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## KUTA TO OBASANJO

# Deregulate and forget 2003

The Chairman, Senate Committee on Aviation, Senator Idris Kuta has advised President Olusegun Obasanjo to forget about contesting the 2003 presidential election if he goes ahead with his pet programme of deregulating the downstream oil sector.

By Reuben Yunana

Speaking at a public hearing on the planned deregulation at the National Assembly yesterday, Kuta accused the president of insensitivity to the plight of the ordinary Nigerian.

His words: "the PDP gov-

## Obasanjo takes case to international community

By Osborne Adi Jnr

President Olusegun Obasanjo yesterday took his campaign for the deregulation of the oil sector to the international community, saying that the global trend today is not only against subsidy, but that its withdrawal will bring equity in prices and distribution of the products in the country.

Obasanjo, who spoke at the opening of the Energy Expert Working Group meeting of the D-8, the umbrella body of Eight Developing countries in Abuja, said if the government succeeds in removing subsidy on petroleum, States and local

contd. on pg 2

## Nigerians control US, UK internet market

By Osborne Adi Jnr

As the business climate at home continues to offer bleak prospects, Nigerians have taken over the Internet market in both Britain and the United States, with about 30 per cent stakes and another \$10 billion investment in the two countries respectively.

This development, which is coming on the heels of persistent calls by the Federal Government on foreign investors to come and invest in the country, observers said, may leave the government with no option, but to appeal to the conscience of Nigerians abroad to bring back home their money to kick-start the economy.

President Olusegun Obasanjo who disclosed this yesterday in Abuja at the meeting of the D-8, said the feat is the product of Nigerian positive contribution to the global economy following their breakthrough in the fields of science and technology, music and sports.

The \$10 billion worth of investment owned by Nigerians

contd. on pg 2

ernment has failed Nigerians who voted for Obasanjo because they believed that with his experience in Yola prison, he would perform. Unfortunately, he is a complete dis-

appointment.

"The ordinary man on the street cannot get food and adequate accommodation. Let me tell you the truth, I am a politician and I play the

type of politics that would ensure I am elected. If the PDP government dares to deregulate the petroleum sector, that will be the end of

Obasanjo's days at the Aso Rock Villa."

Kuta, who received a standing ovation from the public and cheers from NLC

contd. on pg 2



L-R: Dr. Usom Amana, Justice Obiora Nwazota, Chairman, Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the Nigeria Airways, President Olusegun Obasanjo, Chief Bola Ige, Minister of Justice and Chief Yomi Adefulu, member of the commission after a meeting at the State House, Abuja... yesterday.

Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje.

## Court stays proceedings in Mohammed Abacha's trial

Mohammed Abacha and three others standing trial in an Ikeja High Court over the killing of Kudirat Abiola on June 4, 1996 yesterday got some reprieve when the court stayed proceedings in the case.

Charged with Mohammed, eldest surviving son of late Head of State, Gen. Sani Abacha, are Major Hamza Al-Mustapha, former

Chief Security Officer to late Abacha and Mr. Lateef Sofolahan, an aide to Kudirat.

The judge, Mr. Justice Kudirat Kekere-Ekun, adjourned hearing in the matter, pending the determination of an appeal by Mohammed before the Supreme Court.

Mohammed is challenging a verdict of the Court of Appeal which upheld a High Court ruling that he had a

case to answer in connection with Kudirat's murder.

Miss Titi Shitta-Bey,

prosecution counsel at yesterday's proceedings,

contd. on pg 2

## ASUU strike gets off to shaky start

Although some universities seem to have responded with enthusiasm to the call by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) to begin an indefinite nationwide strike yesterday, many others seem to be in two minds about joining in.

Bayero University, Kano, seems to have responded immediately to the strike with lecturers staying out of classrooms and students moving out of the campus, and the

contd. on pg 2

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## NEWS

## ETF N40bn not missing -Acct. Gen.

The Accountant-General of the Federation, Mr. James Kayode Naiyeju declared yesterday before the House of Representatives committee on Education investigating the alleged N40 billion missing from the Education Tax Fund (ETF), that the amount was not missing but paid into the federation account.

In his investigation at the public hearing which began yesterday, the accountant-general revealed that all monies collected by the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) on behalf of the ETF were lodged in the federation account with the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) because ETF as at then had no bank account.

According to Mr. Naiyeju, this option became necessary because government failed to set up a board of trustees to manage the fund, and that monies collected by FIRS on behalf of the ETF between 1995 to 1998, were subsequently, shared amongst all tiers of government on a monthly basis from the federation account.

Said the accountant-general: "I want to make it abundantly clear that there is no

missing or misappropriation of N40 billion Education Tax Fund by the FIRS management.

"Monies collected by the FIRS, including the education tax were put into the federation account, and this was later shared among the various tiers of government," Mr. Naiyeju added.

Giving reasons why the collection of education tax by the FIRS had to begin in 1995 instead of 1993 as stated in Decree 7 of that year, the accountant-general laid the blame on the doorsteps of the Federal Government.

The difficulties in the implementation of the new tax, he stressed was what forced government to set 1995 as the implementation date, even though the decree establishing the ETF was promulgated in 1994, but back-dated to 1993.

Blaming the contradictions in the education tax and the lack of preparedness as being responsible for the apparent under-assessment of the tax in 1993 to 1994, Mr. Naiyeju however, submitted that "FIRS doesn't condone fraud or any form of malpractice."

"As for the education tax, the tax authority (FIRS) has

done a lot to make the best out of a very bad situation," he stated.

Accusing the House committee on education of

University of Benin students and lecturers are said to have responded immediately to the ASUU call to start the boycott.

As the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that ASUU has begun a drive to mobilise a more positive nationwide response, reports from other university campuses speak of a lukewarm response from three or four campuses, or a plea to the lecturers to reconsider their stand.

NAN reported that ASUU began a drive to make lecturers at the University of Lagos (UNILAG) Akoka, and the Lagos State University (LASU) join the boycott by appealing to them "to be resolute and support your union at local and national levels".

A mobilization document signed by the ASUU national president, Dr. Dipo Fasina explained that the strike was necessary to stop the federal government from repudiating an agreement

bias, Mr. Naiyeju said one of the petitioners, Fidelis Ogboko Uzonwanne, who made the allegation of the missing N40 billion was re-

cruited by the committee conducting the public hearing as a consultant.

He described the allegation of Mr. Uzonwanne as not

only motivated by self-interest considerations but completely baseless, and advised that the National Assembly be not misled into believing that N40 billion is missing.

## ASUU contd. from pg 1

signed with it in December last year which was intended to "restore the university system".

Students of the two universities do not seem totally convinced by ASUU's arguments, with the president of the UNILAG students union, Ghenga Omoyumgbo reported as saying that although the lecturers had a good case, "they should adopt another strategy in the interest of students."

"ASUU should make this a warning strike and reopen dialogue and be able to make

concessions when necessary, provided the interest of its members is not jeopardized", Omoyumgbo said.

The vice-president of LASU's students union, Miss Zainab Olokodana is also reported by NAN to have said that although students sympathised with ASUU, it should be careful in its action "as students and communities suffered the most when lecturers went on strike".

Reactions are said to have been mixed at the University of Ibadan where

some lectures were said to have taken place in some faculties although some lecturers said this was because clear instructions had not been received from ASUU.

Activities also continued at the University of Abuja where the authorities, lecturers and the students had reached an agreement to stay in place until ongoing examinations were concluded and at the Ladoké Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso, where returning students were said to be still busy registering.

## Abacha contd. from pg 1

told the court prior to the adjournment, that since there was a Court of Appeal ruling to stay proceedings in Mohammed's trial, it would be inconvenient to go on with the trial of the other accused person since it is a joint trial.

She therefore, urged the court for an adjournment, defence counsel, Mr. Bala Ibn-Na-Allah and Peter Obi,

however, argued that adjourning the trial would amount to continued incarceration "which is unknown in the penal code."

They urged the court to strike out the charge against the accused persons, pending the determination of the appeal before the Supreme Court.

Mustapha Bulama, Mohammed's counsel, in his argument, urged the court to consider granting the accused person bail in the interim.

Kekere-Ekun, however, turned down the defence

counsel's request and adjourned the case till the determination of a Court of Appeal in Lagos on March 20, ordered the High Court to stay proceedings in Mohammed's case, pending the outcome of his case at the Supreme Court.

Meanwhile, the trial of Aminu Mohammed, driver to Mohammed Abacha, for conspiracy and attempted murder of Sen. Abraham Adesanya, in January, 1997, will resume at a Lagos High Court today.

## Obasanjo contd. from pg 1

governments will gain an average of 50 per cent in revenue than what they now collect from the federation account.

He said the issue of petroleum product pricing was not that of "Ragolis, coke and petroleum" as being cajoled by a section of the press, but it is that of perpetuation of gross injustice and massive exploitation of the weak and defenceless.

He observed that subsidy in Nigeria had not only caused serious distortion in the economy, but had been

hijacked by the rich, cartels and syndicates.

"Government in short has compounded her problems by not only diverting money for development purposes to the rich, but by further widening the gap between the rich and the poor with additional disempowerment of the disadvantaged."

According to him, the natural thing for any responsible government to do is to bring to an end this disgraceful and unpardonable inhumanity, adding that government has been very

careful in applying a solution in order not to hurt the target beneficiaries.

To buttress his point, the president told his foreign audience that in the past ten years or so, Nigeria has not been able to maintain an official market price for petroleum products, saying that while one can only obtain premium gasoline at N22 in Abuja and Lagos, in Calabar, Onitsha, Maiduguri, Sokoto and many other locations across the country, the price is at least N50 per litre.

The president also said

while the major city dwellers got 80 per cent of energy and paid 40 per cent, the rural people who produced the resources pay through their noses, a situation that is unacceptable to government.

He described those who agitate to maintain the status quo as people who probably are working for the rich, cartels and syndicates and not at all representing the interest of the people.

To the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), he enjoined its leadership to realise that the congress should be a partner in development and progress and to a natural opposition to government.

"My government's vision is to improve the standard of living of every Nigerian. I do not know what vision the NLC has for Nigerian workers. My government is concerned about the overall economic development and activities that will not lead to distortions in national plans and projections."

He cited workers' retirement, education and retraining, investment of excess income, low cost housing, jobs and wealth creation as issues his government would like to work with the NLC.

## Deregulate contd. from pg 1

President, Adams Oshiomhole and members of the public, turned to officials of the NNPC whom he accused of corrupt practices as well as misleading the president on the deregulation issue.

"You (NNPC staff) should be in Yola prison where Obasanjo was. As a result of corruption you have been arrogant because you have so much money you do not know what to do with it. That is why you can afford to keep a suite at the Nicon Noga Hotel at the rate of N45 million

which is now a debt hanging on the NNPC.

Pointing out that any deregulation accompanied by a price increase would lead to complete chaos in the country.

Kuta accused President Obasanjo of disregarding the National Assembly by going ahead to appoint a Petroleum products Regulatory Commission even though a bill for the establishment of a petroleum product regulatory agency had just been submitted to the Senate and is yet to be debated.

He accused government of mismanaging the sum of \$750 million used for the maintenance of the three refineries at Kaduna, Port Harcourt, and Warri which are still not functioning at full capacity.

Also contributing, NLC President, Adams Oshiomhole said Nigerians cannot afford any price increase in the petroleum sector because of suffering in the land.

He recalled that price increases in 1993, 1994, 1998 and 2000 have failed to solve the fuel problem and advised government to do away with the NNPC if it cannot perform

NEWS

# Senate approves one aircraft for Obasanjo

The Senate yesterday passed the Appropriation Bill (1) 2001 which gives the executive the authorisation to purchase a new aircraft for the presidential fleet.

By this action, the executive is authorised to issue from the consolidated revenue fund an additional sum of N5,488,714,710 in respect of the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2001 for the purchase of the plane.

Thus, this amount is to be added to this year's budget which is N894,214,805,186.

The Senate's approval seems to have brought to an end the controversy surrounding the proposal by President Olusegun Obasanjo to buy a new plane for the ailing presidential fleet.

In response to the president's letter dated 6 February, 2001 seeking Senate's approval to purchase an aircraft for the fleet, Senate demanded that the matter could only be handled through an appropriation bill.

Noting that the average age of the planes in the fleet was 20 years, Senate also recommended that there

By Reuben Yunana

should be at least eight fully functioning aircraft at any one time in the fleet.

President Obasanjo there after submitted an appropriate bill seeking an authorisation the release from the consolidated revenue fund; of the sum of N5,488,714,710 for the purchase of a Gulf Stream V from Gulf Stream Aerospace of the United States of America.

Senate subsequently mandated its appropriation committee to hold a public hearing in conjunction with the Aviation Committee on the issue and advice it accordingly.

The appropriation committee's report submitted to Senate by its chairman Senator Udo Udoma yesterday, and which the upper house adopted, said the Chief of staff to the president, the Head of the Presidential Fleet, the Minister of Aviation, the Attorney General as well as the minister of finance all submitted memos on the subject.

According to the report, the head of the presidential fleet informed the committee that the fleet had eight old aircraft manufactured by five

different companies which constitutes serious problems of maintenance. He said there was need to move them out if the new planes could be purchased.

According to the committee's report, the minister of finance confirmed that from current revenue expectations, there would be sufficient revenue to fund the supplementary budget notwithstanding the quota cuts improved by OPEC, the min-

ister said current oil revenue is more than the budget's projections of \$229 per barrel.

Also, unexpected additional revenue from the sale of GSM licenses N56 billion over the expected estimates of N55 billion.

Briefing National Assembly correspondents later, Udo Udoma said Senate was convinced that the commitment of the huge amount for the purchase of the aircraft

would not affect the people-orientated programmes of the Federal Government.

"The committee is satisfied that there is need to purchase the aircraft. In order to ensure that there are at least

eight functioning aircraft at any one time the presidential air fleet needs to have more than eight aircraft in the fleet. This will allow for regular servicing of the aircraft," he said.

## FG set to inaugurate new prisons

The Federal Government is to open four new prisons and two hospitals for inmates in some locations in the country, the Comptroller-General of Prisons, Alhaji Ibrahim Jarma has said.

Speaking with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) shortly after inspecting the newly completed 160-bed medium and maximum security prison in Minna yesterday, Jarma said the new prisons were constructed to decongest existing ones in the country.

He said that in the next two months, four new prisons located in Minna, Makurdi, Funtua and Ile-Ife, and two 200-bed hospitals at Bauchi and Ilesha Prisons would be inaugurated.

Jarma said the new prisons were equipped with modern facilities and workshops to enable the inmates to learn such trades as tailoring, carpentry, laundry, mechanical and electrical works and welding.

He said the aim of providing the facilities was to enable inmates reintegrate easily into the larger society

at the end of their terms. He also said the new prisons satisfied the requirements of the U.N. Charter on the treatment of offenders.

He said the new mandate of the prisons service was to perform, train and rehabilitate inmates to make them skilful and more useful to the society at the end of their terms.

The Comptroller-General said that the prisons service would also provide sports facilities for the inmates to enable them take part in different sporting activities.

The new Minna prison, constructed at a cost of N153.8 million, has the capacity to accommodate no fewer than 480 inmates and residential accommodation for 54 senior and junior officers.

The new Makurdi prison is also said to have capacity for 240 beds, while those of Funtua and Ile-Ife have 160 beds each although the construction of the prisons were started in 1983, they were later abandoned, but he present administration revived the projects.

## Gana advises OPC, MASSOB to seek peace

The Minister of Information and

National Orientation Professor Jerry Gana, has called on all ethnic groups in the country to tread the path of peace in the interest of promoting development.

He urged members of OPC, MASSOB, Egbesu and other militant organisations to pursue peace.

Prof. Gana who gave the advice when he paid a courtesy call on the chairperson of Abuja Municipal Area Council, Mrs. Esther Audu, charged elected officials at all levels

By Ikenna Okpani

to prioritise projects that will uplift the lives of the people.

"What our people need is the provision of their basic needs, and they would do other things to help themselves," the minister said.

He said listening to the people is a very important administrative skill especially over the efforts being made by the AMAC chairperson to transform the area council.

Responding, the chairman of the Abuja Municipal Area Council, Mrs. Esther Audu, thanked the minister for the courtesy call, promising that her administration would ensure that only people-oriented projects are carried out.

She said the projects executed in the council were based on feedbacks from the people through their councillors whom she said, are in constant touch with them.

She called on the Federal Government to increase the statutory allocation to the council because of its strategic position.

Mrs. Audu observed that the influx of people from all parts of the country to the area council is overstressing the facilities of the council, saying the population of the area council alone is over 1.5 million.

She complained that the council might not be able to pay salaries of its staff if nothing is done to improve its allocation explaining that in some cases that the council was often left with only about one hundred and ninety five thousand naira after deductions of teachers salaries.

The AMAC chairman also complained of friction between the area council, the ministry of the Federal Capital Territory and Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA), but expressed optimism that the problem would be worked out amicably.

The minister was later led to the web site of the council, [abuja\\_online.net](http://abuja_online.net), which the chairperson said is the first website by a local council in Nigeria.



### TENDER NOTICE CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA NIGERIAN TREASURY BILLS

Notice is hereby given by the Central Bank of Nigeria that 91 day Federal Government of Nigeria Treasury Bills amounting to N100,000 million will be issued by an auction-based system on Thursday, 12/04/2001.

Interested Authorized Dealers (Commercial/Merchant Banks, Designated Discount Houses and Brokers) are invited to submit tenders to reach the Public Debt Office, Central Bank of Nigeria, Lagos, not later than 1.30 p.m on Tuesday, 10/04/2001.

Each tender must be in multiple of N1,000, subject to a maximum of N10,000 per tender. Authorized Dealers are allowed to submit multiple bids and quote multiple rates. A tender may be for own account of Authorised Dealers or made on behalf of interested members of the public, who are advised to apply to their banks or Brokers for the Bills.

Tenders for the Bills should be submitted on the prescribed printed forms in duplicate and in sealed envelopes clearly marked "TENDER FOR BILLS". The result of the tender will be announced before the close of business on Tuesday, 10/04/2001. The Bank reserves the right to reject any tender in part or in full.

Allotment letters will be issued to successful tenderers on Wednesday, 11/04/2001. Payment in full for the amounts of the accepted tenders must be made to the Central Bank of Nigeria not later than 1.30p. m on the issue date 12/04/2001. This will normally be effected by direct debit to the accounts of the affected Authorized Dealers which should ensure that their accounts with the Bank are adequately funded for this purpose.

PUBLIC DEBT OFFICE  
CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA  
TINUBU SQUARE  
LAGOS.

## Muslim forum pledges legal assistance to detainees

The Abuja Muslim Forum, a non-governmental organisation, promised yesterday to send lawyers to Kuje prison to facilitate trial of Muslim detainees who had stayed unduly long in prison awaiting trial.

Spokesman of the Forum, Yunusa Salaudeen, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abuja yesterday that at its last visit to the prison on Saturday, it was discovered that most of the detainees had stayed between seven and 10 years in detention without trial.

He said the lawyers to be engaged would ensure that the detainees were produced in court very soon.

He condemned the situation where youths

linguished in prison custody for a very long period and advocated a change, so that suspects could know their fate in good time.

"Some of the detainees would have completed their jail terms if they had been tried promptly," he lamented.

He said that the Muslim Forum was planning provide funds to enable some of the ex-convicts to return home, while others would get some grants to start trade.

Salaudeen also called on other Muslim organisations to pay such visits to prisons to give the inmates some sense of belonging.

"During our visits, we presented items, copies of the Holy Qur'an and other provisions to the inmates," he said.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
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4. Mr. Musa D. Ahmadu  
5. Dr. S.M. Baba  
Any objection to the registration should be forwarded to the Registrar-General, Corporate Affairs Commission, PMB 198 Area 11, Garki Abuja within 28 days of this publication.  
(SGD)  
Dr. S. M. Baba  
Coordinator  
Mrs. Ann Acka  
Secretary

## NEWS

## Kano govt. demotes 200 civil servants

Over 200 Kano State government workers have been down graded to lower grade levels in a major administrative adjustment carried out in 29 ministries and parastatals.

The exercise which has drawn a lot of criticisms from the affected staff, is aimed at correcting all wrong doings in the state civil service, according to Alhaji Hassan Suleiman, Head of Kano State Civil Service.

He told *Daily Trust* that government decided that all civil servants who have gone beyond their terminal points should be reverted to their proper salary grade level. He explained that most of the affected workers had overstepped their salary grade levels, and the amount saved for the exercise is about a million naira which is capable of employing ninety graduates on salary scales 06, 07 and 08.

"The purpose of this exercise is to respect and adhere strictly to civil service rules and we believe by doing so it will improve proficiency in the civil service," Alhaji Hassan Suleiman explained.

But the affected staff see it differently. One of them who was down graded from level 13 to seven said there is no justification for what the government did.

The worker who wished

From Musa Umar Kazaure,  
Kano

not be mentioned said he was promoted to that level on merit and his record of service is there to justify all his promotions, saying "the exercise was meant to witch hunt certain groups of people for political reasons."

Another employe of the Ministry of Works who was down graded said the government was unfair to carryout this exercise now especially with the prices of foodstuff skyrocketing by the day. "How do I get the money to feed my family now, when even before, the

salary I am paid is not enough," he queried.

He said that if the government was truly interested in cutting overhead cost, the governor should do away with the excess luggage of "special advisers, special assistants and political hangers-on."

The state Labour Congress and NUJ, whose members are also affected, are yet to make any pronouncements on the latest government exercise, but the state government insists that it had given the workers enough time to make up their qualifications and change of cadre.



Chairman, National Manpower Board, Dr. Pat Utomi, with his Executive Secretary, Mr. Nmunakwe Anyanwu at a news conference on Human Capital Development and Global Opportunities in the Communication Sector, in Abuja... Monday. Pix: Felix Onigbinde.

## Obasanjo urges Africa to be democratic

President Olusegun Obasanjo yesterday declared that time has come for African countries and its leadership to embrace democratic principles devoid of rancour and acrimony.

Speaking at the wake of political crisis bedevilling most African countries as a result of power struggle, president Obasanjo told a special envoy of President Mathew Kerekou led by Mr. Luc Gnacadja that African countries must start to build a tradition of enduring democracy.

"There must be fair competition, some will win and some will lose, but provided there is a level playing field, those who lose should accept defeat with understanding while those who win should be magnanimous in victory," the president declared.

The deregulation which were at the State House to formally invite president Obasanjo to the Friday inau-

By Suleiman Mohammed

guration of President Kerekou at Port Novo said they were happy that Obasanjo would attend the

ceremony.

Already, President Obasanjo has congratulated the Benin President on the re-election, and said that he would be honoured to be at President Kerekou's side

as he takes the oath of office for another term.

President Kerekou was re-elected last Tuesday amidst allegations of electoral malpractices by the opposition.

## Abuja airport radar outdated

The controversy surrounding the radar at the Nmandi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja, assumed a new dimension yesterday as the board of the Nigeria Airspace Management Agency, (NAMA), was told of how management now cannibalises functional machines to maintain others in order to keep the radar working.

Staffers of the agency who conducted the board members round during a facility tour of the airport took turns to explain technical details of the airspace monitoring equipment to the board led by chief George Obioha, said the radar con-

trol system needed modernisation if the nations airspace was to be properly patrolled.

The agency's Abuja station manger, Mr. Johu Olu, said because the manufacturers of the machines used at the control site have phased out that technology, it was now becoming increasingly difficult to find their spare parts in the open markets, hence the cannibalisation option.

The radar, which is capable of monitoring aircraft within a distance of 150 kilometres circumference is now the subject of a public hearing in the House of Rep-

resentatives, following a petition by former NAMA chairman, Chief Rochas Okorocha, who is challenging his removal over allegations of corruption.

According to NAMA officials, the radar control equipment were manufactured in 1977 and were installed at the airport in 1985. The same types of equipment were installed at Kaduna, Kano, Enugu, Port-Harcourt and Lagos airports.

Some of the problems affecting the operations of the agency according to the officials include; lack of operational vehicles, water supply at the radar control site and lack of manpower development.

## Nyame cracks down on opposition

From Abdullahi Tasiu  
Abubakar, Yola

of inciting the public against the government.

The state commissioner of police, Mr. Egbe Njom, who confirmed the story, told *Daily trust* that the two had already been charged to court and released on bail.

The commissioner alleged that they were being used by unidentified personalities in the state.

*Daily Trust* gathered that they were arrested during the fund-raising ceremony of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Jalingo where they were allegedly distributing the anti-government pamphlets.

Shortly after the incident a large pro-government rally was organised by a group called "Governor Nyame Tazarc Committee" to prop up support for the governor.

Speaking at the rally, the State Deputy Governor, Alhaji Sale Damboyi, warned that the government would deal decisively with any group attempts to disrupt peace in the state.

But in an interview with *Daily Trust*, the State Director of Press, Mr. Aaron Artimus, said that the rally was not a reaction to the distribution of the anti-government pamphlets.

He also claimed that the arrest of the opposition was not masterminded by the state government. "It is purely a security matter. The

security personnel felt that their authority was challenged, and they reacted accordingly," he said.

"Although we are in a democracy, the authorities will not allow lawlessness," the director added.

But one of the opposition groups in the state capital, the Taraba Youth Forum, has been using legal means to oppose the government.

Recently, the group filed a case in the state High Court, challenging the passing of this year's budget and approval of Governor Nyame's cabinet by the state House of Assembly when it was being led by Governor Nyame-backed speaker, Mr. Jolly Yerima.

The group became more active shortly after Governor Nyame succeeded in defeating his opponents in the state House of Assembly which led to the mass resignation of its leaders earlier this year.

*Daily Trust* learnt that the latest round of conflicts between the government and its opponents intensified as, relations between the state commissioner of finance, Alhaji Ahmed Yusuf, and the former Chief of Staff in the State, Mr. Joshua Kola, who is also a cousin to the Governor, worsened.

Mr. Kalla had allegedly resigned (or was fired) last December following the re-appointment of Alhaji Yusuf since then, the relationship between the two former friends has been worsened.

## FG seeks Britain's assistance on telecom, NEPA

By Suleiman Mohammed

As the Federal Government plans to create over twenty-eight companies out of the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA), Vice President Atiku Abubakar yesterday invited Britain to invest in both energy and the telecommunication sectors.

Already, government he said has mapped out strategies towards splitting the moribund NEPA as well as providing telecommunication facilities in the 774 council areas across the country by 2005.

Vice President Atiku who made the plea when the new British High Commissioner, Mr. Philip Thomas paid him a visit at the state house, spoke of the government's efforts at revitalising the economy, of which its privatisation programme is a major aspect.

According to him, Britain could invest, particularly on the telecoms and energy sectors when government starts the second phase of the privatisation programme, adding that these are critical sectors given their significance and the amount of money involved.



Atiku

**DAILY TRUST**  
**EDITORIAL**

**Arrest the looming food crisis**

Speaking at the first anniversary meeting of the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) in Kaduna a fortnight ago, its Chairman and Emir of Ilorin, Alhaji Ibrahim Sulu-Gambari, alerted the nation to the "alarmingly rising cost of food stuff of all variety". He appealed to the governments at all levels to address the matter urgently.

The other plank of the ACF Chairman's address had to do with this year's farming season, having identified agriculture as "our basic economic activity" in the North. He said that with just about five months in to the next harvest period, government should take urgent steps on the supply and distribution of fertilizer and other inputs to arrest the possibility of a "national food crisis".

The federal government, in apparent confirmation of the Emir's fears, announced the release of grains from its strategic grains reserve. The Minister of Agriculture, Malam Adamu Bello, told newsmen in Abuja last week that the release was to cushion the effect of astronomic rise in prices of grains in the market. He said the release would reach Nigerians through the Federal, states' and local authorities.

Malam Adamu said the prices went up as a result of the activities of hoarders who were manipulating the markets for selfish purposes. He said the release would force the perpetrators to release hoarded grains which is expected to beat down prices.

The minister's reasoning cannot be faulted, as the activities of hoarders among our merchants are very well-known. It, however, remains that hoarding is an economic crime with adequate laws and sanctions. Nigerians would want the application of these laws since the hoarders, like smugglers, dwell among Nigerians and are known to authorities. Until hoarders, like their corrupt counterparts elsewhere, know that they could be dealt with, there will be no deterrent to committing the crimes.

But hoarding alone cannot be the reason for the shortages and high prices of grains of all variety. Several farmers have expressed the view that though there was no drought during the last cropping season, the delay in the supply of fertilizers and other inputs, due to inconsistent government policies on the issue of subsidy, led to lower than average yields. Mercifully, the Federal government is led by a farmer who should know better. This was why President Obasanjo last year gave his categorical backing to bringing back subsidy on agricultural inputs, and promised their timely supply. We hope this promise will be kept to the letter this cropping season which is just around the corner.

