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ABUJA TRUST
SETRACO
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structures in
Nyanya
Page 21

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For other places see
details on
Page 18

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Obasanjo lambasts secessionists

President Olusegun Obasanjo, yesterday, took a swipe at those calling for dismemberment of the country, if the outcome of the planned national conference failed to favour them.

The president said such people "need to have their heads examined."

Obasanjo, who spoke

By Reuben Yunana

after being decorated with this year's Armed Forces Remembrance Day emblem by Defence Minister, Lt. Gen. Theophilus Danjuma, said government would take action to curtail what he called "irresponsible rascality."

"Talking about sece-

ssion, anyone who talks about that needs to have his head examined," the president said.

Apparently reacting to a statement credited to ex-Biafran leader, Chief Odumegwu Ojukwu, in Enugu which said easterners may have a rethink and opt out of the Nigerian nation should *Ndigbo's* request for equity be denied them.

While reacting to the statement, President Obasanjo said the magnitude of the call could not be neglected by the government, the armed forces, the people of this country and those who lost on both sides of the three-year civil war.



President Olusegun Obasanjo(l) being decorated by the Minister of Defence, Lt. General T.Y. Danjuma, with the emblem for 2002 Armed Forces Remembrance Day celebration at the State House, Abuja... yesterday.
Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje

World Bank flays cost of Abuja stadium

The World Bank raised dust over the N53 billion being expended on the construction of the new National Stadium complex, Abuja, by the Federal Government.

The Director of the Bank, Mark Tomlinson, who criticised the exorbitant nature of the project, accused the government of operating without "an economic sense of criteria."

The World Bank believes that the huge amount pumped into the project should have been channelled into the economy to address the crippling poverty and other social

By Patrick Andrew

crises in the country.

The Bank questioned the N15 billion approved in the 2002 budget arguing that economic rather than social considerations should have informed government allocation of scarce funds.

The Bank hinged its contention against the huge expenditure on the construction of the stadium on Nigeria's dwindling revenue arising from falling oil prices.

The Bank observed that Nigeria's revenue, the bulk of which is from oil, is likely to fall by some 30 per cent next year, stressing that it was hard to identify the project as a priority in fighting poverty.

"We have expressed concern because it is not intuitive to either ourselves or our partners in the development community that this is top priority. The government sees other important social objectives, to bring a stronger sense of national unity to the capital

He further warned that people who still want to revisit secession must not be allowed to tinker with the peace and unity that has been nurtured since the end of the civil war.

"I believe that rascality must have a limit and we will put a limit to irresponsible rascality."

"I wonder why in this day and age and at the beginning of the 21st century, 31 years after the Nigerian civil war, people are still

Contd. on Pg 2

Osun crisis: Lawmakers, ex-commissioner docked

Two members of the Osun State House of Assembly and a former commissioner in the state were yesterday arraigned before an Osogbo Chief Magistrate over political disturbances that enveloped the state capital last Monday.

People suspected to be loyalists of the state governor, Chief Bisi Akande, and his deputy, Otumba Iyiola Omisore, had on Monday attacked each other

From Yinka Oladoyinbo, in Ibadan

at the premises of the State House of Assembly, Abere, Osogbo.

Daily Trust reliably gathered that dangerous weapons such as cutlasses, knives, guns and charms were freely used during the crisis which left many properties seriously damaged and several people seriously injured.

At the court proceedings yesterday, only three out of

the 43 purportedly arrested in connection with the act were in court, while the other 40 were said to be at large.

Honourables Akindiya Amos and Lekan Oyediran and Mr. Adekunle Alao, a former commissioner were docked on a three-count

Contd. on Pg 2



Gov Bisi Akande



Malam Adamu Ciroma

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Contd. on Pg 2

FG awards N25.6bn NASS contract

The Federal Executive Council has awarded the contract for the third phase of the National Assembly complex.

The N25.6 billion contract awarded to Julius Berger Nigeria Plc is to be completed in 30 months, according to Information and National Orientation Minister, Professor Jerry Gana.

Briefing State House correspondents after yesterday's Federal Executive Council (FEC) meeting, Professor Gana said the objective is to "provide the kind of facilities that would be required by

By Reuben Yunana

legislators for them to be able to do their work excellently."

Gana, who was accompanied by FCDA

Executive Secretary, Engr. Charles Dorgu and Director of Public Buildings, Architect K. Maina, said the project is to provide offices

Contd. on Pg 2

ELECTORAL ACT

AD lawmakers threaten legal action

Alliance for Democracy (AD) lawmakers in the National Assembly have dissociated themselves from the passage of the Electoral Act signed into law by President Obasanjo and have threatened to take legal action to challenge the validity of the Act.

The National Assembly

By Henry Omu

AD caucus further described the Electoral Act as immoral, illegal and unconstitutional, and warned that the Act is a prelude to the emergence of a civilian dictatorship and a one-party state.

AD House leader, Rep. Oladipo Olaitan, made the position of the AD

lawmakers known yesterday in Abuja. He was flanked by other House members, including Senators Femi Okuronmu and Olabiyi Durojaiye.

Rep. Olaitan said as far as the AD is concerned, there exists no Electoral Act, adding that "the truth is there

Contd. on Pg 2

NEWS



L-R: The Minister of Water Resources, Alhaji Murktar Shehu Shagari; the Minister of Power and Steel, Dr. Segun Agagu and the Minister of State for Water Resources, Prince Precious Ngalale, discussing before the commencement of the Federal Executive Council meeting held at the State House, Abuja... yesterday.

Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje

Atiku returns from Umrah

Vice-President Atiku Abubakar has returned from Saudi Arabia where he performed this year's lesser hajj (Umrah).

Atiku Abubakar returned

to the country yesterday in the company of the Governors of Lagos State, Chief Bola Tinubu, Katsina State, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, the Minister for Special Duties, Mr. Yomi Edu,

and some of his personal aides.

A statement from his Special Assistant on Media Relations, Mr. Chris Mammah, said the Vice-President will resume duties today.

Electoral Act

Contd from Pg 1

is no Electoral Act 2001. The laws are clear about the passage of an Act and in this case, all these have been violated."

Similarly, Senator Femi Okunronmu explained that the AD believes the Act was passed illegally and "we will be proceeding to the court to challenge the Act," he added.

According to the AD spokesman, the party supports the position of state governors on the holding of council polls next year, because according to him, "the only law in the land is the 1982 electoral Act."

"The Act is a non-law, null and void *ab initio* since it was not passed in accordance with the rules of both the Senate and House of Representatives," Senator Okunronmu said.

The party therefore, enjoined President Obasanjo and the PDP to discard the Act, and save the country from what the lawmakers described as the "recurrent problems associated with civilian democratic elections," as it happened in 1964 and 1983.

Rep. Olaitan stated that the passage of the Electoral Act violated rules 82 (c) and 87 (c) respectively of both the House and the Senate, as the amendments inserted into the bill by members of the harmonization committee equally contravened section 62 (4) of the 1999 Constitution.

Castigating the harmonization committee members for acting out the script of the Presidency in disregard of House and Senate rules, the AD caucus

said the committee is answerable only to both Houses that set it up and not to the president, directly or indirectly.

"Thus, the bill purportedly passed into law cannot be considered an Act of the National Assembly, but that of the illegal motley assembly of some members of the disbanded joint conference committee and Mr. President sitting at Aso Rock," the party said.

Also speaking, Senator Durojaiye explained that the AD is taking this step because it owes the nation a duty to alert it on the wrong direction the country is headed.

World Bank

Contd from Pg 1

Abuja," Tomlinson told the BBC's World Business Report.

He said the bank embarked on this latest criticism because "if one looks at it purely on economic terms, it is hard to identify it as a priority in fighting poverty. Government is not operating only with an economic sense of criteria, it has social criteria, it has political criteria as well," he said, adding that shrewd consideration should attend every decision taken by the government.

Tomlinson said the Bank had to raise concern because it was convinced that scarce funds would better be spent on combating poverty and other social crisis bedevilling Nigeria.

The new stadium with a

60,000 seating capacity would host the opening ceremony of the 8th All Africa Games in 2003.

Initially, the government had estimated the cost of the stadium to be N38 billion. The amount encompasses the cost of the games village, sports hall and the main stadium complex.

Before now the federal government had been forced to respond to criticisms on the project. President Olusegun Obasanjo had explained that the decision to embark on the project was political rather than economic.

The 8th All Africa Games has been scheduled to begin on May 3, 2003. No fewer than 53 countries would participate in 22 games in the two weeks fiesta.

Fire Service chief explains Wuse market inferno

Two days after an afternoon inferno razed the new Wuse market in Abuja, the Federal Fire Service (FSS) yesterday, said it was not surprised at the incident as the market was "not really a market but a bonfire waiting to happen."

"The fire at Wuse market was really unfortunate and has become an annual event but we must all agree that the place is not really a market but a bonfire waiting to happen," Mr. Fidelis Ogbogoh, Comptroller-General of the FSS told the News Agency of Nigeria

(NAN).

He explained that the shops in the market were exclusively made of wood with each shed overlapping into the other without any visible separation.

"Even pedestrians find it difficult to meander through the market and with this setting, any fire outbreak becomes a complete disaster," he said.

Ogbogoh, noted that naked flame was being used carelessly when inflammable materials were everywhere in the market and expressed fear that a worse inferno could

occur "unless good housekeeping concepts are inculcated in its running."

The fire service boss disclosed that efforts by the service to enlighten people on fire management had been ignored and that officials of Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC) had shunned overtures towards a better fire-conscious planning of the market.

"So you see, without adequate input from the fire service prior to the construction of these markets, we will always have such pitfalls," he stressed.

Ogbogoh said the situation in Wuse market typified the situation nationwide "where Nigerians do not take fire as a serious threat unless it happens."

He blamed the lack of emergency communication channels and deficiencies in the water reticulation system for the escalation of Monday's inferno, and expressed regret that many areas of the Federal Capital Territory had no hydrants while water pressure is very low.

The fire chief urged AMAC to liaise with the service to plan a layout of the market and advised against the current proximity of the sheds.

He suggested that fire wardens be posted to markets to forestall any inferno and blamed the extensive damage done to the new Wuse market on the lack of trained officials with extinguishers to check the situation.

Ogbogoh also harped on the need to zone the market for fire fighting purposes to ease the movement of fire fighting equipment.

Osun crisis

Contd from Pg 1

charge ranging from unlawful possession of firearms to a breach of public peace.

According to the charges read by the prosecutor, Inspector Okon Joshua, the three persons were alleged to have "unlawfully conducted themselves in a tumultuous manner as to cause the breach of the peace and thereby committed an offence contrary to section 69 and punishable under section 70 of the criminal code cap 30 Vol. II Laws of Oyo State of Nigeria, 1978, as applicable in Osun State."

They were also accused of illegal possession of arms, therefore, going about "armed with cutlasses, knives, guns and sticks in public without lawful occasion and in such a manner as to cause terror to the person of another contrary to, and punishable under Section 80 of the

criminal code."

The three accused persons, however, pleaded not guilty to the charges and their counsel, Barrister Kola Adegoke, pleaded that they be granted bail on self-recognition.

The prosecution objected to the application on the grounds that the other 40 accused were still at large.

While defending the application, the defence council argued that the offences were mere misdemeanor and bailable, citing section 118 (3) of the criminal proceedings. He said that the prosecution failed to furnish the court with necessary evidence to substantiate his objection to the bail.

Chief Magistrate F.I. Omisade, however, granted bail to the accused with N50,000 and one surety each and adjourned further hearing to December 18, 2001.

NEWS

Ex-First Lady sues for \$400m

Zambia's former first lady, Vera Chiluba, has sued President Frederick Chiluba for \$400 million as compensation for divorce, the *Independent Post* newspaper has reported.

Vera recently took Chiluba to the High Court in Ndola, north-west of Lusaka, challenging a lower court's decision to dissolve their 33-year old marriage.

The daily quoted sources close to the outgoing president as saying Vera's appeal, which was supposed to be heard in the Ndola High Court last Friday, was adjourned to Monday due to President Chiluba's non appearance in court.

According to the source, the \$400 million Vera was claiming include her pension after spending 33 years in marriage with President Chiluba, her allowance as first lady backdated for nine years and general maintenance, among many other claims.

"She believes that she has to be handsomely rewarded after being divorced as first lady because her chances of remarrying might be slim, considering that very few men can have the courage to ask a former first lady for a hand in marriage," a source said.

President Chiluba's lawyer, Sunday Nkonde, refused to comment on the matter.

But the source disclosed that Vera is also asking the



President Chiluba

court to order President Chiluba to surrender the two houses he has grabbed from her in Lusaka, which she said she had obtained legally.

House queries 2002 budget

The Edo State House of Assembly has queried the 2002 budget proposal of N32.17 billion submitted to it by Governor Lucky Igbinedion a fortnight ago.

Describing it as a budget of deceit, the House asked the governor to explain why he increased the state's budget from N25 billion as appropriated in 2001 to N32 billion for 2002, when both the federal and global economies are facing recession.

The House observed that only N11 billion was realised by the state as at the end of the third quarter of this year, out of the N25 billion budgeted for the year. The lawmakers demanded to know how the state will realise the balance of N14 billion within this last quarter.

The House warned the Executive against being over ambitious, and advised it to go back to the drawing board and come up with a realistic budget based on realistic income.

Responding to their questions in the House, the state



Gov Igbinedion

The couple separated last year and Chiluba was granted divorce last September by a local court in Ndola. Vera has since moved to Ndola, her hometown.

From Shehu Abubakar, in Benin City

Commissioner for Finance and Economic Development, Mr. Bright Ehi-Omokhodio, admitted that there were mistakes with the previous budget which was passed before his appointment.

He promised that the mistakes will not be repeated.

The commissioner, who attributed the decrease in the state revenue to leakages and loopholes in the revenue generating system, urged the House to pass the bill, saying that adequate steps have been taken to make it realisable.

He said the state-owned

The Federal Government has awarded contracts for the completion of the pavilion and construction of a mini-market at the Kano International Trade Fair Complex.

FG builds market in Kano

By Reuben Yunana

The two contracts relating to the construction of the pavilion at the cost of N110 million by Puma Nig. Ltd are to be completed in 26 weeks.

Disclosing this to State House correspondents, Information and National Orientation Minister, Professor Jerry Gana, said a mini-market is also to be constructed at the cost of N60 million at the Kano International Trade Fair complex by the Federal Ministry of Commerce.

He said that the Federal Executive Council meeting has also approved for the development of the Kano free trade zone.

"We already have the Calabar free trade zone, the Onne oil and gas free zone and now we are moving on to another commercial area, that is Kano, where we shall develop a free trade zone," the minister said.

