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New population policy pegs marriage for girls at 18

A new population policy may outlaw marriages for girls below the age of 18 years in the country.

The new policy now being scrutinised by the National Assembly is aimed at curbing pregnancy-related deaths and diseases as well as infant deaths and ailments associated with early marriages.

The draft policy is seeking appropriate legislation to discourage harmful traditional practices, especially early marriages and violence against women.

The draft is proposing that age at first marriage for women should be at least 18 years while men should be required to lawfully acknowledge and register marriages with appropriate authorities.

A copy of the draft which was made available to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) notes that complications related to pregnancies and child-birth are among the leading causes of mortality and morbidity of women of child-bearing age.

Early marriages for girls can make them develop Vesico-Verginal Fistula, (VVF) an abnormal complication after child delivery leading to the leakage of urine and faeces from the vagina.

"Measures to prevent, detect and manage high risk pregnancies and births, particularly to women below 18 years shall be promoted," the draft says.

It notes that while adolescents (ages 10-19) comprise 23 per cent of the population, young adults (ages 20-24) account for 32 per cent while high fertility has contributed to such age structure.

"This implies that a large proportion of development resources need to go to meet the education, health, housing, food and the
contd. on pg 2

YANDABA CLASH IN KANO

Seven feared dead

•Emir calls for FG intervention

No fewer than seven persons were killed at the weekend between political thugs of one of the political parties and the *Yandaba* groups in Kano metropolis, according to unofficial sources.

The State Police Commissioner, Bello Uba Yakubu, confirmed the clash to *Daily Trust*, but limited the number

From Musa Umar Kazaure, Kano

of dead persons to two, saying the police had put the matter under control as reinforcements were quickly dispatched to the affected areas.

The police commissioner criticised some Kano State judges as not helping matters for giving the hoodlums

lighter sentences only for them to resurface on the streets shortly after.

Following the near break down of law and order in the metropolis, the Emir of Kano, Alhaji Ado Bayero called on the Federal Government to rid Kano metropolis of gang violence.

In a special broadcast at the weekend, the Emir

condemned the violence, saying that rival gangs had gone on the rampage terrorising and killing innocent citizens without provocation.

The Emir, who sent the

"Save Our Soul" (SOS) to the Federal Government amidst fighting and killings among the rival groups in Mandawari, Rijiyar Lemo, Warure and Kurnar Asabe
contd. on pg 2

2003: Obasanjo is not marketable

-PDP stalwart

By Ibrahim Modibbo, Political Editor

The national vice-chairman, South-South zone of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) Dr. Marshall Harry has canvassed for the emergence of a southern minority as president because the current president, Olusegun Obasanjo will not be marketable in 2003.

He said only a South-South President in 2003 will guarantee the peace and stability of the country.

Speaking in Abuja, Dr. Harry said "2003 is already a blessed and accomplished year of the Lord where a southern minority president

would emerge and this is the only guarantee for peace and stability. Anything short of this may threaten peace in

this country."

The PDP stalwart maintained that President Olusegun Obasanjo cannot be marketed in 2003 due to

contd. on pg 2

Sanusi Mato: Yakasai fights back from prison

A convicted 1997 coup plotter, Lt. Col. Ibrahim Yakasai, has described the testimonies of Alhaji Sanusi Mato, an ex-convict of 1995 coup plot made against him at the just concluded sittings of the

Oputa Panel in Kano as false. He described Sanusi Mato as a fraudster.

Yakasai said in a three-page prison note: "Sanusi Mato: Fraudster, a sinking ship," which was smuggled out and made available to the



Emir of Kano, Alh. Ado Bayero

press in Abuja yesterday, that Mato was a "fraudster and a liar."

He said that Mato claimed that the late General Yar'adua had written him on his
contd. on pg 2

Parents ask ASUU to embrace negotiation

As criticisms trail the refusal of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) to participate in the activities of the committee on university autonomy and other related matters, parents have asked the union to return to the negotiation table, to resolve their grievances.

The National Parents Teachers Association of Nigeria (NAPTAN) which at the weekend responded to the ultimatum given by the union to government, said that ASUU should yield to government's plea to enter into dialogue into the various issues raised by the union.

The president of the association, Alhaji Babs
contd. on pg 2



President Olusegun Obasanjo (l) and Dr. Alex Ekwueme, Chairman, PDP Board of Trustees, during the party's Convention 2001, held at International Conference Centre, Abuja... Saturday. Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje.

Milosevic arrested

Former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic has been arrested and taken to prison, ending a heavily-armed standoff at his Belgrade villa.

The news came shortly after five single shots and a burst of automatic fire were heard at the Milosevic home where the ex-leader had been surrounded by police for nearly 36 hours.

A convoy of five cars was then seen speeding away from the scene. BK TV showed footage of the car carrying Mr Milosevic entering Belgrade's central prison and the security gates clos-
contd. on pg 2

NEWS

National ID cards kick off October

The Federal Government would recruit about 600,000 ad-hoc workers for the operations of the national identity card programme, scheduled to start in October this year, the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports.

"We are going to employ 600,000 ad-hoc workers to man the 120,000 polling units nationwide, we are expected to use five to six persons per unit, to register Nigerians for the issuance of the cards," the Minister of State for Internal Affairs, Alhaji Mohammed Shata, told NAN in Abuja at the weekend.

Shata said that the

workers would be recruited in a collaborative arrangement with the Department of Civil Registration (DNCR), INEC, and the National Population Commission (NPC) for the registration of eligible Nigerians.

He said in an interview, shortly after receiving the report of the tenders' analysis sub-committee for the national ID project, that while the registration of Nigerians was billed to start in October, the actual issuance of the cards would take-off in the first quarter of next year. The Minister said that the Federal Government had already approved N18.4

billion for the collaborative programme between DNCR, INEC and NPC to ensure the implementation of the project.

He, however, said that the National Assembly had only approved N7.4 billion of the amount in this year's federal budget for its take-off.

He solicited the assistance and co-operation of states and local governments, traditional rulers, and other community leaders to facilitate the smooth registration and eventual issuance of the cards.

Shata further appealed to the media to support the programme, by enlightening Nigerians on the benefits of

the identity cards and its relevance to national growth and development.

According to him, "the

national ID is beneficial to Nigerians, as it would enable them to be distinguishable from non-Nigerians and also

assist during electoral processes and demographic needs."

Milosevic *contd. from pg 1*

ing behind it.

A top official from ex-leader's Socialist Party, Vladimir Ivkovic, said Mr Milosevic had decided to give himself up of his own free will.

Government negotiators had spent several hours inside trying to secure a peaceful end to the stand-off, amidst speculation until the last minute that force would have to be used.

Mr Milosevic was thought to have been holed up in the villa with his wife and daughter and about 20 well-armed and possibly drunken bodyguards.

His defenders fought off a special police assault on the villa in the early hours of Saturday and Mr Milosevic earlier insisted that he would "not go to jail alive".

Serbian Deputy Prime Minister Zarko Korac told the BBC that the ex-president was in a distraught mental state prior to his arrest.

According to officials who had seen him, "he was unbalanced, he was threatening, showing his gun - he was

saying he would kill himself and his family," Mr Korac said.

This account is at odds with a statement given by an apparently relaxed and cheerful Mr Milosevic that was broadcast on Belgrade's Radio B92 only 24 hours earlier.

Mr Milosevic faces charges in Yugoslavia of corruption and theft of state funds.

He is wanted on war crimes charges by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

But, addressing a news conference in Belgrade, Serbian Interior Minister Dusan Mihajlovic said he would not be arrested on the international indictment for war crimes.

The minister made it clear that he would not be extradited to the Hague.

The arrest coincides with the expiry of a US deadline for the Yugoslav government to detain the former president or risk losing substantial American economic aid and loans from the International Monetary Fund and

the World Bank.

The White House has said nothing publicly about the situation, partly in an effort to avoid complicating matters further for the Yugoslav authorities.

US officials had indicated that the arrest of Mr Milosevic would be regarded as an important first step but Washington still wants to see him brought before the war crimes tribunal in The Hague.

A decision on whether to release some \$50m of aid is expected on Monday; but despite the fact that President Kostunica shows no signs of preparing to extradite Mr Milosevic, US officials say the Bush administration is expected to recommend that the funds be released.

The UK has welcomed the arrest in the name of people seeking peace and justice in the Balkans.

"It is another important step towards bringing Milosevic and his cronies to book for their crimes against humanity," Foreign Secretary Robin Cook said.

population *contd. from pg 1*

protection of young ones," adding that the child-bearing behaviour of today's young people will do much to determine whether Nigeria is able to achieve a decline in population growth rates, it says.

Other issues that are of particular importance to the population and development situation in Nigeria, as contained in the draft, include reproductive health which is a state of complete physical, mental and social well being, and not merely the

absence of disease or infirmity.

The draft states that individuals, in the exercise of their rights under the reproductive health issue, should be free to make decisions concerning reproduction free of discrimination, coercion and violence as expressed in the human rights documents.

"In the exercise of this right, individuals should take into account, the social, economic and emotional needs of their children and

their responsibilities towards the community, respect for the reproductive rights of all Nigerians is a cornerstone of the national policy on population," it says.

It notes that although knowledge of family planning is considerably higher than its use, activities shall be expanded at all levels to provide wiser availability and choice of family planning services, by government and non-governmental organisations.

Obasanjo *contd. from pg 1*

poor performance since assumption of office.

"Our people have been cheated and neglected for too long and all we are saying is that the south-west has no business ruling this country for 8 years when the zone is not producing the economy that sustain the country."

Dr. Marshall Harry disclosed that he has the mandate of his people to speak on their determination to produce the next president of this country said that he has no presidential ambition now or in the near distant future but that the south-south minorities should produce the presidential candidate in 2003.

He said, "I am only sensitising our people on their rights. I have not thought of being a Governor what more of a president. But let me make it clear that if given the chance to rule this country I would perform better than anybody, but that is not my agenda."

"The person who would rule this country from the South-South zone would naturally emerge from the system. Already moves are

on from Edo to Cross River States and so on to talk and realign our positions with a view to getting a suitable presidential candidate who will get our collective mandate to vie for the presidency," he said.

The national officer dusted Governor Peter Odilli

of River State for standing against a south-south presidency as according to him "Odilli is still under military mentality hangover as he is slow and sluggish in appreciating the tenets of modern democracy."

He described the Governor's second term

Parents *contd. from pg 1*

Animasahun, said: "the two parties should return to meaningful dialogue, to iron out the points still in dispute in the present stalemate.

"Parents' forum of universities in Nigeria, hereby passionately plead with ASUU to avert any strike or lock-out in our universities.

"The current face-off between ASUU and Federal Government seriously calls to question the sincerity and genuine commitment to the much talk-about revamping of the collapsing state of education in the country."

Apparently in its effort to respond to the 21-day ultimatum which expired on Monday, and avert a general strike, the ministry of Education has released N253.7 million for the implementation of the May

25, 1999 agreement with ASUU.

In a letter to ASUU national president, Dr. Oladipo Fashina said that N32 billion would be required as supplementary allocation for the rehabilitation and improvement of remuneration of staff, "an amount not included in the total budgetary allocation for the education sector this year."

He gave an assurance that the white papers on the various visitation panel reports would be released.

He begged ASUU to participate in the activities of the committee on autonomy of universities, saying: "it is in demonstration of its belief in wide consultation that the committee on universities autonomy and other related matters was set up with ASUU as member."

campaigns for Obasanjo as the highest stage of psychopancy and mediocrity as the president has not justified in words and deeds the over 1.4 million votes he got during the presidential elections from River State.

He said "all we are saying is that we want a PDP president from the south-south. If our party refuses to endorse any candidate from the southern minority, then any party that endorses the candidacy of a south-south candidate would carry the day."

travails in prisons, but wondered why Mato could not present the letter nor give details of its contents.

According to him, "Mato is a crook who specialises in name-dropping to achieve his dubious means", adding that the petitioner's claims that he is a cousin to retired Col. Lawal Gwadabe and that he knew Yar'adua were false.

"He has no family relationship with Gwadabe, but sticks to Gwadabe like a tick, sucking blood and likes, to remain at the corridors of power," Yakasai added

Yandaba *contd. from pg 1*

areas of Kano, said the Kano Emirate Council would complement the efforts of security agencies at all levels through increased surveillance and parental control.

Alhaji Ado Bayero, also called on parents to monitor activities of their children and instructed *Imams* to pray for peace and security in the state.

Meanwhile, the Kano state governor, Alhaji Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso, has declared that his government will do everything possible to protect lives and property in the state.

Alhaji Kwankwaso

apparently disturbed by the terrorist activities in Kano metropolis said security would be beefed up and anyone caught disturbing peace "would pace the full weight of the law, no matter his positions or connection in the society."

Daily Trust investigations further revealed that stalwarts of political parties in the state supported most of the hoodlums. A police source, who pleaded anonymity, disclosed that politicians in Kano failed over 12 members of the 'Yandaba groups during the lat public raid.

Yakasai *contd. from pg 1*

Yakasai said in the note that Mato should explain to Nigerians "what he wants from this government, whether he wants to be rehabilitated and why he has to soil Yakasai's name to do so."

The note detailed how Yar'adua met Mato in Owerri prison and later at Port Harcourt prison and he (Yar'adua) directed that Mato should be fed from outside on his account.

But Yar'adua had to stop later "when he got tired of

Mato's incessant demands."

Yakasai also stated that although he and Mato were in Owerri prison but were in separate cells for only three days before Mato's release. "We had never known each other before we have never discussed such an issue," he stressed.

He advised the government and Nigerians "to always be wary of such 419 people", concluding that "he who destroys others in order to succeed would have destruction awaiting him."

NEWS

Rector wants better deal for polytechnics

The Rector of the Federal Polytechnic, Bida, Niger State, Engineer Umar Sani-Ango, has called for the immediate implementation of the Adamu Yabani Committee on the future of Polytechnics in Nigeria.

Engineer Sani-Ango made this call in his welcome address to the meeting of Council of Heads of Polytechnics and Colleges of Technology (COHEADS) in Bida at the weekend.

The rector pointed out that the implementation of the Yabani recommendations would make it possible for the polytechnic system to develop and attract high-calibre personnel.

"There must be a scheme whereby retiring rectors can be efficiently attracted to remain within the system, as the universities do," Engineer Sani-Ango said.

He also urged the Federal Government to remove the disparity in the salaries of polytechnic and university graduates as well as the law that makes it impossible for polytechnic staff to enjoy HATISS 15 like their university counterparts.

This, he said, creates the

From Akinade Adeniji, Minna

impression in the eyes of society that polytechnics are inferior to universities.

"I believe that if the recommendations of the Adamu Yabani Committee on the future of polytechnics are implemented, we would have taken a significant step towards this, as well as the general improvement of polytechnic education in this country," Engineer Sani-Ango stated.

He disclosed that the Federal Polytechnic, Bida, had in its 24 years of existence maintained its academic standards as a centre of excellence for the 17 National Diploma and 22 Higher National Diploma programmes accredited for it to offer by the National Board for Technical Education (NTBE).

The courses, he said are mostly in the fields of engineering, applied sciences, environmental and management studies.

The rector enjoined the heads of the nation's polytechnics to "extensively deliberate and come up with far-reaching resolutions on problems affecting the tech-

nological advancement of this country in line with the new world order which integrates telecommunications with the use of technology."

Niger state governor, Engineer Abdulkadir Kure, in his address said his government had put in place measures to enhance the teaching and learning of science and technology.

He said his administration had designated some schools solely for science and technical studies.

"This is aimed at enabling the state to fill its quota in institutions of higher learning," he averred.

Governor Kure, who was represented at the occasion by his commissioner for education, Alhaji Abubakar Daja, acknowledged the assistance of the Educational Tax Fund (ETF) in its educational programmes.

"The future of Nigeria lies in polytechnic education whose graduates should be job creators rather than job seekers," Kure said.

He, however, cautioned polytechnic teachers on the danger of incessant strikes that unnecessarily elongate students' stay in school.

Federal civil service may be re-structured

The Federal Civil Service may be re-structured if the Federal Government accepts proposal to split the Department of Finance and Supplies/Administration into separate departments.

Sources in the Presidency said at the weekend in Abuja that the Office of the Accountant-General of the Federation (AGF), has proposed to government the splitting of the Finance and Supplies/Administration Department.

The sources said that if the proposal is accepted by government, a new Finance

Department would be created to be headed by officers drawn from the Office of the Accountant-General of the federation.

It was learnt that the Supplies and Administration Department, also to be created from the separation, would, however, be headed by career administrative officers.

Sources said that the initiative is not new to the service, noting that a similar suggestion had been earlier made to the Federal Government by the Accountant General's Office during the tenure of Alhaji

Gidado Idris as Secretary to the Federal Government and Head of Service.

According to the sources, the suggestion was rejected by the then government because it was not convinced by the arguments advanced by the office of the accountant general in support of the move.

Man, 22, dies swimming in hotel

A 22-year-old man, Olayinka Salako, died while swimming in the Hamdala hotel swimming pool in Kaduna,

From Austin Odo, Kaduna

Friday. Olayinka who lived in Mando village, a Kaduna suburb, was reported to have "lost control of himself" in the swimming pool, but could not be rescued immediately, till he drowned.

Although the hotel authorities are claiming ignorance, investigations by *Daily Trust* revealed that after noticing that Olayinka had died, some workers initially took the body to the hotel's clinic, and later, the Barau Dikko Specialist Hospital where morgue attendants could not accept the body due to the bad state of their facilities.

"They brought the body here around 4:00 p.m., and I told them our mortuary is not in a shape to take in any corpse now, so I advised them to go to the 44 reference

Don't succumb to excessive control

-Bishop warns Govt-owned media

lic media to "listen to the people, interpret their moods and convey exactly that to government without fear or favour."

He further admonished them not to feel scared of telling government what the people thought of their actions, saying that they would be doing government a disservice if they hid the truth as government would continue to wallow in self-deceit until things went out of control.

The Bishop particularly challenged the media to ensure government was informed of the public's reaction to bad policies "like the deregulation of the oil sector currently being considered by the government."

The cleric particularly urged the media to lead the

current war against corruption, stating that they should expose the social malaise in all its facets no matter whose ox was gored.

Onaiyekan observed that there was no way the war against corruption, could succeed without an effective media, stressing that the public could not trust their leaders for information in that regard as they were those on whom the searchlights were being beamed.

He lamented that the hope for a better Nigeria since independence had remained in the doldrums, but alerted that even the "suspended hope" Nigerians still maintain for their nation would soon fizzle out if nothing was done to better the plight of the ordinary man.

Northern petrol marketers call MASSOB's bluff

The Kano State wing of the Independent Petroleum Marketers' Association of Nigeria (IPMAN) has vowed to retaliate any attack on its members by the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB).

In a joint statement with National Association of Transport Owners (NATO) and the Petroleum Tankers Drivers Union (PTDU), they threatened to return fire for fire if any north-bound petrol tanker was attacked by mem-

From Musa Umar Kazaure, Kano

bers of MASSOB.

The associations, which spoke through the IPMAN state chairman, Alhaji Awwal Rimi Mai Shadda, cautioned the Federal Government to wade into the matter before it degenerated into a national disaster.

He noted that their associations will not fold their arms and watch their members killed or maimed and their wealth destroyed without compensation.

The associations expressed concern over the abuse of human rights of other citizens, saying "we are not afraid of anybody. We shall retaliate with utmost speed and violence to any unprovoked attacks aimed at disestablishing our legitimate business in any part of this country."

They also regretted that during the OPC mayhem in Lagos and other parts of the country, over 1000 trucks and their members' property worth millions of naira were destroyed.

hospital mortuary," a morgue attendant told *Daily Trust* at the Barau Dikko Hospital. It was later confirmed that Olayinka's body was deposited at the 44 hospital mortuary.

Our investigations further revealed that one Timothy Ato, a Hamdala hotel staff reported the incident to the police who were preparing the autopsy report in readiness for burial before the deceased's father intercepted it.

"I don't see any need for all these, the cause of death is clear, there is nothing anyone can do now. I just want to go and bury my son peacefully. I have no reason to make a case," the father was reported to have told the police, who confirmed the incident, saying they prepared legal papers from a magistrate court to enable them release the corpse to Mr. Salako.

More than 48 hours after the incidents however, the hotel's public relations officer, Hafsatu Lawal, told *Daily Trust* that neither she nor any management staff was aware of the incident, even as other employees confirmed it. Efforts to see the hotel's manager proved futile as his hostile secretary said he was not prepared to comment on it.

This is the second of such mysterious deaths in the hotel in the last 12 months after a similar incident on October 1, last year. Customers who spoke to *Daily Trust* at the swimming pool expressed serious concern that mysterious deaths such as these are likely to affect their further patronage. Just as the hotel's business is just picking up after the religious crisis in Kaduna last year which greatly affected the patronage of hotels in the state.



Minister of Information and National Orientation Prof. Jerry Gana (left); Deputy Senate President, Alh. Ibrahim Mantu; and NTA DG Ben Murray Bruce chatting during a workshop for CEOs and News Executives of Broadcast stations in Abuja... recently. Pix: Felix Onigbinde.

NEWS

VC warns against university satellite campuses

The Vice Chancellor of the Benue State University, in Makurdi, Prof. David Ker, has advised university authorities to strictly monitor the academic programmes of their satellite campuses to avoid cheapening their degrees and certificates.

Prof. Ker, who spoke to journalists in Makurdi on Friday, regretted that the satellite campuses had been abused. He said that although Nigerians needed education, they should not obtain it at all costs as if it were a do or die affair.

"In some of the satellite campuses, students are taught by unqualified lecturers." The vice chancellor observed, adding that this was detrimental to the image of the nation's institutions and that most of the graduates

would not be proud of their certificates.

Prof. Ker supported the guidelines laid down by the Federal Government for institutions wishing to run satellite campuses, saying that it would bring sanity into the academic programmes.

On incessant strikes in the country's institutions of

higher learning, the university Don said that it was causing instability to the academic calendar of the institutions and was affecting the student's future.

He urged ASUU to dialogue with the Federal Government to avert any strike this year in the interest of academic peace and development.

FG re-awards contract for national ID

The Federal Government is to award contract for the supply of equipment needed to produce the national identity card in June this year, the minister of state for Internal Affairs, Alhaji Mohammed Shata, said in Abuja at the weekend.

"All things being equal and by our technical arrangement, contract for the sup-

ply of equipment for the national identity card will be finalised in June," he said.

He told NAN that the Federal Executive Council (FEC), would soon deliberate on the matter after considering the reports of the high-powered implementation committee and that of the technical committee of the project, in order to enable the government to finally award the contract by that month.

The minister disclosed that the Department of National Civil Registration (DNCR) had embarked on a massive rehabilitation of its facilities, offices and centres nationwide, in readiness for the take-off of the project.

Shata said that the DNCR in collaboration with INEC and the National Population Commission (NPC), was making concerted efforts to ensure a smooth implementation of the "much awaited" national ID.

"The implementation

The Edo State contingent to this year's pilgrimage to Mecca have been sent packing from the holy land by Saudi Arabian authorities due to the outbreak of cerebrospinal meningitis in their camp, six days to the official date they were supposed to have returned from Medina.

Confirming the story to *Daily Trust* in a telephone interview yesterday, Alhaji M.S. Momodu Kelebe, the Oba of Agbiede who is also

Saudi authorities drive Edo pilgrims over CSM

From Shehu Abubakar, Benin City

the vice president of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs said those affected are still receiving treatment from Saudi health officials at a restricted area.

"I do not know the number of people affected by the disease, but I know the chief Imam of Iyaro mosque in Benin city is affected and is still there. I was told he was not given vaccination before he left. The official concern only arranged for vaccination certificate (yellow card) and gave him to enable him to travel," he said.

The Edo State Pilgrims Welfare Board has been under serious attack lately by the Edo Muslim Community. They accuse the board of being insensitive to the welfare of Muslims during their holy pilgrimages. Recently the state chairman of the Su-

preme Council for Islamic Affairs, Alhaji J.E. Abubakar, and the state Chief Imam, Alhaji Edosomwa to led thousands of Muslims to the Government House in Benin and called for the dissolution of the Pilgrims Welfare Board.

Alhaji Isa Ojifor, one of the pilgrims to this year's hajj who could not depart through Edo State even though he is an indigene of the state residing in Benin City alleged that "the officials in the state were not after the welfare of the pilgrims. I went and paid at Abuja where I know I will be taken care of. Look at what happened when 19 pilgrims from Edo State got their visa delayed. All the officials abandoned them in Benin and left for Saudi Arabia. It was Allah who helped them secure their visa and depart on their own without any guide," he said.

