



HEAD OFFICE
General Shahu Musa Yar'Adua House,
7/9 Bank Road, PMB 2180, Kaduna.
Tel: 062-245140-9
Website: <http://www.habibnigeriabank.com>
E-mail: info@habib-bank.com.ng
RC. 80788
Habib Nigeria Bank Ltd.
An Affiliate of
Habib Bank Ltd., Pakistan
51 branches across the country.
... the bank with a difference

THURSDAY COLUMN
Nick Dazang on:
**Plateau State
in ferment**
Page 5

STAR FEATURE
**Life in our
most expensive
city**
Page 12

SUJUD FOUNDATION
HIV/AIDS THERAPY
ADDRESS:
4B Dr Bala Mohammed Road,
Off State Road or Off Sokoto Road,
P.O. BOX 12363, KANO
E-mail: sujudfoundation@yahoo.com
: 090-803322
064-647118
Complete therapy will not cost more than N50,000
We will soon earn your confidence (Insha Allah)

Arewa, Afenifere suspend hostilities

Afenifere, the Yoruba socio-cultural group, has resolved to suspend all hostilities against the Northern states in the spirit of reconciliation.

Leader of the Afenifere and prominent Yoruba leader, Senator Abraham Adesanya gave this indication at a public lecture in

From Ibrahim Dan Halilu in Kaduna and Mustapha Isah Kwaru in Abuja

memory of late Abdulrahman Okene held at Arewa House, Kaduna yesterday.

Senator Adesanya, who was the special guest at the maiden lecture, re-affirmed the resolve of Afenifere leaders to understand their differences with Arewa and explain same to their people and seek possible means to manage the differences for a greater Nigeria.

He called on Arewa leaders to toe the same line rather than blow the difference out of proportion, adding that such differences should not be obstacles to cooperation between the two camps, as well the South-West and the Northern states.

"It is a test of responsible leadership to ensure that differences do not blow out of all proportions into becoming political hostilities," Senator Adesanya stressed.

While conceding that differences exist even within the same family, Adesanya emphasized the need for both Arewa and Afenifere leaders to manage their differences without tearing the nation apart.

He pointed out that the leadership of the two ethnic nationalities have a responsibility to ensure that their peoples see their relationship as being more than a relationship of conflicts.

He noted that the cordial relationship that existed be-

tween the North and Yorubaland for over 200 years was not forced but built on the basis of friendship, peace and prosperity. He urged the leadership of the two camps to build on this network.

"We the leaders of Arewa and Yoruba have taken the first positive step today. Let us build on this step. Let us not shy away from confronting difficulties," he further urged.

According to the Afenifere leader, more steps would be taken to create

channels of communication between Afenifere and Arewa so that negative rumours of hostilities could be quickly resolved and misunderstanding cleared off.

He cautioned that "many individuals with vested interests in chaos will not be happy at what we have started here today, and will seek their own selfish purposes."

The Guest Speaker at the occasion, the former External Affairs Minister, Professor Bolaji Akinyemi, in his paper titled "Revolution of Powers: A pre-requisite for

National Unity - The need for dialogue," faulted the 1999 constitution for what he described as its submerging of the concept of devolution of powers and ceding it to the federal government.

Professor Akinyemi, who noted that the military was not wholly to blame for the imposition of a military and militaristic constitution on Nigerians, said politicians exacerbated the process because of their long romance with military rule.

He attributed the failure of Nigeria to have a stable and federal system of gov

contd. on pg 2

Israeli troops set for war

By Musa Aliyu with Agency Report

No fewer than 40 Israeli tanks and armoured vehicles have taken positions near the West Bank towns of Bethlehem, Beit Tallah and Beit Sahour ready for war with Palestinians.

Palestinian sources said yesterday that Israel began amassing troops at the West Bank towns at midnight on Tuesday.

contd. on pg 2

UniAbuja, five others threaten fresh strike

By Ikenna Emeka Okpani

The industrial peace reigning in the universities maybe shattered again unless the Federal Government complies with the terms of her agreement with the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and recalls unconditionally, members of the union sacked in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka and University of Ilorin.

This is the position of the Abuja zone of the union in a resolution passed at its meeting at the University of Abuja Tuesday. The zone which comprises the University of Abuja, University of Agriculture, Makurdi, Federal University of Technology, Minna and Benue State University,

Makurdi, said it was particularly worried over the stand of the Vice Chancellor of the University of Ilorin who has computed the gratuities of their sacked colleagues at that university.

The zone is worried because it said the situation is capable of creating another crisis in the Nigerian university system.

The zone alleged that the 'conditional' recall of sacked academic staff at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, was only a ploy to sack them again in future. It therefore, sought the intervention of President Olusegun Obasanjo in the matter, especially that of the University of Ilorin where

contd. on pg 2



Alhaji M.D. Yusufu of ACF



Senator Abraham Adesanya of Afenifere

Smugglers attack customs officer's burial procession

The extent of bitterness between customs officials and smugglers was revealed recently at Oke-Odan near Idiroko, Ogun State, when smugglers attacked the lead vehicle conveying the corpse of a dead customs official in a funeral procession of about 30 vehicles.

The Area Controller of Customs (CAC) at Idiroko, Alhaji Hassan Kila, who narrated the story and showed the damaged hearse, a new Toyota jeep to the News

Agency of Nigeria (NAN) at the border town on Tuesday, described it as "unheard of as well as signs of deep-

rooted hatred."

Kila, who lost five of his officers in attacks by smugglers last year, retorted that

contd. on pg 2

Obasanjo to deal with corrupt civil servants

President Olusegun Obasanjo will soon have the powers to retire and dismiss officers in the Federal Civil Service accused of corruption, if a draft amendment to a section of the civil service rules proposed by the Federal Executive Council (FEC) is even-

tually passed into law by the National Assembly.

The FEC, yesterday, approved the draft amendment to the affected section, which tended to shield corrupt civil servants from immediate removal and prosecution, the Transport Minister, Chief Ojo Maduekwe, who briefed

Police, OPC clash claims two lives

From Olumide Bajulaiye, in Abeokuta

The fight for supremacy between the police and the militant Odua Peoples Congress (OPC) took a dramatic turn on Tuesday when two persons were killed and eight others including three policemen seriously wounded during a police, OPC clash at Mokola area in Abeokuta.

The clash, Daily Trust gathered from a reliable source, occurred shortly after a combined team of policemen stormed the venue of a meeting of the OPC members and attempted to disperse them.

The encounter between the OPC members and the policemen resulted in the ex

contd. on pg 2

the press at the end of the meeting, said.

He said that the amendment, if approved by the National Assembly, would pave way for Obasanjo to secure additional powers to deal summarily with civil servants accused of corrup

contd. on pg 2

NEWS

Afenifere *Contd. from pg 1*

ernment to the elite, who he said has yet to learn any lesson from past mistakes.

The leader of the Union of Niger-Delta, Senator David Dafinone in his brief remark, blamed the failure of Nigeria to move forward on the refusal of the Yoruba to cross from their domain into Arewa in order to provide a legal framework for a better governance of Nigeria.

The Secretary-General of *Afenifere*, Chief Ayo Opaokun, said after the meeting that Nigeria would only move forward when her citizens cooperate with one another and forget their ethnic differences.

Chief Ayo, disclosed that his association was at the lecture based on the invitation it received from Northern leaders.

His words: "Our pres-

ence in the North is not a surprise. Yoruba's want to cooperate with the North. We have forgotten all that happened in the past. The issue of killings of Northerners in Yoruba land is also applicable to the North. How many Yoruba's were killed at various crises in the North? This is a time we should forget all ethnic clashes and solve our sufferings."

Also speaking at the occasion, Justice Mamman Nasir, the Grand Patron of the Gamji Members Association (GAMA) organisers of the lecture disclosed that the association decided to invite the *Afenifere* in order to join hands with North to prevent the occurrence of any clash in the future. He added that it is when there is peace in the country that it could be moved forward.

Police *Contd. from pg 1*

change of gunfire between the parties, throwing residents of the entire neighbourhood into fear and confusion.

Shop owners and traders within the area hurriedly closed shops to escape from the troubled spot.

Investigation by *Daily Trust* revealed that two middle-aged men fell victims of the attack as they were said to have been killed by stray bullets. One of the deceased, identified as Kunle, was said to have just arrived from Lagos, where he went to replenish his stock as a trader.

Some of the residents

who spoke to our correspondent on Tuesday night disclosed that some of the wounded persons were rushed to a private hospital close to the scene, but that the hospital management could not admit them, as they referred them to the state General Hospital, Oke-Ijenu.

Confirming the incident, the State Police Commissioner, Prince Udam Ekpoudom, disclosed that three of his men were seriously wounded during the attack. He then warned that "Ogun State is no go area for OPC. Next time, we will match them fire for fire."

Smugglers *Contd. from pg 1*

"it was most shocking that these smugglers will not allow even a dead customs officer to be buried peacefully."

According to the CAC, the Toyota jeep bearing the coffin of late Deputy Superintendent of Customs (DSC), Mike Ajumole, was attacked about 10 a.m. as it blared its sirens through Oke-Odan while leading about 30 other vehicles conveying customs officials.

"The smugglers who were in a second-hand car being smuggled into the country, hauled huge stones at the jeep, breaking its windscreen and side mirrors and injuring one of the three officers bearing wreaths," Kila further said.

He, however, added that residents of Oke-Odan who witnessed the incident, appealed to armed officers who jumped out of other vehicles not to pursue the smugglers

because what the smugglers did was an abomination and it was like putting a curse on themselves.

Kila revealed that his men were on the trail of those who attacked the funeral procession and would soon arrest some of them because residents of Oke-Odan who

Obasanjo *Contd. from pg 1*

tion and other misdemeanour while in office.

The Minister further stated that the amendment became necessary to ensure that prompt action was taken against any civil servant found to have engaged in any official malpractice, by removing an aspect of section 04601 of the regulations which tended to shield corrupt officials.

The minister said that the proposed amendment is seeking to remove the bureaucratic powers hitherto enjoyed by the Civil Service Commission, which must

the union alleges that despite all entreaties, the Vice-Chancellor has refused to recall sacked members of the union.

On the implementation of the ASUU/FGN Agreement reached last July, the zone expressed disappointment over the non-implementation even after the July 31st deadline, adding that this was, "a deliberate attempt to distort the content and philosophy of the agreement."

"The zone consequentially calls on government to constitute an implementation committee to address the grey areas in the agreement in the interest of industrial peace and harmony as well as stability in our university system," it said.

DRAMA: D/Gov, LG chairman disagree over project

There was violent exchange of words and counter accusations between the deputy governor of Taraba State, Alhaji Sale Danboyi (PDP) and the Ibi Council chairman, Mr. Yakubu Sale Agbaogo (APP) over the execution of the N97m Ibi Secretariat Complex.

While briefing journalists on media tour of the state, the council chairman, Mr. Agbeogo had informed that the secretariat was started in 1997 and that the deputy governor who was at one-time a chairman of the council had had an input in the nine-year protracted contract.

In response, the deputy governor admitted having an input but explained that as at

witnessed the incident had provided useful leads to customs intelligence officers.

Late Ajumole, 35, who was the assistant public relations officer of Idiroko customs until his death during a brief illness on July 31, was buried in his Imo state home, a day after the coffin bearing his remains was attached.

first call for a full report on the allegations against the affected officer and his reply to those allegations.

The section would now read: "when he considers it desirable and in public interest, the president after due consultation shall direct the retirement of an officer . . . suspected to have engaged in corrupt activities, thereby hastening the process of charging such suspects to the anti-corruption court.

He said that the council considered the amendment in view of mounting criticisms against government over its anti-corruption drive, stressing that the decision to amend the relevant section was considered

UniAbuja *Contd. from pg 1*

The statement signed by Dr. G. N. Nsofor, National Coordinator of Abuja zone and chairman of ASUU chapter, FUT Minna and three others from Benue State University, University of Abuja and University of Agriculture, Makurdi, states that only a faithful implementation of the agreement will be acceptable.

Indications that the implementation of the agreement has gone sour emerged last week when the National Universities Commission (NUC) sent a letter to the Vice Chancellor of the University of Ilorin asking him to reinstate the sacked academic staff to avert another show down between the union and government.

From Garba Deen Muhammed, in Jalingo

the time he left, the contract sum of the secretariat complex was only N40m out of which the council had paid N30m and that the work "was 75% completed."

The Ibi council chairman became visibly angry and demanded to know from the deputy governor who made the assessment that the contract was 75% completed.

The deputy governor responded by saying that a ministry of justice approved supervisor from the Taraba State Ministry of Works, who monitored the progress of the work and was giving a monthly report can verify his (deputy gov) claim.

At this point the council chairman attempted to snatch the microphone away from the deputy governor who held on to it.

As the situation looked set to degenerate into a brawl between the two public officers, the deputy governor's security men began to drag him away while the council chairman made desperate efforts to follow him but was held back.

in the strong belief that Obasanjo would not use the law to deal with his perceived opponents.



Chief Maduekwe

The reinstatement of the lecturers who were sacked following their roles in the last three months old strike was part of the agreement reached between government and the union before the strike was called off last July.

The union had gone on strike last April asking for increased funding for education, remuneration of staff and increased university autonomy.

After a series of negotiation, which culminated to the signing of an agreement between the union and government negotiating team, the union called off the strike giving government till 31st of July to start implementing all parts of the agreement.

The Minister of Education, Prof. Babalola Borishade has always emphasised government's determination to abide by the tenets of the agreement.

Meanwhile, residents of Ibi whose only dividend of democracy is a poorly constructed N50m drainage of about 15 km, were shouting to the journalists that "the council chairman is lying. He is not doing anything. He didn't do anything to the secretariat.

Other projects that Mr. Agbaogo claimed to have executed like a cottage hospital in the riverine areas at the cost of N45m, a water scheme at Sarkin Kudu at the cost of N12m and two wards of maternity in Ibi town were also vehemently denied by the residents.

A private investigation by *Daily Trust* indicated that the council chairman had fallen out with his people due to poor performance and now uses thugs as aides.

Nigeria now haven for foreign investors - Senate President

By Patrick Andrew

The flurry of investment activities in Nigeria has been attributed to the growing confidence of foreign investors in the Nigerian economy.

Senate President, Chief Anyim Pius Anyim, said that foreign investors now see Nigeria as a haven for veritable investment and have consequently flocked in to participate in the rush.

Chief Anyim, who made the assertion at the formal launching of the National Sports Lottery, remarked that the stability in the economic affairs of the country was another manifestation of the dividends of democracy since the inception of the present administration.

The Senate President said the participation of foreign investors in the National Sports Lottery was a veritable dividend of democracy, stating that it was indicative

Israeli

Contd. from pg 1

According to the sources, a gun battle has ensued between Israeli troops and Palestinian gunmen near Beit Tallah and the Jewish settlement of Gilo.

A Palestinian news agency (*Wafa*) reporter said that the Israeli forces entered several Palestinian villages near Bethlehem.

These villages, he said, are classified under the Oslo Agreements as area B territory, which is under Palestinian civil authority.

Israel Radio has, however, reported that the Israeli armed forces did not enter areas under complete Palestinian jurisdiction.

Meanwhile, Palestinians in Bethlehem said that flares lit the sky while the buzz of gunfire could be heard. No injuries have been reported so far.

In a reaction, Israeli military sources told Israel Radio that the troop movements would not lead to infiltration into territories under Palestinian control.

It will be recalled that in a large military operation, Israeli tanks entered into the Palestinian town of Jenin early on Tuesday to retaliate suicide bomb attacks.

Despite repeated condemnations, Israel claimed that the invasion was necessary to subdue the bombers, many of whom are from Jenin.

The Palestinian authority has, against this development, requested international protection from the UN Security Council.

of the enduring democracy the present administration will want to bequeath to the entire segment of the Nigerian polity.

Chief Anyim observed that the National Sports Lottery fund which is expected to generate billions of naira for sports funding was government's bold drive to effect private sector participation in sports sponsorship.

He noted that government was no longer capable of single-handedly funding sports in view of the contending interests for the meagre resources available hence it deliberately initiated its divestment in funding sports.

The new policy, he said created a broad spectrum for the private sector to take full advantage of the vacuum left by the government to invest and reap the windfall in sports business.

NEWS

NEPA rejects Niger Rep's request for tariff review again

NEPA on Tuesday rejected an appeal by Niger Republic for a downward review of the tariff paid to the authority.

It was the second time NEPA would turn down the request by its West African customer to whom Nigeria supplies energy as part of an agreement that stopped Niger from damming the River Niger.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the first request was made in April in Niamey when the Nigeriens hosted the NEPA management. At a meeting with Nigeria's power management team led by Power and Steel Minister, Segun Agagu, the Nigeriens, led by their Mines and Energy Minister, El-Hadji Yahaya Baare, argued that the review was necessary because the Nigerien currency had been "heavily devalued."

According to Baare, the fact that payment was made in dollars had continued to compound his country's problems as the financial commitment was "very high." The Nigeriens further argued that the fixed monthly charge for the purpose of amortization was no longer tenable, arguing that a downward review would ameliorate the burden on their people and speed up economic development. But

NEPA in its response, described the arguments as "very sensitive," but ruled that a downward review would be "very difficult," citing increasing cost of NEPA operations. "In fact what you should expect is an upward review," chairman of



Chief Segun Agagu

NEPA's technical committee, Liyel Imoke was earlier quoted as telling his guests in April.

Other issues that featured in the bilateral talks included the invitation extended by NIGELEC, Niger's power house, to NEPA to participate in its privatization programme, with Niger arguing that the participation would solidify the partnership that had seen NEPA supplying the bulk of the energy needs of Niger.

The meeting agreed that ministers of both countries would work out modalities for Nigeria's participation while NIGELEC was directed to

provide the relevant documents for the purpose. Both parties also agreed to commence the exchange of engineers as part of the efforts to learn from each other and ensure NUGELEC was also advised to source a new partner for her privatization programme.

Speaker takes over as acting governor in Enugu

Speaker of Enugu House of Assembly, Chief Abel Chukwu will be sworn-in today as the acting Governor of the state, the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports.

A Government House statement in Enugu said the state Governor, Dr. Chimaroke Nnamani would travel out of the state for two weeks while the deputy, Ezenwata Okechukwu Itanyi is proceeding on an annual leave.

The statement signed by the Special Adviser to the



Gov Dr. Chimaroke Nnamani

The Deputy Speaker of the Adamawa House of Assembly, Mr. Emmanuel Isamdu, on Tuesday, narrowly escaped being impeached for allegedly leaking secrets of the house to the executive arm of government in the state.

An investigation by the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), showed that the

Deputy speaker survives impeachment in Adamawa

legislators who resumed from a month recess a week ago, had vowed to remove the leader for allegedly betraying the confidence reposed on him. A NAN correspondent, who covered the proceedings of the house on Tuesday, reported that the members, who usually commenced sittings at 10 a.m.

did not sit until 12.34 p.m.

Some of the legislators had entered the chambers of the house at about 11 a.m., but were told to go to the speaker's office where they had a closed door meeting which lasted for three hours before they moved to the chambers to start deliberations.

Among the allegations levelled against Tsamdu was that he pitched some members against the executive and that he showed no concern about the welfare of the members except for his selfish interest. NAN further reported that immediately the legislators resumed from the recess last week, they began to map out strategies on how to execute their plans.

Speaking to newsmen on the issue, the Chairman, House Committee on Information, Youths, Sports and Culture, Mr. Mathias Ngaro, confirmed the earlier move by some members to remove the officer. He said that because the agitators did not inform their colleagues, the idea was dropped after a thorough negotiation.



Gov Boni Haruna

governor on Media Matters, Mr. Ogazimorah Igbonekwu, disclosed that the governor would embark on a tour of Kaduna State where he would deliver a lecture at the Kaduna Council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists on Friday, this week.

Nnamani will after the lecture travel to the United States of America to participate at the Enugu

Peoples Convention holding in New York from August 24 to 27, in and his Deputy, Chief Okechukwu Itanyi embarked on annual leave from yesterday.

According to the statement, "with the governor and his deputy absent, the mantle of leadership has fallen on the legislature." The governor, the statement revealed was expected in the country on August 29th, this year.

C/River councillors protest over non-implementation of jumbo pay

Over 190 councillors from the 18 local government areas of Cross River State recently took to the streets, protesting the non-implementation of the new salary package approved by the National Revenue Mobilisation Allocation and Fiscal Commission (NRMFC).

The grassroots legislators on Monday stormed the office of the governor, carrying placards and chanting solidarity songs, in utter disapproval to the state government's blunt approval to the issue.