According to him, a perimeter fence is to be constructed at the site of the zone at a sum of N461 million in 26 weeks.

Also to be constructed, he said, is an access road and drainage facilities to the site at N179 million in 16 weeks.



Gov Kwankwaso

FG announces Hajj fares

The Federal Government has approved a fare of N168,000 for Muslims departing for next year's hajj from the southern part of the country and N162,000 for those departing from the northern part.

The Directorate of Pilgrims Affairs said in a statement issued yesterday in Abuja that prospective pilgrims could also travel with a minimum of \$500 Basic Travel Allowance and a maximum of \$1,000.

A breakdown of the fare for prospective pilgrims departing from the northern zone shows that \$750 is for air fare, \$240 for accommodation, \$63 for royalty, \$275 for united agents' fee and one per cent bank charge of \$13.28, all totalling \$1,341.28.

With the exchange rate of N115 to one dollar, the sub-total comes to N154,247.20.

Additional charges are N770 for passport booklet, N1,725 for airport tax, N3,000 for a standard suitcase,



V-P Atiku Abubakar

N1,500 for uniform and N1,000 as administrative charges, bringing up the grand total to N162,242.20.

For prospective pilgrims taking off from the south, the only difference is a \$50 increase in air fare when compared with what those taking off from the north will pay.

The directorate added that the government had also approved Ibadan as additional departure point for prospective pilgrims from Oyo and Osun states and Yola for those from Adamawa, Taraba and Gombe states.

The statement was signed by Prof. Abubakar Gwandu, Chairman, National Committee on Hajj 2002.

Abacha loot: FG files statement of defence

The Federal Government yesterday at a federal high court in Abuja filed a statement of defence in the suit instituted by Mohamed Abacha over the government's effort to recover monies, allegedly looted and stashed in foreign accounts by the Abacha family.

The action of the Federal Government came on the heels of the application made by Yunus Usman (SAN), Abacha's counsel, on Monday, praying the court to enter judgement in favour of his client as the defendants had failed to file their statement of defence.

In an application, dated December 11 and filed yesterday, Mr. Faneé Bebu, coun-

sel to the defendants, prayed the court for an order extending the time within which the defendants could file their statement of defence since the time allowed by the court had elapsed.

The application also prayed the court to accept the statement of defence annexed to the application as exhibit (A) as properly filed and served, and also for such other orders that the court might deem fit to make in the circumstance.

Replying to Bebu's application, Usman said that he was not opposed to the defendants' request for more time to file their statement of defence and withdrew his application for judgement to be entered in his client's favour.

Anthrax scare in N/Assembly is a hoax - Senator Omu

Senate Chief Whip, Senator Stella Omu, said yesterday that the anthrax scare, which rattled the National Assembly last week, was a hoax.

The Senator, who was fielding questions from National Assembly correspondents, said the leadership of the National Assembly has been advised by medical experts to return to their offices, as nothing harmful has been found in the powdery substance sent to them.

Omu, however, revealed that the National Assembly was yet to receive the report of the police and other security agencies on the anthrax scare.

According to her, the

substance sent to lawmakers, including the Deputy Senate President, Alhaji Ibrahim Mantu, and herself, can best be described as "Christmas joke of the year."

"We have not substantiated the substances to be anthrax. What would they benefit from it? Any peace-loving Nigerian will not think of anthrax," she said.

Senator Omu said medical examinations and laboratory tests carried out on her and her staff yielded nothing harmful.

"You can see me and my staff looking even healthier," the senator said.

Police impounds smuggled cars

Ogun State Police Commissioner, Prince Udom Ekpoudon, has impounded 18 smuggled *tokumbo* cars, driven into the country from the neighbouring Benin Republic.

A source close to police command headquarters in Abeokuta told Daily Trust correspondent that the incident occurred when the commissioner was returning to Abeokuta from an official assignment in Ilaro.

According to the source, the smugglers blocked the Ita-Oshin end of Abeokuta to allow a free passage of over 400 smuggled cars being driven into Abeokuta through Eruwa route when the convey of the state police commissioner intercepted them.

From Olumide Bajulaiye, in Abeokuta

On sighting the road blocks mounted by the smugglers, the commissioner alighted from his car and walked towards them. When they saw him, the smugglers abandoned their cars and escaped.

Confirming the incident, the state police commissioner described the smugglers as criminal saboteurs.

He said: "Those doing this are the ones who will come back to blame government, that it is not providing them with enough facilities. They should import their cars legally through over ports."

The cars impounded includes: Nissan, Bluebird, Mazda, BMW, Toyota Carina and Mercedes Benz.

NEWS

Sokoto spends N400m on water

From Kabir Dogon Daji, in Sokoto

The Sokoto State Government has expended over N400 million for the supply of potable water in Sokoto metropolis.



Governor Bafarawa of Sokoto State.

The State Commissioner for Water Resources, Alhaji Dalhatu Sidi Mamman, said this in Sokoto while briefing newsmen on the activities of his ministry.

He further explained that the sum of N360 million was spent on the purchase of water pipes while N70 million was earmarked for the excavation, laying and testing of the pipes.

According to the commissioner, the gesture would go a long way to ensure adequate supply of water in the state capital.

He said that tanks had been installed as part of the programme with a view to supplying two million gallons of drinking water to complement the existing 1.5 million gallons.

Alhaji Dalhatu further explained that the 3.5 million gallons, when added to the 350,000 gallons supplied daily by the Impresit Bakalori, would give four million gallons to the metropolis.

Tafawa Balewa clashes: Police boss assures returnees

With relative calm gradually returning to Tafawa Balewa and Bogoro areas in Bauchi State, six months after sectarian clashes, the State Police Command has assured those wishing to return to the areas of adequate security.

The state police commissioner, Alhaji Mohammed Bate, gave the assurance in Bauchi on Tuesday when the new north-east zonal manager of the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), Malam Sani Adamu, paid him a courtesy call.

Bate said that the command had adopted adequate measures to guarantee the safety of lives and property of the returnees.

He noted that most of the people who fled the area in the heat of the disturbances "had since returned to their ancestral homes," adding that reconstruction of damaged residential and business structures had also started.

The police boss said that apart from security which had been guaranteed, the state government had made adequate plans to compensate the victims.

He said that individuals and groups have been

rendering moral and material assistance to reduce the difficulties faced by the victims.

Bate cited one Alhaji Inuwa Galambi who, he said, recently donated N500 million worth of building materials to enable the displaced persons settle down quickly.

Earlier, Adamu had said that the purpose of the visit was to familiarise himself with the command's activities.

He urged the commissioner to continue with his open-door policy for journalists, saying, "this is the only way the media could assist the police."



Governor Mu'azu of Bauchi State.

Traditional council suspends Tsav over utterances

From Terna Doki, in Makurdi

Former Lagos State Commissioner of Police, Alhaji Abubakar Tsav, has been suspended from the Vandeikya Traditional Council (VTC) by the council over what it described as "his unguarded utterances" against the Tiv people and the Benue State Governor, Mr. George Akume.

Briefing journalists at the end of an emergency meeting of the Vandeikya Traditional Council in Vandeikya, the Ter Kunav, His Royal Highness, Dyako Atser, said the suspension became necessary as his negative utterances were unbecoming of a title-holder.

"It is unfortunate that a title-holder in the person of Tsav, should negatively exploit the misfortune of his people to position himself for personal gain," the royal



Governor Akume of Benue State.

father alleged.

Chief Atser explained that Alhaji Tsav's status in the traditional council should ordinarily have projected him as a patriotic Tiv son who should build rather than destroy his people or join forces with their enemies.

He explained further that

the suspension would remain in force until Tsav appears before the council to defend his verbal diatribe against his people.

Daily Trust reliably gathered that the kindred head of Tsav's community has been directed to bring Tsav before the council within 14 days.

Alhaji Tsav was

conferred the "Kur-u-ya u Kunav" chieftaincy title by the Vandeikya Traditional Council in April, 2000.

The former police chief's suspension follows his recent utterances in the local and international media, blaming his kinsmen for the military operation in Tiv towns following the murder of 19 soldiers in the state.

Union wants more funds for Polys

From Olumide Bajulaiye, in Abeokuta

The Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Polytechnics (SSANIP) has called on the Federal Government to increase the amount of money being allocated to polytechnics to enhance technological development in the country.

In a communique issued at the end of their conference in Nekede, Imo State, the executive members of the association also called for equal recognition and treatment to holders of Higher National Diploma

(HND) and first degree holders.

"The conference observes with dismay the disparity in the professional progression of HND and first degree holders and demands that they be accorded same treatment," the communique said.

The communique, jointly endorsed by B. C. Amapakabo and A. H. Ndandole, the National President and Secretary respectively, also called on

the federal government to abolish the NBTE for alleged lack of performance.

The union urged government to establish Polytechnic Commission, fashioned after the National University Commission and the Colleges of Education Commission.

The communique further noted that the decline in the number of applicants to polytechnics had brought about facility decay and poor products among university graduates, especially in courses that could be better handled by the polytechnics.

Nigeria is not food deficient—FAO envoy

Although more than 60 per cent of Nigerians live below the poverty level of less than a dollar per day, the country cannot be described as food deficient, according to the United Nations.

Professor Gabriel Lombin, the country's envoy to the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Tuesday in Abuja that the nation's food problem was more in its distribution mechanism than production.

"Nigeria is not among the countries regarded by the UN system as food deficient. Though not all Nigerians might conveniently afford three square meals a day, there is enough food in the system," he explained.

According to the envoy, "the seeming food shortage in the country will disappear, if the government addresses the distributional strategies of food commodities."

Lombin, former National Agricultural Land

Development Authority (NALDA) boss, identified inadequate infrastructure for food distribution as major problem in circulating food produced in the rural areas, saying, "the problem cannot be solved overnight."

He commended the Obasanjo administration for initiating policies that would attract the attention of international agricultural institutions towards investing in the sector, to ensure sufficiency in food production.

"If the process is sustained, it will still take some time to achieve food self-sufficiency," he said, urging Nigerians to be patient with government to enable it implement its various strategies aimed at boosting food production.

Lombin said the FAO was pleased with the country's efforts at reversing its erstwhile pariah status which made it impossible for international donor bodies to invest in the country.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY,
THE THREE-ARMS ZONE.
P.M.B. 141, GARKI -ABUJA, NIGERIA

CALL FOR MEMORANDA FOR THE
REVIEW OF NIGERIAN TAX LAWS

The House Committee on Finance, sequel to a resolution of the House of Representatives, is about to embark on a comprehensive review and updating of the Nigerian Tax Laws, particularly:

- (i) Company Income Tax (CIT);
- (ii) Personal Income Tax (PAT);
- (iii) Withholding Tax (WHT);
- (iv) Value Added Tax (VAT);
- (v) Petroleum Profit Tax (PPT);
- (vi) Stamp Duty (SD);
- (vii) Capital Gains Tax (CGT);
- (viii) Capital Transfer Tax (CTT);
- (ix) Education Tax (ET);
- (x) Industrial Development (Income Tax) Relief Act.

The Nigerian Tax Laws have not effectively been reviewed since 1979. It has therefore become necessary to comprehensively review and update these laws with a view to making amendments in order to facilitate establishing an enabling fiscal environment for sustainable development and growth of the Nigerian economy.

Public Hearing will subsequently be held to allow for collective input into the amendment of these tax laws by all stakeholders, as may be necessary.

In view of the above, the public is hereby invited to submit memoranda to the House Committee on Finance in respect of the proposed review and amendment of the Tax laws not later than 15th January 2002 at:

The Secretary,
Committee on Finance
House of Representatives
National Assembly Complex
P. M. B. 141, Abuja. Email: s_daggash@hotmail.com
Fax: 00-234-9-2340535
Tel: 00-234-9-2341137)

HON. M. S. DAGGASH
Chairman
House Committee on Finance

News Focus

The rage of Abuja market inferno

Emeka ran along the highway, almost naked, with his arms over his head, wailing. He took little notice of oncoming vehicles, and his friends could not stop him, despite all efforts.

Emeka was not mad, neither did he wish to be

By Austine Odo

shift their goods from the shops before the fire reached them. In the process, many goods were either stolen, diverted or badly damaged. A trader who could bear it no more, collapsed. Efforts by colleagues to revive him were

frustrated, and he died. As the fire ravaged through the market, sparing not even the police post within, the fire service arrived. First came the truck marked FGN 444 B320. It parked just outside the market, and could not find a way in. There was no access road to facilitate close contact with the fire.

Traders told *Daily Trust* that the frequency of fire disasters in the market gave room to suspect sabotage. They claimed that government was reluctant in allowing them to erect permanent structures to later relocate

where traders were asked to vacate only to have their stalls reallocated to others. They appealed to government to ensure that similar incidents are checked in future, and to allow them to build their stalls by themselves. The protest march by the traders helped to reveal government's plan to build a new modern market on the site, after the traders are relocated.

According to the Permanent Secretary, MFCT, Alhaji Babangida Aliyu, who addressed the traders, a committee headed by the Director of Public Building in the ministry, Alhaji Kabir Maina, had been set up to work on how they would be moved in phases to other districts within the FCT.

Aliyu said the committee would verify the list of affected traders with a view to allowing them to erect shops in accordance with set standards.

Already, the FCT Minister, Engr. Mohammed Abba-Gana, has confirmed government's plans to build a modern market in the site, a directive which, he said, was given by President Olusegun Obasanjo. The minister, who disclosed this when he visited the market on Tuesday to assess the extent of damage, also pledged relief materials to victims of the disaster.

In her reaction after a visit to the scene yesterday, AMAC chairman, Chief (Mrs) Esther Audu, called for the erection of permanent structures in the market. She attributed the incessant fire incidents to the makeshift na-



Engr. Mohammed Abba-Gana, FCT Minister

ture of the market.

Like other residents, Mrs. Audu expressed the fear that the incident could lead to escalation of food prices in Abuja, and urged government to urgently do something about it.

Sources in AMAC said the temporary nature of the market resulted from the failure of the FCDA to define its status.

Several traders who spoke to *Daily Trust* yesterday were anxious over the mode of distribution of the proposed relief materials. They appealed to government to find an acceptable formula for distributing such materials to prevent them from being hijacked by government officials.

Meanwhile, as the traders await government's arrangements for the proposed relocation and provision of relief materials, trading has resumed at the burnt market.

When *Daily Trust* visited the market yesterday, heavy trading was going on while many traders were seen searching through the debris to remove the nails and zinc of the old stalls apparently to reconstruct new makeshift structures. Indeed, a few have already been erecting stalls at the market.

Speaking to *Daily Trust* yesterday, a trader, who identified herself as Mrs. Gloria Alozie, said she resumed trading immediately because she had to return to Umuahia before the Christmas.