Nigerian youths threaten Obasanjo

Nigerian youths have threatened the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo with a massive rally if he continues to marginalize them in matters relating to the welfare of the entire Nigerian citizens of which 70 per cent are youths. The administration is

From Musa Umar Kazaure, Kano

electoral pledges in 2003.

The National Youth Alliance said it plans to actively participate in the May 29th, 2001 2nd anniversary of the return of democracy with its own separate theme which will be "Democracy as a tool for Youth Development," and called on its coordinators at zonal, states, local government levels, to submit names of their representatives by the end of April.



Obasanjo

also cautioned to stop taking youths for granted, and should immediately establish programmes that will enhance the socio-economic well-being of the Nigerian youth.

These are part of the resolutions adopted at the end of the 2nd council meeting of National Youth Alliance held in Kano. The communiqué signed by its national President, Sagir Ibrahim and national Secretary-General, Bala Isa Lore, called on President Olusegun Obasanjo to forget his intended fuel increase because the youths will fight the issue to the finish.

The council also enjoined Nigerians to resist the return of the military to political power, appealing to Nigerian electorate to shun money politics and vote for competent and honest leaders who can deliver and redeem their

NUC security assault *Daily Trust* photographer

By Ikenna Okpani

A photojournalist with *Daily Trust* Newspaper, Mr. Felix Onigbinde, was beaten to coma last Wednesday by security men guarding the gates of the National Universities Commission in Maitama, Abuja.

Mr. Onigbinde said the security men asked him to give them money before entering the premises.

The photographer who was on assignment to cover a seminar organised by the NUC for deans of the faculties of sciences and engineering of all Nigerian Universities showed his ID card to the security men who threw it away and pounced on him.

Daily Trust gathered that the security men at the NUC have been permanently extorting money from commercial photographers who come to the commission to do business.

Mr. Onigbinde was in the

company of Mr. Olamikan Gbenga of *Vanguard News-*

papers who also had a taste of the beating for trying to rescue his colleague.



Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) president, Comrade Adams Oshiomhole (centre), leading labour activists to the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) headquarters in Abuja during the recent rally against deregulation of petroleum products. Pix: Felix Onigbinde.

Jigawa assembly suspends foreign trips for Gov., others

From Bala Mohammed Nasiru, Dutse

All foreign trips by the Jigawa State Governor, his deputy and other government officials have been suspended by the state's house of assembly until a comprehensive report on the previous trips by the governor and his executive as well as other top officials of government has been done.

This resolution came after a motion was jointly sponsored by Hon. Sani Magaji (Binin Kudu) and Hon. Ibrahim Nuhu Sara. The legislators de-

manded that report of all the trips undertaken by the governor, his deputy and all top



Gov. Turaki

government officials since the inception of the administration be submitted to the House of Assembly latest by 2nd April this year.

In his contribution to the debate, Hon. Sa'idu Ibrahim Nuhu said that as people's representatives, they had an obligation to impose restraint on the frequent foreign trips by the members of the executive arm of government in view of the series of complaints from the public against such trips.

In his contribution, Hon. Ahmed Garba (Hadejia) demanded that all members involved in such trips should also forward their report on such trips as it will help the house in ascertaining the benefit of the trips.

The house also gave those affected up to 2nd of April to submit their reports to the house.


DAILY TRUST
EDITORIAL

ECOWAS' Ivan the Terrible

The rampaging sabre of Charles Ghankay Taylor of Liberia appeared to have been caged in its scabbard when in 1997, the rebel leader transformed into the democratically elected President with the support of ECOWAS. Not a few heaved a sigh of relief. With hundreds of West African troops sacrificed, peace was finally brought to that war-ravaged country.

Five years after, it has become regrettably clear that Taylor, far from being caged, has exported his immense capacity to brew and relish crisis to other countries in the sub-region.

Rather than rebuild his war-ravaged country as he promised Liberians during his campaigns, Charles Taylor has instead chosen to recreate West Africa in his own image.

At home, the Liberian economy still remains in tatters – electricity is such a luxury that our NEPA will be revered in Liberia. Unemployment is about 70 percent. Ex-combatants in the 1989-1996 civil war still roam the streets and are responsible for the ever-increasing crime rate in the country.

National reconciliation has not fared any better as Taylor has prepared the hemlock of treason for his political opponents. Alhaji Kromah and Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and other rival politicians have been hounded out of the country.

Not satisfied with his havoc at home, Taylor has expanded his sphere of evil influence to Sierra Leone and Guinea. It is no longer news that Liberia, under Charles Taylor, has been the bedrock and mentor of the Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (RUF), the rebel force that unleashed an orgy of hair-raising amputations and decapitations on their fellow Sierra Leoneans, the bestiality of which is unprecedented in the history of West Africa. The democratically elected government of Ahmed Tejan Kabbah has forever been running from pillar to post to contend with this genie called Taylor, while the latter relishes in the wealth he makes from arming the rebels in exchange for diamonds.

No sooner had ECOWAS, on November 10, 2000, negotiated a ceasefire in Abuja between the RUF rebels and Sierra Leonean government than Charles Taylor extended his penchant to destabilise other countries to Guinea. Taylor had allegedly vowed never to forgive Guinea for contributing troops to ECOMOG. His incursion into Guinea has provoked a refugee crisis, the scale of which the United Nations' High Commission for Refugees described as the worst human tragedy in modern history.

In spite of all these, ECOWAS countries have continued to explore peaceful means to improve the relations among member-countries and promote peaceful co-existence in the sub-region.

In 1998, President Taylor requested for ECOMOG troops along his country's border with Guinea. The request was granted. Last year, he promised to turn over a new leaf describing the Guinean President, Lansana Conte as his "great African brother".

When other West Africa countries came to Abuja to participate in the inauguration of the ECOWAS Community Parliament, a body that would further enhance peaceful co-existence in the sub-region, Liberian delegation refused to show up. Again, when a delegation of ECOWAS set up to explore the possibility of resolving the differences amongst the countries of Mano River Union, Liberia declared the ambassadors of Sierra Leone and Guinea *persona non grata* and gave them seven days to leave Liberia. This action, no doubt, nipped the efforts of ECOWAS in the bud.

Is it not ironical that it was at the request of ECOWAS member-countries that the United Nations' Security Council toned down the regime of sanctions which it imposed on Liberia by delaying its commencement by two months?

Certainly, West African countries have had enough of the wiles and guiles of Charles Taylor and it is high time they allowed him to stew in his own juice by allowing free reign and immediate effect to the UN sanctions on Liberia.

MONDAY COLUMN

Fuel shortage and deregulation

By: Aminu Iyawa

The problem of fuel shortage in this country has reached fever-pitch in the last few months. At least, we have not had it so bad here in Kaduna since the advent of our nascent democracy. And going by the reports from other parts of the nation, the situation is the same everywhere.

Fuel shortage-anywhere at all, results in hardships for the people. Because without the movement of vehicles, not only does economic activity stop, but life itself is put on hold. Everything we eat, sell or buy has to be transported from somewhere; the seaport, the city, the village or the farm.

While fuel shortages in the south started only a few years ago, the phenomenon is not particularly new to the people on this side of the Niger, who have been suffering since 1986 when the then military government, in its effort to meet the demands of the IMF/World Bank, through the Structural Adjustment Programme SAP, increased the pump price of petrol from 15 kobo to 39 kobo and diesel from 11 kobo to 29 kobo. It was in the wake of the anticipated increase at the time, that buying fuel became a nightmare for the poor majority.

As both the government and the labour have drawn the battle-line, it is increasingly becoming clearer who will have the upper hand at the end of the day. Never before in the history of this country has a leadership insisted on the implementation of an "unpopular" policy, with such strident arrogance and will-power. Not even the (mock) protests staged by the Nigeria Labour Congress throughout last week have deterred the government from its, intention of deregulating the downstream sector of the oil industry.

At many fora, President Olusegun Obasanjo has reiterated that "there was no going back on the plan". Vice President Atiku Abubakar has been even bolder in his approach. He told journalists over the weekend that the NLC membership constitutes less than one per cent of the country's population and cannot, therefore, claim to be representing the people. This berating, if anything, casts doubts on the labour union's ability to stop the government in its drive on the issue.

For many Nigerians, however, the problem is not paying more at the pump stations, but rather, having the commodity constantly available. Because since the 1986 increase when hoarding and smuggling became a gold mine, filling stations have become conduits for the perpetrators who become instant millionaires. Although the construction of a standard filling station is estimated to cost not less N5 million, new ones are springing up daily throughout the country, even in odd places.

According to Vice President Atiku Abubakar, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), is the major culprit in the crises, accusing it of "not proffering solutions, but rather, always positioning itself to benefit from the suffering of Nigerians".

To this, I say: hail to the chief. At least, half of the problem is now solved, going by the adage that says: the solution to a problem is realizing the existence of the problem in the first place. Therefore, as premature as it may

seem, deregulation is not just the best answer, as far as I can see, but the only solution to this perennial situation that defies everything else.

The government should, however, expect the worst from these gold-diggers whom it wants to dislodge, as they are a *mafia* who would go to any length to see that they match strategy with strategy, to protect their investments.

For instance, there are currently over 7000 estimated trucks that are involved in the lifting of the three popular commodities: PMS, AGO and DPK - Petrol, Diesel and kerosine in the layman's language. The question, therefore, is: what becomes of all these trucks, if and when the supply of fuel becomes normal? I raise this question because, even the most "tokumbo" of these 33 thousand-litre trucks cost nothing less than N2 million. And since the crisis begun about 14 years ago, bridging and smuggling were the two factors that kept the business booming.

Bridging from the south to the north currently fetches around N150,000 while smuggling fetches N1 million or more depending upon luck. What is at stake here for the perpetrators is: with the availability of fuel after deregulation, there will be no more bridging as the PPMC pipeline network to the various depots will start functioning. The trucks can only do local lifting which fetches not more than N8000.00

Would these truckers and their owners be contented with N8000.00 naira per day, and may be, twice a week depending on their luck? And if the pricing becomes right, and at par with our neighbouring countries, there will also be no more smuggling. Would they, therefore, just sit tight and wait for another opportunity?

Converting the tanker-trucks to open-body would also not yield anything as they are already saturated, particularly with most industries operating below capacity, while the jumbo contracts, that used to come from fertilizer companies are no more, because production has stopped.

These are vital questions that need answers. For unless these people are rehabilitated, they can be a nuisance in the face of the whole exercise. It is easier to deal with those on the NNPC payroll who have been conniving with them. They can be booted, axed, retired, transferred, but what do you do with a veteran smuggler, who after a single deal, can afford a new bride or any kind of *tokumbo* an oversea's trip? Any psychologist can tell you that they would not let go easily.

Not letting-go easy had been the reason why the crisis was sustained. For all these years that the people have been suffering, fuel has always been available outside the city limits. You can drive from Port Harcourt to Katsina and Yola to Yelwa in Kebbi State; the black market supply has never dried. Yet we blindly kept on attributing the scarcity to inadequate supply.

The challenge before Nigerians now, is that we are faced with choosing between two evils: one; support the deregulation and pay more, or two; support the status quo that perpetuates hardships and still pay more at the black market. I would certainly cast my vote for the former. But on condition that the government goes about the deregulation as recommended by the report of the Special Committee on the Review of Petroleum Products Supply and Distribution.

Both the majority and the minority reports agreed on the fact that any increase in the price of petroleum products should be gradual. That in essence would give Nigerians time to settle. Because most civil servants are yet to fully enjoy their new salary structure, as they are owed months in arrears, while the rest of the population battles with poverty.

The administration should not, therefore, allow the International Monetary Fund (IMF), to push it too hard on this sensitive issue. Because should the wall collapse, the victims will be the government and its people.

Aminu Iyawa is a Kaduna-based media consultant and a member of Daily Trust Editorial Board

LETTER OF THE DAY

Keep it up, Maina Waziri

Since the scrapping of the PTF by the Obasanjo regime, many interim chairmen were appointed to settle the debts of the dissolved PTF, but unfortunately, they failed. When Alhaji Maina Waziri came as a debt-payment chairman, he played a tremendous role to settle over 60 percent of the debtors.

This is a real advancement by the Alhaji Maina Waziri who is also a special adviser to the President Obasanjo.

I wish he will carry on his good work to settle the remaining contractors as soon as possible.

Please keep it up.
Yusuf Sanni Yassauta is
of P.O. Box 249 Funtua.

Opinion

Igbo: A race without a vision?

By Aminu Mohammed

The return to democracy in May, 1999, was a good omen for the Igbo who have now constituted the opposition in Nigeria.

Talk about marginalisation, Igbos would say nba! If you mention abandonment, the Igbos would say they are. Poverty is for the Igbos, lack of basic amenities like portable water, good roads and constant or near constant electricity supply are eluding social needs in Igboland.

All these, are good enough to set the Igboman on opposition. But while Nigerians sympathise with the plight of the Igboman, how determined is he to set a mission with a vision for his freedom from bondage?

Agreed that there was a black phenomenon in Nigerian history between 1967-70, when Igbos felt they were brave enough to fight Nigeria by declaring the State of Biafra, which is today responsible for all their woes. The Igboman's miscalculation pushed him into his present dilemma and it appears 30 years after the civil war, this tribe called Igbo is yet to learn from history.

Agreed that democracy is to offer every individual the best things in life, but when people begin to abuse democracy, it becomes something different. Recent comments by some Igbo leaders call for attention and analysis and if left unchecked, these comments may lead to yet another anarchy.

After the 1967-70 civil war, there were reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction which were basically meant to heal the wounds of the ugly war but, recent happenings appear to be opening old wounds which may not augur well for the future of democracy in Nigeria.

The Igbos, who felt brave, energetic and enthusiastic to form a nation called Biafra complained of marginalisation, ethnic-cleansing and, most annoying, segregation in the Nigerian army and then went to war.

But then, 30 years after the ill-fated war, the Igbos are at it again. Having used all other avenues and failed, they now want to blackmail Nigeria with another gimmick claiming that the 2003 Presidency is a must for the Igboman.

Agreed, no Igboman has ever been duly elected as a president, but Nigerian history would be fair to the Igbos by mentioning Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and General Aguiyi Ironsi as two Igbomen who presided over the affairs of the country.

Recent comments by Governor Orji Uzor Kalu of Abia and other Igbo leaders are comments that should not be casually dismissed with a wave of the hand. Kalu, for instance, the Bakassi governor, is going too far not only on the president, but the entire nation. His media comments are no longer comments from a radical, but a man preparing for a bloodbath. Apart from his personal war with his party and his President, the Abia governor is gradually tasking the patience of Nigerians.

It is very unfortunate that those regarded as leaders are not as responsible as the electorate thought in 1999. For now, the Igbo leaders are discrediting themselves in the eyes of the ordinary Igboman who is keenly watching their utterances and steps.

On the issue of the 2003 Presidential elections, the Igbo seem to be divided on what they actually want. While some of the South-East governors like Chimaroke Nnamani of Enugu and Clement Nbadinuju of Anambra are clamouring for a second term for Obasanjo, the likes of Kalu are foreseeing bloodbath if Obasanjo is re-elected.

After the first Igbo summit in Enugu, it took the Igbos months before they could come out with a communiqué which, in the end, lacked substance. The communiqué was a far cry from the agitations of people like Kalu. It is surprising that ranting Igbos would fail to come out with a formidable voice that would seem like a well tailored agenda.

For now, what the Igbos need is a vision either for the future of the ordinary Igboman or an agenda for their political future. The race for the 2003 is far from going to the South east for the future of Nigeria cannot be mortgaged to a confused race that loudly barks, but lacks the power to bite.

This writer is not, however, anti-Igbo, but a sympathiser who is tired of their "nomadic prostitution in the affairs of this country". The Igboman is resourceful and purposeful but, for lack of good leadership, he has become a beautiful bride without a groom. The call for an Igbo President, come 2003 can only be possible if their leaders learn to be committed, dedicated and courageous.

Igbo leaders like Alex Ekwueme, Emeka Ojukwu, Emeka Anyaoku, Uzor Kalu, Ojo Maduekwe, Nnamani and their likes should reposition their agenda to conform with the wishes of the ordinary Igboman.

There is need for one voice, one cause and one mission in Igboland and unless the Igbo leaders identify their problems and tackle them within, they would continue to play the second fiddle, not because of their civil war criminal act, but because they lack a mission and a vision of purpose.

The Obasanjo administration is not the problem of the Igbo race, but it is historical. The Igboman's problem began when he saw himself as his own king and not a subject. The stateless societies in the pre-colonial Igboland are the genesis of the disunity of the Igboman.

People like Kalu and Maduekwe should think of how to re-write the Igbo history- for the present Igboman is the product of a people without leaders. That is why they cannot produce a presidential candidate come 2003.

Any attempt by the Igbo leaders to use Bakassi Boys or the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) to cause political anarchy or unrest would be resisted by Nigerians as they did 30 years ago.

Already, the former Senate President, Dr. Chuba Okadigbo, has warned the Federal Government to handle the MASSOB issue with seriousness and caution. Well, as an Igbo leader, there is no smoke without fire.

It is better for the Igbos to learn from history for the Biafran declaration of 1967 was a disaster to them and the consequences of the 21 century Igbo rebellion would be very, very devastating.

Aminu Mohammed wrote in from Abuja.

NEPA in Chains

By Salisu Na'inna Dambatta

It was the late journalist, Mr. Dele Giwa, who cried out in a masterpiece that the press was in chains. He listed a number of reasons to support and validate his observation then.

In this piece, the postulation, which is supported by facts, is that the much-criticized and much-blamed National Electric Power Authority (NEPA), is a big organisation with great potentials, but it is chained.

The chains that manacled the press which Dele Giwa made an issue of, were laws passed by the government.

In the case of NEPA, the chain was forged and put together by the people, that is, Nigerians, for whom the organisation was created. In other words, NEPA is a service organisation, whose area of specialisation is the steady generation and distribution of power to the public at a reasonable fee. But people impede the work of NEPA, only for the same people to turn around and blame NEPA for inefficiency or failure to serve them properly.

The impediments forced on NEPA by Nigerians include refusal by power consumers to settle their bills as and when presented. In foreign countries where power supply is constant, something we yearn for in Nigeria, the consumers pay their bills or get disconnected and prosecuted. If NEPA is not paid for services it rendered, it cannot pay its suppliers such as the Nigerian Gas Company, for services rendered to it in the process of generating transmitting and distributing power to us.

It is routine for the media to report cases of heinous vandalism of NEPA facilities by sundry criminals. NEPA

transformers are an easy prey. NEPA cables are fair game to Nigerian criminals. This is despite the 21 years or life jail-term the offence attracts. There is no public utility, possibly excepting the NNPC, that suffers more vandalism of its essential facilities than NEPA in this country. Kilometres of NEPA cables are stolen, its poles broken and transformers removed. This heavy part of the chain forced on NEPA affects its performance negatively to our national disadvantage.

In big cities, in medium towns, in villages and hamlets across the country where NEPA services are available, illegal tapping of its product, electricity, is common. People simply hook up for free, either from a neighbour's residence or directly from the near-by power lines. Some people take pride in this form of theft and this problem is part of the chain, which is crippling the ability of NEPA to serve us optimally. In fact, it is probably only in Nigeria that this problem is endemic. Sadly, it is mostly the people who are engaged in this unwholesome act that use the most foul language on NEPA whenever there is load-shedding or an interruption in power supply.

The desire to cut corners by some suppliers or importers of sub-standard cables from the Far East does not help NEPA. Sub-standard cables wired in residences or factories can lead to fire outbreaks and negatively affect NEPA installations in a neighbourhood. This is part of the chain that ties NEPA down.

If it is true that importers of power generating plants sabotage NEPA simply to have mar-

kets for their imported plants, government would be right to regulate power plant imports and punish those guilty of the alleged sabotage in the national interest.

Quack technicians constitute a portion of the chain that affects NEPA negatively. They tamper with NEPA facilities, often causing power interruptions and losses to NEPA. Yet, Nigerians engage them, though sadly, some quacks get electrocuted occasionally.

States and local governments want to electrify towns and villages. They by-pass the Rural Electricity Boards (REBs). They tap power from NEPA grid. Largely, the projects are designed and executed without involving NEPA until it is time to link the new system to the national grid. In cities, huge housing estates, power-guzzling factories and cottage industries are started without involving NEPA from the beginning. The local transformer is over-stretched and if it fails to cope with the demand forced on it, NEPA is blamed.

In addition to the chains put on the legs and neck of NEPA by some Nigerians, most consumers of electric power do not appreciate the influence of nature on power supply in this country. As the dry season sets in every year, the rivers that feed dams with water for generating hydro-power dry up. With less water, the ability to generate hydropower is reduced. Besides, storms and floods can destroy NEPA installations. When this happens, power is interrupted and NEPA gets the blame.

As an organisation managed by human beings, there could be inadequacies and self-inflicted difficulties within

NEPA. For instance, a number of NEPA staff have been found guilty of committing misdeeds in the past. Some of the misdeeds impeded the ability of NEPA to satisfy all of its consumers.

Given all the problems facing NEPA, it is the view of some Nigerians that it should be understood, appreciated and praised for its ability to survive the odds ranged against it. Consumers should, understand the problems NEPA is coping with and blame it less for shortcomings forced on it by the actions of some citizens as indicated in parts of this piece.

Successive governments have taken several and varied measures to support NEPA. Panels and commissions have looked into the problems of NEPA. Financial and managerial support have been provided to the authority. President Obasanjo felt so strongly about NEPA and its problems that he brought it under his direct supervision. The Buhari administration promulgated a decree that made vandalism of NEPA, NITEL and water supply installations a capital offence.

In addition to the massive financial support given to NEPA to achieve and sustain a minimum of 4,000 megawatts power generation by December 2001, some Nigerians are suggesting that special courts be created to try people who engage in acts that are capable of impeding the ability of NEPA to serve us well. Some security conscious Nigerians believe that it is only when adequate security measures to protect NEPA installations from vandalism are put in place that a large chunk of the chain on NEPA's legs could be broken.

Salisu Na'inna Dambatta is a Chief Information Officer in the Presidency.

Reflections on the Islamic financial system

By Rakiya Ibrahim Sanusi

As the world continues to promote globalisation and an interest-based capitalist system which has resulted in the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer, the case for an interest free financial economy is even more compelling.

The damaging effect of *riba* (interest) permeates all facets of life from government economies, businesses down to families and individuals. It has adverse effects on production and allocation of resources as well as on distribution of wealth. In Third World countries, we can clearly see the crippling effects of interest-based loans. Poor countries borrow money to pay off their mounting public sector debts; economies have become stagnant and unproductive.... The list is endless.

Developed countries are not excluded from the evil effects of interest - they also face national and foreign debts; consumers borrow and make purchases against their future earnings; the credit system encourages indebtedness leading to bankruptcy etc.

A good example of a conventional economy reeling from the effects of interest is Japan. Until recently Japan used to apply an unprecedented zero interest rate policy, however, since it changed its policy to an interest rate economy, stock prices have fallen and uncertainty has

mounted in recent weeks over the durability of Japan's economic recovery. Japanese banks are facing a mountain of debts and profits have declined or remained in the red as the sector faces problems stemming from a fragile economy, weak stock market and poor loan quality. Pressure is currently building for the Bank of Japan to return to the zero rate policy.

In advanced economies there is a gradual move towards non-interest based transactions. The benefits and the profitability of an interest free system is being recognised. We are now seeing the mergers of conventional banks with Islamic banks, many conventional banks are now offering Islamic financial services and Islamic investment funds are widely available in Europe and the United States. This development has been acknowledged by Abdullah Saif, Bahrain's Finance and National Economy Minister "The intellectual, ethical and innovative strengths of Islamic finance have enabled Islamic financial institutions to gain momentum in an international movement which has become increasingly aware of the possibilities of conducting financial activities in conformity with the principles of the Shariah."

With the advancement of the Islamic banking system, it is crucial that an international

Shariah board is established for the purpose of codifying the guidelines and standards of the operations and transactions offered by Islamic banks and financial institutions as laid down in the Holy Qur'an. The efforts of the Accounting Organisation for Islamic Financial Institutions, Bahrain, in the codification of a uniform set of accounting rules for Islamic financial institutions should be applauded. The very important role that the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) plays in giving financial assistance to Muslim member countries, which is largely free from conditions unlike those imposed by IMF, the World Bank and other international financing agencies should be applauded, as should the IDB's contribution to the cause of promoting active economic and trade cooperation among its members. Further, the roles of Bahrain and Malaysia as innovators in the development of the Islamic financial system should be acknowledged, particularly in the setting up of an Islamic money market to help alleviate the liquidity shortage currently faced by Islamic banks and financial institutions.