With such inscription as "Donald, enemy or friend?" "No jumbo, No second term," "Councillors in Cross River State been marginalized," the councillors spread the tentacles of their disapproval of the situation throughout the nooks and crannies of the road leading to the office of the governor as they pasted trees and cars around with their protest placards.

Efforts by the security men at the gate to the governor's office to entreat them proved abortive as they demanded to see the governor, rejecting any representation whatsoever.

Not even the Special Adviser to the governor on Legislative Affairs, Chief Eddy Agbe who came to tell them of the governor's intention to show up at 4.30 p.m. could pacify the rampaging lawmakers.

The councillors who were later briefed that the governor's address will be held at the state library

complex, however, made a u-turn to the intenerary to wait for the governor whom they wanted to meet over the issue.

However, the state governor, Mr. Donald Duke who later appeared at about 5.10 p.m. told the honourable members that the state government's lean financial profile was responsible for the non-implementation of the "jumbo pay."

According to the governor who admonished the councils to see reasons and bury the issue for now, disclosed that the state government is bedeviled with accumulated bills which its allocation could not afford to foot.

NFA alerts public on fake document in circulation

The Nigeria Football Association (NFA) has alerted Nigerians including media houses of the existence of what it called "a fake document in circulation which alleged that there is a fraud," in the football house.

Spokesman of the association, Mr. Austin Mgbolu told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) yesterday in Abuja that the attention of NFA was drawn to the document on Tuesday, when a company was brought to its secretariat in Abuja. Mgbolu said that the "truth of the matter is that mischievous persons stumbled into a list of officials who were reminded to retire certain amounts of money which they expended in the course of carrying out their official assignments."

According to him, "it is usual for the football house to remind officers who collected touring advances or competition monies to retire same when they fail to do so on their own since such was necessary for accountability." He said that if the officers fail to heed the reminder, NFA would compile their names and finance department authorized to deduct such monies from their salaries.

Mgbolu said that it was one of such compilations that some "faceless organizations stumbled on and classified the figures attached to each name as an unauthorized or unapproved expenditure," from where it was concluded that fraud had taken place in NFA.

HOS appeals for restoration of diploma courses in ABU

The Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, has been called upon to restore diploma courses hitherto offered at the Institute of Administration of the university but scrapped in 1996 by the then Sole Administrator, Maj.-Gen. Mammam Kontagora (rtd).

Dr. Ibrahim Jalo Daudu, Head of the Gombe State Civil Service who made the call while speaking with *Daily Trust* in Gombe, said the



Gov Habu Hashidu

restoration of the courses has become imperative if quality manpower is to be made available to local governments, especially in the 19 Northern States.

Dr. Jalo who is also a member of the Institute Administration's governing board, explained that the importance of such courses to the development of local governments become glaring following a one-day joint meeting of the Gombe State Local Government Service Commission, Ministry of Local Governments and Community Development and Secretaries of the 11 local governments of the state recently.

He said the meeting had noted the tremendous contributions of the Institute of Administration to the development of sound manpower base for local governments in the past and

hence their current need to enable the councils meet the challenges of grassroots development, especially under democratic dispensation.

Acknowledging the excellent quality of the courses being offered by the institute which include diploma in public administration, local government studies, higher diploma in local government, advance diploma in Sharia and civil law, Dr. Jalo Daudu said other universities like Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ife and University of Nigeria, Nsukka who adopted the courses after ABU have continued to offer them for the benefit of their local governments in their catchment areas.

He also opined that with the recent adoption of Sharia legal code by some Northern States, diploma courses in Sharia and civil law have become even more relevant and urged their restoration in order to help produce capable hands in its implementation.

From Abdullahi Dutse, in Gombe

NEWS

ACF's unity train moves to Minna, Sokoto

The delegation of the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) currently on tour of Northern states to consult with the state chief executives, traditional rulers and opinion leaders on how the North can be united again, were in Minna yesterday.

During the visit, the leader of the delegation, Maj.-Gen. Abdullahi Shelleng (rtd), stated that their mission was to re-unite the North and Nigeria generally and to bridge the educational gap between it and the rest of the country.

However, before the briefing, he posed a question: "How can the North unite again?"

Gen. Shelleng, a former Governor of old Benue State, agreed that the Northern part of the country which used to be the envy of other regions in the past, has become "scattered seeds by the winds; a misfortune that formed the creation of ACF."

Giving a background to ACF creation, he said that the division in the North had earlier given concern to the bodies like Turaki Committee, Unity and Development Foundation and the Northern Youth Committee.

From Kashim Sule, in Minna and Abdulfatai Abdulsalami, in Sokoto

This situation, he said, did not augur well for the much desired unity of the North. It was, therefore, agreed that the fusion of these bodies into a single and coherent institution would bring the desired objective.

Before now, the leader of the delegation said that there was no platform upon which Northerners could stand on



Alhaji M.D. Yusufu

to drum issues affecting them. He cited the massacre of the Northerners in Lagos and other parts of the country which woke the Northerners from their slumbers to put ACF together.

He said the mission of ACF as an umbrella body

was to take care of Northern interests in the nation's desire to seek peace and tranquility underscored by the recent crisis which seriously rocked Kaduna town, a situation which he described as worrisome to the leaders from the region.

Retired General Shelleng, who stood in for Alhaji M.D.

Yusufu, reminded his audience for the umpteenth time that the ACF was a non-political body that was out to foster unity in the North, set up machinery for peaceful co-existence between the region and its counterparts, to establish linkages between the various communities in the North, between the North and the rest of Nigeria and the outside world and examine all issues and matters that militate against the unity of Nigeria.

Ogoni boils again

Residents of Ogoni land in Rivers State and neighbouring communities fled their homes on Tuesday following a renewed violence in the area in which over 70 houses were reportedly destroyed.

From Wisdom-Uduak Patrick, in Port Harcourt

Daily Trust gathered from the Minority Leader, in the Rivers State House of Assembly, Mr. Magmas Ngei Abe that an undisclosed number of

Kano residents cry out over water shortage

Residents of Fagge and Unguwa Uku Quarters in Kano State, have cried out over inadequate water in their areas and called on the state government to come to their rescue.

According to a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Hausa service

people were missing while the community has been deserted.

Fighting reportedly broke out between Kpor and Mogho communities in Gokama Local Government Area on Monday, but escalated on Tuesday, when residents of the areas fled their home enmasse.

The minority leader, who drew the attention of the Rivers State House of Assembly to the incidence, while speaking on the matter of urgent public importance under motion for adjournment, said that the two warring communities have suffered extensive damage.

Abe told the house that more than 70 residential houses were completely burnt down while many persons sustained various degrees of injuries even as he lamented that many were still missing.

By Mustapha Isah Kwaru

monitored in Abuja, a resident of Fagge, Malam Hafiz Dauda, disclosed that the people of the area are facing difficulties daily due to this problem.

His words: "We spend as much as N15 per jerry can and we consume up to 15 cans with our family daily. Government should do something to stop these sufferings."

Speaking on the problem, the state Commissioner for Water Resources, Mahommud Baffa Yola, disclosed that the state government was doing its best to ensure the adequate provision of potable water to its populace.

He, therefore, urged the people of the affected areas to exercise patience, as the Kwankwaso administration would soon solve the problem.



Gov Musa Kwankwaso

Mass housing for Nigerians soon

The Federal Government has put in place adequate machinery to remove obstacles militating against the delivery of mass housing in Nigeria, the Minister of Works and Housing, Chief Tony Anenih, has said.

Delivering a message at this year's national conference of Chief Architects of the Federation in Gusau on Tuesday, he said the government is ensuring the adherence to a

coherent housing policy.

"The government has established a national long-term home mortgage finance system, easy access to capital by private developers to engage in mass housing delivery, and reporting the endemic corrupt practices of officials charged with the responsibility of implementing public projects," he added.

You can now read **DAILY TRUST** on the Web.

Trust Is A Burden

Our dynamic and comprehensive website provides links to editorial contents and analyses, Cover Stories, Business reports, News, Editorials, Star Features, I.T. World, Sports among others.

Advertisers are also enjoined to advertise on the site and reap the bountiful benefits of a global reach for their products.

Visit us today at:

www.mtrustonline.com/dailytrust

DAILY TRUST

EDITORIAL

Senior Advocate of the Masses

On September 10, 2001, Chief Gani Fawehinmi and eleven others will be conferred with the pre-eminent title of Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN) at a special session of the Supreme Court at Abuja. This is one honour that carries with it universal acclaim, solidarity and joy.

The title – Senior Advocate of Nigeria – is a mark of great distinction and a symbol of merit. It is supposed to be conferred upon our very best legal minds, those who truly stand as quintessential models in the theory, practice and advocacy of the law. In this wise, the selection of Chief Gani Fawehinmi for this prestigious honour is quite commendable, though many would also view it as being rather belated.

Once, as a mark of impatience with the structures of state, which seemed to have contrived to deny the formidable lawyer the esteemed title, students of one of our universities conferred upon him the title Senior Advocate of the Masses (SAM). This seems to have been a healthy precedent to the major laurel which would be conferred upon him shortly.

The impending honour is bound to encourage us to take a second look at awards and honours in this part of the world. It is significant that throughout the period when Chief Fawehinmi was denied the title, he had for one reason or the other taken government to court and oftentimes ended up in prison, in consequence of his legal efforts. His legal battles began to adopt a legendary and epic character, and his profundity in law is simply of the best quality.

Soon, he will be conferred with the title SAN and Daily Trust hopes that this means an ennobling of the structures that denied him the title in the first instance. The hope too is that Nigeria is turning towards the tradition of merit, and respect for genius and talent, rather than a culture of official cynicism and antagonism towards those who are eminently deserving of such awards.

It must also be mentioned that we seem to have a tradition of belated honour in this country. It was when Professor Wole Soyinka won the Nobel Prize for literature that the Babangida administration awarded him a national honour. The obvious implication is that without the Nobel award, the national honour would not have been conferred on him at that time. Perhaps it would have been done much later.

Recently, an NGO, the Negotiation and Conflict Management Group (NCMG) made an appeal for a reconsideration of the criteria used in the awards of the title of Senior Advocate of Nigeria. Their call can be seen as part of the process of giving prestige and meaning to the title and ensuring that the award to deserving lawyers becomes more relevant and significant to the society. The call was, no doubt, inspired by the singular selection of Gani Fawehinmi. This award is a handsome turn on the twin wheels of law and justice.

Daily Trust salutes the Legal Practitioners Privileges Committee which selected Chief Fawehinmi and the other deserving lawyers. The turn towards publicly honouring deserving persons in various fields should be encouraged because this is one method by which we can imbue the country with ideas and the strength to face the future with its numerous demands and uncertainties. It is also felt that other problematics in the legal infrastructure would also be taken care of because the legal structures should be seen to be just and fair. This should be the natural and true role of the legal establishment.



THURSDAY COLUMN

Plateau State in ferment

By Nick Dazang

While this column was unavoidably away for two months – and I must apologise profoundly to those who read it – the author took advantage of Jos, the Plateau State capital’s ever clement weather and postcard beauty to accomplish a writing assignment. While it was a joyous and fulfilling moment for this writer, my brief sojourn coincided with a moment when the state was literally in a ferment.

My sojourn coincided with the state’s twenty-fifth anniversary since its creation by the late General Murtala Mohammed. The period also coincided with Governor Joshua Dariye’s two years in office. The state was thus in a festive mood. In strategic locations, billboards proclaimed the state’s celebratory mood and the local television regaled us with the state’s sundry triumphs and accomplishments from Joseph Dechi Gomwalk to Joshua Chibi Dariye.

If the state was in a celebratory mood, it was also a moment for sober reflection. A rash of books and articles assessing the state’s journey thus far were published. The most seminal and thought provoking were *Plateau State: Understanding the Problems* and *Plateau State: The Heritage and Hope*. In addition to these were an assessment of Governor Dariye’s government by a group of concerned elders and other paid articles which sought to join issues with an abrasive one previously authored by Asaph Zadok.

The rash of literature coinciding with this moment is to be expected given the people’s robustness and articulation.

Besides, the piece earlier done by Zadok not only bestirred the hornet’s nest, it drew the ire of many a Plateau citizen. First, it was self-righteous and lacked finesse. Second, it sought to besmear Chief Solomon Lar, who politically, is still in reckoning in the state. Third, Zadok is a sojourner in the state and therefore cut for himself the unsavoury image of a meddler.

Out of the pack, the literature that stood out were the two books aforementioned and the assessment done by the elders. Though *Plateau State: Understanding the Problems* was authored by intellectuals who belong to the opposing All Peoples Party (APP), the booklet must be praised for its maturity, sobriety and boldness. Couched in elegant and sober prose, it attacked the skewedness in the development of the state and called attention to redressing sundry inequities in the state. Specifically, it attacked the manner our elite in the Langtang area used their positions during the military era to feather their nests and to develop their area to the exclusion of other local government areas. The figures and facts deployed by the authors are so damning that in spite of its savage attack no defence has been forthcoming. Consider: even though the Langtang federal constituency has the least population in the state, it has two local governments; it also has two seats at the House of Assembly while other more populated ones such as Jos-South and Shendam local government have one each. Also, Langtang which has a population of 106,935 has 14 wards whereas Shendam which has a population of 217,000 has 12 wards. As if this structural lopsidedness is not galling enough, the elite in Langtang allegedly used their position to corner for themselves a prison, a digital telephone exchange long before Jos went digital, rehabilitation of the Langtang dam, the construction of Gazum/Bwarat/Pilgani road and an airstrip. For good measure, the Langtang elite were accused of supporting others other than those who hail from the state to come into stupendous wealth. Were a mini conference of the state’s nationalities to hold, the 37-page booklet would not only be compulsory reading, it would have been hard to ignore. The recommendations of the booklet should be hearkened to if Plateau people want to carry on as the bastion of justice, equity and peace. Even though *Plateau State: The Heritage and Hope*, a

162-page book, is sponsored by the state government, it is not your normal hagiography or treatise written to elicit praise for those in power. The book, written by five well-known intellectuals, traces the proud antecedents of the peoples of Plateau State from pre-history to the present. It examines all the administrations since the state’s founding and enunciates a vision for the state. It recommends the development of a philosophy or ethos rooted in the people; it canvasses for a youth development programme and it calls for the creation of an entrepreneurial class. Though it glosses over some of the structural defects dealt with courageously by *Plateau State: Understanding the Problems*, the two books cohere on two salient issues. One, both call for the urgent creation of an entrepreneurial class – a lofty project started by the late J. D. Gomwalk. And both are agreed that in terms of breadth and vision, J. D. Gomwalk stands tall as an iconic figure and as a measuring rod whose nonpareil and unsurpassed accomplishments should serve as a yardstick for assaying leadership in the state.

In the period he superintended over the state, J. D. Gomwalk is credited with having accomplished the following: the Jos/Bukuru water project (Liberty Dam); Jos township roads; the Nigerian Standard newspapers and estate; the Plateau Investment Company head office; Jos-Pankshin-Shendam-Yelwa-Ibi road (about 300 km); the BPTV, now NTA Jos; Plateau State government secretariat; the state House of Assembly; Tudun Wada government lodge; Plateau Transport Corporation; Plateau State Polytechnic; Wildlife park; five teacher colleges; extension of Plateau Hotel to three local government headquarters; General Hospital Pankshin; low cost houses in four local government headquarters; Jos main market; Jos abattoir; rural electrification agricultural projects, the University of Ibadan, Jos campus now the University of Jos, etc.

In spite of the fact that some of their criticism is valid, the assessment by concerned elders is a study in how not to criticise. Couched in trenchant and abrasive language, the elders do not appreciate even a single accomplishment of the Dariye administration. Besides, the concerned elders appear to be a conclave of the governor’s presumed political “enemies”. Also, three prominent signatories were in the Dariye administration and had joined the gravy train. Theirs therefore smacks of sour grapes and it undermines the credibility of the assessment. One of the elders is said to have led a commission which outcome has been contentious. The emergence of the elders in large number and in contention with Chief Dariye underlines this writer’s assertion in a previous piece that one of Plateau’s difficulties is a generational one. Whereas ours is the age of the whiz kid and *wunderkind*, the gerontocrats insist on being relevant for all times by latching onto power.

The challenge, from the foregoing, for Chief Dariye is to reconcile the people by giving imaginative and dedicated leadership; all inequities should be redressed; he should carry the people along, be they young or old; he should assiduously work towards creating a business class and reduce poverty; he should reconcile himself with the civil servants by reviewing the cases of those sacked. He should construct roads, hospitals and schools.

Thankfully while I was in Jos, a beautiful edifice was put up in Hwolshe as that area’s model primary school in the span of two months. The governor should replicate such a feat, first in all senatorial districts and then in each local government, resources permitting. Finally he must bring the vision which he himself enunciated for the state to fruition. “To build a viable, just, peaceful Plateau State in which the people are economically empowered and their value system redefined in line with today’s realities and prepared for tomorrow’s challenges. A people united in purpose, high moral and ethical values, deeply rooted in the fear of God. I wish him Godspeed.”

Career Opportunities in Commercial Banking

Nation Wide

Our client is a foremost and recently restructured commercial bank with branches nation-wide. With a strong asset base and consistently impressive performance, our client has constantly redefined new markets, especially with its focus on the Energy sector. Following major growth and expansion, our client needs the following categories of people:

(Post NYSC) Graduates

Ref: NEXP/01

- A first degree in any discipline
(With a minimum of second class lower division)
- Maximum age: 26 years

Ref: NEXP/02

- A first degree in any discipline
(With a minimum of second class lower division)
- Two years working experience
- Maximum age: 28 years

Experienced Professionals

Ref: EXP/03

- A first degree in any discipline
(With a minimum of second class lower division)
- Applicants must have relevant experience of 3 - 6 years in any of the following:
 - Accounting/Auditing
 - Banking/Financial Institutions
 - Information Technology
 - Management Consulting
- Maximum age: 32 years

Ref: EXP/04

- A first degree in any discipline
(With a minimum of second class lower division)
- Applicants must have relevant experience of at least 7 years in any of the following:
 - Accounting/Auditing
 - Banking/Financial Institutions
 - Information Technology
 - Management Consulting
- Maximum age: 38 years

Preferred interested candidates must be numerate and possess strong communication, analytical and problem-solving capabilities. Demonstrable use of initiative and an interest in developing a career in banking and financial services are key requirements.

Our client offers opportunities for a challenging career in banking, in-depth training and exposure to work systems comparable with international standards. Successful candidates' remuneration and progression will be determined on a merit-driven basis.

To Apply

Each application should contain the details listed below in the following order:

- ✦ Name
- ✦ Age
- ✦ Contact Address
- ✦ State of Origin
- ✦ Area of Speciality
- ✦ Number Years of Work Experience
- ✦ Current/Last Employer with Dates
- ✦ Institutions Attended
- ✦ Degree Obtained
- ✦ Class Obtained

Test Centres

Tests will be conducted for candidates applying for the following positions; NEXP/01, NEXP/02 and EXP/03. Tests may be conducted in five (5) different zones across the nation. Please indicate your choice at the top left corner of your CV:

- ✦ Abuja **ABJ**
- ✦ Lagos **LOS**
- ✦ Maiduguri **MDG**
- ✦ Port Harcourt **PHC**
- ✦ Kano. **KN**

* Applicants should indicate on their applications/CV their state of origin beside the relevant reference code (e.g. NEXP/01/Ogun)

**PHILLIPS
CONSULTING**

Phillips Consulting Limited

4th Floor, UBA House, 57 Marina, P. O. Box 5129, Lagos.

Tel: 2665263, 2643111 Fax: 2665325

Please visit our website www.phillipsconsulting.net/careers.html to complete an application form on-line, quoting the relevant Reference Code. Physical applications should contain the specified details in not more than 3 pages and sent to the above address. Applications may also be submitted to the nearest Fenway Courier Services Office

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted
Closing Date: August 28 2001.

Opinion

Democracy and its endless dividends

By Abdulazeez Abdullahi

The federal government has once again lived up to its reputation as being always at variance with popular opinion. Just when Nigerians expect the government to think right and act right by taking decisions that tally with the expectation of all right-thinking people based on available facts, it seizes on the opportunity to remind us that we are, after all, the governed and our opinions, no matter how high our sense of reasoning, amounts to nothing.

It was recently reported that the federal government has given out the contract for the national identity card project to a French firm, SAGEM S. A., at the cost of 25 billion dollars. The contract, according to the Transport Minister, Chief Ojo Maduekwe, who was addressing newsmen after a Federal Executive Council meeting, was awarded to the firm because of its competence, credibility and experience! The question that begs to be asked is: For how long will such acts of deceit by government continue? For how long will our so-called leaders continue to take us for a ride and insult our intelligence as if we are a bunch of nerds?