"I have been greatly affected by the fire. I lost my shop. But I managed to secure just these two bags of gari before I escaped, so I've got to sell them and leave for home," she said.

Asked how she was going to get over it, she said she would borrow money to restart her business, probably in a different location.



The beginning of the inferno, just before the entire market was engulfed.

knocked down by a vehicle; he was only reacting to the shock of watching his shop, stocked with expensive textile materials, go up in flames at the Wuse New Market when the market was burnt on Monday.

Emeka was one of the hundreds of traders who suffered a similar fate on that day. While some took it as an act of fate, others refused to be consoled, or so it seemed. Some of the traders said that they had used loans to start their trades, while many others said that they had end-of-the-year commitments hanging on their necks.

Indeed, some of the traders were wilder than Emeka, and got trapped in their shops in a bid to salvage one or two things. They died in the process. Their death painted a picture of the helplessness of many of the traders as the fire razed on. The fire was said to have been started either through a generator explosion or a restaurant fire, at about 11:00a.m. Through whichever way it started, by midday, the fire had already spread to the heart of the market, destroying everything on its path. Desperate traders rushed their goods to safe grounds. Human beings and goods of different kinds rolled over one another. Idle hands got readily employed by grief-stricken traders who agreed to pay any amount to

fruitless, and he died. As the fire ravaged through the market, sparing not even the police post within, the fire service arrived. First came the truck marked FGN 444 B320. It parked just outside the market, and could not find a way in. There was no access road to facilitate close contact with the fire.

The firemen said the operation could have been better handled with a helicopter. They watched helplessly with the traders as the fire ravaged the market. Frustrated, some traders pelted them with stones, but others understood their limitations, saying it was impossible to stop the fire because of lack of access road.

Traders who spoke to *Daily Trust* said they had preferred to put up permanent structures instead of using makeshift materials like planks and plywood to build their stalls. The market was indeed, a makeshift one, and this contributed to the easy spread of the fire. The traders themselves said efforts by government officials to clear a route for passage of vehicles into the market was always obstructed by those who always took over the cleared routes. So when disaster struck, the fire service could not help.

A handful of traders used water pipes in a vain attempt to suppress the fire.

Unlike other similar inci-

them and give the space to other traders. Monday's incident was said to be the third this year.

By Tuesday, a group of aggrieved traders stormed the Ministry of Federal Capital Territory (MFCT) and demanded to be allowed to erect permanent structures. They went in hundreds and barricaded the road to the minister's office in Area 11, Garki.

Speaking through their leader, Alhaji Ibrahim Kanti, who is the President of Wuse New Market Traders Association, the traders said goods valued at billions of naira, including foodstuff, electronics and other wares were easily destroyed because most stalls were constructed with woods and zinc. The traders expressed fears that if government built the stalls they would end up in the hands of government officials and their friends or relatives. They alleged that an unnamed director in the FCDA illegally allocated five stalls to five girls in a secondary school in Dutse, who later sold them to traders for N50,000 each. It was also alleged that some legislators allocated shops to themselves. As a result, the traders said, many of them were forced to sell their wares outside the market.

The traders said they were scared by the development in the Old Wuse Market



Traders salvage their goods from the burning market

Opinion

Columning and North-bashing

Recent happenings in the Nigerian print media industry are reminiscent of the goings on in the country's musical scene from the mid-eighties, to 1990 when Nigerian musicians tried to outdo one another in the composition and rendition of songs eulogising Mandela and calling for the unconditional and immediate release of Mr. Mandela from incarceration on Robben Island. Onyeka Onwenu it was, I think, who set the ball rolling with her Winnie Mandela and before music lovers could perfect the mimicking of the song we had all manners of musicians springing out like rabbits to a show of magical hats with their own variations of pro-Mandela lyrics. While some chose pop music as a vehicle, others went for the Afrobeat. Reggae however remained most musicians' favoured means of being heard in their clamour for the release of Mr. Mandela and most importantly in their opportunistic quest for relevance.

At the beginning it was heart-warming to listen to such expressions of African nationalism and opposition to apartheid and the continued unjustified incarceration of Mr. Mandela by the then obnoxious racist regime of the white supremacists in South Africa. It was indeed a thing of joy to observe that Nigeria was sparing no armour in its arsenal, including music, to undercut the racists in South Africa and their collaborators and pave the way for majority rule in the former racists' enclave - a destiny wished for by the

By Yakubu Ibn Mohammed

whole of the black race.

In fact the fervour with which those "musicians" were churning out the Mandela songs gave one the impression that their secret prayer was for the man's continued detention because freedom for him would have meant either the beginning of a search for a new theme to sing about or the irrelevance of most of them. And surely the latter came to pass as most of them became musically incarcerated the moment the man regained his freedom.

The same scenario is now being played out on the pages of our newspapers as every columnist, noted for teeth-cutting, strives hard not to be out-written in the current bashing of Nigeria's "bad boy" - the North. Take a cursory look at our newspapers and you will be amazed (maybe you won't) at the amount of space devoted to writing about the "transgressions" of the North and Northerners. If NEPA remains adamantly inefficient and NITEL remains steadfast in its resolve to wrest the top inefficiency spot from NEPA, if the Super Eagles perform dismally (as they are certain to do) at the 2002 World Cup, if Ganiyu Adams and the OPC continue to reign criminally supreme or if the price of garri continues to soar, one does not have to look for the cause. "The North and Northerners", the columnists chorus. This type of columning which is not only hypocritical but also myopic and

simplicistic irks me. It attempts rather invidiously to narrow down the multi-faceted problems of this country to a particular section while absolving the other sections from any blame whatsoever.

The problems of this country MUST not be seen by some third-rate columnists as an opportunity to embark on a campaign of calumny against a section of the country. Short of this orchestrated campaign, what else explains the assertion by one columnist that Northern Muslims regarded their southern brothers and sisters as second class citizens because the Northern Muslims marked the last Eid-El-Kabir a day earlier than their southern counterparts, totally disregarding a pronouncement by a renowned southern Islamic scholar and philanthropist? This stance is objectionable, condemnable because if the said columnist was worth his salt as a journalist, a little investigative initiative would have revealed to him that most Northern Muslims marked the festival the day their southern counterparts did. Of course there are so so-called established columnists whose speciality is North-bashing. What they write amounts to a little more than nothing to me. They are spent. My advice is to the up and coming writers. They should learn from the travails of the musical freedom fighters of the free-Mandela era lest they sink into oblivion after the imminent end of the current North-bashing.

Yakubu Ibn Mohammed is of P.M.B. 0146, Bauchi.

Curses of democracy?

By Zulaikha Bello

May 29th was meant to be a turning point for the Federal Republic of Nigeria. A turn for the better. It was a day on which all Nigerians heaved a sigh of relief after the hardship of the long Military years. It was meant to be a day of which Nigeria was to take her rightful place in the comity of nations.

It was a day of joy and victory for the champions of democracy, for, at last Nigeria had returned to democracy after a long period of military governance. May 29th was supposed to mark the beginning of a better Nigeria in every sphere of human endeavour. As the president said on being sworn in, it would no longer be business as usual. The twin evils of corruption and indiscipline were to be fought tooth and nail. All hands would be on deck to turn the economy of the country around. There would be food aplenty. Unemployment would be a thing of the past. We would have a crime free society. The sanctity of lives and property would be guaranteed. First class education at all levels ensured.

The word "poverty" erased from the Nigerian dictionary, in fact from May 29th onwards, Nigeria would be a place where citizens would loathe leaving and foreigners would aspire to come.

But alas! What we are witnessing to day is almost the exact antithesis of the above. Our collective sighs of relief have turned to groans of pain.

Corruption and indiscipline have become invincible super monsters that have come to stay. The economy is in ruins and life for the citizenry has become hopeless and miserable.

Many families that lived a little above poverty line prior to may 29th have now fallen far below it. All around are sunken eyes, hollow cheeks and bent figures. The country is bedevilled by one violent crisis after the other - from Kaduna to Gombe, from Aba to Abeokuta, from Jos to Takum. There is today no peaceful haven in Nigeria. We are saddled with a government that is irresponsive. A president that is never around. A legislature that performs its functions in the breach. A judiciary that lies prostrate before the executive and the legislature. Lives in Nigeria are now ten a kobo as lives are wasted at the slightest provocation, sometimes even in the absence of any provocation. Schools have become places in which our children are initiated into cultism and other bizarre activities and our hospitals are death traps. All you hear about are incessant strikes of teachers and doctors because the government refuses to meet their demands.

O Yes! Nigeria has taken her place in the comity of nations as a country with a democratic government but she is the laughing stock there because she is a country where nothing works - the giant of Africa, what a giant. And yet, the president and his pack of jokers are singing dividends of democracy. The only people enjoying democracy dividends are the political office holders, the president, governors et al. People that were sworn into office with gaunt faces and scrawny necks now have folds in those necks and their eyes are almost non-existent because of their puffed up cheeks. Their children attend the best schools abroad. They run abroad to treat the slightest of afflictions. They change their wives and girlfriends with boring regularity and their accounts are never in the red - dividends of democracy indeed! Is it any wonder that they are all singing the *tzarce* tune? Being in office means being untouchable. It means appropriating public funds for private purposes without the fear of being held accountable. It means acquiring wealth to ensure the comfort of generations of your family yet unborn the masses that elected you into office can go take a hike, they are after all, only a means to an end. All you need do when it is election time is dole out naira notes and that is sure to do the trick.

Our victory over the barrack boys have turned out to be a Pyrrhic one and if we are not to hear "fellow Nigerians" one day soon, our politicians need to pull their act together. God Save Nigeria!

Zulaikha Bello is available at zulaikhab@onebox.com

Memo to Sokoto PDP

Events are fast happening and before you know it the year 2003 would soon hit its mark and Nigeria will witness yet another political rivalry.

The recent ward, local governments, states and national congresses of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) were not without too many scars that would forever play vital role in the shape of the 2003 elections; While most of the states buried their differences for the sake of peace, others are yet to come to the negotiating table to mend whatever fences there are as crack structures.

Sokoto State is known as an important player in Nigerian politics and it is therefore necessary for any party to woo politicians from that state for numerical strength. Even though during the 1993 SDP/NRC presidential election the state massively voted for the NRC, yet the few votes the SDP got greatly assisted the party in forging ahead.

Again, the 1998/1999 general elections which ushered in this administration was a purely PDP affair in the state but the APP went ahead to clinch the gubernatorial seat. This goes to show that the political situation in the state is dynamic, intriguing and full of surprises:

Analysis have proved that the PDP was supposed to have won the governorship election in 1999 but for lack of coordination, even distribution of campaign largess and most importantly internal feud on who should be the candidate for the governorship election. All that is now history but it appears the same circumstances that led to the PDP's defeat and humiliation are likely to resurface.

As at now, the APP has only one and only candidate who happens to be the incumbent governor, Alhaji Attahiru Dalhatu Bafarawa. Apart from being the sole financier of the APP in the state, Governor Attahiru Bafarawa has built a political structure that may require a strong and rich contestant to unseat him. But this is not impossible if the opposition PDP can capitalise on his weaknesses and reclaim what it lost to internal crisis in 1999.

With the year 2003 fast approaching, the PDP is yet to put its house in order to confront the enemy and unless the party executive realise this and call to order all its veteran self-centred politicians who see the number one seat in the state as their birth rights, the 2003 election may be another blunder. While the APP has governor Bafarawa as its only candidate, the PDP has about five aspirants with some yet to make their intentions known.

Among the already known ones are two former senators, Garba Illa Gada and Ambassador Abdullahi Ladan Shuni who is currently in Morocco. The likely under-50 politicians are Senator Abdullahi Wali, Alhaji Aminu Tafida and the Minister of Water Resources, Barrister Mukhtar Shagari. The name of the son of Sultan Dasuki, Major Sambo, is being spread anyway as another likely aspirant.

By Babuga Danjumi

All these are good materials for the race but the 64-dollar question is who among them can give Governor Bafarawa the fight of his life? To unseat Governor Bafarawa in Sokoto does not require grassroots support or eloquence but money because in modern politics there is only one language, who give what?

A brief citation of the five likely contestants in the PDP primaries show that Senator Illa Gada has grassroots support but lacks what it takes to win votes in Nigeria today, money. He can't fight Governor Bafarawa. As for Ambassador Shuni someone suggested that he should pray for PDP to retain the federal level for him to continue to amass wealth abroad before coming home to seek for votes.

The honourable minister is young, intelligent but lacks the experience to compete against Bafarawa. For Sambo Dasuki, the dream of becoming the next Sultan of Sokoto is more of a preoccupation than planning to drive to the seat of governance in Sokoto. Senator Abdallah Wali just like the water resources minister is young, vibrant, intelligent but where they differ is in terms of financial wherewithal.

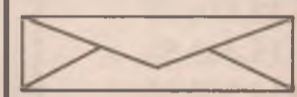
Putting two and two together, the race in the PDP primaries may be a ding-dong affair between Senators Illa Gada and Abdallah Wali. But then, which of them is financially sound to dislodge the Bafarawa incumbency factor? It has been suggested that Bafarawa is unintelligent, but this cannot be so because it takes an intelligent man to single handedly beat all the veteran politicians in the state in 1999 and unless the PDP comes together to support Senator Wali who has the financial strength to chase Bafarawa out of Lodge Road come 2003, history is bound to repeat itself as the circumstances of 1999 are gradually re-emerging.

It will not be out of place to suggest to veteran politicians like Illa Gada that the 21st century is a millennium meant for the under 50 new generational politicians. Going back to the senate is not a bad idea for Illa Gada for as a veteran he can greatly contribute to our national development. However, if he insists on becoming a governor in Sokoto state the road may not be smooth for in 1999 he crossed to the PDP after losing to Bafarawa in the APP primaries. Where will he go next? The senate is a good place for him.

For now Senator Wali should be seen as the best of them all who combines intelligence and money and these are two vital ingredients a winning politician. We are looking forward to a peaceful resolution of this internal crisis which may tear the PDP apart and afford Governor Bafarawa.

A call on the water resources minister, Major Sambo Dasuki, Senator Garba Illa Gada and all PDP supporters to support Senator Wali will be a stitch in time that may save many nines

Babuga Danjumi wrote in from Mombasa Street, Wuse 5, Abuja.



YOUR LETTERS

The new president

Of recent, President Olusegun Matthew Aremu Obasanjo seems to be bolder by the day. The kind of boldness expected of him since May 1999 when he ascended the throne of the presidency of the largest and most populous black nation in the world,

Nigeria. The president has of recent remembered how to call a spade a spade no matter whose ox is be gored.