Oil rich Muslim countries, including Saudi Arabia should lead the way in supporting the Islamic financial system, patronising Islamic banks and encouraging the growth of the system. As Muslims we all have

a collective duty to play in ensuring the success of a truly Shariah compliant financial system. Patronage of these banks instead of conventional banks is a step forward in the right direction, in addition, honesty and sincerity in our dealings with one another will give confidence to and boost the growth of the system.

This new Islamic year, should be a time for reflection for Muslims. A time to reflect and to take more seriously the prohibition of *riba* (interest) by Almighty Allah and the resulting damaging effect that it has and will continue to have on societies. It is a time for radical changes, time for an overhaul of our system and time to move forward and put into action ways in which we can improve the Islamic financial system and provide purely Islamic financial services to Muslims and non-Muslims. Transactions of interest cannot be allowed to continue forever on the basis of necessity. It is time for Islamic countries to put aside their personal interests and approve licenses for the establishment of wholly Islamic banks and their financial systems interest. It is time for us to support the efforts of individuals and organisations that are committed and offer constructive criticism in the promotion of this equity and value based system.

Rakiya Ibrahim Sanusi is of the Institute of Islamic Banking and Insurance, London.

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CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW COMMITTEE
RECOMMENDS SINGLE 5-year TERM
FOR PRESIDENT
NEWS



YOUR LETTERS

The report is commendable but....

The report of the Special Committee on the Review of Petroleum products Supply and Distribution is commendable and comprehensive enough to give an insight into the problems of petroleum supply and distribution in Nigeria.

The main report and that of the minority submitted by the labour representatives are virtually saying that the same thing except that of the minority (whom I suppose represents those who are directly affected, in the sense that they pay for these products or services directly from their pockets) which is saying that you should first put right the "mess" in the sector before you proceed to do anything. I am, therefore, in complete agreement with the labour report.

Common sense dictates that you cannot get maximum benefit (both the government and the governed) from today's 'mess' that is,

the NNPC and its products and, therefore, for a successful deregulation and "appropriate pricing to be of benefit, you must deal with the following state of our refineries: Low capacity, gross mismanagement, excessive unit operating cost, bloated overheads, poor product distribution arrangements, low productivity, sabotage, inadequate technology input for necessary product and process upgrade, management that has all along been self-serving instead of nation serving (take a look at all the management staff of the whole set up they benefit more in person than the nation).

Until these factors are properly addressed, we can never be sure of the following:

-Efficiency and profit level of the sector.

-Profitable cost of refining a barrel of crude oil that will help the private investor to decide coming in or enable

the government determine the true level of subsidy.

-Level playing field in the sector to attract the private sector.

-The real motive of vandalism (is it political arising from bad governance or mere joining the band of wagon of eating the national cake)?

As soon as these issues are addressed, government should then proceed to create a social engineering measure of creating a buffer from the unpredictability of the market rule. Government should also come up with a social security net, a regime of anti-trust law, a consumer energy supply, efficient telecommunication services etc.

With these in place, then, there will be little disagreement about deregulation. It must be noted that the problem of petroleum sector goes beyond lack of deregulation. It is compounded by corruption, greed, and mafia-reign and elite interests. Deregula-

tion will not make them disappear; neither will it eliminate smuggling and massive sales and distribution fraud that are the hallmarks of the system.

We must not forget that we have had this question of deregulation and increase in price five times in nine years. How long shall we continue getting it wrong? We must also remember that the question of deregulation of 1998 failed because it was not accompanied by self-adjusting price mechanism.

Incidentally, what does the government actually want in deregulation? Is it efficiency, supply, availability, cheaper prices, empowerment of the private sector or just joining the chorus? Can all these noise be merely a policy thrust? Until the citizenry understand all these, I am afraid government can not be trusted with the success of the new one being promoted!

Adamu Yakubu, Constitution Road, P.O. Box 3607, Kaduna.

Obasanjo in thieves' den

It beats my imagination that President Olusegun Obasanjo does not bat an eye-lid over the series of stories of fraud perpetrated by his close aides or associates carried by newspapers on a regular basis.

Sometimes, I begin to feel that the newspapers are really wasting their time and scanty, resources carrying out these investigations on matters concerning the fraudulent acts of Obasanjo's aides when it is quite obvious that the President will definitely turn a deaf ear to such stories.

The consequences of what Obasanjo's seeming oversight portends, cannot be over emphasized. Apart from the fact that it can make a mess of the anti-corruption crusade, it also poses a ready point-of-reference to all those who believe that President Obasanjo's probe on the late Gen. Abacha's family is a mere vindictive measure to avenge the treatment meted out to him during the late

The Tribune newspaper

story of 14th January, 2001, captioned "Presidency aide buys \$20 million house", is endlessly a waiting reaction from the right quarters. Two months after the story hit town, the presidency has not reacted.

It is, thus, unbelievable that government has not deemed it fit to refute this story or carry out an investigation into the matter.

The whopping sum involved in this scandalous story is such that would have drawn the attention of any serious-minded administration, least of all one that is claiming to be an anti-corruption crusader.

From all indications, the impression that is created by President Obasanjo's anti-corruption crusade is that, unless you are his enemy, no qualms. Little wonder, the late Gen. Abacha's family are the only Nigerians being probed for alleged financial crimes. It is really regrettable!

Q/S Achum Udo, 68, Mission Road, Benin City Edo State.

Beware Dr. Haladu

Permit me a space in your paper to respond to the comment made by the Kano State Butcher's Association's legal secretary, Dr. Haladu magaji, in his interview in one of the Weekly Newspapers, over the state government's intention to relocate Kano Abattoir to Kwanar Dawakin international cattle market.

In that interview, Dr. Haladu described the move as unjustifiable, not minding the fact that the market and the new abattoir are meant for the development and

progress of the people. And if I may ask, what does Haladu know about human rights? I wonder what type of human rights he was referring to when he said that, the insistence of the state government on the relocation of the abattoir to Kwanar Dawakin international cattle market was an infringement upon "THEIR" fundamental human right.

The establishment of this unique market and the new ultra-modern abattoir, will, no doubt, go along way in creating jobs for the people.

Dr. Haladu went further to say that it was undemocratic of the state government to even think of taking such a step. Since Dr. Haladu, a Ph.D. holder could not understand the full meaning of subject, I would suggest that he goes back to school to acquire some knowledge of democracy. I can't understand how a democratic government which operates within the constitution of the land can be said to be doing something undemocratic.

Perhaps it was because of his failure to secure an ap-

pointment in kwankwaso's government that he now resorts to the criticism and campaign of calumny against the governor.

Let Dr. Haladu magaji know that the people of Kano State have since appreciated the efforts of the state government to improve their lots and are always praying for its successful tenure.

Bala Salihu Dawakin-Kudu, No. 1, Galadima Road, Kano.

Attention, Ben Muray-Bruce

Allow me space in your medium to express my disappointment with the Director, General of Nigerian Television Authority (N.T.A.), Mr. Ben Bruce, who as a guest on one of the NTA Jos programmes, showered praises on the governments of President Olusegun Obasanjo and Chief Joshua Dariye for their achievements even as the much anticipated democracy dividends continue to elude Nigerians.

It is ridiculous for Mr. Ben Bruce to jettison his watchdog

role for that of a praise-singer to an administration which cannot meet the aspirations of those who elected it.

Funny enough, while the programme was going on, N.E.P.A struck and light could not be restored until 6.p.m the following day. Mr Ben, I believe you will not see fault with that. Even uncle Bola Ige will agree with me that NEPA was better off during the Abacha regime.

Murjanatu .A. Sa'eed, Wadata Pharmacy, Jos, Plateau state.

Fagge L.G. Chairman: A rare gem.

On behalf of my self and friends, I wish to congratulate the chairman of Fagge Local Government, Alh. Suleiman Mohammed Chamber, for the execution of projects that have direct bearing on the lives of the people of the area.

Kudos also to the Councillors representing Kwaciiri and Rijiyar/Emo wards, Alh. Umaru Auwalu and Alh.

Abdullahi Shua'bu for the successful execution of projects in their various constituencies. These include: the building of dispensaries, culverts and roads to mention but a few.

We have no doubt that both the chairman and these two councillors are very good materials for future elections.

Abbas Rabiu Lawan-Rijiyar/Emo, P.O.Box 10673, Kano.

Caution: Zamfara state governor

The recent decision by the governor of Zamfara State, Alhaji Ahmed Sani, to build a N500, 000,000 Islamic Hotel in Abuja at a time when the State is in dire need of development is most unfortunate.

Governor Sani should be told that the conceived hotel is a misplaced priority for what the masses need now are basic amenities such as potable water, good roads, rural electrification and qualitative education among others.

Of major concern also

is the governor's recent trip to the Holy Land along with all who matter in his government. On his entourage was his Deputy, Secretary to the state government, and the Speaker of the State House of Assembly.

The question is: having travelled with the Deputy and the SSG, in whose care did the governor leave the administration of the state?

Governor Sani needs to sit tight and do the work he was elected to do instead of embarking on wasteful ventures and trips.

Sani Mohammed Kaura, Federal College of Education, Kano.



APP

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Obituary



SENATOR ADAMU AUGIE
(Chairman, Senate Committee on Navy)

With heavy hearts, yet total submission to the will of Almighty God, the National Executive Committee, NEC, of our great party, All People's Party, APP, and indeed all the members of our party, mourn the transition to eternal glory of our beloved and distinguished Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, **ADAMU AUGIE**, which tragic event occurred on Tuesday, March 27, 2001, along Funtua-Gasua Road.

He will be greatly missed by our great party, APP, his family, the people of Argungu Emirate Council, the Government and people of Kebbi State, the entire Senate and indeed, all Nigerians.

May God Grant His Gentle Soul Eternal Repose.


HIGH CHIEF ALLAMS BAROVBE
Ag. National Publicity Secretary

TRUST INTERNATIONAL

FOREIGN & DIPLOMATIC

Your excellency, the issue now in your country is your government's plan to confiscate five million hectares of land out of about 12 million hectares

from white farmers for redistribution to blacks. Why did it take Britain some 20 years after independence to think of this policy?

Thank you very much. The issue of historical background comes in. There were commitments that were made in 1979 at the Lancaster House Conference. The main problem now is what I call the unfinished business of the Lancaster House Conference because Great Britain, at that conference, made an undertaking that they were going to provide money, 75 million pounds, to pay for the compensation of the land that was going to be given for resettlement because the Zimbabwean Patriotic Front, the liberation movement, argued that Zimbabweans should not buy land that was taken from indigenous people by force by the colonialists. Britain made that undertaking. And the United States also made an undertaking that they were going to provide \$520 million to compensate the farmers for the land that was going to be used for resettlement purpose. By 1997, the new

The problem is Britain

—Zimbabwean envoy

Perhaps, so much noise and little sense have been made out of the plans by the Zimbabwean government to redistribute land to black peasants in that country. In this interview with the Foreign Desk Editor, Kevin Ebele Adinnu, the Zimbabwean High Commissioner to Nigeria, Ngoni Sengwe, looks at the issues from the Zimbabwean prism.

that the conditionalities coming along the way and accusing government of not resettling properly.... We are talking about 500 farmers at that time who owned 15 million hectares of the fertile land. At that time we were talking about 10 million indigenous people who did not get land.

We understand that the white farmers under the auspices of Commercial Farmers Union have changed their attitude to the government's position. They have been meeting although there is this division whether to tow the line of government or not. What pro-

are people who have four, five farms of 8,000 hectares each, which means about 16,000 football fields (to) one person when the average farm in EU is about 15 hectares. In Zimbabwe the average farm is 3000

hectares... So you can imagine the disproportion. And all the statistics that we have, it is only 10 per cent of the farms that are being utilized when the majority of the people are languishing in marginal lands.

Now your country feels very strongly about the plans by the Commonwealth to send a fact-finding team to your country. What is wrong in the team coming to your country?

I believe the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs has made it very clear. We do not have any problem with CMAG (Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group) or the Commonwealth. The problem is between Great Britain, a former Colonial power and Zimbabwe over the question of paying compensation; honouring the commitment they made at the Lancaster House conference. They reneged on that issue. Now it is the question of addressing that issue, the question of dialoguing with Great Britain.

What the Commonwealth can do is to send a mission to Great Britain to persuade them to honour what they promised in 1979. That is the issue... They are raising the issue of good governance and the rule of law. Yet the real issue is land distribution to address the imbalance in order to make sure that people have something to eat. They have a right to their land which was alienated from them by force.

The land issue is the main issue but some have brought up other issues like the outcome of the recent election, the opposition party, the judges' case and things like that and the fact finding mission is concerned with these other issues. What do you have to say to that?

All those issues are an obfuscation. The real issue is the question of land. They are trying to tag in other issues. The election came and went. The opposition has 56 seats.

They just lost one seat during a bye-election. Ours is a truly democratic country. We have had five elections since independence.

The question of the judge was a question that was dealt with by the government... Zimba-



Sengwe

bwe is not the first place where people discuss their own issue in their own house. They are domestic issues, internal affairs of a member state that the Commonwealth has no right to intervene because CMAG or the Harare Principle has addressed the question of military coup. In Zimbabwe, there was an election, there is a parliament and the parliament is functioning.

If somebody wants to create a problem in order to hide their responsibility on the question of land, nowhere in the world do we have a farm of 3,000 hectares belonging to one person. Even in Great Britain, it is not there. If the question of poverty is not addressed, then there is a problem...

Let us discuss your country's involvement in the Congo. Rwanda and Uganda claimed they had withdrawn their forces from the DRC but Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia are still there. Isn't it time to pull out to make way for a peaceful resolution of the crisis?

This issue was addressed by His Excellency when he was here during his state visit last year in which he explained very clearly that Zimbabwe has no territorial ambitions.

Zimbabwe went there in the context of the SADC (Southern African Development Community) allied forces just like you have ECOMOG and in ECOMOG, was it all the countries that were participating?... The SADC took a decision and Zimbabwe is part of SADC allied forces. The government of the Democratic Republic of Congo invited SADC allied forces. The same government has emphasised when those that were invited would leave. President Kabila has mentioned that if the invaders leave, then the SADC forces will leave.

Talking about Nigerian Zimbabwean relations, it appears Nigeria is the only one spending, having supported your country financially in your liberation struggle. What has Nigeria benefitted from your country?

It is a mutual relationship. Your president talked about African cooperation and integration where business persons from Nigeria will go to Zimbabwe and do business and vice versa... We have a delegation moving back and forth discussing how we can move forward in the context of African integration.

What of the joint-commission between Nigeria and Zimbabwe?

We have it. Arrangements have been worked out to convene that commission... To us, our primary purpose here is to ensure that there is effective relation between Zimbabwe and Nigeria in the spirit of African cooperation and integration and we are working for that, in particular, the question of land where we want to see the issue addressed in earnest...

“What the Commonwealth can do is to send a mission to Great Britain to persuade them to honour what they promised.”

Labour government in the United Kingdom reneged on that commitment as agreed at the Lancaster House. In addition, the Lancaster House constitution under which Zimbabwean got her independence has certain clauses that forbade government from taking over land to distribute to the landless majority because it was a willing buyer, willing seller (arrangement) which means government is to raise money in order to pay compensation.

But did the agreement give the British government a specific time frame to fulfill that condition?

The agreement was an undertaking. It is said of an English man that his word is his honour. So it was taken as such. It was taken in good faith and there were a lot of other witnesses to that but subsequently you find

posals have they really come up with?

We do not know the content of their proposal. They are yet to divulge them to the government but government is consistent that we must solve the land problem once and for all.

That is why a constitutional amendment was passed in 2000 which apportions the responsibility compensation to the former colonial power, the Great Britain. And this gave (the government) the right to appropriate land for resettlement. But this is done in a very systematic way by (giving them) the right to appeal if they think that their farms are designated wrongly.

Most of that has to do with one derelict farm, farms owned by overseas landlords and farms that are not utilized—multi farms. There



The British High Commissioner, Mr. Philip Thomas, presenting his letter of credence to President Olusegun Obasanjo at the State House last Friday.

Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje

TRUST INTERNATIONAL

AFRICA & THE MIDDLE EAST

36 feared dead in Lake Victoria accidents

At least 36 people are missing and feared dead in two separate boating accidents on Lake Victoria over the weekend.

A boat loaded with fish capsized as it was approach-

accidents

ing to dock Wednesday in Entebbe port, and all 22 people on board are believed to have drowned, said police

spokesman John Kimera.

Another ship loaded with ice and fish capsized in the same area on Thursday. There were seven survivors, but 14 others are missing and feared dead.

Kimera attributed the ac-

cidents to overloading of boats operating on the world's second-largest body of fresh water as well as bad weather.

Uganda has been hit by a series of accidents on its lakes, and blame has been placed on the government's neglect of the water transport sector.

Somali gunmen free UN hostages

Somali gunmen have released another two of the United Nations aid workers they kidnapped on Tuesday.

The two are Belgian Pierre-Paul Lamotte and Frenchman Mohamed Mohamedi. Two Britons, Bill Condie from Scotland and Roger Carter, are still being held.

Ten people were abducted when gunmen loyal to warlord Musa Sudi Yalahow attacked the Mogadishu offices of the humanitarian organisation, *Medicins sans Frontieres*.

Five other foreign aid workers and a Somali national were set free on Wednesday morning.

The latest release follows UN negotiations with Musa Sudi Yalahow and the intervention of community leaders in Mogadishu.

"The hostages are free to leave Mogadishu uncondi-

tionally... and fly from Gezira airport to Nairobi," said a spokesman for Musa Sudi Yalahow.

"They were released on humanitarian grounds. No money was paid, or demanded."

On the two Britons who remain in captivity, the spokesman said: "They are in good hands and I expect their release today."

UN spokeswoman Sonya Lawrence Green said: "Discussions continue between UN and Somali groups to secure their immediate release."

On Thursday, the UN Security Council demanded that all four UN workers should be freed and their abductors brought to justice.

Foreign aid workers have been targeted in Mogadishu by gunmen who see them as a lucrative source of foreign currency.

MSF says it has now suspended operations in the Somali capital.

Iran summons UAE envoy

Iran has summoned the ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to the foreign ministry this week to protest over three disputed islands in the Persian Gulf.

The envoy was told of Tehran's objection to Abu Dhabi's continued claim on the islands of Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs.

A spokesman for the Iranian foreign ministry said the islands were an inseparable part of Iran.

"The islands have always been Iranian and will always be an integral part of Iranian territory and sovereignty," the spokesman, Hamid-Reza Asefi said.

But he said Iran remained ready to hold unconditional talks with the UAE to remove misunderstanding.

Earlier in March the UAE's foreign ministry summoned the Iranian ambassador to protest over a visit to the islands by Iranian parliamentarians and over what it said were plans to settle Iranians on the islands.

The islands, which occupy a strategically important position at the mouth of the Gulf, were occupied by Iran in 1971 after Britain withdrew its forces from the region.

Iran seized the Greater and Lesser Tunbs in 1971 and annexed Abu Musa in 1992.

The three islands dominate the approach to the Strait

of Hormuz, through which about one-fifth of the world's oil supply passes.

Iran has insisted on direct talks with the UAE, rather than international arbitration, but rejects the UAE's demand for a fixed time limit.

38 die in Burundi fighting

Seven Burundian soldiers have died in clashes with Hutu rebels of the National Liberation Front in Mutimbizi, some 20 km north of the capital, Bujumbura.

An army spokesman, Augustin Nzabampema, said more than 30 rebels had also died in the clashes.

The electricity cables carrying three-quarters of the

energy for Bujumbura pass through the Mutimbizi area and the fighting has led to widespread power cuts in the capital.

Hutu rebel groups and the minority Tutsi-led government in Burundi have been engaged in a civil war since 1993 in which thousands of people have died.



Khatami

Zimbabwean groups press for new constitution

Hundreds of campaigners have attended a conference in the Zimbabwean capital, Harare, to press for a new national constitution.

The one-day meeting - organised by a broad coalition of civic groups, the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) - was boycotted by the government, war veterans and President Robert Mugabe's governing ZANU-

PF party.

In the lead up to the conference, ZANU-PF took out full-page newspaper advertisements, saying the NCA had no national mandate to



Mugabe

press for reforms.

Last year, the president proposed a new constitution which would have increased his powers.

It was rejected after a successful campaign by the NCA.

President Mugabe has tried to discredit the NCA, which has undertaken its own consultation exercise with the people to produce a new draft.

Newspaper advertisements accused NCA members of taking money from Mr Mugabe's western critics and the main opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) to undermine his government.

"Say 'NO', don't be used by the MDC/NCA/donor alliances ever again," said one of the ads.

But the chairman of Saturday's gathering - university lecturer John Makumbe - told delegates Zimbabweans must have a constitution acceptable to the majority.

Mubarak attacks US Mid-East policy

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak has criticised the new American policy in the Middle East in an interview timed with his arrival in Washington to meet President George W Bush.

The comments foreshadow what are expected to be some robust exchanges at the White House between the new US administration and one of his firmest Arab allies.

Mr Bush has repeatedly stated that his administration will not "force peace" in the Middle East, signalling a departure from the aggressive pursuit of a peace deal between Israel and the Palestinians undertaken by his predecessor, Bill Clinton.

"It requires two willing parties to come to the table to enact a peace treaty that will last," Mr Bush said on Thursday. "And this administration won't try to force peace on the parties."

But as Mr Mubarak's plane touched down at Andrews Air Force Base, Newsweek magazine released an interview in which the

Egyptian leader chastised the US administration for taking a hands-off approach.

"The new administration may not have a picture of what's going on," Mr Mubarak told the US weekly, which made an advance copy of its interview, on sale from Monday, available to the media on Saturday.

"I'm going to tell them what I feel," he added.

Mr Mubarak went on to say that the United States "cannot just take its hands off" the situation in the Middle East amid escalating violence.

"It has to work to narrow the gap between the Palestinians and the Israelis," he pointed out.

The Egyptian president also criticised America's decision to veto a UN Security Council resolution calling for deployment of UN observers in the West Bank and Gaza.

"I sent the United States a message: 'Please don't veto now,'" Mr Mubarak said. "They did, and the Arab delegations changed resolutions. We couldn't prevent it."



Frenchwoman Jocelyn Madrilene (L) and Enric Sarrias Prats, both of *Medicins Sans Frontieres*, at Nairobi Airport after their release by gunmen in Mogadishu (Reuters)



American Sheldon Yett (L) and Briton Jonathan Veith, all of UNICEF at Nairobi airport after their release (Reuters)

TRUST INTERNATIONAL

WORLD REPORT

Dalai Lama provokes China

The Dalai Lama has provoked China as he discussed the touchy issue of Taiwanese independence and Tibet's relations with Beijing at the start of his 10-day trip to Taiwan.

Sipping tea and laughing during an hour-long news conference, over the weekend, the Tibetan spiritual leader said that China's suspicions about his second visit to Taiwan were wrong.

He did not come to plot with Taiwanese about how to split up China, he said.

"I want someone from Beijing to come while I'm here

and watch my movements here and investigate whether I'm involved in anti-Chinese activities," the Nobel Peace Prize winner said.

The trip, which is being described as a religious one, includes a series of lectures on Buddhism and spirituality.

But the Dalai Lama also plans to meet new President Chen Shui-bian and the island's former leader, Lee Teng-hui - a move that has infuriated Beijing.

The Dalai Lama praised Mr Chen for "wisely" and "realistically" handling relations with China since his

election.

But he declined to take a position on the Taiwan independence issue, but said the notions of "independence" and "sovereignty" are becoming outdated in this era of globalisation.

The Tibetan religious leader stressed that he does not support Tibetan independence. Instead, he advocates a high degree of autonomy for the region.

A crowd of several hundred supporters was at Chiang Kai-Shek airport to greet the Dalai Lama's arrival.

They included Tibetan nuns and monks in their purple and saffron robes, and some had come from as far as the United States.

The trip has already angered China, which views both Taiwan and Tibet as its own territory.

Describing the visit as political, Beijing accused the Dalai Lama and the Taiwan-

ese authorities of collusion to "split the motherland".

A front-page article in the official China's People's Daily newspaper said:

"No matter what excuses the Taiwan authorities use to invite the Dalai Lama, or whatever the form or status of the Dalai Lama's visit to Taiwan, they cannot cover up their political motives to deepen their collusion," the article said.

The paper warned that "any words or deeds which aim to separate the motherland will be firmly opposed by all the Chinese people," adding that they were doomed to fail.

Beijing is strident in its belief that both Tibet and Taiwan are indivisible parts of China and does all it can to isolate both the Dalai Lama and Taiwan's government internationally.

Britain postpones elections

The British general election has been postponed from May to June, this year.

Prime Minister Tony Blair made the decision at his country residence Chequers after coming under pressure from leaders of other parties and from within the Cabinet to concentrate on fighting the foot-and-mouth crisis.

An official announcement will be made today.

