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my millions
—Dangote



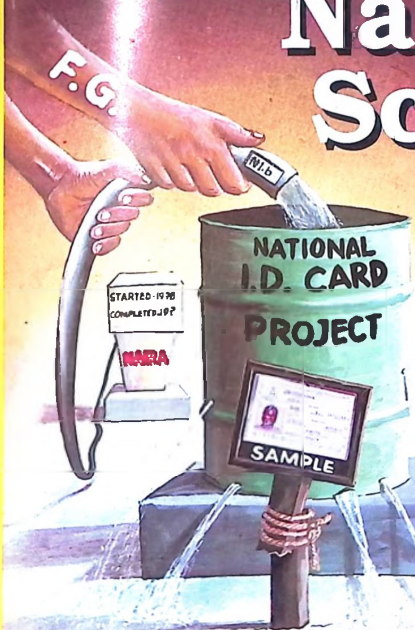
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JUNE 17 - 24 1991 VOL. 2 NO. 25

Citizen

IDENTITY CARD PROJECT:

National Scandal



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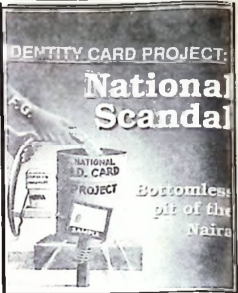
Citizen
All the News in Perspective

June-17-23-1991
SIGNATURE: *Mobolaji*
Vol. 2 No: 25

**ID card project:
a national scandal**

It was conceived in 1976 by the Obasanjo regime to determine who the real Nigerian is. 15 years later after gulping one and a half billion Naira, the project is yet to take off.

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Raw deal for the nomads

The country's five million Fulanis are crying out for a fair deal in a scheme conceived to uplift their well being.

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South Africa: De Klerk courts Moi



Basking in the success of his "reforms" so far, racist president de Klerk has begun diplomatic shuttle to 'friendly' African countries but Nigeria, it seems is not interested —yet.

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LETTERS

Arewa House: what next?

Sir,

After the death of Sardauna Sokoto, a lot has been done during the last 25 years to remember him for his exemplary life. The recent launching of the Arewa House 120 million Naira appeal fund to renovate his official residence is remarkable. I hope the money would be spent as the late Alhaji Ahmadu Bello - may his soul rest in peace - did when spending public money. I congratulate Dr. Bashir Ikara and Alhaji Yahaya Gusau for proposing and making this mother of all appeal funds a reality. My attention now goes to all that admire and talk good about his exemplary life, during and after his death, especially to those who graced the occasion.

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These issues raised need your attention, apart from the research and documentation of his achievements and deeds.

I pray Almighty Allah to give you the strength to realise your proposals to the new Arewa House in your lifetime.

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Maiduguri

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A man who was said to have single handedly initiated the idea of turning Sardauna's house as a tourist attraction in recognition of the late Sardauna of Sokoto, the legend of our time, deserves all the respect and accolade we can bestow upon him. Issues that led to his eventual removal should have been settled amicably and not what I saw as a disgraceful reward for a man who has worked hard to see the whole idea come to fruition. I think also that he has played into the hands of those who may wish him ill.

When the great moment came, some people because of self-claim to greatness, turned a man's greatest moment and expectation to frustration. The legend could not have done what they did - so they could not claim to be protecting the ideas and ways for which the late Sardauna stood, lived, worked and died for.

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The intervention of Alhaji Isa Kaita should have brought some sense to both parties. The authorities should have made Dr. Ikara to see reason instead of detaining him because they are the powers that be.

All reasons adduced that led to his removal need to be looked into critically and there could be more to it than meets the eye. Dr. Ikara himself is not helping matters by refusing to talk. He does not deserve this treatment.

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However keep up the excellent job you are doing.

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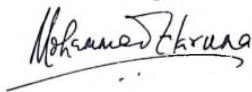
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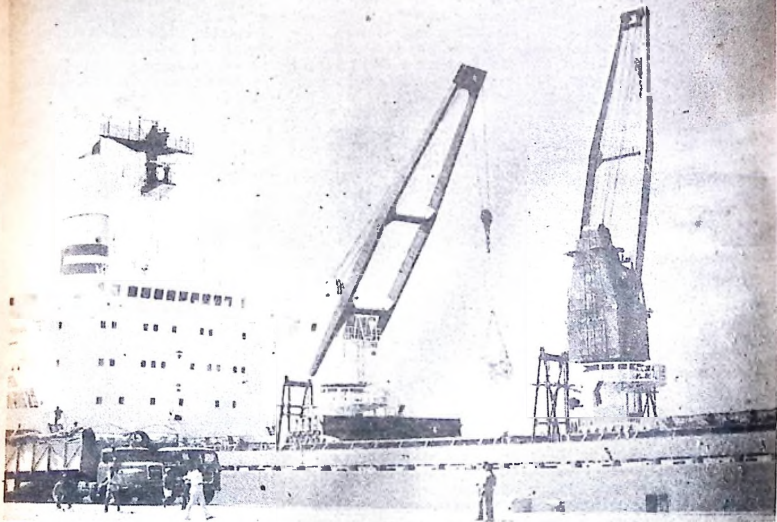
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ID Card: End the blight

As our cover story this week shows, the National Identity Card project has its critics, some of them very important personalities. The general feeling, however, is that it is on the whole a worthwhile project. There is always a danger that the sort of information about individuals that the project will generate can be abused if it falls into the wrong or unauthorised hands. The other and weightier side, however, is that the information is not only useful but necessary for sensible planning. If the project had been implemented according to its initial schedule, that is, by mid-1980, or even a few years later, both the National Population Commission and the National Electoral Commission, for example, would have had a lot of their present burdens eased. In so doing much of what the two bodies are now spending would have been saved.

As things now stand, however, the project has become a national disgrace, if not a national nightmare. A project which was launched fifteen years ago at a cost of about 10 million Naira has grown into monstrous dimensions gobbling around one and a half billion Naira along the way — and still showing little sign that it will soon come to an end. Even on account of the over 10 years delay in its execution and the questionable cost of the project alone, we should all feel scandalized.

However, as if all this is not bad enough, we are now being told that we have to spend one billion Naira more on the project, if the

one and a half billion already spent is not to go down the drain. This one billion Naira, we are told, is the cost of a so-called Automated Fingerprint Identification System, without which individuals can acquire multiple cards and thus make the project "worthless and ineffective".

This is rather curious to say the least. If indeed AFIS is central to the project's effectiveness, how come we never heard of it until nearly ten years after it should have been executed? We ask, is there no cheaper means to make the I.D. Card fool-proof? At any rate must this AFIS thing cost one billion Naira? And is it indeed fool-proof?

We think we have really been had for a song by those we have entrusted with the execution of the project. Perhaps it is rather late in the day to ask for a proper accounting of the one and a half billion Naira already spent. However, it is certainly not too late to avoid pouring an additional billion Naira down the drain. Most of what we require for the I.D. Card is in place. We should go ahead and launch it today without the AFIS.

The I.D. Card should not automatically confer citizenship on its owner and its possession should not be a condition for eligibility for social services, as the internal affairs ministry has suggested. It is only when we insist on these that a system like the AFIS may be necessary. In a situation where documentation is very primitive, this, to say the least, is asking too much, too soon.

Nomadic education

If the Federal Government is still interested in the education of nomadic children, then it ought to intervene and end the rancour presently going on in and around the Nomadic Education Commission. This statement is pertinent because, with the dissolution of the National Primary Education Commission early this year, the Federal Government appears to have washed its hands off primary education. Nomadic

education is an aspect of primary education, but because of its specially complex nature, it has been given a Commission of its own. Since government has not said anything about abolishing this Commission, we assume that it is still interested in pursuing this noble scheme.

The controversy that has enveloped the Commission in recent months however threatens to destroy whatever achievements

it may have recorded. At the centre of the allegations is the commission's executive secretary, Prof. Chima Ezeomah, an otherwise accomplished academic in the area of nomadic education. The allegations against him are many and range from the damning to the frivolous, but all of them need to be investigated by the Federal Ministry of Education. If Prof. Ezeomah is found wanting in some respects, it is the ministry's duty to call him to order. If there are problems in recognising roles and functions within the Commission, the ministry will do well to reconstitute a board for it. If the probe reveals major administrative lapses on the part of Ezeomah, then he should be replaced. It wouldn't be the first time that an accomplished academician will fail to put his

fine ideas into practice.

On the other hand, if *Miyetti Allah* and other associations are found to be sabotaging the commission on the grounds that the executive secretary is not a Fulani, a northerner or a Muslim, then they must be called to order. While agreeing with them that it is desirable, indeed indispensable, to have persons familiar with the target people for any project to succeed, this familiarity must not be defined too narrowly to mean belonging to the group in question. After all, nomadic education is a federal project and its personnel cannot be reserved exclusively for any group.

All parties to this dispute must be warned that nomadic peoples are not well served by rancour.

Sir Mobolaji Bank-Anthony

Sir Mobolaji Bank-Anthony worked hard to make his money quietly; and after making it, he distributed it out even more quietly. By the time he died, the only thing he hadn't given away was his life. He surrendered that on May 27, at 84.

And to the very end he wouldn't take any of the vanities of wealth for himself. "My funeral is to be of the simplest nature," he counselled "I came into the world alone and I am being buried alone." He accordingly forbade any expenditure to announce or celebrate his death. Those alive need the resources more than those dead.

Given his background and immediate environment, this must be a very remarkable, almost unbelievable, thing. In many ways, he was the anti-thesis of most Nigerians. He never saw money — or the art of making, seizing, embezzling, stealing or even honestly amassing it — as an end in itself. It was, for him, always a means to do goodness to his fellow men.

Throughout his long life he adopted a most self-effacing style that was silent, almost invisible. Yet working behind that silence was a dedicated and accomplished entrepreneur, an achiever who believed actions spoke louder than words.

He had, quite early in life, decided that he was cut out for business. And so in the

business sector, he concentrated his energies — mostly — on general merchandising, construction, pharmaceuticals, insurance and oil business. He made millions and gave them away; littering the whole landscape with evidence of genuine philanthropy.

Some of his most well known philanthropic acts — mostly in the medical world — include the donation of a 140-bed fully equipped accident ward to the National Orthopaedic Hospital, Igbobi, Lagos, and a 130-bed obstetrics and gynaecology complex to the Ikeja General Hospital. In addition to these and numerous unmentioned acts of personal generosity, he instituted and endowed scholarships, fellowships, academic chairs and funded research in institutions.

Though he didn't give to court public adulation or gratitude, he got both. His list of honours included a British knighthood, Lagos traditional titles and a national honour.

There is little doubt that on the physical plane, Sir Mobolaji's was a life well fulfilled — a great success story by every standard. To the end he was God-conscious and appeared untroubled by the prospect of meeting the Lord as the years took their toll. To him, he has only "done my normal duty, served my

God and injured no one". Asked how he wished to be remembered, the grand man was surprised why he should have to be remembered. "There are five billion people

on earth", he pointed out. "Why does one man want to be remembered?"

And that is probably why we must always remember him.

Not now

About two weeks ago, F.W. de Klerk ended a visit to Kenya at the end of which Foreign Minister Pik Botha, announced on Kenyan television that the racist president would visit Nigeria. Given the audacious manner in which the announcement was made, we had wondered if it was made with Nigeria's acquiescence.

It was a relief therefore when the Minister of External Affairs, Major General Ike Nwachukwu, (rtd), said that de Klerk would not touch our soil until apartheid is dismantled in South Africa. Significantly, the minister said that de Klerk could visit anytime the remaining apartheid laws were abolished.

De Klerk had given three reasons for thinking that he qualified for our red carpet. That South Africa is the "Japan of Africa" and could therefore help to revive the poor economies of African states. That the "dynamic reforms" taking place in South Africa he told Kenyan President, Daniel arap Moi, were enough evidence of his genuine intentions to reform apartheid. Thirdly, that the scheduled constitutional talks between the racist government and the liberation movements were indicative of his democratic intentions.

We want to make it absolutely clear that on no account should Nigeria or any other African country, either because of the "easing" of repressive laws in South Africa or a promise of economic "assistance and co-operation", fraternise with envoys of the racists or its friends under whatever guise. There should not even be a hint of meeting them half-way. Those African countries that hobnob with the pernicious apartheid regime should be ashamed of themselves. It is not just a question of the abolishing of the remaining apartheid laws, as the minister said, but the enfranchisement of the majority blacks in South Africa. That is the crux of the matter.

Nigeria, in the fore-front of the struggle to

remove the last vestiges of colonialism, should not be seen to be having anything to do with the racists. Recently, the Minister of Justice, Prince Bola Ajibola, asked the British High Commissioner to Nigeria, Mr. Christopher Macrae, to convey to his government our position that Britain should join the international community in imposing sanctions on South Africa and not to see the so-called reforms as anything more than mere window-dressing.

The OAU summit which we only recently hosted took the strong position that there should not be any let up in the pressure, nationally and internationally, on South Africa to end racial discrimination.

The real problem in South Africa, like that of Zionism in Israel, is that of racism and its manifestations. As long as both persist, we have no business having anything to do with either Israel or South Africa. As former OAU chairman, President Yoweri Museveni, said at the recent summit, the repeal of a few acts is peripheral. Giving the vote to the majority blacks is the key to dismantling apartheid.

As for de Klerk's economic carrot, well, South Africa may be the Japan of Africa, but this was achieved on the backs of the blacks. So long as they remain chained and shackled, South Africa can keep its economic wizardry. In any case, its economy as much as most of Africa is firmly tied to the west such that it has little to offer in terms of real strategic alternatives.

On the political front, even as the all-party constitutional talks get underway, de Klerk's National Party, the originator of apartheid, is stringing together an alliance with "nationalists", white liberals, Indians, Zulus, leaders of ethnic homelands who are essentially apartheid retainers and, conservative black churches to perpetuate white rule in another guise.

We insist that for de Klerk to qualify for the hospitality of not just Nigeria and Africa, but the rest of humanity, he must immediately renounce racism and legalise one-man, one-vote. Then we can talk.

Citizen

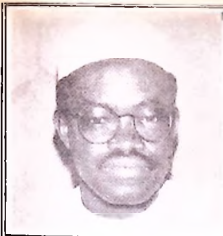
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MOHAMMED HARUNA

thankfully, no truth to the rumours.

Now, you could say that if indeed I have no wish to be a minister of information, I have no moral right to criticise anyone who has. For if I am afraid of the job, how do I know I can handle it better than those who take up its challenges? In all honesty, I do not know. What I do know

would possibly have seen Mahmud Jega's piece where he referred to your launching into praise singing. "This is the tiger himself" you said, "this is the greatest leader of our generation", referring of course to Babangida. I suspect most Nigerian journalists in the hall must have felt embarrassed, like I felt, at such naked toadying up to the president. He, himself, felt embarrassed enough to slap you on the wrist.