For instance, the *Daily Trust* of Monday October 8, 2001 reported that the president declared in Abuja that to succeed in ridding the world of terrorism, there

must be ultimate global justice and equity. The paper quoted the president as saying, "The world we live in now is not just enough. It is not equitable enough. Unless America can lead us to a world that is more just and equitable, we may not get out of the problem of terrorism. We may catch and punish the culprits this time, but there will be more culprits in future". The president was bold enough to say this in this period of "we are, with you America".

Definitely only justice and fair play will bring an end to terrorism in all its ramifications, be it terrorism the American, Western style or Al-Qaida's/Palestine style.

This is because it is an established fact that people resort to acts of terrorism to press home their demands for justice.

All we could say is: ride on Mr. President. Leaders should always speak the truth and nothing but the truth. This is what is called leadership by example. Keep it up Mr. President. Maybe Nigerians may reconsider you come 2003 for the second term *Tazarce*.

Murjanatu A. Sa'eed
Wadatu Pharmacy,
Ahmadu Bello Way, Jos,
Plateau State.

I support reprisal action in Zaki Biam

Kindly allow me space to communicate my views concerning the recent Benue massacre of 19 Nigerian soldiers.

It must be noted that men with bad instincts are more in number than the good, and therefore the best results of governing them are attained by violence not by academic discussion.

We must put our hands together to pull down such callous and barbaric acts; all the perpetrators of that dastardly act must be brought to book.

Aliyu Ibn Hamza,
F28T Dadin Kowa First Gate,
Jos-South LGA,
Plateau State.

Bravo Yunusa

The controller of the Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria, Bauchi branch, Alhaji I. M. Yunusa has made the best improvement of the housing fund scheme in the state.

Alhaji Yunusa has ensured good accountability of service to the state and the banking industry. The Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria, Bauchi branch, is doing its best to take the individual housing fund scheme to the present height of greatness by ensuring that workers willing to cash in their income can do so. It serves anyone who is prepared to follow its procedures to become a customer and people do not have to wait for hours to be served.

In fact, what impressed me most about the good qualities of this bank is the way the management and staff contributed immensely towards the development of the peoples housing fund scheme.

In particular, the state controller, Alhaji Yunusa has ensured full coordination, control of administrative staff with their customers who respond by taking their daily incomes into the bank.

I therefore wish to commend the management

and the entire staff of the Federal Mortgage Bank, Bauchi State branch, for a job well done and may God bless. Amin
A. Y. Wunti,
Wunti Street,
Bauchi,
Bauchi State.

Lesson for America

The September 11, 2001 assaults on some guidepost edifices in the United States are indeed wicked acts in so far as they claimed the lives of thousands of guiltless people.

But for the first time, the United States and its citizens have come to comprehend the dread of what other countries and their folks have been going through for decades, thanks to American policies and interference.

Islam does not support the killing of innocent souls without reason. America would be doing itself good to look inward for the culprit instead of declaring innocent people guilty. Think back on Oklahoma bombing in which an American, Timothy McVeigh, was eventually found to be implicated, tried and executed. Islam means

peace. Muslims cannot fold their arms and see their religion subjected to abusive jeers.

America should change its policy around the world particularly on issues that concern developing countries the state of Palestine and Israeli occupation of Arab territories.

America should understand that it couldn't continue to "police" the world without getting the consent of those they want to police.

America should not

Open letter to Governor Mu'azu

The diverse and patriotic reporting system of the *Daily Trust* is what prompted me

to write this piece to His Excellency the governor of Bauchi State. I hope your newspaper will permit me space to convey this message to His Excellency.

Sir, your ascendancy to the governorship of Bauchi State was a great relief to the masses of the state, particularly to workers after having suffered a great deal under successive administrations for a very long time. Those of us who served under 'Baba' when he was commissioner/deputy governor during the second republic will never support his governorship bid especially because of his repressive tendencies towards some emirs and chiefs. You had everything to your favour during the campaign era but where you threw the baby away with the bathwater is the way you discarded workers from your development agenda.

Your achievements can only be complete with workers' total support and unflinching loyalty; and these can in turn be derived

only through your express goodwill and sustained welfare package for workers including of course:

A good salary package (we know about Taraba's N6,500 minimum monthly take home);

A real vehicle loan (we know about Adamawa's vehicle loan/increment to whom it is due! Talk of Gombe's efficient and mobile workforce);

A good housing programme (we know about Kano's sustained owner-occupier programme);

A progressive and resilient educational programme (we know about Jigawa's educational progress beginning from May, 1999),

And of course a just and real economic empowerment programme based on farming that will see the real end of poverty (a typical Kano and Jigawa States programme).

Bala Danjika (Sule)
Unguwar Kuka,
Bauchi.

The candidates to beat

Hard work, honesty, transparency and your swift and intelligent handling of opposition makes you a candidate to beat in any future election in Dam-Musa local government, Katsina State. Kudos.

Haruna Nagogo,
Union Bank of Nigeria plc.
Bank Road,
Kano.

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12	7" X 5 Cols		21,685.32	23,572.70		31,000.00
13	6" X 5 Cols		18,009.00	20,079.00		27,000.00
14	6" X 3 Cols		14,477.58	15,160.45		22,510.00
15	6" X 2 Cols		12,305.90	12,886.38		15,463.58
16	5" X 2 Cols		9,136.80	10,133.10		14,200.00
17	4" X 2 Cols		6,903.70	8,106.30		12,702.00
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TRUST INTERNATIONAL

Foreign & Diplomatic

Conflicts: What multiethnic societies need to do

Our priorities for the year evolved naturally from our conclusions and reflections on our own experience of transition from a state-controlled system to a free and democratic society. We drew on the lessons we learned in dealing with the harsh realities of adopting a modern and functional market economy, in addressing national minority issues, in building efficient public institutions and in approaching the Euro-Atlantic integration process. We believed that while cultural, religious, geographic or historic differences must be respected and preserved, the values we are fighting for in the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) are universal and eternal and should be at the heart of our philosophy.

Inclusiveness and balance were our watchwords. We wanted to ensure that all OSCE States benefit equally from what our organization can and should do; that all members in society enjoy the same rights and freedoms, regardless of ethnic origin, political persuasion, or religious belief. We wanted to avoid double standards and to guard against measuring performance by different yardsticks. We wanted to contribute to the removal of economic inequalities between and within states and to prevent disparities in the level of security enjoyed by different regions.

We set as our objective for the year the need for action-oriented policies to meet the right of the individual citizen to a decent life. I would like to draw attention to a few of the highlights of our accomplishment.

Significant steps have been taken towards inclusiveness and integration in the Western Balkans.

Ground-breaking elections in Kosovo, organised superbly by our Mission, under UN, Security Council Resolution 1244, with help from the UN, KFOR, and the Council of Europe. For the first time, all those who live

By Mr. Mircea Dan Geona in Kosovo -ethnic Albanians, Serbs and other minorities have a say in how they are governed.

The conclusion of the peace plan in southern Serbia is a significant part of the confidence-building process involving OSCE training of a multiethnic police force and the approval of an amended constitution in the former Yugoslva Republic of Macedonia which offers improved rights to minorities and the opening of the multi-

anti-trafficking legislation. Regional and inter-regional action against organised crime is now firmly on our international agenda.

Following the success of the Kosovo Police Service School, we have expanded policing activities to southern Serbia and FYROM. The OSCE has proven experience that, I believe, should be pursued elsewhere, for instance in Bosnia-Herzegovina. I very much welcome that we are about to enhance OSCE police-related activities. But

money laundering and trafficking endanger not only economic growth and sound democratic development, but also our security. We must pay special attention to the links between organised crime and terrorist groups, particularly on the financing side. The cross-border nature of organised crime and terrorism calls for close cooperation at the regional and inter-regional level backed by political commitment, like an OSCE-wide meeting of Justice and Interior Ministers.

We should find a

responsibility themselves by looking to their own resources and by developing healthy regional cooperation systems. Any organisation can only do as much as its member states wish. This is particularly true for the OSCE. Certain problems and concerns remain which cannot be ignored. In spite of our intense efforts to find a solution, little progress has been registered in resolving the so-called "frozen conflicts": Nagorno-Karabakh, the Transnistrian region, Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The persistence of open tensions indicates a certain failure of political will.

Our friends in Central Asia are rightly disturbed by the security threat in the region. The OSCE and the rest of the international community should increase their support, irrespective of the outcome of the current situation in Afghanistan.

But security is not the only area where support is needed. As the ODIHR have so recently reminded us, terrorism cannot be suppressed at the expense of human rights. Security is strengthened when found on respect for human rights, in particular political pluralism, freedom of expression, religious belief and on effective economic reform programmes and environmental awareness.

Allowing people a choice and encouraging the secular and tolerant model of Islam will diminish the appeal of fundamentalism.

For this to happen, we should explore how we can help the citizens and governments of Central Asia to develop a concept of society in the longer term fully anchored in Euro-Atlantic values. A true partnership for modernity backed by concrete resources would be evidence of a commitment by the international community to this region. Such a partnership should be open to the Russian Federation and other States in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. The measures undertaken by the Russian Federation in Chechnya and President Putin's initiative to launch a political dialogue with Chechen representatives are welcome. I hope these are the first steps towards a negotiated solution to this conflict.

Mr. Mircea Dan Geona is the Chairman-in-Office of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and Romania's Foreign Minister.



Mr. Mircea Dan Geona, Chairman-in-Office of OSCE



Mr. Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General

lingual South East European University in Tetovo.

We have started to address the problems of illegal trafficking. The "Regional Conference on Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Immigration," organised by the Chairmanship and the SECI Centre in this very building, agreed on priorities for national and regional action.

The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights has been working with the Stability Pact and the International Organisation for Migration on public awareness campaigns and

we must also provide the necessary resources. The post of Senior OSCE Police Adviser is an essential part of the package.

We have made huge strides in our cooperation with other organisations, animated by our strong belief in complementarity, synergy and a clear division of labour. We have worked constructively with the UN in Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina. We have a close relationship with the Council of Europe, for instance in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and in Chechnya. The joint efforts of the European Union, NATO and the OSCE in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to prevent the conflict from erupting into civil war has been a classic example of what can be done when we work together. I have enjoyed representing the OSCE as part of this collective effort. We must look at the serious challenges still ahead.

Corruption and organised crime such as

permanent answer to the issue of minorities. Where ethnic or religious minority groups are segregated and disadvantaged in their own society, political and social tensions erupt. We should be applying common standards of tolerance for diversity, instead of creating ad-hoc solutions in response to a specific problem or crisis. We count on the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the new High Commissioner on National Minorities to continue their valued work for justice and integration.

We should examine more closely the role the OSCE can play in promoting a quality return of refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). There are tens of thousands of refugees and IDPs throughout the OSCE area. It is unacceptable that innocent victims of conflict are still suffering. We are working with the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). But we expect a greater effort by national and local authorities to create the necessary conditions of security.

Where the rule of law and

throughout this past year to promote democracy and the rule of law. Their contribution, especially in monitoring electoral processes, has been invaluable.

Correcting the dangerous economic divide within and between states must be a priority. This is an enormous source of instability. Democracy alone does not feed hungry children. It must be backed by economic and social prosperity. The OSCE should do more to identify economic and environmental hot spots which merit international attention.

We should explore with other international organisations how to remove the "syndrome of dependency" on international assistance and on the major powers. The intervention of the international community cannot continue indefinitely. We must encourage and support the creation of accountable and transparent institutions in the Western Balkans that are self-sustaining.

The countries of the region must start to exercise

"We should find a permanent answer to the issue of minorities. Where ethnic or religious minority groups are segregated and disadvantaged in their own society, political and social tensions erupt. We should be applying common standards of tolerance for diversity, instead of creating ad-hoc solutions in response to a specific problem or crisis. We count on the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the new High Commissioner on National Minorities to continue their valued work for justice and integration."

TRUST INTERNATIONAL

AFRICA & THE MIDDLE EAST

US envoy, Moroccan king to confer on M/East

Assistant Secretary of State, William Burns, said on Tuesday, he would confer with Morocco's King Mohammed, on the Middle East crisis and terrorism issues.

Burns is touring the North African region to drum up support for the US campaign against terrorism and Washington's mediation in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"Historically, Morocco has played a valuable (mediation) role in the Middle East peace process ... His Majesty King Mohammed will continue to play this role," Burns told reporters at a news briefing in Rabat.

"The United States and Morocco share the same view that both Israel and the Palestinians should move away from the violence and extremism ... and resume talks to relaunch the peace process."

Burns, who earlier met Prime Minister Abderrahmane El Koussouta and Foreign Minister, Mohamed Benaissa, said Washington hoped to

strengthen its cooperation with Algeria and Morocco to combat terrorism. But he did not elaborate.

The envoy also said Washington fully supported the efforts of UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan's special envoy, James Baker to find a solution to the Western Sahara dispute.

A referendum due to give Western Saharans a choice between independence or integration with Morocco has been delayed several times since 1992 because of differences between the two sides over who is eligible to vote.

This year the United Nations proposed autonomy for Western Sahara under Morocco's sovereignty

Baby rapists docked in South Africa

Two men appeared at a court in Johannesburg on Tuesday, accused of raping a five-month-old girl who was discovered covered in blood and in tears.

It is the latest in a series of rapes of baby girls - some



Muslim children read verses from the Holy Quran at a mosque in Sidon, Southern Lebanon, on the eve of Laylat Al-Qadr, or the Night of Power, which falls on the 27th day of the month of Ramadan.

of them involving children less than one year-old, which has left South Africans reeling with horror.

Every day the newspapers bring awful revelations: a nine-month-old girl gang-raped by six men; an eight-month-old raped and left by the roadside.

Outside the central Johannesburg magistrates' court, 200 demonstrators gathered carrying banners with slogans like "child rapists are not human".

Yet many protesters seem unable to understand why the rapes are happening.

"I don't have an answer, it's inhuman, it's inhuman," one said.

Rape statistics from South Africa are so shocking as to be almost unbelievable - women's rights activists say one

South African is raped every 26 seconds.

It is the young who are particularly vulnerable, with the police saying that more teenagers are raped than any other age group.

But even in a country numbed to horrific events, these cases are bewildering to South Africans, and making them question where their society is heading.

It is hardly believable - but some think that this is not new, only that a horrible truth is finally being acknowledged

"Actually it's not a new phenomenon, it's been something that you hide, you regard it as an embarrassment within the family. But no v people have started to talk, they've decided that they've had enough," a woman protester said.

A typical story reveals the horror.

On a poor Johannesburg estate, a family of eight sleep in one dirty bedroom.

Fresh fighting in Liberia, thousands flee

More than 15,000 people displaced by fresh fighting between Liberian troops and rebels in the northwest of the country in the last week have arrived in Sawmill Town.

Sawmill, situated some 100 kilometres northwest of the capital Monrovia, has begun swelling with displaced people who intermittently arrive in large groups.