The BBC's political editor Andrew Marr said that calling an election campaign on 3 May would have been difficult for Mr Blair, so soon after taking personal charge of the fight against the epidemic.

He said: "Now Mr Blair can appear to be magnanimous and appear to be strong."

County council elections had been scheduled for 3 May, with the same date thought most likely for a general election.

Mr Blair is expected to announce the necessary emergency legislation to suspend the local elections - for the first time since the Second World War.

He must also decide whether to authorise vaccinations to prevent the foot-and-mouth outbreak.

Mr Blair is said to favour the vaccines, believing they could help control the crisis without the needless slaughter of animals.

But farmers warn vaccination could do long term damage to Britain's meat export industry.

Mr Blair's decision to postpone polling will however please farmers' leaders and some of the Church of England's most senior bishops who urged him not to hold a general election while the foot-and-mouth epidemic persisted.

The Archbishop of York, the Right Reverend David Hooper, and the Bishops of Hereford and Exeter joined the Conservative Party

tives in backing a delay.

Tory leader William Hague called on the Prime Minister not to call a poll until October when the outbreak should have been dealt with.

Blast kills 11 in Sri Lanka

A bomb has exploded in a packed stadium during a musical show in western Sri Lanka, causing scores of casualties.

The incident occurred in the city of Kurunegala where tens of thousands of fans had gathered for a performance by two popular singers from neighbouring India.

"There was a gang fight and then some madman lobbed a grenade," said a police officer in Kurunegala, about 80 kilometres north of the capital Colombo.

The authorities said the explosion had left 11 people dead.

The police ruled out any links with the country's civil war between government forces and the separatist Tamil Tiger rebels, blaming criminal gangs instead.

A police officer on the scene said two blasts went off in quick succession, causing a stampede that led to the high number of casualties.

Thishrika Lakmali, a spokeswoman for *Shree FM*, the radio station that organised the concert, said more than 150 were injured, 15 of them in a serious condition.

The police said that no arrests have been made so far.

They cordoned off a small blood-spattered patch of the dusty stadium floor, about 25

metres from the brightly decorated stage.

Witnesses saw hundreds of shoes and torn clothes strewn over the area - along with at least three unexploded homemade bombs.

"I was behind the stage and heard a loud noise even though the concert was in full swing," said Police Sergeant S Karunadasa.

"When the music stopped we heard screaming and saw people running from the fire," he said.

The radio station organised the show in the town's main football stadium as part of a publicity campaign ahead of Sri Lanka's traditional New Year that falls in April.

ODD WORLD



Helen Faaden (l) and Anne-Marie Thus during their wedding (AP)

Gay couples wed

Four gay couples have exchanged wedding vows in Amsterdam's City Hall under a new Dutch law that recognises their civil marriage.

The legislation grants them the same rights as heterosexual couple, including the right to adopt children.

International gay rights groups have welcomed the change as a big step forward.

It is part of a multi-national campaign, which is challenging the traditional definition of marriage.

The ceremony took place at midnight on Saturday (2200 GMT), with Amsterdam mayor Job Cohen officiating at the weddings of the four same-sex couples - three male and one female.

Government ministers were present and it was broadcast live on national television.

All four couples have cohabited for several years and the women, Anne-Marie Thus and Helene Faasen, have a nine-month-old son, born through artificial insemination.

"We are so ordinary, if you saw us on the street you'd just walk right past us," Anne-Marie Thus was quoted as saying.

"The only thing that's going to take some getting used to is calling her 'my spouse'," she said.

The couples were welcomed by applause from family and supporters as they arrived for the ceremony, but a handful of demonstrators protested against what they called the unnatural union.

"We hope these people will choose to return to the Lord," said Cor de Vries, a 30-year-old protester.

Women fall for fictional bachelor

For a few giddy weeks, a rich American bachelor named Bob Harris was the fantasy of legions of Colombian women - and even a few men.

Six thousand sent e-mails and checked him out on the Internet.

Many more dialled a toll-free number, pining to meet the blond, tanned executive who raced cars, abstained from vice, and sought a Colombian bride to share his lonely mansion in Arkansas.

Alas, none of it was true, the heartbroken masses found out this week.

The adventurous man whose Web site, television spots and magazine and newspaper classifieds exalting Colombian women's "latin flavour" was the invention of a deceptive advertising campaign to sell cars.

The campaign drawing attention to the launch of a new Renault sedan has some crying foul. How, critics say, could anyone so callously prey on women's dreams of love, riches and an escape from their war-torn country?

But the young Colombian advertising executives who came up with the idea are patting themselves on the back.

"We've sold more cars in the first three days than we expected to in a month," said Jose Miguel Sokoloff of the Lowe Partners agency in Bogota.

Renault's marketing director in Colombia also defended the campaign, though it did bruise some feelings. "We never meant to make fun of them, far from that," Miguel Rojo y Pinto said in an interview.

The fictional Bob burst onto the scene March 11. Colombia was bombarded with TV spots and print ads laying bare his desire for a Colombian woman between 30 and 35 to form a "loving and affectionate" family.

"Hi, I'm Bob Harris. I'm 39 years old," read one of the ads, complete with a photo of Bob in a blue blazer and yellow tie. "I'm solvent, faithful, sincere and romantic. I don't drink or smoke, and I love to dance merengue and salsa."

At a Web site giving his zodiac sign as Pisces, Bob claims to be a telecommunications consultant who learned Spanish in Venezuela and Costa Rica. But never in his travels had Bob encountered anything like Colombian women, with their special "beauty, latin flavour and values."



Special Police forces storming the residence former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic (Inset) (Reuters)

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H HONDA

BUSINESS DAY

Structural defects halt acquisition of Sofitel Hotel

There are indications that Abuja International Hotel, otherwise known as Sofitel Hotel may be undervalued, if the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) eventually succeeds in harvesting a core investor to acquire the Federal Government's equity shareholding in the Hotel. This is because of some structural defects detected in its conception as well as in its construction.

The 5-star hotel built by the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) on behalf of the Federal Government, was contracted to Tripple "P" in 1991 and initially billed to be completed and handed over to the client in 1994. To date however, the hotel project with an edifice akin to some Sofitel hotels in other countries is yet to be completed.

Sofitel Hotel is listed among 39 enterprises to be privatised in the second phase of the ongoing privatisation programme, going

By Ahmed Shekarau

by a revised privatisation timetable approved penultimate week by the National Council on Privatisation (NCP).

Indications have emerged however that potential investors easily get discouraged from acquiring the hotel after discovering that it was constructed without a conference hall, car Park, as well as other structural defects observed in its plan and construction.

The head of BPE's Public Affairs, Joe Chigbo Anichebe who confirmed investors' reluctance in expressing interest in the hotel at a media briefing last Wednesday in Abuja, however observed that "some few investors" had shown interest in buying off the Hotel "but under certain conditions."

Anichebe noted that one of such investors was willing to pay US \$ 20 million (about N220 million) if it

will be allowed to use the Abuja International Conference Centre as the Hotel's conference hall, since the FCDA maintain both the

enterprise is allowed to take over its management.

It would be difficult to state with some level of precision whether the condition

among others. This may however be necessary for the government to recoup the amount of money sunk into the project.

Hotel project which has reached about 80 per cent of completion. While some have attributed the government's decision to suspend work on the project to the structural defects observed in its conception, a source at the FCDA told *Business Day* that "the project was abandoned for security reasons," in view of its proximity to the International Conference Centre where Heads of State and foreign delegates converge for various events.

According to NCP's revised timetable for phase II of the ongoing privatisation programme, the process of privatising Abuja International Hotel commenced with the selection of advisers in February. Advertisements for expressions of interests (EOIs) will be placed in the media by May, while a core investor for the Hotel will be announced by November, 2001.

Whether or not the BPE can harvest a core investor for Sofitel Hotel is something which time shall tell.



Sofitel Hotel, Abuja. Can the BPE harvest a core investor for it?

Hotel and the Centre on behalf of the Federal Government. If allowed, the potential investor will use and maintain both facilities for a minimum of 10 years within which a core investor in any

will be accepted by the Federal Government as it utilises the Conference Centre for certain national and international events, including seminars, conferences and workshops,

Business Day investigations revealed that over N245 million has so far been invested on the project by the government.

It is yet unclear why the government abandoned the

Two Nigerian banks named in money transfer scam

Midas Merchant Bank and Oxford Securities and Investments Ltd, Lagos, have been named as the financial institutions into which a New York-based medial doctor and his son transferred part of proceeds from a fraudulent securities scheme for which they are indicted.

The indictment, made in a U.S. court in Manhattan on February 26, alleges that Dr. Joshua Gurin and his son, Edward, deceitfully made about 11 individuals to part with 1.87 million dollars on the pretext that they were buying into new businesses that would double or triple their investments in a matter of days.

In one of the deals, Edward Gurin asked an investor in May 2000 to purchase warrants in a company, Actium Pharmaceuti-

cal, which he said was going to be bought in three days at a premium by a company named Schering Haas.

According to the indictment obtained by the North America correspondent of the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), Gurin assured the investor that the deal was "100 per cent safe" and "guaranteed" by Barclays Bank of England and Chase Manhattan Bank of New York.

But the prosecutor alleges in the indictment that Actium had actually not is-

sued any warrants. It also had not entered into any agreement or negotiation on the purchase of any warrants, neither did Barclays nor chase Manhattan guarantee the transaction.

The indictment also states that there was no company like Schering Hass, which Gurin had alleged was about to purchase Actium.

"In addition, the proceeds that (the investor) sent to Edward Gurin were forwarded to Midas Merchant Bank and then to Oxford

Securities and Investments Ltd in Lagos, Nigeria," the indictment states.

The defendant used Global Industries International Inc, controlled by his father, Joshua Gurin, to make the transfer to Nigeria, the prosecutor wrote.

Though the indictment does not state the amount involved in the case of this particular investor whose money was transferred to Nigeria, it shows that four individuals involved in the Actium warrant deal lost a total of 755,000 dollars.

FG urged to re-examine economic policies

The Registrar and Chief Executive of Association of National Accountants of Nigeria (ANAN), Mr. Peter Ibekwe, has urged the Federal Government to re-examine the nation's economic policies as an alternative to turn the economy around.

"Sometimes, our policies are rather lopsided and not properly focused, and there are policy inconsistencies which tend to jeopardise our process of growth," Ibekwe said in Port Harcourt.

He said that the policy re-examination should focus on the economic projections, adding: "we should think of stability of the nation, because when the country is not stable, our economic growth tend to be greatly un-

dermined".

Ibekwe said that since foreign investment was crucial to the nation's economic recovery, the government should tackle the problem of security of lives and property to attract foreign investors.

He also advised the government against deregulating the oil sector, saying: "it is not timely. Deregulation is good, but it will be wrong to apply it at the moment."

"In other words, it is not timely to deregulate the oil industry. If government wants deregulation to succeed, it should ensure adequate supply of petroleum products," he said.

Ibekwe advised that any deregulation in future should be done "in phases and

gradually, and not wholesale or abruptly".

He decried the conduct of people sabotaging fuel supply efforts by diverting fuel for their selfish interests.

Ibekwe urged the government to tackle the problem of unemployment with seriousness by promoting small-scale industries, saying: "even in advanced countries, that is the system they adopt in order to achieve economic growth" and curb joblessness.

"It provides employment, mobilises the people and creates initiative," he said, adding: "serious galvanisation of efforts towards promoting small-scale industries is the answer to our economic problems".

ANAN Registrar admits differences with ICAN

The Registrar and Chief Executive of the Association of National Accountants of Nigeria (ANAN), Mr. Peter Ibekwe, has acknowledged that there was still division between ANAN and the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN).

Speaking in an interview in Port Harcourt, Ibekwe said that the division between the two bodies was one of the factors hindering the growth of the accountancy profession in the country.

"There is no oneness, there is no team spirit, no co-operation," declared Ibekwe,

adding: "what we require is to bury the hatchet and work with each other in order to move the country forward, because the economy requires the services of the accountant to manage the resources."

According to Ibekwe, in times of adversities, accountants were required to properly manage the lean resources, and in periods of plenty, they were needed to manage the surplus wealth.

For over one year, the two-legally accredited accounting bodies have been locked in legal battle at the Federal High Court in Lagos, with ICAN challenging the promulgation of ANAN Decree 76 of 1993.

NEPA embarks on mass disconnection in Jalingo

The Jalingo District of the National Electric Power Authority (NAPA) in Taraba has embarked on mass disconnection to recover the debts owed it by consumers.

The District Manager of the Authority, Mr. Rilwanu Suleiman, said in Jalingo, that customers owed the district about N28 million.

Suleiman explained that non-payment of bills by some consumers and illegal connections were adversely affecting the smooth operations of the Authority, thus the erratic power supply be-

ing experienced in the area.

He said that the district was rated the lowest in terms of electricity supply and revenue collection in the country and urged consumers to settle their bills promptly and stop illegal connections and safeguard NEPA installations.

In the disconnection no category of customers was spared as even government buildings were included.

Meanwhile, consumers have started responding favourably, as long payment queues were noticed in the district office.



Adamu Ciroma, Finance Minister.

BUSINESS DAY

NUB Recapitalisation: Shareholders sue CBN, three others

Four shareholders of the Nigeria Universal Bank International Limited, including the former Minister of Agriculture, Alhaji Sani Zangon Daura, have sought for an interim injunction from the High Court of Justice in Kaduna, restraining the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and three other defendants from rejecting their shareholding in the Bank, pending the hearing and determination of a Motion on Notice from the Court.

The CBN had last year re-capitalised the shares of Nigeria Universal Bank Ltd. (NUB), which led to its transformation into the Nigeria Universal Bank International Ltd., with four shareholders, Cuvest Investments Ltd., Falalu Bello Group, Kaduna & Katsina State Governments and Hikima Group each owing 51 percent, 20.77 percent, 20.00 per cent and 8.23 per cent respectively.

In a Motion-Exparte No. KDH/KAD/212/2001 filed against Cuvest Investments Limited, Alhaji M.I. Yahaya, CBN and NUB International Bank Ltd. respectively, in the Kaduna High Court by the four shareholders, the plaintiffs prayed the court to grant their three prayers, which are:

A declaration that the act of the rejection of the purchase of shares of the plaintiffs by the third defendant (CBN) is in bad faith, unlawful, unwarranted, null and void.

An order restraining the defendants jointly

By Ahmed Shekarau

and severally acting through their agents, assigns, or whosoever from rejecting the shareholding of the plaintiffs.



Joseph Sanusi,
CBN governor.

And an order restraining the third defendants particularly the defendant from altering in any manner the shareholding already agreed between the parties and duly executed on the 8th of January, 2001.

The Motion-Exparte made available to *Business Day* revealed that upon hearing, Y. Mahmood Esq., Counsel to the Plaintiff/Applicant and after reading through the affidavit in support of the application coming up for hearing on 17th day of April, 2001, before Justice T. Zailani, Judge. The Court restrained the defendants/respondents jointly and severally from rejecting the shareholding of the plaintiffs pending the hearing and determination of the Motion on Notice.

It also restrained them

from altering in any manner the shareholding already agreed between the parties and duly executed on the 8th of January, 2001 pending the hearing and determination of the motion on notice.

The plaintiffs claimed in the complaint that MFB Holdings had, through a letter dated November 28th, 2000 investigated and confirmed to the CBN that "all four plaintiffs have liquidated their loans, or have repaid more than the amounts used in proposing for the or purchasing of the shares.

Notwithstanding the MFB Holding's letter however, wrote a letter No. BSD/GI.T3/10/Vol.1/9 dated 20th March, 2001, to the Executive Chairman of NUB International Bank Ltd., rejecting the four plaintiffs as proposed investors, almost three months after the memorandum of understanding were signed and sources of funds were certified as appropriate.

The plaintiffs therefore filed a suit challenging the rejection of their shareholding in the Bank by the four defendants.

The court ordered the defendants to appear before it, physically or by proxy on the date of the hearing (April 17, 2001).

It notified the defendants that in default of their appearance before it, "the plaintiffs may proceed therein and judgement may be given in their absence."

Plateau Govt., IFAD vote N59m for Bee conservation

The Plateau State Government, in conjunction with an international first aid society, has worked out a Bee-keeping programme targeted toward



Joshua Dariye,
Plateau State Governor.

rural women and youths.

The State Commissioner for Information, Mr. Amos Azi, who made the disclosure while speaking with newsmen, said that the programme, which is part of the state government's effort towards making people self-reliant, would also assist in conserving forest resources and bees.

He said that 17 communities had already been selected for the programme while the sum of N7.5 million had been approved by the state government as its counterpart funding of a total of N59 million, part of which would be provided by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

Amos said that the state

government had similarly approved the establishment of the Plateau State Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency.

When operational, the Commissioner said the Agency would be responsible for the provision of potable water all over the state, in addition to regulating sanitary conditions, in line with the National and International Standards as provided for in the UN enabling law number LN 3322.

He also stated that the state government had approved the establishment of a state council of arts and culture to take care of cultural activities as well as preparing a cultural calendar that would boost the tourism potentials of the state.

Poor technology hampers economic growth - Expert

From Bose Musari,
in Lagos

Poor technology has been identified as one of the obstacles to the growth of the Nigerian economy. This observation was made by Dr. Onalapo Soley, former Commissioner of Works and Finance in Ogun State at the convocation lecture of the Centre for Technology Policy in Yaba, Lagos State.

Soley who said this situation results from the low level of attention paid to science and technology, urged the government to focus adequate attention to science and technology development. He stressed that things had gone wrong from the beginning as most of our secondary school laborato-

ries are no more functioning.

Talking on "Generating Wealth from Knowledge," he cited the example of Dee Bee Wines Mack derived from Kolanut by a Nigerian,



Pauline Tallen,
Science & Technology Minister.

Dr. D.B.A. Ogotuga. Soley lamented the inability of Nigerians to manufacture ordinary wirehoods and corks to bottle our wines.

"It is disappointing that such little things as corks and wirehoods which probably were made by roadside engineers in India must be imported for use in Nigeria. Nigeria can't be a friend of other nations at the expense of herself. We are friends with Taiwan, Indonesia, among others under the guise of free trade, without adequately exploiting the economic benefits of such a relationship, but for us to gain international acceptability as a "democratic nation".

Zambia Bank targets \$3.8n HIPC debt relief

Zambia Central Bank warned that the country may face a very difficult environment if it failed to meet conditions for \$3.8 billion debt relief package.



Fredrick Chiluba,
Zambian President.

"We have to meet the Highly Indebted Poor Countries' (HIPC) benchmarks. Failure to do this will lead to a very difficult environment," Bank of Zambia governor, Jacob Mwanza told newsmen.

The debt relief agreement, under an initiative for HIPC, requires that Zambia continues its privatisation programme, fights HIV/AIDS and boosts spending on education and health.

Economists say these targets, in addition to good political governance and transparency, are threatened by the government's reluctance to complete its privatisation agenda and elections later this year.

President Fredrick Chiluba will complete his second and final five-year term late this year, but he has banned debate on his successor within the ruling Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD).

Chiluba has drawn criticism from the opposition and some members of his own party by encouraging supporters to discuss the merits of extending his term.

Analysts say the temptation to loosen purse strains in an election year would have to be avoided if donor conditions for HIPC and other programme funding are to be met.

Mwanza also said that

measures he took in January to stabilise a slumping kwacha currency had yielded favourable results.

"We have achieved stability for the kwacha," Mwanza told reporters at his quarterly briefing.

The kwacha traded at an average of 3,150 against the dollar, last week compared to 4,700 in January 2001 and 2,650 in January, 2000.

... as IMF lists conditions for aid to Kenya

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) said it would resume lending to Kenya only if the country completed reforms on good governance and privatisation.

A visiting IMF team said in a statement that Kenya had made encouraging progress in fighting corruption but it wanted the government to complete promised reforms by the end of April to enable the Fund experts to return in mid-May to prepare fresh lending.

"The IMF mission hopes that sufficient progress would have been made in all areas of Kenya's programmes by end April to allow a mission to complete discussions... by mid-May 2001," the statement said at the end of the two-week visit.

The IMF and other donors have suspended disbursement of over \$200 million in loans to the economically-fragile country of 28 million after Kenya failed to meet key aid conditions relating to privatisation and measures against graft.

The fund has demanded the re-establishment of an independent corruption agency with powers of pros-

ecution after Kenya's High Court declared the Kenya anti corruption authority unconstitutional last December.

Richard Leakey quit as head of the civil service and Kenya's chief corruption buster and president Daniel Arap Moi dismissed three top civil servants closely linked to Leakey, including the finance permanent secretary.

The IMF said the government, seen by its critics as hampered by corruption, had praised the passage by parliament of bills outlawing so-called economic crimes and establishing a code of conduct and ethics for the three branches of government.

The government would ensure the central bank-controlled monetary policy and interest rates remained market-determined, it said.

The statement said the immediate challenge facing Kenya was to contain imbalances that had resulted from a delay in disbursement of financial help and avoid "unsustainable large increases in domestic interest rates and a destabilisation of the micro-economic environment."

BUSINESS DAY

NIPC investment forum to focus on developing SMEs

The Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC) has said that its forthcoming Business and Investment Forum (BIF) will be expanded to allow for participation of many stakeholders in the public and private sectors of the Nigerian economy, as it is planned to focus on enhancing the development of Nigeria's small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs).

Chairman of the Forum's organising committee and council member of NIPC, Ambassador M.B.G. Dongonyaro disclosed this at the NIPC's sensitisation seminar on the BIF in

From Abdullahi Bego, in Maiduguri.

Dogonyaro said the Forum is part of the present administration's efforts at promoting "massive" investments inflow into the country. Thus, the ongoing sensitisation seminar organised in the six geopolitical zones which he said "aim at arousing local investors and exciting the awareness already induced in international investors" about Nigeria's potentials of growth.

The BIF, which is co-sponsored by Nigeria and the United States Small Business Administration (SBA), will attract business firms



Ambassador M.B.G. Dogonyaro, NIPC Council member.

with experience in the development of SMEs from both Nigeria and the US.

Earlier in his speech, the Chairman of the NIPC, Chief Kola Daisi commended the "vibrant commercial and business people" in the northeast, stating that "NIPC is confident that the businessmen of the zone can easily replicate the success of

the Asian Tigers".

Daisi told participants at the seminar that a lot of foreign investors are showing interest in investing in the Nigerian economy but the speed at which this is done depends on the efforts of various levels of government, businessmen and women and Nigerians in diaspora to make Nigeria the

preferred destination for global investment.

"The competition for these resources is stiff within our continent and particularly our region. But we possess the capabilities of making our economy both the gateway and the destination for investment into Africa", the NIPC Chairman enthused.

AFREXIMBANK commits N121bn to trade finance in Nigeria

By Ahmed Shekarau

Nigeria's leading role in intra and extra-African trade has attracted cumulative approvals of US \$1.0 billion (about N121 billion) by the African Export-Import bank (AFREXIMBANK) at the

end of 2000.

The country's total volume of African trade has exceeded 11 percent, with its share of African exports standing at 15 per cent, second only to that of South Africa.

The President of AFREXIMBANK, Dr. Christopher Edordu who disclosed this, said at the signing of an agreement for the opening of Nigeria's branch office in Abuja that the money was approved for the financing of banks, telecoms sector, oil services and software commodities, Pharmaceuticals, aviation, cotton and textiles, plastics, hides and skins, as well as light manufactures.

Edordu, a Nigerian, disclosed further that "the bank also leveraged considerable inflow of international trade finance into Nigeria through the implementation of its guarantee facilities." He said Nigerian entities have also benefited "strongly" from the Bank's advisory services.

The Bank, whose headquarter is located in Cairo, Egypt, was established on October 27, 1993

after leaders of 30 African countries converged in Abuja to sign an agreement to ratify the treaty establishing it. Nigeria is a major shareholder of the Bank, with the Nigerian government and private shareholders holding about 20 percent of the Bank's equity.

Edordu who represents Nigerian Export-Import Bank (NEXIM), noted that the Bank mostly operate through its trade finance intermediaries, 88 commercial and merchant banks spread across 22 countries, with 30 of them from Nigeria.

Some of the Bank's achievements so far, accord-

ing to its President, include acceleration of the return of international banks to Africa, which guarantees significant inflow of international finance, about US \$20 million into the continent. It has also been able to attract more than US \$10 for every one US dollar it invested in African deals, he added.

Earlier in his speech, the Minister of State for Finance, Senator Jubril Martins-Kuye enthused that AFREXIMBANK guarantees a conducive atmosphere for the enhancement of Nigerian small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs).

The agreement and memorandum of understanding for the establishment of the Abuja branch office of AFREXIM was signed for Nigeria by the Ministers of State for Finance and Foreign Affairs, Martins-Kuye and Dubem Onyia respectively, while Edordu and Dr. Shamsudeen Usman, Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) signed on behalf of AFREXIM.