Honourable minister, I do not mean to disparage your qualification for the job of making the image of the government. As a one-time PR boss of Nigerian Customs and Excise and a boss of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations, you obviously have eminent qualification to administer to government's public relations need. So far, however, it seems to me you have not allowed your ministry to benefit from your qualification and experience. So far you seem to have praised those in authority more than you have tried to sell them and their policies to the public.

Apology

Talking about the OAU Summit, we all know, don't we, that Nigeria tried unsuccessfully to get the organisation behind General Obasanjo as its candidate for the job of the UN scribe. Writing on this topic three weeks ago, I said our law forbade a former head of state to contest for such post. I have since discovered it did no such thing. A lawyer acquaintance told me it did. After searching in vain for the relevant decree in five attorneys' chambers in Kaduna just to be sure, I took the lawyer's word for it. When eventually I found the decree, I discovered it only forbade working for a foreign firm not an organisation like the UN. I am awfully sorry for the misinformation.

Letter to Chief Alex Akinyele

When, during our weekly editorial meetings last Monday, I let out that I planned to write a critical letter to you, my honourable minister, Bilkisu, my deputy, reminded me that last time I wrote such letters to your predecessor, Prince Tony Momoh, the word in town was that I was merely suffering from sour grapes. I had wanted the job myself, the word went, and since I couldn't get it, I could see only failure in the lucky fellow who beat me to it.

Contrary to this word, my memory tells me, I prayed not to be a minister, definitely not that of information. As managing director of the *New Nigerian* at the time, I thought I had enough problems balancing the paper's credibility with supporting and selling government policies, warts and all. It would appear that I never made a roaring success of the former, for soon enough rumour did, indeed, start circulating that I would be kicked into the information ministry. When I sounded out late Col. U.K. Bello, as ADC to the C-in-C, he said as far as he was concerned it was only rumours. I then told him that in case it wasn't, he should let the authorities know that I was not in the least interested, because I was sure I would make a worse job of it than the *New Nigerian* — from government's point of view that is. When eventually I had the opportunity to tell them myself, I did. I was then able to confirm that there was,

for sure is that I will probably avoid some of the gaffes you have committed so far.

Two instances readily come to mind, namely your interview with *Classique* recently and the just concluded OAU Summit in Abuja. I will concede I enjoyed reading the interview if only for your wonderful sense of humour. Again the way you parried many of the tough questions was most impressive. Unfortunately, you spoil what was otherwise a beautiful interview by saying things about the dead which you ought not to have said. Major-General Mamman Vatsa, who was shot in 1986, in the wake of a coup attempt he was found guilty of inspiring, deserved his come-uppance, you said. That was a terrible thing to say, not just for a minister of a regime whose central creed is human rights, but also for a human being; no one should feel joy at the death of a fellow human being.

There were a few other disagreeable things you said, like telling your interviewers that you did not look like a letter-writer. That was an ungraceful thing to say about one's predecessor. However what you said of Vatsa rankled the most. One can only hope it was merely a slip of tongue and you've since asked God to forgive you.

The second case of embarrassment happened during the first press briefing President Babangida gave as the Chairman of the OAU. If you read the *Citizen* last week, you

National ID Card



Umaru Shinkafi



M.D. Yusuf



Bello Maitama Yusuf



Dr Ibrahim Tahir



General Magoro

A project defies three administrations

A seemingly never-ending project gobbles billions, and, like *Oliver Twist*, still wants more



John Shagaya

For a seemingly simple project, the 15 years-old National Identity Card Scheme seems to have grown into the most expensive and long-drawn of its kind. Conceived in 1976 by the Obasanjo regime and

launched on September 1, 1979 at an initial cost of less than 16 million Naira and with a completion period of several months, the scheme has seen off three regimes, consumed one and a half billion Naira with another billion on the cards — yet with no guarantee that it will take

off by the time the present regime bows out next year.

The scheme, like many before it, started well enough with good intentions. But almost as soon, it got mirrored in controversy, at the bottom of which was money.

Actually, the project had its

roots well beyond 1976, dating back to 1967. At the time, the civil war had just started and the authorities thought there was a security need to identify the Igbos who did not heed the call to return to the East. Even then there was no unanimity in government on such a need, and somehow those who raised objections on grounds that it will be discriminatory, won the day. As a result the scheme was dropped quietly.



Obasanjo: his administration conceived the scheme

It was revived again in 1976, but this time it was envisaged to be on a national scale rather than a purely

he could remember very little of the project because he was engrossed in the transition programme to the

Dr. Abubakar said he "never thought it was important. It was a bloody waste of money, like some of the other ventures we have embarked on. An example is our steel project. They gulp money and become a quick-sand in which the government gets stuck.

police affair. *Citizen* was informed that considerable study went into it between 1976 and 1979, when it was launched, but few of those who were involved in the planning and execution accepted to discuss the project in any detail.

Among those few was Dr. Yaya Abubakar, permanent secretary, political affairs during Murtala/Obasanjo's regime and now living in Kano. Dr. Abubakar told *Citizen*

second republic.

"I might have signed some correspondence on the ID card project," he said, "but I honestly know little about it. I didn't handle it because it did not interest me."

When *Citizen* wondered how such an important project with obvious security implications will not interest a permanent secretary in charge of political affairs, Dr. Abubakar said he "never thought it

was important. It was a bloody waste of money, like some of the other ventures we have embarked on. An example is our steel project. They gulp money and become a quick-sand in which the government gets stuck. If I were back in government now I would look at this ID card project once because it can't achieve anything."

Dr. Abubakar's views was shared somewhat by Alhaji Bello Maitama Yusuf the first internal affairs minister (1979 — 1980) in the second republic, and Alhaji M. D. Yusuf, Bello's predecessor. Said Bello, "there is nothing wrong in introducing the national identity card for citizens, if it is not going to cost too much. But I have my skepticism about its usefulness in this country where documentation is poor and statistics are scanty because any blackman from Niger and Cameroun or even Jamaica can obtain the identity card. It is possible because a foreigner in this country can procure three passports and the passport has more grievous implications for national security than the ID card."

Dr. Abubakar, Alhaji M. D. Yusuf and Alhaji Bello appear, however, to be in the minority in their skepticism, among the former senior government officials involved with the project whom *Citizen* could interview. Alhaji Umaru Shinkafi (internal affairs minister in 1975), Alhaji Ali Baba (1982 — 1983), Dr. Ibrahim Tahir (1983), Major General Muhammadu Magoro (1983 — 1985) and Alhaji Adamu Fika, the permanent secretary of the ministry during the planning and the early days of the implementation of the project, all agreed that the project was useful. Most of them declined to discuss the details of the scheme, pleading forgetfulness because it has dragged on for so long, but they all expressed grave concern at its escalating cost and at the long delay in its execution. "I am completely baffled at the delay and the

escalating cost," Major General Magoro told *Citizen*, the other day. "Both the ID card project and the scheme for prison expansion were supposed to have been completed long ago, but they seem to drag on for ever."

While expressing the same bewilderment, Dr. Tahir told *Citizen* he knew nothing about the project. "I served for only three months (October to December 1983) and I was made minister against the wish

2 to citizens as well as the identity card form ID-2 itself. Part of the information obtained from form ID-2 was then to be typed on the ID card form ID-1 using special typewriters and ribbons. The owner's passport was then to be taken with polaroid cameras and affixed to the ID card which would then be laminated. All this was to be done manually.

This simple method which was to cost 16 million Dollars (just about 10 million Naira at the currency exchange rate obtained then) got as far as issuing an ID card to General Obasanjo along with a few of his lieutenants — and then got stuck. A little after the take-off, Alhaji Shehu Shagari took over the country as its first executive president. From then on what at first was a simple and low budget project, developed complications and cost over-runs.

The first problem appeared to have started during Alhaji Bello Maitama Yusuf's tenure in the internal affairs ministry. *Citizen*

taken away from the civil registration department and contracted out. Tenders were invited and eventually the project was awarded to an NPN chieftain in Oyo State, whose identify *Citizen* could not establish at press time. Instead of the manual system to be used initially, it was now changed to the computer automated method.

It would appear that this chieftain lacked the money and expertise to implement the project and so he brought in Avant Incorporation of USA and Optifex Incorporated, one as executor and the other as financier.

Nezim Goan, the Chairman of Afro-Continental and Aprofitm reportedly had stakes in both companies. Afro-Continental is currently the contractor for the project having won it in 1986 when it was reawarded following the failure of Avant and Optifex to execute it.

Following Avant's failure, the contract was revoked and readvertised in 1981. By this time Professor Iya Abubakar, a former vice chancellor of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, had taken over the internal affairs ministry from Maitama Yusuf. Three companies, namely Itek corporation of USA, Thomas De La-Rue of United Kingdom, and Agla Gaevert of West Germany, bidded along



Shagari: patronage for party stalwarts

of the NPN establishment. So the first thing they did was to transfer several departments in the ministry including the ID card project, to the presidency," said Dr. Tahir.

Almost from the word go, the project seemed destined to generate controversy around itself. It started simple enough in September 1979, with a department of civic registration in the Internal affairs ministry. The department was expected to register and issue, on-the-spot, simple laminated identity cards to citizens aged 18 and above. This was to be done by field registration teams who were to issue personal information form ID-

The first problem appeared to have started during Alhaji Bello Maitama Yusuf's tenure in the internal affairs ministry. *Citizen* learnt that as soon as the civilians took over, they saw the project as one of those patronages to be distributed to party stalwarts.

As a result, the project was taken away from the civil registration department and contracted out.

learnt that as soon as the civilians took over, they saw the project as one of those patronages to be distributed to party stalwarts.

As a result, the project was

with three other companies including Avant. A technical committee was set up to appraise the tenders. It struck off Avant not only because of its earlier failure but

Mum is the word

If there is one government project that has been shrouded in official secrecy, it is the National Identity Card project. Mum seems to be the word with most of those involved in it, starting with Afro-Continental, the company that has handled the project since 1986 (see box on page 15 for its self portrait). At the Victoria Island headquarters of the company, its public relations officer, Mr. George, told *Citizen* that his company had been instructed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs not to discuss the project with the press. In return, the ministry was also not to refer the press to the company on the subject.

Not surprisingly therefore, the Head of the computer department of the University of Lagos, one Dr. Salako, who is one of the ministry's consultants for the contract, refused to discuss it with *Citizen*. He insisted on an advance list of our questions and said the ministry would have to clear his answers before he can in return let us have them. Up to the time of going to press, nearly two months later, we have not heard from Salako.

At Alraine, the clearing agent for the project, *Citizen* met the same stone-wall. We tried to confirm our information that they

were still keeping some of the equipment for the scheme in their warehouse, but met with silence from its officials. The story was the same

ministry. He therefore gave *Citizen* a note to his director-general, A. Aziz Garuba, and the director of the department of national civic registration,

Brigadier Shagaya, the longest serving minister of internal affairs and in whose time over 90 per cent of the project has been implemented, would also not discuss the matter with us, pleading the fact that he was still in uniform. "I am under oath not to discuss government secrets", he insisted, "besides I cannot afford to be seen as passing judgment on my successor".

at Data Cybernetics, a Lagos computer company which supplied the software for the project. Its Chief Consultant, Mr. Tola Talabi, told *Citizen* that as far as his company was concerned "we have completed our own side of the business". So if there were any delays, he went on, "only the Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs can talk on this".

At the ministry of internal affairs itself, the story was somewhat different. The minister, Major-General A.B. Mammen, expressed willingness to answer our questions, but pointed out that he was in the middle of an extensive tour of the parastatals under his

Alhaji Abubakar Manu, to give us every cooperation. Unfortunately we did not get very far. Manu took us through the history of

the project but otherwise told us little about the reasons for the time and cost over-runs. Garuba, was available only once and would not say much in spite of the clearance from his minister.

Brigadier Shagaya, the longest serving minister of internal affairs and in whose time over 90 per cent of the project has been implemented, would also not discuss the matter with us, pleading the fact that he was still in uniform. "I am under oath not to discuss government secrets", he insisted, "besides I cannot afford to be seen as passing judgment on my successor".

Other ministers we could reach would only express surprise at the

long delay in executing the project, but say little else. The only exception was Major-General Muhammadu Magoro, who said however that he would have to refer to his papers for an accurate account of the affair. Regrettably *Citizen* missed an appointment with him and after that we could not reach him before going to press.

By Mohammed Haruna and Akinyele Aluko



Buhari: stopped the scheme

also because this time it could not provide a performance bond and submit its annual reports for the three previous years as requested in the tenders form.

However, the recommendation of the tenders committee was

this had been paid by December 1983, but no computers had been delivered, nor had the buildings to house them been constructed.

Then the army struck on the night of December 31, 1983 and Major-General Muhammadu

Shagaya thought the re-advertisement was unwise especially when the bidders were quoting a minimum of 200 million Naira to complete the project. He argued that since Afro-Continental was involved in the contract already through Avant, it should be re-invited. Shagaya's advice was heeded and Afro-Continental was appointed to complete the project.

It was at this time that the project got perhaps its only casualty to date. Once it was decided to ship in the computers it became obvious that they had to be inspected. Among the inspection team was one Mr. Fasintei, a deputy director of the NSO, now SSS. *Citizen* could not establish the nature of the report the deputy director wrote. However soon after the inspection team returned, he was queried for taking an unauthorised trip abroad. A little after that he was retired from service.

As for Afro-continental, no sooner was it awarded the contract than the company demanded for a demurrage of 43 million Dollars, arguing that the computers, the Honeywell-Bull, had been laying in a warehouse in France all these many months. This demand was rejected outright and Afro-Continental conceded its demand.

Still government paid about 3 million dollars to Afro-Continental so that the computers could be updated and their life span expanded. In addition, government discovered to its chagrin that by the terms of the old contract it could not use the national shipping line to ship in the computers. A French line had to be used.

On being reawarded the contract in October 1986, Afro-Continental was given nine months to complete the project. Nine months later it was nothing doing. This time the blame was laid at the door of SFEM and FEM. In a speech at the inauguration ceremony of the National Computer Centre, Abuja, — the nerve centre of the project — by President Babangida on August

Since the project started in 1979, the internal affairs ministry has seen off eight ministers, not including the incumbent Major General A. B. Mamman and two ministers of state during the second republic. It has also seen nearly the same number of permanent secretaries and directors general from Alhaji Adamu Fika, who retired as Head of Service, to the incumbent A. Aziz Garuba.

thrown out and the contract was reawarded to Avant in 1982, for the sum of 56 million Naira, up from the original 10 million. The completion time was 18 months this time around.

Buhari took over as Head of State. Several months later and apparently acting out of exasperation, Buhari's regime unilaterally cancelled the contract.