The vast majority of them fled camps in towns

such as Bopolu, the provincial capital of northwestern Gbarpolu county which has been the scene of some of the fiercest fighting in recent days.

The displaced people complained that they were being prevented from moving further on to much more safer areas like the main provincial town, Tubmanburg, some 60km outside of Monrovia.

Zubazi Aquoi, a spokesman for the displaced, said Bopolu itself has not been attacked, "but echoes of artillery bombardments were so heavy from embattled places, that the 3,600 people at the camp all

Israeli helicopter raids leave three dead

Israeli helicopters have launched a missile strike on a Palestinian neighbourhood in the Gaza Strip, killing three people and wounding seven.

The helicopters attacked twice, hitting an area near the Khan Yunis refugee camp.

One Palestinian was killed and two members of the radical Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) were wounded in the first attack.

The victims were in a cemetery at the time. More people were at the scene when the helicopters struck again, firing missiles at nearby houses and killing two more people.

Local Palestinians said the raid followed shelling of the area by Israeli tanks.

The Khan Yunis camp lies next to Israel's Gush Katif settlement block, which comes under regular mortar fire from Palestinian militants.

Israeli army radio said the helicopters fired at buildings near the camp where the military believed Palestinians had fired on the Jewish settlement earlier in the day.

Earlier on Tuesday, Israeli soldiers earlier shot dead two Palestinians in disputed circumstances in the West Bank.

The Israeli military said its soldiers killed the two Palestinians near Tulkarm when their car ignored warning shots and refused to slow down at a checkpoint.

But a Palestinian source said she had seen soldiers chase two men into an olive grove on foot, after which she heard gunshots.

The day was also marked by the funerals of two children killed in an Israeli helicopter attack on Monday. They were attended by about 3,000 angry Palestinian mourners.

Israel has apologised for the killing, which Palestinian Information Minister, Yasser Abed Rabbo described as "immoral".

The children - aged three and 13 - were killed in a failed

bid to kill a member of the militant group Islamic Jihad in the West Bank town of Hebron.

Mohammed Sidr survived the explosion but was seriously wounded.

The latest violence coincides with a new mediation visit to the region by the EU's foreign policy chief, Javier Solana.

He ran into heavy criticism after describing Islamic Jihad and Hamas as "terrorist networks" and demanded that Mr. Arafat dismantle them.

US officials meet Iraqi Kurds

US State Department officials are meeting Kurdish opposition leaders in northern Iraq, fuelling speculation that the US is planning to extend its war on terror to the country.

The US delegation, the first to visit since February, arrived in the Kurds' UN-sponsored safe haven on Monday.

The region is outside Baghdad's control, so Kurdish forces there could be key to any attempt to remove the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, from power.

The move came as US temporarily transferred the headquarters of its military operations in the Middle East and Central Asia from Georgia to Kuwait.

A State Department spokesman said the purpose of its visit was to demonstrate continued US involvement with the Iraqi opposition and to mediate between rival Kurdish factions.

Two parties, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), have shared power in the region since 1992.

But the Kurds have a long history of fighting one another.

The US delegation, led by senior State Department Official, Ryan Cocker, will also check on food deliveries under the oil-for-food programme, the spokesman said.

The programme allows Iraq to sell a limited amount of oil to enable it to buy food and medicine.

Eight US legislators last week called for humanitarian assistance and military training for Iraqi opposition parties.

In a letter to President George W Bush, they said US attempts to remove Saddam Hussein from power would not succeed without the help of local allies.

Zimbabwe holds election in March

President Robert Mugabe, of Zimbabwe, has said presidential elections will be held in March next year, though he did not give a specific date.

Mr. Mugabe told a group of ministers from the Southern Africa Development Community meeting in Harare, to discuss the land and current political crisis that a date would be announced "in due course".

Zimbabwe is by law required to hold its election no later than April next year.

The run up to the presidential poll, in which the opposition Movement for Democratic Change threatens the stiffest challenge yet to Mr. Mugabe's 21-year rule, has been marked by violence and claims of government supported intimidation.

The latest involved an MDC youth organiser whose body was found floating in the Gonye Dam after he had been kidnapped by unknown attackers; the independent Daily News newspaper reported on Tuesday.

Augustus Chacha, was taken from his home in Gonye village, about 240 km south of Harare, late on Saturday. The paper said that Mr.

Chacha's attackers accused him of supporting the MDC.

"I strongly suspect that my brother was killed by Zanu-PF supporters who trailed him from Gokwe, where he was active as an MDC member before he came to Shurugwi in August," the French news agency quoted the dead man's brother, Lazarus, as saying.

Gokwe has been the scene of some of the worst political violence in the country this year.

The newspaper's report coincides with the visit to Harare of the United States Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Walter Kansteiner.

He said he was worried by the breakdown of the rule of law in Zimbabwe and by government support for political violence.

Political violence has killed dozens of people in the last couple of years.

The United States has been the only western country that has so far signalled its intention to act against Zimbabwe for its human rights abuses.



President Charles Taylor

TRUST INTERNATIONAL

World Report

Bush backs out of '72 nuclear pact

President Bush, eager to deploy a missile shield long sought by Republicans, soon will give Russia notice that the United States is withdrawing from a landmark 1972 arms-control treaty, U.S. government officials said Tuesday. The pact bans missile defense systems.

Bush will invoke a clause in the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty that requires the United States and Russia to give six months' notice before abandoning the pact, the sources said.

Initial White House plans were to announce the decision today, but officials cautioned the date could change. One source said formal notice would be issued in January. The four government officials spoke on condition of anonymity.

"The time is coming when we will need to move beyond the ABM treaty," said Sean McCormack, a White House spokesman. Last Thursday, a group of Russian military officials on a visit to Washington told private American arms-control experts they expected the Bush administration to give notice of withdrawal over the year-end holidays.

Bush told Putin during their autumn talks in China that he would withdraw from the ABM in January even if Russia had not agreed to a deal by then.

With the decision, Bush takes a huge step toward fulfilling a campaign pledge to develop and deploy an anti-missile system that he says will protect the United States and its allies, including Russia, from missiles fired by rogue nations.

Bush has said the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks heightened the need for such a system.

Russia and many U.S. allies have warned Bush that withdrawing from the pact might trigger a nuclear arms race. Critics of the plan also question whether an effective system can be developed without enormous expense.



President George H. Bush



Zacarius Moussaoui, a French citizen of Moroccan descent, was charged with six counts of conspiracy Tuesday, the first indictment of a key figure in the Sept. 11 attacks, Attorney-General John Ashcroft announced. Moussaoui faces the death penalty on four of the charges and will be tried in a federal court.

Chinese president visits Burma

Chinese President Jiang Zemin arrived in Burma yesterday for a four-day visit - the first Chinese head of state to visit the country since 1985.

China has been Burma's biggest and most ardent supporter since the generals seized power in 1988. Since then Rangoon and Beijing have been very close allies.

Most of Burma's military hardware comes from China, including tanks, patrol boats and fighter jets. The Chinese military also provides most of the army and the air force's specialist training.

But there is some concern within the Burmese army that it is becoming overly dependent on Beijing for military equipment and training.

Rangoon is scouting around and trying to diversify its sources of military hardware.

There have been growing military ties between Burma and India. Burma has also acquired sophisticated fighter planes from Moscow.

"Beijing wasn't happy with the recent Burmese purchase of MiG jets, and they made their displeasure known," a Western diplomat told the BBC.

There has been constant speculation over the past decade that Burma and China continue to work closely in the area of intelligence.

"We have little doubt that the Chinese are allowed to have access to the Indian Ocean for intelligence purposes," said an Indian Government official.

Other defence specialists are less convinced.

China has certainly helped Burma build a deep-sea port near Mergui on the Andaman sea. But analysts

believe this is as much for economic reasons as strategic.

A decade ago the Chinese authorities encouraged the southern states, especially Yunnan province to look southwards to Burma.

Beijing was concerned that the living standards in the country's southern hinterland was falling behind the more prosperous eastern seaboard area which benefited from trading with Hong Kong, Vietnam and indirectly with Taiwan.

N/Alliance capture French al-Qaeda fighter

An Australian man who trained with Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda fighters in Afghanistan has been captured by the Northern Alliance, Australian Attorney-General, Daryl Williams, said yesterday.

Williams said the 26-year-old caucasian male, who also trained with Islamic groups in Kosovo and Pakistan, was arrested by the Northern Alliance on or around December 9.

He refused to give any details of the capture, the man's personal details or current whereabouts for security reasons.

Williams declined to say if the man was a Muslim or whether he had military experience before leaving Australia, but said he was in good health.

"It was the US authorities which advised Australia of the capture of this man," Williams told reporters.

"We are not proposing

Tamil Tiger attacks claim 12

Tamil Tiger rebels have clashed with government troops in north-eastern Sri Lanka, with six reported killed on each side.

The rebels carried out two simultaneous raids on police and army positions, in the first major attack since Sri Lanka's new prime minister, Ranil Wickramasinghe, was sworn in.

The defence ministry said guerrillas from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) attacked the Pahala Toppur army base in the district of Trincomalee, 230 kilometres (142 miles) north-east of the capital Colombo, killing three soldiers and wounding 12 others.

Around the same time, rebels attacked a police station in Valachchenai in the neighbouring district of Batticaloa, killing three policemen and wounding 11 more.

At least six guerrillas were killed in a counter-attack in Trincomalee, according to defence officials.

"Troop reinforcements were able to repulse the attack and take back a bunker line that the terrorists occupied briefly," defence ministry spokesman Sanath Karunaratne said, quoted by the French news agency AFP.

Local officials said troop reinforcements were sent to both areas and began searching for the rebels who retreated into the jungles.

ODD WORLD Singapore declares war on crows

Tiny Singapore is fighting an army of crows plaguing its high-rise apartments, in a battle reminiscent of scenes from director Alfred Hitchcock's film "The Birds."

The balmy city state is home to some 98,000 noisy, squawking crows, which feed on garbage and breed quickly. But it will take a decade to bring the pests under control and they may never entirely be stamped out, local biologists have concluded after a two-year study.

"If you are living in a housing block where two or three thousand crows come at night, then the problem could be enormous...in terms of the nuisance that they cause every night and they don't go away," biologist Navjot Sodhi, who headed the study, told Reuters.

"The crows can double their population every year," Sodhi, an associate professor at the National University of Singapore, said on Tuesday. "They almost breed like flies."

Singapore's crows are a foreign species which biologists believe migrated from Malaysia or Indonesia in the 1940s.

'Terrorist' squad sends Xmas wishes

A unit of Colombia's ultra-right death squads blamed for some of the worst massacres in a 37-year war, has sent Christmas cards to its fighters wishing them peace and a prosperous New Year.

The e-mail letter, signed by a regional block of the outlawed United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia, features a blonde girl donning a white angel costume with wings standing in front of a richly decorated Christmas tree.

"It is the month in which we sow our hopes to achieve a peace that is so craved for by all Colombians. And with Christmas come our new projects and hopes for the next year," the letter, a copy of which was obtained by Reuters, said.

Funded by business leaders and ranchers fed up with attacks and blackmail by left-wing guerrillas, the 8,000-member paramilitaries are blamed for horrific human rights abuses — such as using chain saws and sledgehammers in the past to torture and kill rebels and suspected rebel sympathizers.

The "paras," as they are known locally, are branded a terrorist organization by Washington.

Teenagers admit creating computer virus

Four Israeli teenagers were placed under house arrest Monday after admitting they wrote and spread the "Goner" worm that wreaked havoc on computers worldwide, police said.

Tel Aviv's juvenile court accepted a police request to confine the 15- and 16-year-olds to their houses pending five days of investigation, said Meir Zohar, head of the Israeli police computer crimes squad.

Under Israeli law, they would face up to 2-1/2 years in prison for a virus that deleted files and clogged e-mail inboxes around the world, causing millions of dollars in damage.

"Goner," the latest of a series of costly computer viruses to have an international impact, appeared as an e-mail with the subject line "Hi" and a screensaver attachment. Officials said North America, Australia and western Europe were hardest hit.

The youths, from the same school in the northern city of Nahariya, had never been arrested before, Zohar said. One admitted to writing the worm, and the other three confessed to spreading it, with the author's encouragement, he said.

"They are not bandits, they are regular kids. They are not computer geniuses, although one of them could write a program," Zohar told Reuters. "I don't think they fully understood what they were doing."

Security experts called for stern punishment, insisting the damage went beyond a children's prank.

Praying the price

Bad drivers in the Polish town of Glogow can now escape traffic fines - if they pray for forgiveness. A local priest patrolling the streets with police offers motorists the option of a ticket or a prayer and a picture of St. Christopher, the patron saint of travellers. Police say Father Piotr's presence is a boon, despite the loss of revenue.

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SONY

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BUSINESS DAY

NIPC lists obstacles to foreign investment inflow

The absence of sector profiles in the formulation of business trips abroad by governors and other stakeholders has been identified as an impediment to inflow of foreign investment into country.

The Chief Operating Officer of the Nigeria Investment Promotion Council, (NIPC), Mr. Sirajo Yakubu stated in a keynote address at the NIPC-UNIDO workshop on Project Formulation, Appraisal and Promotion held at Arewa House, Kaduna.

He lamented that the council has not been able to avail the private investors of lots of opportunities at its disposal due to lack of relevant information about the activities and services of such organisations.

The NIPC chief operating officer further explained that even such giant conglomerates like Northern Nigeria Development Company (NNDC) had not been helpful in providing simple data to the council on agro-allied companies operating in the North.

Highlighting further bottlenecks to foreign investment inflow, Mr. Yakubu noted that lots of duplicity of functions and roles by various government institutions complicate issues relating to promoting Nigeria's investment potentials.

He cited the foreign trips of some governors under the guise of inviting investors as a waste of resources and duplication, adding that NIPC is doing just that.

He stated that while NIPC has all the capacity to promote Nigeria abroad the governors had been travelling at the expense of public resources without the vital sector profiles which any serious investor needed before agreeing to invest his money in a foreign country.

Yakubu further argued that such trips are yet to bring to the states any dividend by way of industrial take off or capital.

"They go and without the sector profiles of their proposed industrial potentials and they visit the same investors that NIPC visits. But inherent are the industries that emerged from those trips.

He maintained that NIPC has mapped out a strategy for attracting foreign investors into Nigeria, adding that what was required was a coordinated effort by government agencies and the private sector to provide accurate, factual and lucid information about the existing investors.

On the role of

From Ibrahim Dan-Halilu, in Kaduna

government in protecting the textile industries against foreign competitors, Yakubu said the federal government must have the political will to decide what to choose and adopt from the policies and programmes proposed to it by international financial institutions.