Dr. Usman is Nigeria's Director of AFREXIM Bank.



Jubril Martins-Kuye, Finance Minister of State.

Calabar EPZ to generate N1.21bn

Calabar Export Processing Zone (CEPZ) would generate about US\$100 million or N1.21 billion by the year 2005. TSG Consortium made this known in Abuja during the bid opening ceremony of the Technical Management Consultants for the CEPZ.

The Federal Government had directed the Ministry of Commerce to invite competitive bidding for the Calabar EPZ to give efficient operation and attract foreign investments into the country. According to the Honorable Minister for Commerce, Engineer Mustafa Bello, the need to turn CEPZ to Private Technical Management Consultant is informed by the success story of Onne Oil and Gas FTZ in Port Harcourt.

By Idongesit Inyangabasi

Onne Oil and Gas FTZ has generated 4,500 job opportunities while about N2.9 billion and N3.3 billion were earned to the Federation Account through Customs tariffs in 1999 and 2000 respectively. Calabar EPZ is expected to play a pivotal role in the sea business because of its strategic location.



Mustafa Bello, Commerce Minister

The TSG Consortium, one of the Technical Management Consulting firms that bid, said CEPZ is expected to generate 5,500 direct jobs and 10,000 indirect jobs in the country. It will also improve upon the operations of the zone to attract foreign investors and competitiveness.

As at the close of bids last Thursday, the Ministry of Commerce screened three firms. Those companies whose bids were opened include African Free Zone Initiatives (AFZI); CPCZ - Transcom-Magnaitis (TSG Consortium) and Louis Berger Group Incorporated.

Based on the outcome of the public presentation, the Federal Government would choose a Technical Management Consultant for Calabar EPZ.

Exchange rates for World currencies against the US dollar as at March 30

	CURRENT	HIGH	LOW
Euro	0.8812	0.8839	0.8771
Japanese Yen	125.28	125.47	123.26
British Pound	1.4271	1.4295	1.4246
Swiss Franc	1.7305	1.7353	1.7246
Austrian Schilling	15.6119	15.6884	15.5695
Belgian Franc	45.768	45.992	45.644
Danish Crown	8.4632	8.5085	8.445
Dutch Guilder	2.5002	2.5125	2.4934
Finnish Markka	6.7458	6.7789	6.7275
French Franc	7.4422	7.4787	7.422
German Mark	2.219	2.2299	2.213
Greek Drachma	386.6	388.5	385.55
Irish Punt	1.1189	1.1222	1.1137
Italian Lire	2196.81	2207.58	2190.85
Norwegian Crown	9.1298	9.152	9.079
Portuguese Escudo	227.46	228.57	226.84
Spanish Peseta	188.77	189.7	188.26
Swedish Crown	10.38	10.448	10.364
Australian Dollar	0.4875	0.4944	0.4868
Brazilian Real	2.151	2.151	2.154
Canadian Dollar	1.5734	1.5741	1.572
Hong Kong Dollar	7.7986	7.7992	7.7992
Mexican Peso	9.53	9.53	9.54
Russian Rouble	28.779	28.79	28.78
Singapore Dollar	1.8025	1.8043	1.795
South African Rand	8.0075	8.065	8.01

Bankers urge govt. to sustain economic policies

By Suleiman Mohammed

The Federal Government has been urged to maintain consistency in its macro-economic policies in order to provide conducive atmosphere for the banking industry.

Speaking during a courtesy visit to President Olusegun Obasanjo at the State House, the Chairman, Metropolitan Bank Limited, Chief Stephen Bakare noted the positive impacts of the government's new macro-economic policy on banking and called for enforcement of the Bankruptcy Law in order to curtail issuance of dud cheques.

He also stressed that banks should be allowed to serve as collection centres for payment of all utilities such as water and NEPA bills among others.

Bakare also proposed that banks should have the full advantage of the provision of legal mortgages without court intervention, saying the present practice has negative impact on the banking industry.

While commending President Obasanjo for introducing various programmes targeted at the general welfare of Nigerians, Bakare said Metropolitan Bank has been re-engineered inline with the Universal Banking concept, adding that the new economic policies have positive impact on the bank.

President Olusegun Obasanjo while re-affirming government's commitment to rejuvenate the economy in order to attract more invest-

tors, told the bankers that their contributions in this direction was necessary.

The President spoke of his administration's commitment to fight corruption at all levels, and advised the financial institutions to be steadfast and curtail the alarming cases of advance fee fraud (419) that bastardised the banking sector.



President Obasanjo.

The Chieftaincy Conferment Ceremony the Igbo Muru Dike I of Ahiasa, Okpuala Ngwa, on the Hon. Min of Transport, Ojo Maduekwe by the Eze Ukwu of Ngwauku, Eze Bernard Enwerenmadu, on the 24th of March, 2001.



Hon. Min. of Transport, Chief Ojo Maduekwe congratulate by MD Niger Dock Nigeria Authority.



Hon. Min. of Transport, Chief Ojo Maduekwe congratulate by MD Nigerian Railway Corporation and Director of Finance and Supply, Barrister A. I. Nnamani Federal Ministry of Transport.



Igbo Muru Dike I of Ahiasa Okpuala Ngwa, Chief Ojo Maduekwe being congratulated by the Managing Director of Nigeria Ports Authority (NPA) Malam Bello Gwandu.



The minister is beign presented with a certificate of the title by His Royal Highness Eze Ukwu, Ngwauku, Eze Bernard Enwerenmadu.



Vice President Atiku Abubakar, Eze Bernard Enwerenmadu, Governor Orji Uzor Kalu and the Deputy Senate President, Alhaji Ibrahim Mantu watching performances by traditional dancers.



Vice President Atiku Abubakar delivering a speech, while the governor of Abia State, Orji Uzor Kalu and His Royal Highness Eze Okpuala Ngwa are having a chat.



Hon. Min of Transport, Chief Ojo Maduekwe and Andrew Isichie Managing Director National Clearing & Forwarding Agency.



The Minister of Transport, Chief Ojo Maduekwe being conferred with the title Igbo Muru Dike I of Ahiasa Okpuala Ngwa by His Royal Highness Eze Bernard Enwerenmadu.



Minister of State for Transport, Alhaji Isa Yuguda, Prince Vincent Ogbulafor, Minister for Economic Affairs in the Presidency welcoming Vice President Atiku Abubakar and Governor Orji Uzor Kalu to the Ezeukwu's Palace Ahiasa.



Minister of State for Transport, Alhaji Isa Yuguda, Andrew Isichie, MD NCF A, Malam Bello Gwandu, MD NPA, Engr. Rabi Abubakar MD National Inland Water Ways Authority, B.A. Mohammed, Special Assistance to Minister of State.

Star Feature



The waterfall. There are picnickers in the foreground



The embankment at 'River Wonderful'.

Kafanchan: Singing waters of 'River Wonderful'

Tadaferua Ujorha

The Fantswam of Kafanchan have their origins in the Bauchi area, and they moved over to their present location in a series of migrations which occurred over a long period of time. The ancestors of the Fantswam were hunters, and the vast fields of Kafanchan still provide ample room for a variety of activities including hunting. One can easily understand why the ancients accepted to reside around these hills, and the infinity of rolling fields. The original name of the people was "Fantswam". Over the years, the latter name underwent forms of alteration, until it resulted in Kafanchan as we know it today.

Kafanchan is a tourists delight. There are the singing waters of River Wonderful to charm and thrill you, for starters. The waters flow from a height in a graceful cascade, and when they hit the waters beneath they instantly foam and become lithe in an almost magical sequence. Then swiftly they move into powerful currents that surge forward, almost courageously. What a sight! The spray, and the echo of the pounding waters is an unforgettable experience. Picnickers and bathers also gather around the little waterfall here. The high embankments impress with their silent joyfulness.



Trees are being felled in great quantity.

Banana plants blossom nearby, and the flash of cameras is a continuing experience.

Then there is a natural staircase or so, which has formed after years of movement both to and from the waterfall.

There are forests around Kafanchan too, where people can hunt and go for long walks, or have picnics. In the forests one also encounters forms of architecture which have a traditional aspect. There are palm trees in the forest also. However,

there is a lot of destructive work going on in the forest. The trees are being felled, and cut into logs of wood for commercial purposes. The beauty of the forest is fading away, while the animals naturally move further afield to escape the influence of men and machines. A terrible devastation is unfolding here.

In the distance a sawing machine whines mournfully as it fells another tree, and then another. There are streams in the forest. Some of them have free flowing

waters, while the waters of others have been halted by logs of wood or trees which have fallen across the course.

Also there are historical trees in the forest. Several mango trees mark the spot where the ancestors of the Fantswam first resided when they came out of the forest.

There is another little forest which is being protected by the community under the watchful eye of Aegwam Fantswam, the Chief of the Fantswam. The forest is central to the culture of the people, and it is being preserved so that future generations would have an idea of the culture of the people. This is a clear example of how a collective decision by a community can help to preserve an environment. Kafanchan is made up of Hausa and Fulani also.

In Kafanchan, there are little hills and larger rocks are found in the distance behind the forest. In the forest there are remains of the dwellings of the ancients. At least an outline of a fence was perceptible at one spot. There are flourishing Banana, Palm, and Guava trees. In Kafanchan there are rolling fields, and plains, and some forests too. There are the endless accents out of 'River wonderful' which speak to the talents slumbering in the man.

All Pix by Felix Onigbinde



A shelter in the forest.



Little palm trees flourish in the forest.

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Sokoto
No.6 Zungeru Road
Off Gusau Road
Third Floor

NEWS

First lady lectures on charity

Hajiya Turai Yar'Adua, wife of the Katsina state governor, has donated N50,000 to a three month-old baby, Maryam Idris, who developed a complicated tumour, to enable

doctors save her life. She called on wealthy individuals in the state to assist the less-privileged in order to ease their hardships. She said the burden of charity must be borne by all advantaged people in the society.

From Hasein A. Korfi, in Katsina

Hajiya Turai, equally donated N20,000 to a woman receiving treatment at the Katsina Specialist Hospital. She maintained that it was only through selfless service by the haves that life could become better for the have-nots. She, therefore, called on people in the state to always

assist the needy whenever the need arose. Earlier, the chairman of the Jibia local government, Alhaji Sani Jibia, announced the council's donation of N30,000 for the operation of little Maryam. Also at the occasion, Alhaji Bilya Sanda, a popular philanthropist in the state, promised to settle the remaining money needed for the operation.



Gov. Turaki

Rural dev: Japan to invest in Plateau

From Buhari Bello, in Jos

Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has indicated readiness to cooperate with the Plateau State Government in the provision of water and sanitary facilities.

Consequently, the state government has approved the establishment of an additional parastatal, Plateau State Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency to liaise with the Japanese agency.

Disclosing this at the end of the executive council meeting held at Rayfield, Jos, the State commissioner for Information, Mr. Amos Azi, also said other projects such as sinking of bore-holes, provision of pit latrines, concrete walls and tubes in rural areas would be executed in concert with UNICEF.

Mr. Amos Azi also added that Direct Labour Agency and Ministry of Water Resources and Rural Development would also liaise with the foreign agencies so as to achieve the desired objectives.

He stated that based on the rural needs of the people, the state has been zoned for easy project implementation, adding that local contractors would be used on the projects for which N200 million has been set aside.

Mr. Azi also disclosed that the state government had approved the establishment of a Council for Arts and Culture which would be headed by an Executive Secretary, "to take care of cultural activities and preparation of a cultural calendar that would help boost tourism in the state.

The management of the Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON), has been called upon to consider opening an outreach learning centre in the Northern part of the country so as to bring it nearer to intending Northern students.

The call was made by the Jigawa State Governor, Alhaji Ibrahim Saminu Turaki, when the chairman, governing board of the college paid him a courtesy call in Dutse. He said if the North had "such learning center here, it would make it easier for our people to enrol in the institution, i.e. the training of our civil servants here".

The governor pointed out that if the college could work out modalities for the training of staff in the Northern

Open a Northern campus here - Turaki tells ASCON

From Bala Mohammed Nasir, in Dutse

campus, they (governors) will be ready to make it mandatory for civil servants to go there for their training, at least, twice a year. He also charged the management on the curriculum so as to make it blend with the times more especially as now, information technology was the order of the day.

Earlier in his address, the chairman of ASCON's governing body, Alhaji Abubakar Koko, told the governor that they were in Dutse as a follow-up to their letter sent to the governor previously introducing the institution, saying the college, established 28 years ago, was becoming Africa's

largest management training institute. He disclosed that over the years, the college had trained 35,000 senior public officers, including members of the armed forces and the police.

Alhaji Koko also said the college conducts trainings outside its premises in Badagry, Lagos State. He maintained that there was no state in Nigeria in which the college had not conducted training programmes.

The most recent according to him, was Kano where about 216 grade level 13 officers were trained in administrative processes and procedures so as to prepare them for promotions to directorate cadre and improve their proficiency.



The Miringa Youth Progressive Association president, Alhaji Aliyu Abubakar Miringa presents educational materials to the District Head of Miringa, Alhaji Bukar Miringa.

Zamfara declares Muslim new year public holiday

From Salisu Zakari Maradun, in Gusau

Zamfara State has declared every first Muharram day (Muslims Calendar) a public holiday in the state.

The Governor of Zamfara State, Alhaji Ahmed Sani, disclosed this during the launching of this year's Muslim's calendar, held at the Ali Akilu Square in Gusau, the state capital, during the week.

Alhaji Ahmed Sani also explained that with the introduction of the Sharia legal system in the state, it was expedient to inculcate Islamic knowledge in our children, noting that children had been taught only the Gregorian calendar with little or no knowledge of the Muslim calendar.



Gov. Ahmed

"we have to do something as it is not serving our interest as Muslims, and for our young ones, we have to teach them our religion."

Apparently referring to his critics, the governor took time to explain some of the socio-economic policies being introduced by his government.

Governor Ahmed Sani, said further that "those who think we are wasting public funds are only ignorant of the programme as we have not spent 10 percent of our capital expenditure on the programme."

Commenting further, governor Sani reiterated his administration's determination to pursue Islamic legal system to its logical end.

He maintained that he was physically and mentally prepared to face any consequences, asserting, "I am ready to die for it (Sharia)".

APP stalwart justifies Ogunshola's removal

From Abdul Laro, in Ilorin

The removal of the former chairman of the All Peoples' Party (APP) in Kwara State, Prof. Albert Ogunshola, was long overdue, the former acting chairman of the party in the state, Alhaji M.K. Ijaiya, has said.

In a press chat with Daily Trust in Ilorin, Alhaji Ijaiya said, the dissolution of the state executive council by the APP national secretariat was in order.

According to Alhaji Ijaiya, for the APP to win and record a resounding victory in the local government elections next year, there must be total re-organisation of the party in the state.

He said there was no crisis within the party at the national or state levels, explaining however, that APP governors rallied round to save Dr. Olusola Saraki, from being suspended from the party for anti-party activities at the last APP meeting held in Jigawa state.

Alhaji Ijaiya noted that Dr. Saraki contributed immensely

to the growth of the party, hence the pardon granted him by the party, because "as a human being, nobody is 100 percent perfect".

Answering another question, the former acting chairman said there was no problem between Governor Muhammed Lawal and Dr. Saraki since government differed from the party.

Alhaji Ijaiya said the government had every right to choose and invite anybody as commissioner, based on his prerogative.

He said even though Chief Ige was from the Alliance for Democracy (AD), yet President Olusegun Obasanjo invited him to serve in his government.

He added that Prof. Ogunshola wanted to impose commissioners on governor Lawal which was resisted.

Alhaji Ijaiya also boasted that the AD and PDP in the state could never pose a threat to the APP, because while the AD was not rooted, the PDP was not an organised party.

FCOEs to boost UBE - Chief Oshodi

The Chairman, Governing Council, Federal College of Education (FCOE), Okene, Kogi State, Mrs. Onikepo Oshodi, has assured Nigerians that Federal Colleges of Education are in position to ensure the success of the Universal Basic Education (UBE).

She stated this at Okene at the commissioning of the Institute of Administration's block, which was commissioned by Governor Abubakar Audu last Friday.

Mrs. Onikepo Oshodi, said the Federal Government knew the capability of Federal Colleges of Education in areas of manpower development for

to being, the enrolment has steadily increased from less than 1,000 to over 5,000 students.

Mrs. Oshodi also deplored a situation where one entering into a higher institution is confronted by ramshackle buildings that tend to put the school in a bad light, stressing that "with the management team here, a conducive atmosphere for learning will be created in the school.

She further allayed the fears of Nigerians on the delay in the take-off of the Universal Basic Education scheme, noting that the structures for the take-off of the programme must be put in place in order to avoid the mistakes of the past.

the overall success of the recently launched Universal Basic Education (UBE).

Mrs. Oshodi told the governor that the institution's enrolment was encouraging, noting that, "since the present management of the institution came in-



Prof. Aborishade

NEWS

NLC lambasts Tinubu over retrenchment

The acting General Secretary of the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), Mr. John Odah, lambasted the Lagos State Government for retrenching over 6,000 workers in spite of the economic buoyancy of the state.

According to him, the Lagos State Governor, Alhaji Ahmed Bola Tinubu, was acting contrary to the symbol of democracy, he claims to represent in the country by embarking on mass retrenchment of workers without following the due process.



Gov. Tinubu

From Samson Ojo, in Lagos

He said Governor Tinubu has been acting in a way that suggests that he has no regard for democracy. "People who want to be identified as defenders of democracy should at least create jobs and provide for welfare of the people rather than kill jobs and create hardship," he said.

Mr. Odah added that due process was not followed and that it was coming "from those who the other day were self-professed democrats".

He said the sack in other states is equally unacceptable because it was done in "fragrant disobedience of tackling redundancy which would have entailed negotiation and dialogue."

"We see these states' chief executives as enemies of workers. Worse still, they are already campaigning for second terms," he said.

Comrade Odah stated that the NLC is already working on modalities to ensure that workers' rights are not trampled upon.

Committee of patriots' co-ordinator demands apology for detention

For the first time since he was released from a four-day detention, the National Co-ordinator of the Committee of Patriots (CP), Alhaji Shuaibu Badegi, has demanded for unreserved apology from the Federal Government for his arrest and detention, an action, he said, was an infringement on his right of expression.

Badegi, who was the co-ordinator of a self-sponsored campaign for the former military President, Gen. Ibrahim Babangida, to contest the 2003 presidential election, later denounced his

course after he was arrested and detained by security operatives.

The former co-ordinator, who is the Director-General of the newly established Media Corporation in Niger State, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Minna last Thursday, "I am compelled to demand for an unreserved apology from the Federal Government and Prof. Jerry Gana because of the minister's recent statement that my arrest was connected with security implication of the campaign for IBB's presidential candidacy".

The State Independent Electoral Commission (SIEC) has a vital role to play in the democratic process of this country.

The Deputy Governor of Rivers State, Sir Gabriel Toby, made the assertion while speaking at the 2nd national conference of the State's Independent Electoral Commission (SIEC) held in Port Harcourt recently.

Sir Toby said that given SIEC's composition, with all members being stakeholders in the operational areas, it would bring about an end to electoral fraud.

He also said that the state shared responsibility will make for efficient productivity, lead to confidence-building, as well as engender credible results.

Meanwhile, speaking at the occasion, the chairman of the Rivers State Electoral Commission, Mr. Sam Jaja, said that the growing controversy over the inauguration of state independent electoral commissions was borne out of ignorance.

According to him, the country's political system "is not yet mature enough to have election processes

State electoral commission vital - Rivers Deputy Governor

From Aisha Momoh, in Port Harcourt

developed to the state level from the centre."

He said the argument against State Electoral Commissions was irrelevant as state commissions were

indices of a true federation.

Mr. Jaja reasoned that if governors "can influence members of the State Independent Electoral Commission, it then follows that the President can also influence the national body".

Cultural orientation staff to undergo computer training

By Tashikalmah Hallah

The National Institute for Cultural Orientation (NICO) is to embark on the training of its staff in computer technology, chairman, board of the institute's governing council, Dr. Beatrice Okpala, has said.

Dr. Okpala, in a maiden parley with the staff of the institute, announced that since the world had become a global village, courtesy of information technology, every staff of the institute must be computer literate.

She explained that the study of cultural heritage had moved from conventional studies to a technology-based enterprise, hence manage-

ment's decision to compel all staff to undergo computer training with a view to enhancing productivity.

The chairman also explained that the board had observed and analysed the other problems facing the institute, and had put in place a well-articulated programme of sourcing for money and re-organising the institute for the better.

On staff welfare, Mrs. Okpala announced that the board has worked out a good welfare package such as staff promotion, provision of staff bus and a detailed plan for the provision of staff accommodation.

USMANU DANFODIYO UNIVERSITY TEACHING HOSPITAL, SOKOTO INVITATION TO TENDER

Tenders are invited from registered contractors with the Usmanu Danfodiyo University Teaching Hospital, Sokoto for the rehabilitation of the following buildings:-

- A single storey building consisting of the Emergency Paediatric Unit (UPU) and Paediatric Medical Ward.
- A single storey building consisting of the male and female surgical wards.

The rehabilitation work in each building involves underpinning of foundation, replacement of basement, water pipe network and other plumbing repairs, electrical repair works mending of roof leakages, internal and external repainting of the building.

Tender documents are obtained from the office of the Secretary, Department Tenders Committee upon the payment of the Cashier of a non-refundable tender fee of N20,000.00 in respect of each building. Detailed information could also be obtained from the Secretary upon presentation of receipt of tender fee.

Completed tender documents should be submitted with the original copy of the receipt of tender fee in wax-sealed envelopes addressed to the Chief Medical Director, Usmanu Danfodiyo University Teaching Hospital, P.M.B. 2370, Sokoto and clearly marked "TENDER FOR PAEDIATRIC WARDS" for "a" and "TENDER FOR SURGICAL WARDS" for "b" not less than 12:00 noon of 16th April, 2001.

Tender should however noted that the hospital is not bound to accept any quotation that does not meet technical requirement. Tenders will be opened immediately upon expiration of submission period.

Signed:

Dr. Mu'uta Ibrahim'
Chief Medical Director

PARLIAMENT

No second term for the President - Sen. Waku

By Buhari Bello, in Jos

Within the Nigerian polity, Senator Joseph Kennedy Waku needs no introduction. But for the purpose of records, Waku represents the People's Democratic Party (PDP), Benue North-West. Frank to a fault, Senator Waku, is the Senate Committee Chairman on Insurance. He spoke to Buhari Bello, our Plateau State Correspondent, on many issues affecting Nigerian politics.

Excerpts:

What is your reaction to the second term debate currently going on?

Yes, in a nascent democracy like ours, I would support one term in office because of what I perceive is likely to happen and let me give you this analogy. Any military intervention in this country or any democratic interruption in this country, always come as a result of second tenure, in the sense that people want to perpetuate themselves in power without minding their performance.

It would have been easier if the occupants of these offices realised that they don't have to lobby for a second tenure because their performance will automatically guarantee them second tenure.

So, I am really not in support of that, if I were a governor or the president, I would not open my mouth and tell anybody that I need a second tenure. It is my action in the office that will guarantee that. So, as a result of that, there have been several crises from one state to the other, all in an attempt to sideline other politicians who are working to replace them. The governors are using instrumentality for which the end result would be chaotic because Nigerian citizens would no longer take such, whether or not the military does indicate their intention to come back.

Nigerians on their own would not take it. And let me give you a typical example. Look at the ward congresses in Delta State where angry councillors forced the state governor to escape through a church building. Then you can see the anxiety and it shows that incumbency is not a guarantee that you can work your way and perpetuate yourselves in office at the detriment of the people. It would no longer happen. And even if it does happen it would mean the incumbent carrying people along. Any time the governor wants to use the governmental machinery, they could return fire for fire in several states. That, I am afraid of.

But from experience, most of these political office-holders ride on the machinery of government to perpetuate themselves in office.

That is why I said there is a danger. That is why the one tenure will sustain the nascent democracy until Nigerians nurse it for several years, then it will stabilise. So, I am absolutely in support of the Constitutional Review Committee's recommendation of a one term tenure. Any human being given the opportunity to develop the coun-

try, state or a local government for a period of five years and who fails, if you give him 15 or 20 years, he will still not perform. Therefore, I am completely in support of the five years of one term in office.

Looking at the performance of the ruling party (PDP), of which you are a member, are you satisfied and do you think that PDP will record the kind of victory it recorded in the past?

PDP will have to work very hard. It will no longer have it on a platter of gold. Those days have come and gone and other parties are watching and they have been capitalising on the party's weaknesses. And until PDP performs miracles, no matter the use of governmental instrumentality, opposing parties will still send them packing.