That would probably have been

the end of the matter. However, in August 1985, Buhari was in turn ousted by President Babangida. Nearly one year later, the project was revived. A council meeting concluded that it was wrong to cancel the project after about 90 million Naira had been spent and when the computers had been acquired and were only

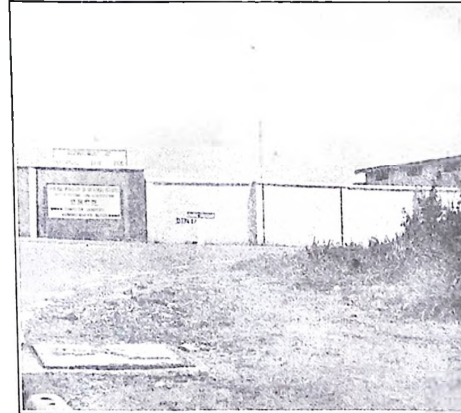
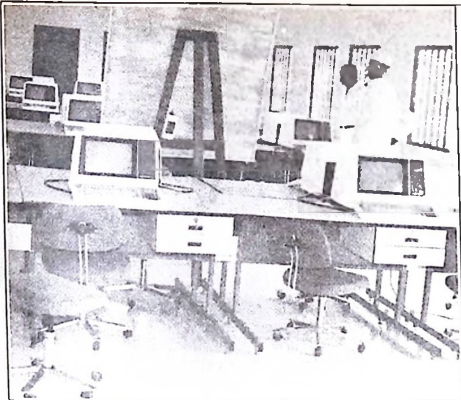
waiting to be shipped from France for installation.

The contract was then re-advertised and new bids invited. *Citizen* was reliably informed that the new minister at the time (then Colonel) John



ID Card Scheme samples

Two years after the reaward, the project failed to take off for the second time. By this time delays in payments to the contractor, fluctuations in currency exchange rates as well as variations by the contractor had raised the contract sum to 90 million Naira. Much of



Computer Centre (top) and the main building of the Scheme headquarters

4, 1989, Shagaya, explained that the nine-month target could not be achieved because of government "inability to secure required foreign credit for the project..... In the wake of SFEM and FEM and its

concomitant effect on the exchange rate, the funds allocated could not procure up to one quarter of the capital goods and services envisaged."

By the time the computer centre

was commissioned, virtually everything was in place for the scheme's take-off. The registration centres in all the 21 states, but for Kaduna where there was an initial problem in acquiring suitable land, and the Federal Capital Territory, had been built, the computers brought in and installed and the training of computer operators commenced. Indeed Shagaya felt confident enough to announce that the project would soon take off.

Today, nearly two years later the project has remained jinxed. Not only has it failed to take off, it has also cost the tax payer a puzzling one and half billion Naira.

Part of the puzzle says a senior government official, who declined attribution, was the fact that the internal affairs ministry has seen too many changes in its head. "Each time there was a change" he said "Afro-Continental apparently always saw an opportunity to ask for variations and request for costly modifications to the project. Invariably the company always got its way."

Since the project started in 1979, the internal affairs ministry has seen off eight ministers, not including the incumbent Major General A. B. Momman and two ministers of state during the second republic. It has also seen nearly the same number of permanent secretaries and directors general from Alhaji Adamu Fika, who retired as Head of Service, to the incumbent A. Aziz Garuba.

Of all the ministers, the longest serving was Shagaya (1985 — 1989) and it was during his tenure that most of the project's targets were achieved. However, even as the computer centre in Abuja was being commissioned in readiness for the scheme's take-off, a new dimension was being introduced which was bound to cause time and cost overrun. This new dimension was the Automatic Finger Print Identification System (AFIS). According to Afro-continental, without the AFIS, the project would

Afro Continental Nigeria Limited — Self-portrait

Afro Continental Nigeria (and A p r o f i m Engineering and Construction Nigeria Limited) is part of a larger group of companies, parent being the "Compagnie Noga d'Importation et d'Exportation SA." located at 42 Rue du Rhone, Geneva, Switzerland.

Noga has branch offices in North and South America, United Kingdom, Zaire, Benin Republic, Israel, Egypt, France and Portugal.

Afro Continental started as an exporting company, selling Nigerian produce such as cocoa, groundnut, palm oil, palm kernel, etc. to Europe. From this very basic and humble beginnings, we have progressively identified with the government's aspirations and the people's needs by diversifying into a g r i c u l t u r e , manufacturing, construction, building and civil engineering. A commitment to excellence has placed us in an unassailable position to successfully meet the challenges of the day, i.e. self-sufficiency in food production, local sourcing of raw materials and export oriented economy. We have done it excellently well before. We have done better today with our known expertise, in our

specialised fields with international connections and unflinching commitment to this great country. Today, we export a variety of local produce. Apart from leading in cocoa export in Nigeria, we also export palm kernel, cotton, ginger, gum Arabic, sheanuts etc.

Afro Continental also imports essential machineries for

steps in agriculture with back-up support like Steyr Trucks, combined harvesters and related implements and large storage facilities.

Afro Continental has gone another a step forward to open a 10,333,000 Naira poultry farm and 5,000 hectares of farmland in Sokoto State. About 100 Nigerians are gainfully employed on the farm. Besides this,

distribute nation-wide 1) Nigercafe instant coffee (The 100% Nigerian); 2) Highlife (the new medium roast instant coffee).

Afro Continental Nigeria Limited participated immensely towards the implementation of the National Identity Card Project. Afro Continental Nigeria was awarded the contract in October, 1986, for the supply of all the goods and services relating to the issuance of a national identity card to the populace. Afro Continental characteristically took the challenge and 4th August, 1989 saw the first phase of the inauguration ceremony of the National Identity Card Computer Centre in Abuja by the President Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida. High technology projects involving computer technology are part and parcel of our business; such as the telecommunication, industrial electronics and the latest technology in automated finger print identification. We have also been involved in social security systems both in Europe and some Afro countries.

Afro Continental Nigeria Limited participated immensely towards the implementation of the National Identity Card Project. Afro Continental Nigeria was awarded the contract in October, 1986, for the supply of all the goods and services relating to the issuance of a national identity card to the populace.

development such as tractors, lorries, generating sets, air-conditioners, building materials etc. The company imports Completely Knocked Down (CKD) parts to assemble tractors utilising the local infrastructure of Steyr Nigeria Limited. Steyr Tractor 8075 range is specially designed for agricultural development in Nigeria. Over 1,500 of such tractors and implements have been supplied to various state governments on soft-loan terms. In fact, Afro Continental is complementing its bold

another 10,000 hectares of rubber plantation at a cost of 150 million Naira has also been acquired at Ajegunle/Onisere in Ifesowapo Local Government Area of Ondo State. The product from these farms will be sold locally and where possible, it would be exported to some overseas markets. Arrangements are in the pipeline to acquire more land in Gongola, Cross River and Niger states for agricultural purposes.

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If you have ever dealt with us in the past, you will no doubt be familiar with our efficient and courteous approach towards our customers.

In other lands

Nigerian is hardly the first country to introduce an identity card scheme. In Britain, an official of its High Commission told *Citizen*, such a scheme was introduced during the Second World War (1939-45). The purpose was to serve as a security measure against espionage and secondly it was used in the allocation of scarce essential commodities which were then rationed.

The use of the national identity card, said the official continued

told that the United States has no national identity card scheme. The nearest thing to an I.D. Card are the social security numbers for the unemployed and the aged and the driving licence for eligible adults.

The case of Togo and Cameroun are example of French colonial legacy in the Francophone West African countries. Officials at the Togo Embassy told *Citizen* that nationals of Togo are supposed to carry the national identity cards as from the age of 18 years.



Major: no ID Card for Britons

At the United States Information Service, USIS, Lagos, *Citizen* was told that the United States has no national identity card scheme. The nearest thing to an I.D. Card are the social security numbers for the unemployed and the aged and the driving licence for eligible adults.

till around 1949 because even after the war in 1945 supplies continued to be short. Eventually when the Identity cards were to be phased out, it was replaced by the national Insurance number which is issued to Britons when they started working. This the official said is not an identity card.

At the United States Information Service, USIS, Lagos, *Citizen* was

The scheme the official said dates back to the colonial period.

Elaborating on the system of issuance, the official told *Citizen* that at age 18 when a citizen is expected to have one, the birth certificate or sworn age affidavit is tendered to the village Head who issues a testimonial to the applicant. This is in turn used to collect a local government certificate of

origin which is then attached to the birth certificate and forwarded to the ministry of Justice with a written application for national certificate which is eventually used in obtaining the identity card.

The embassy also revealed that the identity card is used for seeking employment in government offices and parastatals, for opening bank accounts and transacting other official business. It is also for everybody as from age 18 regardless of education or

residence or occupation said the official.

Similar to the Togo example is that of Cameroun where the nationals are also expected to carry Identity cards as from the age of 18. According to the official at the Cameroun Embassy the identity card was introduced during the colonial period and it has become so entrenched that failure to carry one could lead to one being arrested by the police.

By Aluko Akinyele

be of little use as the identity cards could not be fool-proof. Government seemed to have agreed. "Without this system" said internal affairs ministry, "the whole exercise will become worthless and ineffective as people will be able to acquire multiple cards." The AFIS, according to Afro-Continental would cost additional 1 billion Naira, 760 million of which would be off-shore.

A source in the internal affairs ministry said Shagaya kicked against the introduction of this new dimension so late in the day, arguing that the system was unnecessary for our immediate needs and that in any case we lacked the infrastructure, in terms of constant electricity supply and communications, to make much use

financial implications,"

Whether or not Shagaya raised any objections, it would appear that the AFIS has now been accepted by government. In late April, Internal affairs minister, Major General Mamman announced in Minna, Niger State that the 1 billion Naira loan needed for it has been procured. It would appear, however, that the announcement was more of a ploy to force the hands of the ministry of finance and the Central Bank, both of which, *Citizen* learnt, have objected strongly to the amount for the reason that Afro-Continental lacked the resources to back it up. When *Citizen* sought to confirm the procurement of the loan from Mr.

is clear, however, is that even if the loan has been procured, the ID card may not take-off for the rest of this year, indeed possibly for the remaining period of this regime.

One reason is that the infrastructure needed for the AFIS is not ready. An official of Afro-Continental told *Citizen* that a building similar in size to the computer centre would be needed, among other things.

When *Citizen* visited the site of the centre in Abuja the portion meant for the AFIS building was yet to be cleared. Part of the reason was that Afro-Continental was yet to start receiving payments, assuming the loan had been procured. Another reason, said a government source, is that the Naira has continued to deteriorate against



Mamman (left) and Babangida: when will the drain stop

of the AFIS. Another source, however, said the then minister did not raise any objection or if he did, it must have been in private. For, the source pointed out, in his speech at the August 1989 commissioning of the Abuja computer Centre, Shagaya described AFIS as "very crucial" to the project, "not only in terms of its importance in the final take-off, but also in terms of its

Garuba, the director general of internal affairs ministry, he said though the minister had announced the procurement of the loan, there were still some details to be ironed out.

As at the time of going to press, it was not clear whether or not the internal affairs ministry had overcome the objections of the finance ministry and the central bank. What

foreign currencies and this was bound to lead to delays in payments arising from escalating costs.

"Besides," said the source, "how do we know AFIS is the last joker Afro-Continental will spring on us in this seemingly never-ending saga of the ID card?"

By Mohammed Haruna with reports from Bilkisu Yusuf and Aluko Akinyele

Citizen

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Nomadic Education

"Fear deal" for the nomads

Controversy greeted the programme's inception, and continues to bedevil it

Chima Ezeomah, bearded and diminutive, is widely regarded as the leading academic authority in Nigeria in the field of nomadic education. For nearly two decades, he had painstakingly worked at the University of Jos to document information about the country's five million Fulani pastoralists and to seek effective ways of providing them with western-type of education. In 1989, when the federal government created the special programme for nomadic education and backed it up with decree no. 41 of 1989, it appeared that the dedicated work of many academicians was about to receive official sanction. Ezeomah himself was initially overlooked when a head was appointed for the fledgling National Commission for Nomadic Education. For more than a year, he engaged in a running battle against the commission's acting executive secretary, Mr. Okonkwo, an assistant director in the federal ministry of education. Early in 1990, however, the government reversed course and gave unto Caesar what was Caesar's: Professor Ezeomah was appointed the substantive executive secretary of the Commission. The protem governing board was also dissolved, although Colonel Mohammed Bello Kalil (rtd) was retained as a largely symbolic chairman.

Far from smoothening the controversial programme, however, Professor Ezeomah's tenure is now at the centre of a heated challenge from individuals and organisations with a close

interest in the Commission. The most consistent challenge has come from the *Miyetti Allah* Cattle Breeders' Association (MACBAN). On January 9, this year, MACBAN's national coordinator, Alhaji Ahmed Rufai Abubakar III, addressed a petition to the Sultan of Sokoto

have no knowledge or appreciation of the culture of the Fulani." The petition alleged that the majority of the senior staff were from Anambra, Imo and Bendel states and "do not know the aspirations of the Fulani nomads". MACBAN also alleged that Professor Ezeomah had



Minister of education Fafunwa and Ezeoma: Fulanis cry out

urging him to intervene in order to arrest some perceived developments in the Nomadic commission.

Alhaji Ahmed wrote that his organisation agreed to cooperate in the nomadic education programme despite its initial fears that the "culture and traditions" of the Fulani pastoralists may be violated by it. MACBAN's fears now appeared to be justified, the coordinator said, because "most senior officials of the commission

acquired an official guest house at a cost of 500,000 Naira; had purchased and supplied to nomadic schools equipment and material too advanced for their needs; had lost four of the commission's vehicles to thieves within three months; had failed to closely consult MACBAN on his activities, and had allowed Christian evangelists to "encroach upon the programme."

MACBAN followed up this petition with an equally vitriolic one on February 25, this year, addressed

to the minister of education, Professor Babatunde Fafunwa. Signed by Ambassador Umar Ka'oje, the association's secretary-general, the petition alleged that the Nomadic Commission "has become a one-man show," since Professor Ezeomah has no board to restrain him. It also accused the executive secretary of diverting resources meant for the education of Fulani pastoralists to educating migrant fishermen; of installing "non-Fulanis and non-Muslims" to key positions in the commission; of non-payment of teachers' salaries; of allowing a Christian church to be built at the Mazat Ropp nomadic school in Plateau State; of inciting Fulani clan leaders, the *Ardo'en*, against MACBAN; and of "secretly working with the *Christian Science Monitor* and *ELWA*", both foreign evangelical media houses.

Others soon joined in the fray. The *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo* of March 23, 1991 quoted the Muslim activist Sheikh Ahmed Sanusi Gumbi as calling for the dissolution of the nomadic commission "before it destroys the good Islamic heritage of the Fulani nomads".

Thus cornered, Professor Ezeomah addressed a crowded press conference at the commission's headquarters in Kaduna on May 10. In defending himself, he said the commission maintains more than four hundred nomadic education schools and has bought furniture for distribution to these schools. More than two-hundred and thirty Islamic religious teachers, he said, were hired by the commission to teach in the schools. The executive secretary also said that of the thirty-eight senior staff in the commission, "sixteen are Fulanis and twenty two are Muslims". Professor Ezeomah flatly denied that he had poor working relations with the commission's chairman, or the three research centres at Sokoto, Jos and Maiduguri affiliated to the Commission. He did admit poisoned relations with MACBAN,

however. "The association has many factions", he said, "and the Kaduna faction tried to use us in its struggles against the rest. It wanted us to provide it with an official car and official space in our secretariat, and to allow it to recruit all our staff and to identify all our projects". Professor Ezeomah took pressmen to see a model collapsible classroom and the guest house, which was rented for 50,000 Naira, or ten percent of what MACBAN alleged.