He also advised the private sector to put up a strong lobby through appropriate fora to seek policy review such as upward review of tariffs on imported textiles.

A participant at the workshop, Mr. Nuhu Waya in his remarks called for regular interaction between NIPC and stakeholders in the business sectors so that adequate information on the activities of the manufacturers could be obtained.

He noted with concern the non-challance of government agencies to promoting business transactions and opportunities, stressing that the private sector should seize the opportunity to take over full control of business enterprises and fora.



Kola Daisi, NIPC Boss.



The Federal Government of Nigeria signed a credit agreement with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) on a Community-Based Agricultural and Rural Development Programme. Picture shows the Minister of Finance, Malam Adamu Ciroma (r) exchanging documents with the IFAD President, Mr. Lennart Bage after the signing ceremony, Tuesday in Abuja. Pix: Felix Onigbinde.

NLC backs fuel price hike

By Samson Ojo

The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) has agreed with the Federal Government's plan to increase prices of petroleum products. The NLC yesterday endorsed the proposed liberalisation of the downstream sector of the Nigerian oil industry.

The Group Managing Director of the NNPC, Mr. Jackson Gaius-Obaseki said Sunday night in Abuja that though liberalisation will lead to increase in prices of fuel, the prices may not be very high.

In a communique issued at the end of a joint seminar on the liberalisation of the downstream sector of the petroleum industry yesterday, in Abuja, the NLC supported the liberalisation of downstream sector.

The seminar was organised by representatives of the NLC in conjunction with the Presidential Technical Campaign Committee on Liberalisation (PTCC) headed by Engineer

Funso Kupolokun, who is also the Special Assistant to the President on Petroleum and Energy.

In the communique, jointly signed by Comrade Issa Aremu and Comrade S. O. Z. Ejiofor for Labour, and Engineer Kupolokun and Edareh Agbah for the PTCC, the participants said "the Federal Government is encouraged to liberalise the downstream sector."

According to the participants, regulation of the downstream sector of the industry had essentially been responsible for the present problems of the subsector, and thus their decision to support liberalisation.

The participants however recommended the establishment of a price regulatory body representative of major stakeholders "to create appropriate equilibrium for price, quality, and supply stability."

The two-page communique further explained that liberalisation is an essential policy instrument for vibrant economy and therefore advised that the Federal Government should liberalise the downstream sector but with "utmost sincerity and transparency."



Adams Oshiomhole, NLC Boss.

Aboki Zhawa inaugurates ALSCON pension board

*Charges members to keep funds in trust

The Permanent Secretary, Establishments and Pensions Office, Dr. Aboki Zhawa has charged members of the newly inaugurated Pension Board of Trustees of the Aluminium Smelter Company of Nigeria (ALSCON) to stir clear of mismanaging pension funds entrusted in them.

Dr. Zhawa warned while inaugurating the ALSCON pension board at Ikot Abasi, Akwa Ibom State that "on no account should pension funds be diverted for any purposes other than payment of retirement benefits."

According to the permanent secretary, section 24 of the Trust Deed makes

By Ahmed Shekarau



Dieter Matron, ALSCON Boss.

it a crime for which all board members are liable to prosecution if pension funds are misappropriated.

He however urged the members to settle all outstanding pension liabilities before investing surplus funds into profitable ventures.

A statement signed by Musa Hallah, Principal Public Relations Officer and made available to *Business Day* Monday in Abuja said the ALSCON pension board of trustees is headed by Engineer Mohammed Murtala Salik, who is also the company's Deputy Managing Director.

In his statement at the occasion, the Managing

Director of ALSCON, Mr. Dieter Matron stated that the inauguration of the pension board could not have come at a more auspicious time than now when the company is about to resume production early next year.

He said the new development will help to usher in a stable atmosphere in the company as the management plans a new reinvigorated ALSCON that places premium on core business of smelting aluminium for overseas and domestic end users.

Mr. Matron emphasised that there can be no greater reward or honour for an employee who has served meritoriously than participating in the pension scheme.

Chikwe inaugurates anti-corruption committees

From Shakirat Abdulmajeed, in Lagos

In an effort to wipe out corruption and indiscipline in parastatals under the Ministry of Aviation, the ministry has set up an anti-corruption and transparency monitoring committee for the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA), Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) and Nigerian Airspace Management Agency (NAMA).

Inaugurating the committees at the Lagos airports, the Minister of Aviation, Dr. Kema Chikwe lamented that in spite of the nation's immense human and natural endowments, the high expectations of post-independence prosperity and speedy national development continued to be a mirage with the vast segment of the citizenry impoverished.

This, according to her, had prompted the federal government to launch a crusade of national rebirth and social regeneration aimed at correcting the damage to the nation's image.

Speaking through the chairperson of the ministry's committee on Transparency Monitoring and Anti-corruption, Mrs. M. Lashman, the minister stated that even though the committee is being formally launched for the parastatals, her ministry has never at any time lost sight of the need to maintain transparency and accountability in line with the tenets of the Obasanjo administration.

This she said was why her ministry set up a number of committees/panels to look into financial transactions and general activities of the ministry and parastatals under its supervision.

She stated that the results of these investigations have been useful to her ministry in reaching some important decisions aimed at instilling discipline and improving efficiency within the system.

"This informed the steps being taken by my ministry to ensure professionalism and transparency in the handling of commercial and financial transactions in the parastatals," she said.

For the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA), the anti-corruption committee is being chaired by Mr. Sam Gaiya, Mrs. Bukola Fagbohun Secretary, Engineer Onyeyiri, Alhaji Raji and Mr. Hambali as members. Mrs. Kalejaiye is the chairperson of FAAN's committee on Transparency Monitoring and Anti-Corruption while Engineer Sosanya, Alhaji Yusuf, Dr. Kukoyi, Mr. Ojo and Alhaji Haruna are members.

BUSINESS DAY

ELECTRICITY WATCH

As the December 31st Presidential deadline to the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) closes in, reports from various parts of the country show improvements in power supply in some places, while there is little or no improvement in some states. From Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State, reports indicate that electricity supply in the city has improved, even as it is reported to have dropped in Gombe, the capital of Gombe State.

The report from Sokoto, however, shows that there are slight improvements in power supply. Investigations by our reporters in most of the satellite towns of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) like Kubwa, Old Karu, Nyanya, Karmo and Mararaba-Gurku have shown that there is no improvement in power supply in those areas.

Meanwhile, the Minister of Power and Steel, Dr. Segun Agagu has said that power generation is being improved by about 1000 megawatts (MW) following the commissioning of the two units of Egbin Thermal Power Station last Friday and those of the Afam Power Station, by President Olusegun Obasanjo on Monday, among other stations connected to the grid.

The four units commissioned at Egbin and Afam are expected to add 276 MW of electricity to the national grid.

Commissioning the Afam station Monday in Port Harcourt, President Obasanjo reiterated the government's firm determination to keep to its promise to eliminate power outage due to load shedding by December 31, this year.

"By the end of this year, with 4000 MW available, we expect that there will no longer be any interruption due to load shedding. That is the essence of our promise," the President said in Port Harcourt.

President Obasanjo recalled that NEPA's performance had become "so dismal that I was compelled to apologise to the nation" about 22 months ago. "We then began a countdown to the end of epileptic power supply in the country. By the grace of God, we are on course to keeping our promise," he said.

But many respondents who spoke with our reporters across the country doubted NEPA's capacity to keep to its promise of eliminating power outages in all parts of the country before the end of this year. Will it keep to the promise?

Below are the reports from some parts of the country.

Power supply improves in Maiduguri

Electricity supply has significantly improved in Maiduguri and other parts of Borno State, even though most people *Business Day* spoke to felt that the room for improvement is too big to be filled by NEPA before December 31st, 2001.

Most *Business Day* respondents in Maiduguri were also quick to draw parallels between NEPA power supply regime in the city during the last three to four months ago and what obtains now.

"I think the situation is becoming better," said Aminu Ibrahim, of Bolari Ward, Maiduguri. "During the last four months, power failure was so chronic many small NEPA dependent businesses such as barbers went out of business... In my area, we get at least eight hours of power supply per day now," he added.

In Abbaganaram Low-

...rises in Sokoto

In Sokoto, our correspondent who spoke with some consumers reports that there are slight improvements in electricity supply in the city.

According to Alhaji Yakub Maccido, the Managing Director of Millennium Printing Press, there are slight improvements in supply, "but it's still poor here."

According to him, the consumption rate in Sokoto metropolis is very low and the supply is not constant despite all the promises at the beginning of the year.

"Sokoto's electricity demand does not require rationing as they are doing now," Alhaji Yakub maintained.

He said often times they have to resort to the use of their power generating sets for more than two - three hours daily.

From Abdullahi Bego, in Maiduguri

cost and Bank of the North areas, also in Maiduguri metropolis, *Business Day* respondents spoke of a NEPA that is "becoming new" due to what they called "relative stability" in the trend of power supply.

While this is true of several other wards in Maiduguri, *Business Day* checks show that it is very rare for NEPA to allow an uninterrupted power supply at any given area of the city

throughout the day or throughout the night.

What obtains, for the most part, is that supply runs smoothly for some part of the day and most part of the night or most part of the day and some part of the night.

However, the fact that the generality of people are expressing more optimism with the turnaround of events in NEPA is not in question. But it is also true that this optimism vary with the sense of apprehension regarding the authority's readiness to

address the public's long standing complaints regarding in-appropriate billing, lack of quick response to fault reporting, etc.

At a section of Bulunkutu Kasuwa area, for instance, *Business Day* was told of how people of the area, after exhausting their patience with the problem of poor power supply, decided to "contribute" thousands of naira to NEPA before a new power transformer was installed for them.

... drops in Gombe

From Abdullahi Dutse, in Gombe

Residents of the state capital who spoke to *Business Day* on the deadline were generally pessimistic about the actualisation of the deadline, pointing out that no meaningful improvement has been recorded since the announcement of the deadline by President Obasanjo.

Alhaji Bala Bello Tinka, a politician and Managing Director of Tinka Point Civil Engineering Company lamented the situation in Gombe, saying "NEPA's 133 KVA substation serving the whole north-east sub-region is situated here but we



Governor Abubakar Hashidu of Gombe State.

sometimes go without power for up to 18 hours."

He said Nigerian's hopes were raised with President Obasanjo's seeming resolve to find a lasting solution to NEPA's problems but we are now faced with the possibility that the situation may be beyond salvage as it continues to deteriorate.

Mr. Sunday Uche, who runs a bakery in Bogo (Joy Malted Bread) a suburb of the state capital told *Business Day* that the epileptic nature of power supply has led to reduction in his bakery's production and therefore reduction in revenue, forcing him to lay-off about a quarter of his employees.

Similarly, a journalist, Malam Abdullahi Garba of Radio Nigeria said the erratic power supply in the state has negatively affected dissemination of information from the state by correspondents of various media organisations operating in Gombe.

Malam Yakubu Audu owns one of the most popular Barbing Saloons at Bolari quarters, the social nerve centre of Gombe and he said of the power supply situation: "I used to have many customers a day, now with only four to five hours electricity supply in a day I hardly get to serve 10, customers."

NEPA can generate 4,000 MW, but... -Agagu

By Ahmed Shekarau

The Minister of Power and Steel, Dr. Olusegun Agagu has assured that the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) has the capacity to meet the presidential promise to generate, transmit and distribute 4,000 megawatts (MW) of electricity by the end of the year.

The minister, however, claimed that "the configuration of electric system in Nigeria is prone to outages occasioned sometimes by human factors."



Segun Agagu, Power and Steel Minister.

Dr. Agagu said in Abuja when he met the National Electric Power Monitoring Committee that 1000 MW is already being added to the grid within the week.

Part of these megawatts added included 276 MW being generated from the newly commissioned units of Egbin thermal power station and the Afam power station.

A statement signed by Mr. Clinton Adebolu Oni, Chief Press Secretary of the Power and Steel Ministry said the minister told members of the committee that the 2,742 MW generated as at last week was the highest level ever generated in the history of Nigeria.

Commenting on Enron's involvement in the Independent Power Producers' Scheme, Dr. Agagu told newsmen that at the initial stage, the deal was absolutely between Enron and NEPA.

He explained that Enron intended to sell to NEPA at the rate of N2.75 per MW, while NEPA was only willing to buy at N2.20 per MW.

December 31 deadline a myth -Handaz boss

By Hassan Idris

The Managing Director of Handaz Technical Limited, Ustaz Hussaini Zakariya has asserted that it may not be possible for NEPA to meet its promise December considering its current performance in most parts of the Federal Capital Territory.

He pointed out that in areas like the Old Karu Federal Housing Estate, where he stays, including Nyanya, Jikwoi, Karshi, Orozo and Mararraraba in Nasarawa State, NEPA was performing better in the last three years. But they had a "terrible" experience with its services in recent times.

Similarly, the Assistant General Manager (Investment Services and Promotion) of Nigerian Export Processing Zones Authority (NEPZA), Mr. Chris O. Ndibe said NEPA has improved its services in Abuja between year 2000 and 2001 because it is the seat of government.

Dr. Ndibe disclosed that in Calabar, for example, the people there do not enjoy stable power supply each time he travels there. "But NEPA restored adequate and constant power where they hear Mr. President was visiting," he claimed.

He lamented that in Awka, the capital of Anambra State, there was constant outage for about eight hours out of the 48 hours he stayed there recently.

Furthermore, he went to Onisha and spent six hours without NEPA as generating

sets were working all over the city, adding that there was always preferential treatment for Abuja as the seat of government.

He advised NEPA to extend such stable services to other states in the country, noting that NEPA cannot meet its nationwide undistruptible power supply promise.

In the same vein, a civil servant in the Nigeria Press Council, who preferred community said he noticed there was a change in NEPA services especially in Abuja.

He stressed that between 1999 to now, he lives around Kubwa but power supply, by NEPA was erratic. He recalled a period when he stayed for about 10 days without electricity.

Now, there is improvement only in Abuja but in the satellite towns, NEPA cables were only erected without power.