Similarly, we hope the Federal Government's policy on agriculture will be better coordinated to prepare adequately for dry season farming, especially in areas where irrigation facilities are available. The policy of commercialising the river basin authorities appeared to have slowed the momentum of agricultural activities at such irrigation sties. The idea of providing man-made reservoirs for agricultural activities is

a sound one because experts have revealed that we can not depend on the vagaries of rain-fed agriculture if we are to provide Nigerians with food security.

Farming activities during the dry season along these river basins provide gainful employment for youths who, otherwise, would migrate to the cities to worsen unemployment and crime.

Daily Trust calls on the government to see agriculture as a fool proof way of alleviating poverty and articulate this along its poverty alleviation programme. Similarly, we call on the authorities to address the issue of inadequate storage and processing infrastructures in the rural areas. Small scale agricultural processing should be given adequate attention to reduce the amount of waste from the farm to the markets.

We believe the issue of food security also borders on national pride and security. A nation that cannot feed its population will remain subservient to its benefactors. If the number of imported and canned foods in our markets is anything to go by, then Nigeria is still way back in becoming self-reliant, food-wise. Opening our markets to all sorts of food will only encourage dumping, and push us further away from achieving food security.

**WEDNESDAY COLUMN**

**Obasanjo and the deregulation brouhaha**

By: Mohammed Haruna

Twenty-seven years ago, the *New Nigerian* (June 29, 1974) carried an editorial in which it wondered whether oil money would in the end prove a blessing or a curse for the country. The prophetic editorial entitled: "Oil. Money Honey or Poison" is worth quoting at some length. "It is commonplace," said the paper, "to say Nigeria is at the moment lucky because of oil revenues."

But the reverse side of this coin is painful to contemplate... It is the foreigners who employ their capital and skills to exploit this resource and we simply receive huge autonomous additions to our income.

"Such unworked for riches can land a country in trouble of a peculiar kind. There is the soulless opulence of the few in evil contrast to the crushing poverty of the many. There is unimaginable corruption and disastrously wrong allocation of resources. Above all, there is absence of hard work without which the country cannot pull itself together. How will an economic historian, 50 years hence, explain the relative expenditure on agriculture and on the various forms of so-called 'culture': All-Africa Games, Black Arts Festival and the rest of it? He must conclude that we had taken leave of our collective senses."

Nearly twenty-seven years on, it is pretty obvious that the *New Nigerian's* fears that oil money might prove bitter rather than sweet couldn't have been more accurate. Today, corruption is very much with us, probably even worse largely because of easy oil money, in spite of President Obasanjo's avowal to battle it. Substitute yesterday's All-Africa Games, Black Arts Festival and all that with today's 42 billion stadium in Abuja and the request for new presidential jets and all that and you will agree that disastrously wrong allocation of resources remains very much with us.

Above all, the billions of dollars of easy oil money down the years have apparently landed us in such a peculiar mess that we have become lazy not only in terms of physical work but even in our thinking. It is commonplace to say that the problem with Nigeria is not in planning but in implementation. Nothing, however, could be more incorrect; the truth is, not only have we often implemented badly, we have also often planned badly, especially since we stumbled on oil. Indeed, it can be argued that we have often implemented badly precisely because all too often we have planned badly. In other words, we have become lazy in our thinking process, not because we are inherently incapable of thinking clearly or planning properly, but simply because we have become blinded by the temptation for private gains occasioned by easy oil money. Thus, in planning, we have all too often put the cart before the horse and at times, we have even forgotten the horse altogether.

The proof is there in such colossal failures as the Ajaokuta Steel Mill, and the Aluminium Smelter Company where we first put the mills in place and only thereafter thought about their feedstock and how to transport their products. The proof is also there in the Kaduna Refinery which has shut down frequently because the designers, in the words of an industry expert, "apparently forgot that in an inland refinery, most of the bottoms must be further cracked to gasoline as there would be no facilities to export this fuel oil by sea" (James Massey, one time Chairman/Managing Director of Mobil Producing Nigeria Limited at a workshop on the management of the downstream petroleum industry in 1996). One can go on and on, but because of their impact on our economy, I think these three suffice to make the point that oil money has made us as lazy in our thinking as it has in our performance.

It is partly this laziness in thinking which has brought us to the predicament in the pricing of oil products, with serious implications for law and order, as workers threaten to shut down the country if the prices go up. This lazy thinking has also landed us in even more serious predicament about "resource control" with even more serious implications for the unity and survival of our country. Our concern this morning, however, is the predicament in the pricing of oil.

In the controversy over the so-called proper pricing of oil, we have so much abused the term "deregulation" that it has completely lost its meaning. By deregulation, both sides in the controversy have meant the liberalization of the pricing of oil. But any clear thinking will show that deregulation and liberalization do not mean the same thing. Governments may or may not be liberal in their handling of the affairs of state, but their very essence is to regulate. And to regulate, according to my *ENCARTA WORLD ENGLISH DICTIONARY*, is "to control something and bring it to the desired level." It also means "to organize and control an activity or process by making it subject to rules and laws."

Obviously, for government to deregulate the prices of oil products, it means it should completely hands off the management of our oil resources. Surely, that would be a most irresponsible thing for any government to do. Indeed, there is absolutely no where in the world where governments do not play a major, or even critical, role in the management of their country's resources, vital or otherwise.

Instead of talking glibly about deregulation, therefore, we should be debating whether government has over-regulated or under-regulated the pricing of oil products. And this is not just mere semantics. Everywhere, governments and market forces, both have roles to play in a nation's economy, but governments are always the ultimate arbiters. That was why, for example, when the price of crude oil was shooting through the roof not so long ago, the United States, which regards cheap oil as vital to its national interests, heavily leant on OPEC and other oil producers to flood the market in order to bring down the price. It is instructive that the U.S., with all its belief in the god of capitalism, did not leave matters entirely to capitalism's almighty market forces.

Governments, therefore, differ only in the degree of leeway they allow the so-called market forces. Hence, the right question to ask about the controversy over the pricing of our oil products is whether or not government has restricted market forces too much. Clearly, President Obasanjo and the oil industry chiefs on one side believe government has over-regulated the industry. On the other side, labour and leading opposition figures think government has already given in too much to the oil industry, what with the quantum leap in, say, the price of petrol from N3.50 litre to N22 per litre in under 10 years.

Based on the assumption that the oil industry is working efficiently-an assumption which is clearly false as we shall see presently -there is no doubt that government has given in too much to the oil industry. But false as this assumption is, both government and industry have themselves encouraged belief in it. In a report to the government of General Abdulsalami Abubakar in December 1998 when it decided to increase the price of petroleum from N 11.00 per litre it had inherited from General Sani Abacha to N22 per litre, Mr. Aret Adams, General Abubakar's Adviser on Petroleum matters said, "The marketers welcomed this development and expressed great appreciation to government for finally listening to their pleas after seven years. They pledged their commitment and cooperation to import as much as they could to ease the shortage of petroleum products in the country." Both the marketers and government were obviously satisfied that the N22 per litre price of petrol had taken care of all the cost factors and the profit margin. The cost factors included those of crude, refining, distribution, marketing and taxes. As I remember it at that time as General Abubakar's Chief Press Secretary, this price was supposed to have also taken care of the so-called government subsidy of petrol.

Today, a little over two years the marketers and government have been singing a different tune. Today and so soon after the quantum leap in price, government and the industry are arguing that N22 per litre for petrol does not reflect today's costs. Perhaps, it does not. But then who, other than government and industry, is, to blame? They both knew what the major problems responsible for the scarcity and the presumed under pricing of petroleum products were, but as usual, they fought shy of confronting those problems head on.

Government, for example, knew that one problem was the public sector monopoly of product supply. It also knew about the corruption and inefficiencies that have inhibited the proper functioning of our four refineries. It knew that the PPMC's import reception facilities could only handle about 30% of our consumption at best. The implication of this for availability of petroleum products at a time when our refineries have proved incapable of meeting local demand was pretty obvious.

Yet in spite of government's awareness of all these and other problems there has been little or no indication that it is prepared to confront them. Instead it has relied up till now on the seemingly easy way out i.e. of massive importation. Matters have not been helped by President Obasanjo's rhetorics when he was out of government and even when he was waiting to take over from General Abubakar. Apparently because he once talked of "SAP with a human face" during General Ibrahim Babangida's regime and because he initially rejected General Abubakar's "deregulation", he seemingly found it hard for a while to eat humble pie and admit that the solution to the scarcity of petroleum products is necessarily a painful one.

But even now that he has come round to accepting that the scarcity of petroleum products, as well as the problem of the larger economy, cannot be fixed without pains, there is little sign that his government is prepared to ensure that both the privileged and the under privileged share the pains equitably. When, for example, people hear rumours, whether true or false, and see signs of privileged people, some of them in government, becoming fabulously rich through import of petroleum products or through over-invoiced contracts to refurbish our refineries, it is hard for them not to be cynical about calls for them to accept new increases in the prices of petroleum products.

Similarly, when the president insists on new presidential jets at a time when hardly anything seems to work for the poor, it sends the wrong signals that for those in power, it really has to be business as usual. Above all, when the pre-occupation of Obasanjo's kitchen cabinet is his self-succession at a time when the economy remains in a mess, and when he is barely half-way through his four-year tenure, it is difficult for people to accept to make the sacrifices necessary for the country's progress.

Even as Obasanjo battles the oil crisis, he must be seen to be addressing these issues of equity with all the seriousness they deserve. Obasanjo may have made mistakes, but he remains the best hope of pulling the country forward if only because of his unalloyed faith in the existence of Nigeria and the role he had played as a conscience of the nation in between his first and second tenures.

Mohammed Haruna is a former Managing Director of New Nigeria Newspapers and member, Daily Trust Editorial Board

**LETTER OF THE DAY**

**On Obasanjo's second term bid**

Recently, the Minister of Works and Housing, Chief Anenih, was quoted in one of the national dailies of February 12, 2001, as having insisted that there was no vacancy in the presidency for the 2003 elections. Though this assertion is an expression of his fundamental rights, it clearly shows that the likes of Chief Anenih are truly cut out to work in the President's campaign machinery rather than being saddled with the responsibility of administering the affairs of any ministry.

The question of whether there exists a vacancy or not in Asif Rock is certainly not an exclusive preserve of the likes of Chief Anenih. The point to make here is how well has Tony

Anenih fared in all his assignment in government to warrant his commanding such powers to dictate to Nigerians what will be the outcome of 2003 elections?

The fact is that scheming to retain President Obasanjo in office has taken the lead in our priority list even though there are two years outstanding for him to stay in office. Time it was when Gen. Abacha's aides flew such kites and it was roundly condemned. What then is the difference between Obasanjo's 2003 campaign and Abacha's self-succession bid of 1998? Only time will tell.

Philip Awolaba, Dean's of Post-Graduate Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Ugbowo Campus, Benin City.

## Opinion

## Concord newspaper and Abiola's death: The travails

By Olumide Lawal

Late Moshood Kasimawo Olawale Abiola, the acclaimed winner of the annulled June 12, 1993, presidential election, while he was alive, touched the lives of so many people, Nigerians and non-Nigerians alike. He was a symbol of unity and comfort to many, some of whom he did not know. His home at Moshood Abiola Crescent was a 'Mecca' to unending visitors-invited and uninvited. He welcomed them with open hands, no matter the odd hours of the day. Tribe, religion, creed and nationality meant nothing to him. Service to mankind was his pre-occupation. In his words: "the hand of the giver is atop that of the receiver". He gave and gave, until fate disallowed him to give any more.

In the business world, late M.K.O Abiola was a colossus. He traversed the business world with boundless energies, charisma. Name it, he was there. Telecommunication, agriculture, publishing, commerce, aviation and more. He excelled in all and left indelible marks behind. He remained a reference point in many of these fields.

I am sure, were late Basorun Abiola to be alive, his Radio Communication of Nigeria (RCN) or ITT would have won, one of the GSM licences recently bid for. But today, RCN and ITT are almost extinct for reasons of lack of continuity and improper management. How has death cheated Abiola, the great M.K.O. of the World. An amiable son of Africa?

But most hard hit in the 'collapsing' business empire of late M.K.O Abiola, is the once flourishing and enviable Concord newspapers. Concord titles were among the most articulate and intellectu-

ally-oriented newspapers that paraded the newsstands. The Community Concord, Isokan, African Concord, Sunday Concord and Weekend Concord.

The above newspapers paraded the best brains in the journalism world: Duro Onabule, late Dele Giwa; Bayo Onanuga; Femi Ojude; Yakubu Mohammed; Ray Ekpu; Sina Adedipe; Stanley Ugochukwu; Liad Tella; Ajuluchukwu; Dele Alake; Tom Borha; Mike Awoyinka; Dele Momodu; Ralph Akinfeleye; Femi Adesina (The incumbent Editor of National Concord) and many more.

But today, the story is different. Concord Publishing Company and its titles are dying a gradual death in a most unfortunate and undeserving circumstance. My periodical visits to the publishing house gave me an insight into the abject state of being at the Concord House. My consternation was given credence by the recent publication of TEMPO of February 1, 2001, which did an incisive expose on the publishing house entitled "Concord Jarring tune".

I am always moved to tears each time I enter the Concord premises and see the neglect that it has become, including the long faces 'always worn by the few workers left: -those who are still very loyal to the cause for which the publishing house was established by late M.K.O. Abiola. I praise their courage, sagacity and tenacity of purpose.

But should this be the lot of Concord Press, despite the towering status of late M. K. O. Abiola and his unparalleled benevolence and philanthropic gestures to so many and the huge resources, the

man of the people, left behind? By BBC's recent survey, the late business mogul was declared, despite his four years in detention, the 26th richest man in the world with US \$339 million income per month (see the Punch of December 19, 2000). He was the 3rd richest in Nigeria after Chief Harry Akande and Deinde Fernandez.

If this is so, what then is the problem confronting Concord Press and its titles? Is it a case of *I don't-care-attitude* by those who should care? Or one of "to thy tent O Israel, every body to himself, God for us all"? by members of Abiola's family and his supposed beneficiaries? Even advertisement patronage has ceased to come the way of the titles, by Abiola's erstwhile friends and business associates. Lagos and Ogun governments do so occasionally.

It is time those who should take the bull by the horn do so promptly and save Concord newspapers from extinction. The spirit of late M. K. O. Abiola will never forgive those who are supposed to help the situation, but refused to do so. For whatsoever reasons, Concord should be an enduring legacy. It must not die. It will not, *Insha Allah*. Over to you Kola.

A humble suggestion is that, the executors of the WILL of late M.K.O Abiola should treat the issue of Concord Publishing House very dispassionately with a view to revamping it. Knowledge is wealth. That was what late Abiola stood for in his life time. He did not establish concord titles primarily for profit but to impart knowledge to its readers.

Efforts should be geared at making the newspaper house

go public so as to attract investors, who will inject funds as shareholders for its revival, without losing its ownership base. A cue should be taken from the management of PUNCH and TRIBUNE titles after the demise of their founders.

PUNCH and TRIBUNE are today, two of the newspapers that are effectively and professionally run. I am sure their founders are happy in their graves. Let us make late Abiola do the same. He laboured so hard for his investments. They should not die with him. Sentiments, pettiness and acrimony should be played down by members of his immediate family.

Abiola's friends, business associates and his 'boys' that once passed through the four walls of Concord HOUSE as well as his other beneficiaries should rise up to the occasion.

Abiola never personalised his wealth. He shared it round as much as he could. Is it not proper for us all to rally round and make his legacies live on?

All legal bottlenecks should be removed from the way in making Concord titles the pride of journalism once again. Nothing is too small or too big in making late Abiola a happy man in his grave.

Abiola's case most sadly, is a lesson for the wealthy Nigerians, particularly, the polygamous ones, to put their families and businesses in good order while they live. Had late Abiola lived for just another one year outside incarceration, the situation of his family and businesses would not have been the way it is presently.

Olumide Lawal, wrote in from Aguda-Surulere, Lagos state.

## Democracy, globalisation and debt burden

By Haruna Penni

The quest for both world trade and governance that are open, popular and accountable cannot be achieved without a strong economic base, enhanced investment and some form of understanding and co-operation over the debt issue by members of the international community. This concern is expected to go beyond the level of ceremonial hand-over of reign of power by a vilified junta to elected civilians.

It is exactly in line with this reasoning that President Olusegun Obasanjo had the courage to ask advanced countries to forgive, cancel or erase the debts developing countries owe them as a higher social responsibility. The big economies owe the emerging democracies a helping hand to enable them get out of the woods and find an escape from the devastating problems of civil wars, military rule and general instability.

The President appealed to the developed countries, twice, that is, during the Japanese Prime Minister's visit to the country and at the inaugural session of the National Assembly in 1999. He said on both occasions that "the euphoria of democracy could quickly evaporate if it is not followed by massive in-flow of foreign investment and a more realistic reappraisal of the crushing debt burden". The President rightly believed that you cannot ask a country in a harsh economic state to pay up a debt and expect the country to feel relieved.

Such a situation would be incompatible with the new world order of, free trade and socio-cultural co-operation among nations, such nations would be distracted by a residual debt burden whose circumstances and utilization seems amorphous. There is wide spread suspicion and doubt about the genuineness of motives for the debt and the level of the debt itself. Democracy, devoid of supporting resource bases, is vulnerable and susceptible to doubt and, at the extreme, rejection.

It is, however, heart-warming to learn that some advanced countries have started taking President Obasanjo's call very seriously. One of the evidence of this seriousness was demonstrated by Spain. It is on record that she cancelled, unconditionally, a debt of US 100 million owed her by Nigeria. Another backing for Obasanjo's call for debt forgiveness is the decision by China to cancel, unconditionally, debts worth US\$1.2 billion owed her by some African countries, including Nigeria.

The fact that Nigeria, as the President disclosed recently, has paid more than twice the actual amount of money borrowed, but is still owing the so-called creditors some US\$29 billion, showed that the debt-trap is, indeed, a trap, a modern slavery which is devoid of morality.

If developed democracies refuse to render a helping hand to this democratic aspiration that helps keep popular hopes alive, the people will assume that Western democracy is merely a sophisticated slogan to trick the poor countries into exposing themselves to all kinds of agitations capable of destabilizing them.

There is no doubt, democracy is a very expensive business, especially for a country with a huge population that lacks basic facilities to maintain the democratic structures, while its institutions initiate and enthrone a political transition programme which costs billions of scarce naira.

If democracy is to be promoted, a more pragmatic approach should be adopted in respect of the cries for debt forgiveness, rescheduling or even outright cancellation as the debt-burden does not help to promote democracy. A perpetually enslaved population cannot be expected to imbibe all essential basic needs that help the culture of democracy. When a people are only trying to cope with basic needs such as food, shelter and clothing, it is impossible for them to continuously support a system that limits itself only to hope sustenance. Failing to strengthen democracy on the part of the international community, will only create the vacuum for the pseudo-democrats to spin their usual home-grown and graded models of democracy, which could lead to anarchy and despotism under the guise of civil rule.

In order for developing democracy like Nigeria to avoid being turned into a banana republic, it would continue to call for debt forgiveness and trade globalisation with a human face, as well as an unconditional support for its fledgling democratic experiment.

It can be seen to operate from two dissimilar points of view, but the home industry will grow only with the support and co-operation of the proponents and industrial pioneers of advanced countries. Same with the country's nascent democracy.

Haruna Penni is a Senior Press Officer in the Presidency.

## Boosting Nigeria's Foreign Service

By Charles Chikezie

On Thursday, 8 February, 2001, a little event which lasted less than 30 minutes took place in the Conference Hall of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The occasion was the institution of an endowment for an annual prize to the best-graduating student in the nine-month programme of the Foreign Service Academy.

As Nigeria went about its routine business that day, the preponderance of staff in the ministry and even the active press that cover activities of the ministry were almost unaware of that landmark event. Yet the benefit of that innocuous deed will have a tremendous, futuristic impact on the conduct of Nigeria's foreign relations.

It will equally equip Nigeria's foreign service officers with the requisite learning and psychological positioning that will make them stand head above shoulders in the diplomatic

terrain where only the brilliant, the bold and the wise triumph.

Ambassador Femi George, whose idea the endowment was, and by who it is named, is a serving foreign service officer. He is not endowed with a towering frame, but is highly gifted with towering ideas, courage and foresight.

So what was Ambassador Femi George's propulsion? What was his motivation for instituting the award and putting down handsome money in these austere times, and in a generation that seems contented with the status quo? As he succinctly put it himself, it was his belief in the Nigerian foreign service, its human resources and in Nigeria's greatness.

Elaborating, Ambassador George stated that the Nigerian Foreign Service had, over the years, set a standard for itself as a centre for excellency. This was rightly so

as it had, indeed, moulded itself on the best diplomatic traditions of the modern era.

The above, Amb. George proudly declared, made the Nigerian foreign service the envy of many, both within and beyond the shores of Nigeria. The appointment of several Nigerian diplomats to the membership of many international bodies, bears affirmative testimony to the judgement of Ambassador George.

He lamented that some of them (the top brass) have watched helplessly and unhappily, how the ideals which they met in the ministry about 30 years ago, have become diluted.

He asserted that it was imperative for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to continue to maintain the tradi-

tion of excellence which was its hallmark of vibrant and impactful diplomacy.

The annual prize for the best-graduating student in the nine-month Foreign Ser-

vice Academy programme will carry a cash award of N10,000. The money, Ambassador George said, was an incentive for, and recognition of, excellence.

Receiving the authorisation for the execution of the endowment, the Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sule Lamido, who also chaired the occasion, declared that by that initiative, "Ambassador George has ignited the fire of a revolution and an impetus which will launch the ministry to greater heights."

The Minister of state, Chief Dubem Onyia, extolled Ambassador George for breaking away from the old practice whereby officers waited until retirement before doing something noble, stressing that the civil service did not preclude officers from contributing

meaningfully to capacity building.

Charles Chikezie is the Chief Press Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

CARTOON



YOUR LETTERS

The right way to fight corruption

It is quite absurd and akin to irony of fate that Nigerians should be suffering when they ought to be reaping the fruits of their much-sought-after civil rule. Supporters of the present government may argue that the two years the Obasanjo-administration has spent in piloting the affairs of the nation are not enough to make any meaningful impact on the lives of the people. Granted that the position sold by the Obasanjo government at inception that Nigeria was a nation on the verge of precipice is true. However, many policy-watchers will prefer to believe that given the euphoria which greeted Nigeria's return to democracy, a year's budget of any nation, which generates as much revenue as Nigeria, is enough for the elected to redirect the fading hopes of the electorate. Sadly, this is far from reality.

Of course, times are different; nonetheless, the idea of good governance lies in the ability of those charged with the responsibility of leadership to proffer solutions to pressing issues affecting the governed. It does not augur well for any nation to have leaders that busy themselves with chasing after their perceived enemies, invariably mortgaging its future by living in the past. Sadly, this appears to be the situation Nigeria has found itself in the past two years. The Obasanjo-administration's fight against corruption is, indeed, a welcome development but it is disturbing to imagine that someone, who has a log in his eyes, would worry about removing the speck in the eyes of another. The growing cases of corruption in President Obasanjo regime brings to fore the question

of how sincere the anti-corruption crusaders and the whole exercise are. Indeed, President Obasanjo may be corruption-free, but that he continues to condone the corrupt practices of his close associates is the very reason why he should not be exonerated as the buck must stop on his desk. Is it all right by Nigerians for the Obasanjo-regime to keep probing one Abacha associate or the other when those entrusted with such responsibilities have not exhibited a reasonable level of transparency that would exonerate them from the avalanche of scandals that have been reported by the media in the recovery of the so-called Abacha loot? **Gideon .P. Ochoma, 17, Njaba Street, Abakpa Nike-Enugu, Enugu state.**

Obasanjo, time to change gear

The months of January and February, 2001, presented Nigerians with some remarkable events. These events, though mostly political, were mainly reported in the newspapers. The one, which took the cream of the icing amongst other events, was that of a body known as Senior Staff Association of Statutory Corporation and Government Owned Companies (SSAS-CGOC). This body was reported to have assessed the twenty months-old democratic government of Nigeria headed by President Olusegun Obasanjo and declared that "Nigerians are going through the worst economic mismanagement in their history". In addition, the group concluded that democracy has been demonised by the ruling class. This low-

score verdict on President Obasanjo and his administration by this body, albeit a personal opinion of the association, cannot be wished away as idle talk as members of SSACGOC are well-known players in the Nigerian economy. The indictment of Obasanjo's government by SSACGOC is very remarkable indeed as most members of that body are senior staff of government-owned companies. Given our sycophantic disposition, one would have expected a less harsh assessment of Obasanjo's administration, but quite frankly most Nigerians are becoming impatient with our nascent democracy. The general opinion on the street is that this government of President Obasanjo, which started as a transitional arrangement aimed at enthroning the real process of democratic governance, ought to have started yielding democratic dividends after two years of its

existence. Unfortunately, the situation on ground is far from impacting positively on the masses. Granted that Obasanjo may be committing mistakes as he goes along learning the ropes of democracy, but it is obvious that the mistakes are becoming too many. In summary, Obasanjo has performed very poorly in most areas of Nigeria's developmental governance. His over indulgence in the Abacha probe and too many foreign visits are two of his major programmes that have obviously left him with little or no time to get other things done. The point to be made here is that for Obasanjo's scorecard to be assessed positively, the President will have to show greater attention and seriousness to the most neglected welfare programmes that have the capacity of impact on the masses. **Salawu Lawal, 74, Ibrahim Taiwo Road, Ilorin, Kwara state.**

Government's ban on generators

In 1999, when the Obasanjo-administration was inaugurated, amongst the many promises he made towards actualising the dream of a better Nigeria was that, sooner than later, power outage will be a thing of the past. In fact, this was amplified by the then Power and Steel Minister, Chief Bola Ige, who set a definite date for the actualisation of this promise. The pledge for uninterrupted power supply was followed by the dissolution of the National Electoral Power Authority Board hitherto considered inefficient. Gross retrenchment was also carried out and at the end of the exercise, many Nigerians

were thrown into the spilling labour market. Yet, no positive change has been witnessed in the power sector. The direction all these failed measures point to, is that arguably, the government is lost on the tactics to use in making good its promises which have turned out to be a seeming tall order. Nigerians in their characteristic manner, have tolerated Obasanjo's shortcomings for almost two years. Many people have adopted a "Siddon look" attitude, but what appears to be a big shock is the latest ban on generators. Government's excuse that it took the measure to curb the unpatriotic acts of importers of genera-

tors is very appalling. This is quite ridiculous. Firstly, how can government place a ban on an item that is almost a necessity given its failure in aborting power outage? Secondly, the reason adduced for the ban is very unrealistic. How can government claim that importers of generators are sabotaging government's efforts at providing steady power supply? It only shows that government does not even understand the cause of power outage, least of all, a solution. When the reason for this ban is weighed against the adverse economic implications, the resultant effect is doom for every sector of the

nation's economy. It is difficult to understand why government is turning the heat on alternative power suppliers when power outage has become commonplace in Nigeria. Quite frankly, what the administration of President Obasanjo has done is to chase shadows. Nigerians are yet to come over the devastating effects of the clamp down on imported cars yet government is coming up with another policy that will further squeeze the day light out of the ordinary Nigerian. At times, I wonder if Obasanjo realises the implication of leaving Nigeria worse off than the Abacha regime he vilifies. **Uchechukwu Njokama, IITA, Ibadan, Oyo state.** spite this modest achievements for whatever reason, sponsored or encouraged the current slogan *Tazarce*. He was quoted as saying, "when the time comes, my God and my people will surely decide." Continue with the good job you are doing. Sir, God is surely with you and people don't run away from a man of God. **Ibrahim Mohammed, No. 20, Waff Road, Kaduna.**

A call to Governor Aliero of Kebbi State

I wish to sincerely thank the courage of your newspaper in trying to sanitize the entire media industry and restore its lost glory through objective and balanced reporting. May Allah guide you through, Amin! Meanwhile, permit me to thank His Excellency, Governor Adamu Alleru, of Kebbi state for all his developmental projects in Kebbi state which we have been following with keen interest from here (Edo state). However, I would like to make a passionate appeal to the governor to please reactivate the official residence of the village head of Jiga in Alleru local government council which has since become inhabitable due to its dilapidated state.