President Olusegun Obasanjo it was who during his first stint in power in 1978, initiated the National Identity Card project which was awarded to the same French firm, SAGEM S. A. The project at that time was given out for the sum of 16 million dollars. SAGEM, of course, proved how competent and credible it was by failing to execute the contract, an action which has led us to where we are today; without an identity card and an astronomically high contract sum to grapple with owing to the upward reviews of the contract by successive administrations.

The United Nations through its Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo was reported to have sent a memo to the federal government warning it not to award the project to the French firm based on the UN's previous experience with the company. The UN Mission said it had in 1999 in Kosovo contracted the company "to supply a functional central civil registry with a streamlined and accurate data base and civil documents (ID cards) production system, but the company failed to deliver". It not only failed to deliver an adequate central civil registry system in Kosovo, it also failed to supply adequate project management services and a data capturing system for the field. The memo further pointed out that the company acts unprofessionally in the way it structures its negotiations with the international community and that "it has a short-sighted and minimalist approach when interpreting its obligations towards projects, the contract and its customers as well as other partners".

A minister in the present administration was also said to have sent a memo to the presidency in which he stated that beside the exorbitant price quoted by SAGEM, there were some inadequacies in the contract which have to do with the execution of the project, arguing that the firm had proposed an AFIS architecture whereby information flows from a central location to zonal and then state centres, contrary to the preferred conventional pyramidal bottom-up AFIS architecture where information moves from the local government areas to the states, to zones and then to the centre.

Why the government chose to turn a blind eye to all these allegations levelled against SAGEM is still a mystery. One easily comes off with the impression that perhaps ours is a different kind of democracy because it is obviously not the type practised in other parts of the world, especially in places where probity, accountability and sensitivity on the part of elected leaders have for long been the pillars upon which such democracies were built.

As a way of deluding itself and Nigerians, the present administration has since its inception popularised the slogan, dividends of democracy. I believe it expects us to accept the ID card project as one of such dividends, after all we are the governed and our opinions do not amount to anything.

Abdulazeez is a staff of Daily Trust.

State involuntary euthanasia

By Shehu Sani

Miss Sherifat Abdulrahman, 32 is not a name in Nigeria's tribe of prominent elite or socialites. She's just an ordinary citizen, a citizen, currently serving two years in the Kaduna Central Convict Prison. But Sherifat is a different prisoner from the close to a thousand that inhabit that dungeon. Sherifat Abdulrahman has full-blown AIDS; she's currently half alive, isolated and lying in the prison's clinic.

Miss Sherifat Abdulrahman who comes from Ilorin, Kwara State used to live the life typical of an ordinary Nigerian housewife: toiling, struggling and surviving the pains and the hardship visited by the nation's economy. She sold plastics at a market in Ilorin to supplement the family income. With proceeds from that she could partly foot the food bill and most times pay the school fees of her two daughters and a son - ages ten, seven and five.

Miss Sherifat Abdulrahman's ordeal began from the date of her separation, and then divorce from her husband. Her husband abandoned her with the children and left for Lagos. Without the male breadwinner, Sherifat was left with the burden of playing both roles. As life got tougher, and she couldn't make ends meet, she contemplated and eventually chose a negative alternative which was to become her undoing - hawking Indian hemp.

A man, who had for a long time been living on drug business, approached Miss Sherifat with the idea of the illicit trade. She resisted for so long out of fear of its consequences, but the man did everything he could to lure her. As life became more and more unbearable, she threw out reason and fear and picked the sword of survival-by-every-means. On her first venture, she collected a bagful, and off to Kano, in the far north, she went. With a ready market and high demand for the product, she made quick cash. First mission accomplished. On her return, she decided to invest the proceed in her plastic business.

The success of the first adventure encouraged her to try a second time. Following the same procedure she set off to Kano again on March 10, 2001. On her way to Kano at a sleepy town called Birnin Gwari in Kaduna State officials of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, NDLEA, intercepted her bus. Sherifat Abdulrahman was immediately arrested. She was taken to the Agency's Station in Zaria. There she spent a month in the cell.

Sherifat Abdulrahman's journey to the unknown had started. She was brought to Kaduna and arraigned before the Federal High Court. In case No.FHC/KD/24C/2001 on 17th May 2001, Sherifat Abdulrahman was charged with the offence of "unlawful

possession of cannabis sativa contrary to and punishable under S(10)(d) of the NDLEA act as amended" for that she bagged a two-year sentence.

Sherifat wept for her undoing, thinking of how she will battle the isolation and all the pains, deprivation and hardship associated with it. She saw two years as an endless time of suffering. Sherifat never knew that what was ahead of her was worse than the liberty she lost.

Two months in the prison she started experiencing minor, then major symptoms of AIDS. She thought it was malaria or typhoid and was treated by the prison clinic for such. Futile it was. Her state of health deteriorated further. The prison moved to take her out to a laboratory for a test. In both first and second test she proved positive.

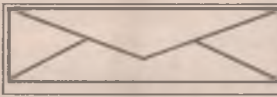
Back in the prison, Sherifat was isolated from other inmates. Her issue scared the warders as well as the inmates and their reaction was typically uninformed.

On two occasions Sherifat's case was presented to judges on visit to prison and twice they rejected the plea by the prison authorities to release her. The judges' reason: releasing her is "unleashing a dragon" on the whole society. But neither the prison officials nor the inmates wanted 'the dragon' in. Sherifat assumed the status of a human-weed while her life became fifty here fifty to the unknown. Sherifat

Abdulrahman's last resort is prayer. She seeks forgiveness daily from her Lord. Her God may have forgiven her as He is said to be all merciful and all-forgiven. But her holier-than-thou country has not forgiven her. Her countrymen believe she has broken the law and as a petty drug dealer and an AIDS carrier she deserves to expire in chains.

Realistic analyses of Sherifat Abdulrahman's crime is a drop in the ocean of Nigeria's catalogue of crimes committed with impunity from the lowest strata of the society to the peak of political and social hierarchy. In a country where mortals who were once gods looted the treasury and now live in the comfort of their ill-gotten wealth. And in a country where those that committed heinous crimes of human rights abuses that included murder and other related evil acts. Sherifat's offence is a speck of dust. By virtue of her incarceration, the Nigerian state owes her any of the two options: give her the best and available treatment an incarcerated AIDS patient can get, or let her go and battle the slow wastage. Denying her the best of care and denying her the liberty to take care of her infection is a state sanctioned murder or if permitted: state involuntary euthanasia.

Shehu is president Civil Rights Congress



YOUR LETTERS

Re: The sugarcane revolution in Jigawa

After reading the above referred article in the Wednesday 27th June, 2001 edition of the *Daily Trust*, I couldn't understand what the writer really intended to portray in the story.

I began to wonder whether the writer was trying to make us understand that the much talked about sugarcane production was in practice before the arrival of Governor Turaki. He made mention that it started since 1996-97, i.e. two years before Turaki's coming. But I think my assumption was a wrong one because even if the sugarcane farming was in existence before Turaki's coming, it was only practised in small scale because: "ever since the official launching" by Governor Turaki, not less than 1,568 hectares of sugarcane was produced in the state which is "a great departure from initial pilot scheme of two hectares involving only eight farmers to 58 covering 16 hectares. Now, about 10,000 farmers are involved" in the sugarcane production.

Now, looking at the

quantity of sugarcane being produced annually by over 10,000 farmers in the state on about 16 hectares of land and the fact that even the feasibility studies for the construction of a sugar factory has just started, then one wonders whether the writer intends to show us the level of economic blunder committed by the state government by spending

millions of naira to encourage the production and subsequent purchase of sugarcane while actually there was no factory to transform the sugarcane into sugar.

Generally speaking, the so-called sugarcane revolution is a disaster to Jigawa State, as it has grossly affected food production in the state. Farmers were lured into the 'lucrative' sugarcane farming to the detriment of food items like millet, guinea corn, wheat, maize, rice etc. which has now led to their soaring prices in the local markets. If I may ask, of what benefit is sugarcane to the government and masses of Jigawa State since there is not yet the factory to produce the sugar out of the sugarcane being produced? While the government encouraged the masses to stop producing have now gone beyond the reach of the common man. I beg to say that the whole programme of sugarcane production in Jigawa is 'penny wise and pound foolish'.

Finally, I wish to advise the government of Jigawa State to face the realities of time by forgetting about all these illusory projects of hers. The government should, instead, encourage food production rather than expending huge resources in sugarcane production.

Kallah Mamman, AK, 47, Kano Street, Kawo New Extension, Kaduna.

ASE: The coffin is nailed . . .

The recent outright but unfortunate scrapping of the Abuja Stock Exchange (ASE) is quite baffling but it didn't come to me as a surprise because I foresaw it. What is surprising however is how a clique of ethnic jingoists could hijack the present administration for the purpose of achieving its selfish aims. With this crop of people in the corridors of Aso Rock Villa taking absolute and irreversible decisions of national importance ahead of the Federal Executive Council, something less than what befell the ASE should not be expected.

The fact that the ASE is now converted to the commodity exchange when the fate of FACOMEX is still hanging in the balance is nothing to clap about. Only God knows when the proposed commodity exchange is going to take off.

The unfortunate and untimely 'demise' of ASE is definitely bad news for the nation's economy. Adieu, Abuja Stock Exchange. Abdullah S. Abubakar, Anguwar Hausawa, Garki Village, Box 5331, Garki, Abuja.

TRUST INTERNATIONAL

AFRICA & THE MIDDLE EAST



Kenya's President Daniel Arap Moi arrives at parliament to vote for a crucial bill, August 14, 2001.

MPs block Kenya anti-corruption plan

The Kenyan Government has suffered a humiliating defeat after members of parliament threw out a crucial anti-corruption bill. If passed, the bill would have led to the establishment of an anti-corruption authority.

This was one of the key conditions before the International Monetary Fund would agree to release an estimated \$20m of aid.

But opposition MPs opposed the bill, saying it would not reduce corruption in Kenya.

So close was the vote that President Daniel arap Moi put his political prestige on the line by taking the unprecedented step of coming to parliament to vote.

He argued that if the bill failed, Kenyans would be pushed into deeper poverty.

But in the end, the 130 votes in favour of the bill fell short of the 145 needed to pass the constitutional amendment.

Standard Chartered economist Razia Khan said, "Rejection will effectively rule out any IMF lending."

"The concern is if the IMF won't lend to Kenya this year there is going to be upward pressure on interest rates because of funding difficulties."

The country's economy is badly faltering and unemployment is rising. Kenya regularly is ranked among the most corrupt countries in the world.

But the last anti-corruption body was effectively dismantled in December, after its powers to prosecute were declared illegal by Kenya's constitutional court.

And an anti-corruption bill

and a code of ethics bill, promised for the last parliament, were never passed.

The bill cannot be debated again for six months.

The largest opposition party, the Democratic Party, argued that the authority resulting from this legislation would be too weak to make a difference.

Democratic Party shadows attorney-general Kiraitu Murungi, said: "What we don't want is a lame duck Kenya Anti-Corruption Authority (Kaca), a Kaca that will be shrouded in constitutional and legal problems."

The opposition also argued the new bill would create a conflict between the head of Kaca and the attorney-general because the latter would retain the power to prosecute cases of corruption.

"We need International Monetary Fund money, the government knows this and should prepare proper bills," said Peter Anyang' Nyong'o, head of the political bureau at the opposition Social Democratic Party of Kenya.

Conservationist Richard Leakey was appointed head of the notoriously corrupt Kenyan

civil service in 1999.

His appointment after years of opposition to President Moi was seen as a sign to international donors that Kenya was serious about cracking down on rampant corruption.

Dr Leakey said at the time he was confident he could wipe out government corruption.

But he stood down in March this year amid speculation that he was carrying out his brief too diligently and had offended some senior people.

The IMF suspended lending to Kenya late last year complaining that the government was backtracking on efforts to fight official corruption.

A parliamentary report in Kenya recently revealed that \$10bn of public funds went missing during the course of one year.

The report - by the Public Accounts Committee - said that during 1994-95 the money was either lost or uncollected by the departments responsible.

The missing money included funds from the Central Bank, the state-run post and telecommunications corporation and Kenya Railways.

South Africa to outlaw land invasion

The South African government says it is planning to push through a legislation that would make land invasion a criminal offence in the country.

The bill, which will be part of the government's legislative programme when parliament resumes sittings at the end of this month, would be seen as a clear message that illegal land occupation would not be tolerated.

Last month South African authorities quickly took legal

action to evict squatters who had occupied waste land in Bredell Park just outside Johannesburg.

President Thabo Mbeki has not condemned the violent land grab supported by neighbouring Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe.

But Mr Mbeki has been quoted as saying tentative efforts to seize land in his country were the work of opportunists who should be shunned.

South Africa's Housing Minister Sankie Mthembu-Mahanyele on Tuesday told the BBC's Focus on Africa programme the land law is being amended to make it possible for those who instigate land invasion to be prosecuted.

At present the squatters and not the instigators are seen to be breaking the law.

The government says it had helped five million people build or buy 1.5 million homes since 1994. She admitted that more than 7 million people are still without housing.

US planes attack Iraq

US planes have carried out a new air strike on a surface-to-air missile site in southern Iraq, the US Department of Defence says.

Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman said the aircraft targeted a radar installation, which was a key part of Iraq's air defence system.

Four days ago dozens of US and British planes carried out the heaviest raids against Iraq by coalition forces for six months. One person was killed in the strikes on air defence sites.

Earlier this month, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein warned western planes to leave Iraqi airspace or face retaliation.

A statement from US Central Command said the latest raid was carried out "in response to recent Iraqi hostile threats against coalition aircraft monitoring the southern no-fly zone".

The US planes attacked fire-control radar that helps Iraq guide its missiles and is located near An Nasiriyah, about 272 kilometres southeast of Baghdad.

Mr Whitman said the air force F-16s bombed the site with precision guided missiles and returned safely to base.

"This was an element of the Iraqi air defence system that has been directly contributing to the effectiveness of their integrated air defence system," he said.

Last month, President George W Bush said the United States would continue putting pressure on Saddam Hussein after an unarmed U2 spy plane on a reconnaissance mission was allegedly almost shot down by an Iraqi missile.

US analysts took this as a sign that Iraq had improved its anti-aircraft defence systems.

The White House said that

Iraq has recently stepped up its efforts to shoot down planes patrolling the no-fly zones over the north and south of the country.

In a speech to mark the 13th anniversary of the end of the Iran-Iraq war, Saddam Hussein said: "If you want to save your pilots and planes from the fire of the courageous combatants of Iraq, you must leave and take your planes and warships with you, and stop attacking Iraq".

The no-fly zones, within which Iraqi aircraft are forbidden from flying, were set up in 1991 after the Gulf War, to protect Shia Muslims in the south and Kurds in the north from attack by Iraqi Government forces.

Israeli tanks prepare for operation in West Bank

Israeli tanks have moved towards Palestinian-controlled areas in the West Bank again, taking up positions on the edge of villages near Bethlehem.

Tanks are poised on the outskirts of Beit Jalla and Beit Sahour, but have not yet entered the territory under Palestinian control.

Israeli state television said, "a military operation involving a large number of soldiers is under way", although an army spokesman denied the troop movements were unusual.

The show of force was in response to recent suicide bombings and shooting incidents, Israel claimed. Gunmen in Beit Jalla fired on the nearby Jewish settlement of Gilo in a disputed part of Jerusalem on Tuesday morning.

The latest moves came as the United States criticised Israel's earlier raid on the Palestinian-controlled West Bank town of Jenin as "provocative".

The Palestinian Authority condemned the attack as a "declaration of war".

It was Israel's deepest incursion in the West Bank since the Palestinian uprising started 10 months ago.

The United States urged both sides to restore calm following the Israeli tank thrust,

which saw police buildings demolished and the governor's house surrounded.

"As we have said before, Israeli incursions into Palestinian territory are provocative and undermine efforts to create an atmosphere of calm," said US National Security Council spokesman Sean McCormack.

"We urge both sides to take immediate steps to restore an atmosphere of restraint and

calm," Mr McCormack said.

The Israeli army said the Jenin raid was to warn Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to rein in militants engaged in an uprising against Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Gaza.

The Palestinian Authority appealed to the United Nations for international protection, and the Palestinian militant group, Hamas, said Israel would pay for the attack.



Palestinian policemen search the remains of the destroyed police headquarters in the West Bank town of Jenin, August 14, 2001.

Egypt gay trial resumes

The trial has resumed in a state security court in Egypt yesterday of 52 men arrested at a gay disco on a luxury yacht on the Nile.

The two main defendants are accused of exploiting religion to spread extremist ideas.

The others face charges of debauchery - which is usually used against prostitutes.

They all denied the charges.

BBC Cairo correspondent said that Egyptian law does not specifically penalise homosexuality, even though it is a major social and cultural taboo.

She said that Egypt's gay community - which until recently has been tolerated - has been shocked by the case.

Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone hold talks

The foreign ministers of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone have held a groundbreaking meeting in the Liberian capital, Monrovia, to discuss a possible summit between their presidents aimed at ending continuing conflict on their common borders.

During a courtesy meeting, which the foreign ministers had with the Liberian president, Charles Taylor, he pledged full cooperation in the search for

peace.

In the past, Liberia and Guinea have accused each other of backing rebel groups and cross-border attacks.

Liberia denies supporting rebels in Sierra Leone.

The Sierra Leone foreign minister, Ramadan Dumbuya, said it was very significant that the Monrovia discussions were happening at all.

TRUST INTERNATIONAL

World Report



Indonesia's President Megawati Sukarnoputri, wearing a scout's uniform (right), walks with National Education Minister, Abdul Malik Fajar, during a ceremony marking the 40th anniversary of the National Scouts Association in Cibubur, West Java, Indonesia.

Megawati appoints new Attorney-General

In a keenly awaited appointment, the Indonesian president, Megawati Sukarnoputri, has named Muhammad Abdurrahman to the politically sensitive post of Attorney-General.

Correspondents said Mr Abdurrahman is a low profile official, who had been leading the Indonesian government's sluggish

efforts to prosecute those responsible for the bloodshed in East Timor two years ago.

The correspondents said his appointment is likely to raise further doubts about Mrs Megawati's seriousness in addressing accusations of abuses by the Indonesian military and associated militia groups in East Timor and elsewhere.

French army veteran faces murder charge

A judge in France has sent for trial a former soldier suspected of being a serial killer in the 1980s.

The man, Pierre Chanal, is suspected of having killed eight young men near three

military garrisons in the northeastern Marne region.

But the judge ruled there was only enough evidence to try him on three of the killings.

Chanal, who denied the murder allegations, was

US, Britain welcome Musharraf's election plans

The US and Britain have welcomed the announcement by the Pakistani military ruler, General Pervez Musharraf, of a timetable for general elections next year.

But the US said the sanctions it imposed after General Musharraf seized power in a 1999 coup would remain in place, until an elected government took office.

General Musharraf, who made himself president in June, announced in a televised speech on Tuesday that provincial and federal elections would be held starting on 1st October, 2002.

The Pakistani leader said the election would cap a

democratisation process during which, according to his plan, federal and local institutions would be rebuilt.

BBC correspondent in Islamabad said that it is not yet clear what role General Musharraf will play in the new democracy, but the planned constitutional amendments might allow him and the army a wider role.

The Pakistani leader said he planned to reform the election commission and prepare accurate election rolls.

He also promised to introduce constitutional changes that would create checks and balances in the election system.

General Musharraf said the setting up of local institutions would change the fabric of Pakistani society because it would include previously disenfranchised groups, such as women, peasant farmers and the poor.

"We are taking the government to the people," he said.

General Musharraf did not mention in his speech whether national political parties would be able to participate in the general election, though he had previously said they would.

The parties were barred from taking part in the recent local elections.

The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) of the exiled former Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto, responded cautiously to General Musharraf's announcement, saying it would "keenly watch and monitor progress in the matter".

The PPP expressed concern about General Musharraf's plan

to amend the constitution by decree.

"The PPP believes that any attempt to amend the constitution in a manner other than as laid down in the constitution itself would endanger the federation (of Pakistan) and must be avoided," it said.

And the president of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League, Javed Hashmi, said the pre-election preparations were too long.

"We have no trust in Musharraf," he said, adding that the president "remained silent

about lifting the ban on political rallies and public meetings".

"The elections timetable should be followed by lifting the ban on all such activities."

The Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy, a union of parties demanding earlier elections, said it would meet on Thursday to discuss an appropriate response.