Comment on the deregulation of the petroleum sector intended by President Olusegun Obasanjo and the said IMF agenda?

Well, I don't know why you want me to comment on that issue again. I spoke on that deregulation during my interview with the *Tell* magazine, which generated controversies, but today it is coming. I already saw it coming. I am totally against it and I remain against it because government is all about welfare. Government is not a business organisation that makes profit. Government should not deregulate fuel prices. Indeed, I think it is a deliberate attempt to send Nigerians into hardship.

So, do you feel vindicated today over what you said in that interview?

I cannot be a judge in my own court. Let others make the judgement whether I have been vindicated or not. As a result of that interview, some people see me as a controversial Senator today. I do not know if to speak the truth qualifies you to be controversial.

I remember you threatened taking the magazine to court for distorting your interview and putting words into your mouth. What is the situation now?

The matter is still in the Abuja High Court.

What are you demanding?

N500m only.

How do you view the supplementary budget submitted by the President to the National Assembly for the purchase of an aircraft for the presidential fleet in spite of the economic hardship that Nigerians are facing?

I have a contrary view on the aircraft that the supplementary budget was sent for. Is it not one aircraft? Let me say this and this is me: I have always been objective when I speak my mind. That presidential jet is not Obasanjo's jet. Nigeria is said to be the leader in Africa. I mean, there is a price you have to pay to lead the nations. It is not Obasanjo's jet. It belongs to the Federal Government because he will use it and leave it. Other

presidents will come and use it. It is an image of the nation. I would not want my President to keep going in a dilapidated jet. And in the Senate, we advised that those that are no longer in good condition should be disposed off. Would you be happy - may God forbid it - that your President is going in an old presidential jet with technical problems? In as much as I am

money and Nigerians are suffering while the country has too much money. I did mention it in my interview with the *Tell* magazine. You see, like somebody told me that "look Senator Waku, if I were you, I would no longer talk until the end of this four-year tenure" because there is nothing new that I am going to say, that I haven't said. We are now coming back to the deregulation

of priority today Nigerians are asking this kind of question. In fact there would have been support from the people because of the image that it would have created for the nation.

There was a report alleging poor leadership styles of the present Senate President, Anyim Pius Anyim, which have been said to be responsible for the absence of many Senators at the Senate sittings. Can you assess the performance of the Senate President?

The leadership of the Senate cannot decide on what the Senate itself could do. A Senate President is the chairman and he is a leader among equals. We chose him among equals to preside. He cannot be accused of non-performance. And I am not buying the idea that Senators' absence is because of the poor performance of the leadership. No. The Senate and, indeed, the National Assembly, operates in such a manner that you need to be one to understand and appreciate the operational norms. And you need to be closer to members for you to know their different operations.

The Senate in several countries is like that. For instance, if you watch the BBC television reporting the British parliament you see few members because the others may be involved in Committee jobs and that also forms part of the legislative responsibilities. There are several issues that attract the attention of all legislatures. In fact, certain debates interest all legislators and when such issues are brought, they are handled by the Committee before they are presented for adoption, debates or in some cases referred back to the committees. This is what many Nigerians are ignorant of. It is not their fault. The constant democratic interruption have made Nigerians ignorant about the knowledge of such responsibilities. It's not every day that you go and seat in the chambers. That is why there are Committees. Because the actual legislative work is done by the Committees. That is why in U.S. the moment a budget is passed, every legislator is given some amount of money paid directly to his account to run Committee duties.

What I am trying to say is that the President of the Senate should take a decision on behalf of the Senate. Issues are always put into a vote and if it is the wish of the entire Senate, the majority always carries the vote and he has no choice when the majority decides on where to go and where to move. His duties are to confirm what the majority's decision is. So what are you now accusing him of?

Are you satisfied with the current working relationship between the Presidency and the National Assembly?

Wait, I haven't finished what I am saying.

Go on, please.

looked at it. We want our independence based on the principle of separation of powers. This separation of power, does not, therefore, mean that you will be antagonistic to the executive. And let me tell you, in the United States of America, there is an office meant for lobbying where a Chief Lobbyist is appointed between the executive and the legislative arms of government. If by today in Nigeria we have a Senate President who combined a job of a Chief Lobbyist for the benefit of his colleagues in the Senate and that, of the executive what is wrong? Must we carry arms before it would be known that there is a need for separation of powers? Politics is all about negotiation, politics is all about dialogue.

Don't you think that it has affected the image of the National Assembly?

It does not affect. No, it does not affect.

As a lobbyist and at the same time, as a lawmaker?

In this case it is a different issue. Let me tell you, we are not performing as lobbyists to satisfy the executive for the legislator's welfare. It is to establish a firm understanding between executive and the legislative arms and there is nothing wrong in doing that. For instance, if a Senator were able to bring a project within his Senatorial Districts and if the National Assembly leadership lobby the executive for the implementation of such projects, there is nothing wrong. The fact that it is not going to be Waku's project or anybody's project doesn't matter. It is the people within these communities that will benefit through an individual's efforts. We are not saying that we are rubber stamps. And it has never happened since he became the Senate President. He has never told the executive, "give me that and I want to go and see my colleagues." It has never happened. So what is the reason for the attack. Everybody has his own style of leadership. During Enwerem, he brought us the recognition. He brought prestige. Prestige in the sense that during the Second Republic legislators took car loans. But during Ewerem he said no. You should not be provided with car loans. You should be provided with cars and when you are leaving you leave it with the government of the day.

Secondly, during that Second Republic, not every legislator had an office. It is only the principal officers. So, you can see what I am saying. Today, almost every Senator has an office.

And when Okadigbo came, he tried to bring us independence with his own leadership style which was to stabilise the National Assembly by creating welfare. Indeed, some of the actions like the Senate Committee work were initiated by Chuba Okadigbo.

Relationship with executive is now trying to bring stability



Senator Joseph Kennedy Waku

critical of Obasanjo's regime about investment and economy, I do believe also that for you to be able to stand firm and speak, the cloth that you wear will determine the kind of person and the country you come from or like I said the jet is an image of Nigeria. In fact, the only thing that one may ask is why he decided to choose that as a priority now. My comment in the Senate was that why should that form part of priority. But considering it at the global level, we think it is also better, because we think it is the nation's image.

The fact is if the 2001 budget we passed is being implemented to the letter, Nigerians wouldn't even have to be talking about the presidential jet because we would have been busy and nobody would even look at it as something.

But you also passed the 2000 budget and the fortunes of Nigerians did not improve. What has the Senate done about the said poor implementation? Or are you telling us that the government would fully implement 2001 budget and if not, what next?

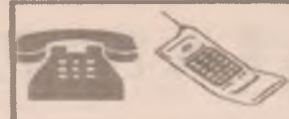
We would sack him. We would remove him if he doesn't implement the Nigerian budget for Nigerians. Definitely, he has no business to stay in the office and as such, there could be a move to remove him because this is no joke now. It is a very serious matter. It is not Waku's

lotion, I had said it. You are now talking about IMF interest, I did mention it that Nigerian government has been enslaved and Obasanjo wants to please the IMF. So, what can I say today that would be news? I think if I were you the journalist interviewing me, I should not talk about Obasanjo's issue. So, I saw these things coming. I am not a young man in the politics of Nigeria and I have a purpose of going into politics. The politics of welfarism. To assist and develop the nation. Politics is not just about making a name for yourself but also about making a social impact. If you look at our health institution in this country today, it is the poorest. You know the United Nations recommendation for health sector of every nation is 11 percent. Nigeria cannot even do three or four percent and what is the sense of that. Today Nigerians have every good reason to ask what happened to our educational sector, our health sector or the economy generally. Then, you take such huge sum to buy one presidential jet. I know Nigerians would ask that. But if economy were booming and people see the impact of it, nobody would comment.

If the industrialization were put in place, productivity was high, people got jobs, nobody would have talked about the presidential jet. But because of



I.T. WORLD



Nigerian insurance software debuts

A Nigerian company has introduced insurance software into the computer market.

The software manufactured by Executive Systems Limited and General Systems Technology Limited is primed to handle various types of insurance business and processes.

According to the Chief

From Bright Ewulu, in Lagos

Executive of Executive Systems Limited, Mr. Emma Njokanma, the software known as *Perfect Policy* "is a comprehensive insurance software that gives the user the power to quickly, easily and efficiently generate underwriting operation, renewal information, process claim

and define reinsurance treaties."

Njokanma revealed that the product has been performing creditably in the Nigerian market and abroad, saying that using *Perfect Policy*, Nigerian brokers will derive commission from crude oil sales, which presently go to only foreigners.

Digitalisation of Lafia exchange to be completed in June

The Minister of Communication, Alhaji Mohammed Arzika, has said that the digitalisation and expansion of Lafia exchange in Nasarawa State will be completed in June. Speaking on Thursday when he paid a courtesy visit to Governor Abdullahi Adamu, the minister, who had earlier inspected the digitalisation project, said that work on the project was going on in earnest.

Arzika, accompanied by NITEL's Executive Director in charge of domestic network, Dr. Suleiman Sani and Deputy General Manager, Mr. I.A. Sebanjo, said that the exchange would be expanded from the 500 'epileptic' analogue lines to 2500 efficient digital lines.

He told the governor that work on the digitalisation of Keffi exchange would commence as soon as the Lafia exchange was inaugurated.

On post offices, Arzika said that e-mail facility would be provided in every post office in the country, adding that NIPOST now carried mails daily and delivered them within 72 hours.

He urged the governor to find ways of encouraging his people to utilise the telecommunication and postal services to enable government invest more for the development of the sector.

The minister further advised NITEL customers to settle their bills promptly to enable it serve its subscribers better.

Responding, the governor assured the minister that he would use the facilities of information centres in the state to enlighten the people on the need for them to patronise NITEL and NIPOST.

Adamu said that the people of the state had the capacity to subscribe to NITEL service, assuring the Minister of optimum utilisation of NITEL exchange capacity.

He said he was desirous that the state be linked to the new fibre optic transmission wiring, which he pointed out, passed through the state from the Eastern zone.

NNPC acquires aviation information systems

Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) has acquired latest aviation information systems for more effective transport administration services throughout the cities NNPC offices are located.

A reliable source told *Daily Trust* at NNPC headquarters in Abuja, over the

weekend, that the hardware and software systems conformed with the corporation's IT environment.

The source further disclosed that a comprehensive transport administration technology system would be installed soon to meet the present need for modern high technology for higher productivity and reduction of losses within the NNPC.

According to the source, the NNPC would overhaul its Downier aircraft in four weeks from April 6 to achieve hitch free flights by NNPC staff nationwide.

NITEL laments congestion in network

Nigerian Telecommunications Limited (NITEL) has blamed congestion in their network for the difficulty experienced by telephone users in placing calls to and from

Stories by Hassan Idris

Lagos. According to a press release signed by one Bala Abdulkadir for the Deputy General Manager (PR) of

NITEL: "The problem arose from the congestion in the network and has affected mainly telephone calls to and from Central Lagos and Victoria Island parts of the city."

The full text of the statement reads thus: "NITEL management has regretted the inconveniences caused the public following the non-completion of telephone calls to and from Lagos.

"The problem arose from the congestion in the network and has affected mainly telephone calls to and from Central Lagos and Victoria Island parts of the City. NITEL has put a team of engineers together and they are working round the clock to rectify the problem.

"NITEL is presently working to massively expand both the switch and

transmission capacity of the Lagos network which would enhance the Company's network traffic management and reduce any bad situation as the one being presently experienced in Lagos.

"The Company hopes that the public would bear with it while repair works are going on."



MD NITEL: Dr. Emmanuel Ojeba

Arzika commends NCC

Minister of Communications, Alhaji Muhammadu Arzika, has commended the National Communications Commission (NCC) for successfully conducting the digital mobile license auction.

Speaking at the formal presentation of digital mobile licences to new operators in Abuja recently, the minister observed that NCC had been working to set the country on

the path of enjoying efficient and reliable telecommunications services.

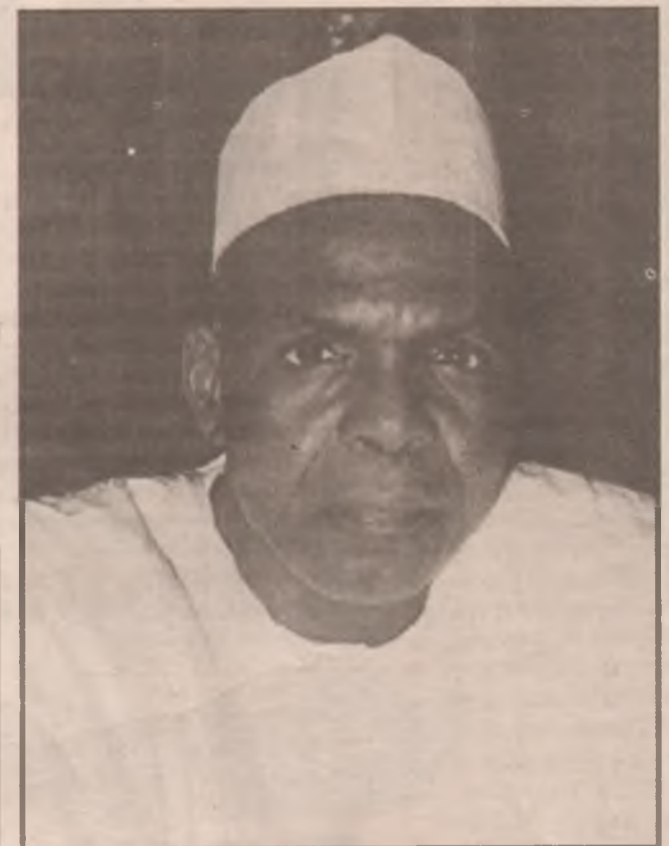
"The NCC board barely one year after it was inaugu-

rated," he said, "has worked successfully in conducting the digital mobile licence auction that has given other interested investors hope and confidence to invest in the country. I must commend the commission for its efforts in achieving this feat."

But CIL could not meet the payment deadline and was dropped by the NCC, according to news reports.

NCC, last week, issued the GSM licences to the companies that have paid the licences fees of N285m each.

The Minister of Communications said the government was not unmindful of the widely reported problems being experienced by the private telecommunication operators.



Arzika

rated," he said, "has worked successfully in conducting the digital mobile licence auction that has given other interested investors hope and confidence to invest in the country. I must commend the commission for its efforts in achieving this feat."

Between January and February six telecommunication companies, participated in global systems of mobile telecommunication operating licence auction where four companies won

the bid. They are NITEL, MTN, CIL and ECONET.

Three companies, NITEL, MTN and ECONET, have paid \$285m or N28.5b

FG to establish IT agency

The Federal Government will soon establish an agency that will implement the new policy on information technology approved by the Federal Executive Council, the Minister of State for Science and Technology, Mrs. Pauline Tallen, has said.

Mrs Tallen stated this when she received officials of an Israeli information technology company, YAEL Software and Systems, in her office.

She said that her ministry had begun the computer networking of some government offices to meet up with the global trend in information technology. The networking project, according to her, would instil transparency in governance and eliminate all forms of corruption.

Mrs. Tallen restated that the government was committed to ensuring that the nation becomes a participant in the global initiative in IT such as

e-commerce and e-government.

The minister assured the visiting Israelis that Nigeria would co-operate with Israel in the area of information technology for the mutual benefit of both countries and urged the company to support the computer literacy programme of the government.

Earlier, President of the company, Yitzhak Rachlewski, said they were in Nigeria to explore areas of mutual business between the two countries, adding that his company was involved in software development with major expertise in health care and government management systems, as well as business-to-business and Internet technologies services provision.

He showcased Smart phone, their latest product, capable of sending and receiving e-mails and Internet

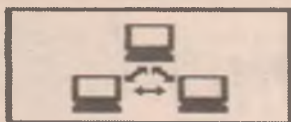
services apart from its regular telephone function.

According to him, the

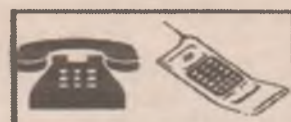
product is portable and only costs \$250 or N31,250.00 per unit.



Yitzhak Rachlewski



I.T. WORLD



Cuba opens up to the Internet

A relative latecomer to the Internet, Cuba has now embarked on a major technological modernisation programme whose chief promoter and enthusiast is President Fidel Castro.

At a computer room in Havana University's foreign languages department, students wait patiently for slots, they booked in advance to use one of six machines connected to the Internet.

One-by-one they consult their e-mail or browse Web sites under a sign that warns, among other instructions on the use of computers: "It is prohibited to disseminate information not in line with the principles of the Revolution."

Underpinning that is the usefulness of the Internet to what Castro calls the "Battle of Ideas," his government's year-old ideological offensive to demonstrate the superiority of Cuban socialism over the Western capitalist model.

"We have no fear of the dis-

Stories by Hassan Idris & Umar Mu'azu, online

semination of counter revolutionary information on the Internet because you cannot fear lies, and all that is lies," said Melchor Gil, Vice Minister in the Information and Communications Ministry set up last year to oversee Cuba's technological drive.

"Those who should be worried are our enemies because the Internet is the ideal medium for disseminating the truth about Cuba," Gil added at a recent news conference.

In that vein, official institutions have created 300 Web sites such as that of the Foreign Ministry (www.cubaminrex.cu), which vigorously promotes Cuba's political aims abroad, such as its fight against U.S. economic sanctions.

Some foreign businessmen are working in joint venture with Cuba to help develop Internet sites. "There is a desperate need around the world for information

about Cuba," said Stephen Marshall, a British entrepreneur who has 65 active Web sites about Cuba, some in partnership with Cuban companies.

According to Vice Minister Gil, the state's sites receive 50 million visits per month. "The way to defend our principles is to put our information out on the Internet," he said.

But only a small percentage of Cuba's 11 million people can

see these or other Web sites. Gil acknowledged there are only 60,000 e-mail accounts on the island, of which just "one quarter have the ability to surf the Internet."

"I'm starting a course on Web sites and I have never surfed the Internet, not even for one minute, I only have e-mail," said a graphic designer who — like most Cubans when speaking to foreign correspondents on politically delicate subjects — preferred to remain anonymous.

Palm announces profits, job cuts

The handheld computer maker, Palm, reported better than expected profits for the three months leading up to February, driven by a sharp rise in sales.

But the firm is launching a cost-cutting programme nevertheless, which includes 250 job losses.

It is also to delay the con-

struction of its new headquarters in California which was scheduled to begin this month.

Palm's revenue beat analyst forecasts by climbing to \$473.8m, up from \$272.3m the previous year and \$522m the previous three months.

Exports of Palm handheld computers were 112 percent higher this year compared to the previous year, bringing the total to 13 million devices.

But despite the rise in sales, profits were lower than the previous year due to increased competition in the market, and the cost of developing new advanced products.

Net income during the three months was down to \$9.3m compared to \$15.8m the previous year.

The announcement came after the close of the US stock markets, where shares in Palm closed 7.36 percent higher at \$15.5.

IBM launches quietest notebook drives

Big Blue last week launched a new line of Travelstar hard drives for notebooks that the company claims are the world's quietest. Among other sound-reduction features, the new 48GB Travelstar is fitted with sound-dampening padding to reduce excess vibration. New micro-code also allows the arm of the disk to travel more smoothly over contours.

The disk's platters also spin on a bed of liquid rather than on ball bearings.

"If you think of this as a lazy Susan, what we are doing is replacing the lazy Susan with liquid, which eliminates the metal to metal noise," said David Uriu, Director of Marketing for 2.5-inch disk drives at IBM.

Many of these individual technologies have been featured in other drives, but never in combination together, Uriu

added. Along with being quiet, the drive spins at 5,400 rpm, making it the fastest mobile hard drive to date.

It's also the largest capacity drive produced for notebooks, capable of holding 48,000 novels, or 12 DVD movies. One-upmanship over disk speed and size, however, is common in the disk industry.

IBM has long positioned itself as the Cadillac of microcomponents, producing computing parts that pack more technological innovations than products rivals. The company's semiconductor division, for instance, is known for state-of-the-art innovations. It produced the first chips in volume to use copper wires, rather than aluminum.

The emphasis on technology, to a certain degree, has helped IBM stay competitive in one of the most cutthroat segments of the industry. In 2000,

IBM's hard drive revenue stopped contracting and grew, according to the company's annual financial conference call. The company captured 41 percent of the notebook drive market in 2000, according to figures from IDC.

Last year, the hard drive division of Seagate Technologies was acquired by a private investment group; Maxtor purchased rival Quantum.

The new drives will appear in the second quarter in notebooks from Compaq Computer, Dell Computer, Hewlett-Packard and IBM, the company said.

Nine arrested over internet child pornography

United States authorities have broken up an internet child pornography mafia based in Russia and arrested nine people in a joint operation with Moscow police.

An assistant U.S. CUSTOMS service Commissioner, Dennis Murphy, told newsmen that four Americans and five Russians had been arrested following a year-long investigation into the sale of explicit child pornography videos over the internet, mainly to Americans, from a web site called "Blue Orchid" run from a Moscow apartment, recently.

Last week, US government said they are conducting more than 20 separate investigations for child porn distribution and manufacturing as a result of operation Blue Orchid and officials expects to make more arrests.

Acting U.S. Customs Commissioner, Charles Winwood, said, "we have to send a message: those who are using the Internet this way cannot hide."

Similarly, Russian police made the first arrests in December when they took Sergey Garbko and Vscvalod Solutsev-Elbe into custody on suspicion of operating the 'Blue Orchid' web site, the US Customs Service said.

US government through the state department had granted \$100,000 to help Moscow city police stop the pornography on the internet, including training at a U.S. Customs "Cyber-smuggling" centre.

The 'Blue orchid' site operated from March to December last year and sold several hundred videos to at least 80 customers worldwide.



A stock broker on the floor of the New York Exchange contemplating the drop in share prices of IT companies



Air prime wireless digital springboard at the CTIA wireless 2001 convention in Las Vegas, last week

The central processing unit, or CPU, is the brain of the computer.

Scientists work constantly to overcome the obstacles of heat dissipation and low manufacturing yields. Each time they crack that combination, vendors push their CPUs to higher clock speeds and faster performance. Then it's back to the drawing board, chasing heat and manufacturing glitches to make way for the next performance boost.

The CPU market plays host to some intense rivalries. For example, PC mainstay Intel has tried every trick in the book to keep Advanced Micro Devices (AMD) from establishing a foothold in high-performance PCs. But AMD persevered through a

Chipmakers in speed race

By Tom Yager

put a significant dent in Intel's dominance, and that battle is far from over. Currently, AMD is ready to venture into another prized Intel market space — the multi-processor system market — and the company also plans to offer its own 64-bit alternative to the joint Intel/Hewlett-Packard Itanium chip, which is aimed at high-end workstations and servers.

Meanwhile, Sun Microsystems has been battling reports of production delays and unimpressive performance of its flagship UltraSPARC III CPU. Sun

of the industry benchmark tables in a long time, and the UltraSPARC III (which Sun says it is now rolling out in quantity) still hasn't won its class.

In general, the CPU you use will be decided by your system and application vendors. You may not even know which CPUs are used in your systems or how fast

they are. That's where Standard Performance Evaluation Corporation (SPEC) comes in.

SPEC is responsible for creating and managing the industry's leading standardized CPU benchmarks. SPEC is not, however, a testing lab. Rather, it supplies benchmark software to vendors for a membership fee. The vendors run the tests in a best-case environment and submit the results to SPEC.

The SPEC's key measure of CPU performance is a benchmark called CPU2000. This test has two components: CINT2000 and CFP2000, so named because they exercise the CPU's in-

tegrity, respectively. Most of a CPU's workload involves integer operations including math (addition and subtraction), logic (and/or statements), and memory manipulation. CINT2000 runs a target CPU through a battery of integer tests. The final CINT2000 base result is a single number that is essentially meaningless, except in comparison with other chips' CINT2000 base results.

A quick visit to <http://www.spec.org/> is a good place to start studying the published results. But remember: Always avoid making spending decisions based solely on benchmarks, even SPEC's. No benchmark can predict how well a CPU will handle your workload.

Yager is of InfoWorld Test

"Always avoid making spending decisions based solely on benchmarks, even SPEC's. No benchmark can predict how well a CPU will handle



Arts & Entertainment



Music

Life of Beethoven

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827), the second-oldest child of the court musician and tenor singer Johann van Beethoven, was born in Bonn. Ludwig's father drilled him thoroughly with the ambition of showcasing him as a child prodigy. Ludwig gave his first public performance as a pianist when he was eight years old. At the age of eleven he received the necessary systematic training in piano performance and composition from Christian Gottlob Neefe, organist and court musician in Bonn. Employed as a musician in Bonn court orchestra since 1787, Beethoven was granted

a paid leave of absence in the early part of 1787 to study in Vienna under Mozart. He was soon compelled to return to Bonn, however, and after his mother's death had to look after the family.