Similarly, I would like to also call on the governor to build a secondary school at Jiga to enable our children have where to further their education without necessarily going to far away places—a situation which I believe discourages parents from sending their wards to school. In the same vein, I would like to call on the governor to continue to pay more attention to projects that have direct bearing on the lives of the people like setting up of industries, construction and rehabilitation of roads, hospitals, schools and the encouragement of farming and other good-results-yielding trades. **Alhaji Sahabi A. Jiga, APP Secretary (AREWA Peoples' Wing), Edo State Chapter.**

Well-done, chairman Dutsin-Ma L.G.

Allow me space in your widely read medium to appeal to Nigerian leaders, particularly the grassroots chairmen, to emulate the sterling qualities of the chairman, Dutsin-Ma local government council of Katsina State, Alhaji Mustapha Kuki. This commendation is borne out of the fact that when you talk of grassroots

development in an area that has not witnessed positive changes in recent times, Dutsin-Ma local government is the place. This is not an attempt to publish a mini-supplement on the achievements of this chairman, but to put the records straight. As an indigene of the area, I'm fascinated with this chairman's leadership qualities. Besides

improving the lots of his people in the areas of education, health, agriculture, community development and rural infrastructures, the chairman has done his best in other areas that have touched the lives of the people. In addition, in spite of his tight schedules, his office is always full to the brim with people. All said and done, Alhaji Mustapha Kuki has not de-



For further information and to submit applications please contact:

**Abuja Jobs**

The British Council,  
C/o the British High Commission,  
Dangote House,  
Aguiyi Ironsi Street,  
Maitama District,  
Abuja.

Telephone 09 413 4559 - 64

Email with attachment in MS Word to

Abuja Jobs@ng.britishcouncil.org

The British Council is committed to a policy of equal opportunity.

The United Kingdom's International organisation for educational and cultural relations.

## Exciting job opportunities in The British Council's Flagship Abuja Centre

The purpose of The British Council is to enhance the reputation of the United Kingdom in the world as a valued partner. The British Council is opening its new centre in Abuja in mid-2001. The centre will include a state-of-the-art library, public access information centre, multi-purpose function room and a cafe on the roof. The centre will become the new headquarters of The British Council in Nigeria and West Africa.

The posts we are recruiting for are detailed below.

All candidates will need to demonstrate:

- Excellent English Language skills
- Excellent teambuilding and team leadership skills
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills

- Demonstrable IT skills
- A passion for customer service
- Willingness to work unsocial hours (our library will open to 20.00 hours)
- First degree desirable.
- Availability from latest 15 June but earlier if possible.

### Front of House Services Manager

The post-holder will lead our information services work and will be the front-line customer service manager. The post-holder will be responsible for ensuring that our information services deliver the planned impact on our target audiences. Candidates will demonstrate a flair for customer service.

**Package N1m + pa**

#### Duties

- Overall lead on development and marketing of information services
- Lead on front line reception services
- Lead on management and marketing of multipurpose function hall

#### Experience

- Information services background is essential
- Delivery of customer focused services
- Knowledge of and experience of the UK
- Qualification in library or information management
- Marketing

### Library Services Manager

The post-holder will lead the management of the library and information centre. The challenge will be to lead Nigeria's most modern library with a combination of electronic and book services aimed at our target young professional audience.

**Package N770K + pa**

#### Duties

- Grow a targeted membership
- Lead library services including the cybercentre
- Lead on proactive information services
- Lead an internet training project
- Initiate networking events
- Lead a small team

#### Experience

- Qualification in library or information management
- Management of library or information services
- Knowledge or experience of the UK
- Familiarity with British Book scene

### Education Counsellor

The post-holder will lead the promotion of British education including counselling on study in the UK, distance learning services and British examinations.

**Package N770K + pa.**

#### Duties

- Counsel students considering study in the UK
- Market and develop distance learning services
- Promote and manage British examination services
- Manage British education exhibitions and visits

#### Experience

- Information or library management qualification
- Experience or knowledge of the UK education and training sector
- Or of British examinations
- Or of British distance learning products
- Information provision management experience

### Customer Service Officers (six posts)

**Package N530K + pa**

There will be six CSO posts working as the frontline in our information and reception services. These posts will be unusual and challenging. The six post-holders will rotate duties between all the main information and reception services so the experience and skills gained will be considerable. Common duties will be:

- Front line reception
- Front line examinations services
- Front line education information service
- Front line library service
- Electronic information services and IT administration support
- Front line multipurpose function hall.

Each CSO will have a lead area of responsibility relating to one of the above duties. Read the next part carefully.

**We welcome applications from a range of backgrounds. We are looking for individuals with flair and a passion for customer service.** We are looking for people who want to get promoted. We don't expect you to stay forever. Gain experience and skills with us and move on! Some of the posts will require specialist experience, background and skill. You should apply for a Customer Service Officer indicating which post you prefer. Depending on your background we will consider you for one or more posts.

To be short-listed you must demonstrate all of the competencies at the top of this advert. Four of the posts will require specialist qualification:

- A knowledge of the British education system will be an advantage for two posts;
  - Library or information management qualification for three of the posts;
  - IT troubleshooting skills and Microsoft Certified Professional qualification for the electronic information service post only.
- Do not apply for this post if you only have applications and package skills.

### Facilities Manager

The post-holder will manage the day to day running of the British Council's estate in Abuja including the main office and a number of residences. Candidates must be able to demonstrate that they will take a wider interest in the aims of the British Council and will fit into our dynamic team.

**Package N770K + pa**

#### Duties

- Facilities meet internal and external customer needs
- Facilities meet corporate brand standards
- Strong budgetary control and supervision of accounts
- Facilities well maintained, contracts in place;
- Continuity of power and water assured,
- Cafeteria monitored.

#### Experience

- Contract negotiation
- Day to day running of an office
- Proven accounts or finance work
- Knowledge of Hausa or other appropriate local language

### Applications

- Please send a CV which is specifically written to demonstrate skills, competencies and experience against the requirements of the post and a letter summarizing key relevant skill and experience. If you do not do this you are unlikely to be shortlisted.
- Please include the names and contact details of two professional referees and current remuneration details.
- Interviews are likely to be conducted in early May. If you have not heard from us by 1 May 2001 then assume you have not been short-listed.

Registered in England as a charity.

• Closing date for application: 17 April 2001.

TRUST INTERNATIONAL

FOREIGN & DIPLOMATIC

# “Museveni is a thunderbolt” (2)

*In the concluding part of this interview, Anne Mugisha, the national publicity secretary of Besigye-for-president task force in Uganda, foresees chaos in Uganda and calls on the international community to intervene. She spoke to our Foreign Desk Editor, Kevin Ebele Adinnu.*

**T**he previous presidential election also won by Museveni was not as controversial as this one. Where lies the difference?

In 1996 when President Museveni won, actually in my view, I think at that time, Museveni should have changed the movement into a political party and run against other political parties. It happened that the political parties came together - Obote's UPC (United People's Congress), Ssemogerere's DP (Democratic Party) and then the CP (Conservative Party). They came together and created something which they called the Front, united together to run against Museveni. The problem was the timing. At that time, Obote was still very very fresh in our minds. This group was seen as wanting to bring back Obote; people who have refused to espouse the Movement System of government. The Movement was very very popular. And most important of all, there was no challenger from within the movement. Actually, that is what marks the difference.

So, he had an easy go. We didn't even bother to go out and campaign. We just knew the Movement was going to win.

But this time, he got a challenge from within and it demonstrated clearly how Museveni had filled all the political space and wanted no competition. And Besigye stood for all the good things that were the Movement he had served for 19 year starting from the bush. He was the doctor of the President and the High Command. He had a clean record. He is not tainted by corruption. He looked like the right alternative.

Before I joined Dr. Besigye, I had written an article in the papers in Uganda saying: Give me one reason why I should vote for the Movement with all this nepotism and corruption and cliques. These are the things the Movement taught us to hate but we are seeing them again. Please tell me why I should vote for the Movement.

So for people like me and there are many in my category, Dr. Besigye was the solution. We didn't want to identify ourselves with these old parties. So, here was a candidate, standing on individual merit under the Movement principle and we said let's go ahead with it.

The Movement should never have strayed from being transitional. Political parties have been proved for centuries. I believe Uganda should follow suit and go for multi-party elections.

Besigye has filed a suit at the Supreme Court challenging the results. There were other candidates that contested Museveni and they are not raising any eyebrow. Why

Besigye?

Well, I think it is their choice. But if you look at the figure that gave Museveni 69 point something percent, the nearest best challenger is Dr Besigye. All the other four candidates shared about two percent. I think he is in the best position to challenge and he has the kind of support. His supporters felt strongly that there had been widespread rigging because 23 out of the 56 districts turned down the results; our task forces refused signing the results.... The malpractices were so rampant--underaged children voting, foreign-

ers voting...people lost their lives, people were beaten up. How will you explain this, even when you want to run the next time and the people know you cannot protect their votes, you cannot even challenge it? That is one thing. And there is the right to appeal, which people are free to use or not to use and my candidate has decided to use it because he feels he has a very strong case.

That is why in Uganda today, it is not only the election result that is on trial but even the independence of the judiciary. The situation is so delicate. The President has just appointed a new chief justice.

I don't know if he will have the capacity to turn down the results.

The most important thing right now, may be that's another reason why we are here, (is that) we must expose what is happening in Uganda. We mustn't wait until the situation is so bad for this to happen.

Uganda right now is a host to about five rebel groups of different countries. There is the SPLA (Sudanese Peoples' Liberation Army) of John Garang. The ones from Congo are three different types - the group of Hemma tribesmen, there is John Pierre Bemba, there is Wamba dia Wamba. You also have to think of our own insurgents living in Uganda - the Lords Resistance Army, the ADF. All these things are happening in Uganda. People are dying due as long as our economy is doing well, the West had decided to treat Museveni as the blue-eyed boy. You can see trouble is brewing.

We need to expose this before we end up like the Interahamwe. Yes, the other group that is there is the Interahamwe of Rwanda. You know that now there is a problem with President Kagame because they said that Uganda is training the Interahamwe.

Even Museveni alleged that some of the malpractices perpetrated during the election were done by Besigye's camp; that he would have gotten more than 69.3 percent of the votes. We don't know whom to believe again.

I think that is the important thing about the court case because they should also try to prove...but you see, if you are an incumbent, you have certain powers that the opposition does not have and you control

not easily relinquish the power he risked his life in the bush to acquire...Don't you think it is pointless challenging him? Somebody like Okwir Rabwoni, in your task force, was arrested and tortured and he abandoned the campaign and went into exile. Why should you continue fighting Museveni?

We cannot give up. Museveni himself should know that. In 1990, an election was rigged in which he was the worst candidate. Museveni had almost no vote but he chose to go and remove the government forcefully because they had stolen an election.

We must know that there is always the danger of people reaching the point where



Mugisha.

Pix Felix Onigbinde.

many things. I will tell you some scandals that happened that will show you why.

The company which printed the ballot papers which we challenged from the beginning is a company which was fronted by the people in Museveni's task force. Apparently, the the same company is the one which printed Museveni's campaign posters.

Number two, during the campaigns, security operatives broke into the computer rooms, the tally centre, where the results coming in were supposed to be tallied, where the register was being done. They were caught by electoral officials and they said they were from state house. They left. They were not prosecuted. Nothing happened to them. Even the electoral commission did not have the guts to sue them...

Three, Museveni deployed the army, created almost martial law and a situation of emergency so that people could be intimidated. The country was zoned into certain military zones and the police was put under the army even in areas like Kampala where there was absolutely no risk of violence whatsoever. We went to the electoral commissioner and complained...and he ignored them.

Four, at some point when the results were coming in on the 13<sup>th</sup> of March, we got information that, because of the over-rigging, the number of votes which had already come in (was) far far much higher than the number of people who registered.

Every candidate was allowed to have two (agents) at the tally centre of the electoral commission. Our people were sent out for five hours. When we entered, who was controlling the computers? Honourable Bako Bulingi, a member of parliament who was in Museveni's task force.

From the reports coming to us, a lot of malpractices were perpetrated. At one point in his campaigns, Museveni said he would

they think that this man can only be removed forcefully but we are not yet there because we have chosen to use the established institutions... We are petitioning the Supreme Court under the law of Uganda...and we think that by so doing we are managing to expose him...

It is a shame that Museveni is suffering from that African disease that we call incumbency. We are not going to give up. That is why we are here talking to people like you. International pressure must be brought on Museveni to give a timetable to the people of Uganda and the international community on the benchmark of this transition because at the end of these next five years he would have been in power for 20 years.

**Some of your supporters have taken to violence in protest to the extent that Besigye was stopped from travelling. He was roped in in one bombing incident. Must your supporters use violence to protest?**

Why do you think they are Besigye's supporters? Violence, those bombs you heard about... have been going on in Uganda for five years. I think certainly that these people, like the Lords Resistance Army, were agitated by the fact that Museveni came back to power again and therefore they had to show their displeasure the only way they know how.

Candidate Besigye, throughout, dissociated himself from these violent elements and he chose to take the legal part, to petition the Supreme Court. He had also said he was going to use the political part meaning that if we cannot use the structures that are there, we have to build our own structures so that come 2006... we would have got our own grassroot structures working on this reform package which he (Besigye) presented in his manifesto....

**Concluded.**

***“The most important thing right now, may be that's another reason why we are here, (is that) we must expose what is happening in Uganda. We mustn't wait until the situation is so bad for this to happen.”***

# TRUST INTERNATIONAL

AFRICA &amp; THE MIDDLE EAST

## US silent on Mid-East peace

President George W. Bush met the Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak, in Washington but gave no sign of taking a more active role in the peace process.

He told Mr Mubarak that Washington could not force a peace, although it would use its prestige and influence to facilitate it.

Mr Mubarak was seeking to pressure the new administration to play a more active role, following signals from the Bush administration that it will pull back from President's Clinton personal mediation efforts.

Mr Mubarak, who is the first Arab leader to visit the White House since President Bush took office, said he had great hopes that Mr Bush would exert the maximum effort to help end the violence.

Both leaders stressed that they would not impose any solutions on the Palestinians or Israelis, but would help bring them together to negotiate a settlement.

"The role for strong coun-

tries like ourselves and Egypt is to encourage, first, the violence to end. And secondly, for discussions to begin again," Mr Bush said.

"And I am very optimistic and hopeful that we will be able to achieve that," he added.

Mr Bush also said Secretary of State Colin Powell had spoken to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon early on Monday.

State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said Mr Sharon and Mr Powell discussed the overall situation in the region and the steps needed for a return to calm and for the parties to get back on track with direct discussions.

Jordan's King Abdullah also flew to the US on Monday for talks with Mr Bush.

"We will address steps that can be taken to restore

calm to the region and redirect all efforts towards reactivating the peace process," the king said before leaving Amman.

Meanwhile, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres has started a European tour aimed at gathering international support for Israel's policy against Palestinian violence.

Mr Peres is in the Swedish capital Stockholm. He is expected to visit Norway, France and Greece.

## DRC rebels reluctant on treaty

The leader of one of the Congolese rebel movements has refused to give an assurance that his troops will pull back from the front-line in compliance with a peace treaty.

Jean-Pierre Bemba of the Congolese Liberation Front would not confirm to a delegation of United Nations ambassadors that his soldiers would disengage.

UN peacekeepers arrived in the Democratic Republic of Congo last week to help monitor a 15 km withdrawal that was agreed by all the warring parties last December.

Mr Bemba said that he was concerned for the safety of the local population after his troops had left and wanted the UN to protect them.

The two-and-a-half year conflict in the DRC has seen Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia backing the Kinshasa government against a rebel insurgency supported by Uganda and Rwanda.

A peace agreement signed in Zambia in 1999, it is only since the death of DRC President Laurent Kabila that progress has been made in its implementation.

The agreed 15 km retreat is intended as the first stage in the complete withdrawal of foreign troops from the country.

The UN, however, has admitted that some armies have been slow to comply.

In response to Mr Bemba's comments, UK Ambassador to Kinshasa James Atkinson said that he hoped "that he will reflect carefully on our demands".

A representative from the UN mission in the DRC (Monuc) told Mr Bemba that its role in the country was to monitor the troop withdrawal rather than protect the local population.

Meanwhile, the authorities in Zimbabwe have said that troops allied to the Kinshasa government have pulled back the required 15 km.



Bush (l) and Mubarak at the White House.

## Bus crash survivors blame high speed

Survivors have said that the two buses that collided on a bridge in Kenya and plunged into a river had been racing against each other of top speed.

At least 13 bodies have been retrieved so far, and dozens more are feared dead, trapped in the submerged vehicles.

Kenyan media said the number of dead could rise to 100. Police said at least 22 people had survived and were in hospital.

A bus conductor of one of the buses said in hospital that the buses had been trying to overtake for some 20km before the accident in a race to get to the coastal town of Malindi first to pick up passengers.

The accident happened on a bridge over the Sabaki River near the Malindi, 96 km north of Mombasa at about 1830 local time (1530GMT) on Sunday.

One of the buses reportedly swerved to avoid another vehicle carrying tourists that had stopped on the bridge and hit the other bus from behind. They both plunged into the flooded river below.

A Kenyan naval rescue team was sent to retrieve bodies from the sunken buses.

News agency reports from the area said the rescue effort had been suspended until heavy lifting equipment can be brought to the site.

Two cranes have reportedly failed to lift the sunken vehicles.

The *Daily Nation* newspaper said strong river currents and a moonless night hampered initial rescue efforts by more than 100 volunteers as they worked by the headlights from a truck.

"There was also a danger from hippos, which come out to feed at night and can attack anything that interferes with this.

The *East African Standard* quoted a witness, Mama Veronica, as saying: "The scene was horrific. The guard rails had been crushed flat and bodies were falling into the water."

On March 29 last year, 101 persons were killed when two overcrowded buses collided and burst into flames at Kapkatunga 300km west of Nairobi.

That accident occurred when one of the bus drivers lost control while negotiating a sharp corner and hit the other bus, police said.



Muslims pray at the foot of the bridge over Sabaki river for missing victims of bus accident ...yesterday. (AP)

## Rebels end war in Sierra Leone

Rebel forces in Sierra Leone say the decade-long war is over and that they want to engage in purely political struggle.

Senior rebel commander Jibril Massaquoi said the United Nations, which has its largest peacekeeping force in the world in Sierra

Leone was now welcome to deploy throughout the country.

Senior commanders of the Revolutionary United Front said that if elections due to be held at the end of this year were fair and monitored by the international community, the rebels would transform themselves into a political party and compete peace-

fully. The British presence appears to have been a critical factor in bringing them to the negotiating table.

The British army has several hundred soldiers in Sierra Leone.

But they are working outside the UN mandate, training the army of the internationally recognised government to face up to the rebels.

The rebels will not admit it publically, but there's no doubt that the large British military presence on the Sierra Leone government's side has been critical in bringing about this change in attitude.

## Israeli-Palestinian clash intensifies in Bethlehem

Gunshots rang out overnight in the West Bank town of Bethlehem after a fierce battle between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian gunmen.

An Israeli soldier was killed and at least six Palestinians were injured in the clashes on Monday, in which Israeli tanks fired shells into the town centre, sending up clouds of black smoke.

A tourist hotel was struck and two floors were destroyed. Two Palestinian refugee camps were also targeted.

At least two children were among the injured. A Palestinian medic said a young girl had been critically wounded in the eye, chest and pelvis.

A BBC correspondent on the scene said it was one of the worst battles in Bethlehem so far.

Earlier, an Israeli helicopter gunship fired rockets into a Palestinian car in the Gaza

Strip, killing a member of the militant Islamic Jihad group.

Witnesses said Mohammed Abdel Al's car was reduced to cinders.

A Jihad official told the AFP news agency there would be "strong and appropriate" revenge for the death of one of their militants.

The attack followed Sunday's seizure of at least five members of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's elite Force 17 bodyguard unit.

They were taken by Israeli security men while they were manning a checkpoint near the West Bank town of Ramallah.

In Bethlehem, clashes between stone-throwing Palestinian youths and Israeli soldiers erupted near the Jewish holy site of Rachel's Tomb.

The confrontation then escalated into a full-scale fire-fight.

## Clerics defend Kuwaiti singer

A group of Kuwaiti clerics have come to the defence of a leading Kuwaiti pop singer who has been condemned to death by a Saudi Arabian cleric.

The fatwa, or religious edict, was issued last week against Abdullah Ruwaished for "insulting the Koran" by putting its opening chapter to music.

It was declared by Saudi cleric Hamoud bin Shuaibi - although he qualified it by saying that the Kuwaiti religious authorities were the only body competent to carry out the death sentence.

The Kuwaiti clerics, representing Kuwait's main Islamic groups, have declared the fatwa illegal because Mr Shuaibi is not qualified to issue the edict.

# TRUST INTERNATIONAL

## World Report

### Strike halts Bangladesh

An opposition-led general strike has brought Bangladesh to a near standstill for a third day yesterday.

Most buses and trucks stayed off the roads, two stock exchanges were closed and the port of Chittagong was severely disrupted.

Airport officials said hundreds of people returning from the Hajj pilgrimage

to Mecca were stranded for up to 12 hours in the capital, Dhaka, because of a shortage of transport.

The three-day strike, called to try to force Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to call early elections, began on Sunday and is due to end on Tuesday evening.

General elections are due in July and the prime minister's Awami League party has vowed to serve out its full term.

Security was tightened after at least one person was killed and more than 200 injured in clashes with police and in a series of bomb blasts preceding the strike.

Last month, the four-party opposition alliance - which includes opposition leader Begum Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh National Party - gave Sheikh Hasina an ultimatum to step down or face protests.

The prime minister had earlier announced she would step down after 17 April and hand over power to a caretaker administration, but has since changed her mind.

"We have changed our plan to hold early polls after the opposition issued the ultimatum," she told a rally of her supporters in Dhaka on Saturday.

### Putin to unveil reforms

The Russian President, Vladimir Putin, is preparing to deliver his annual state of the nation address to parliament.

It is believed that Mr Putin will use the occasion to stress the need for quicker economic reform.

When Vladimir Putin delivered his very first state of the nation address nine months ago, he certainly set the alarm bells ringing.

Russia, he warned, was weak, "our national security under threat".

Back then, Mr Putin came up with a cure - a plan to transform Russia into a strong, centralised state with a flourishing market economy.

So far though, Mr Putin appears to have stopped short of administering the full treatment.

The Kremlin may have succeeded in tightening its control of the country, but apart from tax cuts across the board, there's been little sign

of desperately-needed economic reform.

That may now be about to change.

Vladimir Putin is expected to use his second state of the nation address to launch an acceleration of Russia's economic transformation.

Senior Kremlin sources have suggested that Mr Putin will announce a whole series of measures aimed at supporting business.

Liberal currency laws, a fight against state bureaucracy and corruption and, most important of all, reform of the infamous Russian legal system.

Without that, no business in Russia will ever feel protected.

Of course, it's a message that many Russians will have heard before.

Barely a year went by when Boris Yeltsin wasn't promising them economic prosperity in his annual state of the nation address.

### US awaits access to spy crew

The United States is anxiously awaiting access to the stranded crew of a US spy plane forced to land in southern China.

China has offered to let US officials meet the 24 crew members yesterday night local time, but Washington says that is not soon enough.

There was no sign that China will allow access to the EP-3 plane, which was packed with sensitive monitoring equipment. It was forced to land at a military base on the island of Hainan on Sunday after a collision with a Chinese fighter plane.

Two US military attaches and a consular official are still stuck at a hotel in Sanya, a seaside resort near the Lingshui base where the plane landed.

According to US officials, the last message from the crew said Chinese soldiers were boarding the plane.

The rubble of ancient giant statues of Buddha, which were blown up by the Taleban authorities in Afghanistan last month, is said to have been offered for sale.

Reports said several truck-loads of rubble from the statues turned up in Pakistan and was offered to dealers.

The reports have led to heavy criticisms of the trade from academics and collectors.

Koichiro Matsuura, the Director-General of the United Nations cultural organisation, Unesco, is due in Pakistan on today for talks about stopping the sale of antiquities from Afghanistan.

Reports from the town of Peshawar on the Pakistani side of the border with Afghanistan speak of truck-

### Buddha's rubble on sale

loads of rubble, some of which could be clearly identified as having come from the Buddhist statues.

But the UN is not yet convinced. Unesco says it wants to check, and has again appealed to dealers not to reward the illicit trafficking in antiquities.

It's a difficult and tragic situation.

The enormous statues, one as tall as a five-storey building, which had stood for 2,000 years, were reduced to rubble by Taleban weaponry because they were judged offensive to Islam.

No-one suggested as the Taleban showed off the ruined cliff face niches in Bamiyan, where the statues had stood, that there had

also been an attempt to profit from the destruction.

One dealer who said he had been approached to buy the remains suggested that private collectors of Buddhist artefacts, perhaps Japanese collectors, were prepared to pay for the statues to be restored in another place.

That would be a daunting task, and in any case would be deeply unpopular.

International experts say no museum nor respected collector would help if it would reward the destruction.

But if the rubble is found to be genuine and a private individual buys it, Pakistan only has to agree the paperwork for the sale to go through.



Commuters travelling on the rooftop of a bus in New Delhi yesterday. Most buses are off the road as the government, forces buses to use compressed natural gas by September 30, 2001. (AP)

### US approves aid to Yugoslavia

The US has pledged to release up to \$50m in aid for Yugoslavia, following the arrest at the weekend of former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic.

But State Department officials also said that the US expected to see "continued progress" in Yugoslavia in the coming months.

The US aid package is not dependent on the transfer of Mr Milosevic to the international criminal court in The Hague, the officials said.

The Serbian Government welcomed the US announcement. "It's good news that will reinforce the ambitious path of economic reform on which we have embarked," Serbian Finance Minister Bozidar Djelic said.

Prosecutors in Belgrade have widened the charges against Mr Milosevic to incriminate him in accusations that he sent bodyguards to

shoot at police trying to arrest him.

Meanwhile, Mr Milosevic has admitted that his government financed Serb separatist forces in Bosnia and Croatia in the early 1990s.

Appealing against his detention on charges of looting state funds, he said the transfers of money to Serb forces were state secrets - and as such, they were not entered in the budget.

The United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, said on Monday he was confident that Belgrade would co-operate with prosecutors in The Hague.

"It is important those responsible for the violations of international humanitarian law are brought to justice," Mr Annan said.

Meanwhile, Serbia's interior minister said Mr Milosevic might choose to go to The Hague to face war crimes charges in order to avoid the death penalty at home.

### Commission accuses UK of racism

Britain has been accused of being racist and intolerant in its treatment of asylum seekers and refugees.

A report from the Council of Europe's racism commission says that a "xenophobic" attitude is evident in the media, political debate

and government policy.

The report also details continuing problems in Austria, Albania, Macedonia and Denmark.

But it found that intolerance of refugees and asylum seekers was "particularly acute" in the UK.

The report said this was

"reflected in the xenophobic and intolerant coverage of these groups of persons in the media".

But it also criticised the "tone of the discourse resorted to by politicians in support of the adoption and enforcement of increasingly restrictive asylum and immigration laws".

Home Office Minister Barbara Roche said the report contained a series of "very serious factual inaccuracies".

"For example it claims discriminating behaviour by immigration officials at borders. Yet of the 89 million passenger arrivals in the UK last year, there were only 40 complaints of racial discrimination against the service and one was upheld," she said.

Eva Smith-Asmussen, who was a member of the research team behind the report and is herself Danish, insisted there were inherent problems in the UK such as racist chanting at football matches.



Arms recovered from the home of former Yugoslav President, set him last Saturday.

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# LEAD MERCHANT BANK LIMITED

On behalf of

RC 126564



# TRADE BANK PLC

Offer for Subscription

RC 719330

## 980,000,000

Ordinary Shares of 50 kobo each

At 80 kobo per share payable in full on Application

Application list for the ordinary shares now being offered for Subscription **WILL OPEN** at 8.00 a.m.  
On Monday, 2nd April 2001 and close at 1.30 p.m. On Wednesday, 2nd May, 2001.

#### Share Capital and Reserves as at 30 September, 2000

Authorised: 3,000,000,000 Ordinary shares of 50 kobo each	N,000
Issued and fully paid: 1,020,000,000 Ordinary shares of 50 kobo each	1,500,000
Statutory reserve	510,000
Share Premium	109,693
Revenue Reserve	18,911
Shareholder's Funds	106,112
	744,716

**Indebtedness:** As at 30 September 2000 the Bank had no outstanding debentures, mortgages, loan capital, bank overdrafts, short-term loans, charges or similar indebtedness or material contingent liabilities other than those arising from the ordinary course of business.