MACBAN's secretary-general, Ambassador Umar Ka'oje, responded heatedly to Ezeomah's denials. In two vitriolic press releases in mid-May and again in

from "conducting inspection, establishing new schools, expanding new ones or providing stationary, instructional materials or recruiting new teachers". The memo also complained that the Commission supplied them with "charts of the life-cycle of a cockroach, which is not found in a *ruga*", as well as weight measures, microscopes, mountain bells and basket balls, which they don't need. They also accused the Commission of "administrative lethargy" for not calling a meeting with them for thirteen months.

Professor Ezeomah answered some of these charges at his press conference. For example, the

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early June, he accused the executive secretary of inflating the Fulani component of his staff from six to sixteen; of misusing the Commission's guest house; unduly favouring some schools and some staffers and of evading the multiple charges against him.

Nor is MACBAN the executive secretary's only adversary. State coordinators of the nomadic programme appear to be chagrined by it all. A memo written in January this year, and signed by sixteen of them said, for example, that "despite the federal government's timely release of funds to the Commission, it did not do the same to the states for fourteen months", thus disempowering them

Nomadic Commission itself has been thoroughly destabilised by the dissolution early this year of the Primary Education Commission. Since the federal government regards nomadic education to be an integral part of primary education, funds have been difficult in coming to the Commission this year. The winding-up of primary schools boards in the states also robbed the Commission of the avenue for paying its teachers.

Still, it appears that Professor Chima Ezeomah regards the criticisms against him as a northern smear campaign. Some of MACBAN's charges were certainly strange. For example, it accused the executive secretary of failing to provide for the nomads "drinking

water; grazing reserves; cattle routes; livestock feeds, concentrates and vaccines; prevent settlement encroachments on reserves; protect pastoralists from harassment by law-enforcement agencies and from cattle rustling, and stop the killing of is clearly beyond the scope of Ezeomah's powers and duties.

These executive secretary's defensive strategies appear to be equally unhelpful. For his May 10 press conference, he invited fifteen

newsmen from Lagos, sent them on a tour of some schools in Plateau State, and published the text of his press conference in several southern, but not any northern newspapers. Shunning the belligerent MACBAN, he has also helped to organise a meeting of *Ardoen* as a counter to it. Ezeomah himself sports the cumbersome title of "Professor *Ardo*"; MACBAN's latest press release warned him that "Fulanis do not sell titles. Ardoship is a kinship title which is part of the

Fulani philosophy of life and occupation. You cannot be an *Ardo* no matter your large herds of cattle".

Ardo Ezeomah, who dresses entirely like a Fulani pastoralist, has not yet answered this charge. Meanwhile, in the prevailing atmosphere, Ambassador Ka'oje said that the programme's lofty goal of a "fair deal for the nomads" has become a *far deal*.

By Mahmud Jega

NRC

Stronger together

That is the way, according to Tom Ikimi, to ensure NRC wins at the polls

Chief Tom Ikimi is gradually stamping his authority as the leader of the National Republican Convention, NRC. Members of the party seem also to be thinking of nothing but teaming up to ensure resounding victories in subsequent polls. At least, that was the attitude displayed on Saturday, June 8, when Ikimi met with all aspiring to the gubernatorial and mayoralty posts, held at the Kaduna State Secretariat of the party. And if what obtained during and after the meeting is anything to consider, lose or win, the NRC is certainly ready to stay together, stronger.

Besides, in apparent reference to the widely and regularly reported cases of squabbles within the party's national body, Alhaji Audu Na Abdu, the party's Kaduna State chairman observed that the party had a very serious information management problem that has been unable to control news flow.

Ikimi must be glad with himself, not just because he finally delivered the national executive's

principle towards the coming elections. But also because most of the nearly 200 aspirants in attendance displayed those

qualities that Ikimi regards as those of great "partymen" whose main reason for being in the party is to build a strong house. Furthermore,



Ikimi: ready to stay together

It must be noted that the party is beginning to put its acts together so as to make nonsense of the notion that it is a disorganised and divided house; Ikimi even advised some intruders into the party who are not "newbreeds" to stay clear to allow the newbreeds bring about a new future.

Chief Ikimi said that it was the political parties that have the power to ensure a progressive political future for the nation, adding that should the parties become unstable and irredeemably factionalized, the "political system (will) experience volcanic eruptions and may be a catastrophe". He also stated that the parties must not fail in their role as the agents of political participation, mobilization and national integration towards entrenching a new democratic culture.

Turning to the main reason for the meeting — preparations for the primary elections, coming on the 24th of August — Chief Tom Ikimi stated that the national leadership of the party would not impose any persons as gubernatorial candidates. He observed that the "way we handle our primaries can make or mar the chances of this party in the state elections". Ikimi also advised aspirants to take active part in the primaries as "great republicans who have absolute faith in the spirit of sportsmanshipand not as Roman gladiators in the arena who must win or die". This is certainly to ensure that whoever wins, the party still remains united: In his own words, "those who can not be partymen should know that they can not aspire to head".

Chief Ikimi also called on the party's officials at the state level to ensure that their actions do not have an adverse effect on the fortunes of the party. And the only way to ensure that, he said, is to display a "transparent neutrality and fair play".

For the August 24, primary elections to pick the party's

candidates, a committee has been formed to oversee its organisation in conjunction with the various states secretariat. The committee is

job of recruiting supporters; but the scars of their presence is still being felt in Kaduna, as if all are gunning for the Kaduna government house.

About 200 aspirants from the 21 states and Abuja attended the meeting. Most of them must have left for home to resume the tasking job of recruiting supporters; but the scars of their presence is still being felt in Kaduna, as if all are gunning for the Kaduna government house.

headed by Alhaji Samaila Mamman, who recently resigned as minister to join the party.

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Posters of candidates from all over the federation are still in place — on some parts of Durbar Hotel and all over the walls and entrance of the party's secretariat at Kakuri, Kaduna.

By Rabiū Barde



Na Audu: NRC chairman,
Kaduna State



Mamman: heads primaries
committee

Tackling the legacy

At the 1971 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting held in Singapore, the then Prime Minister of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew, made a point which I consider particularly relevant to the theme of this lecture. No one, he said, was granted equality; one had to earn it.

I believe that, like the Japanese and the Chinese before us, our path out of alleged inferiority lies both in opposing it and ultimately in heeding Lee Kuan Yew's advice at all relevant levels of our society. And in this great challenge the role of our political leadership is as clear as it is pre-eminent. Speaking broadly, that role is to ensure good governance, good governance not in an alien sense but in an innovative, autochthonous sense. To skill and courage in leadership, we must add foresight and innovation so as to put an end to the image of Africa as a land of instability plagued by corruption and incompetence.

But it is not only the leadership which will need to be courageous; the electorate will which will be no less courageous if probity in government is to be assured. The convention wisdom is that an electorate gets the government it deserves. This is of course not always true and, in any case, the electorate can hardly be expected to make informed choices on the basis of ignorance. This is where the media can make a decisive contribution.

All too often our media complains of a lack of the necessary freedom in which they need to operate; and no doubt this is true in some instances. A muzzled or emasculated media is a charge on development. A free press is one of the most effective bulwarks against the abuse of power and all manner of irregularities. Its absence therefore opens the high road to corruption and all the other unwholesome practices with which Africa is now associated. But the press has its own responsibilities to the community. Among these is the obligation to investigate and verify its reports and stories before publishing.

Additionally, in the case of Africa, the media also has an external role. It is no secret that Africa has suffered from a bad press over the years, especially at the hands of the European and Euro-centric media. Indeed a wholly separate lexicon for discussing African affairs seems to have developed. In this way the unflattering image of Africa and Africans is sustained notwithstanding whatever political stability or economic progress might be achieved in other parts of

By Chief Emeka Anyaoku
Commonwealth Secretary-General

the continent.

This anthropological approach to the reporting of events in Africa is unlikely to end unless the African media itself takes the lead. There has been, as you all know, a successful campaign especially in the United States to promote non-sexist lexicon. I wonder whether a similar project cannot be launched beginning in Africa but going well beyond Africa to promote the development of a non-racist lexicon.



Another section of the society that deserves special mention is the public service. And here I use the expression 'public service' in its widest sense to embrace every institution, governmental and non-governmental, where people are employed to deal directly with, or indirectly through the provision of services to members of, the public. Unless such public servants can by and large be said to be always willing and eager to execute their responsibilities efficiently and courteously, the productivity and image of our institutions will continue to lend weight to the frequent adverse comparisons between Africa and other parts of the world.

The private sector also has a role in meeting this

of Africa's Slavery

challenge. Indeed as privatisation becomes more and more the common sense of the age, Africa's economic destiny will increasingly turn on the quality of its business community. Will our businessmen then be content to play second fiddle to foreign multinational companies, or will they display the necessary vision, and I dare say courage, needed to scale the heights? Will they be a national bourgeoisie or will they be content to be a comprador class?

I raise these questions not for rhetorical flourish. As you all know, an African Economic Community is planned to come into being early in the coming century. The necessary papers have already been prepared and the Treaty establishing the Community is expected to be signed in Abuja in the coming few days. I see this development as a major milestone in the long journey

It is not the colour of the skin. The solution is the political unification of Africa. When Africa is a united strong power everyone will respect Africans, and Africans will respect themselves.

towards African unity. But unless our business community is equal to the challenge, we may end up with a Common Market which is not necessarily African.

And there can be no economic prosperity without political stability. In a sense African history since the early 1960s has been a search for political stability in many parts of the continent. George Ball, an Under-Secretary of State under President John F. Kennedy, is quoted by Ruth First in her book, *The Barrel of a Gun*, as having said in his memoirs that during the years he spent at the State Department, he was awakened once or twice a month by a telephone call in the middle of the night announcing a *coup d'etat* in some distant capital with a name that sounded like a typographical error.

The fact that there have been no less than 40 attempted and successful military coups in Africa since 1963 illustrates the point that the search for political stability has continued. We will surely never be able to

find political stability as long as the military see a role for themselves in the political process. This is of course not to tar all the military regimes we have had in Africa with the same brush. Some have had lasting achievements to their credit; especially those which have shown remarkable courage and farsightedness in embarking on a determined course of bringing about their own demise in favour of civilian administrations. But these have been the exceptions pointing up the rule. Protracted military rule in any time and place stultifies the development of those civic virtues without which civil society itself becomes brittle.

In the last two decades, the growth and development of the new technologies, especially information technology, has added another area where redoubling of efforts is urgently required in Africa. When I touched on this subject on an earlier occasion in another part of the country, I made the point that this development threatens to replicate in the economic domain the consequences produced in the politico-military domain when in the last century our forefathers took to the field with bows and arrows against the Maxim Gun. It is a point which cannot be exaggerated.

With the OAU Summit taking place in Abuja next week, let me conclude by referring to the role of African unity in what I have been saying. In the final analysis, African unity will surely contribute to a lasting answer to the legacy of slavery. This has now become something of a truism; but not long ago, it was restated with a special poignancy by Kwame Nkrumah, almost as if he intended it to be his parting message to the African people. (Nkrumah said):

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African unity cannot of course be the panacea to the problems I have spoken of; nor will it be achieved tomorrow or the day after. However, if we understand our problems and tackle the challenges they pose with due diligence, Africa as Pan-Africa, may yet prove to itself and others that she has not got feet of clay. Then her future in unity will be one of greater effectiveness and achievement. That is the great objective to which the efforts of Africa's governments must be bent.

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Uganda

A reporter's diary II

May 17: Fatima and I register at the Conference Centre. We collect our file and tag, return to the hotel to dump them before proceeding on a tour of the business district. Uganda like most African countries relies on export earnings from raw materials. Although it has increased the production of these commodities, the glut in the world market caused partly by the discovery of alternatives to Third World raw materials has led to the collapse in prices of coffee, tea, cocoa and cotton. Shortage of foreign exchange for importation of machinery and industrial inputs has produced a sluggish growth in the industrial sector. Apart from this familiar scenario, Uganda has another peculiar problem, the ownership of the manufacturing outfits most of which were previously owned by Asians who were expelled from Uganda by ex-president Idi Amin. The absence of government policy on the legal status of these enterprises has stifled initiative since the current operators are unable to secure loans for rehabilitation and or modernisation of machinery. Capacity utilisation in such industries has declined.

The major industries are cement, paper and paper products, tobacco, soft drinks, soap, sugar, beer and coffee. After our tour of a small part of the business sector, we return to the conference centre where we discover that a meeting of the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI) is in progress. It was declared open by Professor Adebayo Adedeji, the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa. The director of UNAFRI is Professor Femi Odekunle, a former criminology lecturer at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Many delegates arrive today.

MAY 18: We meet most of the delegates from Nigeria who travelled through Nairobi. The deputy Governor of Lagos State, Mrs. Lateefa Okunnu, Dr. Femi Badejo and Ayo Ogundipe of University of Lagos and Benin, Mrs. Maryam Inusa of Women's Commission, Chief Bisi of Country Women's Association, (COWAN), General Obasanjo's wife, Mrs. Stella Obasanjo, Retired Major-General Shehu Yusuf and two pressmen, Emma Agu, editor of *Champion* and Nosa Igiebor of *Tell* were among the group. I join other journalists at the conference centre for a press conference addressed by General Olusegun Obasanjo in which he outlines the objectives of the Africa Leadership Forum, ALF. He is accompanied by Mr. Hassan Sunmonu, the secretary-general of the Accra-based Organisation of African Trade Unions (OATU), Mrs. Marie Angélique Savane, an adviser to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), Mr. Felix Moshia, Director of ALF,

and other officials.

President Yoweri Museveni, host of the ALF who has been away on a week long tour of Britain and Germany arrives and so do other African heads of states. Among them are Presidents Kaunda of Zambia, Chissano of Mozambique, El-Bashir of Sudan, Quett Masire of Botswana and Aristides Pereira of Cape Verde. Other dignitaries are former Tanzanian president Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, the Prime Minister of Saharawi Arab Republic, Mr. Mahfoud Ali Baiba and diplomats from various countries.

Meeting of UNAFRI governing board ends. It was attended by delegates from 13 member countries, delegations from United Nations Development Programme, (UNDP) and the Organisation of African Unity, (OAU). Most of the delegates including Professor Adedeji are staying for the ALF Conference scheduled for tomorrow.

The conference centre is wearing a new look as technicians put finishing touches to the fountain in front of the building. Security is tightened at the entrance and grim faced policemen search handbags and brief cases of delegates whenever they enter or leave the centre.