Lijel Imoke, NEPA Chairman

BUSINESS DAY

Nigerian Stock Dealings (NSE) Price List as at yesterday (12/12/2001)

COMPANY	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	DEALS	VOLUME	VALUE
7UP	5.06	5.06	0.00	20	36,700	185,702.00
ACCESSBANK	1.30	1.30	0.00	1	900	1,170.00
ADSWITCH	0.86	0.82	0.04	1	1,000	820.00
AFPRINT	0.91	0.87	0.04	6	95,000	83,450.00
AFRIBANK	8.55	8.70	0.15	25	186,038	1,604,403.96
AGIP	35.80	35.47	0.33	24	61,659	2,204,667.25
AGLEVENT	1.15	1.10	0.05	2	6,000	6,640.00
AICO	3.05	3.14	0.09	11	44,306	137,164.97
ALUMACO	0.84	0.84	0.00	8	90	75.60
AMICABLE	0.53	0.51	0.02	1	5,000	2,550.00
AP	19.34	19.34	0.00	13	8,067	156,015.78
ASHAKACEM	21.20	21.50	0.30	35	135,735	2,917,001.94
AVONCROWN	0.95	0.93	0.02	7	32,477	30,573.59
BATA	0.37	0.37	0.00	8	409,170	151,442.90
BCC	4.79	4.79	0.00	1	3,906	18,709.74
BERGER	2.85	2.85	0.00	12	79,963	227,894.55
C&ILEASING	1.30	1.30	0.00	1	500	650.00
CADBURY	27.00	27.70	0.70	73	248,161	6,735,467.45
CAP	3.03	2.88	0.15	5	64,964	187,096.32
CAPALBETO	8.10	8.10	0.00	2	702	5,686.20
CCNN	3.07	3.07	0.00	1	250	767.50
CFAO	3.40	3.40	0.00	1	149	506.60
CHARTERED	4.35	4.35	0.00	10	2,319,090	10,088,041.50
CHELLARAM	1.78	1.78	0.00	2	231	411.18
CMB	0.95	0.95	0.00	1	10,000	9,500.00
COOPBANK	1.82	1.91	0.09	6	36,800	69,154.00
CORNERST	1.32	1.32	0.00	6	130,857	172,731.24
COSTAIN	0.77	0.77	0.00	1	3,273	2,520.21
DELTGLAS	5.00	5.00	0.00	8	38,827	194,135.00
DNMEYER	10.01	10.01	0.00	2	15,194	152,091.94
DUMEZ	2.80	2.80	0.00	7	35,100	98,280.00
DUNLOP	3.50	3.35	0.15	14	91,188	308,055.90
EKOBANK	2.15	2.15	0.00	13	204,869	440,198.35
EKOCORP	3.41	3.41	0.00	1	100	341.00
ENAMELWA	3.52	3.52	0.00	1	300	1,056.00
EVENSMED	1.53	1.46	0.07	1	1,760	2,569.60
FIRSTALUM	1.46	1.46	0.00	3	21,900	31,974.00
FIRSTBANK	24.49	24.00	0.49	228	980,005	23,577,194.33
FLOURMIL	15.40	15.71	0.31	40	178,426	2,806,178.78
FSB	8.12	8.20	0.08	40	384,995	3,112,294.71
GOLDBREW	1.06	1.01	0.05	1	500	505.00
GUARANTY	6.59	6.60	0.01	50	731,010	4,825,563.50
GUINNESS	31.70	32.21	0.51	51	389,603	12,618,653.60
HALLBANK	3.80	3.79	0.01	1	100	379.00
IGL	4.71	4.48	0.23	12	34,500	159,086.30
IMB	1.02	1.06	0.04	18	204,690	209,454.80
INLANDBANK	1.25	1.19	0.06	1	20,000	23,800.00
JBERGER	45.00	42.90	2.10	2	16,228	693,867.00
LASACO	1.52	1.52	0.00	3	18,000	27,310.00
LAWUNION	1.55	1.55	0.00	2	5,000	7,750.00
LENNARDS	0.30	0.29	0.01	1	773	224.17
LEVBROS	27.04	27.10	0.06	63	486,412	13,140,102.36
LIONBANK	1.35	1.35	0.00	1	1,000	1,350.00
LIZOLOFIN	0	0.16	0.00	1	300	48.00
MANDRID	4.05	4.06	0.01	1	4,500	18,270.00
MANNYBANK	1.20	1.25	0.05	8	74,480	91,450.00
MAY&BAKER	2.70	2.70	0.00	3	20,000	54,000.00
MOBIL	64.50	64.60	0.10	30	46,614	2,975,242.80
NAL	3.69	3.62	0.07	30	805,837	3,029,000.53
NB	35.18	35.00	0.18	60	470,533	16,484,158.45
NBC	26.05	26.17	0.12	3	144,031	3,757,056.28
NCR	2.07	2.00	0.07	1	3,600	7,200.00
NESTLE	66.00	64.00	2.00	23	131,517	8,433,817.00
NIG-GERMAN	3.15	3.10	0.05	3	6,625	20,537.50
NIGERINS	4.33	4.33	0.00	1	200	866.00
NIWICABLE	2.17	2.17	0.00	8	137,572	298,531.24
NOLCHEM	28.00	26.85	1.15	19	7,768	208,804.00
OKOMUOIL	9.45	9.45	0.00	7	7,472	70,610.40
OWENABANK	2.21	2.31	0.10	1	1,000	2,310.00
PRESTIGE	1.91	2.00	0.09	3	26,400	52,674.00
PZ	10.88	10.70	0.18	48	494,267	5,331,640.01
RTBRISCOE	3.57	3.40	0.17	4	3,698	12,828.20
SAVANNA	1.14	1.09	0.05	11	167,960	187,684.40
SCOA	2.27	2.38	0.11	10	8,800	2,086.00
SKBEECHAM	2.00	2.00	0.00	16	53,438	106,804.32
STUDPRESS	1.45	1.45	0.00	1	10,000	14,500.00
TEXACO	62.00	63.99	1.99	12	21,811	1,364,634.04
TIB	2.18	2.18	0.00	3	281,000	612,580.00
TOTAL	66.00	65.00	1.00	21	49,778	3,263,703.68
TRADEBANK	1.20	1.15	0.05	1	5,050	5,807.50
TRIPLEG	1.07	1.07	0.00	1	500	535.00
UAC-PROP	4.71	4.50	0.21	26	1,222,566	5,903,736.36
UACN	3.61	3.70	0.09	54	415,701	1,519,086.25
UBA	11.05	11.00	0.08	82	616,215	6,909,519.91
UBN	24.91	24.91	0.00	54	716,615	17,850,879.65
UNIC	1.86	1.77	0.09	9	83,700	150,000.00
UNIDONDON	18.46	17.54	0.92	5	12,500	219,250.00
UNIPETROL	52.00	49.44	0.92	10	5,154	258,484.02
UNTL	4.00	4.00	2.56	20	137,853	551,412.00
UPL	3.40	3.40	0.00	2	5,500	18,700.00
UTB	3.00	3.07	0.00	12	292,898	897,446.92
VITAFOAM	4.40	4.30	0.07	33	104,202	447,079.80
WAPCO	21.80	22.50	0.10	12	291,672	6,143,874.80
WAPIC	2.01	2.01	0.00	2	3,000	6,030.00
WEMABANK	3.34	3.35	0.01	22	411,715	1,375,135.25
TOTAL				1,553	15,085,510	176,109,244.13

Nigerian Stock Dealings (NSE) Gainers/Losers as at yesterday (12/12/2001)

Gainers			
COMPANY	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE
TEXACO	62.00	63.99	1.99
CADBURY	27.00	27.70	0.70
WAPCO	21.80	22.50	0.70
GUINNESS	31.70	32.21	0.51
FLOURMILL	15.40	15.71	0.31
ASHAKACEM	21.20	21.50	0.30
AFRIBANK	8.55	8.70	0.15
NBC	26.05	26.18	0.12
SCOA	2.27	2.38	0.11
MOBIL	64.50	64.60	0.10
OWENABANK	2.21	2.31	0.10
COOPBANK	1.82	1.91	0.09
UACN	3.61	3.70	0.09
PRESTIGE	1.91	2.00	0.09
AICO	0.05	3.14	0.09
FSB	8.12	8.20	0.08
UTB	3.00	3.07	0.07
LEVBROS	27.04	27.10	0.06
MANNYBANK	1.20	1.25	0.05
IMB	1.02	1.06	0.04
MANDRID	4.05	4.06	0.01
GUARANTY	6.59	6.60	0.01
WEMABANK	3.34	3.35	0.01

Losers			
COMPANY	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE
UNIPETROL	52.00	49.44	2.55
JBERGER	45.00	42.90	2.10
NESTLE	66.00	64.00	2.00
NOLCHEM	28.00	26.85	1.15
UNIONDICON	18.46	17.54	0.92
FIRSTBANK	24.49	24.00	0.49
IGL	4.71	4.48	0.23
UAC-PROP	4.71	4.50	0.21
RTBRISCOE	3.57	3.40	0.17
CAP	3.03	2.88	0.15
DUNLOP	3.50	3.35	0.15
VITAFOAM	4.40	4.30	0.10
UNIC	1.86	1.77	0.09
NCR	2.07	2.00	0.07
EVANSMED	1.53	1.46	0.07
INLANDBNAK	1.25	1.19	0.06
SAVANNA	1.14	1.09	0.05
TRADEBANK	1.20	1.15	0.05
GOLDBREW	1.06	1.01	0.05
AGLEVENT	1.15	1.10	0.05
ADSWITCH	0.86	0.82	0.04
AFPRINT	0.91	0.87	0.04
AVONCRWON	0.95	0.93	0.02
AMICABLE	0.53	0.51	0.02
LENNARDS	0.30	0.29	0.01

Summary of Transactions

	OPENING	CLOSING	% AGE CHANGE
MKT. CAP.	641,113,564,283.04	638,969,826,366.94	-0.33
INDEX	10,839.08	10,802.84	-0.33
DEALS	VOLUME	VALUE	No. OF COMPANIES
1,553	15,085,510	176,109,244.13	95

Source: NSE, Abuja Area Office

Market capitalisation closes at N638.97bn yesterday

Trading reports collected from Abuja Area Office of the Nigerian Stock Exchange yesterday indicated that a total of 15.10 million shares valued at N176.11 billion in 1,553 deals were traded on the floors of the Exchange.

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

Price Movement:

The Nigerian Stock Exchange All-Share Index closed yesterday at 10,802.84 a decrease of 0.33 percent. The index opened at 10,839.08, while the market capitalisation closed at N638.97 billion, a decrease of 0.33 percent, it opened at N641.11 billion.

The bears led on the floor with a total of 25 companies losing and 23 companies gaining in their share prices.

Gains were recorded in the Petroleum Marketing, Beverages & Tobacco, Building Materials, Breweries, Banking, Conglomerates and the Insurance sub sectors.

Texaco Plc led the price gainers, as it appreciated by 199 kobo to close the day at N63.99 per share, followed by Cadbury Plc and WAPCO, both appreciated by 70 kobo to close at N27.70 and N22.50 per share respectively.

Other price gainers include Guinness (51 kobo); Flourmill (31 kobo); Ashakacem (30 kobo); Afribank (15 kobo); NBC (12 kobo); SCOA (11 kobo); Mobil and Owenabank (10 kobo apiece); Coopbank, UACN, Prestige and AICO (9 kobo apiece); FSB (8 kobo); UTB (7 kobo).

Losses were recorded in the Petroleum Marketing, Construction, Food/Beverages & Tobacco, Banking, Industrial/Domestic Products, Real Estate, Automobile & Tyre, Chemical & Paints, Insurance, Computer and Office Equipment, Healthcare, Breweries, Conglomerates, Textiles, Packaging and the Foot wear sub sectors.

Unipetrol Plc led the price losers, dropping by 256 kobo to close at N49.44 per share, followed by JBerger Plc, which lost 210 kobo, to close at N42.90 per share.

Other price losers include Nestle (200 kobo); Nolchem (115 kobo); Uniondicon (92 kobo); Firstbank (46 kobo); IGL (23 kobo); UAC-Prop (21 kobo); Rtribriscoe (17 kobo); CAP and Dunlop (15 kobo apiece); Vitafoam (10 kobo); Unic (9 kobo); NCR and Evansmed (7 kobo apiece).

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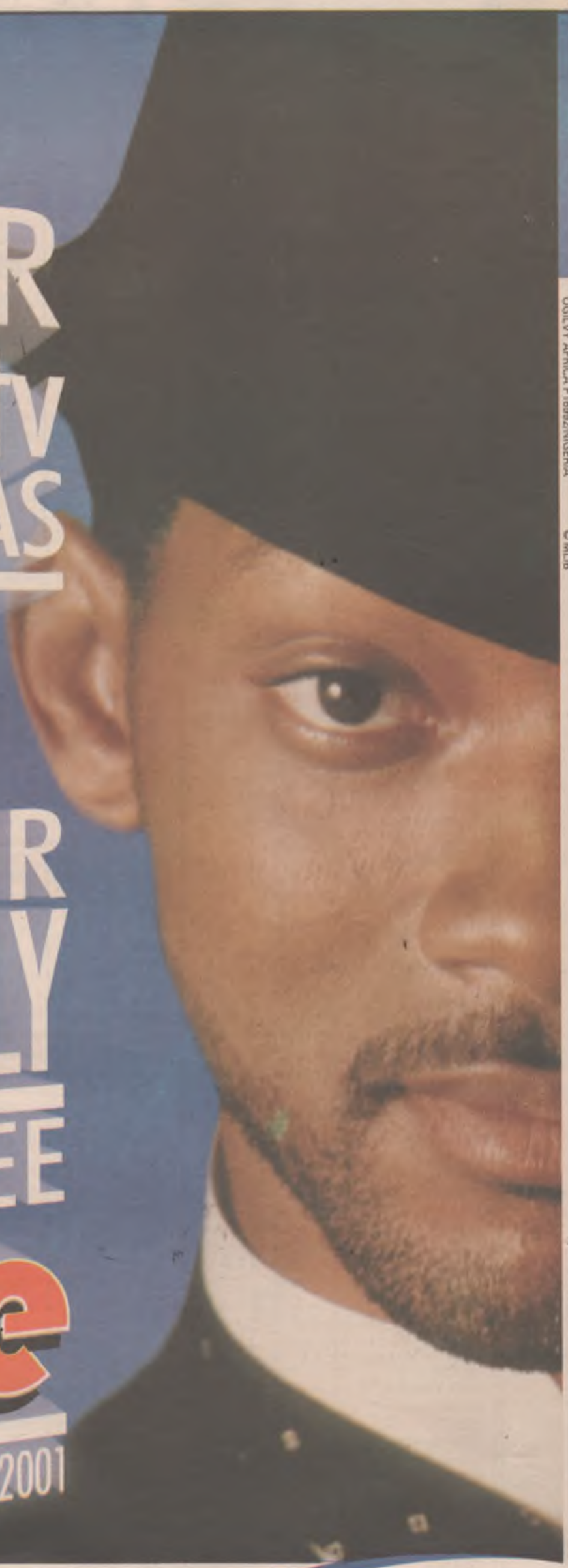
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Turning Wheel Systems & Co.
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NEWS

Batagarawa calls for U.S. assistance

The Minister of State for Defence (Army), Alhaji Lawal Batagarawa, has appealed to the U.S. government to expand its assistance programmes to Nigeria in the area of helping soldiers re-enter civilian life.