#### Summary of the Offer

The following information should be read in conjunction with the full text of this Prospectus, from which it is derived:

<b>Share Capital:</b>	
Authorised	N1,500,000,000 divided into 3,000,000,000 Ordinary shares of 50 Kobo each
Issued and fully Paid:	N510,000,000 divided into 1,020,000,000 Ordinary shares of 50Kobo each
Being Issued:	980,000,000 Ordinary shares of 50 Kobo each.
<b>Vendor:</b>	Trade Bank Plc ("Trade Bank" or "the Bank")
<b>Offer Price:</b>	80Kobo per share
<b>Method of Offer:</b>	Offer for Subscription
<b>Application:</b>	Application for the Offer for subscription must be for a minimum of 1000 Ordinary shares and thereafter in multiples of 500 Ordinary shares.
<b>Payment:</b>	In full on application.
<b>Market Capitalisation (Pre-Offer at Offer Price):</b>	N816,000,000 (1,020,000,000 ordinary shares at 80kobo per share)
<b>Market capitalisation of Offer (At Offer Price)</b>	N784,000,000(980,000,000 Ordinary shares at 80kobo per share)
<b>Market capitalisation of Offer (Post-Offer at Offer Price):</b>	N1,600,000,000 (2,000,000,000 Ordinary shares at 80kobo per share)

**Status:** The whole of the issued and fully paid shares of Trade Bank Plc have been admitted to the daily Official List of the exchange. The shares now being offered will be subsequently so admitted.

**Purpose:** The purpose of the offer is to raise funds for the bank to finance its branch network expansion, investment in information technology and provide additional working capital for the Bank's operations

**Utilisation of Issue proceeds:** The net proceeds of the Offer will be utilized as follows:

	%	N
(i) Branch Network Expansion	60	437,890,200
(ii) Investment in Information technology	20	145,963,400
(iii) Additional working Capital	20	145,963,400
	100	729,817,000

#### Expected time table for the offer

Issue Opens:	Monday, 2nd April 2001
Issue Closes:	Wednesday, 2nd May 2001

#### Historical Financial Summary:

	6months Ended 30 September, 2000	15months Ending 31 March 2000	1998	1997	1996	1995
	N'000	N'000	N'000	N'000	N'000	N'000
Gross Earnings	1,030,540	2,000,338	1,068,046	697,659	588,847	473,252
Profit before taxation	60,619	67,746	96,611	20,244	38,062	36,402
Profit after taxation	55,819	62,675	84,060	15,732	29,153	30,921
Share capital	510,000	510,000	510,000	340,000	110,000	100,000
Net Assets	744,716	688,897	626,222	593,295	213,519	184,366
Total Assets	8,140,933	6,729,523	5,290,804	3,808,862	2,696,527	2,007,089
Dividend			51,000			20,000
Adjusted earnings per share	5.47%	6.14%	8.24%	1.54%	2.86%	3.03%
Adjusted dividend per share			5.00%			1.96%
<b>Forecast Offer Statistics:</b>		2001	2002	2003		
		N'000	N'000	N'000		
Profit Before Taxation		126,720	324,325	650,133		
Taxation		(25,344)	69,905	(130,027)		
Profit After Taxation		101,376	259,620	520,106		
<b>APPROPRIATION</b>						
Statutory reserves		(30,413)	(77,886)	(156,032)		
Dividend Proposed		(51,000)	(150,000)	(300,000)		
Retained profits carried Forward		93,386	125,120	189,194		
Forecast Dividend Per Share		5k	7.5k	15k		
Forecast Earnings Per Share		9.94k	12.98k	26k		
Ordinary Shares Ranking for Dividend		1.02billion	2billion	2billion		
Forecast earnings yield at offer price		12.43%	16.23%	32.50		
Forecast dividend yield at offer price		6.25%	9.38%	18.75%		
Forecast price earning ratio at offer price		8.05	6.16	3.08		
Forecast dividend cover (times)		1.99	1.73	1.73		

#### Directors and Parties to the Offer:

Directors	Name	Address
	Alhaji Atiyu A. Salman, SAN (Chairman)	Saraa Chambers, Oomoda Roundabout, Ajikobi Ilorin
	Mr. S.E. Kolawole (Managing)	Trade Bank Plc, 2, Illofa Road, Ilorin
	Mallam F.G. Ibrahim	Trade Bank Plc, 2, Illofa Road, Ilorin
	Mallam M.T. Mammad	Trade Bank Plc, 2, Illofa Road, Ilorin
	Alhaji Ibrahim Ade. Yusuf	Obayo Crescent, Off Ahmed Bello Way, G.R.A. Ilorin
	Chief Zaccheus A. Olayemi	Plot 7, Second Avenue, Off Fate Road, G.R.A. Ilorin
	Hajia Habiba A.Y. Yusuf	Ministry of Finance, Ilorin
	Dr. Mairwada Abba	Khadija Medical Centre, 53, Katsina Road, Funtua
	Ms. Christie E. Adejob	56, Mbawde Street, By-Yaounda Street, Wuse Zone 6 Abuja
<b>Company Secretary:</b>	O.S. Afolabi Esq	Trade Bank Plc, 2, Illofa Road, Ilorin
<b>Registered Office:</b>		2 Illofa Road, Ilorin
<b>Issuing House:</b>	Lead Merchant Bank Limited	1, Oladele Olashore Street, Victoria Island, Lagos
<b>Stockbrokers:</b>	OMF Securities & Finance Limited	298, Ikorodu Road, Anthony, P.O. Box 11676 Ikeja, Lagos
<b>Reporting Accountants:</b>	Adebola Sobanjo & Company	Oluremi Chambers, 46 Queen Street (2nd floor) Alagomeji Sabo, Yaba, Lagos
<b>Joint Auditors:</b>	Oladipo Opaletke & Co Ogunola Adebayo & Co	44, Dele Abubakar Road, Ilorin 3, Ogunola Adebayo Street, Ibrahim Taiwo Road, Ilorin
<b>Solicitors to the Offer:</b>	Bayo Ojo & Co	Suite 4 Penthouse, Stallion House, 2 Ajose Adegun Street Victoria Island, Lagos
<b>Solicitors to the Bank:</b>	Kehinde Simpson & Co	200 Igboere Road, Lagos
<b>Registrar:</b>	Wema Bank Plc	Registrar's Department, 27, Nnamdi Azikiwe Street, Lagos
<b>Receiving Bankers:</b>	Lead Merchant Bank Limited	1, Oladele Olashore Street, Victoria Island, Lagos

#### History and Business

Trade Bank Plc was incorporated on 14 May, 1985. The bank was granted licence by the authorities to carry on the business of banking in Nigeria on 28 March, 1987 commenced banking operations on 2 April, 1987. Its shares were listed on the Nigerian Stock Exchange on 26 May, 1992.

At incorporation, the Kwara State Government was the major promoter of the bank but have since then been encouraging private investors to invest in the Bank to ensure its economic success. The intention of the Government is to avoid unnecessary interface in the operations of the Bank and thus allow it to run purely as a commercial organisation with the primary objective of providing first class commercial banking services and giving reasonable returns on the investment of its shareholders. Presently, the Kwara & Kogi State Governments hold collectively 40.52 per cent of the Bank's paid-up share capital.

The Bank's Head Office is located at No 2, Illofa Road, Ilorin, Kwara State from where the Bank commenced operations on 2 April, 1987. The bank's branch network has grown to 21 within a space of thirteen years. Eight of these are located in Lagos, namely: Martins, Doemoso, Ikeja, Ojuelegba, Mushin, Abule-Egba, Apapa and Oke-Aris. Others are located at Abuja, Onitsha, Port Harcourt, Yenagoa, Akure, Kano, Kaduna, Lokoja, Bauchi and Abuja. The remaining two branches are located at Wabab Fofawayo Road (formerly Unity Road) and Oja-Oba in Ilorin, the capital of Kwara State. Plans are now at advance stage to open more branches across the nation.

Trade Bank Plc operates purely as a commercial outfit in the finance sector of the economy. It has strong bias for efficiency, personalized and courteous banking services in the area of cash management, agricultural and industrial projects financing, provision of loans and other credit facilities. This operation is particularly enhanced because of the free hand the management has in running the day-to-day affairs of the bank as directed by a board operational policy. In the same vein, the bank's Board can easily pass as one of the most stable in the country as it has not for once since inception witnessed the slightest form of crises either covertly or overtly.

The bank pursues a policy of maintaining a strong capital base to give it a competitive capability, service the credit needs of individual and corporate customers in particular, and the economy in general while keeping a close look at credit quality controls. In the long term, the Bank's strategic goal is to be one of the major Banks in the country, with a reputation for excellence in servicing customers nationwide. Its major goal is to optimize shareholders investment, by continuously striving to improve its financial returns.

#### Future prospects

The Bank's mission is to build enduring partnership with its customers for the benefit of its various stakeholders. Accordingly, the Bank will continue with the expansion and improvement of its branch network with a view to eventually making its services available throughout the country.

In the immediate future, the bank will be a medium-sized bank with a very strong financial base providing equal opportunity, personalized and efficient banking services to "Traders", thus acting as a catalyst to the development of commerce and industry, while maximizing the return on stakeholders' investments by being innovative and responsive using appropriate and up to date technology, competent and highly motivated personnel through a well co-ordinated network of branches based on customer-driven approach to marketing.

#### Subsidiary and/or Associated Companies

As at the date of this Prospectus, the bank has no subsidiary or associated neither does it have any significant investment in any other company.

#### Claims and Litigations

Trade Bank Plc has 14 cases pending in various courts in Nigeria. Total amount is N275.8 million broken into litigations worth N174.7 million for the bank and N101.1 million against the Bank. A record of these claims is available for inspection at the Legal Department/Company Secretariat of the Bank and at the head office of the Issuing House. All litigations are in the ordinary course of business and it is not expected that anyone of them will give rise to any material claim or statement.

#### Material Contracts

The Company has entered into the under-mentioned contracts, which for the purpose of this Offer is materials:

- Vending Agreement dated 16 February 2001 under which Lead Merchant Bank Limited agreed to offer for Subscription 980,000,000 shares of 50 kobo each at 80kobo per share on behalf of Trade Bank Plc.
- New Ojuelegba Branch (81, Ojuelegba Street, Surulere Lagos (Branch under renovation).
- Newly completed construction of Lokoja Branch.

#### Indebtedness

As at 30 September 2000, the bank had no outstanding debentures, mortgage, loan capital, bank overdrafts, short-term loans, charges or similar indebtedness or material contingent liabilities other than those arising from the ordinary course of business.

#### Estimated Costs of Issue

The total costs and expenses of making the offer for subscription, including fees payable to the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Nigerian Stock Exchange, Issuing House fees, Legal and Accountancy fees, Stockbrokers' fees, Brokerage Commission, Printing, Publicity and Advertisement costs is estimated at N54,183,000 representing 6.91% of the total proceeds and is payable by the Bank.

#### Consents

The following have given and have not withdrawn their written consents to the issue of this prospectus with their names and reports (where applicable) included in the form and context in which they appear:

		Issuing House
(a)	The Directors of the Bank	
(b)	The Company Secretary	
(c)	Lead Merchant Bank Limited	Issuing House
(d)	Adebola Sobanjo & Co (Chartered Accountants)	Reporting Accountants
(e)	Oladipo Opaletke & Co Ogunola Adebayo & Co	Joint Auditors to the Bank
(f)	OMF Securities & Finance Limited	Stockbrokers
(g)	Bayo Ojo & Co	Solicitors to the Issue
(h)	Kehinde Simpson & Co	Solicitors to the Bank
(i)	Wema Bank Plc	Registrar to the Issue
(j)	Lead Merchant Bank Limited	Receiving Bankers

#### Documents For Inspection

Copies of the following documents may be inspected at Lead Merchant Bank Limited, 1, Oladele Olashore Street, Victoria Island, Lagos, during usual banking hours on any weekday (excluding public holidays) from Monday, 5 March 2001 to Friday, 30 March 2001.

- Certificate of incorporation of the bank
- Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Bank
- Audited financial statements of the Company for the four years ended 31 December 1998, 15 months ended 31 March 2000 and six months ended 30 March 2000 and six months ended 30 September 2000.
- Reports of the reporting Accountants on the Audited financial statements for the four years ended 31 December 1995 to 1998, 15 months ended 31 March 2000 and six months ended 30 September 2000, as well as the Profit Forecast for the years ending 31 March 2003.
- Schedule of Claims and Litigations referred to above.
- Material contracts referred to above
- Consents referred to above.

#### Procedure for Application and Allotment

##### APPLICATION

Applications must be made on the official Application Form and in accordance with the instructions set out on the back of the Application Form. Applications made on photostat copies of the Application Form will not be accepted. Care must be taken to follow these instructions because applications which do not comply will be rejected. Application lists for the shares now being offered for Subscription will open at 8.00 a.m. on Monday, 2nd April 2001 and close at 1.30 p.m. On Wednesday, 2nd May 2001.

Application for the shares must be for a minimum of 1000 shares and in multiples of 500 shares thereafter. The number of shares for which applications is made and the amount of the cash, Cheque, Certified Cheque or Bank Draft attached should be entered in the boxes provided. Individual and Joint applicants should complete the relevant portions of the Application Form. Corporate applicants should also complete the required portions and affix its seal accordingly.

Each application should be forwarded together with Cash, Certified Cheque or Bank Draft for the full amount of the shares purchased to any of the Receiving Agents aforementioned. All certified cheques or draft must be crossed as "TRADE BANK OFFER" for the Offer for Subscription and made payable to the Receiving Agent to which the application is addressed. All cheques will be presented upon receipt and all applications in respect of which cheques and bank drafts are returned unpaid for whatever reason, will be rejected.

##### Allotment

The Issuing House and the bank reserve the right to accept or reject any application in whole or in part. All irregular or suspected multiple applications will be rejected.

##### Application Monies

All application monies will be retained in a separate bank account by Lead Merchant Bank Limited, pending allotment. No receipt for application monies would be issued by Lead Merchant Bank Limited, but the Receiving Agents must issue receipts for amounts collected by them from prospective investors. If any application is rejected or accepted for fewer shares than the number applied for, a cheque for the full amount or the balance (as the case may be) will be returned through the post at the applicant's risk within 7 days of allotment.

##### Share Certificates

Share certificates in respect of shares allotted would be despatched by the registrar by post, at the applicant's risk within 28 days of allotment.

##### Receiving Agents

Application forms may be obtained free of charge from any of the Receiving Agents listed in the Prospectus. Brokerage will be paid to the Receiving Agents at the rate of N1 per N100 worth of shares allotted in respect of applications bearing their official stamps.

##### Issuing House:

Lead Merchant Bank Limited.



# BUSINESS DAY

## Board uncovers N1bn fraud at NMA

The new Board of Directors of the National Maritime Authority (NMA) has disclosed that most of the contracts awarded by the past management of the authority were over invoiced to the tune of one billion naira.

The Board Chairman, Alhaji Lawal Kaita disclosed this at the three-day seminar on "Maritime Capacity Building and Resource Development" organised by the National Maritime Authority in Lagos.

According to him: "We carried out an investigation by interviewing each of the contractors and at the end of verification, we were able to discover that contracts which were awarded to the cost of N1 billion were actually valued at N400 million.

He however assured that

From Tokunbo Oloke, in Lagos

his members who had been working seriously since they assumed office would not leave any stone unturned in removing shaft from the present NMA so as to make it more endearing to everybody in the Maritime industry.



President Olusegun Obasanjo.

The Chairman also said the Board has created a new department called "Maritime Safety" to make the Authority more responsive. He expressed regrets that the Authority had lost its focus from the basic tenets for which it was established due to inappropriate execution of policies contained in the National Shipping Policy of 1987.

The resultant consequence is that the Authority has failed to develop Nigeria's shipping capacity, could not adopt technology for safety at sea, and could not increase the volume of trade, as well as search and rescue capabilities and monitoring of coastal waters against pollution from oil spillage.

Kaita urged the federal government to lift suspension on cargo allocation.

## NNPC hits 33,200 barrels per day

The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) has hit 33,200 barrels of oil per day (bpd) which is a departure from the past record of a trickle 7,500 bpd.

The NNPC Group Managing Director, Jackson Gaius-Obaseki who disclosed this noted that two factors were responsible for the poor performance of NNPC in the past - poor work force and external interference.

He said at the opening ceremony of Chief Officers Management Development Programme in Abuja that the present management of the Corporation was faced with a problem of small work force that had lost faith in the system and uncertain of the future prospects of the Corporation. At the same times, for more than nine years, NNPC did not recruit competent employees capable of running its affairs. This he said, informed the urgent need to develop its human resource base, especially

By Idongesit Inyangabasi

from the middle class of the management to ensure the continuity and sustained growth of the Corporation.

The Corporation he noted, trained about 1,000 officers preparing them to take-up future management responsibilities of the company.

According to him, for quite a long time, NNPC has not been run to make profit and to be financially independent. But, the present autonomy granted to the Corporation by the Federal Government, Obaseki said, is a challenge to the entire staff and management of the company.

Now, the NNPC has the opportunity of carrying out its statutory functions without undue interference from external forces.

NNPC is now responsible for sourcing for funds, to pay its staff salaries, as well as dividends and other taxes to the government. It therefore has to be focused to meet

these challenges.

He appealed for support from Nigerians the NNPC to serve its traditional role of being a pillar to the nation's economy.

The Corporation, he said has continued to produce fuel at N17.00 while the marketers sell to the public at about N50.00. The marketers create artificial scarcity and price like by hoarding the products.

In the face of price deregulation, Obaseki maintained that NNPC would still remain in the business as the price is expected to normalise at a point.



Jackson Gaius-Obaseki, GMD NNPC

## PSTC protests suspension from capital market

Price Security & Trust Company Ltd. (PSTC) has protested her recent suspension from capital market activities by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

In a petition signed by the head of capital market operations, Bede Mbama Ogujiuba, the company argued that there was no incidence of illegal acquisition of FSB International Bank Plc shares by unidentified persons through PSTC as SEC accused.

According to the petition, which was copied to the Minister of Finance, the Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria and the Director General, Bureau of Public Enterprises, the shares in question was sold by PSTC's former Managing Director.

The petition read: "Our former Managing Director approached us that she had decided to dispose of her 75,183,328 units of FSB Inter-

From Bright Ewulu, in Lagos

national Bank Plc ordinary shares and asked us to source for buyers. We did, but the people we got were not acceptable to her.

"she later told us that she was approached by Alhaji Mohammed Hayatu-Deen, representing FSB International Plc, who indicated interest in acquisition of the shares. On her instruction, the share certificates were sent to BGL Securities for verification and crossing in favour of the said buyer."

It stated that the shares crossing was effected on July 7, 2000 on the Lagos Floor of the Nigerian Stock Exchange at N3.50 per share.

PSTC agreed that SEC invited it to a meeting on three or four occasions but said its failure to appear in some of the meetings was due to circumstance beyond its control.

It however averred that as former MD who was at the centre of the problem was present at the last meeting but the commission refused to give her hearing on the grounds that she no longer works for Price Securities.

The company therefore appealed against its suspension since the firms supposed sin was handing over the said share certificates totalling 71,560,578 kept in its custody, by the transferor plus 3,622,750 units held in its name, though owned by the transferor, that is, its former managing director.

It would be recalled that the Security and Exchange Commission (SEC) recently suspend price securities from capital market activities because of its alleged role in the illegal acquisition of shares in FSB International Bank Plc.

## ... as SEC explains position on suspension

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has explained its stand on the commodity exchange controversy, saying no commodity exchange application has met its registration requirements.

According to it, "this clarification becomes necessary following claims from certain quarters that SEC refused to register them in spite of their meeting the registration requirements of the commission."

The commission who made this plain in a press statement signed by its

Head of Corporate Affairs, Alhaji Iliyasu Dacko stated that the capital requirements for a commodity exchange Limited by Shares organisation in a minimum of N50m or assets tantamount to the same amount.

Besides, it stressed that an application for registration as security exchange should be filed on form SECS as provided in schedule 3 to these rules and regulation and should be accompanied by a copy of its certificate of incorporation, information relating to market facilities, detailed information about

the trading system to be adopted, among others.

The statement warned that SEC may not register an Exchange nor allow its registration to remain in force without provision for expulsion, suspension or discipline of members who derail from set rules and regulations as regards to just and equitable principles of the trade.

In addition, the statement maintained that after two days of filing an application SEC in pursuant to the degree and its rules and regulation makes known its decision to either grant or deny registration.

## NITEL generates N34 million monthly in Ilorin Territory

NITEL's Ilorin Territorial Manager, Mr. Abel Oni, has said that the Territory collects about N34 million revenue monthly from its subscribers.

Briefing the Minister of Communications, Alhaji Mohammed Arzika, in Ilorin, Oni explained that about N6 million of the monthly collection revenue came from the 2000 line capacity at the Offa Exchange.

The Manager said that

Ilorin Exchange had more than 7,000 applicants who could not be connected because NITEL cable did not run through their areas.

He said unless NITEL ran cables in the new layouts, there was no way the applicants could be connected.

He explained that work on two of the rural exchanges were yet to be completed but that the Kaima Exchange would soon be

completed.

Arzika, who was in the state as part of his three-day tour of the North-Central Zone, was accompanied by NITEL's Executive Director in charge of Domestic Network, Dr. Suleiman Sani and the Deputy General Manager (Lon Distance), Mr. I. A. Senbanjo.

He had earlier inspected NITEL and NIPOST facilities at Nasarawa, Benue and Kogi States.

## Exchange rates for World currencies against the US dollar as at April 2

	CURRENT	HIGH	LOW
Euro	0.8816	0.8835	0.8745
Japanese Yen	126.46	126.6	125.7
British Pound	1.42	1.4238	1.4142
Swiss Franc	1.7306	1.7455	1.7278
Austrian Schilling	15.6012	15.7332	15.5748
Belgian Franc	45.737	46.124	45.659
Danish Crown	8.458	8.5336	8.4476
Dutch Guilder	2.4985	2.5197	2.4943
Finnish Markka	6.7412	6.7982	6.7297
French Franc	7.4372	7.5001	7.4245
German Mark	2.2175	2.2363	2.2137
Greek Drachma	386.34	389.61	385.68
Irish Punt	1.1198	1.1218	1.1105
Italian Lire	2195.32	2213.89	2191.59
Norwegian Crown	9.1556	9.2041	9.1395
Portuguese Escudo	227.3	229.23	226.92
Spanish Peseta	18.65	190.24	188.33
Swedish Crown	10.3675	10.4245	10.354
Australian Dollar	0.4845	0.4887	0.4827
Brazilian Real	2.157	2.158	2.152
Canadian Dollar	1.5236	1.5794	1.5736
Hong Kong Dollar	7.7979	7.7998	7.7985
Mexican Peso	9.414	9.465	9.41
Russian Rouble	28.858	28.88	28.782

# BUSINESS \$ DAY

## Chevron introduces lubricants

Chevron Global Lubricants has announced the introduction of its lubricants into the Nigerian market to develop its network of distribution of engine oil in the country.

Having established distributors in a number of countries in Africa, Chevron said it is now looking forward to developing its network in Nigeria. The wide range of diesel engine oils Chevron Global lubricants is introducing, according to a statement, is for use in passenger transport, trucking, extraction, agricultural and industrial market sectors.

Fairwinds Oil Limited was announced as the official distributor of the products in the country. The products include Chevron Delo 400 Multigrade SAE 15W-40 for high performance emission regulated engines, Chevron RPM Super Diesel Multigrade SAE 15W-40 for naturally aspirated and turbo charged diesel engines operating on or off highway conditions.

## Albarka completes airlift of pilgrims

Albarka Air Services has announced that it has completed airlift of 13,000 Nigerian pilgrims from the Lagos and Maiduguri zones to this year's Hajj and brought them back on schedule, as indicated in its mandate.

A statement issued by the Manager, Public Affairs of Albarka, Durosinmi Meseko disclosed that the airline has finished the return leg of airlift of the Lagos Zone pilgrims on Tuesday, March 27, while that of the Maiduguri Zone was completed on Sunday, April 1, 2001.

Meanwhile, a newspaper report has indicated that about seven thousand Nigerian pilgrims are still stranded in Saudi Arabia. The report blamed the situation on the inability of some of the contracted airlines to complete their mandates of returning the pilgrims back to the country.

The Saudi authorities have urged the airlines concerned to complete their respective assignments or face some sanctions.

## DAPPMA offers FG 210m litres storage facilities

Depot and Petroleum Products Marketers Association (DAPPMA) has reiterated its call on the Federal Government to put into use the 210 million litres storage and dispensing facilities of its member companies as a way of solving the perennial fuel scarcity in the country.

DAPPMA had earlier called on the Pipeline and Products marketing Company (PPMC) to utilise the storage facilities.

Addressing a Press Conference in Lagos, DAPPMA Chairman, Engr. George Enenmoh, expressed concern that their facilities which can pump over 400 trucks of petroleum products into the system daily are left idle, "whilst we have excess of some petroleum products in the Warri and Port Harcourt Refineries' depots, and scarcity of same in Lagos and other parts of the country."

Enenmoh who stated that DAPPMA members' facilities exceed those of the Major Marketers, urged the Federal Government to give its



Jackson Gaius-Obaseki, NNPC GMD.

From Rakiya A. Muhammad, in Lagos

members equal conditions as the Major Marketing Companies to enable independent marketers deliver products to market outlets.

"We assure Mr. President that once we get the products at the price and the financial and other terms and conditions like the major marketers, we would deliver the products to the retail outlets as will be directed by the NNPC," the DAPPMA helmsman assured.

He condemned the Independent Marketers (IPMAN) National Executives' position that the Federal Government should stop NNPC from supplying fuel to petroleum storage depots owned by member companies of DAPPMA on the allegation that such marketers do not own petrol stations.

The DAPPMA boss also debunked claims by IPMA that its members have recently acquired a petroleum storage facility capable of storing 10 million litres of petrol per day. "The fact is that IPMAN as an Association has no licenced Petroleum Storage Depot," he stressed.

He, however, acknowledged that there was the IPMAN Petroleum Marketing Company Limited (IPMCL), which he said has not gotten an approval to construct Petroleum Storage Depot.

Enenmoh urged the Group Managing Director of NNPC, Mr. Jackson Gaius-Obaseki, to make good his promise to visit and assess the petroleum storage facilities of member companies of DAPPMA in order to recommend them to the government for utilisation.

## Nigerian Stock Dealings (NSE)

Gainers/Losers as at 02/04/2001

### Gainers

COMPANY	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE
FIRSTBANK	26.19	27.41	1.22
UNION DICON	16.00	16.75	0.75
NBC	16.66	17.20	0.36
UBN	32.50	33.00	0.60
LEVBROS	21.05	21.50	0.45
DNMEYER	8.50	8.92	0.14
VITAFOAM	4.08	4.20	0.13
UTB	4.22	4.35	0.12
UACN	4.00	4.12	0.10
UAC-PROP	2.12	2.22	0.10
SKBEECHAM	3.05	3.15	0.10
CADBURY	29.70	29.80	0.10
NB	28.05	28.13	0.08
MANNYBANK	1.88	1.95	0.07
NESTLE	52.00	52.05	0.05
EKOBANK	1.09	1.14	0.05
NIWICABLE	2.29	2.33	0.04
UTC	0.84	0.88	0.04
SAVANNA	1.24	1.26	0.02
LIBERTY	1.86	1.87	0.01
PZ	12.49	12.50	0.01
BERGER	2.90	2.91	0.01

### Losers

COMPANY	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE
TOTAL	67.10	80.75	3.35
JBERGER	53.25	60.65	2.60
GUINNESS	35.00	34.00	1.80
WAPCO	22.00	24.02	0.98
IGL	6.70	5.42	0.28
AGIP	24.74	24.50	0.24
7UP	4.94	8.00	0.24
AFRIBANK	8.20	2.57	0.13
CFAO	2.70	5.17	0.08
GUARANTY	5.25	1.50	0.07
CAP	1.67	4.10	0.06
PRESTIGE	4.15	0.97	0.05
INCAR	1.02	0.96	0.05
COSTAIN	1.00	11.62	0.04
FLOURMILL	11.85	2.19	0.03
NCR	2.20	2.19	0.01
WEMABANK	2.06	2.04	0.01
JOHNHOLT	1.75	1.74	0.01

### Summary of Transactions

	OPENING	CLOSING	%AGE CHANGE
MKT. CAP	541,645,267,201.57	543,133,487,891.08	0.29
INDEX	9,159.83	9,186.70	0.29

DEALS	VOLUME	VALUE	No. OF COMPANIES
1,687	15,471,977	172,012,354.97	95

Source: NSE, Abuja Area Office.