MAY 19: The International Conference Centre is busy as the ALF conference opens. The plenary session has all the five heads of states in attendance. Mwalimu Nyerere chairs the session and as each president reads his speech,



Left to right Felix Moshia, General Obasanjo and Bona Malwal at a committee session

simultaneous translations into English and French are provided. All the leaders dwell at length on the problems of underdevelopment, political turmoil and insecurity in Africa. Midway into the session, Chief Tom Ikimi, chairman of the National Republican Convention, NRC and his entourage of Alhaji M.B. Aikali, a gubernatorial hopeful from Sokoto State, Chief Maxelle Amadi, Mr Ndugu Obaigbena, publisher of defunct *ThisWeek* magazine and one other NRC officials arrive. They distract attention for a while before seats are allocated to them. They came in an Okada flight specifically for the Kampala Forum which is now waiting at Entebbe airport to take them back the following day. How is that for style? Chief Ikimi's 10 page paper on "Poverty and African Security" is distributed to delegates although his late arrival makes it impossible for him to present it at the plenary session. A furious Ikimi

retires to the largest suit in Sheraton Hotel to sulk. General Obasanjo's suggestion that he presents his paper to any one of the four committees holds no attraction for the Chief who returns home the following day in his chartered flight! The plenary session which starts in the afternoon ends late evening. It is to continue the following morning. We return to the hotel. It is a rather chilly night. The rains which have become a daily affair since our arrival in Kampala have stretched from the afternoon late into the evening. Fatima and I thought of trying the Indian cuisine at the Nile Grill, a popular restaurant in the heart of Kampala but we put it off and settle for the sea food restaurant within the Sheraton hotel. We order shrimps and salmon dishes. The former tastes fine but the latter is rather salty.

MAY 20: Plenary session continues with presentations from the leaders of the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). They are so many that only the representatives of the international federation of these NGOs are allowed to address the delegates. Committees are established to deliberate on these themes: Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation. I join the stability committee but before the sessions begin, I attend a meeting of all women delegates where we decide that women must be fully represented at the four committees. The meeting also wants a statement issued highlighting the views of women on the four themes. Mrs. Lateefa Okunnu and Mrs. Marie Angeli are the leaders of the Women's group. They co-opt me into the team of four charged with drafting

tasted flat and we gave up. Fatima returns from the reception a bit too late for the Eba party.

MAY 21: Committee sessions continue. The chairman of my committee is Mr. Eriya Kategaya, the First Deputy Prime Minister and National Commissar of Uganda. A very democratic chairman, he gives members plenty of time to make their point. Also in the same committee are Ambassador Elizabeth Bagaya, the princess of Toro who was Idi Amin's roving ambassador before they fell out, and Dr. Ona Soleye a lecturer at the University of Ibadan. The committee identifies the causes of instability and submits its report to the documentation committee before presentation at plenary session and subsequent incorporation into the final document. On the programme today is a luncheon invitation for all women delegates hosted by Mrs. Lubega, the Ugandan Minister for Women Development. Dr. Femi Badejo is the most vocal of the group of men who oppose this "apartheid" and cries out for justice. He convinces General Obasanjo that the women are planning a *coup d'etat* to unseat the men from their positions of power. Just as we were about to start our lunch the General and Dr. Badejo accompany Ambassador Bagaya and Mrs. Stella Obasanjo into the hall. Everybody roars with laughter and General Obasanjo tells the group that he has decided "to become an honorary woman for this afternoon just to attend the luncheon." It was wise of him because it was a sumptuous meal. Fatima and I encourage Mrs. Okunnu to try matooke while we wink at each other. One mouthful and she gives it up. She helps herself to another serving of rice. After presenting my draft to the women delegates, we return to the hotel where CNN broadcasts Rajiv Gandhi's death and details of Mengistu's flight from Ethiopia.



Left to right, Fatima Abubakar, Ambassador Clark and another delegate at the plenary session

the statement after collating the views of women delegates.

A cocktail party hosted by President Museveni is on the programme today. It will take place at State House, Entebbe. I think of the long drive to the venue and the draft I am supposed to submit early tomorrow for typing and opt to stay back.

Also on the programme today is an *Amala* and *Eba* party organised by Dr. Femi Odekunle, the director of UNAFRI, for Nigerian delegates. Fatima and I want to attend this party since it will give us an opportunity to eat something entirely different from the bland food served at Sheraton. When we got tired of the regular continental menu a few days back, we began a gourmet's adventure trying Ugandan food. Our first dish was matooke-mashed, unripe bananas served with stew. It

Airways flight direct to Lagos.

MAY 23: We have just today to shop, visit the Nigerian Embassy, Makerere University and some newspapers. Our Ugandan friend, Mrs Rosetta Butare, takes us on a tour of the market and the shopping centre. We shop for crafts. I buy some banana fibre paintings and the bark cloth. By the time we return to the hotel we are too tired to go out again. There isn't much to buy from the shops as inflation has eroded the purchasing power of the Ugandan shilling. One US Dollar is 850 shillings!

MAY 24: We leave Kampala for Entebbe airport where we board a Nigeria Airways flight to Abuja. Delegates for the OAU ministerial conference disembark at the federal capital while we proceed to Lagos.

Aliko Dangote

"How I made my millions"

A man with the midas touch fast becoming a business colossus

This encounter took place a few months ago, but certain pressing events prevented me from recounting it. The first day I had appointment to see Alhaji Dangote at his Apapa office, I was made to wait for one hour before I could reach his secretary, who told me that her boss was in the office with someone and had asked not to be disturbed. Another date was fixed, but this time it was I who stood up the Alhaji, because the Gulf War had broken out early that morning and I was chained to my desk monitoring developments. I went a day or two later to apologise and fix another date. To my surprise I got a better treatment; his secretary promptly ushered me in and he told her to stop all incoming calls and personal callers. Dangote preferred to do one thing at a time.

In a large hall-size office that has three sections (one with a conference table, another with settees) his table was at the far-end corner, several feet away from the door. It took more than a few strides to reach it, which gave the young tycoon enough time to examine his visitors and for the visitor to take in the impressive surroundings. Dangote did not rise to shake my hands as I was sure he would have done if I had come with a multi-million Naira proposal. For some moments I was eyeing a bottle of Coca-Cola I saw on his table, hoping he would at least offer me a drink. But the coke bottle turned out to be a telephone receiver which he used to talk to his secretary! Otherwise he was polite if rather cagey, because as soon as I started firing questions we



Dangote: more heights to attain

both forgot the grandeur of his office. The main one really was how at his age (which he did not want disclosed, but he is younger than me) he managed to become one of the touted rich men of Nigeria?

First he had a headstart. After working in an uncle's transport business for one year, his maternal grandfather, Alhaji Sanusi Dantata, bought him three lorries and at 19 years of age he struck out on his own. Besides the transport business he also dabbled with construction during the UPE contracts of the mid-70's. His big break came in 1977,



Ex-President Shagari

when he made the momentous decision to move from Kano to Lagos. His grandfather had opposed the idea, but he got the old man's friends to prevail on him to allow Aliko take the risk, despite his youth and inexperience. The catalyst for the move was Alhaji Usman Dantata, an adventurous uncle who had long discovered that the money was in Lagos and not Kano.

"What brought me to Lagos in 1976 for the first time was that another uncle of mine Usman Dantata needed money, 18,000 Naira and nobody can give it to him (in Kano). I had the money so I loaned it to him and he said I should come and collect in Lagos. On coming to Lagos, Usman gave me cement instead of money and when I sold it I not only recovered my money but I made 6,000 Naira profit. It was not easy to make that kind of money in the North in those days. A Mercedes 600 model was then selling for 7,000 Naira. I said so

Naira borrowed from my grand dad. But I had more than what I needed (for the business). Sometimes people paid deposit for the cement three months in advance".

The construction boom soon led to an ever-growing importation of cement, the ports became congested and the cement business collapsed in 1978. Aliko said he quickly switched to the other imports, including spare parts, cars, musical records, rice, vegetable oil and flour. Anything really that would sell. He was then all by himself, but his junior brother, Sani, joined him later



Aminu of the Dantata empire

First he had a headstart. After working in an uncle's transport business for one year, his maternal grandfather, Alhaji Sanusi Dantata, bought him three lorries and at 19 years of age he struck out on his own.

this is how people make money here!"

You guessed what happened next. Dangote moved to *Ikko* (Lagos), permanently. "At first I was allocated two lorries of cement by Usman and because of port congestion and construction people paid money for it in advance. In the first two months I was making 2,500 Naira on average per day, including weekends. I was not even using money. The capital I came with was 50,000 Naira of my own and 50,000

when he finished school.

Dangote denied speculation that he made a kill during the Shagari era, when all sorts of imports licenses and currency rackets were going on. He said the import license policy became an impediment to his business because it was secured with exorbitant commissions from third parties. "I am not denying that I have made money during politics. We are not saying that government (of Shagari) did not help, obviously it is a third world country.... but

during politics we could not make much because our handicap was age, because they feel if you are not 40 or 50 they believe you should not have money".

Dangote said his peripheral involvement with Second Republic politicians ensured that he had no problems with the Buhari/Ideagbon crack down on corrupt businessmen. He said he was performing the Hajj when the Buhari coup took place, but he returned home and he was not arrested or his business tampered with by the regime. But while he claimed that he did not suffer under the stifling atmosphere of Buhari's moral crusade, he could not hide his enthusiasm for the free-for-all atmosphere of SAP. "SAP has really worked.... without deregulation people like myself cannot think of owning a bank (He is chairman of Liberty Merchant Bank). There is nowhere on earth with opportunities like Nigeria".



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Broad Street

The flip-side of the coin

The nation's financial nerve centre bubbles with drama, glamour and shady deals

Three-piece suit, designer briefcases and intimidating skyscrapers. Welcome to Broad Street, Lagos Island where banks jostle for space and black market currency speculators accost passers-by, with the now familiar opening shot: "which one you want, dollars or pound sterling?"

Broad Street, the epicentre of the nation's financial sector has a charm of its own. It is like a stage awash with actors, all of them immensely talented. Top of the cast are young bankers, usually young and flashily dressed, hawkers peddling their wares to passing motorists and of course the inevitable currency traffickers in their flowing *babbanriga*. These three categories of people mingle to give Broad Street its charm, allure and excitement.

Broad Street has two main sides to it, though. There is the formal sector consisting of bank and insurance executives, ministry workers and the employees of the various oil companies. Then there is the noisy, chaotic informal sector—the world of the hawkers peddling imitation trinkets, watches, ball-point pens and three-piece suits. Then there are the street-side traders who have converted a substantial portion of the C.M.S. Church premises into a bustling market. A hard bargainer who does not mind the shoves and curses of passers-by can pick up a fairly used pair of shoes at a modest price here. There are also skirts, trousers and even designer neckties. The "proprietor" is quick to tell you that they are all "original and imported". True, only that they have been fairly used, and look a little

worse for it.

You never know with Broad Street. Now the long and winding street is calm, almost serene. And then it suddenly explodes in a flurry of shouting voices and running feet. Officials of the environmental sanitation authority are chasing street

What would Broad Street look like without its street traders? Silas Awojobi, a credit analyst with Universal Trust Bank thinks it will look very beautiful. "Street traders are pests. They litter the street, obstruct traffic and scream on top of their voices. They have turned Broad



Broad Street

traders as usual. It is a cat-and-mouse game, and the street traders are the perpetual losers. The eagle-eyed ones among them spot the officials from far away and dash away with their wares. Those who are not fortunate enough to make a quick get-away forfeit their goods to the environmental sanitation officials. "I lost a set of expensive watches to the environmental boys last week", Lewis Koroma complained to *Citizen*. "They are making this business unprofitable and I may have to change base".

Street into a nightmare and I will be glad to see them go". Zainab Emeje, a computer programmer at Niger House, corporate headquarters of UAC thinks differently. Emeje thinks that Broad Street without the flurry and bustle of the traders would be too dull and quiet. "They (street traders) add colour and life to this place. Besides, you don't have to go into the supermarket for everything. Street traders are always there and their goods are not too bad". But it is precisely these "goods" that most people complain

With the recent deregulation of the financial sector, over forty new merchant and commercial banks have sprung up in the past three years alone, doubling and then quadrupling the number of bank executives who work on Broad Street.

about. Victor Omole, a civil servant told *Citizen* that he bought a gold-plated Seiko wristwatch from a trader along Broad Street. According to Omole, the trader had assured him that the watch was made of genuine gold. "I paid 300 Naira for it, but by the time I got home, the watch had stopped working. Even worse, I discovered that it was made of imitation gold." Others have complained of being sold stolen goods. Truly, in Broad Street things are not exactly what they seem. Shadows and substance mingle freely, and in the grey areas, tricksters, speculators and conmen set their wares to trap the unwary victim.

Broad Street is also fast gaining reputation as a hunting ground for ladies of easy virtue. With the recent deregulation of the financial sector, over forty new merchant and commercial banks have sprung up in the past three years alone, doubling and then quadrupling the number of bank executives who work on Broad Street. During lunch break on work days, the street is literally jammed with three-piece suits. The young ones among them are easily the cynosure of all eyes. They call themselves yuppies (young urban professional) and they usually dress in designer suits and neckties, brogues and expensive wrist watches. They have money to spend and the ladies

flock to them. Nowadays it is not unusual to see young and well-dressed girls parading the length and breadth of Broad Street, hoping to be picked up by a yuppie.

The possibility of Broad Street becoming the red light district of Lagos Island worries Kelvin Osafana, an estate valuer, the influx of free girls would damage the corporate image of Broad Street, thus driving down property rent. Office space on

Broad Street currently rent for 45 Naira per square foot and indications are that it will climb even higher as more banks join the scramble for corporate offices on the street. "Brothels, cheap hotels and free girls will hurt Broad Street's corporate image. This is the nation's financial nerve-centre and as such, it should exude dignity appropriate to bankers and insurance executives", Osafana said.

Broad Street is not all glamour and high living though. True, there are chic and deluxe restaurants such as Pentagon and Oasis, but only managing directors and other top executives can afford the five course meals with mind-boggling price tags. The rest of the pack disappear into the *bukas* and modest restaurants in the alleys off Broad Street and Martin Street during lunch break. And they are a sight to behold: Young bank executives in immaculate three-piece suits bent over plates of hot *amala* in dirty and decrepit restaurants. This is the other side of Broad Street, and it is certainly not ennobling.

By Ike Okonta

BUSINESS BRIEF

Haisha News launched

Haisha Investment Company Ltd, last week launched its house journal, "HAISHA NEWS"

The Executive Chairman of the company Sule Abiola said that the house journal would not only promote communication between the internal and external publics of the company, but proffer expert solutions on issues affecting the economy of the country.

This he said would be done by asking experts to contribute to the journal. Dr. Idowu sobowale, Managing Director of Primo Publications who spoke on "the role of communication in promoting Industrial harmony and favourable industrial

climate" expressed hope that the journal would create the desirable industrial harmony among the staffers of the company and also to create favourable image of the company to its external publics.