Imran Khan, leader of the Justice Party, told the BBC there was "great optimism" now that a timetable had been set out.

The election date chosen by General Musharraf is the latest allowed by Pakistan's Supreme Court.

There is only one China - Chinese embassy

Some countries believed to have been instigated by Taiwan have on August 8 written a letter to the UN Secretary-General asking for a review of Taiwan's participation in the UN.

According to a press bulleting from the Chinese embassy in Abuja, this action is viewed as an attempt to create two "Chinas."

The statement also described it as a "blatant violation of the purpose and principles of the UN charter and a gross interference with China's internal affairs."

"There is only one China in the world. Taiwan is an inseparable part of Chinese territory and the People's Republic of China is the sole representative of the entire Chinese people," it said.

"The quest of Taiwan is purely China's internal affairs," it added.

US jails Puerto Rican mayor

A United States magistrate has sentenced the mayor of the Puerto Rican island of Vieques to four months in prison for trespassing on restricted land during protests against the US Navy's presence on the island.

The magistrate, Jesus Castellanos, told Mayor Damaso Serrano that he should set an example to his constituents and should not break the law.

Correspondents said the sentence is one of the stiffest to have been handed down to any of the protesters who broke into the US Navy's bombing range on Vieques during a civil disobedience campaign earlier this year.

The US Navy, which has used the island for bombing practice for more than six decades, says it is vital to military training.

Mr Serrano said before being sentenced that he was standing trial "because of the

right of my people to be free".

There was angry reaction on the island: "It's a clear act of abuse," Resident Commissioner Anibal Acevedo Vila, Puerto Rico's sole Congressional representative, said of the sentence.

"I can't see how a federal judge can sentence a person to four months for protecting the rights of his people."

The accidental killing of a civilian guard by a stray bomb in 1999 sparked widespread protests by local residents.

Anti-US protesters also said the navy bombing exercises damage Vieques residents' health and the environment.

A referendum on the navy's use of Vieques is scheduled for November 6.

But detractors said it is "academic" because 68% of Vieques residents voted for an immediate end to navy training in a referendum organised by Puerto Rico's Government on July 29.



Women gather under the shade of a tree in the southern Turkish village of Sirt, where they have banished their husbands from the bedroom until they fix the village's water

ODD WORLD

Protesting women banish husbands

A group of women in southern Turkey have banished their husbands from the bedroom in a protest against a lack of running water in their village, a local official told Reuters on Tuesday.

A few dozen women have boycotted their husbands for about a month in an effort to force their

husbands to build a drinking-water system in the village of Sirt, near the Mediterranean resort of Antalya, local governor Mehmet Carpraz said.

"These ladies are sending a message," Carpraz said. "They are not allowing their husbands into the bedroom because they are tired of carrying water to

their homes from the well."

Sirt's husbands have appealed to authorities to provide pipes and other material, saying they will donate their labour to expedite the system's construction, Carpraz said.

"The men came to us and said, 'Please help us, please understand our situation,'" he said.

Global balloonist running out of puff

American balloonist, Steve Fossett was taking stock yesterday as lighter-than-expected winds slowed his craft to a crawl, indicating that oxygen supplies crucial to the success of his round-the-world bid would not last the trip.

Fossett has yet to cross into South America and tackle the Andes Mountains on the 10th day of his latest

bid to become the first person to circle the globe solo in a hot-air balloon.

"The immediate challenge in crossing the Andes is getting there," said meteorologist, Bob Rice at Mission Control at Wasington University in St. Louis, Missouri.

"We've been drifting along for what seems like forever. But we'll get there. Flying a balloon over large

mountains is not a trival matter," he said.

The Chicago millionaire took off on August 4 from Northam on Australia's west coast in hopes of returning there to claim his latest ballooning title in 14 to 16 days.

Fossett, 57, is curently creeping along at just 36km per hour, about 7.7 km above the pacific.

BUSINESS DAY

First Bank pensioners kick against tax deductions

From Bose Musari, in Lagos

The First Bank of Nigeria Plc Pensioners Association has appealed to the Federal Government to help convince the management of the bank to stop deductions of tax from their monthly allowances.

In a letter jointly signed by Mr. A. A. Balepo, President of the association and Mr. A. O. Taylor the General Secretary, the move against the deductions from their monthly stipends is in accordance with the Federal Government of Nigeria Policy on Pensions.

The association also urged the government to help actualise the refund of its members' contributions to the Federal Government of Nigeria Housing Fund Scheme, alongside the taxes already collected from the members.

Amongst the issues the association wishes to discuss with the First Bank management is actualising the granting of a free medical treatment to their pensioners and their spouses in conformity with that which the management of Union Bank of Nigeria Plc grant its pensioners.

According to the release, the association had on four occasions written to the management of the bank on the issue and also carried out a peaceful demonstration to register their grievances with the FBN management on NTA Channel 10, but to no avail as the bank management turned a deaf ear.

The letters carried stamps of First Bank certifying that they were received. The letters are dated March 12, January 8, June 18 and June 25.

The letters carry a threat to seek legal redress of the matter in respect to a press release from the bank's public relations manager on June 19, 2001 if its is not retracted.

According to the letter, the press release portrayed the First Bank of Nigeria Plc Pensioners as liars and irresponsible individuals before the public.



Bernard Longe, FBN MD

About 1,000 Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) workers retrenched by the Abacha administration have appealed to President Olusegun Obasanjo to order their reinstatement.

Addressing a press conference in Lagos, Tuesday, Mr. Supo Adedeji,

Sacked CBN workers appeal to FG

From Samson Ojo, in Lagos

Head of State, General Sani Abacha.

Mr. Adedeji disclosed that no reason was given for their retrenchment. Said he:

the co-ordinator of the group explained that they were unlawfully retrenched between July 1996 and November 1998 to satisfy the political whims and caprices of the late military

Ex-bank chief condemns revenue sharing formula

Dr. Chichi Ashwe, a former Managing Director of Continental Merchant Bank, has said that the current revenue sharing formula in the country has weakened the link between revenue generation and the provision of services, especially at the state and local government levels.

Delivering a paper on Tuesday in Abuja at the start of a two-day national seminar on "new strategies for revenue mobilisation at state and local government levels," he said that "the outcome is excessive graft and outright looting in the conduct of government affairs."

Ashwe, who is now an Abuja-based consultant, said that there was also a sceptical and lacklustre approach to government business, making the task of mobilising revenue an uphill one.

Reviewing government revenues in Nigeria since 1995, he observed that states and local governments were heavily dependent on "unstable and unreliable transfers from the federal government."

The resultant "unpredictable windfalls," he said, had displaced the traditional non-oil sources of revenue and broken the chain between production, taxation, responsibility and

accountability. On effective use of various taxation methods to rake in more revenue for the third tier of government, Ashwe said that most local governments lacked the resources to employ, train and retain the services of qualified valuers, accountants, tax assessors and other professionals to implement, monitor and enforce compliance with the tax code.

He also said that states and local governments could improve on the revenues from the federation account by enhancing their independent revenue sources and borrowing to finance their expenditure.

Ashwe said that the existing structures for operating revenue sharing could be built on and expanded to cover cooperation and co-

ordination in tax-sharing arrangements, to open-up opportunities and avenues for enhancing revenue mobilisation for states and local governments.

"Common concerns in the areas of loans and debt management can also be addressed," he said.



Hamman Tukur, Revenue Commission Chairman

Edo govt disburses micro-credit loans to fire victims

From Shehu Abubakar, in Benin

businesses.

Governor Lucky Igbinedion of Edo State has directed the state Ministry of Finance in collaboration with the state Micro-Credit Loan Scheme to disburse loans to victims of Oliha Market fire disaster in Benin City to enable them set up new businesses.

Governor Igbinedion made this remark at the commissioning of the reconstructed Oliha market stalls built at the cost of N8.6 million by Oredo Local Government Council about two months after the fire incident that gulped most parts of the market.

The Governor who was highly impressed by the prompt response to the plight of the victims by the local government council, assured that the loan which only attracts 10 percent interest will be promptly disbursed to the market women.

Earlier in his welcome address at the commissioning ceremony, the Hon. Chairman of Oredo Local Government, Dr. Mike Nosa Ehima assured that the reconstructed market stalls would be re-allocated to their original owners.

The local government council has also constructed a block of four classrooms at George Idah Primary School at the sum of N2.8 million and a skill acquisition centre constructed at the sum of N5.6 million while the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is expected to provide equipment for the skill centre through a counterpart funding by the state government.

Reforms will transform economy - Ayagi

The on going economic changes as enshrined in the privatisation programme will ultimately transform Nigeria's economy for the better.

Dr. Ibrahim Ayagi, Chairman of the Nigeria Economic Intelligence Agency (NEIA), who made this declaration at the 39th Annual National Management Conference of Nigerian Institute of Management (NIM) held Tuesday at Eko le Meridian Hotel, Lagos, stated that resisting these changes would be inimical to the economic interests of the nation.

Ayagi took a cursory view of the nation's economic development and stated equivocation that change is the only way out of the country's economic malaise.

He made the delcation in a paper he presented entitled "Financial Imperatives for

From Bright Ewulu, in Lagos

Implementation of Policies and Plans." In his remarks, the President of the conference of Nigerian Institute of Management (NIM), Chief (Dr.) M.O. Akindele, stated that the theme of the conference was crucial given the historical failure of the nation at policy implementation.

According to him, "with a historical average achievement of a mere 35 percent of plans, coupled often with budget deficits, certainly there is cause to worry about the head and the heart of the Nigeria economy."

He wondered why national development plans which had been successful in most parts of the world failed in Nigeria, saying it was the need to sift the real problem hindering Nigerian's progress that made this year's conference epochal.

"We were neither charged with any offence nor were we asked to defend ourselves."

The workers called on President Obasanjo to set-up a committee to review their cases alongside all other workers found to have been victimised and are still capable, to be re-absorbed into service.

The workers under the aegis of 'CBN Victimised Workers Group' disclosed that despite the condemnation of their

retrenchment by Justice Wilson Egbo of the Federal High Court Lagos, the CBN Governor, Chief Joseph Sanusi, has refused to re-absorb them despite a court order to that effect.

According to the group co-ordinator, Justice Egbo had in May 22, 2000, while delivering judgement on a suit filed by the group against the CBN described the retirement as "unlawful, and a rebellion against the government."

DNMeyer announces N628m turnover

The Chairman of DN Meyer Plc, a subsidiary of Dunlop Nigeria Plc, Mr. Jafet Dayo Lawuyi has announced a turnover of N628.1 million in the year 2000. Mr. Lawuyi also disclosed N57.8 million as profit before taxation, which he said is better than 1999 performance by 38 percent.

According to him, the company also recorded a financing income of N8.3 million which resulted from the short-term investment of the surplus cash generated during the year under review. He also recommended a dividend of 40 kobo on every 50 kobo share which he said is an improvement on the 30 kobo dividend paid the previous year while the shareholders immediately approved it.

Recounting other achievements of the company, Mr. Lawuyi said the company has continued to satisfy the requirements for the 150 9002 certification, and also recorded satisfactory results during the annual NIS certification on the quality of products.

He also recounted that

Customs generates N1.18b in Lagos Airport

The Murtala Mohammed International Airport in Lagos command of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) in Ikeja has generated N1.184 billion in July, against the N506.2 million realised in June, the area comptroller, Mr. Nahum Angyu, has said.

Angyu told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) shortly after a facility tour of the command, that more than N664 million of the total amount was collected as import duty at the cargo section of the airport.

He said that N38.9 million was generated as import duty at the International wing of the airport in the same month, noting that the command was expected to collect an average of N5 million monthly, in consonance with the target given.

According to him, "we have repositioned the command to meet and even surpass our revenue target for the entire year," adding that "the 100 percent examination is presently being carried out at the

airport to ensure strict compliance with government directives.

Angyu, however, exonerated the customs service from any fraudulent act at their duty posts, saying "I have officers and men of integrity and commitment and they are not involved in acts contrary to the dictates of the services."

NAN recalls that the command had collected a total of N2.966 billion between January and June, as against a revenue target of N4.9 billion for the year.



Ahmed Mustapha, Customs Boss

BUSINESS DAY

FG plans 'Export Houses' abroad

The Minister of Commerce, Engineer Mustafa Bello has disclosed government's plan to establish 'Export Houses' in strategic commercial cities abroad to ensure that made-in-Nigeria products penetrate foreign markets.

He made this known while delivering a keynote address at a seminar organised by the Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC) in Lagos.

While speaking on NEPC's activities and current export incentives in Nigeria, Engr. Bello further stated that the government had approved the establishment of Export Production Villages (EPVs) in all the states of the federation. He expressed gratitude to states that have indicated interest.

According to him, the EPVs are geared towards processing and harnessing the abundant agricultural resources and small-scale handcraft products of the various states for the export market.

Engr. Bello further revealed that the pilot schemes for this project will be established in conjunction with the United Nations Development Programme and the International Trade Centre

From Bose Musari, in Lagos

(ITC) in Geneva. They will be located in Kaduna, Kaduna State for ginger and Kwano Omuahia, Abia State for Cassava.

The Minister also disclosed that a high-powered trade mission will be departing Nigeria later this month for South Africa, Botswana, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Seychelles and expressed hopes that it will yield more result in enhancing the performance of Nigerian products in those markets.

The mission, according to him, is also aimed at using numerous promotional tools (exhibition, buyers/sellers meet) to improve trade between Nigeria and other countries, to develop, expand and diversify Nigerian non-oil export with a view to increasing the country's foreign exchange earnings among others.

The Federal Government is also in the process of establishing Nigeria Trade Office in the People's Republic of China to reciprocate the agreement between the two countries (Nigeria and China) to establish trade offices in each other's commercial capital the minister also revealed.

According to him, the office will be located in Shanghai, the industrial nerve centre of China and expressed hopes that it will help Nigerian exporters to effectively penetrate the Chinese market which is the largest market in the world.



Mustapha Bello, Commerce Minister

NPA Privatisation: Ports union threaten national body

Senior Staff Association of the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) is set to pull out of its national body.

The final step to hasten the pullout was put in place at a meeting held by the Senior Staff President, Comrade Pire Maidambe with his officers.

Informed sources told *Business Day* that the "non-chalant attitude of the national body towards privatisation of NPA necessitated the moves."

According to a source, "throughout our protest with the government and corporate bodies, we are yet to receive any assistance from our national body; what is the extent of belonging to a particular body when it can not help you during the trial times?"

According to the source, therefore, "the best thing is

From Tokunbo Oloke, in Lagos

to be on our own: We have secured a new accommodation and we are going to register with the Corporate Affairs Commission."

On the legal aspect, the source hinted that they have already contacted their lawyers and all litigational grounds have been perfected.

Efforts to get the President Maidambe proved abortive as he was said to have travelled to Abuja.

Indigenous oil firms may enjoy FG's patronage

The Federal Government is making fresh moves to enhance participation of local operators in oil and gas production in the country.

To this end, a committee is to be set up before the end of October this year to prepare modalities towards achieving the government's target in this direction.

The committee, according to a *Business Day* source, will draw its membership from the ministry of petroleum resources, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), the Presidency and Society of

From Rakiya A. Muhammad, in Lagos

Petroleum Engineers (SPE), Nigerian Association of Petroleum Explorationists (NAPE) and Federal Ministry of Finance.

The report of the committee is expected to go to the two committees of the Senate and House of Representatives on Petroleum Matters for further deliberations.

The report, *Business Day* learnt, will eventually be included in the indigenous participation draft bill being worked-out at the National Assembly.

The Department of

Petroleum Resources (DPR) will also release guidelines on how to effectively involve the local operators in the sector.

The guidelines and legislative framework would predicate the release of the marginal fields.

Meanwhile, the Chairman, House Committee on Petroleum, Hon. West-Idahosa had, while giving the support of the House on the issue last week in Abuja, promised that the members will expedite action on the local content/indigenous participation bill when presented at the floor of the House.

ETB elevates 204 staff, raises pay

Equatorial Trust Bank Limited (ETB) has promoted a total number of 204 staff representing 51 percent of its work force.

Apart from this, the bank also announced a double package of incentives for the entire workforce.

ETB's Manager, Corporate Affairs, Onyekachi Nwosu who disclosed this in a statement stated that "a summary of the promotion exercise shows that one staff was promoted to the position of Ag. Assistant General Manager (AGM); fifteen (15) staff were elevated to Senior Managers, five were also moved to the same position but on acting capacity."

According to him, "these promotions are in addition to a pay rise that has shot the bank to the top bracket of the industry."

He stressed that the bank's belief is that this heavy investment in the workforce will impact more positively on its customer service quality and enable it maintain its credible position

From Bright Ewulu, in Lagos

in this regards in the industry.

Nwosu was emphatic that ETB has over the years built and sustained its reputation as a profitable and efficient bank, saying that this was justified recently by its rating by Augusto & Co., leading rating agency in Nigeria.

"Our service delivery standards are built around our workforce. And do not forget that we have done well over the years," an official of the bank said last week.

Equatorial Trust Bank's new product in the market 'Equiserve' has attracted a lot of customers for the bank particularly in view of the fact that it enhances ease of transaction for its customers. Equiserve had won numerous awards for the bank.

Equatorial Trust Bank is also believed to be one of the new generation banks to render efficient and quality services, which explains why many customers have gradually attracted to it.

Nigerian hotels too costly - Consultants

A tourism practitioner and media consultant, Mr. Tope Awe, has decried the exorbitant cost of accommodation and other services in Nigerian hotels.

Awe, who described the development as "unfortunate," told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) Tuesday in Lagos that cheap and affordable tourist or budget hotels were available in some African countries for ordinary tourists, but the country lacked such inexpensive hotels.

He explained that budget hotels are one-star hotels in such countries as South Africa and other tourist-friendly countries and that they are usually well maintained and neat.

Awe said that Nigeria's version of budget hotels have no class, but, instead, they are the back street dirty

hotels. He stressed the need for hotel operators to know that ordinary tourists have a limited budget and as such want cheap accommodation.

Awe said that most of the average hotels in Nigeria are not for the average tourist because of the high cost of their services.

According to him, a four star hotel goes for about 80 dollars per night, while a similar hotel charges about 230 dollars.

Awe said that the poor exchange rate of the naira would also affect operations of hotels in the country by making rates higher.

However, the Public Relations Officer of the Federal Palace Hotel, Hajia Bilkis Guobadia, said that the exchange rate did not affect charges in the hotel.

Guobadia said that instead, the hotel based its

charges on the forces of demand and supply in the hotel industry. She said the hotel's aim was to make profit and break-even since it was operating in a service industry.

According to her, the hotel has lot of Nigerian customers, while the number of foreign tourists coming these days are low.



Bromilow Jack, Culture & Tourism Minister

Tariff hike may increase smuggling - Olatunde

Failure to reduce the recent increase in valuation tariff by the Nigeria Customs Service Tincan Port command will further aggravate the level of smuggling and other vices in the country, the chairman of the Association of Nigerian Licensed Customs Agents, (ANLCA) Prince Olubanjo Olatunde has said.

As a result of the increase in tariff which he described as an illogical, he said the increment has been giving the clearing agents sleepless nights.

According to him, an Audi-80, that used to clear at the cost of N30,000 is now N80,000. Mercedes Benz 280 model (Shagari style) was cleared at N120,000 before but now N270,000, while V-Boot was N75,000 before but now N300,000.

From Tokunbo Oloke, in Lagos

Olatunde who was speaking during a protest by the ANLCA Tincan port chapter, urged the service to revert to its old charges because this could lead to diversion of cargo to neighbouring ports.

"If the situation is checked, it would lead to increase in smuggling, other societal crimes," he added.

The chairman therefore appealed to the NCS boss to expedite action on the matter saying that ANLCA was ready to support government at anytime.

The Area Comptroller of Tincan Port command, Bamidele Dokun could be reached as at the time of filing this report, as he said to be attending a meeting.



The chairman of Econet Wireless Limited, Oba Otundeko (middle), displaying a handset during the kick-off of GSM operations by the company recently in Abuja. Otundeko is flanked by the Managing Director of Econet Mr. Zachary Wazara (left) and the company's General Manager, Regulatory and Government Affairs, Mr. Chioke Ogugua (right). Pix: Felix Omghinde.

Life in our mos



Hon Gbenga Onigbogi member, House of Representative Illesha East and West, Osun State.



Mrs Esther Charles Ayede, General Manager, Horizon Mortgage Finance Ltd, Abuja.