In 1792 he chose Vienna as his new residence and took lessons from Haydn, Albrechtsberger, Schenck and Salieri. By 1795 he had earned a name for himself as a pianist of great fantasy and verve, admired in particular for his brilliant improvisations. Before long he was travelling in the circles of the nobility. They offered Beethoven their patronage, and the composer dedicated his works to them in return.

By 1809 his patrons provided him with an annuity, which enabled him to live as a freelance composer without financial worries. Beethoven was acutely interested in the development of the piano. He kept close contact with the leading piano building firms in Vienna and London and thus helped pave the way for the modern concert grand piano.

Around the year 1798 Beethoven noticed that he was suf-

fering from a hearing disorder. He withdrew into increasing seclusion for the public and from his few friends and was eventually left com-



pletely deaf. By 1820 he was able to communicate with visitors

and trusted friends only in writing.

availing himself of "conversation notebooks".

The final years in the life of the restless bachelor (he changed living quarters no fewer than fifty-two times) were darkened by severe illness and by the struggle over the guardianship of his nephew Karl, upon whom he poured his solicitude, jealousy, expectations and threats in an effort to shape the boy according to his wishes. When the most famous composer of the age died, about thirty thousand mourners and curious onlookers were present at the funeral procession on March 27, 1827.

Globally, Jazz is regarded as a sophisticated elitist and innovative music. But this has not always been the situation with Jazz music.

In fact this area of sophistry was introduced to Jazz music in the late 1940's with the advent of Bepop and the rise in popularity of such artistes like trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie, alto/tenor saxophonist Charlie "Bird" Parker and other reformers who began to pursue innovations and dexterity instead of convention in the late 40s.

This trend was given more vent in the 1950s by a number of artistes like Miles Davis, pianist Bill Evans, baritone saxophonist Gerry Mulligan and the Dave Brubeck Trio—all of whom were proponents of "cool" jazz. That is a softer less intricate rendition of the Bepop style.

Jazz

Ostensibly the jazz of today was greatly influenced by the 1950's situation where multifarious styles were introduced into the music form. For instance, artistes like Herbie Hancock performed Hard pop and later pioneered "avant garde" Jazz.

These new sound formats obviously took jazz off the dance hall and made it a property of matured musical minds and the elite, thereby restricting its mass appeal. In fact other jazz formations of the late 60s, afro beats for instance, had the basic aim of returning jazz to the people from whence it came ultimately, afro-beat failed to achieve this.

Apparently, the music idiom failed to spread widely as appeared

tightmated with the name of its investor, Fela Anikulapo Kuti, whose contribution was that he fused mainstream jazz with highlife music.

But as Paul Dairo disclosed to me recently, Fela's style of music borrowed from Coltrane. Nevertheless, it was only after the death of Fela that other proponents began to try their hands on Afro beat.

However, jazz innovations have no bounds as different parts of the world try to give their own interpretation of what largely an Afro-American music form derived ostensibly as historical fusion of used African and Engineer music.

The Jazz resurgence at the close of the 70s was not as massive as should have been expected. Recently musicians have even tried to play "crossover" jazz with steel instruments. And of recent, in the 1980s to be precise, Tedd Rely

(American pop producer) tried to put jazz on the dance floor by inventing "New jack swing" But its rap Music package, did not make a lasting impression, even though it held sway for some years.

Thanks to the Marsalis brothers, the life of jazz has remained unquenched.

What about Kenny G? You may want to ask. With the plenteous Grammys and platinum records the man has won. There is no doubt that his overly-pop jazz ruled the music form in the 1990s. But then Kenny G may be big, but jazz is no longer in charge.

Gone, it seems were the days of "traditional" jazz and "Dixie land-jazz" as played in New Orleans and Chicago amplified by such great names as Joe "King" Oliver, Louis Dods and others, who ruled the 1929s' dictatorially.

Gone also is the swing era or the big band era of the 1930s and 40s when clarinetist Benny Goodman, Count Basic, Duke Ellington and Jimmy Lunceford ruled the airways.

And the "Sweet Swing" era when performers like Glenn Miller, Wtynne King, Guy Comberdo and others produced danceable and popular jazz music that was the talk of all and sundry.

Fact it was that even in the big era, Pop music was not the only thing, innovation was also respected. But the appeal was mass based unlike now that the music appears to have come to an end for the masses. Obviously, jazz players have to listen to the great jazzman, Duke Ellington to keep things in the right perspective and remain relevant.

Bright Ewulu

Dialogue on Igbo Literature

There will be a workshop on Igbo Literature in Enugu. It is organised by the Association of Nigerian Authors and sponsored by Ford Foundation. Venue is Hotel Metropole, No 19 Ogui Road Enugu from Wed 4th April 2001 to Sat. 7th April, 2001.

The participants resident in Hotel Metropole will present their literary works in Igbo Language to be published by A. N. A. Non-resident participants are also welcome.

Authors and publishers especially of Igbo Literature are wel-

Conference

come to exhibit and sell their books. Organizations, cultural groups and individuals that promote Igbo Literature are welcome.

The workshop is geared towards using Igbo Literature as a tool in restoring, spreading and preserving Igbo Language and cultural values beyond the international frontiers.

Arrival for participants is 4th April 2001, while departure is 7th

April 2001. Opening ceremony will hold by 10.am on 5th April 2001.

The co-ordinator is Chinwe Nzewgwu, poet and Legal Adviser to the Association of Nigerian Authors and Women Writers of Nigeria. She is author of *Pensive Stanzas* and *Elusive Melody* used by Higher Institutions.

Elusive Melody is also an approved Text Book for Post Primary

Schools in many states.

The resource persons are as follows:

1. Prof Anezi Okoro whose literary works in English and indigenous Nigerian languages include over eight published novels and a number of poems.

2. Mrs Ifeoma Okoye the novelist who won Commonwealth prize for short stories in 1999. Her literary piece, *Men without ears* is ever green.

3. Tina Aronu, essayist and co-ordinator of Providence High

School Enugu, Project Citizens Club, an American based civic rights organisation Civitas International.

The master of ceremony is Henry Aniugbo, Head of Department of Languages, Institute of Management and Technology Enugu where he teaches languages including Igbo. He co-ordinated Igbo in I.M.T. making I.M.T. the first polytechnic in the country to teach Igbo.

The consultant is the novelist Dr. May Nwoye of University of Benin, Edo state, who is a veteran writer.

Story

Nightingale's Legacy

One day a poor old Nightingale fell sick. Within a few days, the sickness got worse. He couldn't raise his wings to fly. And his voice grew dull that whenever he sang, some other birds laughed at him mockingly. Very soon, his children noticed how their father was being mocked whenever he sang. They felt worried that they discussed anxiously. Later, they made an idea of fighting against those who acted in such a disrespectful manner.

Without their knowledge, all they discussed and decided were overheard by their sick father. In an instant, he talked to them in his dull, shaking voice.

"Don't worry about what other birds do to me. The world is demure enough to retaliate for me. All you have to do now is come closer to me, I have a legacy for you," said the poor old Nightingale.

They inched closer and knelt down attentively, to listen to him.

"I have been one of the popular

birds known with sweet voice. Now that I have lost handsomeness I lost my sweet voice and I lost strength due to old age. The world has beaten me" said the poor old nightingale. He sneezed and sighed and then paused for a while, then continued talking to his nestlings. "Be careful in this world. Do and try as much as you can and make good and better use of your life". He coughed and paused again for a while and started talking, "my children, make use of your wing, fly and reach a land called remarkable

achievement, it's the land of which everyone wants to go and live in it. Use your eyes and locate good ways that will take you to the land. Please make good use of your sweet voice" he paused, panting and then looked at them one after the other and said, "for now, I'm dying. Don't be confused about what I'm telling you, just comply.

The old and poor Nightingale fell flat and sprawled, and then died on the spot.

The nestlings broke into tears.

"father you should not die, we love you to be with us" said the younger nestlings sobbing.

"Father! Father! Can't you hear me, father!" said the second nestling in his anxious voice.

"My brothers, my sisters. We shouldn't be foolish, he's dead. He can't move, look or talk to us — All we should do now is bury him and calm down with patience. Allah would help us, his legacy would guide us in our life, and our hope and determination would help us go to the land of total happiness", said the elder nestling in a soft and confident voice.

Ibrahim B. Lawan.



Arts & Entertainment



The Story of the *New Nigerian* Part VII

The *New Nigerian* is born!

In the last account we read about how the title 'New Nigerian' was selected. In today's account the story unfolds to reveal the early days of the *New Nigerian*, and the Sardauna's warm and encouraging words at the inception of the paper.

But Mr. Sharp said that his wife had suggested the title of *New Nigerian* for the paper even before they set sail from England to come to Kaduna to set up the paper.

A. I don't know about that. But I do remember this dinner at Mr. Sharp's house and what transpired."

Once the decision on the title of the paper was taken other issues were quickly resolved. At a Press Conference held in Kaduna on 17th June, 1965, Mr. Sharp informed the world that the new company, the Northern Nigerian Newspapers Ltd., was to start printing a daily newspaper to be known as the *New Nigerian* which was to absorb the *Nigerian Citizen* before the end of 1965.

He also announced that machinery worth over £90,000 for the company had begun to arrive in the company's premises and were in the process of being installed. (In 1997 money terms, this was about N 11, 880,000.00).

"The machinery is among the best in the world for producing first class work and indeed it will be the first of its kind in Nigeria," Mr. Sharp asserted.

And true to his claims the *New Nigerian* made its debut on 1st January, 1966 - a beautiful newspaper, technically well-produced with no smudges which was characteristic of all Nigerian newspapers being published at that time. Even the manufacturers of the press in Chicago, U.S. of America were impressed: "Congratulations. Print quality as good as anything we have seen come off one of our presses".

In its first editorial the *New Nigerian* promised above all that it would strive to be "a good newspaper; dispensing news and comment without fear or favor."

Secondly, it went on, "as a Northern newspaper we shall seek to identify ourselves with the North and its peoples, their interest and their aspirations. For that we offer no apology. But at the same time we shall champion the vital need for national unity, for without unity and the first and mutual respect that goes with it, this great country will never find its rightful place in the sun."

Thirdly, the editorial, among other things, promised to "honour truth and try to instill within our editorial staff a sense of purpose and a pride in their profession."

The editorial is worth publishing in full: The Principles by which we stand-or fall The *New Nigerian* makes its bow in troubled times.

A few weeks ago a leading daily newspaper closed down. Another

Books

faces a ban on sales in two regions of the Federation.

For a time at least the bigots have had their way.

Where stands the *New Nigerian*? There are many things we shall strive to achieve-but above all we shall try to be a good newspaper, dispensing news and comment without fear or favour.

As a Northern newspaper, we shall seek to identify ourselves with the North and its peoples, their interests and aspirations. For that we offer no apology. But at the same time we shall champion the vital need for national unity. For without unity and the trust and mutual respect that goes with it, this great country will never find its rightful place in the sun.

In the same way that we shall oppose the evil extremes of tribalism, so we shall raise our pen against all forms of racialism and discrimination. We shall honour truth and try to instill within our editorial staff, a sense of purpose and a pride in their profession. We shall welcome all shades of responsible opinion, for we are conscious of the fact that we represent the people as a whole, and not just a section of it.

We shall try to show understanding towards all. We ask the same and no more from the public.

Thus the principles by which we stand are simple, but should truth and justice be assailed by ignorance and fear, or tolerance challenged by prejudice, then they will become the principles by which we shall fight and, if necessary, fall.

Unfortunately, the *New Nigerian* only served its founders - Sardauna's Government -for just two weeks. On 15th January 1966, the Army took Over the governments of Nigeria at Federal and regional levels and the Prime Minister of Nigeria, Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the Premier of the North, Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto, the Premier of the West, Chief Ladoke Akintola, were assassinated in the course of the coup d'etat. Also eliminated were all the senior army officers of Northern Nigerian origin of rank of Lt. Colonel and above except one, Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon. Those killed included Brigadier Zakariya Maimalari, Lt. Col. J. Y. Pam, Col. Kur Muhammed, Lt. Col. Abogo Largema, Brigadier S. A. Ademulegun and his wife and Colonel R. A. Shodeinde. Thus as a partisan "Northern" newspaper, the was still born. A new Nigeria indeed emerged from the tragic events of that Friday night, January 15th, 1966.

The maiden edition of the *New Nigerian*, in addition to its policy editorial, carried profound messages of goodwill from both the Governor of Northern Nigeria, Alhaji Kashim Ibrahim and the Premier, Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto. In his message, Alhaji Kashim Ibrahim expressed the hope that the *New Nigerian* would prove "to be a cementing force to the unity of Nigeria:

"With its size and great diversity, Northern Nigeria has an exciting and continuous story to tell, not only to Northerners but to all Nigerians and indeed, all the world. In the past we have had to face certain obstacles in the effective telling of our story. We have relied on friends and the indulgence of others to tell our story.

Today, we join the field with the *New Nigerian*, which I hope will prove a worthy competition not only to our own press in Nigeria but to the foreign newspapers which we read in this country. I hope that in telling the story of the North and this Federation, the *New Nigerian* will maintain the highest of professional standard.

And may be, young as it is, bring some freshness and purpose to journalism in our Federation. It is my earnest hope, above all, that this newspaper will prove a cementing force to the unity of Nigeria"

In his message, the Sardauna of Sokoto stressed that the newspaper's greatest weapon for success of its mission is "I hope the *New Nigerian*, will rely at all times on this reliable weapon: tell the truth about the North to the world and in return tell us the truth about the rest of the world".

The Premier's message was thoughtful and penetrative. It touched on the essence of the newspaper so eloquently that it deserves to be quoted in full.

"It gives me great pleasure to welcome the birth of this daily newspaper in the North today.

When one pauses to reflect on the recent history of our growing country, one cannot but come to the conclusion that a newspaper of this nature in this Region is a very 'real necessity. It used to be generally considered as being improper for one to blow one's own trumpet. But the fact has emerged and has been demonstrated time and again that nowadays if you do not blow your own trumpet, nobody will blow it for you-for the simple reason that they are too busy blowing theirs! ,

I am of course, not saying that the *New Nigerian* should be a trumpet-blowing newspaper as such.

What I am saying is that such a newspaper is necessary to tell the world, in words and pictures, the exciting story of Northern Nigeria as it unfolds day by day.

I have repeatedly expressed my desire that this region should be publicised far and wide. We must tell our fellow-countrymen about ourselves; we must tell the outside world about ourselves. We have not been entirely without our own resources for doing this, but this newspaper will add considerably to our effectiveness in a sphere in which we have been rather weak.

I hope that once again the *New Nigerian* will demonstrate a fact that Northern Nigeria has demonstrated several times in the past -namely, that while we do not believe in rushing wildly into new schemes just for the costly glory of being labelled 'first', we do believe that once we have made up our mind that something is desirable, necessary and possible, we go all out to do it well.

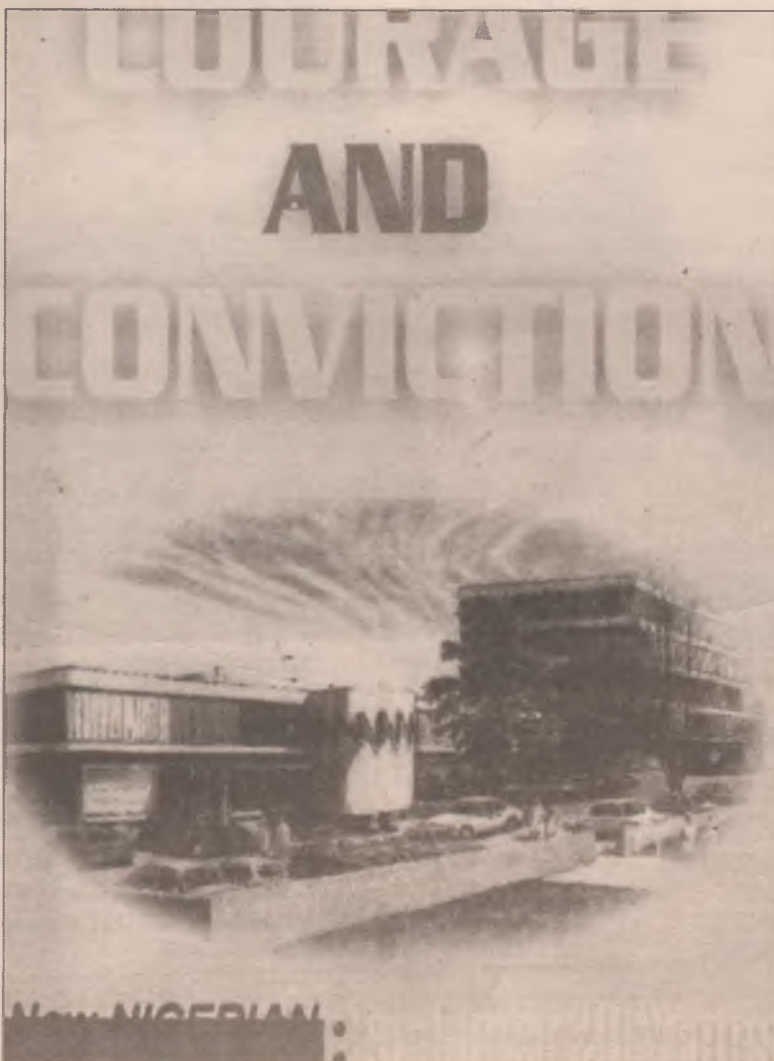
We do not believe in reckless haste to get things done; if we did, this newspaper, or something like it, could have been launched long before now. But it would not be the same as the newspaper that is launched today, because the long and careful thought, planning and preparation that has gone into the *New Nigerian* would have been lacking.

There are several other newspapers in this country today and all of them can claim to be older than the *New Nigerian*: this circumstance, to my mind, should work in favour of this newspaper because what is required on the present day scene is a completely new angle to things, a fresh and vigorous approach to our problems and aspirations.

The *New Nigerian* is new and it is fresh: it is not weighed down by age; nor encumbered by old prejudices: it has no ancient policies to preach and no lost causes to fight for at all costs. I have no doubt that it will look at events with unclouded eyes and report these events faithfully. This is the real need today and I believe the newspaper is best suited to fill it.

"It should tell the world in words and pictures, the leading story of Northern Nigeria as it unfolds day by day."

The region has in the past been a frequent victim of prejudice, distortion and downright falsehood on the part of certain organs in the newspaper world. I hope this newspaper will not make the mistake of descending to such levels against anybody, anywhere. The greatest weapon is truth.



The Book

SAY NO TO TOUTS

Why risk the loss of your money, ticket, documents and luggage, just to save a few minutes on the queue?

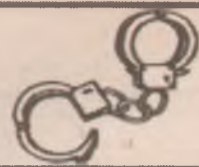
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Crime & Punishment



Bishop beats wife to coma

The Bishop of a Pentecostal Church located on Ogbor Hill, Aba in Abia State (name withheld), nearly beat his wife to death recently over an alleged sexual abuse of their housemaid by the man of God.

According to sources, the house girl was lured into a room by the Bishop, who tore her clothes when the girl refused both his advances and the N1,500 he allegedly offered her. A source said that when the wife of the Bishop, an Igbo newscaster with the NTA, Channel B, Aba, came back from work, she saw their housemaid in the care of their neighbours.

The housemaid was re-

ported to have told the lady what had happened.

The mother of six children, immediately confronted her husband who felt offended and beat her severely nearly killing her, had the same neighbours, who rescued the housemaid earlier, not intervened.

Confirming the incident, the wife expressed regret that the maid was not the first victim of several abuses by the Bishop but all other housemaids who had lived with them.

She said she got to know about the incident when she became worried on why the maids left abruptly and undertook to visit them individually in their respective

homes where she got the truth of the matter.

Investigations revealed that the pastor was alleged to have impregnated a woman who was once his housemaid and aided the abortion of the pregnancy in 1998 while in another occasion he impregnated a woman in his church.

Efforts to get the Bishop proved abortive, as he has reportedly absconded from his matrimonial home as well as from the church.

NYSC staff in court for causing death

By Uwem Umo

The police in Abuja from the Maitama Divisional Police Command have arraigned one Ogundele Gbenga in court for causing death through dangerous driving.

The accused person said to be a staff of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), Abuja, was said to have driven his vehicle, a Datsun Bluebird with registration number AJ 848 ABJ in a dangerous manner and collided with a bullion van registered BL 423 MUS.

According to the prosecuting police officer, Mr. Samuel Onoja, the collision

led to the death on the spot of one police corporal Ocheje Ajanwa and a staff of the United Bank of Africa (UBA), Abuja.

The accused person pleaded not guilty while his counsel, Mr. Faith Ahwinawhi prayed the court for bail adding that Gbenga has been on police bail since the incident occurred on March 19, 2001.

The prosecution did not

object to the application but told the court that the case file has been forwarded to the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP), for necessary advice.

The presiding Senior Magistrate, Mrs. Grace Inyang admitted the accused to bail in the sum of N30,000 and one surety in like sum who must be a senior civil servant not below grade level 13 and adjourned the matter to May 9, 2001 for further mention.

Customs ACG appears before NITEL/M-Tel

Commission of Inquiry

An Assistant Comptroller-General (ACG) of Customs, Mr. Alexander Dedeke, has appeared before the judicial commission of inquiry into NITEL and M-Tel on the auctioning of three 800 KVA generators belonging to NITEL.

Dedeke, who was also the Chairman, Ministerial Committee on the disposal of abandoned goods at the Ports, said "the containers carrying the generators were not bearing NITEL's name."

He told the Commission that it was later through the manifest of the Nigerian Ports Authority, that the Committee knew that the generators belonged to NITEL.

The ACG explained that the goods belonging to government organisations were exempted from disposal.

According to him, efforts have been intensified to re-

cover the generators, although they had been auc-

tioned at the cost of N200,000 each.

Meanwhile, the chairman of the Commission,

Justice Daniel Adeniyi, has adjourned further hearing on the matter to April 4 this year.

Trader jailed 2 years for receiving stolen property

Lagos based trader, Alhaji Alhasan Sarki has been sentenced to two years imprisonment for dishonestly receiving stolen property.

The offence, according to the prosecution is contrary to section 317 of the penal code law.

According to the prosecuting police officer, Mr. Harrison Omeoka, an Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP), the accused person dishonestly received gold and other jewellery from one Kelvin Krepke, a confessed armed robber, at a rock bottom price of N320,000 knowing fully well that the items were stolen.

The police prosecutor informed the court that the said items were robbed from one Miss Ufoma and four other ladies, all resident in Abuja.

The accused person said to be a trader at the Alaba in-

ternational market, Ojo, Lagos, pleaded guilty to the charge and begged for leniency.

The presiding Upper Area Court Judge, Alhaji Aliyu Abdulrahman sentenced him to two years or in the alternative pay a fine of N5,000 and also ordered that he pay compensation to the tune of N320,000 being value of the



IGP, Musilfu Smith.



Let's work together to rid Abuja of crime: That's what these two men seem to be saying as Commissioner of Police FCT, Mr. Dika Bwala, 1st left, in a handshake with the AIG Zone 7, Prince Rilwanu Akiolu, when the latter went on tour of the FCT Command recently. Watching is Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Z. Adesoba, left and DCP Esene, right.

Battered wife commends Human Rights Commission

A victim of severe battery in the hands of her husband has thanked the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), for saving her life and her marriage.

The victim (name withheld), a middle-aged woman had brought a complaint to the Commission, alleging that ever since her husband took a second wife, he had turned her into a punching bag and has refused to discharge both his sexual and financial responsibilities to her.

She said she then opened a food canteen but her "jealous" husband chased away all the male customers.

When she went into supply of sand to building contractors, her husband accused her of sleeping with them. He then beat her, knocked off her tooth, and banned her from coming into her matrimonial home where she has several children.

Frustrated, the complainant turned to the Commission for help. When an Investigator contacted the alleged violator, the man accepted beating his wife but accused her of adultery citing an instance where his wife was said to have obeyed an "Alter Call" in church when the Pastor invited all adulterers to come out for

special prayers.

A meeting set up between the Commission's officers and the couple led to

a resolution of the crisis. The woman moved back into her home and the husband fixed her tooth.



Justice Uche Omo, Chairman, National Human Rights Commission, (NHRC)

Court restrains NUJ

An Abuja Senior Magistrate Court has restrained the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) from forcefully ejecting one of its tenants to be occupying a makeshift structure within the premises of the union at its headquarters in Area 11, Marki, Abuja.

Senior Magistrate, Mrs. Grace Inyang issued the order of restraint in Abuja last Friday following an ex parte application moved by counsel to the plaintiff, Barrister Benjamin Enemaku.