The Director of the Nigerian Institute of Journalism, Chief Dayo Duyile who launched the house journal told the management of the company to ensure that the journal does not die.

The house Journal has Bolaji Balogun as the editor and Mr. Charles Obi as the Editor-In-Chief.

Tola Sunday

South Africa

De Klerk courts Moi

The apartheid leader scores in Kenya and eyes Nigeria next

On June 8, two days after the OAU summit in Abuja, F.W. de Klerk hopped across his border into Kenya, where he reportedly held "constructive talks" with President Daniel arap Moi on formalising and improving trade between their countries, which until now has been carried on through third parties.

But more than that, President de Klerk had hoped to get the Kenyan leader to lend support to his effort to have world-backed sanctions against his country lifted. It has been reported that during the Abuja summit of the Organisation of African Unity, OAU, President Moi tried to convince his colleagues that Mr. de Klerk had introduced enough change of the structures of apartheid to deserve a review of sanctions against South Africa.

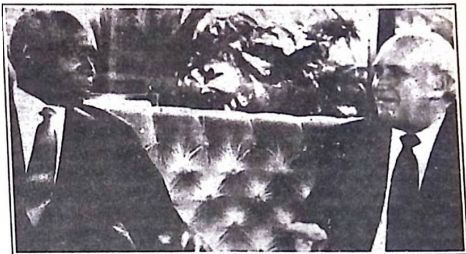
South Africa could also count on Madagascar, off Africa's east coast, as well as on Cote d'Ivoire on the west coast, Mali, Mauritania and Morocco. The latter three on the night of June 7 broke the 28-year OAU air embargo against the Pretoria regime by allowing three South Africa Airways aircraft to overfly their airspace to and from Europe. There was an unconfirmed report at the weekend quoting sources within Zaire that the government of Mobutu Sese Seko was to send an ambassador to South Africa. President de Klerk was in that country on an official visit in 1989.

In Kenya a fortnight ago, he urged the establishment of four trading blocks, led by his country, Nigeria, Kenya and Egypt to compete with a united Europe after 1992. He said South Africa, could be

the Japan of Africa. On the political front, he did not hide his dream that his country would one day become a member of the OAU. "It's natural that South Africa will soon play its role within the OAU", he told journalists in Nairobi, hoping the

"complete" dismantling of apartheid next year and free elections, based on adult universal suffrage.

Meanwhile, Nigeria's reaction to the South African leader's planned visit has been expectedly cold. Reacting first in a BBC interview on



De Klerk and Arap Moi during the former's visit to Nairobi

June 3-5 Abuja summit would be the last without a South African presence.

To press home his point, de Klerk made what many observers have said was his most startling, if not audacious, remark in recent times: his intention to come to Nigeria for talks with President Ibrahim Babangida, current chairman of the OAU. During the Abuja summit, the Nigerian president speaking in his new capacity saluted Mr. de Klerk's "act of courage", promising a review of the OAU's position "in the light of positive developments in South Africa leading to the establishment of a non-racial democratic society."

In Nairobi, the South African president responded by promising

June 11, vice-presidential spokesman Nduka Irabor said Nigeria has not invited Mr. De Klerk but "he invited himself."

Major General Ike Nwachukwu, (rtd), the Minister of External Affairs, was more forthright. Nigeria, he said, would not welcome the racist president until apartheid is dismantled. He however said the aim of Nigeria was to give the leader of the white minority regime in Pretoria, "a chance for what he has done so far". The message is quite clear. If, indeed, de Klerk wants to take South Africa away from the Boer *laager* mentality, he has to bury the corpse of *baaskap*, white supremacy first.

Tawey Zakka

Ethiopia

Uneasy calm

After the mayhem of the last few weeks normalcy has returned to Addis Ababa or has it?

Residents of the old city of Addis Ababa now go about their business unmolested except for the night time curfew which is still in force. Essential services like water, electricity and telephones have been partially restored.

Two weeks ago an ammunition dump went up in smoke and the explosion rocked Addis Ababa. The dump which is close to a residential area left over 100 people dead and the Red Cross said over 150 were injured.

Eye witnesses said the explosion which began at about 2 am local time was preceded by heavy exchange of gun fire. About four other ammunition dumps have been blown up since the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front, EPRDF, took over the capital three weeks ago. A government statement blamed the explosion on saboteurs but it was strongly suspected that elements loyal to the overthrown government were behind the series of explosions in Addis Ababa.

The most difficult problem facing the interim government of Meles Zenawi since he took over the country early this month is the maintenance of law and order. Compounding the problem is the fact that the EPRDF is not in control of the whole country. The security situation in the south east, for instance, is so bad that food convoys and relief workers have been repeatedly attacked by bandits with arms left behind by the deserting soldiers of the former government.

Ethiopians who had initially welcomed the end of the civil war later took to the streets to protest the US brokered peace talks in London

when it dawned on them that the agreement would lead to balkanisation of the country. Residents of the city demonstrated in front of the U.S. embassy in Addis Ababa and the city centre to denouncing America's dubious role in the peace talks. Several people were killed when government troops attempted to disperse the demonstrators.

Alarmed by the deteriorating security situation in the country, UN's senior officials of the World Food Programme, (WFP), warned at

distribution of relief materials as vital road linking the Red Sea port of Assab with Addis Ababa has been opened to allow the transportation of emergency aid to several millions Ethiopians. Already about 40 trucks carrying food, fuel and medical supplies, are on their way to Addis Ababa, Ethiopian radio said the road was opened following agreement reached between the Eritrean rebels and the EPRDF government. France also joined the call for international aid for Ethiopia when the minister for humanitarian affairs, Bernard

Alarmed by the deteriorating security situation in the country, senior officials with the UN's world food programme (WFP) warned at a press conference recently in Addis Ababa, that bandits and looters were making it difficult for aid workers to get to the famine areas. They said condition in the south and south east of the country was alarming with 1.7 million people in urgent need of emergency assistance.

a press conference in Addis Ababa, that bandits and looters were making it difficult for aid workers to get to areas with severe food shortages. They said condition in the south and south east of the country was alarming with 1.7 million people in urgent need of food.

Another official of the UN, working in Addis Ababa, Michael Edis said in the Ogaden area alone, about 80,000 returnees especially children were in poor condition. Though the official pledged not to withdraw the team, it was feared that a large number of children might die soon unless law and order is restored.

Government's response last week indicates that it is seriously concerned about the smooth

Kouchner, flew into Ethiopia for talks with the EPRDF and other separatist allies. He said the relaunching of relief aid would top his talks with the government. Kouchner arrived on a French aircraft carrying 11 tonnes of medical supplies for Addis Ababa and another 11 tonnes for Asmara, capital of Eritrea.

Meanwhile, the acting prime minister, Tambat Layne is expected to name a new cabinet to reflect the various factions and interests in the country. He has promised to convene a conference of all political groups by July to form a multi party transitional government until elections are held next year.

By Abu Mommoh

WORLD

China

Gang of three

Mao's widow Jiang Jing joins the great helmsman.

The secretive apparatus of the Chinese Communist Party and government were slow to admit it. For two weeks, reports circulated in the West alleging that Mao Zedong's widow Jiang Jing, who has been in detention since her arrest for revolutionary crimes in 1976, has committed suicide under conditions of house arrest. Madame Jiang was known to suffer from throat cancer, a possible cause of death, but on June 4, China's official Xinhua news agency announced that she had actually committed suicide on May 14.

ing up to her death stood in sharp contrast to the years 1966 to 1976, when she was at the peak of her power as one of the leaders of the ultra-leftwing faction of the Chinese Communist Party. A popular film actress in Shanghai in the 1930's, Jiang Jing caught the eye of Mao Zedong who at the time was leading the Chinese Communists' epic war against the Japanese and the Kuomintang. In 1939, Mao divorced his second wife and married Jiang Jing.

As a young girl, Jiang had taken part in the Long March of 1934-5,

army and all spheres of culture." Along with Lin Piao and Chen Po-ta, Jiang became a leader of the radical communists who set out to smash all those described by Mao to be "left in form but right in essence". Jiang personally unleashed the fanatical Red Guards at China's then head of state, Liu Shao-qi, whom she described as a "capitalist roader."

In 1976, Jiang also clashed with Deng Ziaoping, the vice premier who succeeded the great premier Chou en-Lai in January 1976. Deng had led the "pragmatic" interpretation of Chou's "four modernisations" of agriculture, industry, defence and science. He took the position that, "It does not matter whether a cat is black or white if it catches mice," in response to charges of right-wing deviation. Jiang countered that, "It does not matter that enterprises lose money as long as the ideological line is correct." Deng was soon denounced by Mao and replaced by Hua Guofeng.

When Mao died on September 9, 1976, Jiang and her allies lost the succession tussle to Hua. A month later, Jiang and her three colleagues Wang Hung-Wen, Yao Wen-Yuan and Jiang Jing-jiao were arrested and quickly labelled the "gang of four." After a lengthy trial, they were sentenced to death in 1979. This was commuted to life imprisonment in 1981, and since 1984 Jiang Jing has lived under house arrest. The rehabilitation and return to supreme power of her arch-rival, Deng, ensured that the wife of the Great Helmsman Mao Zedong never again breathed freedom. With her death last month, the gang of four was reduced by one.

By Mahmud Jega

Jiang Jing's rise to great power began in 1966, when Mao launched the tumultuous Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Mao called for the "repudiation of those representatives of the bourgeoisie who have sneaked into the party, government, army and all spheres of culture." Along with Lin Piao and Chen Po-ta, Jiang became a leader of the radical communists who set out to smash all those described by Mao to be "left in form but right in essence."

Last week, the *Liberation Army Daily* of Shanghai, official organ of the huge Chinese People's Liberation Army, commented that the "she-devil" took her own life "when she realised that her campaign was a complete failure". The paper added that Jiang's suicide was neither because she was "too much persecuted nor a sign of remorse," claims difficult to prove.

The sorry state of Madame Jiang's condition in the years lead-

ing up to her death stood in sharp contrast to the years 1966 to 1976, when she was at the peak of her power as one of the leaders of the ultra-leftwing faction of the Chinese Communist Party. A popular film actress in Shanghai in the 1930's, Jiang Jing caught the eye of Mao Zedong who at the time was leading the Chinese Communists' epic war against the Japanese and the Kuomintang. In 1939, Mao divorced his second wife and married Jiang Jing.

As a young girl, Jiang had taken part in the Long March of 1934-5, and after Mao declared the People's Republic of China in 1949, she remained active in the party's cultural affairs. She was also involved in the redistribution of land to the peasantry in the early 1950's.

Jiang Jing's rise to great power began in 1966, when Mao launched the tumultuous Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Mao called for the "repudiation of those representatives of the bourgeoisie who have sneaked into the party, government,



BILKISU YUSUF

opportunism. How you classify them will depend on where you stand.

A typical case of manipulation of voters emotions is the example of Mrs. Sonia Ghandi, Rajiv's widow. Two days after the death of her husband she was named leader of

make her mother, Mrs. Nusrat Bhutto a minister. Some guts!

On the home front, we can call Dr. Tokumbo Dosunmu, late Chief Awolowo's daughter the inheritor of Papa's political empire. Her detractors view her involvement in politics as an attempt to climb on her father's back and rise to fame. If she is gifted in politics she will have to cease to be Awolowo's daughter to convince her detractors. Not to bother, reincarnation (if anybody believes in it) should give her an opportunity to choose her parents the next time around. I certainly never bought Mrs Thatcher's policies when she was prime minister of Britain but I was an admirer of her political achievements, an astute politician and a grocer's daughter who rose through the ranks of the conservative party, she had no father or husband's back to ride on.

From all these gains and losses, the world is witnessing, women have proved that they are no longer the political pygmies of yesteryears.

Women are known to be more honest than men, that is one factor that should be an added advantage in their struggle for effective political participation. Their patient endurance and sacrifice when entrusted with responsibilities should also stand them in good stead in any political contest.

But a lot has to be done if women's involvement in high stake politics must be meaningful. For one, they must be the effective walls against mounting symptoms of materialism, moral bankruptcy, opportunism and manipulation of names to achieve cheap political victories. They must also shun the empty triumph of emotions over political discretions. If and when women conquer these temptations they can boast of having come a really long way on the political scene. Only then can they afford to speculate.

Speculative politics

Latently, my reflections have focussed on the increasing, albeit confusing "achievements" of women in politics. Recent political developments worldwide sensitively capture the varying roles of women in politics.

First, the international scene where a female suicide bomber killed Rajiv Ghandi. Whatever might have been her motive, or whoever her sponsors were 18 others died with Rajiv. How is that for expertise in terrorism? Prime Minister Eugenia Charles of Dominican Republic using her position as the leader of the Organisation of East Caribbean States OES, invited the United States to move into Grenada to "protect" the Caribbean from the selflessness of communism and entrench the selfishness of capitalism. How is that for hypocrisy and trickery?

Then we heard the hoarse voice of Imelda Marcos from her United States hideout telling Filipinos that she is now willing to return home and serve them as a leader. In short she is ready to bow to the will of "her people". Never mind the fact that their hard earned money bought her unsurpassed collection of shoes and jewels. If these women constitute the string pullers at a puppet show of international politics their less shrewd sisters are the pawns in the games, manipulated either by forces beyond their understanding or out of their reach. Of this class there are also those who are driven by

his party the Congress I. She wisely declined. She still isn't spared the long arm of opportunists who have now printed posters of Rajiv's grieving widow, appealing for votes for her assassinated husband!

Long before the Sonia factor, the Matriarch, late Indira Ghandi, her mother inlaw is often cited as one who capitalised on the fame and political career of her prime minister father, Jawarhalal Nehru, to launch herself into power. Easily forgotten is her mastery of the game of politics while her courage and the decisive way she stuck to her convictions on what was best for India are rarely highlighted.

In Bangladesh, last March, a widow of former head of state, Begum Khaleda Zia, whose husband Ziaur Rahman ruled the country between 1976 and 1981 contested and won elections. Her rival was Hasina Wajid, the daughter of late Mujibur Rahman who ruled from 1972 to 1975. Their electioneering campaigns highlighted the qualities of their late husband and father but there was an eclipse on the capability of the candidates.

Not to be forgotten is the controversial "daughter of the east", Ms Benazir Bhutto who became prime minister of Pakistan as political observers say, because she is the daughter of late head of state, Zulfikhar Ali Bhutto who was overthrown by late General Zia and later sentenced to death. Benazir Bhutto while in power saw it fit to

Citizen

All the news in perspective

June 17 — June 23, 1991

Vol 2 No. 25

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Loco: A home on the theatre stage. Page 44

I DO NOT UNDERSTAND
HOW A PILLON COULD MEAN
SO MUCH TO YOU, ALL OF
A SUDDEN?



IT'S A FEMININE
SECRET.

?!

AND NOW THERE'LL BE
BETTER LIFE FOR OUR FOLKS
TOO... NOW THEY'LL STOP ALL
THEIR CRIES ABOUT
HUNGER!...



THAT PILLON!... CAN IT
HOLD OIL?!...
... PLENTY OF OIL?!...