Engineer Ahmed Abba Gana, FCT Minister

Ever since Abuja became the Federal Capital City, monumental changes have been taking place with attendant consequences in terms of expenses that have had adverse effect on the residents especially the less-privileged. From the onset, it should be made clear that Abuja unlike other cities in Nigeria, especially Lagos, does not appear to be a city where the poor are comfortable, to say the least. It will not be an exaggeration to say that Abuja is a place for the rich. Over the years, Lagos has not only been the city of excellence as the nation's federal capital, but has undoubtedly become the costliest city in the whole land. Today, however Abuja has taken over. For the low-income earner, living in Abuja today is very expensive and daily life here is simply difficult.

Daily Trust went round the city seeking the views of residents on how they are able to manage in such an environment where things are not as easy as one would have wanted.

Miss Ifeoma of Princess World has this to say: "Things in Lagos are cheaper than here in Abuja. In Lagos you get food everywhere and at a cheaper price. But I am made to understand

By Danlami Baban Takko

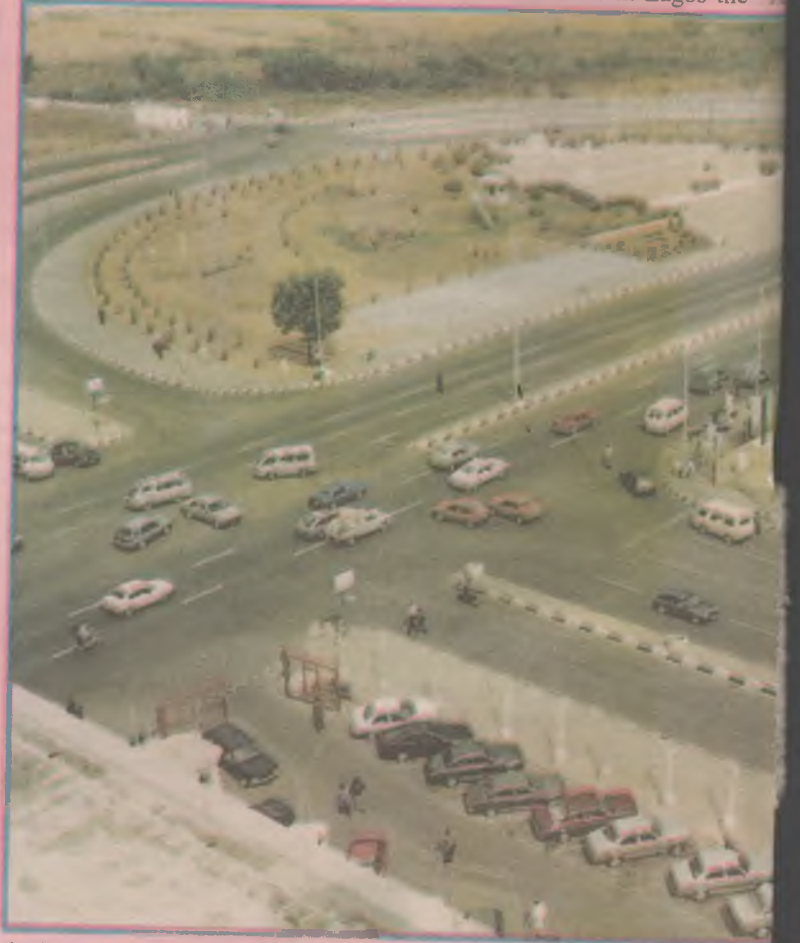
that part of the reasons why things are costly here in Abuja is because of the accommodation problem. The rent is so high and you can imagine how one single room costs as much as N100, 000.00 or N150, 000.00 while in Lagos one can get a single room at the cost of say N50, 000.00 to N40, 000.00. Look at the services we offer here, some people are complaining that we charge high prices but if you consider the amount we pay for rent it is then that you will understand. You see in Lagos things are so organised that the common man can afford to buy whatever food he wants and the rich can also buy to their own taste. There you get a plate for N40.00 but here in Abuja it is N100.00. Even business here in Abuja is not as high as people are expecting and this also is due to the high cost of rent. The accommodation problem is affecting every other thing in Abuja. But the way I see it, hotel business is the only profitable business in Abuja and the hotels are making big business because of conferences, seminars and meetings that take place almost on a daily basis.

However, one good thing

about Abuja is in the area of Transportation. Transport is available and cheap, for example you can take a "drop" at the rate of N100 to N150 unlike Lagos where a drop costs as much as N300 to N 5 0 0 . 0 0 .

Abdulazeez Karim is a driver by profession and he has been in Abuja for the past 10 years. He has this to say on the nation's capital city: "As we enter this 2001, things have been going up and down. Before 2001, prices have not been like that but as at now everything is costly. For instance, take the case of garri, which in the past cost only N40 per mudu. Before, one was able to feed well with N30 to N35 but now it is either N100 or more

"Abuja is a metropolitan city and by and large people here do not produce agricultural products, and they have to bring such from the neighbouring states of Nasarawa, Benue, Kogi and so on. So, the high cost of foodstuff experienced in Abuja is a direct result of the high cost of transportation of such foodstuff to say Wuse Market. The issue of accommodation in Abuja is the natural law of demand and supply. When we talk of demand it is very high because people are moving, people are relocating from all over the federation to the new capital city, which is Abuja. And when you talk of supply it is limited because the cost of construction is very high and the land is not just available. If you compare the buildings and property and the people scrambling to get them, you find that the demand is high, while the supply is low. To rent a duplex in Abuja costs as much as N1.5m or more than that, while in Lagos the



Aerial view of the Central Area of Abuja City

than N200 per plate. In the past I used to spend N150 and N200.00 daily on food but now I have to spend about N400 to N500.00 daily. As a commercial driver, the cost of living in Abuja has drastically affected my business since something that I used to buy at N3, 000.00 is now N5, 000.00. On accommodation if someone doesn't have money he cannot live in Abuja, as it is a place for the big men. As for me, the cost for a room is too high and I can't pay for it, so I sleep inside the car or bus every night."

Honourable Gbenga Onigbogi, a member of the Federal House of Representatives representing Illesha East and West in Osun State says of Abuja:

amount is less. Here in Abuja I don't think there is any problem once you are used to it and it makes no difference whether one is in Lagos or Abuja as long as one has a stable source of income. But there are certain people; the unemployed and those who have no stable source of income and these are the people who I can say are in a serious dilemma. Those people living below the poverty line here in Abuja are experiencing what is happening everywhere not only in Abuja. You know unemploy-

In places like this one does not... There is a lot of money here especially the rich can be seen... one gets up to N200.00 or more the month, if you calculate... generous benefactors you will take care of you even without meagre.



The famous Aso Rock on the back ground of the car park, National Assembly

Feature

Most expensive city

know that there is money there but it seems the money is only for some very few people who are only after themselves. Some times I regret ever coming to as we are living in a boy's quarter given to us by a good Samaritan. Initially we were paying for rent when things were not as expensive as they are today in Abuja. We were

ent is one of the serious problems facing the country today. Nevertheless, Abuja has so many positive things and principal among these is security Abuja is the place where you can sleep and close your two eyes and wake up in the morning relaxed, but you cannot compare this with Lagos where armed bandits have virtually taken over.

Traffic wise, Abuja is very okay and at this stage we wish to implore the municipal council to speed up the development of phase two of the city so that with such expansion, traffic will not be congested. Apart from that, other social infrastructure are in good shape as we can see from NEPA, which is performing creditably well. For example, we have been operating in our building for the past nine years and I can assure you that we never had any cause to buy a generator unlike in Lagos where we have stand-by generators. The roads in Abuja are of first class."

from the northern part were cheap and you could get it at N800 or N1, 200.00 but now a goat is about N2, 500.00. The factors partly responsible for such disparities between then and now is the general inflation in the economy, increase in the price of fuel and the influx of people into Abuja which has corresponding effect on the demand factor. Regrettably most of the people living in Abuja are workers and they have to depend on farmers who live on the outskirts, while some go as far as Bauchi, Jos and Katsina to bring beans and grains. They have to transport such things and because of the transport fare the cost of foodstuff is automatically affected. The



NICON Hilton Hotel, Abuja



that at present there are eighty thousand applicants on the line waiting to be allocated parcels of land for them to build houses. It is on record however that the FCDA does not sometimes treat such dispatches with the utmost urgency it deserves. They have already opened up districts like Asokoro, Maitama, Garki II and I, Wuse I and II and they are just opening up Katampe extension but the infrastructure are not there. So long as government doesn't open-up phase two of Abuja, people would continue to expand into such areas. As at now Abuja is congested. Look at the roads, we are now suffering hold-ups at every junction, this was not meant to be so. Abuja was not planned like that at all. Accommodation will continue to be high until government relaxes its conditions for land allocation. On transplant however, compared to Lagos, it is cheaper in Abuja. But in discussing on transportation one has to link up with the increase in fuel prices and the demand. There is a lot of pressure on transportation system because most of the people live in the outskirts of the city from Karmo village and other satellite towns. But I still think transport in Abuja is relatively cheap."

Baba Maigoro, a 63 year old security guard describes life in Abuja as 'mixed blessings'. He noted that the expensive nature of the city is comparable with any other place in the country. As a retired soldier, Baba said he

had lived in places like Enugu, Lagos, Kaduna and Jos but nowhere has he encountered difficulties in the cost of food, clothing and shelter in Abuja. Yet, he feels happy and is comfortable as he puts it: "In places like this one does not live on salaries alone. There is a lot of money here in Abuja and people especially the rich can be so generous at times and one gets up to N200.00 or more a day. At the end of the month, if you calculate what you get from such generous benefactors you will find that it is enough to take care of you even without your salary which is so meagre."

But for Gabriel, a 25-year-old Taxi driver the story is not sweet to tell. He has been in Abuja now for the past five years but took to driving about three years ago after going from one job to another in order to keep body and soul together. He said: "Look now I have no place to sleep by night." Sometimes I sleep inside the vehicle while at times I sleep at a friend's house. The money I get at the end of the day after balancing my boss is just enough to keep me going. Look, I don't have enough clothes. I am living from hand to mouth. Yet back home people will think just because I live in Abuja I must have money and that is why they put high hopes on me and look forward to seeing me any day. I will visit them. But when I go, I will have nothing to give them. I don't blame them because if you come to Abuja you will

Abuja."

Madam Ngozi, a food seller thanked the Almighty for all that has happened to her for the past seven years she has been in Abuja. She said she came with her husband who is a furniture maker way back at 1994 and since then they have been living happily and have no cause to complain. She said: "My friend, everything depends on the Almighty and the way you take things. As for my husband and me it is life as usual whether in Abuja or any other place. Here we don't pay for rent

then living in a single room in Nyanya paying the sum of N500.00 a month. But today you can't get a single room at that rate. As for food, I thank God that I usually cook enough to sell and reserve some for my husband and five children. As for my transport in Abuja, I don't go anywhere it is from home here in Wuse to the market, which is just a trek. my children also trek to school. Luckily for us food is in high demand in Abuja, and we sell very well. After all, we don't have high ambition."

Mrs. Esther Charles Ayede, General manager Horizon Holdings Abuja observes that there has been a considerable increase in the cost of food unlike the years ago when things were less costly, she continues: "...I remember well that you can take N500.00 and buy yams that can serve a family of five a week or more. Presently you will buy yams that might not last three meals for a family of five. Look at chickens, chickens brought by the Gwaris used to be cheap then. Even goats brought

common saying is government means big business in developing economies, as a result of the young graduates who flock to Abuja to look for work. Not only private businessmen also come to Abuja to look for contracts because this is the seat of government. You can even see unskilled people coming because there are lots of constructions going on. The basic factor is that there is a great increase in the population of this city. Accommodation in Abuja has been expensive for long and it will continue to be expensive for the next 10 years at least. The laws surrounding land allocation in Abuja are such that they are quite restrictive and are limiting. I read in the newspaper sometimes ago that the minister of FCT said

not live on salaries alone. In Abuja and people are generous at times and more a day. At the end of the day what you get from such generous benefactors you will find that it is enough to take care of you even without your salary which is so meagre."



Miss Ifeoma, Princess World, Abuja



Abdulazeez Karim

Watch

Every Saturday on The NTA Network Time: 10.00-10.30p.m.



...it could change your life forever.

To be a part of the Game Show recording, please call Ayoami, Biloa, Yetunde & Franklin on 01-7748579, 4702445, 5455515



EDUCATION TAX FUND

RE: NIGER-DELTA UNIVERSITY

The attention of the Education Tax fund has been drawn to a news story in *Vanguard* newspaper of Friday, August 3, 2001 titled "BAYELSA ASKS ETF TO RELEASE N2 Billion for NIGER-DELTA VARSITY." The story was credited to the Bayelsa State Deputy Governor, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan.

The ETF wishes to place on record that it did not at any time promise the State such amount of money.

It is common knowledge that of all the States in the federation, Bayelsa is the only State that does not have any kind of tertiary institution – whether federal or state owned. Based on this fact the first ETF Board doubled the allocation to Bayelsa State in respect of both the primary and secondary sub-sectors.

However, when the current Board came on stream, it decided instead to assist Bayelsa State to establish a tertiary institution of its own. The Board approved a grant/allocation of N250 Million (AND NOT N2 Billion AS ALLEGED) for the take-off of the States first tertiary institution – the Niger-Delta University. Out of this amount N100 Million has already been disbursed in line with the Funds disbursement policy. The remaining amount will be made available at various stages of project execution. Thereafter, the Niger-Delta University will be treated like any other University in the Country and will be entitled to an annual allocation in accordance with the ETF enabling Law.

It should be noted that for the year 1999, each University was given N59 Million and N20 Million for the year 2000.

Below is a tabulation of ETF disbursements to educational institutions in Bayelsa State for the years 1999 and 2000.

ALLOCATION/DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS TO BAYLESA STATE SINCE INCEPTION TO DATE

<u>YEAR</u> <u>1999</u>	<u>ALLOCATION</u>	<u>DISBURSEMENT</u>
State Primary Education Board (SPEB) 8 No. LGA x N4.0M x 2	N64,000,000.00	100%
Ministry of Education Secondary School Education (SSE) 18,000,000 x 2 (Allocation for this year was doubled due to non existence of tertiary institution in the state)	N36,000,000.00	100%
Sub-total	N100,000,000.00	100%
<u>YEAR</u> <u>2000</u>		
State Primary Education Board (SPEB) 8 No. LGA x N1,443,410.85	N11,547,286.80	75% (N8,660,465.10)
Ministry of Education (MOE)	N20,405,479.45	75% (N15,304,109.50)
Niger-Delta University (NDU) (Special grant/contribution by the Board of Trustees for the establishment & take-off of Niger-Delta University)	N250,000,000.00	40% (N100,000,000.00)
Sub-total	N281,952,766.25	(223,964,574.60)
Total Allocation (1999 & 2000) =	N381,952,766.25	
Total Disbursement (1999 & 2000) =	N223,964,574.68	

Signed:
ETF Management

NEWS

UBE takes HIV/AIDS campaign to schools

From Terna Doki, in Makurdi

The campaign against the spread of HIV/AIDS in Nigeria has come to the door step of primary school pupils. This was the focus of a two-day National Workshop in Makurdi organised by the National Co-ordinator, Universal Basic Primary Education (UBE) Professor Gidado Tahir, with the assistance of the World Bank.

The workshop which had its theme as 'UBE Master Trainers workshop on HIV/AIDS Awareness Campaign' attracted four participants from each state of the federation and was designed to educate them on ways of enlightening primary school pupils on the deadly disease.

In a key-note address, Prof. Tahir explained that, the action was necessary because the National Policy on HIV/AIDS required an all-embracing approach in disseminating informations on the scourge to men, youth and children.

The National Co-ordinator, UBE, stated that "since we are at the centre of the children's affairs, we need to put our hands in this collaborative effort to evolve strategies that will stamp out the high risk of HIV/AIDS spread and its impact among primary school children," adding that the workshop would train state delegates on the necessary techniques and skills to enable them impart same on primary school children at the state level.

Prof. Tahir applauded the efforts of the World Bank in actualising the scheme which has enabled UBE put together HIV/AIDS posters, jingles on the electronic media as well as curriculum development

Governor Sani lifts ban on Emir

The restriction of movement enforced on the Emir of Talata-Mafara, Alhaji Bello Mohammed Barimo, by the Zamfara State Government has been lifted.

Governor, Ahmad Sani (Yariman Bakura and Sardaunan Zamfara) announced this yesterday while receiving a high powered delegation of elders from the area.

Alhaji Ahmed Sani thanked the elders for wading into the matter for the sake of continued peaceful co-existence in the state.

According to a press release signed by the State Director of Press Affairs, Bashir Sanda Gusau, the Governor also stated that the state government remained committed to the welfare of the traditional rulers and urged them to reciprocate the gesture by being committed to their job.

The leader of the delegation, Alhaji Abubakar Tunau Kayayen Sardauna, had earlier pleaded for leniency for the emir.

Alhaji Abubakar Tunau said the delegation was constituted to apologise on behalf of the emir, and

assured that the offence would never be repeated.

In his speech, the Talata-Mafara Local Government Chairman, Alhaji Lawal Jibril Jangebe, commended the government for reversing its decision.

He prayed Allah to guide the governor against all evils and give him the wisdom and courage to steer the state forward.

Among the delegations were Senator Idris Samaho, Alhaji Bala Tanko, (Ciroman Mafara), Dr. Abubakar Mohammed Dogo, Alhaji Salisu Mafara and the Chief Imam of Mafara, Alhaji Muhammadu Tukur.



Gov. Ahmed Sani

Kebbi youths honour Bamaiyi, Bagudu

The embattled former chief of army staff, retired General Ishaya Bamaiyi and fugitive Atiku Bagudu are among the 10 persons to receive the Distinguished Community Service award from Kebbi State Youth Council, the council chairman, Mallam Jamilu Mustapha has said.

Addressing a news conference on the council's preparation for the state's 10th anniversary celebration, Jamilu said Bamaiyi was given the award for building a hospital at his home, Senchi and handling over the hospital to the state government.

He said Bagudu, a henchman of the Sani Abacha regime was also being honoured for contributing financially to numerous community assisted projects in the state, especially, the youth organisation.

Jamilu gave the names of other recipients of the awards to include the former military governors of Rivers and Ekiti states, retired Col. Daudu Komo and retired Col. Inuwa Bawa

respectively and the area comptroller of customs, Alhaji Abubakar Gari Malam.

He said the family members of Bamaiyi and Bagudu were expected to collect the awards on their behalf.

Bamaiyi is being tried by a Lagos high court for the murders of Mrs. Kudirat Abiola and Guardian publisher Alex Ibru.

The chairman said the awards would be made during a Special Dinner Award Night in which Gov. Alero would also bag the council's "overall achievement award for the development of Kebbi State."

The Kebbi Youth Council, whose activities include training youths on leadership and organising sensitisation workshops and seminars, is being sponsored by the Kebbi government and USAID/OTI.

Kebbi TV goes off air

Television viewers in Kebbi no longer enjoy the facility as the only television station, Kebbi State Television, serving the area had been forced off the air due to a faulty transmitter.

According to the permanent secretary, state Ministry of Information, Alhaji Abdullahi Gebe, the sudden break down in transmission of the television was due to a damage to one of the power tubes at the transmitter.

He said, already, the government had placed order for the replacement of the faulty power tubes to ensure the immediate resumption of transmission.

He appealed to members of the public to exercise patience as the government was committed to ensuring all media establishments in the state were fully functional and giving the best to the people.

Gebe explained that most of the affected components of the Bulasa transmitting station of the television had outlived their life usefulness and had not been replaced."



Gov. Aliero

hence these problems now."

The News Agency of Nigeria reports that the television station went off the air more than two weeks ago. (NAN)

Shiroro community thumbs up Kure

The recent attack on Niger State Governor, Abdulkadir Kure by one Alhaji Awaisu Giwa Kuta, has been condemned by the Shiroro local government community.

The community led by Alhaji Abdullahi Bawa Kuta, emerged from a meeting in the wake of the administration's performance in the local government and gave it pass mark.

The community leader, in his assessment of Kure's administration, expressed his appreciation for the general transformation being undertaken in the state particularly for electrifying the local government and providing roads, water and clinics.

Listing the successes of Governor Kure's administration, Alhaji Bawa Kuta further condemned the government for providing fertiliser to the farmers in the current season, adding that farmers in the local government, had hired tractors and bought herbicides at subsidised rates, describing the gesture as a sign of good things to come.

While these achievements were not limited to Shiroro local government alone, he said that, the development in the area was a manifest of the situation generally in the

state.

Alhaji Bawa Kuta, therefore advised the detractors of the state government to join the administration in the development of the state rather than embark on pulling down the government.