## NSE: First Bank leads the bulls in 1,567 deals

A total of 15.47 million shares worth N172.01 million were exchanged in 1,567 deals, on Monday, April 2, 2001 on the floor of the Nigerian Stock Exchange with 85 companies participating, according to information from the Abuja Trading Floor of the Nigerian Stock Exchange.

There were no transactions in the Industrial Loans/Preference Stocks sector and the Federal Government Development stocks sector.

### Price Movement:

The bears lost a little bit of ground on the floor but are still in the lead, with a total of 18 companies losing and 22 gaining in their share prices.

Gains were recorded in the Food/Beverages & Tobacco, Construction, Banking, Breweries, Chemicals & Paints, Conglomerates, Industrial/Domestic Products, Real Estate, Engineering Technology and the Healthcare sub sectors.

First Bank of Nigeria Plc led the price gainers, as it appreciated by 122 kobo to close the day at N27.41 per share, followed by Union Dicon, which appreciated by 75 kobo to close at N16.75 per share.

Other price gainers include Nigeria Bottling Company (65 kobo); Union Bank (50 kobo); Levbros (45 kobo); DN Meyer (42 kobo); Vitafoam (14 kobo); Universal Trust Bank (13 kobo); UACN (12 kobo); UAC-Prop, SKBeecham and Cadbury (10 kobo apiece); NB (8 kobo); Mannybank (7 kobo); Nestle and Ekobank (5 kobo apiece); Niwicable and UTC (4 kobo apiece); Savanna Bank (2 kobo); Liberty Ban, PZ and Berger Paints (1 kobo apiece).

Losses were recorded in the Construction, Food Beverages & Tobacco, Petroleum Marketing, Conglomerates, Chemicals & Paints, Banking, Insurance, Computer & Office Equipment, Building Materials, Automobile and Tyre sub sectors.

Total Nigeria Plc led the price losers, crashing by 335 kobo to close at N63.75 per share, followed closely by Julius Berger, which lost 260 kobo, to close at N50.66 per share.

Other price losers include Guinness (100 kobo); WAPCO (98 kobo); IGL (28 kobo); Agip and 7UP (24 kobo apiece); Afribank (20 kobo); CFAO (13 kobo); Guaranty (8 kobo); Prestige and Incar (5 kobo apiece); Costain (4 kobo); Flourmill (3 kobo); NCR, Wemabank and Johnholt (1 kobo apiece).

# BUSINESS DAY

## Cargo allocation, ship acquisition fund

The Minister of Transport, Chief Ojo Maduekwe, has emphasised that the Federal Government would not lift the suspension of the cargo allocation function of the National Maritime Authority (NMA) until the indigenous shipping operators got organised.

Maduekwe, who gave the explanation in a keynote address delivered in Lagos at a three-day seminar on "Maritime Capacity Building and Resource Development: The Role of National Maritime Authority", declared: "Suspension of cargo allocation and ship acquisition fund remains".

The minister, who noted that he had been accused of dragging his feet on the restoration of cargo allocation, said that he wanted to see the

capabilities of those who were supposed to benefit from the exercise.

"I want to see the financial muscle of potential investors in shipping to arrange and organise themselves, and government is not ready to spoon-feed anybody."

Maduekwe also stated that he would not want to see the exercise abused, adding:



Ojo Maduekwe, Transport Minister.

"Suspending cargo allocation was a decision of government, and if I am to go back to the President on the issue, I need more forceful argument."

"Until I am given a rational and scientific analysis on the matter, I am not going to Mr. President to say let's bring back cargo allocation, and the same thing applies to the ship acquisition and ship building fund," the minister stated.

He said that the ship acquisition fund was will intended, but the beneficiaries squandered the taxpayers' money.

According to Maduekwe, while there were complaints from some of the beneficiaries that the money was not enough to buy ships, "some were describing the fund as their own piece of the national cake," adding: "I am yet to be convinced about how this money was used."

## Manufacturer advises FG on Naira depreciation

The Federal Government has been advised to peg the exchange rate of the Naira on quarterly basis to allow for proper planning and budgeting for manufacturers of goods, and also allow for effective execution of government projects without budgetary distortions.

An executive member of Kano State branch of Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), Alhaji Saidu Dattijo Adhama, who gave the advise in a chat with *Business Day* said the major cause of Naira's decline is lack of government's periodic intervention as it is the case in United States and

From Musa Umar Kazaure, in Kano

Britain whenever their currencies are fluctuating.

He observed that the Nigerian economy is not strong enough to sustain a market-driven currency as is being experimented now.

Adhama, who is also the Chief Executive of Adhama Textiles, Kano, recalled with nostalgia that late General Abacha's consistent economic policies had halt the Naira floating between 80 and 84 to a dollar for five years, "an enviable record ever achieved for the Naira."

It is economic suicide to leave the country's currency at the mercy of market

forces, he maintained. "Where is the market, which forces control the market? The fraudsters or the CBN round-trippers who rip-off the CBN anytime the Naira depreciates?" Adhama queried.

The businessman lamented that the Naira has depreciated against the US dollar by almost fifty per cent, in just two years, sliding from 84 Naira in 1999 to about 129 Naira. The effect of this fall he stressed could be seen in the decline in purchasing power of the citizens, as manufacturers have no option but to increase the cost of their goods

## ...as FG moves to tackle it

The depreciating value of the Naira at the foreign exchange market was the main issue in the financial system last week.

The Naira exchange rate, which has been on the decline in the past two weeks, continued last week with the Naira trading as low as N135 to the dollar at

the parallel market and N121 at the Inter-Bank Foreign Exchange Market (IFEM) last week.

The Naira was traded for N122 and N123 to the dollar at the parallel market and N111 and N112 at IFEM a fortnight ago.

Concerned by the widening gap between the parallel and IFEM rates, President Olusegun Obasanjo, last week directed that immediate measures should be taken to bridge the gap to reduce their incidence of round tripping.

In an effort to sanitise the foreign exchange market, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) suspended 25 banks from IFEM for 10-IFEM days because of their inability to provide cash backing for foreign exchange they

bought at the market.

The Assistant Director, Corporate Affairs Unit of the CBN, Mr. Tony Ede, said that the measures were taken to sanitise the system.

He, however, said later in the week that the ban might be lifted in view of the number of banks involved because of likely consequences of distress the ban could engender.

Trust Bank last week advised monetary authorities to give official recognition to the parallel market as part of measures to strengthen the Naira.

He told newsmen in Lagos that by according parallel market its due recognition, government would be able to intervene in the market and bring sanity into the market.



Adamu Ciroma, Finance Minister.

## project with GSM funds

The Minister of Communications, Alhaji Mohammed Arzika, has said that part of the revenue generated by the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) in the GSM auction would be used to finance rural telephone project.

NCC generated about 855 million dollars (about N2.46 billion) in the auction from three companies, each paying 285 million dollars for its licence.

The Federal Executive Council at its last meeting approved a National Policy on rural telephone for the country.

The Minister said at the end of his three-day working tour of the north-central zone that it was not yet decided how much of the fund would be used to subsidise the project.

He explained that the council had established a

committee to deliberate on the modalities of executing the project and how much of government subsidy would go into it.

The Minister did not, however, give details of the composition of the committee.

He further explained that the rural telephone project would be executed through private companies but because rural telephone was not profitable, government had to subsidise it at a certain level.

The minister also listed three objectives on why he embarked on the tour namely - to assess the progress of work-under construction: to find out from the officials problems associated with their operations and gauge public expectations.

He expressed satisfaction with what he saw on the ground throughout his tour, stressing that the experience

he gathered during the tour would form valuable inputs into future policies of the ministry.

Asked what he would do on the problems associated with NITEL operations in the zone, the Executive Director of NITEL, Dr. Suleiman Sani, said that they would do "whatever is possible to rectify the problems within a reasonable time"



Alhaji Mohammed Arzika, Minister of Communications.

## NUATE chief condemns privatisation of Lagos airport

The Deputy National President of the National Union of Air Transport Employees (NUATE) Comrade Imonitie Itua has condemned the privatisation of the domestic terminal of the Murtala Mohammed Airport, Lagos, describing it as unpatriotic, wasteful and a misadventure.

Peaking to *Business Day* in Lagos Itua said the Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) was not in short of money and there was no need for its privatisation.

He also argued that the privatisation of the terminal will have many

From Bose Musari, in Lagos

disadvantages on workers as they may not be granted the opportunity to work with some foreign companies besides, the revenue collected from he sales may not be made available to FAAN, he argued further.

He also stressed that the privatisation offer which goes to a Canadian based company for a period of 10 years on a Build, Operate and Transfer deal through a syndicated grant of over N3.2 b may lead to external aggressions that may arise through insecurity of the nation's airports and airspaces, including re-

trenchment of highly trained personnel.

He further condemned the project, which he describes as sale of the live wire of the local airport. "It is our view that no matter the turn around maintenance that may occur during the 10 years tenure of Royal Souderton, the law of diminishing returns would also have taken its toll.

He also warned the management of FAAN to stop the continued deduction from staff salaries monies purportedly being contributions into the National Housing Fund Scheme, which he said has failed to secure the purpose for which it was intended.

## Dogonyaro tasks northern entrepreneurs on investment

Chairman of the Conference of Northern Chambers of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, Ambassador M.B.G. Dogonyaro has called on businessmen and women in the north to refrain from looking at investments "from the individual point of view" and embark on vigorous and sustained activities that would promote the northern economy.

He said developments within the country, such as the clamour for resource

From Abdullahi Bego, in Maiduguri

control and re-structuring made some people to portray the north as a parasite. Ambassador Dogonyaro tasked the northern entrepreneurs to work together "since it is obvious from what is on the ground that either from the economic or political point of view, the north can never be a parasite or a junior partner."

In a chat with newsmen recently in Maiduguri, Dogonyaro argued that the

north will continue to be the "deciding factor" on who rules this country "because of its population," as well as its comparative advantage in the agricultural sector.

He claimed that solid minerals alone "are enough to sustain this part of the country". He challenged northern state governors to harness and develop the numerous resources that abound in their respective states for the benefit of their people and the nation at large.

## Star Feature

# The colourful market at Kwoi

The market at Kwoi in Kaduna State is a fascinating place. The market sits by the motor park and it is called 'Juye baya' market, which is literally translated as 'Back turning' or

By Tadaferua Ujorha

is in session. They have *fura* and *kindirmo* (yoghurt) in abundance and people eagerly make purchases of the excellent meal. One significant feature of the Fulani ladies

sorts and small patterns of embroidery were being cut on the sides of the calabashes. The calabashes slowly became more impressive than their original state.

Some people sold local

implements are also on sale here, and these items were significant in view of the rainy season, which is gradually drawing closer.

At 'juye baya' market people are bold and free. You buy your meal, and



Another interesting head gear

not sold a calabash of yoghurt since morning, or you even laugh at yourself. It does happen at this market.

Music goes from tape recorders all over the market, and this may lessen the heat of the afternoon sun and the rigour of the

day. The ground is dusty and people walk about and look down at their sandals.

Here there is an endless concourse of stalls beneath which traders sit. Sometimes goods are simply spread on the ground.

This is 'juye baya' market where men are simple and free!



A fulani woman with a colourful head gear

turn back'. In other words, people in the market do their things or make purchases without any feeling of shame or shyness, and it was possible to notice some of this in the market when we arrived on Friday which is the market day of this community.

On a Friday, people come from so many neighbouring communities to sell goods at the 'Juye baya' market. Fulani milk maids are there too, and they maintain a constant dialogue while the market

were the excellent headgears, which they had on. The various head gears gave an impression of a little rainbow above each woman's head, and this imbued the market with some colour. It is interesting to note how impressive people become as soon as they simply merge with their culture. They draw endless values from this perpetual source of strength. There was much of this at Kwoi.

Then there were those who sold calabashes of all

mats which were very attractive, and these must be very pleasing to sit upon, we reasoned. People put the age of 'juye baya' market as being some three years at its present location. It was once located at a position within Kwoi proper.

'Juye baya' market offers other possibilities. There are little stalls on the outskirts of the market where one can have a meal and rejoice with friends in the afternoon. Cattle are also sold here. Farming

eat it when you like. You turn your back and enjoy yourself. You can laugh at your neighbour who has

*"The various head gears gave an impression of a little rainbow above each woman's head, and this imbued the market with some colour. It is interesting to note how impressive people become as soon as they simply merge with their culture."*



Calabashes on sale at 'Juye Baya' market



Some items on display.

All pictures by Felix Onigbinde

Star Feature

# Dances of the desert



The Larcoal musical concert entertaining spectators at the festival

The 11th Niger Republic national festival of arts and culture (Festival nationale de la jeumeme) was first conceived by late President Hussain Kuncé in April, 1978.

The main aim of the festival is to bring the various peoples of the country together, so that each group will understand the nature, tradition, behaviour and customs of the other and to further cement a healthy relationship for the peace and tranquility of the nation.

This year's festival (*de la jeumeme*) was declared open by the Minister of Youth Development and Sports, Mallam Issa Laminu.

The *Festival Nationale de la jeumeme* is a traditional festival staged once every five years across the eight states of the republic.

The festival according to Issa Laminu was organised by government not only to foster healthy relationships amongst various ethnic nationalities but to equally boost the traditions and customs of the Niger people.

Troupes from eight states of the Re-

public converged to compete in over 20 events including dances, races, football, musical concerts, arts and display of traditional costumes etc.

After the initial official protocols to declare the festival open, a group of youths of the Larcoal, performed and thrilled the mammoth crowd. The festival began with a march past by all the participating states.

Another group of fourteen beautifully dressed young boys and girls entertained the enthusiastic crowd with a philosophical song on the need to embrace only the good of western culture.

Although the song was more inspirational than musical, the combination of the youthful voices and well co-ordinated flowing rhythm thrilled the crowd which gave a standing ovation. The most thrilling show of the day came from the nomadic "Buzaye" who performed their traditional "Baki na rawa kafa na sata" (the legs steals while the mouth dances).

The "Baki na rawa kafa na sata" is an exciting performance by a man on a camel. He goes round a group of women

Hassan A. Karofi in Maradi, Niger Republic

clad in the Buzaye traditional costumes, singing, while the man on the camel manipulates the camel to a kneel and dance posture and this is done with expertise.

The camel dances, kneels and gallops in mutual consonance with the drum beat.

It was an interesting performance to the delight of the crowd.

After the camel dance, 'a group of over 200 school children clad in the country's national colours performed another exciting acrobatics displaying at various stages the Niger National Emblem.

Musicians, notably Sa'adou Bori performed at the occasion before the festival was declared open.

According to Audu Bagazam, our guide, the festival *de la jeumeme*, will

this year's festival.

Katsina to Maradi (venue of the festival) is not more than one hour drive.

Close to Jibia town, a short drive will see you through to the dances of the desert. From Guidan Haro, Gobirawa, Dianmarat, *Danmakao Radi I to Danissa* (the biggest town before Maradi).

However, one visible and unforgettable sight is the biting poverty of the people. Although hospitable and warm, the people that inhabit every thatched roof available on your way to Maradi, represents a people devastated by drought and malnutrition.

But the beautiful African architecture with its peculiar thatched roof sometimes with designs that look like artistic brick works adorned the houses.

In his speech at the opening ceremony, the Minister of Youth Development and Sports, Mallam Issa Laminu, expatiated on the aim of the festival when he declared



This a procession of the Dosso delegation exhibiting their traditional "Ganga" music.

usually attract notable musicians such as carnabal Sa'adou Bori, Tubal Doso, Jazz band Agades, Samari na capital orkaaltar Gurmu, orkaaltar Guruba and Sani Zandar among others.

The musicians thrilled spectators for 10 days while various other groups showed their artistry in traditional costumes, dances and songs.

Each group dressed in distinct colours and hair style.

Niger Republic consists mainly of the Zanderma, Hausa, Tibawa, Barebari and Buzaye. These tribes and some others converged at the Maradi Stadium for

that 'as a result of this festival, our country has become a household name in the area of traditional wrestling Takwaendo in West Africa, indeed the best'.

He said his government will do everything possible to improve on the cultural antecedents of its people.

Although, the festival nationale *de la jeumeme*, was not staged for more than 12 years, since 1989. Indeed, it is a thrilling experience with all the crafts, traditions and customs Africa can boast of.

Hassan Karofi, a Staff of Daily Trust was in Maradi, Niger Republic, recently.



The 'Yan mata' of Maradi displaying their fashion and dances at the opening ceremony.

**"The "Baki na rawa kafa na sata" is an exciting performance by a man on a camel. He goes round a group of women clad in the Buzaye traditional costumes, singing, while the man on the camel manipulates the camel to a kneel and dance posture and this is done with expertise. The camel dances, kneels and gallops in mutual consonance with the drum beat."**

# Focus



President Obasanjo presenting the new colours to the parade commander, Lt-Col. F. S. Owonibi at NDA parade ground

## 'Colours' parade at the NDA

President Olusegun Obasanjo was in Kaduna penultimate week on a brief of official engagement at the country's premier military institution, Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA). The President's visit to the state was the third since he took over the mantle of leadership as the country's fourth executive president.

His first official visit to the state was on the heels of the sectarian crisis that rocked the state in February last year. The President then came to commiserate with the government and people of the state over the crisis, which he described as a "civilian coup".

But his posture changed when in September last year he came back for a three-day official visit. No doubt he was extremely happy that September in view of the fact that peace had rapidly returned to the troubled state so much that those who had hitherto fled at the peak of the crisis returned back to their normal businesses.

Again, on Monday, March 19, 2001 the president was at hand in the state. One could see that he was happier, this time than during his earlier visits.

This time around, he was in the state as the guest of Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA) for its 'trooping and presentation of colours' parade, the third in the series.

For the premier military institution, the occasion was historic in the sense that it was the first time it was presented with colours in a democratic dispensation. No wonder then that a number of high ranking government officials as well as serving and retired military officers witnessed the colourful event which took place at the parade ground of the academy.

Among those that witnessed the event were the host governor, Alhaji Ahmed Mohammed Markarfi, Minister of Defence, Lt-Gen T.Y. Danjuma, Malam Lawal Batagarawa and Mrs. Dupe Adelaja, Ministers of State for Army and Navy respectively. Also at hand were Chief of Defence Staff, Vice Admiral Ibrahim Ogohi, Chief of Army

### From Dare Oyewole, in Kaduna

Staff, Lt. Gen. Victor Malu, and Chief of Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Victor Ombu, Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal Ibrahim Alfa and the Inspector General of Police, Mr. Musliu Smith.

The history of colours is as old as the history of warfare and the military. From the medieval age to the contemporary era, the flag has been very significant. In Military activities, it is said to be symbolic of the spirit of military formation and also serves as an embodiment of collective destiny and sources of inspiration in times of war and peace.

Here in Nigeria, available records show that the four infantry battalions that constituted Nigeria regiment were first granted regimental colours 79 years ago. The tradition of presenting national and regimental colours to deserving formations was however established in the Nigerian Armed Forces at Independence in 1960.

But before the advent of colonialism in Nigeria, available records show that colours were used in much the same way as they were used in the British Empire. For instance, the Sokoto caliphate had a strong tradition of carrying flags into battle, as a symbol of collective strength. Also commanders sent on expeditions by Shehu Usman Danfodio were usually given flags to symbolize authority derived from the Supreme Commander, the Caliph. In Kano, for example the keeper of the

flag was the Sarkin Dawaki Maituta, who was also the commander of the Cavalry force.

In the riverine areas of Southern Nigeria a similar tradition of flag flying on the bows of war canoes during expeditions also existed. Even in pre-colonial Nigeria, colours were very significant in military engagements.

Before the four infantry battalions that constituted the Nigerian regiment got their colours 79 years ago, colour presentation in Nigeria started with the heroic performance of the Nigerian regiment as part of the West African Frontier troops in the first and second World Wars. The Nigerian Regiment earned their first colours after gallant battles of East Africa and Cameroon between 1916 and 1918.

Away from the national level, the NDA was first presented with the national and regimental colours in May 1970 by the then Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon. The colours were however retired from active service after 17 years. New ones were presented in November 1987 by the then military President, Gen Ibrahim Babangida. The colours were formally retired March 19, 2001 after serving the institution for thirteen years.

Daily Trust learnt that the new colours presented to the academy by President Obasanjo took some time to be produced. The production, it was gathered was undertaken by a foreign company and the Defence Industries Corporation of Nigeria (DICON). According to sources, the texture was made

from the finest quality of silk and embroidery mainly hand-woven. The new colours are expected to serve the academy for a period of not less than ten years before they will be retired and kept in the academy museum.

Speaking at the occasion, President Obasanjo expressed delight at the high professional and patriotic manner in which products of the academy had responded to the challenges of service in the past.

He said despite military incursions, into politics, NDA had managed to stay focused on its original objective of educating patriotic officers for service in our Armed Forces.

He also noted with satisfaction that the academy had over the years met the expectation of the national and regimental colours since 1970:

President Obasanjo used the forum to remind members of the Armed Forces that there can be no greater honour to a professional soldier than loyalty and patriotic service to the nation in consonance with the national constitution.

"The dark days of the past characterized by suspicion and vindictiveness, have now been replaced by an open and transparent system based on merit and the rule of law," he said adding that they must now dutifully contribute to sustaining this process as according to him, they are equal stakeholders in the enterprise of building a strong and stable Nigeria.

Stressing the government's belief in high standards, he said the colourful and highly regimented parade he witnessed was an affirmation of the academy's seriousness in the pursuit of excellence and pledged the government's preparedness to assist the academy to achieve its goal.

President Obasanjo said that huge investments had already been made in order to maintain a well-trained, cost-effective, compact and mobile Armed Forces, adding: "We will rehabilitates refurbish, upgrade and replace as and when necessary."

***"But before the advent of colonialism in Nigeria, available records show that colours were used in much the same way as they were used in the British Empire. For instance, the Sokoto caliphate had a strong tradition of carrying flags into battle, as a symbol of collective strength."***

NEWS

# 4 MASSOB members remanded for alleged armed robbery

Four members of the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) have been remanded in the Owerri federal prison, for alleged robbery.

The MASSOB members' detention followed an order given by an Owerri chief magistrate, Mr. N.B. Ukoha, before whom they were arraigned on three counts of armed robbery.

They were accused of robbing Mathew Nwunne of Waterside filling station, Umunnachi, Obowo, in Imo State of 22,500 naira while armed with horsewhips and of robbing one

Daniel Nwoha of Ahiazu in the state, of 35,000 naira, being proceeds from sale of fuel.

Chief Magistrate Ukoha, after hearing the charges against the MASSOB members,

ordered that they be remanded in the prison custody while their case

files be sent to the state director of public prosecutions since, according to

the magistrate, the court lacked jurisdiction to try armed robbery cases.

## Govt mass transit operators kick against deregulation

Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of government mass transit companies in the South-South and the South-East zones of the country have declared their opposition against the planned deregulation of the oil sector by the federal government.

The group stated their position on the deregulation policy in a communiqué

issued at the end of their inaugural meeting in Umuahia.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the meeting, was hosted by the general manager of Abia Line, Rev. Sam Ekeledo, under the aegis of "the meeting of the general managers of government mass transit companies in the Eastern states".

NAN learnt that the

group discussed a wide range of issues that affected the smooth operations of the scheme, including the proposed deregulation, and cross-fertilised ideas on how to move the scheme forward.

In their communiqué, signed by Ekeledo and made available to NAN, the general managers said that the federal government's argument that deregulation of the oil industry would arrest fuel scarcity in the country was not correct.

They said that the crisis in the oil industry was caused by the continued importation of refined products and the irregularities and sharp



Minister of Transport practices that characterised the distribution process.

They, therefore, enjoined the federal government to beef up the quantity of refined products in the nation's refineries to meet

local demand as well as stop the continued importation of petroleum products.

They further called on the federal government to hand over the distribution of petroleum products to transport operators "since distribution is an aspect of transportation," adding that the job was currently being "mismanaged by neophytes".

The meeting also called for the resuscitation, reorganisation and proper running of the federal urban mass transit agency (FUMTA), in view of the initial successes recorded by the agency, adding that it should also be decentralised "so as to give it a dynamic and profitable outlook".

The meeting resolved that "for the purpose of creating order and control and to eliminate friction in mass transit operations, the local government operators must comply with the directives of the federal urban mass transit authority (FUMTA) which limited their operations within the states".

They said that the local governments could "obtain permission, where necessary," from the state mass transit agencies before embarking on inter-state operation.

Ekeledo later told NAN that part of the objectives of the meeting were "to foster greater co-operation among the CEOs of the scheme, exchange ideas and programmes and offer relevant advice on mass transit matters to the various governments and other stakeholders.



Justice Muhammed Uwali, chairman of the National Conference on the Problems of Corruption in Nigeria in hand shake with the Minister of State for Justice, Alhaji Musa Elayo Abdullahi ... recently. Pix: Felix Onigbinde

## Teachers call for special salary scale

The president of the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT), Chief D. J. Atunrase has appealed to the federal government to approve the implementation of the teachers special salary structure (TSS) towards improving their welfare.

Chief Atunrase who made the appeal recently in Gombe during the commissioning of a new office complex of the Gombe state branch of the NUT named "Teachers' House", appreciated the efforts of the federal government for "liberating workers generally and teachers in particular".

The president who was represented by the third vice-president, Mr. Timo Okonu also called on the National Assembly to legislate appropriately for adequate funds to cater for all matters affecting teachers' salaries and allowances, stressing that such funds be deducted from first charge so as to "stall the fight by local government chairmen to manage primary education".

Speaking at the occasion, the state governor, Alhaji Abubakar Habu Hashidu reiterated the resolute determination of his administration to promote qualitative education through continued provision of

necessary support within the available resources.

He disclosed that in an effort to revamp the educational sector, the state government had constructed new classrooms and examination halls at the cost of 25 million naira while pre-vocational workshops were constructed in each of the 11 local government areas of the state at the cost of 21 million naira.

According to him, instructional materials worth about 9 million naira and 5,457 sets of furniture were also purchased and distributed to all the post-primary schools in the state in addition to the renovation of some staff quarters to enhance the productivity of the teachers.



Prof. Aborishade

## Lagos'll appoint only judges of integrity - Tinubu

The Lagos state governor, Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu has said that he will not let down the residents of the state, particularly in the appointment of judicial officers for the state.

Tinubu who disclosed this to aviation correspondents in Ikeja on his way to Abuja, said that his administration will put men and women of integrity, honour and good reputation in the state judicial system to earn the respect of the international community.

Speaking on the appointment of a chief judge for the state, which has generated some uproar, Tinubu said that his administration could not discriminate

From Shakirat Abdulmajeed, Lagos

against certain people, saying, "the chief judge post is an institution, not parochial or politicised, it belongs to everyone".

"I have covenant with the people of Lagos state, both indigenes and non-indigenes voted for me, and I believe in constitutional democracy, with the right to invest, to derive benefit from that investment", stressing that it is too cheap for people to engage in bad politics.

Senator Tinubu affirmed that the chief judge of the state as a non-indigene was even more "passionate about this indigeneship" than any judge he knew.

According to him, "those who are playing cheap politics can continue with any cheap politics they want to play, we do the job we are sent to do, so that the judiciary will come back to its glory, to the expectation of the people, the investing communities who look up to the judicial system to attract that foreign investment and investors to our state," he added.

He stated further "any judicial officer that will be sitting in judging a decision or process that is peculiar to the indigenes is not taking those decisions as an indigene but on behalf of the entire people of Lagos state and the judiciary that he swore to uphold".

NEWS

# Resource control wrangle: Ogun State says Supreme Court lacks jurisdiction

As the legal battle between the federal and the 36 states over resource control moves to a decisive stage, Ogun State government has declared that the Supreme Court in Abuja lacks jurisdiction to entertain the suit.

In a five-page objection raised by the state to counter federal government's claim and made available to *Daily Trust* by the state's Attorney-General, Chief Oluseyi Oyebolu, Ogun state asserted that the issue of seaward boundary or littoral state which the plaintiff sought to be determined falls within the realm of international law and treaties between nations and such issues can only be adjudicated in international courts or tribunals.

Ogun state, which is the 27<sup>th</sup> defendant in the case filed



Chief Bola Ige, Minister of Justice

by the attorney-general of the federation, claimed that power to define, fix or determine the land or seaward boundary of

From Bajulaye Olumide in Abeokuta

any state within the Federal Republic of Nigeria, as that of the legislative arm of the federal government.

The relief sought from the court, and based on section 162(2) of the constitution, the

state argued, is misinformed in that neither the said section nor its provision defines the boundary of any state.

In an 18 paragraph statement of defence supporting the preliminary objection, the state contends as irrelevant the issue of whether it is the

federal government of Nigeria or any of the constituent states that has the power to exercise legislative, executive or judicial power over territorial water, exclusive economic zone and continental shelf.