?... WHY?... NO!...

**WHEN WE STRIKE
OIL, I'LL LISTEN
TO YOUR PILLON-
TALK!**



Thatcher of Kwara

O ye Kwarans, be on thy guard for thou shalt have a Thatcher in thy Government House come 1992. In thy midst has arisen an Iron lady (perhaps she has been feeding on the Itakpe iron field) who has vowed to conquer thy Government House.

Thy iron lady is a Florence Nightingale, born and bred in the lamp carrying profession of nursing. Thou can do with some milk of human kindness. Thy iron lady is also a fairy with a magic wand for the eradication of poverty, ignorance and disease. Thy iron lady is a realist who believes that "the men should start the Third Republic first" giving 1996 as a possible date for the emergence of a female president.

By her fiery speech shalt thou recognise her. Said the Iron gubernatorial aspirant "I am the most loved of all politicians in Kwara State. Once voted into office, I will be given a second term because of my performance. I will be Thatcher of Nigeria." Hear! Hear! If what my eyes gather from the interview my colleagues at *Al-Ahram* of Nigeria granted to this metal lady (metallurgists tell me iron and metal are interchangeable) then this Thatcher of Kwara will not be snatching the milk from the mouth of thy babes. Being a nurse, metal lady of Kwara has pledged to provide drugs and uplift the standard of life for thy poor people. Ho! Ho! some "un-thatcherite" ways for thy consid-



eration. Thou should tell Chief (Mrs) Aiyepoku that "Thatcherism" and love of the poor are as odd a combination as "Bushism" and "Sad-damism". Not so Kwarans?

The Barons

The strategic committee of the barons has allocated the eleven northern states to caucus members who are to coordinate underground political activities in those states. It was their method of beating the ban and manipulating the newbreed.

Baron Maisaje—The newbreed are our relations and proteges. It is our bounden duty to assist them to succeed in the task the military has thrust on their young shoulders governing Nigeria. We should make available to them the benefit of our political and administrative experiences so that they do not fall into the pitfalls that characterised the first and second republics which gave the military the excuse to intervene and stay in power for too long.

Baron Nagogo—Another point to remember is that if we put "boys" into government houses they will accord us the respect we deserve — and also dish out patronages to us or to our friends and relatives!

Baron Nababa—I hope you are Citizen, June 17, 1991

right Nagogo. Sometimes the people you assist to climb to the top of the ladder easily forget you. They may bar us from entering Government House or their exalted offices. It happened during the second republic when proteges of a famous politician in the north turned against him, denigrated him. Poor soul.

Baron Maidauro—Any further contributions to the deliberations? If not, permit me to summarise. It is agreed that the current situation facing us is a serious one that needs to be handled with the greatest care and circumspection. The soldiers who overthrow our legitimate regime continue to castigate us at the slightest opportunity. They called us all sorts of names during the second and first republics. I remember one state chief executive during Gowon's time referred to politicians as ex-this ex-that who were dubbed "Navabs of Negativism". Even civilians close to the military joined in the game and business tycoons called us jobless liars! This is just by the way and we should not be swayed by such charades.

We have today resolved to par-

ticipate in politics—ban or no ban. The rationale being to assist our younger brothers and sisters in the art of government and to retain influence in the corridors of power—that is, if the soldiers quit the stage. We have already established a committee to achieve our goals.

We begin mobilisation in our home base—our beloved North bequeathed to us by the Sardauna (May his soul rest in perfect peace). He it was that coined the slogan "One Norths One people, One destiny". This statement holds true today as yesterday despite the fragmentation (by the soldiers) of the entity into eleven states and Abuja. We should capitalise on the legacy left by the great Sardauna. After all, the West and the East have their Awolowos and Ziks. I believe their successors are doing exactly what we set to do. I know better, being amongst southerners most of the times since 1954.

The resolution is that as from today we should make necessary contacts with our political colleagues first in the North and then in the South.

For love of rain

The rainy season is the season of life when the dead earth is revived. It brings forth its plants so lush and green. The flowers bloom along with the earth. No wonder spring is the season of loves for without rain, drought takes it toll on love and plants. But the season of life is here again to warm our hearts and wet the earth.

Rainstorm

Flash. Drip. Splash.
Flash. Drip. drip! Deep.
The noisy skydrum rumbles
In the background
A million torchlights lash
Revealing the pregnancy of the clouds
Zig-zagging, lightning brightly illuminate the sky.
Rainsleets drizzle off —handedly
Meandering with corroding grace
Forming floods and stagnant ponds.
Flash. Drip. Splash.
Blinding illuminating lightning flashes
Rain furiously drips and splashes
And smiling gardens shake heads
At the draper of May —
Lo! over there is a castle afloat
Then groaning goats and screaming soul,
All riding the shaky spine of the waves.

Shehu El-Hafiz

Rain at noon-time

A feastful sight
You see them now our people
This noon of leavening shadows
Come sit round together to
Dance the dance of children...

You say . . .

Dance the dance of rippling waters
As now our history gathers
The foliage hold their palms to the

skies
Faces frowning look up to the skies
In our lands where laughter weeps
unknowing

Dance with us a dance of the future
They will not let us sit in peace
Nor let our eyelids droop in earned
rest
And the flood comes that must

They will not let the rain-drops say
Rain time is peace time
For the bursting forth of joys.
Molara Ogundipe—Lestle

Little prayer for rain

Rain, rain
Come again
At your will
On hill
Or plain.

Fill up streams
And fill up lakes
This is the dream
For all our sakes.

Rain, rain
Come again
You are sweet
And we shall meet
In the plain
And on the street.

Rain, rain
Come again
Give us grains
And more plantains.

Rain, rain
Come again
Fill the buckets
To the brim
Keep the fields
And bushes trim.

Rain, rain
Come again
And bring us clouds



In fleeing rows
One nimbus
And two rainbows.

Rain, rain
Go away
For today
Is Saturday
And children
Want to play.

Rain, rain
Come back quick
All is dry
In just a tick.

Rain, rain
Come again
At your will
On hill
Or plain!

Rain, rain.....
Come again.....

Pierre Meunier

The Changing Tide

The uproar of the moving spread
Soon descend from its peak
To lower level
Witnessed by the same sailors
That it toasted heaven rise
The splashed noise
Rose from the splashed
Cascading moistened-
And cool off the thirst
Of the hungry trotters.

Olawale Okunade

Beating diabetes (I)

No major disease is more insidious than diabetes. It can strike suddenly or, more often, lie undiagnosed for years, silently attacking your body through blood vessels and nerves. As a group, diabetics are far more often afflicted with blindness, heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, hearing loss, gangrene and impotence than the general population. Diabetes and its complications are a leading cause of death in the US, and one-third of all visits to physicians are related to the disease.

Fortunately, however, if you develop Type II, the more common form of diabetes, you have an excellent chance of controlling it—or even reversing its course. In short, with a combination of expert medical help and self-discipline, the odds are you can beat diabetes.

When sugar isn't sweet
Diabetes severely disturbs the way the body uses food. During

By Arnold Schechter

digestion sugars and starches normally are turned into a form of sugar called glucose, and the pancreas produces a hormone called insulin that makes the glucose available to the body's cells for energy.

In Type I diabetes the pancreas produces little or no insulin, and the diabetic must inject insulin every day to survive. About one million



Tips for chronic back pain

One of the most frustrating things about chronic low back pain is its tendency to recur. But there are several things a patient can do to improve the situation:

Regular exercise to strengthen the back muscles is the best treatment. Most family doctors have free pamphlets available that show the correct ways to use and exercise the back. If these exercises are followed conscientiously, they should reduce the severity and frequency of attacks of back pain. If you are overweight (as most of us are) and you lose several pounds, you may get substantial relief from your pain. Less weight equals less strain on your back muscles.

A stiff mattress often helps people

By William Nolen

with chronic back pain. Some even choose to sleep on the floor.

Seeing a physiotherapist may help. Sometimes, using whirlpool baths, ultrasound and various other modes of physical treatment, a physiotherapist will bring relief to patients with low back pain. The physiotherapist in the hospital where I work is very effective at treating low back pain, and I frequently refer patients to him. Some large medical centers have begun to sponsor "back schools," which emphasise preventing the recurrence of back pain. A typical course may range from five to 16 or more hours of instruction, "back

people in the US have this form of the disease, which comes on quickly, most often during adolescence.

Type II diabetes afflicts some ten million people and usually develops after the age of forty. Here the pancreas produces some insulin, but the insulin is insufficient or its action meets resistance from the body's cells (or both).

In any form, diabetes leads to elevated levels of glucose in the blood, sugar seems to be the biggest culprit that causes blood vessel and nerve damage. At the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, Robert Silverman, M.D., Ph.D., is following a number of research projects on the cause of diabetic complications. "I believe there is a link between elevated glucose and these complications, although the evidence is not conclusive," he says. "Other factors, such as genetics and reduced blood flow, may also play an important part."

schools are still new, and opinions vary as to their usefulness. However, we can report that back schools do seem to offer many people a new and sometimes effective way to prevent the recurrence of back pain." The Mayo Clinic has its own back school, and Mayo staffers have visited and been favourably impressed by several other schools, including the Canadian Back Institute in Toronto, the Back School of Atlanta, the Spine Education Center in Dallas, and St. Mary's Spine Center in San Francisco.

Finally, a warning. If you have chronic back pain, use pain killers with discretion. Simple pain killers are preferable to narcotics, which—as we all know—can be addicting. But no drug is "simple" if it's overused.

Sam Loco

Thirty-years on stage

He tried all manner of jobs but with the twist of fate, stage became home

His number was 4444. That meant over four thousand people were attending the interview for the two vacant positions of sales representatives in Michelin! His chances of getting the job was as bright as that of winning the national lottery. Worse, he could not drive, a precondition for the job. His

ingenuity came to play. Overnight he took a crash programme in driving and in just two hours felt he had mastered the art well enough to face the interviewers. Confidently, the next morning, he filled out the portion that indicated he could drive. The interview was just an hour away. Jauntily, he

walked to the venue, passed the oral and written tests easily. Then the crunch came: driving. He eased himself into the driver's seat and crashed into the gate. Yet he got the job for frankly admitting his error of judgement. The package was

mouth watering. Forty pounds a month with a car attached. Date: 1972.

For six months he frolicked in his new acquired status symbol, a Morris minor bus, criss-crossing Lagos, Abeokuta and Ijebu-Ode, selling Michelin tyres. The world could not have been any better, just then,

beer," he smiles, downing his third bottle oblivious of the artistes milling around. Presently, two actresses have taken their seats beside him. A middle aged woman, owner of one of the many stalls by the National Theatre, soon lounges over, shouting "stage marshal." He pats her, then continues: "I ordered beer for



Loco: Life on a fast lane

he lost the job for "telling a small lie". But luck still smiled at him. On collecting his last pay, he had sauntered to a nearby beer-hall to drown his sorrows. It was here he got his next job!

"That's why I will not leave

this man and as he was leaving he asked where I worked. I told him I just lost my job. He asked me to come over to his office in Dunlop the next day..."

Life on the fast-lane was to continue, after all. What with bigger pay, car.... other trappings. His base was to be Benin. "I was the first person to ride a Volkswagen 1500 CC in Benin", he asserts.

He remained with Dunlop for four years switching to Karo Pharmaceuticals in 1976, as sales manager. He not only had a 504 saloon car attached to him this time, but a chauffeur to go with it.

For Sam Loco Efe, who turned

fifty this year and celebrated his thirtieth year on stage, it was not always like this.

"I lost my father, a warder, while still in elementary school, "it was my mother, an akara (bean cake) seller who the burden of bringing me up fell to."

It was tough. There were two other nieces, too. As early as 4 a.m., the beans must be sent for grinding as frying commenced at 5 a.m. Schooling became a sporadic affair. Indeed, rotational for the three tots. Each year, one had to trade places for the other. By the time he got to standard six, his mates were already in class three (secondary school).

But the theatre offered an escape. From the moment an amateur theatre group came to present "The Doctor Inspite of Himself" in their school in 1960, the make believe world of the theatre became his own. With the help of a teacher, they produce excerpts of "Julius Caesar," later, presenting it for the Abakaliki zonal festival of arts. Their school came last but he won a prize as "most promising actor" with a scholarship to go with it.

Without that scholarship, I wouldn't have gone to secondary school," he admits....

Through secondary school, he nurtured theatre clubs that presented concerts on a regular basis. Even during the civil war (he fought briefly on the Biafran side before being captured by the Federal troops), he enacted sketches to boost flagging morale.

With his return to Benin in 1968, his practice blossomed. He formed the Ovonranwen National Theatre Group (ONTG) which introduced plays outside of the historical gear to an appreciative audience.

"We sent an established group parking" he recalls.

There were also the thrills. Like when they had to be on the run for two months for producing Wale Ogunyemi's Play, "Day of the Oro

Cult" without his permission. Or when they got locked in for five days in an hotel in Auchi while on tour for failing to settle their hotel bills. Certainly, artistic success was not matching financial returns. Even his foray into TV did little to improve things. He was co-actor with NTA Benin's prime time drama, programme, "Hotel de Jordan" where he played Pikado Suberu and later Ukatabiribiri. His pay per episode was ten Naira!

His in-law was getting restive. He kept wondering how one could keep on with a trade that was not paying off. Early, 1972, he dragged

of department of theatre arts at the University of Ibadan. He was offered the position of senior artiste with "Unibadan Masks" on level 7, a far cry from his former salary. The academic community thrilled him and he was able to enter for the two year diploma in theatre arts, graduating in 1979. He later went solo, presenting shows for radio, television stage and doing master of ceremony on the side. Within this period, he formed Ben Sam Productions with Ben Okunguale which toured extensively and in 1980, joined the Unibadan performing company as head of drama. He

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himself to Lagos. The jobs came... At the peak, he quit.... for the theatre!

It was time for FESTAC '77. After the audition, the lead role for "Langbodo," Nigeria's entry, fell on him. He had to choose between his job and the production. He choose the latter.

"Actually FESTAC '77, held so much promise' he says 'There were plans to tour extensively around the world, after the event. But nothing came of it'."

The question for going back to his old job was out. Through Professor Adelugba, director of "Langbodo," he got introduced to Professor Joel Adedeji, a man he now calls "my godfather" who was then head

remained there for three years, creating "Two Just Men" and "Fun Time" on Oyo State radio. By 1985, he began work on a TV programme, when a call came from Odumegwu Ojukwu, in Lagos, asking him to participate in his sponsored play "Wind versus Polygamy." Several productions followed: "Eruku," "Once More Dear Native Land," "Broken Jug," "Turning Wheel" (a TV sit-com), "The Prince Must Marry the Princess"...

Surely, Sam Loco Efe, has come a long way in the theatre. The years, too have taken their toll: Gone are the cars. Gone, also, are the chauffers. But for him, life goes on... on stage. And then there is the beer.