The youth empowerment programme initiated by the governor's

wife and the sharia legal system also criticised by Giwa, he said, Mrs. Kure's response to youth's unemployment, pointing out that the community differs from the position of Alhaji Giwa on the introduction of the sharia legal system.

Sharia he said, had gone a long way in eliminating certain malpractices and urged the governor to strengthen it.

Niger CJ enjoins law officials to fear God

From Kashim Sule, in Minna

The Chief Judge of Niger State, Alhaji Jibril Ndajiwa has called on officials charged with dispensing justice to fear God while discharging their duties.

Apparently emotional over the sad condition in prisons, the chief judge made the call at the end of his decongesting tour at Minna prisons.

He reminded officials charged with upholding the law especially the police to be humane, "whatever role you play on earth you will definitely account for it hereafter."

Alhaji Ndajiwa who directed this warning specifically at the Minna police wondered why they were in the habit of hastily putting suspects behind bars, thus congesting the cells and the prisons.

He therefore condemned the police tactics of keeping suspects behind bars under the

pretext of 'investigation has not been completed; This, in his view, was a worn altcliffe which the police should do away with.

Alhaji Ndajiwo advised the police to use their experience to dispense with minor cases rather than delaying complainants by unwholesome tactics.

The judge who did not hide his emotion was also moved by the police practice of keeping teenagers in the same place with hardened criminals.

While cautioning the police to desists from such behaviour, he pointed out that teenagers were fast learners, and could easily pick-up the attitude of the criminals in the process.

He advised that teenagers be kept in remand homes but not in prisons or cells.

During the decongesting exercise, the chief judge freed 35 prisons detained without charges.

Otobo urges contractors to complete project by December

Chairman of the engineering team monitoring federal roads, Mr. Guy Otobo, has asked Moulds Nigeria Limited the firm handling the repair of the 51 km Tafawa-Dawaki road in Bauchi state, to complete work on the N1.07 billion project by December.

Inspecting the project at the weekend, Otobo noted that work on the road was supposed to be completed last January.

He said when last he inspected the project, the impression he got was that the project would be completed by last month, and asked the firm to deploy more men to the site to ensure that the contract was completed by December.

Otobo, however, expressed happiness that the 4 kilometre spur of the road to Bogoro, the headquarters of Bogoro local government, was being executed speedily and to specifications.

He said Moulds was one of the indigenous road construction companies executing high quality roads, and asked it to execute the Tafawa-Balewa-Dawaki project speedily, "to correct the notion that Nigerian firms are incapable of handling major roads contracts.

Otobo, who noticed that three bridges on the Bauchi-Tafawa-Balewa road were on the verge of collapse, asked the federal highways engineer in the state to prepare the bills of quantity for their repair and to send

them to Abuja for immediate action.

He said that unless immediate action was taken, the bridges would collapse and cut-off the people of Tafawa-Balewa and Bogoro local government areas from other parts of the country.

Earlier, an official of the firm had told the team that work on the Tafawa-Balewa-Dawaki project was disrupted several times by the recurring ethnic clashes in the area.

The official stated that there was a time almost all the workers fled the construction site and the company had to suspend work for several weeks.

But he gave the assurance that the company would do its best to complete work by December.

The team had earlier visited the 38 kilometre road linking Gamayin, near Hadejia, in Jigawa State, to Bauchi state, being constructed by Habibu Construction Company, at a cost of N365.6 million.



Tony Anenih

NIGER 2001**PDP****NORTH CENTRAL ZONE***Cordially Invites:*

1. Members of the Board of Trustees from North Central Zone.
2. Senator and House of Representative Members from the Zone
3. Ministers from the Zone
4. Speakers and Members of the House of Assemblies from the Zone
5. Chairmen and Members of Board of Parastatals, Federal and State from the Zone
6. Commissioners and Local Government Chairman from the Zone
7. Distinguish PDP Members and Sympathisers.

*To its***NORTH CENTRAL ZONAL RALLY – NIGER 2001**

Under the Chairmanship of:-
ENGR. BARNABAS GEMADE

*National Chairman PDP***Venue:-** Bako Kontagora Memorial Stadium, Minna**Date:-** Sat, 18th August, 2001**Time:-** 10:00a.m.Special Guest**CHIEF SOLOMON LAR**

Former National Chairman
 Representing Board of Trustees

SEN. ALH. IBRAHIM MANTU

Deputy Senate President

HON. ALH. ABUBAKAR BAWA BWARI

Chief Whip National House of Repr.

HON. SPEAKER BENUE STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Representing Speakers from North Central Zone

Special Guest of Honour**MR. GEORGE AKUME**

Benue State Governor

CHIEF JOSHUA DARIYE

Plateau State Governor

ALH. ABDULLAHI ADAMU

Nassarawa State Governor

ENGR. ABDULKHADIR A. KURE

Governor Niger State

Chief Host**ALH. ABUBAKAR MAGAJI**

National Vice Chairman PDP North Central Zone

Special Guests**ALL PDP SENATORS**

North Central Zone

ALL HON. MEMBERS

National House of Reprs.

North Central Zone

ALL HON. SPEAKERS

State House of Assemblies

R.S.V.P.**PUBLICITY COMMITTEE**

INSIDE POLITICS

Reps may resolve to shelve LG elections

As political activities in the grassroots heighten, against the backdrop of the forthcoming local government elections in the country, the Federal House of Representatives has said that it was making a far-reaching resolution that will grant the present local government councils a four-year tenure.

Deputy Leader of the All People's Party (APP) in the House, Chief (Dr.) Nya Eyoma Asuquo, said in Calabar recently that the resolution

From Bassey Ita, in Calabar

will be adopted so as to put an end to the rising waves in the campaign for the local government electioneering across the country.

Apparently commenting on the issue of tenure of local government council, Dr. Asuquo maintained that local government council like other tiers of government must have a life span not exceeding nor falling below that of other tiers, adding that the military had reflected that in the

constitution so that they can scuttle the democratic process with easy manoeuvre.

According to the APP leader, the House will, however, take the decision in order to rest the already raised hope of some people at the grassroots who have channelled their resources and energies into what may become a stillborn dream for them.

Commenting also on the decision of some states' Houses of Assembly to create additional local governments in their state, the lawmaker stated that the creation exercise will be a futile one as those local governments may be marred by lack of finance as "it is not the creation of local governments that is the problem but how to fund them," he said.

He conceded that since the constitution makes provision for 774 local government areas, it became imperative for states' Houses of Assembly to dialogue with the appropriate authorities at the national level so as to ensure uniformity.

Asuquo, who also reacted to the state of affairs on the Calabar Obongship

tussle that has recently raised dust of controversies, said: "It is satanic for political sentiments to be paraded in the selection of the Obong of Calabar."

Dr. Asuquo, who is a descendant of the Efic royal dynasty, however, described as mere rumour the news that the state government wanted to impose an Obong on the Efic dynasty even as he maintained that the attempt will be greatly resisted.

"A new Obong of Calabar from Central Calabar is impossible, western Calabar should have the turn now, in fact, western Calabar do not lack people who should be Obong, they even have people who are more than qualified, if qualification is it, so attempts to infringe on such rights of privileges will be resisted," he said.



Gemade

Rivers House of Assembly on war path with Michelin

From Wisdom-Uduak Patrick, in Port Harcourt

The Rivers State House of Assembly has concluded arrangement to issue a warrant of arrest on senior officials of Michelin Nigeria Ltd in Port Harcourt for refusing to appear before it.

The Chairman, House Committee on Human Rights, Hon. Monday Inaya, told *Daily Trust* yesterday that the company was needed in the House following a petition on alleged abuse of human rights forwarded to the House against the company.

He stated further that the petition emanated from a cross section of the company's workforce, adding that it was very necessary that Michelin appear before the House and tell her own side of the story.

Inaya said that the House resolved to order the arrest of some principal staff of the organisation following over three months of a waiting game which according to him was now over.

Workers of Michelin Nigeria Ltd in Port Harcourt had written a petition to the state House of Assembly alleging, among other things, inhuman condition they were being made to work under. *Daily Trust* also gathered that the company despite repeated warning by the state government has failed to desist from the habit of

conveying its staff to and from their places of work in an open truck.

Following this allegation and many others, according to Mr. Inaya, the petition was referred to his committee for proper investigation. Adding that efforts by the House to get the management of Michelin to respond to the petition have so far yielded no positive result as the company blatantly refused to cooperate.

The House, therefore, has concluded arrangement to order the arrest of some principal staff of the company except they appear before it.

Daily Trust tried to reach the company for their reaction but none of the officials were willing to speak to the press on the issue in their Trans-Amada Industrial layout factory.

PDP cancels computerised membership registration in Ebonyi

By Reuben Yunana

Following the carting away of membership cards meant for Ebonyi State from the National Headquarters of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) last week, the party has suspended its memberships' registration exercise in the state.

A statement signed by the chairman of the project coordinating unit, Dr. Shettima Mustapha, said the forms meant for the computerised membership card registration exercise in Ebonyi State were carted away without due formalities.

"For this reason, the forms bearing Nos. 1,260,001 - 1,350,000 allocated to Ebonyi State is hereby cancelled and the registration exercise in that state suspended," the statement said.

The statement directed those who took the forms away to return them to the National Secretariat, adding that a new date is to be fixed soon for the handing over of materials for Ebonyi State.

The party recently embarked on a computerised membership card registration exercise amidst protests from the members of the party in Ebonyi State who alleged interference on the activities of the party in the state.

The protesters recently stormed the party secretariat in Abuja as well as the National Assembly.

UNDF committed to the unity of Nigerians - Col. Akaagerger

By Ahmed Shekarau

The former military administrator of Katsina State, Col. Joseph A. Akaagerger (rtd), has said that the United Nigeria Development Forum (UNDF) is a non-partisan organisation whose main objective is to foster unity among the diverse ethnic groups that make up Nigeria.

Col. Akaagerger, who spoke exclusively to *Daily Trust* last week in Maiduguri stated that contrary to speculations that some of the young military officers retired by the present administration were regrouping through the UNDF to form a political party, "the United Nigeria Development Forum is a non-governmental organisation that is not committed to politics but committed to the development of Nigeria and giving Nigeria a new direction."

He said though the forum is headed by a retired military man, Col. Lawal Jaafaru Isa (rtd), it is predominated by non-military personnel, stressing that "we have made our position clear right from the onset that we will remain an NGO (a non-government organisation) even though we were approached by quite a number of political associations that have emerged, including the existing political parties."

Commenting on his personal political ambition, Col. Akaagerger, who is the Ambe-U Konshisha, disclosed that his decision to contest for the Senatorial seat of the Benue North-West Senatorial district is independent of his participation in the UNDF and his association with any retired military officers in the country.

The former Katsina State military administrator said: "My decision to run for the senatorial seat of my constituency in 2003 is

informed by my desire to ensure effective representation of my people at the Upper House of the National Assembly."

Col. Akaagerger stated further that his numerous contributions to the development of his area through the execution of certain infrastructural projects have nothing to do with his ambition.

According to him: "This is part of the tradition in my family that we engage in community development." He cited the examples of the church and primary school in his village established in 1937 and 1942 respectively through the efforts of his father, stressing that he also borrowed from such examples.

He rebuffed the idea that the contemporary problems of Nigeria were caused by military men, arguing that "Nigerians should be blamed for our problems and not soldiers, after all, the soldiers themselves are part of the Nigerian society."

Regarding the retirement of all officers who held political appointments in the country by the present administration, Col. Akaagerger stated that "it is a great loss to the country considering the various trainings and experience we have had which would have benefited the nation."

He, however, noted that even though no reason was given for their retirement other than the statement that their services were no longer required, their retirement might have been informed by "the need to stabilise democracy in the country."

The Ambe-U Konshisha observed that, "whether or not our retirement will stabilise democracy is entirely a different thing."

Agitation for a northern president in 2003 healthy - APP chieftain

Abdu Labaran and Hassan A. Karofi, in Katsina

An All People's Party (APP) chieftain in Katsina State, Alhaji Junaidu Mamuda Yantumaki, has said that there was no cause for alarm over the already intense clamour by one of the three geo-political zones to have one of their own sons as president come 2003.

Alhaji Yantumaki, the defeated APP gubernatorial candidate in Katsina State, noted that despite the seeming hopelessness as a result of the jostling between the west, the east and the north for the presidency, Nigerians are very much capable of and adept at solving their political conundrums.

"I do not agree with the doomsayers who believe that the 2003 presidential election would not be free and fair because I am confident that if Nigerians are allowed to freely operate they will find a way out through political compromise," he enthused.

He said Nigerians should view such a situation as a challenge or quest for a stronger polity and not a problem because to do otherwise would be tantamount to handing to the military the excuse and opportunity they are waiting for on a platter of gold to truncate yet again another attempt at democratic governance in the country,

stressing that the military remains the insidious opposition (party) to civilian government.

The APP chieftain also kicked against the planned use of the national identity card for voting, believing that although it may be a "scientific" way of voting, it is fraught with the potentials of disenfranchising a lot of eligible voters, notably the itinerant Fulani nomads in the northern part of the country.

He expressed reservation over the adequacy of time to carry out a successful national identity card project before the 2003 presidential election, urging the government to jettison the plan and instead use the usual voters' registration card for 2003 until such a time when adequate arrangements have been made to dispel any misgivings about the potentialities of the national identity card.

Alhaji Yantumaki, who addressed the press on Monday also refuted a report in one of the national dailies (not *Daily Trust*) captioned "2003: APP chieftain warns Rimi" in which he was alleged to have spoken to newsmen in Funtua on three topical political issues namely, the presidential ambition of Alhaji

Abubakar Rimi, his relationship with the National Solidarity Association and the conflict between Dr. Olusola Saraki and Governor Lawal of Kwara State.

Describing the publication as false and malicious, the APP chieftain vehemently and categorically, stated that "I did not speak to any group of newsmen at anytime in the recent past or at any place nor met with the correspondent who filed the false report," expressing his bewilderment at the motive of the correspondent who filed the "false and damaging report against me."

Insisting on an immediate retraction of the report by the correspondent, he threatened to take "the steps deemed necessary to protect my image and reputation in the event of failure to comply with it," he said.



Alhaji Yusuf Ali

HABITAT (Housing and Environment)



By Warsaw Imoh Udosen



Fraudulent acquisition of property - The India experience

In February 2000, Jayalalitha Jayaram, a 52-year-old lady and former Chief Minister of India's Tamil Nadu State was sentenced in Madras, India to a year in jail for violating building regulations in allowing the construction of a seven-storey hotel in a local hill resort.

Being a former movie star with an Imelda Marcos-quality shoe collection, she was well known and had a lot of followers. When the verdict was announced, her supporters noted: three girls died when a bus was set ablaze, and one man went as far as committing suicide. This outbreak of violence did not deter the Indian government which stood its grounds on the sentence. The former Chief Minister was then the highest-ranking person to be convicted under India's sweeping anti-graft law as reported by Time Magazine and other international journals.

Back home in Nigeria, property laws are violated on a daily basis. Fraudulent acquisition of property is a game for those who are connected. The Anti-Corruption Law, known as corrupt practices and other related offences Act 2000 is seen by many Nigerians as a toothless bulldog. It is over a year since it came into force and we are yet to see an ex-this or that convicted. If an ex-minister in India could be sent to jail for merely allowing the construction of a building, how about the ones in Nigeria who do the constructions themselves? In Abuja and Lagos one could point to a number of such constructions belonging to former leaders in the country? In Lagos for instance, a former No. 2 citizens constructed a filling station where it ought not to have been. It was obvious that he violated building regulations and may have secured approval of the site fraudulently. When the present administration came into being, Lagosians gave a sigh of relief when the almighty "X" was marked on the site. The question is, is this where it should stop?

How about the Anti-Corruption law. Abuja our model city, is not spared as violation of building regulations by the high and mighty is marring efforts to keep the city in its original design. Or how could one explain the siting of a filling station on the Zone 6 side of Mabushi junction by a former no 4 citizen only for it to be pulled down at the state of about 80 percent completion. In the first instance, the site was not gazetted for such purpose, secondly the junction is a major one meaning that traffic is bound to be very heavy there. But Oga went ahead to get approval fraudulently or otherwise to build a filling station. And what did the government do? Only to pull it down. I don't think such actions will deter these moneybags from further violations of building laws and fraudulent acquisition of property. The law should spread to whosoever violates it. If it could happen in India, why not in Nigeria. We are both in countries where democracy is practised. Also in Abuja, a stretch of land supposedly the buffer zone on the right-hand side of Berger Junction to Mabushi junction took a new face last year. Somebody was trying to create a relaxation spot, by the highway, mind you. The spot was nearing completion when it was pulled down. One got wind that the then minister gave the orders for it to be pulled down. Other sources claimed the minister gave the proposed developer the go ahead to develop. Yours truly wonders, which group, is right but why did it take that long for the Minister to act?

Recently the government set up a panel to look into illegally acquired property by past government officials and others who might be affected. The report came out indicting many top citizens including former leaders, governors, minister etc. These people fraudulently acquired properties. Are we sweeping the report under the carpet or should we take them to the constituted independent corrupt practices and other related offences commission and jail any one found guilty as was done in India. Or is the commission going the way of Oputa panel that has no power to compel former leaders to appear talk less of sentencing those found guilty?

The president of the federation in his address on the occasion of the formal signing into law of the Anti-corruption Act stated that "the law will mark a turning point in all the major aspects of our lives, individually, collectively, economically, politically and socially" and ended by saying that "the implementation of this Act will go a long way in purifying our society. Need I say more!

Imoette Warsaw Udosen, is a Senior Estate Surveyor with Country Home, Abuja.

COREN solicits better pay for engineers

Stories by Tashikmah Hallah

Not until the federal government comes up with a definite policy that would endear Nigerian engineers, the drifting of Nigerian engineers in search of a greener pasture abroad would continue, E.I.E. Ofidile has said.

Ofidile, Professor and Registrar Council for the Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria (COREN) in an interview with *Daily Trust* said the condition of service for the engineer in Nigeria is too poor and has resulted in the migration of Nigerian engineers abroad.

Said he: "I think the condition of service in Nigeria is generally poor. The condition of service for a Nigerian engineers for instance, if you hire an engineer to work with an architect on a project, while the architect maybe making four percent of the contractual sum, the engineer may be paid one percent of the contractual sum.

But, if it is in another country, lets say Ghana or United States of America, it is the engineer that would be given the job and he gets four percent. But of course, it is more beneficial as an international because any one who can practice in

the United States or England are working in those country effectively," he added.

However, in Nigeria, the engineers have been marginalised, as they have not been properly placed adding that this is a profession that would move the country. "It is the only thing that would make our economy grow."

Engineering, he said is an international profession and urge the Nigerian engineers in diaspora to come back and do the same thing they are doing there.

"If a man in NASA (National Aerospace Agency) in US is helping to put people on the moon, is helping to design spacecraft

that is operating, and we know we had that technology; these people if you created a good environment for them here, then we'll progress.

"We are talking about producing the first Nigerian car even the ones the Nigerian engineers are doing it here if they are given the opportunity. Professor Falayan of the ABU, is making every effort, but what has government done. they go there and shut down the place," adding "they need encouragement.

The Registrar also lamented the poor funding of the COREN saying that the underfunding has rendered the council ineffective in the performance of its activities.

"Most of us trained in



Prof. E. I. E. Ofidile, Registrar COREN

Ebonyi govt signs N1.4b hotel contract

The Ebonyi state government, on Monday, in Abakaliki, signed a N1.4 billion contract for the construction of a five star hotel in Abakaliki, the Ebonyi State capital.

To be executed by CAT Construction Limited, the hotel is expected to be completed in 15 months.

The Permanent Secretary in the State's Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Mr. Laz Agbo, signed for the government, while Mr. John Obayuwaria, the managing director of CAT construction signed on behalf of the company.

Agbo, who spoke after the signing of the contract,

said that the project was another step towards developing the state.

He explained that the project was designed to solve the problem of quartering "very important personalities as well as yield revenue for the state."

The permanent secretary, who commended the Ebonyi Governor, Dr. Sam Egwu, for his efforts to develop the state, urged the contractors to complete the project on schedule.

In his comment, Chief Emma Agbati, the Managing Director of Baview, the project's consulting firm, said the firm would help ensure speedy completion and quality job.

FG rehabilitates 30 roads, 90 others under construction

The Federal Government has released the summary of the number of road contracts awarded by the President Olusegun Obasanjo led government since it came to power in May 1999, with the south-south geopolitical zone topping the chart of the beneficiaries.

The zone which got the lion share of N55.1 billion out of the N190.6 budgeted for the rehabilitation and construction of roads also has the highest number of roads either rehabilitated or on-going.