It further stated that if indeed such powers are

exercised by the federal government of Nigeria over the territorial water, exclusive waters, exclusive zone and continental shelf such powers do not vitiate the constitutional rights of the coastal states to 13 percent of the revenue accruing to the federation account.

## Adoption of *amana* will stop corruption – Adegbite

The adoption of the Qur'anic principle of *Amana* (trust) will serve as an antidote to

corruption in the country, the secretary-general, Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, Dr. Abdulateef Adegbite, has

said in Ilorin.

Delivering a keynote address at a one-day conference on Islam in

Nigeria, Dr. Adegbite said trust is fundamental in Islam.

He said that Muslims should not condone corruption and should be in the forefront of the war against it and that one of the causes of our prolonged political tragedy in the country was the deliberate exclusion of a role for Islam in the conception and formulation of political policies.

He said that the colonialists did not even give a thought to the Islamic principles, let alone consider Islamic ideology as meriting a consideration as a possible alternative to the Anglo-Saxon system.

Adegbite asked Muslims to be more involved in public affairs and to come forward from time to time to expose Islamic alternatives on issues.

Adegbite, however, urged Muslims to affirm their commitment to a united Nigeria, a country entrenched in democracy, freedom and good governance.

The one-day conference was sponsored by the Islamic Welfare Foundation.

## Nasarawa governor counsels on peaceful co-existence

Governor Abdullahi Adamu of Nasarawa State, has cautioned that constant ethnic clashes were a bane to the progress and development of communities in particular and the society in general.

Speaking at a parley with people in Lafia senatorial district of the state, the governor urged the ethnic groups in the area to shun hatred and endeavour to live in harmony.

"Lafia senatorial district and, indeed, Nasarawa state is heterogeneous. We, therefore, must be accommodating of one another. Every ethnic group in this state has come to stay and that is how God wants it to be. Accommodation, therefore, is the only basis for peace and progress," he advised.

The governor charged communities in the district to utilise the various amenities

From Ma'ashim Ibn Ma'ashim, Lafia

government has established to boost local businesses and

community development.

Adamu further admonished citizens of Lafia senatorial district and Lafia local government area to stop

complaining and work hard to maintain and improve their leadership in the private sector.

During his tour of the

district, the governor visited Doma, Obi, Awe and Keana councils where he inspected and commissioned some projects.



The Katsina State Deputy Governor, Alhaji Tukur Jikamshi and the state's Commissioner for Commerce, jointly receiving a gift from KCCIMA's Director of Media Affairs during the last Kaduna International Trade Fair ... recently

## Gombe First Lady joins war against women trafficking

The wife of Gombe state governor, Hajjiya Aishatu Abubakar Hashidu, has joined the campaign against human trafficking with an appeal to the federal government to intensify the screening of persons travelling abroad, particularly women, in order to curb the ugly trend.

Hajjiya Aishatu made the call recently while fielding questions from newsmen in her office at Government House, Gombe.

She commended the

initiative of the wife of the vice-president, Mrs. Tinin Abubakar, in championing the crusade against human trafficking, child labour and other social vices in the country.

The governor's wife who identified early marriage and girl-child school drop-outs as major problems to women education, especially in the northern states, disclosed that plans are underway to launch her pet project: The Girl-Child Education in the state with a view to arresting

the situation.

Hajjiya Aishatu urged the womenfolk to embrace both formal and informal education



Gov. Hashidu

and skills-acquisition towards achieving economic self-

reliance and boosting family welfare, expressing confidence in the transformation of the womenfolk by the end of the present administration's tenure.

Commenting on women in politics, Hajjiya Aishatu debunked the jinx that politics is a game strictly for men, stressing that "women will clinch about 70 percent of elective offices in the state in next elections".

## Albarka rounds off airlift of pilgrims

Albarka Air Services says it has completed the airlift of the 13,000 pilgrims it was mandated to uplift from Saudi Arabia at the end of this year's Muslim pilgrimage.

By Elizabeth Ikyanyon

airline, in the statement, expressed gratitude to the federal government for the opportunity given to it to participate in this year's hajj

A statement for the airline's manager, public affairs, Mr. Durosinmi Meseko, said the pilgrims who were from the Lagos and Maiduguri zones, were returned on schedule.

Mr. Meseko said the return leg for the Lagos zone was concluded on Tuesday March 27, 2001 while Maiduguri zone was concluded on April 1.

The management of the



Mohammed Marwa

# INSIDE POLITICS

## APP would sweep 2003 national polls - Dep. Gov.

**I**n an interview he granted our Gombe State correspondent, the Deputy Governor of the State Barrister Joshua Lidani spoke of the pressure the government faces from the opposition, about infrastructural development, peace and politics as the year 2003 approaches. He bares his mind on many issues to **ABDULLAHI DUTSE** in Gombe.

**EXCERPTS:-**

Recently your government has been subjected to a lot of accusations on non-performance by the opposition in the state. Sir how do you react to these accusations?

Thank you for that question. Its true of recent there have been series of publications in the media especially the news papers making one allegation or the other most of them false allegations against the government which I believe is an indication that some people are becoming desperate as they have seen very clearly the writing on the wall that they don't stand any chance come the year 2003 and hence their resort to this politics of blackmail. However unfortunately for them, Gombe State is an enlightened state, people know what is going on. They may be able to deceive people from outside who read these things but definitely not the people in Gombe.

If you say that the fertilizer blending plant is not working, the people of Gombe know that it is working. They know that the president commissioned the factory, they also know the cost because it was made known during the commissioning. All this matters are not secret so you can't fool all the people all the time.

Well, some people are probably nursing some ambitions and they feel they can paint us black, vilify us so to speak, it might give them some advantage you know, but politics is not like that, politics is being honest with the people, doing what they want you to do in the cause of improving their welfare.

But we don't see the State Government reacting in like manner, by joining issues with critics on the pages of the news papers?

We don't play dirty politics that's why if we do that we are bringing ourselves to the same level as they are so we do things the way we've been doing it in an honest, transparent and open manner. Sir, recently the APP in Gombe State embarked on campaigns in most parts of the state - why is it so?

No, It is not a campaigns perse but I will rather call it a reconsolidation to reassure ourselves that we are still relevant and to allow people who want to joint the bandwagon to do so. This is an opportunity we are opening to people who want to joint the train of success to do so, otherwise they will be left behind. People in the state are very euthusiastic about the government as the reception we got is very tremendous, we feel justified that the course of action taken is being appreciated by the people. Eh people have shown tremendous interest in the party, they have shown confidence in the Government of G O V E R N O R Abubakar Habu Hashidu and they want to be part of the success.

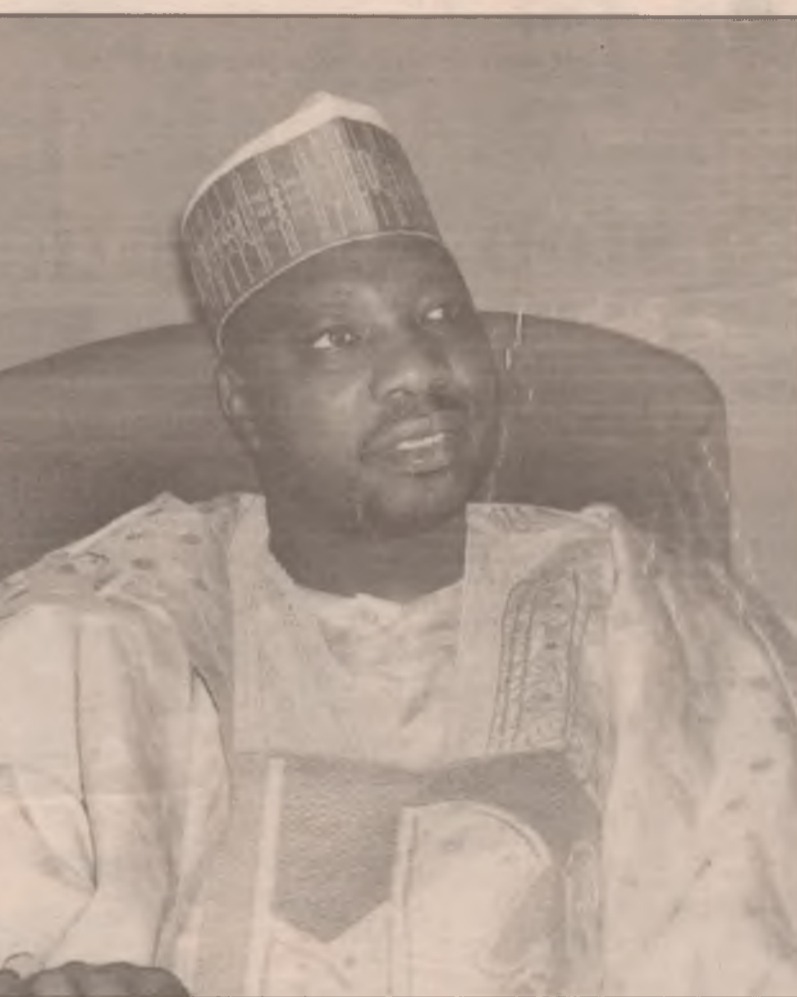
Some prominent politicians in the state are against the recent creation of emirates and chiefdoms as well as the appointment of the Emirs and Chiefs which they said is a politically motivated as it is aimed at ensuring that by 2003 you will use the influence of these traditional rulers for electoral victory? How true is this assertion.

What is wrong with that? There is nothing wrong with it. If you think there is a way in which you can reach the people to do things you want, what is wrfong with that? Politics is all about, what the people want and do it for them if you can, I don't believe anything is wrong with that. The people want to be given some measure of independence in their own traditional institution which they have been deceived for long we are just satisfying their yearnings and aspirations as well as their genuine desires. We were committed to meeting their genuine desires. If it translates into getting more votes for us, the better.

How do you react to allegations that your government has lost track of focus and all the promises contained in its manifesto as regards alleviating the sufferings of the people of Gombe State?

You have to understand that the basis for the existence

of any Government is the provision of security for lives and property, and that is what we've been doing. We made the issue of the security of lives and property of the people of Gombe state our number one priority. Without these basic things, then nothing else makes any meaning.



Barrister Joshua Lidani

So, once we've provided it to the people and they are happy. We've assured them that we are doing the right things, because the basic thing they wanted, we've provided for them.

Rallies were often held and you hear people shouting the slogan "ta zarce ta zarce" meaning you should continue into the second term. Has you as a government decided to re-contest elections come 2003?

No, we have not taken that decision, we are yet to complete our second year in office and it is too early for us to start speculation on that. We strongly believe that God in his infinite ways, will decide when the time comes. When the time comes, may be we'll decide and see if the people tells us, 'look you've been doing a good job, why don't you continue, then we'll consider it, but so far we've not taken a decision on the matter yet.

Some APP Governors, especially in the North said that by the end of the year 2002, it would have been apparent that the APP would take over as the leading party that will form the central Government. Are you of the same opinion?

I am of that opinion, I am optimistic because if you look at what is happening in PDP, the party is fragmented into so many factions so many groups, and they are not compatible. It would be very difficult for them to pair up together, come me year

on massive construction of feeder roads and water supply. Feeder roads linking major high ways and other states. We also have the intentions of embarking on the provision of hand pumps in all the constituencies. Luckily we have ordered for drilling rigs from UNICEF and they agreed to support us in that direction and the rigs will be here in the next two weeks so when they arrive we'll embark on that project in not less than ten constituencies in the state. In fact the focus of our government this year apart from the Gombe Regional Water Supply will be Rural Development. All the constituencies have submitted a number of proposals on roads these we will also do and then we have also electrification project for the rural areas. Those areas that have not yet been served, we will make sure that they are served, so the focus actually this year apart from the Gombe regional water supply as I earlier said will be rural development.

Sir, I would like you to make some comments on the issue of religion in the state as well as general peaceful coexistence among its diverse peoples.

Yes, you see one peculiar feature of Gombe is that it has several ethnic groups, it has several, ...well, two main religions are there plus those who don't even have any religion, like they use to say, and all these people are indigenes of Gombe State, it is not that they came from a different place and settled or they are pursuing their businesses or something, they are people of Gombe State. Christians, Muslims and animists, so we have to understand this peculiarity and for us to live together in peace, we have to understand these differences and see how we would be able to accommodate each other, and that is what we have been trying to do all along to see that people understand that ours is a peculiar society. There is the need for us to be more accommodating, more tolerant and if we do that, then these differences that we have will

In the current financial year, the state government is planning to shift emphasis towards rural development. How are the rural areas going to feel the impact of this decision?

We are going to embark

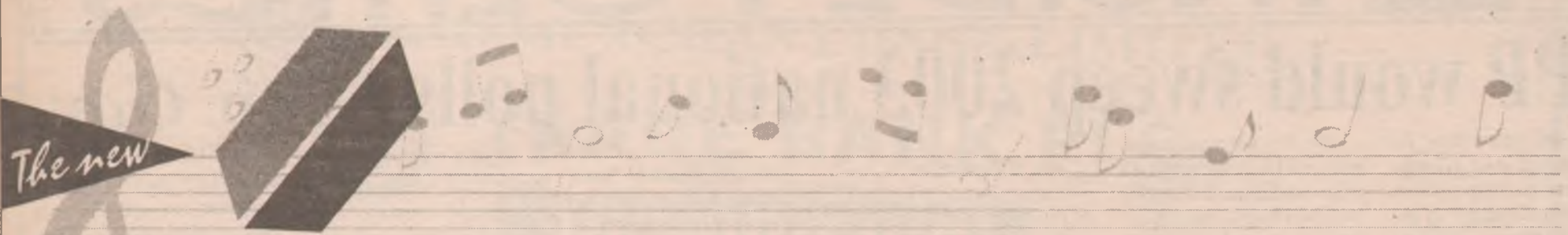
ultimately turn to be our greatest strength. People should understand this because without peace we cannot make any progress, so peace is very important and we want to make Gombe State the haven of peace.

Traditional institution are usually very useful in matters of this nature; that is assisting to help in the maintenance of peace, law and orderliness in the society, I don't know if there is any clear cut role in this respect given to the traditional rulers?

Yes, we have had meetings with them and we have shown them the importance of them getting involved in the security of their areas. They should monitor the activities of people who come to settle or those that are passing through or those that come to visit their domains. They should monitor them and see if they are engaging in some acts that are not in the interest of peace. Once they see that kind of situation they should make the report to the appropriate agency. They should serve as custodians of peace. Actually we are involving them in this respect of security in their domains.

In the recent past when the state government was actually battling the invasion of armed bandits and foreign cattle rearers, known as the Udawas, the state government had reason to raise eyebrows about the activities of some traditional rulers. I don't know about the standing order issued by the government on any erring ruler found to be colluding with these armed bandits or foreign cattle rearers that were attacking innocent Nigerians.

Well, that was when we observed that some of the traditional rulers, not the senior ones, but the junior ones were turning blind eye to the activities of some of these criminals. Either they turned a blind eye or they didn't report or they were just careless. So they were directed to be more vigilant in monitoring the activities of strangers and reporting them promptly to the law enforcement agencies. We don't have concrete evidence of collaboration, but there were reports that these bandits sometimes take refuge in the domains of some of these village heads.



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OF THE PRESS

aspn 0078

# Lady's Line

For women of today

## Give yourself a beauty treat

**Y**ou're a woman on the go, with a demanding career and an even more demanding family. Your days are spent answering phones, meeting deadlines and playing the usual head-games required to ascend the corporate ladder. Your nights are filled with preparing meals, checking homework, catering to your children, listening to your mate and preparing yourself and your family for the next working day. Your eyes-the windows to your soul are tired. And slowly but surely your whole body is sliding toward a total meltdown. You've come to realize a disturbing truth: True energy is created through a steady diet of relaxation and physical rejuvenation. In other words, it's time for you to make time for yourself.

It all begins with making a simple commitment to yourself: One hour, at least once a week, strictly for pampering.

Start with this exercise: Stand in front of a mirror and take note of all of the things you admire about yourself. Do you have a smile that can melt an igloo? Do you have curvaceous hips like Vivica A. Fox, or legs like Tina Turner? Whatever your goods are, point them out to yourself often. (Feel free to ask your mate what he likes most about you, too; you may have overlooked something.)

Next, make an appointment with yourself and keep it. Admittedly, some Sisters may consider time-stealing to be a selfish crime, but you likely owe it to yourself. On occasion, every Sister should indulge in the total spa experience. In the meantime, with just a few easy steps, you can create a spa sanctuary in your own home. McClure suggests creating an area in your home that is free from distraction. "This should be a place for you to meditate, do yoga or write your thoughts in your mood journal," she says.

Now retreat to your spa sanctuary and prepare to pamper yourself from head to toe.

### Your crowning glory

A beautiful hairstyle should frame your beautiful face. You should strive to keep your hair healthy-no matter what hairstyle you wear

### Saving face

Your face is the first thing the world sees. But what exactly do they see? Is your skin as dry as the Sahara, or as oily as the Texas drilling fields? Are the wrinkles and fine lines slipping up on you, threatening to reveal your true age? Whatever the case, there are some quick-fix tricks that can have your skin glowing almost instantly.

To tighten your pores or diminish the appearance of fine lines, try a homemade cryotherapy treatment. The International Spa Association's version of cryotherapy uses frozen products on the skin's surface to produce a

constricting effect on skin tissue and muscle mass, thereby creating a "lifting" of the areas to be treated.

For the at-home version of the treatment, first, apply moisturizer to your face and neck. Then, put ice into a plastic bag and gently rub it all over your face and neck in a circular motion for two to three minutes. This tones the skin and reduces the appearance of fine lines. To revitalize dull-looking skin, give your face a one-two punch of hot and cold sensation. After you've cleansed your skin, take two washcloths, one soaked in hot water (as hot as you can take it) and the other in cold water. Hold the hot cloth to your face for one minute and then switch to the cold cloth for 10 seconds. Do this three times. This causes capillaries to contract and expand, which improves blood flow, tone and colour. (If you have sensitive skin, this method is just as effective using gentler temperatures). Now your face is primed for your makeup.

Tired, puffy eyes are a no-no in the world of beauty, and baggy eyes are a telltale sign of a woman who's been overextending herself. The best method to fight bags is to get plenty of rest, drink plenty of water and invest in some fresh cucumbers. Ever wonder why upscale spas are quick to slap cucumber slices over your eyes? Cucumber is excellent for softening the skin and cooling and soothing the eyes. (Another use for your cucumber: If you're feeling a little bloated, create your own spa drink

by adding a thin slice of cucumber to a glass of water; cucumber seeds are a natural diuretic.)

### Love your body

Now it's time for the full-body makeover. It's vital to develop a customized all-over body regimen for your skin type before trying any new products, so be sure to consult your dermatologist. One of the more popular detoxification treatments is the salt rub. This procedure is believed to invigorate the skin and improve circulation. (Do not give yourself a salt rub if you have sensitive skin, a rash or have recently used a hair-removal technique; it could result in "break-outs" or pain.

After you shower, take a handful of deep-sea salts or Epsom salt and massage your wet skin gently, progressively rubbing more deeply. Repeat the treatment on your elbows, abdomen, legs, arms and back until you've massaged your entire body.

### Fancy hands and feet

Your hands and feet deserve special attention, too, not just for cosmetic reasons but for health reasons as well, says Octavia Sansing of the Bettye O Spa in Chicago. "You can polish your toes and your fingernails at home, but you should get a professional pedicure and manicure to remove the build-up of dead skin cells." Sansing advises. "A good manicure and pedicure should be a part of your monthly beautification regimen."

Culled from *Ebony*

## Cook's corner

with Halima Yakubu

### Coconut Rice

#### Recipes

- One large coconut
- Two cups of rice
- One kg of meat
- Two large fresh tomatoes
- One large onion
- 100g margarine
- One tin tomato paste
- Salt and pepper to taste

#### Method

1. Shell and grate the coconut finely or beat in a motor.
2. Wash the coconut in the water and strain. Squeeze out all the milk from the coconut into the water and discard chaff.
3. Put the coconut water into a saucepan. Wash and cut meat into pieces. Season with salt and pepper and then add to the coconut water. Bring to boil and simmer until meat is partly tender.
4. Grind and chop onion, slice or grind tomatoes, and grind pepper. Add to meat. Add tomato paste and continue simmering.
5. Wash the rice and add to other ingredients. See that there is just enough water to cook the rice. If there is not enough add some more, but it should not be too much.
6. Bring to the boil. Add more seasoning. Add the margarine. Stir occasionally. When the rice is almost soft, cover sauce pan with cloth, then with the lid to keep in the steam.

Serve with boiled cabbage, or any other vegetable.

## 5-Minute Fiction

With Ms. Farouq

## Love's conquests

**N**ajib looked over at his wife and baby and felt his heart swell with joy. Ever since the birth of his daughter, six weeks ago, his whole life has revolved around them. They are, no doubt, the two most important people in the world to him.

He reached out for the button and switched on the car stereo. The track that played straightaway was from the Muslim Youth of North America (MYNARAPS) tape. The words were most appropriate for the moment:

"Praise Allah together, say *Alhamdulillah, Alhamdulillah, Alhamdulillah...*"

The music played, and Najib could only nod in agreement. All praises are undoubtedly due to Almighty Allah for His numerous blessings.

He gave me a wonderful and considerate wife, a perfect, little daughter and a good, moderate source of livelihood. Najib thought to himself. They drove on in silence then he took the turn that brought them face to face with Zuma Rock and he let out a short sigh.

"Does it still have that magical effect on you?" Jaleelah asked moving their daughter from the left to the right side in order to breast-feed her.

"I don't think it will ever cease to," Najib replied fixing his eyes ahead. Though several kilometres ahead, Zuma Rock always has the entrancing effect on him. The closer he drives towards it, the greater the feeling of awe and reverence that fills him at the sight. It seems to suddenly loom into sight, large, domineering and seemingly blocking a federal highway. Yet you are drawn to its natural charm: its smooth rocky surface, the smoky top that seems to blend with the skyline, the scant vegetation on its lower sides and the rough etches on its front view that seem to make up a human face, all combine to give it a beauty all its own. Zuma Rock is majestic and awe-inspiring, reflecting two attributes of the Almighty Himself.

Looking out at the rock as they drove smoothly past it, Jaleelah looked at her husband and said, "It's hard to believe that despite its solid nature and size, this rock will be ground to fine dust one day."

"It's hard to believe indeed, but that's what the Holy Q'uran says, and on that day even bigger rocks and mountains will meet the same fate. It is the promise of the All-powerful, who put them here in the first place."

"Yes, and whoever put them here in the first place will certainly be able to change them to any other form. He will be able to do all things," Jaleelah answered.

Strangely, her answer was comforting to Najib. When they left their home in Abuja for a visit with the family in Kaduna, he had been full of misgivings over what reception they will get.

There had been a stiff opposition to their marriage from his side of the family and it had only taken his strong resolve and the grace of the Almighty for the marriage to take place.

This will be the first time they will be travelling home since they got married exactly one year ago. When he drove into the FCT with Jaleelah by his side last year, he was full of bitterness over the way some of his relations shamelessly displayed their hostility to his bride. What kept him going was the thought of sharing his life with the one woman he ever truly loved. Luckily in the one year they lived together, she had never given him cause to regret all that he went through because of her.

Looking back on the events of last year, he couldn't help wondering how prejudices could affect even the most rational people sometimes. They didn't know Jaleelah, never having lived with her but they all knew that she was unsuitable because her mother wasn't one of them.

"Where her mother comes from" his aunt had said, "they treat their men like dirt, the wives are the bosses, is that what you'd like to become, a woman's errand boy?"

Before he could respond to that, his elder sister had joined with her own criticism of Jaleelah's mother's tribe. Then another aunt chipped in her contribution, till Najib could take it no longer and he simply walked out of the room. He went straight out of the house and drove away, having no idea where he was going. The only thing he knew was that he missed his own mother terribly, she was such a sensible person, who always encouraged you to do what was right by you, unless the disadvantages were glaringly obvious. It's a pity she isn't alive today, she would have certainly stood by him, all prejudices notwithstanding. Alas she is dead and he had to contend with people who don't love him half as much as she did, but who will insist that they knew what was best for him.

Later that evening he had gone to his father and said, "Please advise these women to end their opposition or else I will get married without their blessings." And his father had intervened and the rest is history. Even when his daughter was born and he phoned to inform them, he had discouraged them from coming to Abuja, because he was under no illusions that they will be happy. He had promised to bring both mother and child to them as soon the forty days of confinement were over.

Now they are on their way and he couldn't help asking "Hope you are ready to meet the great gang?"

"I am, if you are"

"Well then, here we are" and he turned into the short lane that leads to his family house.

The younger members couldn't even wait for them to come in, they rushed outside and welcomed them effusively. Jaleelah couldn't believe her eyes, but then neither could Najib.

They went inside and all the sisters and aunts trooped into the courtyard to welcome them. So many hands were outstretched to take the baby, but Najib picked her up and handed her over to his mother's sister Inna Altine, who led the opposition to his marriage last year.

"When you said you had named the baby after your mother, I didn't know that she inherited more than my sister's name, she inherited her looks. This baby is late Aisha's spitting image. Oh May Allah have mercy on my sister" and wonder of wonders the tears were running down her cheeks.

Much later, after the greetings and other pleasantries, Najib and Jaleelah sat in a room in the family home eating lunch.

"I wonder what caused this change in them", Najib said.

"I wonder too, except to say its one of love's conquests, you know people say that 'love conquers all'."

"May be it does. But to me it's more like Almighty God's ability to do all things."

"That must be it", she agreed smiling back at him, what else can explain the change from a whole flock of adversaries to a troop of well-wishers.

Arts & Entertainment

# Beauty Queen to star in Taj Mahal movie

US-based Indian technology tycoons have come together to fund an Imax movie on the Taj Mahal, in which former Miss World, Aishwarya Rai, will play the queen who inspired the marble monument.

The large-screen movie to be shown in special theatres will involve a budget of up to \$10 million and a cast of big "hollywood" names. Director Ganapathy Bharat told Reuters recently.

"It is not just for India... It is going to be released all over the world," Bharat said adding that he expected the project to be the biggest international movie venture out of India since "Gandhi".

Richard Attenborough's epic

based on the life of Indian independence leader Mahatma Gandhi won several Oscars nearly two decades ago.

Imax Corp. creates the illusion of depth and movement through its large-format film and theatres fitted with huge curved screens. India's first Imax movie theatre opened in Bombay last week.

Aishwarya Rai, after winning the Miss World pageant, ventured successfully as an actress in Bombay's "Hollywood" cinema. With pale eyes, and graceful manners, Rai is considered to be the hottest talent in India.

Bharat said she was an obvious

## Mahal movie

choice because she would carry the idea of an Indian beauty with a global appeal in a movie on the 17th century marble mausoleum inspired by Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan's love for his favourite wife, Mumtaz.

The movie is expected to be released in July next year.

"This is an intense, passionate story of Shah Jahan and Mumtaz," said Bharat, who has written the story for the movie with his wife, Kanika.

The male lead to play Shah Jahan is still a secret, and the name is expected to be revealed later this

month.

Silicon Valley tycoons usually known to fund hot technology Startup with venture capital have chipped in to form a company to back "Taj Mahal," the movie.

Bharat said they include E.B. Chandrasekhar and B.V. Jagadeesh, co-founders of Internet infrastructure firm Exodus Communications Inc., Gururaj "Desh" Deshpande, chairman of optical networking firm sycamore Networks (SCMR.O), and Kanwal Rekhi, former Chief technology officer of Novell Inc.

These and other technology millionaires from the Silicon Valley have joined to form a company

called Lotus Inc to fund the movie.

"Pre-production work is in full swing," Bharat said, referring to casting, set design and research ahead of shooting.

Bharat, popularly called Bala, has won acclaim in India for combining with his long-time friend, composer A.R. Rahman, to make novel video versions of patriotic songs, including the Indian national anthem "Jana Gana Mana".

Rahman, who uses world music themes and digital technologies sounds that appeal to youngsters, is also collaborating with British-composer Andrew Lloyd Webber on a new musician.

(Reuters)

# The Japanese Statue of liberty

Millions of visitors had come to see it and it had become one of the most photographed monuments in Tokyo. In 1999, the French Statue of Liberty, a copy of the one in New York of Liberty enlightening the world, had been erected for ten months in the Japanese capital, on a promenade overlooking the artificial beach of Odaiba, on the occasion of France-Japan Year. It had been a great success and the Japanese had reluctantly let it return to Paris in September 1999, for the River Seine fete of which it was one of the stars.