According to the lawyer

By Uwem Umo

the NUJ had threatened to use force to evict one of their tenants at its Area 11 headquarters premises, Abuja.

The counsel to the plaintiff submitted that there was a receipt for a two-year rent payment made to the union which will expire next month.

He urged the court to restrain the union or its agents from carrying out the ejection threat pending the determination of the substantive suit.

April 19, 2001 has been fixed for hearing.



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The Group General Manager
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Herbert Macaulay Way (North),
Central Business District,
P.M.B. 190, Garki,
Abuja.

Applicants could submit their applications at any of the NNPC Zonal Offices, i.e.
Lagos Zonal Office, Mulliner Office Complex, Pa Alfred Rewane Rd, Ikoyi, Lagos;
Benin Zonal Office, 1, High Court Road, Benin;
Warri Zonal Office, 19/21 Warri/Sapele Road, GRA, Warri;
Port Harcourt Zonal Office, 46, Moscow Road, Old GRA, Port Harcourt;
Kaduna Zonal Office, 24, Gubarau Road, Kaduna,
or any Pipelines and Products Marketing Company (PPMC) location nearest to them.

All applications must reach the above address or locations not later than Friday, 20th April, 2001. Application should be marked "Plant Operator" with discipline of the applicant written at the top right hand corner of the envelope containing the application. Candidates who had earlier submitted unsolicited applications to NNPC should reapply following the guidelines in this advertisement. Only applications of candidates who meet the requirements shall be shortlisted and acknowledged. Candidates are advised to deal directly with NNPC. No agent is designated for this purpose and no special forms or application fees are required. **Holders of Higher National Diploma (HND) should not apply.** If they apply under false pretense and are caught during the recruitment process or after engagement, they will be disqualified.



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MARCH, 2001.

**PUBLIC PRESENTATION OF AFIRKA:
KINGDOM OF GOD
PROPOSED ACTIVITIES AND KNOWN SPEAKERS**

DAY OF BRAINSTORMING AND FESTIVITY

THEME OF THE DAY

THE RESURRECTION NOT THE DEATH: A RE-APPRAISAL OF
SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP AMONG HUMANS'
ACTIVITIES AMONG OTHERS

(A) LECTURES

1. 'Sexual Reproduction and the Female Sex Organs'
 - a. Presenter: LINUS Achumu Esq. (Biologist)
Crescent International School, Kano
 - b. Chair: Engr. Eke Ukwu
SCL Malumfashi
2. 'Prevention of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) and Family Planning Methods'
 - a. Presenter: Lami Tukur
Matron, Bela General Hospital, Yadakunya
 - b. Chair: Talatu Dogara
Matron, Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital, Kano.
3. A talk titled "As You Grow Into Women: Pep Talk to my Daughters"
 - a. Giver: Altine Binta
MA/OC BETTA Kano
 - b. Chair: Nalya T. B. Abdullahi
4. A legal opinion titled, 'Abortion of the Human Foetus and its Legal Implications'
 - a. Holder: Barrister Fatima Kwaku
Legal Practitioner, Yafatima Chambers Kano
 - b. Chair: D. D. Onletan Esq.
Legal Practitioner, J. M. Majiyagbe & Co. Kano

(B) DRAMA

(C) MUSIC & SONGS

DATE: Monday, 16th April, 2001.

VENUE: ROYAL TROPICANA HOTEL, KANO

TIME: REGISTRATION TO START AT 8.00 a.m. prompt.

CATEGORIES OF REGISTRATION AND THEIR FEES

(i) The first group is the human. In this group there are three categories.

CATEGORY ONE:

Females: These shall pay five hundred Naira only and the title Ms shall be fixed to their names

CATEGORY TWO:

There are among women those who want to announce to the world that they have been made women by some men and they insist on the title Mrs. We shall give them if they double the females fee i.e. pay one thousand Naira only.

NOTE: Whether you are Ms or Mrs. This subsidized rate is because you are female. so please when you come. by your appearance show us you are. The easiest is hairdo, spend some time on it and make it feminine, you never know, there may be a price for that. If you prefer to tie head tie, no problem. Just know how to tilt the angles to show us the braids. NO VEILS ALLOWED IN THIS CATEGORY

CATEGORY THREE

Males: Two thousand Naira only. This category is only for those in mufti and no caps. In this part of the world, men's head gear is used to distinguish their status. If you come under this category you are coming as a plain Mr.

(ii) The second group is the institutionalised group. The fee is for each individual member of the group.

CATEGORY ONE

This group is for the titled personnel of the various professions. If you want to be addressed as Dr. Engr. Arch. etc. You have to pay N10,000 for that.

CATEGORY TWO

If you represent the traditional society that has refused to let go, you shall pay fifty thousand Naira flat. This means titles like Chief, Lolo, or additional explanation to your names like Alafin, Sardauna or Garkuwan etc. shall be taken care of.

CATEGORY THREE:

This is the category of the God's anointed. If by your appearance and/or title, you wish to propagate God's message to the world, you belong here. This category has two sections.

Section One:

Dominant in the South, are people who by the title Sister, Evangelist, Bishop and/or ear skull cap (men) and short veil (women) they each shall pay one hundred thousand Naira flat.

Section Two:

Imported from the north, are who go by the title of Alhaja, Alhaji, etc. They also wear beards (men) or long veils (women), they each shall pay one hundred thousand U.S. dollars flat.

CATEGORY FOUR:

This is for those who represent the state. If you go by the title of President, Your Honour or Honourable etc. and/or if you are arriving the venue with siren escort you must pay the fee of one million Naira flat. This is per person.

CATEGORY FIVE

This is for uniformed personnel. If you wish to wear your uniform and/or you want a military title affixed to your name then each of you shall pay the fee of one million U.S. dollars flat

(ii) The third group is for those who wish to attend free of charge. This is for reporters. Each reporter should please send in a brief report stating the following: Name of reporter, whom you are reporting to, locating focus & philosophy. For attendance in any category please contact:

BETTA

No. 3 Bompai Road,

Opposite Central Hotel,

Kano. Telefax (064) 648348

E-mail: altinobinta@yahoo.com



FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON PRIVATISATION

Secretariat: Bureau of Public Enterprises

**TELECOM WORKSHOP TO DISCUSS DRAFT
TELECOMMUNICATIONS BILL AND REGULATIONS**

**WORKSHOP AGENDA: TO ESTABLISH A LEGAL AND
REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR THE
TELECOMMUNICATIONS SECTOR**

VENUE: Banquet Hall, Rockview Hotel, Abuja

DATE: 3- 4 April, 2001

TIME: 8.00a.m. -6.00p.m.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND:

- Top Government functionaries including:
- The Honourable Minister of Justice
- The Honourable Minister of Communications
- Ministers of State for Justice and Communications
- Chairman and members of Senate and House Committees on Communications
- Board members of Nigerian Communications Commission, NITEL, and Nigeria Broadcasting Commission
- Chairman and members of Senate and House Committees on Privatization
- Telecom Sector Reform Implementation Committee members Association of Telecom Operators of Nigeria
- Telecom Lawyers Association
- All Telecom Service Providers
- Electronic Media Operators
- The Media
- General public and all other stakeholders

This Workshop is intended to provide an opportunity to discuss the recommendations and draft documents, including the Draft Telecommunications Bill, prepared by the Consortium of Consultants (consisting of Booz Allen & Hamilton, Clifford Chance LLP, Udo Udoma & Bello Osagie and Afric-Projects Consortium) advising the National Council on Privatization (NCP). Presenters will include members of the Consortium, and representatives of the NCP's Telecommunications Sector Reform Implementation Committee (TSRIC) will facilitate the discussions. TSRIC and the Consortium invite all stakeholders to provide comments on all aspects of the recommendations and draft documents.

For further enquiries, please contact:

Mallam Nasir Ahmad el-Rufai

Member/Secretary

National Council on Privatisation

Secretariat:

Bureau of Public Enterprises

Plot I Osun Crescent

Off Ibrahim Babangida Way

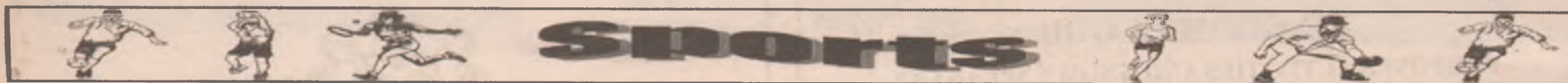
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P.M.B. 442, Garki, Abuja, Nigeria

Tel: 234-9-4134636-46

Fax 234-9-4134642, 4134661

E-mail: bpegen@micro.com.ng, bpe@bpe.org



Karl signs record deal for coaches

Basketball

George Karl became the highest-paid coach in professional sports and a part-owner of the Milwaukee Bucks.

Terms weren't revealed, but a source with knowledge of the deal who spoke on condition of anonymity said the two-year extension is worth \$14 million and also includes a small slice - believed to be 1 to 2 percent - of the franchise that is valued at \$125 million.

Karl, who turns 50 in May, is committed to the Bucks through the 2003-04 season.

"George is one of the best coaches in the game and this extension ensures that we will continue to have his leadership on our sideline for the next several seasons," general manager Ernie Grunfeld said Wednesday. "He's innovative, he's a great motivator and he has a genuine passion for basketball. Those qualities make him a great fit for this team and this city."

Karl is in the third year of his original four-year, \$20 million contract. The extension makes Karl the only coach, other than Miami's Pat

Riley, to own stock in his team, said Karl's agent, Bret Adams.

The deal contains escape clauses that would allow Karl to leave if the Bucks win the NBA title after next season or the job at Karl's alma mater, North Carolina, comes open again. Kohl didn't allow Karl to interview for the Tar Heels' job last year.

Karl wanted to wait until the summer to sign his record-breaking contract extension so that it didn't detract from the Bucks' bid for their first Central Division crown since 1986.

But the delay actually led to speculation he was holding out for another job, so Adams and Bucks owner Herb Kohl worked out the details of the deal this week.

The timetable was moved up because of rumors Karl was waiting for Mike Dunleavy to be fired in Portland so he could take the Trail Blazers' job.

Karl once worked for Portland general manager Bob Whitsitt in Seattle.

"My thought all year long was it would be better served if we signed it in the summer-time," Karl said. "But I think because of all the stuff that's



Karl...the highest paid coach in professional sports.

been stirred up, it's probably best signed (now)."

The Bucks have enjoyed a turnaround under Karl, reaching the NBA playoffs in his first two seasons, and they are approaching their first Central Division title in 15 years.

"George's leadership and his passion for winning have

had a very positive effect on the Milwaukee Bucks and on the entire community," Kohl said. "His basketball knowledge and his competitive spirit have helped restore our winning tradition. At the same time, his work ethic, his accessibility and his genuine love for the game have endeared him to our fans."

Del Bosque honoured by contract extension

Real Madrid, CF head coach Vicente Del Bosque has said he is honoured by the club's decision to extend his contract until June 2003.

"It gives me great satisfaction that they have put their trust in me while we are in the middle of the season with two titles still to play for," Del Bosque admitted.

The mild-mannered Real coach said negotiations with the club's sporting director Jorge Valdano had been concluded without a hitch. "The negotiations were very straightforward. The only condition I made was that I wanted to continue with the same team of coaches that I have at present."

Del Bosque, who is Real's eleventh coach in the past ten seasons, said the de-

cision to extend his contract was a reflection of the club's desire to avoid the uncertainty of previous years. "It is important that your work is valued and that the club functions in a stable environment," he said.

Real's players greeted the news that Del Bosque was staying as coach with enthusiasm. "I am really pleased," Brazilian international Roberto Carlos said. "He never seeks the limelight but the fact that things are going so well this season is down

to him."

Spanish international striker Raúl González also praised a man who has been involved with the club for over 30 years. "He is a great coach who has always tried to create a comfortable atmosphere in which the team can work effectively," he said.

With typical modesty, Del Bosque said he was grateful for the players' support. "I don't know if it is good to have the players speaking so well of a coach but, in any case, I would

rather have them with me than against me."

Del Bosque, replaced John Toshack as Real coach in November 1999 and led the club to their eighth European Champion Clubs' Cup victory last season. He will become the longest-serving Real coach in the last 25 years if he sees out his contract. Real lead the Spanish first division by five points with 11 matches remaining and are playing Turkish club Galatasaray SK in the UEFA Champions League quarter-finals next month.



Danny Murphy fires Liverpool's opener against FC Porto in the quarter-finals of UEFA Cup competition...recently. Pix AFP

Bayern v United: The French Connection

- Willy Sagnol

When Willy Sagnol signed for FC Bayern München for 6.4m from AS Monaco FC last summer he became only the third Frenchman to join the German champions, after Jean-Pierre Papin (1994-96) and Bixente Lizarazu. In his first full season Sagnol has established himself in the right-back role vacated by Markus Babel, and his recent performances for Bayern have been good enough for him to win his second cap for France, ironically enough versus Germany in Paris last month.

The 24-year-old learned his trade at the football academy of AS Saint-Etienne, whose senior team he captained at the age of 19. Having played for the French under-18 and under-21 teams, Sagnol made his debut for the French national team in November last year in the 4-0 win over Turkey. At Monaco he came under the influence of Claude Puel, who converted him from a midfielder player to a full-back.

"Sagnol is a role model for any professional football player," says his former coach. "He takes very good care of his body and during his time with us he was never injured. For a right-back he is very technically skilled and at Bayern he will no doubt improve his strengths in man-to-man marking."

Sagnol usually plays right-back, with World Cup winner Lizarazu - his own role model and the other half of what Bayern fans call the "French Connection" - on the left. But Sagnol himself says his long-term ambition is to move into central defence.

Sagnol himself is still somewhat in awe of his new surroundings in Bavaria: "In Monaco we practically knew the name of all our support-

ers because we only had about 4,000 people watching our home matches," he says. "But in Bayern this is all different and the support behind the club from the fans is tremendous. We are like one big family, everyone sticks together and my goal is to become a regular in the team here. It's very unusual that French players move to Germany, but I feel very at home in Munich."

His new coach, Ottmar Hitzfeld, says: "Sagnol is very technically strong but he needs to develop more attacking initiatives into his game. This was also Lizarazu's problem when he arrived here and look how much he has developed. In modern football defenders have to be very versatile but I have to say that I am very impressed with the way Willy has developed in man-to-man situations. He never lets anybody get past him."

On the pitch Sagnol is dynamic, aggressive and very competitive but by his teammates he is described as very quiet, calm and even a little reserved. He is, however, a big Formula One buff and his thoughts lie not only in Europe but further afield in Japan and Korea.



Sagnol

Toyota chasing Schumacher

Motor Racing

Japanese giant Toyota, the latest major manufacturer to enter Formula 1, are reportedly preparing to lure Michael Schumacher away from Ferrari when his contract expires at the end of next year.

Responding to a story in German newspaper *Bild* linking the world champion with Toyota, Schumacher's manager Willy Weber said: "Nothing is impossible."

He added: "As a general rule we must take everything into consideration."

"Ferrari has top priority however because Michael feels good at Maranello and his dream of a Ferrari era appears about to be realised."

Weber also said he was unconcerned about the fact that Schumacher's contract, which expires at the end of 2002, has not been renewed. "There's no hurry," he said.

"We'll discuss it towards the end of the season. We have plenty of time."

However, in the article headlined 'Toyota want to buy Schumacher,' *Bild* claimed that the Japanese manufacturer were willing to do everything possible to have Schumacher in their team, at any price.



Schumacher



Okocha, Babangida shun Bonfrere

Paris Saint Germain (PSG) midfielder, Austin Okocha who was given the last chance to prove his relevance in the Super Eagles in the forthcoming friendly match against Libya has turned down the invitation.

Okocha's reasons were not quite plain except he adduced serious club engagements. But this is ironical in view of the fact that Okocha hardly feature in PSG's matches and when he does merely as a substitute.

Apart from Okocha, Tijjani Babangida and Garba Lawal are equally turning down Johannes Bonfrere's nod to enlisted them in the Eagles squad to confront Libya in Tripoli on April 7.

The duo's decision not to honour the invitation is in protest against the NFA's inability to make refunds of their return tickets each time they and other members of the Eagles fly in for national service.

Lawal, the Roda FC left winger, described as "outrageous" the NFA insistence not to pay more than 2,500 dollars, an amount said to be for the economy class. But Lawal, who served notice in Ethiopia that himself and other Eagles might be forced to ignore future invitations, said no fewer than 3,500 dollars is the amount they usually pay to make any round trip to honour national invitation.

However, four other players are backing out of the Tripoli friendly match for different reasons. Ifeanyi Udeze, who is fastly

assuming the left back position from out-of-form Celestine Babayaro, returnee Emeka Ifejiagwa, Julius Aghahowa and Isaac Okoronkwo who played brilliantly in Chingola, Zambia in a Nations Cup qualifier, are all opting out for club engagements.

Ifejiagwa, Udeze and Okoronkwo were said to

have pleaded with Bonfrere to excused them in the Tripoli friendly, even as they vowed to be available for the April 21 make or mar World Cup qualifier against the Leone Stars of Sierra Leone.

While Patrick Ovie and Yakubu Aiyegbeni who feature for Ironi Shoni Lezion and Maccabi Haifa will also miss the Tripoli friendly

because they play in Israel. The Libyan authorities have directed the NFA that players with Israeli clubs should be excluded because of diplomatic and political face-off between the two countries.

Bonfrere though is yet to make replacements for them. The tentative departure date for the team is April 4 while the friendly holds on April 7.



Julius Aghahowa would miss Nigeria's friendly against Libya on April 7 in Tripoli

Why youth football's faltering, by Ekarika

By Patrick Andrew

Former Flying Eagles striker, Uwem Ekarika, has attributed Nigeria's dwindling fortunes in youth soccer to lack of well articulated graduated programme and inadequate pre-tournament preparations.

Ekarika observed that a progressive programme would have ensured that players from the previous U-17 teams stepped into the U-20 squad as obtainable in other countries.

He regretted that such graduated programmes was lacking in Nigeria, a situation that compelled assemblage of fresh players each time the country has an age-grade engagement. He cited the example of the present Black Satellites of Ghana which graduated from the Black Starlets U-17 side that defeated the Golden Eaglets in 1999.

Members of the then Eaglets graduated into the Flying Eagles squad that

performed woefully in the African Youth Championship in Ethiopia. The authority it appears has neither given serious consideration to a graduated programme nor is it willing to learn from the examples of other countries."

The sweat merchant of Akwa United FC, an amateur league shield aspirant, said the usual epileptic and fire brigade approach was another bane of Nigeria's poor outings in the age-grade championships.

Ekarika, whose team thrashed host Industrial Promoters of Abuja 2-0, noted that it would be difficult for Nigeria to win any laurel in youth soccer unless the necessary things were done. He insisted that gone were the days when the NFA could just assemble a crop of players without requisite experience to participate meaningfully in any age grade championship.

The former Flying Eagles striker said the authority administering football in the country must evolve a functional programme that would allow for and facilitate the development of a youth programme.

"We cannot continue to rely on the fire brigade approach. The time has come for Nigeria to adopt to the scientific approach to preparation for competitions. The technical department of the NFA should be up and doing in fashioning out functional youth programmes."

Mobil/University Athletics kicks off April 5

The Nigeria University Games Association (NUGA) has fixed the finals of the first edition of the Mobil/Nigeria University Athletics Championships (NUAC) for April 5 and April 8 at the Liberty Stadium, Ibadan.

A statement signed by Bola Orodele, NUGA Secretary, Saturday in Lagos said that qualifiers in the eight zones from the 36 universities were expected at the four-day meet.

Orodele said that Mobil/NUAC started in June 2000 with zonal qualifiers from the eight zones, adding that NUGA and the main organizing committee of the competition agreed that athletes who emerge first, second and third in various events would participate in the finals.

He said that the finals of the Mobil/NUAC would also

Athletics

be part of basis to select athletes to camp. Some of these athletes are billed to represent Nigeria in the 2001 World University Games (FISU) in Beijing, China later in the year.

He said Mobil Producing Nigeria sponsorship for all finalists to the games would

cover feeding, accommodation and competition allowances.

Orodele said that it was expected that the universities would use the meet to test their athletes for the 18th NUGA Games billed for between April 18 and April 28 at the Ahmadu Bello Stadium, Kaduna.

Badminton tourney gets new date

The maiden Adekunle Fajuyi National Under-19 Badminton Championship earlier scheduled to hold between March 28 and April 1 in Ado-Ekiti has been shifted to between June 27 and June 30 at the same venue.

Opeyemi Aminu, the Secretary of the Badminton Federation of Nigeria (BFN), told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Lagos that the postponement was due

Badminton

to unforeseen circumstances and regretted the inconveniences the shift might have caused.

Aminu said that entries made by states and clubs for the championships remain valid, adding that free accommodation and feeding would be provided to all the participants.

Players from all parts of the country are expected to feature in the three-day event.

Abraka turf glows for Easter Polo

Preparations are in top gear to host the unique Abraka international polo tournament slated for April 13-16 in Abraka, Delta State.

Speaking with Trustsports Thursday, the tournament manager, Yemisi Ogunjipe said the teams to look out for in the three-day tournament are Kaduna

From Richard Abayomi, in Lagos

Polo

Trappco, MRS, IBTC, Auto Hall and Ashbert Rainders "Also expected are a unique mix of foreign players from Argentina, UK and France for a high goal match."

Ogunjipe explained that the trophies being contested

for are the Patron's Cup, the International Gold Cup, the Belgium Ambassador Cup and Conservation Cup.

"We have in the past, seen foreign teams from Cowdray Park and Ham Polo Clubs of the UK play at the Abraka turf club," he said.

He promised that the competition would be a fun galore for all and sundry.



brahim Mohammad of Kaduna El-Amin, on the prowl, during the Lagos Polo Tournament

NCA to pick players from cricket tourney

The Nigeria Cricket Association (NCA) will select the players who will represent the country at the 13th West African Quadrangular Tournament scheduled to hold between 21 and 29 in Free Town from the Super League competition which ended yesterday, according

Cricket

NCA scribe Gloria Ekwempu told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) last week in Lagos that the decision to select the players from the meet was based on the recommendation of the technical committee of the association.

Ekwempu said that

had been pencilled down at the end of the just-concluded trials in Lagos, the committee felt that the competition would serve as a better avenue to choose the best.

Four clubs—FCC 1 and FCC 2, Cosmos and GTI—

having finished a

four in the cricket league this

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Sunderland's striker Kevin Phillips jumps in front of Chelsea's defender Marcel Desailly to score Sunderland's final goal in a 4-2 triumph...recently.



Mitch Richmond of Sacramento Kings slam-dunking during an NBA clash with Los Angeles Clippers.

NFA boils over ministerial directives

By Patrick Andrew

The Nigeria Football Association (NFA) is boiling over a ministerial directives that tends to infringe on the status of the pro-league and discipline among clubs.

Sports Minister, Ishaya Mark Aku, *Trustsports* learnt, had by fiat ordered the NFA to reverse the decision of the organizing and disciplinary committee against Plateau United whose fans were indicted for encroaching on the field of play during the rescheduled week 13 encounter in Jos.

The encroachment abruptly terminated the encounter. Though the Plateau United were leading by 3-2, the visiting El-Kanemi protested and the NFA organizing and disciplinary committee found Plateau United guilty, with match officials report strongly indicting them.

Consequently, the committee banished Plateau United to Makurdi and awarded the three points at stake to the El-Kanemi Warriors, a development the officials of the Tin City club found hard to stomach and decided to seek ministerial intervention.

Aku, we learnt, subsequently ordered the NFA to reverse the decision by returning Plateau United to Jos as well as restoring the three points to them.

But the authorities of the Glass House are chafing over the directives, as its implementation would set an undue and damaging precedence.

An impeccable source disclosed that it may even create unnecessary avenues for clubs to capitalize on flaunting pro-league laws.

The NFA is hard put as to how to implement the ministerial fiat without provoking untoward reactions inviting clubs to disregard the decisions of

the organizing and disciplinary committee in subsequent cases.

Trustsports learnt that the Plateau United management has appealed against the committee's decision thus giving the NFA the needed vista to execute the ministerial fiat.

But the El-Kanemi Warriors are not letting things lie low. The club's management has officially intimidated the Borno State government of the development, a situation that might pitch Plateau and Borno States on each other's throat.

Trustsports recalled that erstwhile sports minister, Damishi Sango, had by fiat ordered the NFA to award three points to Plateau United against Gabros International last season, which ensured Gabros inability to play in the Super Four Tournament.

Plateau United fans had also last year physically assaulted Jigawa Golden Stars players openly, without recourse for discipline. In all, the team went scot-free.

Professor Nomau's travails, written & illustrated by Bulama Mustapha