A "summary of the achievements of the Obasanjo administration in the national roads rehabilitation and construction programme" issued by Ministry of Works and Housing indicated that a total of 10 Federal roads were rehabilitated with additional 25 roads under reconstruction.

Closely followed was the south-south and south-west geo-political zones with a total number of 8 roads rehabilitated and 14 others still under construction netting about N4.5 billion and N39.02 billion respectively.

The summary also shows that the north-west zone has five projects

completed and 15 others under construction netting N2.5 billion and N20.638 billion respectively while the followed suit with five projects completed and 11 others under construction with N2,417,364,862.77 expended and N20,638,807,155.37 to be spent on the projects still under construction.

The south east came fifth on the allocation of the rehabilitation and construction of roads chart, with the total number 14 contracts awarded with only on completed costing N21,716,211,835.03 and N153,331,816.87.

Topping the chart at the bottom however is the north east zone with the total of 13 contracts awarded including one completed amounting N25,825,010,557.78 and N360,947,171.97 respectively.

According to the summary results, the sum of twenty billion, forty million, four hundred and sixty two thousand, two hundred and ninety one naira and eleven kobo (N20,040,462,291.11) was spend on 30 completed projects across the country with one hundred ninety billion, five hundred and seventy two million, one hundred and five thousand, nine hundred and ninety five naira, fifty six kobo (N190,572,105,995.56) to be spend on the 90 on going road projects.

Also, out of the N67,155,740,000.00 (sixty seven billion, one hundred and fifty five million, seven hundred and four thousand naira) appropriated for the year 2001 fiscal year to the ministry, the sum of N20,091,072,906 (twenty billion, ninety one million, seventy two thousand nine hundred and six naira has so far been received by the ministry.

The report also explained that the ministry had given priority to all the road contracts awarded by the defunct Petroleum (Special) Trust Fund (PTF) but were abandoned and has created a federal road maintenance agency to monitor and tackle the maintenance of federal roads.



The front view of Child Trust Headquarters, Abuja.

HABITAT (Housing and Environment)

Kaduna warns coys over pollution

The Kaduna State government has issued a serious warning to companies operating in the state to either put up waste disposal plants or risk the wrath of the law.

Kaduna State Commissioner for Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. John Haruna Malam, revealed this in a chat with *Daily Trust*, at the consultative forum on industrial pollution in the state.

According to the commissioner, the issue of industrial pollution in the state has reached an alarming rate and that the government would not fold its arms while the lives of the people are being threatened by pollution.

Specifically, he named Arewa Textile (Nig.) Limited as the highest polluter of the environment in the state but has been recalcitrant to early warnings.

Said he: "Really, there have been series of meetings on the environmental problem in the state, and most

Stories by Tashikalmah Hallah of the industries have agreed to put in place, pollution facilities.

"However, the complain they usually give is that their installed capacity cannot afford them to put in place the facilities because they are too expensive.

"We have been insisting that they have to put in place the facilities. And already, some have already done that.

"And for your information, we have already given one of the recalcitrant industries, Arewa Textiles, an ultimatum. They have to put it in place, a well treatment plant within the time frame, and if the time frame expires then Kaduna State government has no alternative than to take action," he said.

Also, reacting to the denigration of environmental problem in Kaduna State, Hon. Binta Garba Koje, a member of the House of Representatives, representing Kaduna South Federal Constituency, said

the people in her constituency are now at the mercy of tuberculosis, diarrhoea and other water borne diseases.

Kaduna South, the area where most of the companies are located, she explained has by the 1991 population figure of 45,000 people and by the year 2000 estimate is 60,000 "and how can you sleep as the representative of the people when the lives of the people you represent are being threatened," she queried.

According to the representative, some people have started writing anonymous letters, threatening the companies in the area, and this you know is the most unfortunate. This is the problem the country is facing in the Niger Delta," adding, "we don't want the situation to occur."

The people of Kaduna South, she said do not need anything from the companies, "but let the environment be friendly to each and everyone of us; so that at least we would now be happy that Kaduna South has a lot of

industries."

Mrs. Koje also revealed that legislation is now on ground before the House of Representatives, and "I have discussed with the committee chairperson on environment because we want to have a public hearing on such a thing."

The public hearing, she said would enable stakeholders to present their views all with the aim of finding an amicable solution to the looming environmental crisis in the state.

However, Mrs. Koje was not pleased with the representation of the companies summoned by the Minister of Environment, Alhaji Muhammad Kabir Sa'id.

Said she: "The people that are representing these companies are not captains of these industries. How can they take decision without board members present?"

However, she said, "they know the problem they know how to tackle the problem, but it seems they gave it a deaf ear. And one thing I want the people to understand is that we are in a democratic set up. We are no longer under the military era.

"So, anything should be done to meet the yearnings and aspirations of the people. Nobody should look at people as nobody. The people may decide that they don't want these industries situated in their area or they can even close it, God forbid bad thing because we don't want it to go to that extent.

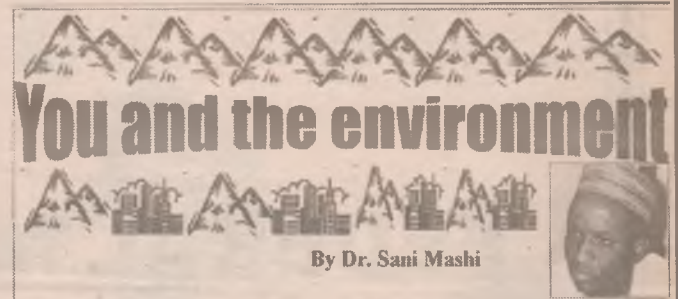
"What we want right now is to see how we can come to a compromise, so that at the end of the day, the industries are happy and the people are happy too," she concluded.

Declaring the meeting open, Minister of Environment, Alhaji Muhammad Kabir Sa'id, has frowned on the activities of the companies in the state, saying "the consequences of this practice, which you have willfully perpetrated, have come to rest."

The state of both the surface and ground waters are so contaminated that the colour of the water which is either blue, green, red, yellow, brown or any combinations of colours is determined by the colour of what you discharge that day.

This, he explained depicts how the companies have contaminated these waters with pollutants so much so that their absorptive capacity and resilience have been exceeded.

The Kaduna State government and the industries operating in the state have been in a cat and mouse game over environmental pollution.



Still on official misconceptions about desertification

In my previous write-ups on this column, two were specifically on how desertification, especially its seriousness and pattern of occurrence, are being misconceived, both by governmental and non-governmental sources. On Wednesday 11th April, 2001, I featured an article in which I described in great detail how governmental sources are wrongly conceiving the seriousness of the problem. Based on facts supplied by a one-time Nigerian military head of state, and now a civilian president, by now all what is left of Nigeria's land mass should have been consumed by desertification. Based on those facts as they were given at that time, many thought Nigeria was in a very pitiful stage and hence deserving immediate international attention.

But about 23 years since the time that statement was made, desertification in Nigeria has not extended beyond the boundaries of the states to which reference were given in that official statement. In that statement, an argument was made that desertification boundary in Nigeria as at 1978 was at near the southern boundary of the former Sokoto (now Zamfara, Sokoto and Kebbi) States, all other states adjoining Sokoto along the Northern states of Nigeria. At least I lived and worked within those "frontline" states of the country. Almost every two weeks, I do pay visits to at least 75 percent of them. I can't remember seeing desert-like landscape in Southern Kebbi, or Sokoto, neither Zamfara, not to talk of Southern Katsina, Kano or even Borno and Yobe States. Where then is the boundary that General (now President) Obasanjo claimed was extending Southward in those states at alarming rates, way back from 1978? Last year, we published an article in a British journal in which I reposted the results of a study we've undertaken (together with two other Nigerian colleagues of mine) on desertification fragility in Sokoto Rima area of Nigeria.

We employed latest available techniques, based on satellite technology to obtain a synoptic view of the landscape. We also employed appropriate field and laboratory techniques to obtain additional ground information on indicators of desertification in the area. The results of the study revealed that contrary to the widely held view, over 70 percent of the area has only a moderate fragility (risk) of desertification and in fact only about eight percent has a desert-like landscape. We thus asked in the article, where is the desertification problem in the Sokoto area? That perhaps, explains why many authorities, especially in Europe believe that even if desertification is real in Africa, we deliberately (or ignorantly) exaggerate its seriousness. Some in fact suspect that we are doing this knowingly in order to attract foreign aid or be granted some debt relieves.

Someone going by the name David McDowell was so confident about this that he wrote an article in *Daily Mirror* newspaper of Britain titled: "Desertification: Treaty without a cause." In that article, he described the International Convention on Desertification to which over 50 nations of the world ratified (and agreed to work with African countries towards helping them to combat with the problem) as unnecessary since the problem is not real or at best not worthy of the sentiments being raised. While someone may accuse McDowell of being too hard on African nations or being insensitive to their plight, the African nations themselves have some large share of blame on this since they themselves lacked adequate reliable facts on how serious the problem is.

On 20th of July, 2001, I also featured another article on this column in which I reacted to a report by a reporter of Nigeria's *Guardian* newspaper. In that report, statements were made that desert is encroaching in Nigeria and that the country is losing 350,000 square kilometers of its lands annually to desertification. I argued in my article that the figure represents about 25 percent of Nigeria's landmass. As such if the figure were true by the year 2003, the land up to around Abeokuta and its environs would be consumed by desertification. This to say the least is absolutely ridiculous. On Thursday 9th August, 2001, the Hon. Minister of Environment was quoted by the *Daily Trust* newspaper as saying that the country is losing some 350,000 square metres (not kilometers) of its land annually to desertification. This implies that every year, only 350,000 square metres of Nigeria's land is being lost to desertification. At this rate, it will take the next 100 years before even Northern Nigeria is consumed by desertification. If this "new" figure given by the minister is true, then it is apparent that desertification in Nigeria is not yet a very serious problem as we are imagining. As such, David McDowell can be said to be right. But being a native to the desert-prone regions of Nigeria, I have no doubt that the problem is a serious one. What then can we do to avoid this misconceptions in Nigeria? Answers are no doubt needed on this so that we could be in a position to make arguments that will appear reasonable enough to attract for us international sympathy, co-operation and the much-needed foreign dollars.

Dr. Sani A. Mashi, is of the Department of Geography, University of Abuja.



Speaker of the House of Representatives, Alhaji Ghali Umar Na'Abba (left), Chairman, House Committee on Environment, Hon. Mercy Alumona-Isel (middle) and Minister of Environment, Alhaji Muhammad Kabir Sa'id during the first international conference/symposium on oil pollution and environment management in Abuja. Pix: Felix Onigbinde

Environment Ministry to tackle pollution in the Niger Delta

In a bid to address the environmental problems caused by over 40 years of neglect in petroleum exploration and production in the Niger Delta region, the Federal Ministry of Environment, has established two national organisations to carefully study and recommend appropriate solutions, the Minister of Environment, Alhaji Muhamad Kabir Sa'id, has said.

Alhaji Sa'id, announced this last Tuesday in a message he sent to the first international conference on oil pollution and environmental management, organised by the House of Representatives.

The national organisation, he said are: The national organ forum for cleaning the Niger Delta and national forum for national gas utilization and implementation of related

projects in Nigeria.

These two organizations, he said particularly the national forum for cleaning the Niger Delta, is charged with the responsibility of conducting studies in the region and advise the government on how best to curb environmental issues inherent in the region.

He noted that it is pertinent that the gas utilization drive of government in a way would assist in addressing the acute problem of desertification.

"Gas utilization has the potential to reduce, and eventually check the persistent felling of trees and shrubs in the already degraded and detested arid and semi-arid lands thus abating drought and infertility.

"Effective utilization of gas in the domestic sector of the economy will ultimately put a stop to the rapid

deforestation of our environment," adding, "I wish to seize this opportunity to call on the oil companies to perfect their plans for gathering and utilizing all associated gas by 2004."

Alhaji Kabir also noted with displeasure the past administrations' failure to compensate oil spillage victims which he said are the root cause of most social unrests in the region.

However, the Federal Ministry of Environment, he said has finalised work on a document titled: "Response, compensation and liability for environmental damage in Nigeria (RECLEL).

In nearly all cases of oil pollution, said Alhaji Kabir, the issue of liability and compensation bordering on the environment, have always been handled under the traditional common law of civil liability.



FEDERAL MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT

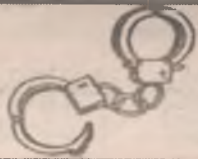
OFFICE OF THE HONOURABLE MINISTER

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

THE attention of the Honourable Minister of Transport has been drawn to the inundation of the Nigerian Ports Authority's Headquarters (NPA) with requests for contractual patronage from important public figures, to government functionaries and National Assembly members. Quite often, contract requests are faked and conveyed to the NPA on forged letter headed papers. The most worrying and embarrassing aspect is the use of such letters as tools for threats and blackmail to the management of the NPA. These letters pour in at the average of sixty per day.

2. While appreciating the right of private individuals to seek patronage from public institutions, the ministry condemns in its entirety, the practice of channelling contract requests through unorthodox methods which can only constitute distractions to the officials of the Authority. It is observed that NPA officials now spend 80% of their time attending to such letters. In addition, it is a contradiction of the ideals of the present administration particularly as it relates to transparency in the conduct of official business. Needless to remind the general public of the need to avoid actions that can erode the transparency ideals which government seeks to entrench in the conduct of official business in the country, the practice runs counter to the principle of accountability and good governance. Let me stress that the NPA is one of the first major commercial contacts of the nation with the outside world and hence the sensitivity of its image must be protected by all with patriotic zeal.
3. Meanwhile, in the spirit of transparent business and in keeping with the established tenders procedure, the NPA has opened a tenders post at its Headquarters (Annex Office) at No. 1, Joseph Street, Marina, Lagos where tenders can be submitted and given due consideration. Accordingly, all prospective contractors are requested to make use of the channel.
4. Finally, I wish to appeal to those who have at one time or the other used the unorthodox channel to desist from the ignominious practice and embrace the way of decency please.

J.P. Hirse, mni
 Permanent Secretary
 For: Honourable Minister



Crime & Punishment



The National President of the Igbo Women Forum Chief (Mrs.) Juliet N. Olejenu (R.) presenting the portrait of President Olusegun Obasanjo and his wife to the President (L.) during courtesy call of Igbo Women Forum on the President at the State House, Abuja... Tuesday.
Pix: Kenedy Egbonodje

Bank fraudster jumps bail

A 28 year-old man, Dapo Seriki, who was arrested in the premises of the African International Bank (AIB) Allen Avenue branch in Ikeja, Lagos while attempting to cash a N2.8m cheque has absconded after being allowed on a N.5 million bail granted him by a Lagos Chief magistrate court.

Angered by this development, the trial chief magistrate, Ayo Odugbedan has ordered that a bench warrant for his arrest be issued against him.

Before his arrest, the accused was alleged to have succeeded in withdrawing N1,875,000 property of AIB from the Allen Avenue Branch on March 14, 2001.

He was not as lucky when he attempted to present

From Adelanwa Bamgboye, in Lagos

another forged cheque for N2,8 million because the Bank officials informed the police who came to arrest him.

According to police sources, Dapo Seriki and others still at large conspired to commit felony to wit;stealing.

The accused was alleged to have altered and forged an AIB cheque leaf No. 00002970, property of AIB, knowing same to be false but to be acted upon as genuine.

He was further alleged to have stolen N1,875,000.

At the resumed hearing of the matter, the police informed the court that the bench warrant issued for the arrest of the accused could not be executed as he could not be located.

On the strength of this,

the court ordered that the sureties be arrested until they can produce the accused. Further hearing has been fixed for September.

The offence for which the accused is charged with is punishable under sections 516, 467, 468 and 390 (a) of the criminal code cap. 31 vol. 2 laws of the Lagos State of Nigeria. If found guilty, the accused may be sentenced to 3 years imprisonment.

Three in court for stealing Abalaka's money

Three men, Isaac Idegbo, Ahmed Ibrahim and Idoko Ibrahim, were yesterday arraigned before an Abuja chief magistrate's court for allegedly assisting in concealing stolen money belonging to Dr. Jeremiah Abakala's Medicrest Medical Hospital at Gwagwalada, Abuja.

The prosecutor, Mr. Abu Okpanachi, told the court that the Medical director of the hospital Dr. Abalaka, reported that the accused persons aided in hiding the N6.5 million, which was stolen by his employees. The accused persons pleaded not guilty to the charge.

Their counsel, Mr. Muhammad Ibrahim, applied for bail for them, saying that they would not jump bail.

The presiding magistrate, Malam Muhammad Kolo, granted term bail in the sum of N200,000 and a surety each, who should have landed property within the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and adjourned the case to September 25, for further mention.

Also in the same court, a couple, Mr. Yakubu Ibrahim and his wife, Asabe Ibrahim, were arraigned for allegedly aiding Abalaka's employees to commit crime against his hospital, Medicrest hospital.

The prosecutor, Okpanachi, told the court that Abakala reported to the po-

AIG orders increased patrol of Lagos airport road

The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) has committed its men and officers to the security of the Murtala Muhammad International Airport route, which has reportedly been taken over by men of the underworld.

Rising from the National retreat called by President Olusegun Obasanjo, the Assistant Inspector General (AIG), of Police in charge of zone 2 Onikan command headquarters, Sunday Ehindero said that the police is worried about the Murtala Muhammad International Airport route road.

"I have tasked the commissioner of police, Lagos, the Area Commanders and the Divisional Police Officers to re-double their efforts to ensure that their area of operation including the international airport road are crime free" the AIG said.

In an exclusive interview with *Daily Trust*, Ehinders said "we will commit our men to secure the route, we know where and when to strike."

He said that the Inspector-General of police, Mr.

Musiliu Smith has directed that crime should be stamped down drastically along the airport road because of its international airport. He noted with dismay, the increasing rate of violent crimes in the zone and the pattern in the zone. The areas where crimes occur more frequently than others have been noted," Mr. Ehindeno said.

He said further that the fruits of police strategies would materialise soon, adding that "it is just unfortunate that we have bad people around us at the Murtala Mohammad International Airport road."

It would be recalled that the Murtala Muhammad International Airport road, Lagos, has become a crime rone road, particularly around

Mafoluku and Oshodi following the activities of under world men who specialise in terrorising travellers either when leaving or heading for the airport which is certainly one of the busiest exit and entry points in Nigeria.



Mr. Musiliu Smith

Police ready to fight crime despite killings

Despite the killing of policemen in the course of their duties, the Assistant Inspector General of Police (AIG), in charge of zone II command headquarters, Mr. Sunday Ehindero on Tuesday in Lagos said the force will not be deterred in its duty to protect life and property.

Speaking on new strategies to combat crime while addressing newsmen in his office, Ehindero revealed that religious leaders, market women, traditional rulers and all factions of transporters including the members of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) as well as members of the public would indicate when, where and how they, want to be policed.

On why the Nigerian Po-

lice is seemingly helpless in combating robbers and violent crimes generally, he said the socio-economic causes of crime such as unemployment and lack of good parental care and morals were being addressed by the government.

"I am happy that government is addressing these through schemes such as the Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP)."

According to him, a lot of people would get self employed and this will reduce crime in the society "we have realised that if the socio-economic problems are solved we will have less crime." He implored, the public to continue to assist the police by giving correct and adequate information about criminals in the society.

NIWA may drag Lagos govt to court

The National Inland Water ways Authority (NIWA) may soon take the Lagos state government to court over the inability to settle its outstanding payment with the authority.

Speaking on this development with *Daily Trust*, the area manager of NIWA, Mr. Ayuba Balogun, said the state government had refused to pay for the services rendered by NIWA for making use of its coastal vessels.

The Manager who declined to mention the actual amount involved disclosed that, "we do not have any option than to take any debtor that fails to offset its debts to court.

From Yinka Tokumbo Oloke, in Lagos

He added that, the authority is planing to purchase two ferries to beef up the number of ferries in its fleet, adding that the authority needs money to meet this obligation.



Gov. Bola Tinubu, of Lagos State

23 year-old docked for vandalising cars

By Uwem Umo

A 23 year-old barber who vandalises vehicles at night has been arraigned before an Abuja Upper Area Court for criminal conspiracy and theft.

Chimezie Ilozie, according to the prosecuting police officer, Mr. Yakubu Sani, had on February 2, 2001 at about 4:30 a.m., was arrested by a team of policemen from Kubwa police division, Abuja for belonging to a gang of armed robbers that terrorised the area.

The suspect was said to have been in company of one Francis Abah who was shot dead while trying to escape and one other suspect simply identified as Muffy but who

is now on the run.