By Oji Onoko

A song for mother Africa

Former leader of music sensation, Jambos Express, breaks away to chart solo course

The moderately furnished sitting room is getting hot. The table fan sharing a space with the sound system and piano on a side table, is presently adjusted. Paintings juxtaposed with sculptured pieces adorn the wall. Soon, his Togolese born wife, enters, taking her seat beside him. His two children later join. A happy family? He stands, goes to the deck and inserts the cassette "Ire Mambo". As the music wafts in, he shuffles to it. Unconsciously, you join in the melée.

"Mambo is an original African rhythm", he says. "I am just reviving it. The music has always been there". "But is it not the same as calypso"? You argue, as the music becomes louder.

"Not at all", he counters. "In Mambo, I use such traditional musical instruments as the talking drum, omele, bongo and ape iyalu. These are absent in calypso", he explains further. "So you see, it is authentic African music", he concludes, waving his hands triumphantly.

Better known as Prince Bola, Prince B. Agbana, from Mopa in Kwara State, is not new to the Nigerian music scene. He has been around since he left Provincial Secondary School, Kano, in 1967. He was back up singer, drummer and kongarist to Bongos Ikwe's "Roof Toppers" in Kaduna in the early 70's. In Lagos, he was in league with Sam Abiloye, Johnny Wood and Ehima Oteh in the "SJOB Movement" which produced "A Move in the Right Direction" before packing up. He formed his own band, "The Believers" thereafter, as Sunny Ade purchased a set of musical instrument for him.

"But SJOB Movement would not leave me alone", he recalls. "We regrouped under the name, The Roots Foundation" "And waxed an album", "Give Me Some More" which was an instant success".

They bought three cars and a bus. Then confusion set in. The bus was sold. The group again, disbanded. He joined Sunny Ade, as he (Sunny) needed a drummer, an innovation in his juju music then. They toured extensively: Japan, United States, Western Germany and Britain. On his experiences with Sunny Ade, he says: "I enjoyed my stay with him. Under him, I learnt to play various African rhythm. Now, I can play the talking drum, bata, gbedu"

In 1979, SJOB members came calling once more. His wife objected strongly to his joining them again. "Why do they always come back to you"? She had asked. He knew. He was the *dejure* leader. As lead singer and composer, he mostly spoke for the group. But he was never accorded such a respect.

Jambos Express! That was what they christened themselves. It was a group that he was to become synonymous with. Even now, it is difficult to talk of Jambos without his name coming to the fore. "Mother Africa" their hit album bore his signa-

ture....

His eyes flash in anger. He stands. "No"! he shouts, suddenly, "I don't want to talk about them".

"But you have to", you prod. "Mother Africa was a hit. Surely, something must have been very wrong to make you leave after such a successful outing".

"Look", he says, sitting now, voice still shaky, "they refused to give me credit for composing the songs. Worse, they eased me out of the financial angle. When I asked to see the sales records and discovered that money had been collected, they said it was for 'promotional tours', he concludes, breathing heavily.

So how has it been, going solo? "Challenging", he answers. "For once I am in charge. I can now experiment without anyone breathing down my back".

With thumbs up, he exclaims, "I feel, 'Ire'"

"Ire", you respond uncomprehendingly.

By Oji Onoko



Prince 'B' Agbana: "I feel Ire"



It takes
 a Great Citizen
 to communicate
Great news
 and Sound views

Through history, we learned great ideas make great citizens. Like Gutenberg, Shakespeare, Crusoe. They all left their footprints on the sands of time.

Citizen begins with the Journalism that puts all the news in proper perspective. Balance, fair, lucid and puzzling. News features that intrigue, stimulate and nourish the mind.

On hand is a super-team of tested breed of journalists who know their onions, and are determined to assure Citizen isn't just another news magazine but something you'll be glued to page to page, week to week.

Every
 Monday



Citizen

ALL THE NEWS IN PERSPECTIVE

REG



NIGER RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

INVITATION FOR INTERNATIONAL PREQUALIFICATION BID ON GALMA DAM AND IRRIGATION PROJECT:

The Federal Government of Nigeria intends to execute the Galma Basin Development Project in Kaduna State to boost wheat and rice production in Nigeria. The project is expected to be financed through external loan sources or grants and it is hoped that successful bidder will assist in identifying and negotiating an adequately guaranteed source of finance for the project.

SCOPE OF WORKS

The scope of works include the following items:-

1. The construction of an earth dam 3.530km long and 30.5m high with five sluice gates, spillway and bridges.
2. The construction of a concrete/LINED right hand bank and left hand bank canals totalling 104.5km in length with various structures.
3. The construction of concrete lined distributory canal totalling 200km in length.
4. The construction of several kilometres of drainage and road net-work including storm drainage canal and lateral canal covering 20,500 ha.

The project as may be dictated by financing arrangement may be split into 2 or more separate contracts and to 2 or more independent contractors.

Interested contractors are therefore required to complete a prequalification application form which may be obtained on request and payment of non-refundable fee of N2,000.00 or \$200.00 made payable to the:-

The General Manager,
 Niger River Basin Development Authority,
 Kilometer 5 Zungeru Road,
 P. M. B. 68,
 Minna, Niger State.

One set of completed prequalification application and supporting document should be returned to the General Manager at the above address.

A second copy with all documentation should be forwarded to the Consultants at the address below:-

T. C. International Associates,
 1, University Crescent, Bodija Estate,
 P. O. Box 7839,
 Secretariat, B.O. Ibadan,
 Oyo State, Nigeria.

The Niger River Basin Authority, the delegated execution body shall not be bound to give any reason for prequalifying selected applicants, and shall not defray any cost incurred by applicants nor refund fees paid for prequalification forms and other administrative cost.

Closing date for receiving completed Application Forms 31st July, 1991.

Signed: The General Manager,
 Niger River Basin Dev. Authority,
 MINNA.

French open Surprises of Roland Garros

The just concluded two-week French Open in Paris was a classic tale of upsets and intense rivalry among the world top rated tennis stars.

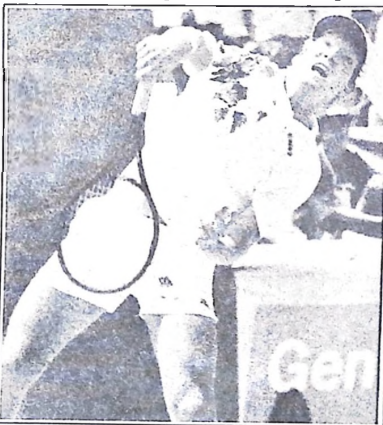
The recently concluded two-week French Open at Roland Garros in Paris presented a classic picture of the intense rivalry and constant changes among the ranks of top tennis players. That Jim Courier, the lanky American from New Jersey popped up from his pre-tournament relative low ranking to claim the men's single title by

overwhelming much favoured, last year's finalist Andre Agassi, is a further proof that most of the world big prized ATP tournaments are fast becoming too perilous for gamblers and game analysts who usually base their predictions on the current form and ranking of the tournament stars.

On the eve of the opening rivalry for the fame and the big prize monies at stake at the red clay courts of Roland Garros, a heavy pall of uncertainty clouded the tournament. While stars like Andres Gomez, Yannick Noah and Ivan Lendl and tennis legend Bjorn Borg who has been struggling to return to active

playing, chose not to take part, it was still not easy picking who the possible winner will be. And among the names that were tossed around by highly respected game analysts, the ninth seeded Jim Courier was never reckoned with as possible winner. Better known and rated names like Michael Chang, Andre Agassi, Emilio Sanchez, Sergi Bru-

not had a particularly fantastic outing in most of previous tournament he featured in this year since winning the Australian Open in January caused the first ripple when he eliminated Michael Chang 6-4, 6-2 to set up a semi-final clash with Andre Agassi. Chang, who holds the record as the youngest player to win the tournament at the age of 17,



Courier: overwhelming



Seles: still the queen

was tipped to make it to the final.

The quarter-finals ripple of surprises reached its climax when Jim Courier turned giant killer when he eliminated tournament top seed Stefan Edberg 6-4, 2-6, 6-3, 6-4 in a thrilling but explosive encounter that stretched the wits and staying power of the two players for three hours.

But that was not the end of the thrilling rivalry of upsets in the French Open. Agassi, last year's losing finalist in the U.S. Open ended

guera and Goran Ivanisevic.

The upset fever that gripped the Grand Slam from the on set reached a turning point when the tournament got to the quarter-finals. Boris Becker who has been having a running tussle with injuries and had

the lucky run of Boris Becker 7-5, 6-3, 6-1 in another gruelling encounter while Jim Courier ended the title dream of another German Michael Stich to set up a historic all-American French Open final clash since 1954.

Most seasoned gamblers and game analysts inside the Roland Garros centre court did not hesitate to assumed victory for the tournament number two against ninth seeded under dog like Jim Courier. But the reverse turned out to be the case as Courier won his first Grand Slam title against country man 3-6,

two would have dethroned the 17 year-old America-based Yugoslav from the highly coveted number one spot. Also waiting in the wings as this year's possible French Open winner was Arantxa Sanchez Vicario who was still bitter about how Monica dethroned her last year and shattered her record as the youngest tournament winner in 1989.

Sanchez gave a hint of her intention to recapture the French Open title when she eliminated Steffi Graf in the semi-final. Sanchez Vicario's semi-final victory over Graf was in itself a big upset because Graf had

won all their 10 previous encounters. The face-off between Gabriela Sabatini and the defending champion Seles provided the two female tennis stars an opportunity to settle old scores. Some weeks earlier, the 21 year old Sabatini had overwhelmed the world female number one in straight sets to win the Italian Open. Seles got her pound of flesh when she eliminated the South American and set up an epic final against another hot rival, Sanchez-Vicario of Spain.

The defending champion's eventual 6-3, 6-4 victory over Sanchez

put paid to all the intrigues among the female top players for now. But there is no end in sight for intense rivalry and constant changes among the top ranked tennis players.

But while the Jim Couriers and Monica Seles revel in their Grand Slam fame, tennis fans are eagerly awaiting the next grand slam event, Wimbledon which is considered the most prestigious.

By
Joe Olajuwon



Becker: a shadow of himself?



Graf: bad outing

6-4, 2-6, 6-1 and 6-4.

If the French Open men's single title was a classic picture of the strong rivalry for fame and big prize monies that Grand Slam titles confer on their winners, the female category was even moreso. At stake here was the top spot of the world ranking. The French Open was to determine whether or not the top spot in the female ranking would change hands. Defending champion and the youngest winner of the Grand Slam had her number one spot threatened by German born Steffi Graf and Argentine Gabriela Sabatini. A victory for either of the

If the French Open men's single title was a classic picture of the strong rivalry for fame and big prize monies that Grand Slam titles confer on their winners, the female category was even moreso.

ADAMU ADAMU S

DEFINITIONS
IN HUMOUR

Enter the Tiger

When Tony Momoh was writing his letters, I did the most sensible thing: I never read them. I never met the minister except when he accompanied Segun Osoba to the *New Nigerian Parley*. Probably because I didn't want to, but most likely because I thought he would be a big bore. Perhaps he was, but I am now certain I would enjoy his company more than that of the Son of Tiger. Do you know the "Son of the Tiger"? That's how Mr. Alexander Akinyele, the minister of information named himself. Of course, President Babangida was immediately promoted from Maradona to the Tiger himself. Now instead of dribbling past you the president is likely to maul you. That's what I call sycophantic violence.

I was happy when the president displayed his displeasure. Otherwise only God knows how many names he will have received. He would have turned the tiger into a lion or camel or elephant or whale.

This reminds me of President Mobutu Sese Seko Kuku Bendu Waza Banga, and King Sobhuza, the Great She-Elephant and Son of the Great Crocodile.

Shamuwa fund

We all know about *bush meat*, don't we? Some of you must have taken a bite at one time or the other. I haven't, don't wish to, will not.

And that is final.

Refusing *bush meat* doesn't mean accepting *town meat*, though. Do you know *town meat*? During the good old days we used to call it directly without any pretensions. Its name was *vulture*. Not that I have caught anyone with a

roasted edition. But looking around, I can't see the myriad that used to swarm around and clean up all the mess there was. What must have happened to them is a simple guess, and yours is as good as mine.

By the way, will no one launch a *Save the Shamuwa Fund*? *Shamuwa*, the Hausa name of the specie of the beautiful, black, white-breasted, heron-sized rainy-season bird, is a disappearing breed. It disappears as fast as it lands. Is it the next in the line of extinction? But come to think of it. If the soil can't feed us, we must assume the sky can. If agriculture fails, providence will not.

Broderbond

To whatever use it has been put, it is always a sorry sight to witness the dismantling of privilege. A disappointed man, lashed by fate, blown by vicissitudes, and laid low by defeat, is the greatest evocator of pity and in need of the tears of sympathy. Even if he was a racist, and the aggregate of his privilege was the broderbond empire. Especially if he displayed spontaneous, survivalist wisdom taught by painful realism—in hot pursuit. There is no admission of fear and failure more expressive.

He reminded you of the tears you shed for a "murderer" lynched without the benefit of a trial, or the inconvenience of the *innocent* accused who could not prove his

innocence. Or those shed in pity of someone deprived of love. For whom the wide world was an arena of friendlessness and lack of concern — beaten by rain, torched by shine, covered by dust, jeered by all.

Realism for South Africa took long to take root. Giving up pleasurable dominance and opulence is not the easiest thing to do. Naturally the journey went snail-like: Verwood-Voster-Botha-de Klerk. Fredrick de Klerk is surely dismantling apartheid not all that willingly but out of sheer necessity. He had done much but he thought he had already done enough.

No, sir, Museveni said quite rightly and eloquently. Dismantle apartheid first. One-man, one-vote, let's have that.

But the reasons advanced were the wrong ones.

They are mentioning minority rule. Forget about it. In Africa half the continent is ruled by a minority of either marxists (what are they called nowadays?) or soldiers. So minority rulership can't be all that new or objectionable. By the way, why are we trying to interfere in South Africa's internal affairs?

OALUC — OAU Liberation Committee. The liberation committee of the Organisation of African Unity has done its job — well, almost. Now what the OAU needs is a Redemption Committee, to redeem those liberated from racists and colonialists and handed over to local despots.

AEC — African Economic Community. Ha! ha! This is a case of putting a wheel-less cart before a sick horse. You can only remain where you are. If you go anywhere at all, it is backward — at a gallop.

With EAC (East African Community) in comma, CEO (French ECOWAS) wallowing in assimilation throes, Maghreb Union at *maghrib* (sunset) and ECOWAS only a faint *echo*, AEC is going to be a resounding *success-lure*. Quote me.

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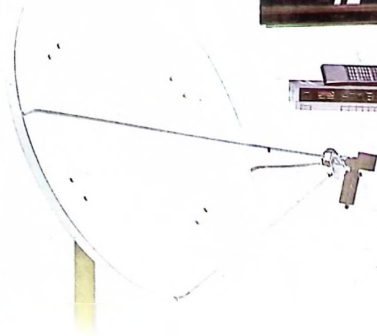
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