When the statue left, there was a big void and many people asked to have it back», Jitsunosuke Kawai, the deputy chairman of Fuji Television

Network, explains. So Fuji TV and other companies based in Odaiba decided to finance a copy of the work designed by the French sculptor Frederic-Auguste Bartholdi in 1886 and presented by France to the United States.

Even if this statue is four times smaller than its big sister, holding up her flame at the entrance to New York Harbour, it was still a big challenge and presented new technical difficulties. Everything had to be identical to the original, from the green patina to the gold leaf covering the torch. We had to reinvent what Bartholdi may have imagined, Sandrine Boogaerts, assistant engineer to the project manager, explains. We had to innovate and meet the anti-earthquake re-

quirements in Japan. We handed over this task to the Coubertin foundry which had an artistic approach.

The Coubertin foundry, located in Saint-Remy-Ies-Chevreuse, in the Paris area, took up the challenge. It is used to carrying out exceptional projects (we owe the reproduction of Rodin's Gates to Hell, standing in the garden of his Paris museum to this foundry) and its reputation made its way abroad a long time ago. At the moment, it is working on the reproduction, in bronze, of a dancer, a work by the Senegalese sculptor, Ousmane Sow. American artists deliberately make the journey all the way from the United States to have their sculptures cast in Saint-Remy-Ies-Chevreuse.

For the Statue of Liberty, however, the challenge was an almost impossible mis-

sion and all the more so as there was a strict deadline. The statue was to be erected, inaugurated and floodlit at the end of the year 2000. «Less than a year is a very short deadline for a work of such a scale», Jean Dubos, in charge of the foundry, confirms. «An undertaking on such a scale bears some unknown elements that only experience will enable us to overcome. It was also complicated to make this statue identical to its model. Our furnaces were barely big enough for the three parts of the body, the two arms and the head! It should be noted that the foundry was also given the task of making the statue of General de Gaulle for the gardens of the Grand Palais, at the same time.

So, finally, the craftsmen in Saint-Remy-Ies-Chevreuse accomplished a real technical feat. All the elements together weigh no less than 13 tonnes. To manufacture the base, more than six

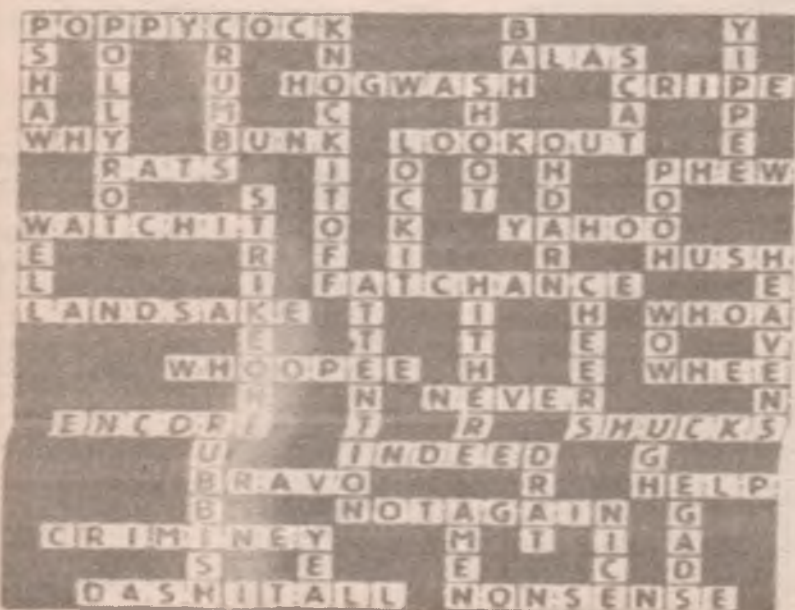
tonnes of metal had to be cast at a single stroke. The materials used are contemporary but the method used is traditional. We used the technique of melted wax, which we have improved upon with time and our know-how, Jean Dubos points out.

The last elements were cast on 7th July. It then took three weeks of cooling before the craftsmen could move onto the carving. The statue, transported, in pieces, by boat, was accompanied by copper bolts for assembling it, which was carried out on the spot, on arrival. A few more touches on the patina and the statue was ready for the inauguration in December, right on schedule. It will now no longer budge from the prestigious place that was chosen for it, facing the majestic bridge opening up Tokyo Harbour.

By Sylvie Thomas  
Actualite en France

### Solution to yesterday's puzzle

## PUZZLE 4



The replica of the American Statue of liberty in Japan

Arts & Entertainment

# The Story of the *New Nigerian* Part X Calm in a raging Storm!

In the last account Sir Ahmadu Bello provided advice to the *New Nigerian* newspaper. Soon the coup of January 15th 1966 takes place. In today's account the environment becomes more volatile and dramatic, as military rule is fully established. But, the *New Nigerian* marches on.

The offices of the President and Prime Minister had been abolished. Military Governors would assume control of the Regions, with the former Governors acting as advisers. The judiciary and the civil service would continue to perform their duties in the normal way.

The following day Major Hassan Usman Katsina was appointed Governor of the North alongside Lt. Col. C. Odumegwu Ojukwu (East); Lt. Col. F.A. Fajuyi (West) and Lt. Col. D.A. Ejoor (Mid- West).

These appointments went down well with the *New Nigerian* without any sign of dissent. Its leading stories and editorials during the first three months of the new Military Government in the country appealed mainly for peace. It gave wide publicity to Major Hassan Katsina and the activities of his government. The administrator travelled all over the North by air to appeal to the Emirs and Chiefs and people of the North for support for his government and that of Ironsi. The *New Nigerian* went along and was generally supportive of the government of the day. It supported all the reform measures announced by the government including the transfer of Native Authority Police and the prisons to the Federal Government and the transfer of the Native Authority Alkali Courts to the Regional Government Judiciary.

On the international scene, the *New Nigerian* gave a detailed coverage of the coup, which followed a few weeks later in Ghana. It published with glee an afternoon edition on the day of the coup, 24<sup>th</sup> February, together with an editorial. The *New Nigerian* had no regrets on the fall of Nkrumah probably because of Nkrumah's arrogant comments on the death of Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa.

In all these reports and commentaries there were no signs of dissent. The *New Nigerian* did not want any more bloodshed. Furthermore its management may have decided that discretion was the better part of valour. The paper appealed for calm and normalcy, and published special reports from Sokoto, Kano and Borno indicating that the people have accepted the demise of the Sardauna and his government as an act of God. As should be expected it gave front page coverage with pictures of the Sultan of Sokoto's visit to General Ironsi in Lagos.

But this acquiescence to the change of government accomplished with the murder of political and military leaders of Northern origin was not to last forever. The first sign of dissent was the letter

by Alhaji Sulaimanu

Takuma to the editor published in the *New Nigerian* of 19<sup>th</sup> April. The letter speaks for itself and in view of subsequent events deserves to be quoted in full:

"Since the Army assumed control in Nigeria much has been said about the merits of the change and future constitution Nigeria should have. One surprising aspect, however, is that no-one has been bold enough to point out the demerits of the manner of the change. More surprising is the attitude of silence and indifference to what is happening in the country on the part of the indig-



Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa.

enous sons of the North.

I feel duty bound to say that our silence is neither born out of fear nor is it born out of lack of views to present. But as one writer put it in the '*New Nigerian*' of April 7, it is partly born out of shock.

The shock that even if the military regime demanded the lives of those politicians who allegedly spoiled this country, how could such a bloody consequence be restricted to a particular part of the country?

The shock that never in the history of military coups had it occurred that the lives of innocent army leaders (from a particular part of a country) should also be claimed along with those of the politicians. One is bound to ask why and what is the attitude of those who now guide our destiny?

The shock that though the Supreme Commander of the Armed

## Books

Forces admitted that there was an Army mutiny in the country on Saturday, January 15, those who subsequently assumed power have so far failed to do anything to the mutineers and, possibly, the alleged civilian brains behind such a mutiny.

Those shocks are some of the reasons that kept us quiet, not to mention the mad rush of application letters for jobs pouring into the North from the other parts of the country. Nor to talk of newspaper editorials which shamelessly went all out to condemn the masters that

us without ascertaining the wishes of the people.

Why should they place the cart before the horse? One sad fact which these journalists as well as some of the military top advisers refused to admit is that a Nigerian Unitary Government does not necessarily unite the people of Nigeria. Especially if one views critically the events that led to the introduction of that desired unitary government.

Unitary Government will only be justly accepted in this country when we Nigerians learn to respect one another's views. When we are able to tolerate and respect each other's background, and when some few arch tribalists realise the fault in their belief, that it is their right to dominate this country.

In fact, I could advise that in writing our new constitution, a phrase be included which would allow for the breaking up of the Federation.

Whether this decision is accepted or not, I say bluntly that: nothing short of 'Federalism' is good for Nigeria. The Federation may be modified, but it must remain.

It is also our wish that Mr. Francis Nwokedi will tell the real fact about the impracticability of unifying the Nigerian Civil Service, especially with our out-moded communications, and environmental factors.

Again we must not lose sight of the fact that much has been spent by the erstwhile Governments to establish civil service headquarters in the regions. The money spent was derived from taxpayers and to render such projects of no use now means a gross disservice to these taxpayers.

As Mustafa Dambatta put it, we in the North must speak up. But I have to point out that both on the part of the Government and of the Press are so disheartening and full of unfavourable speculations, that we are bound to wait and see. We are, however, still convinced that the problem is yet to be solved. To force a unitary type Government on people without an impartial refer-

***"The New Nigerian did not want any more bloodshed. Furthermore its management may have decided that discretion was the better part of valour, The paper appealed for calm and normalcy, and published special reports from Sokoto, Kano and Borno indicating that the people have accepted the demise of the Sardauna and his government as an act of God."***

endum is setting the clock backward."

For its glaring courage and foresight Alhaji Suleiman Tukuma's action deserves the greatest admiration.

In an interview with Muhammadu Hassan Tom, my research assistant, 30 years later, Alhaji Sulaiman Takuma said he was moved to write the letter by the pattern of the killings and the behaviour of the Igbo traders and artisans in the North "I was then a broadcaster and my office was close to the present Abubakar Gumi market, Kaduna. Our junior staff used to go in and out of the market. One day, a young lady working under me went to the market and came back crying and I had to inquire into it as her superior officer. "Why are you crying?" I asked. "I have just been provoked," she answered. She said that a trader from the eastern part of the country had brought out a picture of late Sir Ahmadu Bello and said "Look, your father is no more. So the young lady started crying. So, it was true that we were being provoked beyond control.

That was on Monday, April 18, 1966 and so I wrote the article. I will never forget this. The heading of the article was "Federalism is good for Nigeria" and I outlined the injustice in the coup, the killings that were purely one-sided, the influx of applications for Northern jobs, a decree unifying the civil service of the country contrary to the constitution that we were practicing, all these, I outlined. In the article, I also challenged Ironsi not to place the cart before the horse. We should know where we were heading to before we can start moving. I referred to the killings of Northern military officers who were not involved in politics. Through their training only, they were regarded as Nigeria's soldiers yet they were eliminated. This shows that the coup was a calculated attempt to push back the northern elite both civilian and military.

**QUESTION:** What reaction were you expecting when you took the risk to write such an article?

**ANSWER:** Two reactions. One, I was absolutely sure that I was saying the truth so the reaction from the north would be total support. Two, the military coup was the first in the country but I knew if people like the Sardauna could be killed what stops the military from killing me? But I knew that even if I was killed that record will remain forever. So, I gathered the courage. The very clerk who typed the article for me was an Igbo man who was working under me.

To be continued.

## The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Nigeria

2, Ontario Crescent (Off Mississippi Street),  
Maitama A6, Abuja.

### VACANCY: Program Officer

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation seeks a Program Officer for its Nigeria Office within the Global Security and Sustainability Program (GSS). The GSS Program makes grants related to our critical problems which are central to the Foundation's mission: Arms reduction and Security policy, Population and reproductive health, Promotion of human rights and global ecosystem and sustainable development. Through interdisciplinary staff teams, the Program also makes grants coordinated by the Africa Task Group and in selected thematic areas.

The Program Officer will be working with Foundation staff to develop grant recommendations supporting programs focused on advancing human rights, improving conditions in the Niger Delta, and promoting reproductive health and rights.

This position will report to the Country Director in Abuja.

**Other Responsibilities:** To identify prospective grant recipients, evaluate proposals, maintain extensive liaisons with people and organizations active in relevant fields, prepares grant recommendations, organizes meetings with grant recipients and program advisors, monitors active grants catalyze cross-project learn, and participate in planning future program actions.

For a detailed announcement see website [www.macfound.org](http://www.macfound.org). Competitive salary and benefits offered plus expenses for relocation to Abuja. Candidates living in Nigeria are encouraged to forward their applications to the Abuja office. Candidates living outside Nigeria should forward their applications to the Chicago office. Mail cover letter, curriculum vitae and writing sample to: Search Director, MacArthur Foundation – Nigeria Office, 2 Ontario Crescent (Off Mississippi Street), Maitama A6, Abuja, Nigeria or Search Director, MacArthur Foundation; 140 S. Dearborn Street, Suite 1100; Chicago, Illinois USA 60603.

**Deadline for submission of application  
is May 1, 2001.**



#### INAUGURATION CEREMONY

OF

### THE NIGERIA-ARAB CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

ON

TUESDAY, 3<sup>RD</sup> APRIL, 2001

AT

AGIP RECITAL HALL

OF

#### MUSON CENTRE

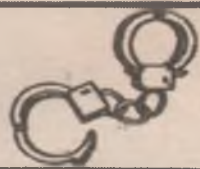
8/9, MARINA, ONIKAN, LAGOS

AT

3.30P.M.

#### PROGRAMME

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| 3.30p.m. | Arrival of GuestS.  |
| 4.00p.m. | Arrival of Chief Guest of Honour<br>-His Excellency, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, GCON<br>Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria |
| 4.05p.m. | National Anthem   |
| 4.15p.m. | Recognition   |
| 4.20p.m. | Welcome Address by NAASS' Chairman<br>Dr. Abdul-Lateef Adegbite, CON  |
| 4.30p.m. | Goodwill Messages   |
| 4.45p.m. | Keynote Address and Inauguration of the Chamber<br>by the Chief Guest of Honour   |
| 5.15p.m. | Investiture of the President of the Chamber   |
| 5.30p.m. | Acceptance Speech by the President of the Chamber   |
| 5.40p.m. | Vote of Thanks by Mr. Faysal El-Khalil  |
| 6.00p.m. | Departure and Refreshment   |



# Crime & Punishment



## Soldier held for impersonation

As the military authorities continue their move to plug all loopholes against fraudulent practices at its pension office in Lagos, Police at the weekend arrested a soldier attached to Military Pension Office in Ikoyi, with fake documents trying to withdraw over N150,000 from a military pensioner's account.

The soldier whose names were given as P/O Gbenga Idowu, serving at the Military Pension Office, Ruxton Road, Ikoyi, was picked up at the premises of Union Bank Plc, Daleko, Mushin branch, by police detectives who were contacted by the bank's accountant.

The Police Zonal Public Relations Officer (ZPRO) at Zone II Onikan, Lagos, Mr. Emmanuel Ajayi, who confirmed the incident to *Daily Trust*, added that the case was being investigated by detectives attached to

From Wisdom Patrick, in Lagos

Mushin Police station where the soldier is also detained.

He stated that the suspect had with him, at the time of the arrest, documents allegedly portraying him as the owner of the account belonging to one retired Lt.Col. Ojekunle Olusegun, upon verification.

Sources told *Daily Trust* that the detained soldier



Gen. Victor Malu, Chief of Army Staff.

sometime last year fraudulently withdrew from Lt.Col. Olusegun's account the sum of N978,710 using fake vouchers and tellers allegedly forged.

It was learnt that upon his presentation of the withdrawal voucher, the cashier at the bank discovered that the documents presented by the suspect were similar to those used last year to withdraw the sum of N978,000.

*Daily Trust* learnt that he was promptly asked to wait in a private waiting room while his money was being arranged only for the bank officials to contact the police at Mushin police station who wasted no time in getting to the bank and arresting the soldier.

*Daily Trust* tried to speak to the Army Information Director, Col. Felix Chukwuma, but was told he was on "Pass" (casual leave) and had travelled out of Lagos.

## Burglary on the rise in Gusau

The people of Gusau, the Zamfara State capital are now living in fear after a syndicate, specialising in house-breaking, went on the offensive in the city.

Investigations by *Daily Trust* in Gusau revealed that within three weeks, no fewer than 20 shops and houses were broken into by the men of the underworld who carted away about N600,000.

The most affected areas are the Gada-biyu, Kanwuri, Sabon-gari and Government Reservation Area (GRA).

During the attack, a journalist working with *Path* newspaper was robbed of twenty thousand naira and his wife severely beaten.

The syndicate usually operates in a large numbers, sometimes armed with dangerous weapons. They enter into houses to demand for money, threatening to kill if they are not given money.

Sources disclosed that the thieves "cover their faces with masks because they are indigenes of the state who

From Salisu Zakari Maradun, in Gusau

want to avoid being identified. While operating, they don't talk so that they can't be identified through their voices. They also communicate through sign language."

Investigations further showed that neither the police nor the vigilante group have ever confronted the syndicate as they always claim lack of arms when vic-

tims report to them.

Members of a recently attacked compound, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to *Daily Trust*, said that they have resolved to be on the alert since the government has failed to guarantee their security.

Victims also complained of the vigilante group's failure to ensure their security.

## High Court starts hearing of alleged N100m theft

The Kaduna High Court has commenced hearing on the case of alleged criminal conspiracy and theft of over N100 million preferred against a member of House of Representatives, Mr. Nnamdi Ezeani, and his brother, Mr. Best Ezeani.

In March 2000, the state, after receiving complaints from the former chairman of Menoil Petroleum and Petrochemical Company, Brigadier Garba Mohammed (rtd), charged Nnamdi

From Ibrahim Ka-Almasih, in Kaduna

Ezeani, a former Managing Director of the company and his brother on six count charges bordering on criminal conspiracy, fraud, and theft of company property.

Earlier, in the hearing, the presiding Judge, Justice James Abiriyi, ordered the counsel for the state, Mallam Dari Bayero, to grant the leading counsel for the accused, Mr. J.B. Daudu (SAN), access to the statements of the witnesses to enable the accused to prepare his defence.

When the case reopened for hearing on Monday, the prosecuting witness, who was formally with Anti-

Fraud section of the Nigerian Police Headquarters, Abuja, Mallam Zubairu Yakubu, tendered the statements of the chief security of the Menoil Petroleum and petrochemical company, Mr. Banabas Benedict, as exhibits.

According to the investigating police officer, a driver of the company confessed in his statement that Mr. Ezeani directed him to destroy some documents in respect of some consignments that were loaded out of the company to the village of the accused.

Led by the counsel for the state, the investigating police officer, tendered photocopies of gate passes and written directives claimed to have been signed by Mr. Ezeani for the passage of the company's properties to unknown destination.

He also tendered documents from United Bank for Africa (UBA), where the accused was alleged to have opened an illegal account for the diversion of the loan facilities obtained from NAL Merchant Bank.

But the leading counsels for the accused, Mr. J.B. Daudu (SAN) and J.A. Achimuga, argued that the over 20 documents tendered by the counsel for the state were not acceptable under section 27 of Evidence Actm, because they were photocopies of the original documents.

## Councillors hold chairman hostage

The Otukpo Local Government Council Chairman, Barrister Godwin Obla, had a close shave with death on March 28, 2001, at the council secretariat when he was held hostage for more than five hours by eight councillors while his supporters battled to rescue him.

Sources hinted that trouble started when the

From Mike Elaigwu, in Makurdi

legislative arm's inauguration, which was billed for that day, was postponed for the third time by the council chairman.

It was also gathered that the eight councillors were aggrieved over the Chairman's appointment of all his candidates as supervisory councillors instead of their candidates.

The letter of proclamation, which was sent to the clerk of the house two days earlier by the chairman, angered the councillors who accused the chairman of playing politics with their constitutional rights.

The crisis later degenerated with both parties freely using dangerous weapons at the secretariat.



Chief George Akume, Benue State Governor.

## Sharia court orders woman to pay her guard

The Sharia court, Wage No.7 in Fagge Local Government Area of Kano State, has given one Hajiya Rabi Rakad, proprietress of Rakad International School, in Hotoro, two weeks' ultimatum to pay the security guard under her employment, Mallam Mustapha Mohammed, the sum of N27,308.

In his ruling, the Sharia Court Judge, Malam Kabiru Ya'u Chiranchi, said that the amount represented seven months' salary of the security guard allegedly denied him by Hajiya Rabi.

The Sharia Court judge said that the security guard had told the court that Hajiya Rabi had a reputation for acquiring cheap labour and breaching contractual agreements. As a result, most of her employees were either underpaid, paid piecemeal or denied their salaries for months.

Malam Kabiru Ya'u Chiranchi, therefore, gave the counsel to Hajiya Rabi, Mr. Ganniyu Ajebi, two weeks within which his client should pay the accumulated salary to the security guard.

Speaking to *Daily Trust* in her office in Tsamiyar Boka, Hotoro, Hajiya Rabi

From Jamilah Musa, in Kano

Rakad, denied that the salary of Malam Mustapha amounted to N27,308. "I know of N14,000 but not N27,308," she said.

She, however, agreed to pay the N27,308 only on the orders of the judge, adding that she had merely employed the security guard on humanitarian grounds.

Malam Mustapha Mohammed said some of his other colleagues, whose names he gave as Aminu, Akpan, Gambo, Julies, Pa-

tience and Malam Bashir, had gone through the same ordeal.



Rabiu Kwankwaso, Kano State Governor.

## Two students, carpenter jailed for theft

Two secondary school students and one carpenter have been sentenced to six months imprisonment for theft of school books worth thousands of naira.

According to the police first information report, filed at the chief magistrate court, Lafia, one Echoda Anfofoum of Government Science School, Lafia, had reported that on March 26, 2001, Yusuf Adamu, Husseini Musa, Isa Hamza and John Ishaya conspired with one Samson Audu and another now on the run and stole books from Government Science School, Lafia, which were properties of Nasarawa State government. The offences are contrary to sections 97 and 288 of the penal code.

From Ma'ashin Ibn Ma'ashin in Lafia

Yusuf, Husseini and Isa admitted committing the offences of conspiracy, store-breaking and theft while the fourth accused person, John Ishaya, pleaded not guilty.

The culprits, who pleaded guilty were each sentenced to six months imprisonment and given six strokes of the cane in court to serve as a deterrent.

In addition, each of them was ordered to pay N1,000 fine or serve additional six months in prison.

John Ishaya, who pleaded not guilty, was granted bail in the sum of N10,000 and one surety in like sum. The case comes up on April 9, this year for further mention.

Arraigned before the court.

# Abuja News

## Almost four years after, taps in Wuse still remain dry

Almost four years after civil servants were relocated to Abuja from Lagos by the late Gen. Sani Abacha administration, residents in some parts of Wuse district of the FCT, have remained without steady supply of water.

NAN reports that the huge influx of people into the city, following government directives in 1997, without a corresponding provision of the needed infrastructure, had immensely distorted the hitherto fairly balanced distribution network of utilities such as water and electricity, leading to massive shortages in some areas.

Investigations by the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in the worst hit areas of Wuse, Maitama and, recently, Life Camp, showed that while all other areas of the city have enjoyed steady water supplies, taps in these areas have continued to "experience hiccups" with residents in high rise buildings of Wuse being the most affected.

"It is not clear why water has ceased to flow here (Wuse) for such a long time and without any explanations from the FCT water board", a resident of a high-rise flat in Zone 3 in Wuse, Mr. Joe Kalu, told NAN, adding that getting water in such areas was now a difficult affair.

According to him, water occasionally went up to flats on the third and fourth floors in the middle of each rainy season when the dam serving the city was filled up, but soon after, the situation normalised to dry taps and scarcity.

As a result of the scarcity that is now a norm in the area residents are forced to wake up at dawn in search of water, which for most times is hardly available within the immediate vicinity, forcing them to go long distances before fetching water.

NAN learnt that sometimes in 1999, a private firm that was commissioned by the FCT water board, carried out a survey on the water needs of each flat in Wuse district,

raising hopes that the unending water scarcity would cease. But almost two years after, the situation has remained the same.

NAN reports that notwithstanding the commissioning last year of a second treatment plant for Abuja, the problem of acute scarcity had not changed at least in both Wuse and Maitama as resi-

dents have been left with the options of either having to buy water from vendors or travel long distances in search of it.

"We do not understand what the FCT water board is doing on our problem, we have reported this matter over and over to them but nobody seems to bother about the problem here," a disgruntled

Wuse Zone 3 resident said, adding: "It is shameful that within Abuja City, water vendors could be seen selling water for as high as N20 per 20 litres jerry can."

NAN reports that the consequences of the incessant scarcity has resulted in the evolution of a filthy environment with many toilets not being flushed properly and

some homes resorting to using polythene bags to defecate inside.

Sources at the FCT water board has attributed the scarcity of water in Wuse and parts of Maitama districts to the topography of the area and low pressure, saying that, "the solution still lies in the provision of additional plants to serve the city."



Turn by turn at a telephone booth in Abuja. Pix: Felix Onigbinde.

## FCT ministry set to equip Abuja mini-stadium

The ministry of Federal Capital Territory (MFCT) has completed plans to equip the Abuja mini-stadium (Old Parade Ground) as part of efforts to improve the skills of athletes in the territory, the Director of Sports in the FCT, retired Col. Boman Kachim, has said.

Kachim told newsmen in Abuja yesterday, that the MFCT would soon install facilities for field and track events at the Old Parade Ground, to boost athletes' performance.

He said that MFCT would also install a standardize boxing-ring at the mini-stadium, in replacement for the old model, wrestling-ring, which had been in use for both boxers and wrestlers.

He said that the ministry would renovate some parts of

the mini-stadium, pending when it would have sufficient funds to embark on a general maintenance.

Kachim said the Sports Council would have completed the installation of facilities at the mini-stadium, if not for the lack of funds.

He called on the Federal Government to help in the development of the stadium, as it would also serve as a training ground for the 2003 All African Games, billed for

Abuja.

He commended the MFCT efforts to improve sporting facilities in the territory, adding that athletes representing the FCT in competitions would now have an enabling environment to train adequately for competitions.

Meanwhile, Kachim said that the sports associations under the council, which were dissolved last month, would soon have their elections to elect new officers.

## Only an upright leadership, made up of God-fearing individuals "can take Nigeria to the promised land," the minister of state for Transport, Alhaji Isa Yuguda, said yesterday in Abuja.

Speaking in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), Yuguda blamed the present predicament of the country, which had wit-

## Nigeria needs upright leadership to succeed - Minister

nessed the eruption of different ethnic pressure groups, such as the Egbusu, OPC, APC, Bakassi Boys, agitating for one thing or the other, on the misrule of past military regimes.

He said that lack of vision on the part of the past regimes and their indifference and insensi-

tivity to the development and maintenance of infrastructure, led to the current crisis situation, stressing that the Federal Government was determined to redress the situation and revive the economy.

He described the return to democratic governance as a welcome development, and urged Nigerians to consolidate their voting power, by electing into office "people who will add value to their lives."

The Minister also advised Nigerians to see the country as consisting of "one local government, one tribe, and one religion," stressing that the country would achieve the much-desired greatness if the present division along tribal and religious lines ceased to exist.

He said that the role of the press was critical in shaping the destiny of the country, and urged members of the press to embrace the challenge, by ensuring that the current war against corruption was sustained and won.

## FHA workers express fear over possible scrapping of authority

Staff of the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) have become apprehensive over the security of their jobs in view of the way and manner the authority's property are being sold, a News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) investigation has revealed.

A NAN correspondent, who has been monitoring events at the FHA headquarters in Abuja, reports that the apprehension was heightened by the seeming nonchalant attitude of the authority's management to this strange development.

Already the authority's headquarters building has been sold off, a transaction that has been interpreted by the

staff to mean a prelude to either scrapping it or merging it with another establishment.

Many of the workers, who claimed that they never knew when the idea was mooted, said that they were shocked last week when buyers of the property visited the FHA premises to inquire when they will formally take over the blocks of houses.

NAN also learnt that all FHA projects in the various states have been sold and plans concluded to sack the 700 of the 1,800 strong workforce of the authority.

Furthermore, there are complaints that the plot of land, acquired by the authority for the construction of its corporate headquarters, has

also been sold out.

NAN learnt that the land, located within the Central Business Area, was sold af-



Chief Tony Anenih, Works & Housing Minister

ter the Authority had spent N40 million on preparing the plot for development.

Some of the workers believe that since the land was originally acquired for the construction of its corporate headquarters and since there was no official statement on whether an alternative office accommodation had been procured, it was clear that FHA would be scrapped or merged.