According to the porsecution, during police investigations, Chinezie, Ilozie otherwise known as Chimex, specialised in the theft of car stereos from vehicles using remote control devices and locally fabricated master keys to gain access into the vehicles.

The suspect, according to the police First Information Report (FIR) confessed to have stolen a car stereo from a peugeot 505 car belonging to one Uchenna John valued at N5,000.

The accused person pleaded not guilty to the two court charges preferred against him.



Dika Bwala, FCT Police Comm.

The trial judge, Alhaji Aliyu Abdulrahman granted him bail on the conditions that he produce a very reliable surety whom the police would cross check his personality and adjourned the cas to September 3, 2001 for further mention.

Abuja News

AIDS: Abuja residents urge govt to encourage claimants

A cross section of residents of the Federal Capital Territory have appealed to health authorities in the country to encourage Nigerian traditional medical practitioners who have claims to the cure of HIV/AIDS.

According to the residents who spoke to *Daily Trust* in Abuja, the fight against HIV/AIDS should not be left to modern medicine alone, moreso as traditional medicine has been found to be very effective on the disease.

The residents particularly warned the health minister, Professor Alphonsus Nwosu against disregarding claims by Nigerian doctors to the cure of AIDS, as according to them, such attitude made the former health minister, Dr. Tim Menakaya, very unpopular among Nigerians.

"Nigerians hated that man," said Joseph Akhile, an unemployed graduate who lives in Gwagwalada, "they saw him as someone who used his exalted position to work against his own people, I am of the view that as health minister, he should have allowed them to prove themselves as much as possible."

Miss Caroline Agwu, a student in Gwagwalada, also suggests that notable Nigerians who claim to have the cure for HIV/AIDS should be registered and closely monitored by health authorities, and encouraged where necessary.

"It appears we are living under the notion that a prophet is not accepted in his own country. I'm sure if these people sneak abroad, they will begin to make waves, why don't we make good use of what we have?" she queried.

Another resident who claims to have been cured by an Abuja-based AIDS doctor, but requested not to be named, said it is a "sin" to disregard the local claimants. "I can say it clearly, that Nigerian doctors can cure HIV/AIDS. I am very surprised that government has not come

Stories by Austine Odo

out clearly to support them, may be they have a secret agenda. You see me, I wouldn't have been alive anymore, when I fell sick, I was diagnosed HIV - positive. Then my viral level was 65 per cent. Yes - Enoch Heart treated me - Dr Ifeanyi Enoch Heart in Jabi, now I am HIV - free and someone is saying we shouldn't believe them.

He advised Nigerians to take herbal cure of HIV/AIDS seriously in their own interest, "otherwise, if we continue to wait for the West to find a cure, most of us would be dead by the time they get the medicine to our country."

The fears by these

Nigerians would have been laid to rest by the health minister, Professor Nwosu who on Tuesday last week, told newsmen in Abuja that he was in support of individual research efforts on the AIDS pandemic, saying it would be a major breakthrough for a Nigerian to discover a cure for the disease.

Prof. Nwosu charged all orthodox and unorthodox medical practitioners to prove themselves and earn foreign exchange for Nigeria. He however pointed out that government was against people administering drugs not approved by NAFDAC, especially when such drugs were imported. The minister said he was not against claimants to AIDS cure or those who patronise them.

Kwali Area Council gets crime club

A crime prevention campaign aimed at fishing out criminals through the provision of reliable information to the police, has been launched in the Kwali Area Council.

The campaign, which is being jointly organised by the area council and an NGO called the National Crime Prevention Club, is expected to be extended to the ten wards that constitute the area council with crime prevention clubs in each ward.

The Inspector General of Police, Mr. Musiliu Smith, has already endorsed the campaign. The Inspector General who spoke through the Force Public Relations Officer, Mr. Haz Iwendí at the inauguration ceremony in Kwali town on Tuesday, said with the sophistication of crime wave in the country, it had become necessary for all Nigerians to assist the police by providing information to fight it.

He noted that Nigerians now sleep with an eye open because of the activities of

armed robbers, which continue to give people a serious cause for concern. The IGP commended the organisers for their initiative in setting up the campaign.

Kwali Area Council Chairman, Hon. Samuel Gwamna, however made it clear that the crime prevention club was not designed to replace the police force, but to complement its efforts.

"The club is not an alternative to the police. We have used our taxes to train the force, we should therefore not allow our taxes to be under-utilized," he said, promising to provide the needed resources to ensure the club's success not only in the Kwali Area Council but even beyond.

A message from the FCT Minister indicated that the ministry is working on a strategy to wipe out crime from the FCT. The Minister, Engineer Mohammed Abba-Gana, assured the six area councils of his total support and commitment towards the realisation of the club's objectives.

FCT farmers get advice on food security

Farmers in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), have been charged to transform agriculture through the planting of fruit trees to provide raw materials for agro-based industries in the Territory.

The FCT Director of Economic Development, Alhaji Abdul Hameed, gave the charge in his welcome address at the fifth regular session of the FCT Council on agriculture, on Tuesday.

Alhaji Abdul Hameed advised the farmers to participate actively in transforming agriculture by planting cashews and mangoes, which he said, could provide ready raw materials for industries.

The farmers were also charged to explore more avenues that would enhance their productivity.

Declaring the session open, the minister of the Territory, Engineer Mohammed Abba-Gana, advised the farmers to give urgent attention to improved storage of their products as well as agricultural research linkages to enhance the drive for food security within the territory.

He pointed out that arrangements had reached an advanced stage for feasibility studies on the Gurara Basin Irrigation Scheme and a detailed agro-ecological study of the FCT to boost agriculture.

The FCT council on agriculture was set up in 1996

to assist in the development of agriculture in the Territory. The council has held sessions in other councils within the Territory in the past four years. This year's session holding in the Abuja Municipal Area Council, is deliberating on agriculture and rural development.

Centre calls for subsidy on computer programme

The Acting Director-General, National Centre for Women Development (NCWD), Mrs Florence Iheme, has called on public-spirited individuals, governments and other interested organisations to help subsidise the fee for the children computer appreciation programme to make it accessible to more children.

Mrs. Iheme made the call at the opening ceremony of the programme in Abuja on Tuesday.

She stated that the programme was aimed at acquainting Nigerian children with the necessary technological skills that would render them functional and relevant in an increasingly computerised world.

By Habiba Adamu

Mrs. Iheme further pointed out that even though N22,000 was charged as the fee for residential participants, the centre is hoping to reduce the fee for children from indigent homes to equally benefit from the programme.

"I would not like the computer programme to be seen as an elite programme. That is why in the past, the centre tried to reach out and ask for collaboration. I made an observation on the fee and that is why some children are sponsored by organisations and states," she said.

The acting director said the centre would subsidise the fee, if it could get assistance from rich individuals, cooperate organisations and states.

INVITATION TO TENDER

- Applications for tenders are hereby invited from reputable Companies for the Construction of a five -story building within the premises of Independent National Electoral Commission Headquarters at Maitama, Abuja.
- The proposed office building will have
 - * A basement floor
 - * Five typical floors
 - * An auditorium/Press Centre
 - * 2 No. Lift Cars and other facilities
 - * Conference room
 - * Intensive External Work/Parking lots
- 3. REQUIREMENTS**

All applications must be accompanied with the following:-

 - A non-refundable pre-qualification tender deposit of N25,000.00 {Twenty five thousand naira} only.
 - Company's Certificate of incorporation
 - Ownership structure of the Company whose paid up share Capital must not be less than N5,000,000.00 {Five million naira} only.
 - Company's profit stating the following:-
 - List of Directors
 - List of Technical staff
 - Company's work force
 - Company's safety programme
 - Company's current three years tax clearance Certificate
 - Evidence of registration with the FMW & H or INEC as a contractor in category 'D', {Building and Civil Engineering}.
 - Company's area of specialization
 - Bank references
 - List of building projects handled in the last three years {Companies that have not handled a single building project worth One hundred million naira {N100,000,000.00} in the last three years need not apply} .
 - Projects currently being handled { on -going}, if any.
 - The company's Machinery , Plants and Equipment.
 - Company's three years audited financial report.
 - Only contractors who satisfy the pre-qualification conditions as listed in Nos. {3} need apply.
 - Only short-listed applicants will be invited to submit tenders for the project
 - All applications for pre-qualification tender should be submitted to

Hon. Secretary INEC Independent National Electoral Commission Plot 436, Zambezi Crescent Maitama District Abuja.

To reach him not later than fourteen {14} working days from the date of this publication

Signed:
HON. SECRETARY
INEC.



SPORTS



NOC elections

Boyd keeps opponents in suspense

As the political climate gathers momentum for the next election into the executive board of the Nigeria Olympic Committee, the outgoing Secretary-General, Dr. William Boyd, has kept his opponents in dark on his plan to join the race for re-election.

Dr. Boyd told *Trustsports* that he has been maintaining sordid silence over time because he wanted to consult with his political constituency. "As soon as I get clearance intention known to Nigerians."

The Delta, State-born sports administrator informed that he has broader vision for sports which transcends beyond the NOC secretary general position. "I

From Babs Oyetoro, in Lagos

am qualified to work in any capacity as sports administrator."

However, it was gathered that one of the old association chairmen has indicated interest in Dr. Boyd's job and has received the blessings of his colleagues in the board with him.

Commenting on the committee's preparation for the election, the baseball board member said the NOC can do little or nothing to set the stage for election except the new associations boards are inaugurated by the Sports Ministry, Ishaya Mark Aku.

He explained that after the inauguration ceremony, thereafter the board members would meet to determine the date of the election. "We shall give 30 days of grace for everybody to acknowledge the receipt of the notification letter then the election will follow."

It will be recalled that the lost election, which ushered in this out-going board generated a lot of tension, although the election turned to be a clean sweep of the Alhaji Rahman Adejumo-led board.

Presently, the NOC has been enmeshed in internal crisis, which is almost putting the committee asunder.



Cuba's Ivun Pedroso competes in the men's long jump final on Saturday, at the World Track & Field Championships at Commonwealth Stadium in Edmonton, Alberta. Pedroso won the gold medal.

Udo-Obong criticises new false start rules

Enefiok Udo-Obong, who propelled the winning of silver in the 4x400 relay at the 2000 Sydney Olympic has criticised the newly introduced false start rules by the world sports governing body (IAAF).

The Italy-based athlete who sustained a fracture during the trails for the Edmonton, Canada.

Said that the rule was in bad faith because it would be discriminatory. "It leaves out an offender to punish the innocent."

"I am sure that if they realise the enormity of pressures on the athletes, they will do well to withdraw the application of the new rule," he stated.

The rule stipulates that if the is a false start, all athletes are deemed to have committed the offence and in a subsequent false start, the offender will be disqualified even if the athletes was a first offender.

According to athletic buffs, the rule which would take effect in two years time was designed to inject discipline and cut down on time wasted by athletes in the course of a race.

Obieniu commends Aku for World Cup ticket

Nigeria Football Association (NFA) has commended the Sports Minister, Ishaya Mark Aku, for giving the football authority all the necessary support towards the national team's qualification in the World Cup.

Speaking with *Trustsports* during the first anniversary lecture of TodaySports organised by the publisher of the sports paper, Paul Bassey, NFA first Vice-Chairman, Barrister Emma Obianu, said for the first time the NFA has a minister that has an explicit confidence in the board's ability to perform. "We are everything to the minister. If not for his backing we wouldn't be able to send Bonfrere away."

Who is Bonfrere that we cannot handle if not because of the system we were operating then?" he said.

The vice chairman maintained that the football house has received the impetus to work through the minister's backing, promising that the NFA would take Nigerian football to the promised land.

He revealed that the NFA's contribution to the country's qualification for third consecutive World Cup could not be quantified. "So much underground work was done to ensure our qualification for the next mundial."

He assured that Nigeria

would have her best outing in the mundial come next year saying that they have learnt from their past mistakes and would not allow such mistakes to repeat themselves.

It will be recalled that Nigeria almost lost the chances of qualifying for her third consecutive World Cup having lost two vital matches to

both Liberia and Sierra Leone. Nigeria's hope of winning the World Cup ticket was rekindled when she defeated Sudan at home and Liberia losing to Ghana 1-2 in Freetown.

The last group match saw Nigeria demolishing the Black Stars 3-0 to finally back a place in the mundial.

Owen set for new Liverpool deal

Liverpool manager Gerard Houllier hopes Michael Owen will add to his optimism for the new campaign by signing a new five-year contract at Anfield.

England striker Owen is now at an advanced stage in talks over a new deal that will keep him at Liverpool and end the interest of foreign admirers.

And Houllier has told BBC Sport Online that both Owen and Liverpool are keen to seal the deal.

Owen is in the best form of his career at present, scoring a hat-trick in the 5-0 Champions League qualifying round win against Finland's FC Haka and hitting the target in the Charity Shield win against Manchester United.

He has also finally shrugged off the hamstring injuries that dogged his career for two years.

Houllier, in an exclusive interview with BBC Sport Online, said: "We want to keep Michael Owen at Liverpool and Michael Owen wants to stay at Liverpool - those two things are a good start for both of us."

"We are hopeful, but we must now wait and see."

Houllier is delighted with Owen's form, believing he is

reaping the benefit of his first summer of rest in five years.

He said: "He has been playing every summer since 1996, apart from a summer when he was injured. He has had a rest and he has also had a very good pre-season."

"I think he should have a very good season. I think he is continuing to improve his game, and he is looking refreshed and fit."

"He has a goal ratio that speaks for itself, and he is becoming more aware of the all-round game and also aware of the team."

"Michael is also very brave and very focused on the game. He is simply different from others and he is a big asset for us."

Owen set for new Liverpool deal

Liverpool manager Gerard Houllier hopes Michael Owen will add to his optimism for the new campaign by signing a new five-year contract at Anfield.

England striker Owen is now at an advanced stage in talks over a new deal that will keep him at Liverpool and end the interest of foreign admirers.

And Houllier has told BBC Sport Online that both Owen and Liverpool are keen to seal the deal.

Owen is in the best form

Falcons whitewash Zimbabwe 6-0

Nigeria's female national team, the Super Falcons, on Sunday dampened the National Day celebrations of Zimbabwe, with a 6-0 pounding of the hosts in Harare.

Sunday's victory marked the second time the Nigeria had overwhelmed the Zimbabwean national team, known as the Mighty Warriors.

The Warriors had fallen 3-0 at last November's African Women Championship in Johannesburg, South Africa.

After an unco-ordinated start Kikilomo Ajayi broke the deadlock in the 30th minute and the winners held on to the goal till the interval.

Barely three minutes into

the second half, the floodgates opened when Olaitan Yusuf got the second goal with a long-range shot, Maureen Madu and Ifeanyi Chiejine followed up with two quick goals before Ifenwa Ekpo finally sealed the hopes of the Warriors with two goals, the last coming in injury time.

The Zimbabwean fans switched support to the Falcons, who taught their hosts some football lessons with their beautiful display of accurate passes.

The Nigerian High Commission mobilised the Nigerian community in Harare to watch their compatriots, who entertained the 20,000 crowds at the Rufaro Stadium.

16 teams for 2003 FIFA Club Championship

The FIFA Organising Committee has decided to allow 16 teams to take part in the FIFA World Club Championship 2003. This proposal, however, will still have to be ratified by the FIFA Executive Committee during its next meeting, in Busan, Korea on

By Ismaila Umar Lere
1 December 2001.

The Organising Committee for the FIFA Club World Championship, chaired by Abdullah K. Al-Dabal (Saudi Arabia), decided during its meeting in Zurich recently that in future, 16 teams should take part in the tournament. Only eight teams took part in the inaugural championship, which was held in Brazil in 2000. The 2001 tournament, which was scheduled to be played in Spain, had to be cancelled due to economic considerations, namely the bankruptcy of ISMM/ISL, FIFA's former marketing partner. Each of the 12 teams due to appear in Spain will receive USD 750,000 compensation from FIFA. The Spanish FA will also receive USD 1 million to compensate for their organisational work.

The FIFA Club World Championship 2003 will either be held between mid-January and mid-February, or between mid-July and mid-August. Spain is the likely choice as host nation. The other countries that could also host the championship are Australia, Egypt, England, Iran, Japan, Mexico, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Uruguay and the USA.

During its meeting in Busan, Korea on 1 December 2001, the FIFA Executive Committee will make a final decision regarding the number of participating teams, the host nation, and the format of the tournament.

Vieira makes Arsenal U-turn

Patrick Vieira's turnaround as Arsenal could see him extend his contract with the club.

Vieira seemed certain to leave during the summer but the French midfielder is now set to extinguish talk of his departure by signing a new deal.

"Yes, it was possible that I would leave in the summer," Vieira told the News of the World.

"It is possible for me to leave at the end of next season."

"In football - like life - anything can happen. It is also possible for me to stay here for the next 10 years."

"The crucial thing is that no-one will ever get me to do what I don't want to do."

He added: "If I see at any time that Arsenal don't do ev-

everything to try to win trophies, that their ambitions no longer match mine, then that's it."

"I have three years left on my contract but we are already talking about a new deal which could be for five or six more years."

Vieira was linked with a move to several major European clubs, including Arsenal's Premiership rivals Manchester United.

Vieira continued: "There were talks, although I never personally met anyone from Manchester United, Real Madrid or Juventus. But my agent did. That's his job."

But Arsenal have convinced Vieira of their ambition.

"They are determined to become one of the biggest clubs in Europe," said Vieira.



Necaxa's Miguel Acosta, right, fights for the ball with Calaya's Javier Munjarin at the Aztec stadium in Mexico City on Sunday, during their Mexican first division game.



This space is for sale

This space is for sale



World Athletics Championship Aku gives excuses for poor performance

By Patrick Andrew

The Sports Ministry, has reacted to the barrage of criticisms over the poor performance of the nation's athletes at the World Athletics Championship in Edmonton, Canada.

Sports Minister, Ishaya Mark Aku, exonerated the athletes on the excuse that the bulk of the contingent were amateurs being groomed for subsequent championships.

Albeit, the ministry also attributed poor preparation and sundry hindrance, he insisted that the contingent should not be crucified because the ministry was only exposing them to international championships in a bid to groom them for the All Africa Games.

"I am happy with their performance because most

of them are amateurs that we took there basically for exposure. With their exposure and performance the coaches would now know where to concentrate for them to improve for better performance in subsequent events. Besides, preparation was not the best and other contingencies. So I'm neither disappointed nor sad with their results," he said, stressing that a move is being made to groom fresh

athletes for Nigeria.

The Nigerian contingent could not win a medal at the games though Mercy Nku qualified for the women 100 meters finals, a development that attracted verbal recriminations from many.

The critics could not accept the fact that Nigeria failed to record any medal against its name when smaller countries like Ethiopia, Kenya, Senegal, Morocco won medals at the Games.



Goran Ivanisevic, from Croatia, hits a volley during a third round match with Gustavo Kuerten, from Brazil, at the Tennis Masters Series Cincinnati tournament, recently.



The USA's Caron Butler, left, a native of Racine, Wis., and a player at the University of Connecticut, is guarded by Marko Malic of Croatia during their final of the World Basketball Championship for Young Men game in Saitama, Japan on Sunday. USA defeated Croatia 89-80.



Stacy Dragila of the United States falls after clearing the bar during the final of the Women's pole vault at the World Track and Field Championships in Edmonton, Canada Monday Aug. 6, 2001. Dragila won the gold medal.

FG budgets N7b for 2003 African fiesta

The Federal Government has earmarked a whopping N7 billion for the 8th All Africa Games coming up in April 2003.

Senate President, Chief Anyim Pius Anyim disclosed the figure on Tuesday while launching the National Sports Lottery at the Sheraton Hotels and Towers, Abuja.

Anyim declared that the National Sports Lottery was one of the results of the search for private sector participation in sports.

Anyim, who emphasised government's commitment to sports and the funding problems described the coming of the lottery as an indication of the growing confidence of foreign investors in the Nigerian economy since the advent of the current democratic dispensation.

The senate president commended the allocation of 30 per cent of the lottery's income after prizes and direct costs to sports development.

In order to achieve the equitable distribution of lottery fund and impact on sports development, a board of trustees has been appointed by the Federal Government.

The board has Chief Subani Balogun as chairman, while the Minister of Sports and Social Development, Engineer Ishaya Mark Aku, is the vice chairman. Other board members are Chief Kola Daisi, Chief Noel Okoragu, Colonel Dangiwa Umar, General Sam Teidi and Chief Segun Odegbami.

Strands of Fate: written & illustrated by Bulama Mustapha