On the N2 billion which the Works and Housing Minister, Chief Tony Anenih, said had been released to the FHA by the Federal Government, a source claimed that the management was too small for the kind of projects being handled by the Authority.



Umar Mohammed Abba-Gana, Minister of FCT

# Abuja News

## Abuja Catholic Corps members appeal for support

Catholic Corps members in Abuja have appealed to public-spirited individuals, philanthropic bodies, and the Catholic community to support the completion of their N8 million hostel project in Nyanya, on the outskirts of Abuja.



Most Revd (Dr.) John Onaiyekan

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the Catholic corps members, in their bid to assist their colleagues to solve the perennial accommodation problem in Abuja, last year, started the project, which is made up of four units of eight rooms each.

The President of the association, Mr. Finans Okere, told NAN that the project, which is still at its foundation stage, would also house corps members of non-Catholic faiths when completed.

He stressed that the Roman Catholic Church, as a denomination, had no boundaries on charity matters, noting that, "we Catholic corps members can accommodate anyone in need, as our doctrine has no boundary on whom to help in life."

He, however, regretted

the snail speed at which the project moved in the last few months, because of the lack of funds.

Another official of the organisation, Miss Celestina Evuleocha, told NAN that the association only realised N40,000 at a recent launching, and blamed the low proceeds on poor turn out of invited guests.

"We have mapped out plans to raise more funds," Evuleocha said, adding that "the members will source monetary assistance from the public and corporate bodies, to ensure that our target is met before the next set of corps members arrive in camp," he stated.

She said the initiative was borne out of the need to rescue homeless members of the group, who became victims of dupes and greedy landlords.

The Minister of Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Engr. Muhammed Abba-Gana, has charged the Biu Integrated Youths Forum to preach the gospel of peace throughout Borno State.

He gave the charge at the weekend when members of the forum led by their chairman, Alhaji Maina Ibrahim Mustapha, paid him a courtesy call in his office in Abuja.

Abba-Gana blamed some of the crisis in the country on the neglect of the youths, saying that the future of any nation depends on the youths.

He said that time has come for government to change the situation and make provisions for youths in its policies.

The Minister said that he always weep when he sees a huge number of unemployed Nigerians roaming the streets in frustration.

He further disclosed that government was planning

## Abba-Gana tasks Biu youths on peace

By Emmanuel Ande

programmes that can accommodate youths and change their lives for good.

He expressed happiness over the political leadership the youths of Biu have conferred on him, noting that, "no right thinking man can succeed without counting on the youths".

Abba-Gana told the delegation that he would not betray the confidence they reposed in him. He advised them to work in unity in order to achieve their goals.

In his remarks, the chairman of Biu Integrated Youths Forum, Alhaji Maina Ibrahim Mustapha, told the minister that their visit was to tell the minister that he has the support of Biu youths and that he has full support at home.

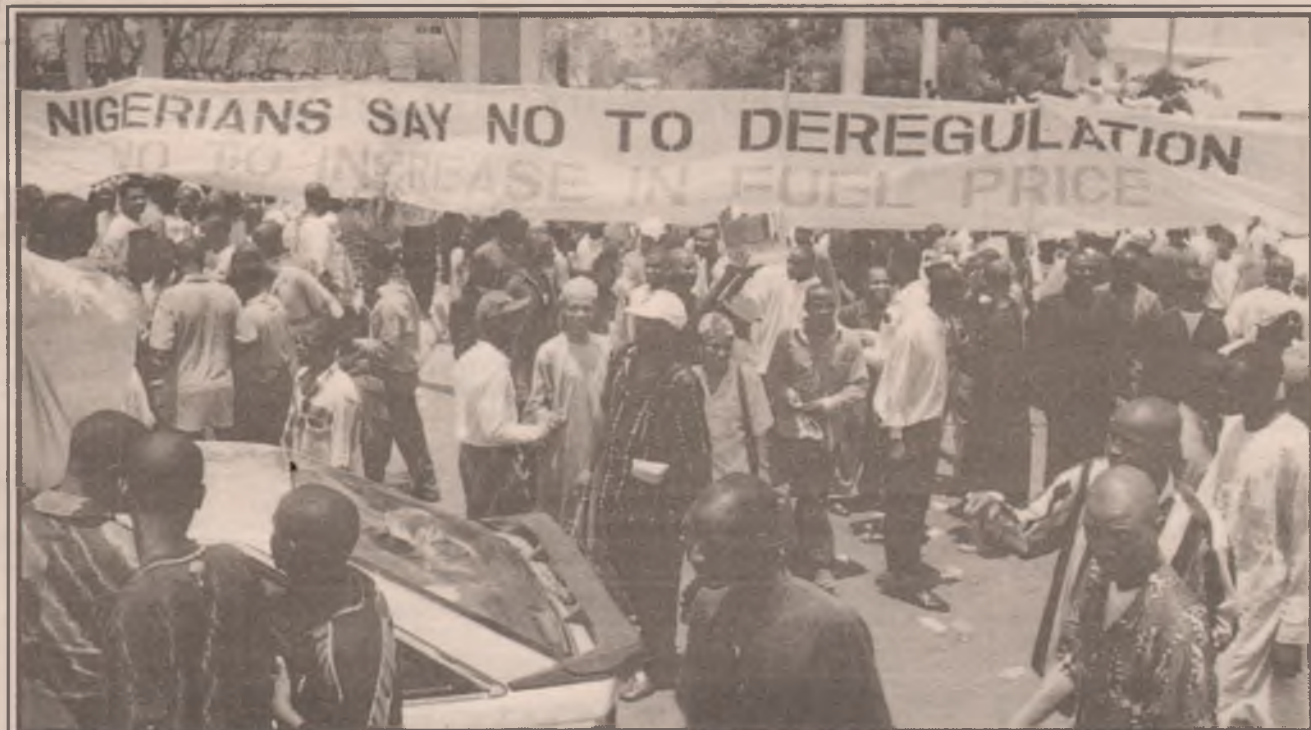
He said that for a long

time the youths of Biu were like sheep without a shepherd, saying that their sense of direction was lost due to lack of a good political leader.

Mustapha pleaded with the minister not to allow sycophants to mislead him, but that he should embark on projects that the masses of FCT can remember him for after his tenure



Engr. Muhammed Abba-Gana, FCT Minister.



Nigerians say no to deregulation... NLC rally in Abuja... last week. Pix: Felix Onigbinde.

## Nyanya residents protest over water scarcity

By Emmanuel Ande

Business activities were disrupted last weekend in Nyanya, a satellite town in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), following a peaceful demonstration staged by residents demanding for provision of water in the area.

Daily Trust learnt that for the past four months, the inhabitants of Nyanya have been buying 20 litres of water for between N40 and N50 and that the water was becoming increasingly scarce despite the exorbitant price.

Our reporter who monitored the demonstration reported that some people carried placards with inscription such as: "The director of water board must go", "Abba-Gana, give us water", "We are dying because of lack of water", "Has Obasanjo deregulated water too?"

Mrs. Dorcas Ojomo, the chief executive of Glory Restaurant, blamed the water scarcity on corrupt practices by officials of the water board.



Mrs. Esther J. Audu, AMAC Chairman

She told Daily Trust that after she had conducted an investigation on the problem of water scarcity, she discovered that the officials of water board were causing the scarcity in order to make money.

Mrs. Ojomo said that it was time for the minister of FCT, Engr. Abba-Gana, to take a hard look at the activities of the water board officials and flush out the bad eggs among them.

"Every year a lot of money is voted for provision of water in satellite towns in FCT, yet there is no water. Where is the money going and on what other projects are they using the money for," she queried.

The Managing Director of Evergreen Dry-cleaning, Mr. Christopher Ndukwe, told our reporter that the cost of water was forcing some of his colleagues out of business.

He called on the FCT minister to change the director of water board and other officers at the board and bring new hands that can manage the water crisis in the FCT.

"If this government cannot give the masses ordinary drinking water, then what can they offer the people again," he asked.

Ndukwe who was visibly angry said the minister's political career was on trial before the court of public opinion because of the water scarcity

## Asokoro hospital due for commissioning this month

By Emmanuel Ande

The newly constructed general hospital in Asokoro district in the federal capital city would be commissioned this month.

The Minister of FCT, Engr. Muhammed Abba-Gana, dropped this hint yesterday in Abuja, while inspecting facilities at the hospital.

He blamed the past administrations for delaying work at the hospital, saying that "it is unfortunate that FCT is lacking in good hospitals.

"This is a shame. My administration cannot allow unproductive officers to waste government efforts at improving people's welfare," he stated.

Engr. Abdulkadir Maina, the supervising engineer who

conducted the minister round the hospital, said that some of the hospital equipment like x-ray and scanning machines were no longer in good state.

He said that the equipment had been supplied five years ago and that the guaranteed time given by the manufacturer of the equipment had expired.

The 60-bed hospital has three surgery units, two VIPs ward and a mortuary, with six storing units.

Maina told the minister that adequate personnel was lacking for the take-off of the hospital, saying that the ministry has to employ new doctors, nurses and other auxiliary staff.

He disclosed that the Maitama General Hospital would also be ready for use in May this year.

## UNIABUJA, South Africa explore area of co-operation

The University of Abuja (UNIABUJA) and South Africa's Department of Education, are to explore areas of partnership relevant to the development of Education in the continent.

The decision was reached at the end of a meeting in Abuja between the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Laraba Abdullahi and the South Africa Director of Education, Mr. Ghaleb Jeppie.

The officials said that the partnership was part of efforts to concretise Africa's initiative in developing higher education, especially in area of research.

The vice-chancellor stressed that the university

was ready to enter into strategic partnership with any institution on areas beneficial to them.

She said that the university was already discussing with the Wilberforce University in the U.S., where programmes on areas of co-operation were been worked out.

Abdullahi stated that the university was reactivating its distance learning centres in Enugu, Lagos and Zaria, in its efforts to offer wider study opportunities to Nigerians.

Responding, Jeppie expressed South Africa's willingness to share its experience with the university for their mutual benefits..



# SPORTS



## Injury doubts over Smith



Leeds boss O'Leary has several injury worries

Alan Smith is a doubt for Leeds' Champions League clash against Deportivo La Coruna on Wednesday.

Smith suffered a calf injury against Sunderland on Saturday and will face a late fitness test before the Elland Road encounter.

"I suffered a calf injury during the game at Sunderland and I spent Sunday at our training ground having some treatment on it," said Smith.

"I'll be having treatment right up to the game but I hope to be fit for Wednesday.

"With Robbie Keane ineligible for our Champions League games this season I really need to be fit and, of course, I am very keen to play because it's such a big game."

Leeds boss David O'Leary has additional injury concerns over Lucas Radebe and Dominic Matteo.

But, midfielder Olivier Dacourt should be fit and O'Leary will be hopeful Smith can play against the Spaniards.

Smith has scored six goals in Leeds' European campaign this season and has struck up a good understanding with fellow striker Mark Viduka.

Both scored against Sunderland before Smith was sent-off after picking up two yellow cards.

## Latest WTA Tour Tennis Rankings:

(previous rankings in brackets):

1. (1) Martina Hingis (Switzerland) 5,763 points
2. (3) Venus Williams (US) 4,824
3. (2) Lindsay Davenport (US) 4,378
4. (4) Monica Seles (US) 3,223
5. (5) Jennifer Capriati (US) 2,646
6. (7) Serena Williams (US) 2,320
7. (6) Conchita Martinez (Spain) 2,302
8. (9) Anna Kournikova (Russia) 2,007
9. (11) Elena Dementieva (Russia) 1,978
10. (8) Amanda Coetzer (South Africa) 1,957
11. (10) Mary Pierce (France) 1,861
12. (12) Nathalie Tauziat (France) 1,819
13. (15) Anke Huber (Germany) 1,778
14. (13) Amelie Mauresmo (France) 1,742
15. (14) Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario (Spain) 1,732
16. (16) Kim Clijsters (Belgium) 1,626
17. (17) Magdalena Maleeva (Bulgaria) 1,561
18. (19) Chanda Rubin (US) 1,411
19. (18) Sandrine Testud (France) 1,322
20. (20) Justine Henin (Belgium) 1,281

# Champions on parade

**Arsenal:** Can count themselves fortunate to be in the last eight after a less than impressive performance during the second phase of group matches.

Indebted to Spartak Moscow for denying Lyon the victory which would have taken French side through rather than the Gunners.

Arsenal's defence has been, concern recently, which means it is vital Tony Adams stays fit.

In Thierry Henry, Sylvian Wiltord, Kanu and Dennis Bergkamp, the Highbury outfit have an attack capable of worrying anyone.

**Key man:** Tony Adams

**Bayern Munich:** Have made it through to the quarter-finals for the fourth successive season and topped Group C ahead of Arsenal.

Recently earned the wrath of Franz Beckenbauer but are still a team to be feared.

Mehmet Scholl is an inspirational figure in the middle of the park and poses a real danger from deadball situations.

At the back, goalkeeper Oliver Kahn is an enormous presence and can help win matches with his shot-stopping ability.

**Key man:** Mehmet Scholl.

**Deportivo La Coruna:** Perhaps the weakest of a formidable trio of Spanish clubs into the last eight, although they did emerge top in a qualifying group that included Galatasaray, AC Milan and Paris St German.

Can be inconsistent but showed they can never be written off by coming from three goals down to beat PSG in what proved to be a crunch encounter.

Roy Makaay is a big influence up front for Deportivo but the main man is Brazilian Djalminha, who makes them tick in midfield and is a big threat from free-kicks.

**Key man:** Djalminha.

**Galatasaray:** No-one will relish making the trip to Istanbul, but Galatasaray have shown they can be more than a handful on their travels as well.

Not as potent as they were when winning the Uefa Cup last season following Hakan Sukur's departure to Inter Milan, but they still possess the inspirational Gheorghe Hagi.

Despite being handed a six-match ban by the Turkish football federation for spitting at a referee, the Romanian midfielder is still available for Champions League matches.

He may be 35 but he has lost none of his trickery and can still have a huge bearing on games.

**Key man:** Gheorghe Hagi.

**Leeds United:** Surprised many by reaching the second phase of qualifying but refused to be overawed when drawn in a group that included Real Madrid, Lazio and Anderlecht.

Were the first of the English clubs to seal their place in the last Viduka's goals have proved eight -and deservedly vital for Leeds so.

What they lack in experience they more than make up for in skill and youthful exuberance.

Spain and England dominate the quarter-finals of the Champions League following the completion of the second phase. The two nations occupy six of the eight berths, with holders Real Madrid and shock contenders Leeds United among the qualifiers. But Bayern Munich, runners-up to Manchester United in 1999, and UEFA Cup holders - Galatasaray are still in there fighting. Trustsports gives you a rundown of the eight clubs still vying for the title of 'Best in Europe'.

Their biggest strength is their attack, which boasts Mark Viduka, Alan Smith and the fit-again Harry Kewell.

**Key man:** Mark Viduka.

**Manchester United:** Left it late to book their place in the last eight after several below-par displays, particularly against Panathinaikos.

Must improve if they are to emulate their success of 1999 but are more than capable of unseating current holders Real Madrid.

Have plenty of options in most areas of the pitch but their frontline is a potential headache for Sir Alex Ferguson.

Dwight Yorke has failed to hit the heights of previous seasons while Andy Cole has spent a long time out because of injury and suspension.

David Beckham has also lost a little of his lustre in recent weeks but is still a major player.

**Key man:** David Beckham.

**Real Madrid:** Capable of dismantling most sides without needing to shift into top gear.

Have looked mightily impressive so far although they lost their final qualifying game against Anderlecht.

The result was not significant as the Spanish giants have already booked their place in the quarter-finals.

Quality oozes from every position, with Luis Figo, Raul, Roberto Carlos and Steve McManaman just four names to conjure with.

Favourites to hold onto their title -and with just cause.

**Key man:** Luis Figo.

**Valencia:** In Hector Cuper, Valencia have one of the shrewdest coaches in the business.

He has turned the club into one of the most respected in Europe, although his tenure looks set to end when this season finishes. Criticised for selling such star names as Claudio Lopez, Farinos and Gerard last summer, Cuper has replaced them with the likes of Norwegian striker John Carew, who is among the leading scorers in the Spanish league.

Gaizka Mendieta pulls the strings from the heart of midfield and is a big reason why Valencia finished above Manchester United in qualifying.

**Key man:** Gaizka Mendieta.



At 35, Hagi is still a major threat for Galatasaray

## McCarron wins title after epic clash

American Scott McCarron endured the elements and a 36-hole final day to win the BellSouth Classic in Atlanta.

McCarron won by three shots after carding final rounds of par 72 and one-over par 73 in gusty conditions. The event is seen as final preparations before the Masters begins on Thursday.

And South African Ernie Els will be hoping his luck changes -and quickly. Els recorded his second worst score in nearly 450 rounds of golf.

The world number three posted rounds of 81 and 73 as the 2m pounds event crammed in 36 holes to make up for the

loss of Thursday's play to rain. "That tested my patience to the limit," said Els, his confidence battered again by the wind after three weeks in which he has broken 70 only once.

But McCarron was delighted after collecting the 427,000 pounds title for the second time in five years.

Controversially he is not in the Masters this time -after Augusta National dropped the rule whereby all US Tour winners qualify. Afterwards McCarron said: "This was just an absolute marathon.

"I had some trouble coming in. It was like that four years ago. I missed a few short putts

then too." His eight-under-par total of 280 left him three ahead of Canadian left-hander Mike Weir.

Defending champion Phil Mickelson was in a group a stroke further back. The conditions blew Swede Pierre Fulke, Europe's leading money-winner this season, to rounds of 78 and 77 on his US Tour debut.

At eight over he was one of the few players to finish behind Els.

Jesper Parnevik finished on one over and Jose Maria Olazabal, the only other European to survive the halfway cut, closed with a disappointing 77 for three over.

## Agassi powers past Gambill

Andre Agassi defeated fellow American Jan-Michael Gambill in the Ericsson Open final in Key Biscaine to claim his third title of the season.

It was Agassi's fourth Ericsson Open success and completed back-to-back wins for the 30-year-old.

Gambill made 33 unforced errors and only managed to get 41% of his first serves in. Agassi eagerly exploited every error, returned ruthlessly and served impeccably. He kept Gambill away from the net and controlled the baseline rallies to sweep the final nine games.

Agassi won the Australian Open in January and the Indian Wells title two weeks ago, and he's a runaway leader in this year's ATP champions race with a 22-2 win loss record this season.

Gambill, the No 19 seed,

recovered from an early 2-0 deficit, serving well to reach 6-6.

But he committed two unforced errors in the tie-breaker, allowing Agassi to take the set with a forehand winner and service winner on the final two points.

From there the rout was on. Gambill saved five match points on his way to the final, but Agassi put him away on the first one in the final, dispatching a forehand cross-court winner.

"I definitely ran into a tough guy today," Gambill said. "He didn't make any errors -I don't know what that was about."

Agassi, who turns 31 on 29 April, became the oldest Key Biscayne men's champion.

The win earned him US\$444,000 (£313,000), while Gambill won US\$233,000 for reaching his

first Tennis Masters Series final. "This is a place where I have always played well. I

have always enjoyed it here from the moment I step onto the court until the moment I leave," said Agassi.



Andre Agassi



## Agali, Shorunmu Down with injury

Barely three weeks to Nigeria's crucial World Cup qualifier against Sierra Leone in Freetown, two key Super Eagles players, Victor Agali and Ike Shorunmu are down with injuries.

Sources close to the players told *Trustsports* that the Besiktas goal tender sustained an injury last week in a match against Galatasary FC of Turkey in a local derby and he had to be replaced with another goal keeper when it became obvious that Ike Shorunmu could not continue.

However, it has not been ascertained whether the Super Eagles goalkeeper would be fit for the next match against Sierra Leone, as the extend of the injury is not known.

Also, Victor Agali is reported to be down with in-

From Richard Abayomi, in Lagos

jury and the club's medical experts have advised him to rest for two weeks, after which he would go for medical examination to determine whether he would be fit to resume action again.

*Trustsports*, however, gathered that the state of two players is given the technical adviser, Bonfrere Jo a sleepless night as these two players are very vital to the team's preparation and Bonfrere's plans for the match against Sierra Leone later in the month.

Meanwhile, a close associate to the Dutchman told *Trustsports* that the Bonfrere Jo has no option than to look for alternative replacements for the two players, if it eventually confirmed that the duo couldn't make the team.



Super Eagles striker Victor Agali cuddles captain Sunday Oliseh during a World Cup qualifier against Sudan last January. Agali and Ike Shorunmu are down with injury.

## Aku supports Gboko Heats ban

Ishaya Mark Aku, the minister of sports and social development, says he supports the banning of Gboko Heat basketball club by the Nigeria Basketball Federation (NBBF).

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the federation banned the club for fielding three players who registered with two clubs featuring in this year's 7-Up Premier basketball league.

The opening match of the league on March 3 at the sports hall of the National Stadium, Lagos, between Gboko Heats and Egun Comets of Akure failed to hold due to the double registration issue.

He said he had heard all sides to the dispute and had concluded that the federation was right in its decision. The ban is for the rest of the season.

Egun Comets had insisted that Gboko Heats could not feature the three players-Priwitt Gagara, Gboyega Vidal and Mike Udo-in the opening match as the three players were also registered with it (Egun), but Gboko insisted and the match was abandoned.

The federation initially banned the three players, but after investigation proved that the club was aware of the discrepancy the federation then banned the club.

The minister said at a news conference Monday in Lagos that the decision of the federation to ban the club was to curb indiscipline among clubs.



Aku

## Chairmen complain over non-payment of affiliation fees

National sports association chairmen Monday complained of the non-payment of their affiliation fees to international bodies, the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports.

NAN gathered that the first salvo was fired by the out-going president of the Nigeria Tennis Federation (NTF) Mr. Chuka Momah, informed the meeting of sports chiefs, secretaries and the minister, Mr. Ishaya Mark Aku, that the international bodies were not happy with the Nigerian government for the debt owed them.

Momah said that officials of the ministry had not helped matters, adding that while they claim the money had been paid, inquiries revealed that no payment had

been made. Other chairmen and association secretaries corroborated the Tennis Federation chief's statement that their affiliation fees had also not been paid, adding that the joint letter written to the ministry for payment or reimbursement of those chairmen who paid from their personal resources had not been acknowledged.

Aku then ordered that the letter be forwarded to him before his departure from Lagos.

NAN reports that the NTF boss had persistently complained about Nigeria's four years indebtedness to the ITF amounting to about 40,000 dollars.

The debt, Momah said, could lead to Nigeria's relegation from Euro/Africa Davis Cup tie if the money was not paid.

## Kano Pillars defeated again in Bauchi

Kano Pillars Basketball Club of Kano on Sunday suffered a second defeat in Bauchi when it lost 55-73 to Yelwa Hawks of Bauchi in the Savannah Conference of the Premier Basketball league, the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports.

The team had earlier been defeated by Bauchi Nets basketball club of Bauchi on Saturday 66-57.

Abdul Ahmed of Bauchi Nets emerged the highest scorer with 14 points and efforts by Kano Pillars star player, Suleiman Mohammed, did not yield result as he was sent out of the match having committed five fouls.

Meanwhile, at Sunday's match, Nodjibo Sainphorien of Yelwa Hawks spearheaded the defeat of Kano Pillars when he scored 16 points to wipe away the first half 32-29 score in which Pillars led. The match was played before a capacity crowd at the multi-purpose sports hall, Bauchi.

Retired Sqn Ldr. Sani Ahmed, who led the Kano Pillars to bronze medals at

the 1995 and 1985 African Club Basketball Championships in Mozambique and Egypt is the Yelwa Hawks coach.

He said that the initial control of the game by Kano Pillars was because his boys, whom he described as rook-

ies were intimidated, but added "I was able to guide them to victory."

Yelwa Hawks, making its debut in the premier basketball league, has defeated home team rivals Bauchi Nets, Immigration Club of Kano and Kano Pillars.



Abia and Lagos state hockey players in action during the National Sports Festival in Bauchi last year. The sports associations chairmen have complain over affiliation fees.

## Results

**Division One**  
Julius Berger, Gabros Int. (pp) NPA 2, El-Kanemi FC 0 Insurance FC 2, Enyimba FC 1 Lobi Stars 2, Wikki Tourist FC 0 Rangers Int. FC 2, Plateau Utd. 1 Gombe Utd 1, Katsina Utd 1 Nationale 1, Jasper Utd 0 Sharks 4, Jigawa Stars 0

**Division Two A**  
Zamfara Utd 1, JUTH 0 Kwara Stars 1, Ranch Bees 1 Yobe Stars 1, Kano Pillars 0 N. Tornados, NEPA FCT (pp) Mighty Jet 1, Adamawa Utd 0 BCC Lions, Kwara Utd (not played)

**Division Two B**  
Okomu Oil 2, Bayelsa Utd 1 Sunshine Stars 2, Delta Utd 0 Dolphin FC 3, Air Safety 0 Ebonyi Angels 2, Bendel Utd 0 NITEL FC 1, Shooting Stars 1 Udoji Utd 2, C. Rovers 0

## Pepsi Professional League

### Division One Standing

#### Week 20

#### Top Five

Pos.	Teams	PL	WN	DR	LS	GF	GA	PTS
1st	Rangers Int.	19	10	4	5	27	16	34
2nd	NPA FC	20	10	2	8	20	19	32
3rd	Katsina Utd.	20	9	4	7	18	20	31
4th	Enyimba	20	9	3	8	24	15	30
5th	Insurance FC	20	9	3	8	18	15	30

#### Bottom Five

12th	Lobi Stars	20	8	2	10	21	28	26
13th	Julius Berger	19	6	6	7	18	14	24
14th	Jigawa Stars	20	6	6	8			
15th	Wikki Tourists	19	7	2	10	15	22	23
16th	Plateau Utd.	20	6	4	10	19	25	22

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Arsenal defender, Tony Adams being shoved off by Galatasaray's Gheorghe Hagi during last season's UEFA Cup final in Copenhagen. Both Arsenal and Gala are engaged in a mid-week's Champions League action

## SHAP SHOTS

### Woods

Tiger Woods has been installed as 11-8 favourite to win the US Masters, starting at Augusta on Thursday.

British bookmaker William Hill also quote Woods at 12-1 to win all four majors this year, of which the Masters is the first.



Woods... Master's favourite

### Lauda

Three-times Formula One world champion Niki Lauda believe Ferrari driver Rubens Barrichello should be banned for two races after being involved in a series of crashes.

"Such accidents can be bad luck," Lauda, now a chief adviser with the Jaguar team, said after local hero Barrichello crashed into the back of Ralf Schumacher's Williams in Sunday's Brazilian Grand Prix.



Coulthard... Brazilian Grand Prix winner

### Safin

Marat Safin regained the world number one spot in the ATP's Entry System on Monday despite a second-hand defeat in last week's Ericsson Open.

The Russian leapfrogged Brazil's Gustavo Kuerten into top spot because he equalled his 2000 performance in Miami whereas Kuerten, runner-up last year, fell in the third round this time.



Safin... regained the world's number spot

## Sack NFA board now - Akinwumi

Former National Sports Commission Chairman, Chief Sylvanus Oladipo Akinwunmi has called on the federal government to dissolve the Nigeria Football Association (NFA) without any further delay.

Speaking with *Trustsports* in Lagos, yesterday, Chief Akinwunmi said the present crop of NFA members are not knowledgeable in football administration, hence he advocated for the sack of the board.

Akinwunmi who led Nigeria to Nations Cup victory in Tunisia in 1994 and the World Cup in USA, the same year stressed that you don't leave football administration in the hands of politicians and expect to set a better result.

He advised that for Nigeria football to move forward seasoned and experienced sports administrators should be brought in to manage our football.

"We didn't get the kind of money they are asking for today but ours was about the best in the administration of football in Nigeria," he said.

He continued: "it was during my tenure we won the Nations Cup in Tunisia and we also went to the World Cup for the first time. Even

From Richard Abayomi, in Lagos

in 1980, I was a member of the NFA when Nigeria won the Nations Cup in Lagos. I was also led Nigerian contingent to the Commonwealth Games in 1994. The records are there for people to see."

He sounded optimistic that Nigeria can still qualify for the World Cup in Japan/South Korea but, however, warned that the NFA must put its house in order if Nigeria must qualify for her third consecutive World Cup finals.



Chief Sylvanus Akinwunmi (left) exchanging pleasantries with former Dutch technical adviser, Clemens Westerhof last year.

## Professor Nomau's travails, written & illustrated by Bulama Mustapha