Batagarawa, according to a release from the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Consulate-General in Lagos, made the call Tuesday, while speaking with the Washington File, a programme of the U.S. Department of State from the Ministry of Defence in Abuja.

"We have a large reservoir of ex-servicemen who

are trained in the use of weapons, but who need to be helped and given a livelihood, so they can fit back into civilian life and care for themselves," the statement quoted Batagarawa as saying.

"I would like to see the programme that is currently funded by the U.S. Department of Labour, which re-trains Nigerian servicemen expanded," he added.

The minister also called for more joint exercises between the military of both countries, as well as an expansion of the U.S. foreign military sales programme to Nigeria.

The U.S. Defence Attache in Nigeria, Col. Victor Nelson, who administers his country's military assistance programme in Nigeria, said on the programme that the Nigerian Veterans Employment Project, was originally a collaborative effort between the U.S. Departments of Defence, Labour, and the Nigerian government.

He described the exercise as an invaluable programme, which was especially critical now, considering the country's high unemployment rate.

According to the release, the US assistance programme, which commenced in August last year, aims among other things, to help the Nigerian government revitalise its Armed Forces Resettlement Centre in Lagos.

It said the next phase would involve installing more electrical generators, constructing a trainees hostel, instituting five additional training courses and developing an entrepreneurship and small business management course at the resettlement centre.

Under fire due to increased crime rate and communication handicap resulting from NITEL's disconnection of its telephone lines, the Nigeria Police (NP) has appealed for the restoration of the lines to enable those in distress to call the police for assistance.

In a telephone interview with the News Agency of Nigeria Tuesday, the Police Public Relations Officer, ACP Haz Iwendi, expressed regret that the disconnection of police telephone lines nationwide for the third week running was a great handicap to efforts at curtailing crime, especially in crime-prone cities such as Lagos.

Iwendi said having paid

Police beg NITEL to restore telephone lines

N300 million out of its N800 million indebtedness to NITEL, the telephone company should have given the

police some concessions by allowing calls to come in, even if the police could not dial out.

"We need to have lines through which members of the public could reach us and make their complaints or call us when they are under siege, especially during this season," he said.

The spokesman stressed the importance of telephones in effective policing and crime bursting. He said a couple of people had called him in Abuja from Lagos as they were unable to contact the police in Lagos to make their complaints.



Musiliu Smith, IGP

Women decry use of violence in resolving disputes

Christian and Muslim women in Plateau State have decried the use of violence in resolving disputes.

Presenting a joint memorandum to the Justice Niki Tobi Commission of Inquiry investigating the Jos disturbances, the women, under the umbrella of Movement for Peace Committee, headed by Mrs. Valentina Dariye, wife of the state governor, observed that women were always at the receiving end in crisis situations.

In the memorandum read by Mrs. Gloria Kesdhi, the committee described as very unfortunate the disturbances and expressed the hope that the clashes would never occur in any part of the country in the future.

It appealed to parents to lead exemplary lives by being law-abiding and to cultivate the spirit of patience, love and forgiveness.

It also suggested that sensitisation workshops on conflict resolution and peaceful co-existence be organised by the government, and youth groups from time to time.

The chairman of the commission commended the committee for putting religion aside and writing a joint memorandum.

Tobi said the initiative was the first of its kind in the history of the country and commended Mrs. Dariye for making the courageous move.

He further urged other state governors' wives to emulate the initiative, stressing that constant interaction among women would enhance the country's unity.

Clergywoman tasks Christian clerics

A clergyman, Pastor (Mrs.) Love Emmanuel, of City of Love Church, Gwagwa, Abuja, has tasked clerics to be mindful of the manner they discharge their divine duties, saying "Satan is at war with those who distinguish themselves as people of God."

Speaking with newsmen in Abuja Tuesday, the clergywoman said "it is time for pastors to stand up and

defend the kingdom of God so as to prevent prophets of Satan from infiltrating God's kingdom."

While calling on men of God to be prayerful, she advised them to embrace godly lifestyles and avoid acts that could portray them in bad light before the general public.

"The bible says that by their fruits we shall know them and that when the end of the world approaches, there will be many fake prophets preaching in the name of God, so we should be careful" she further warned.

The clergywoman, who is also an Assistant Director with Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), stated further that "although the bible says we should not judge one another, it is needful that we advice our brothers and sisters who are indulging in activities that are ungodly to turn a new live before it is too late."

Commenting on the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo, the clergywoman said the government needs strong prayers before it can take the country to the promised land. She urged Nigerians to support the administration's efforts at socio-economic transformation.



RAMADAN 28 1422H (Thur 13 Dec, 2001)

P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. A.M. A.M.
Ishai Magrib Asar Zuhur Fitar-rana Alfijir

7.04 6.09, 3.34, 12.29, 6.38, 5.23

The above represents the earliest times of the daily obligatory prayer for Kaduna. Below are the times variations in respect of named towns.

Zuhur variations can serve for Asar prayer while those in respect of Magrib could do well for Ishai.

TOWNS	المغرب Magrib Minutes	الظهر Zuhur Minutes	الافجر Alfijir Minutes
Aba	+9	0	-9
Abakaliki	+10	+3	-4
Abeokuta	+23	+17	+11
Abuja	+4	+1	-1
Akure	+14	+9	+4
Argungu	+7	+11	+15
Ankpa	+4	-1	-8
Auchi	+11	+5	-1
Azare	-13	-11	-9
Bama	-27	-25	-23
Bauchi	-9	-9	-9
Benin	+15	+8	+1
Bichi	-6	-3	0
Bida	+5	+6	+4
Birnin Kebbi	+10	+13	+16
Biu	-19	-19	-19
Calabar	+6	-3	-12
Damaturu	-21	-18	-16
Daura	-8	-4	0
Dutse	-10	-7	-5
Enugu	+7	0	-7
Funtua	-1	+1	+2
Gombe	-15	-15	-15
Gumi	+6	+9	+11
Gusau	-1	+2	+4
Gwadabawa	+4	+9	+13
Hadejia	-13	-10	-7
Ibadan	+19	+14	+9
Ife	+17	+12	+7
Ilorin	+15	+12	+9
Jalingo	-13	-16	-18
Jere	+1	-1	-2
Jos	-5	-6	-7
Kafanchan	-1	-3	-5
Kaiama	+15	+13	+12
Kefin Maiyaki	-6	-3	-1
Kano	-7	-4	-2
Katsina	-4	0	+4
Kontogora	+8	+8	+8
Lafiya	-2	-5	-8
Lagos	+23	+16	+9
Lokoja	+7	+3	-1
Maiduguri	-26	-23	-21
Makurdi	+1	-4	-9
Minna	+6	+4	+2
Misau	-15	-13	-12
Mubi	-24	-24	-24
Nguru	-16	-12	-8
Okene	+10	+5	0
Ogbomoso	+17	+13	+9
Onitsha	+11	+3	-5
Oyo	+18	+14	+10
Port Harcourt	+11	+2	-7
Potiskum	-17	-15	-13
Segamu	+21	+15	+9
Saki	+19	+16	+13
Sokoto	+5	+9	+13
Umuahia	+9	0	-9
Wukari	-5	-9	-13
Wurno	+3	+8	+12
Warri	+16	+7	-2
Yola	-18	-20	-22
Zaria	-2	-1	0
Cotonou - Benin	+27	+20	+13
Ndjamena - Chad	-33	-30	-28
Niamey - Niger	+16	+21	+25
Zinder - Niger	-12	-8	-1
Yaounde - Cameroun	-5	-16	-28

NUJ urges FG to curb crime, communal crises

The executive members of Zone D of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) at a crucial meeting yesterday in Abuja, called on the Federal Government to curb the rising waves of crime and communal crises in the country.

In a press statement signed by the zone D National Vice President, Mr. Adamu Mashal, the union also expressed concern over the growing rate of unemployment in the country and the hijacking of the National Poverty Alleviation Programme (NAPED) by top government functionaries, politicians and traditional rulers.

It equally called on the National Assembly to expedite action on the two media bills before it for the purpose of improving the practice of journalism in Nigeria.

The union further called

on practicing journalists to avail themselves of the opportunity of the ongoing registration exercise for journalists and commended the NUJ National President, Mr. Smart Adeyemi, for his leadership style which, it said, has re-positioned the NUJ for greater challenges.

The zone D executives noted with great concern the show of disrespect to constitutional provisions by some aggrieved members during conflict situations and mandated its national, state and chapel leaderships to apply punitive measures on members who externalise union matters in the media without recourse to laid down procedures.

The zone accordingly endorsed the suspension from office of the Deputy National President, Mr. Abia Onyike, by the Central Working Committee (CWC) for

anti-union activities, saying "his actions are capable of tarnishing the image of the NUJ."

The zonal members also expressed their gratitude to the Minister of Federal Capital Territory, Engr. Muhammed Abba-Gana and the Abuja council of NUJ for their hospitality and successful hosting of the meeting in spite of late notification.



NEWS

Briefs

Abuja

The Federal Government is launching a campaign aimed at sensitising Nigeria on the need for a peaceful conduct of the 2003 general elections.

Speaking with journalists in his office Tuesday, the Minister of Information and National Orientation, Professor Jerry Gana, said the campaign will be launched in January next year in all the 774 local government areas of the country.

Sokoto

The Managing Director of Cement Company of Northern Nigeria, Engineer Ibrahim Gobir (Sardauna Gobir), has received an award in recognition of his immense contributions to the economic growth and development of Nigeria.

According to a press statement signed by the company's Senior Public Relations Manager, Alhaji Ibrahim Argungu and made available to *Daily Trust*, the award was conferred on the Managing Director by Intra-west Africa communication Limited.

Gusau

The strike embarked upon by local government employees nationwide was suspended in Zamfara State Tuesday.

Minna

The Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) has commended the Niger State Governor, Engineer Abdulkadir Kure, for his achievements in office.

In a letter of condemnation signed by Mr. Olu Akinboyewa, the National Assistant Secretary of the Union and made available to *Daily Trust*, the union lauded the governor's accomplishments in the areas of rural electrification, housing, roads, street lighting as well as the provision of potable water to the people of Niger State.

Lagos

The leader of the militant wing of Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC), Mr. Ganiyu Adams, was absent Tuesday at the Federal High Court Annex Lagos where he is facing criminal charges of unlawful possession of fire arms.

Although Mr. Ebun-Olu Adegona, lawyer to the accused was present, the prosecutor, Mrs. Pius Iornumbe, from the Federal Ministry of Justice, was absent.

The absence of both the accused and the prosecutor forced the Judge to adjourn the case to February 5, 2002.



President Obasanjo

FG, others urged to resolve communal crises

The Federal Government as well as the governments of Taraba and Nasarawa States have been called upon to take urgent steps towards the comprehensive resolution of the crises in those states to enable displaced Tiv people return to their ancestral homes.

The chief Press Secretary

From Terna Doki, in Makurdi

(CPS) to the Benue State Governor, Mr. Tahav Agerzua, who made the call while briefing newsmen in Makurdi, the Benue State capital, said the present facilities in the over 10 refugee camps in various locations in Benue State were overstretched and the state government could no longer cope with the situation. Agerzua explained that with the continuous influx of displaced persons into the camps especially from Taraba State where Jukun militia are continuing with covert campaigns against Tiv indigenes, "the call for a speedy resolution of the crises has become imperative." He further explained that the displaced

persons now live under deplorable conditions in the camps, saying, "with the terrible conditions in the camps, if nothing is done, epidemics can break out at any time."

CPS deplored the non-challant attitude of the governors of Nasarawa and Taraba States towards their Tiv indigenes who are now residing in various camps within Benue, saying "none of the governors has bothered to visit their people being looked after by the Benue State government." He disclosed that the state has already spent over N50 million on the camps and this was exerting immense pressure on the finances of the state.

Agerzua said the only panacea to ethnic clashes in the country is for the National Assembly to provide a legislation which will recognise the rights and privileges of Nigerians wherever they live within the Nigerian Federation,

pointing out that Benue State has blazed the trail in this regard by "recognising all ethnic groups within its geographical boundaries as bonafide indigenes."

He advised Governor Jolly Nyame of Taraba State "to summon courage and speak the truth "as well as follow the footsteps of his predecessors like Alhaji Bamanga Tukur by appointing Tiv sons into this cabinet.

"The government and people of Benue State are bending backwards to protect the Jukuns in Abinsi, Wurukum and Guma. So if we can protect these people, what stops the Taraba State government from protecting Tiv people in Taraba State?" he asked.

While imploring the governors of Taraba and Nasarawa States to emulate the example of the Benue State governor, Mr. Agerzua called on Benue people to continue to protect the Jukun community in there midst.

Church calls on Obasanjo to stop demolition

Members of the Faith Revival Ministries World Outreach (Victory Christian Church) have called on President Olusegun Obasanjo to stop the demolition of the church and the violation of their rights by NASCO Plc.

The church, located at Abule-Osun on the Lagos-Badagary Express Road, on Monday had a face-off with armed mobile policemen as well as men of the Rapid Response Squad who came to demolish the church.

The policemen, numbering more than 100, arrived at the church in about 10 vehicles and a bulldozer but were confronted by angry church members who had gathered for a scheduled news conference.

The church members threw stones and other missiles at the policemen, who shot indiscriminately.

At the news briefing, which later held after the policemen had withdrawn from the scene, Mrs. Nkechi Illoputaife, General Overseer of the church alleged that NASCO Plc had constantly attacked the church after the death of her husband and founder of the church, the Rev. Hayford Illoputaife.

She claimed that NASCO Plc was bent on dislodging the church from the land on which it is built in spite of a court injunction restraining the company from such an act.

Illoputaife blamed the Lagos Police Command and the state Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning for allowing the police to unleash "terror on the church even though the case is still in court."

In addition to the incident, Illoputaife further claimed that earlier on Friday, another group of policemen led by an ASP also invaded the premises of the church "with more than 100 hoodlums and thugs brandishing dangerous weapons."

According to her, the walls of the church and its health care centre, a project being sponsored by the Japanese embassy to the tune of 50,000 dollars, were demolished.

The Project Manager of the church's Medical Centre, Mr. Emeka Mbonu, of the Japanese Embassy, ex-

plained that the objective of the project was to assist the community with essential needs such as immunisation and water schemes.

He urged the state government to redress "this injustice and ensure that the demolished properties are rebuilt."

NOA DG advises against party registration

The Director-General of the National Orientation Agency, Dr. Ifeanyi Chukwuka, has advised those clamouring for the registration of new political parties to jettison the idea and instead fuse into the existing ones in order to ensure that a credible and formidable political system is established in Nigeria.

Dr. Chukwuka, who represented the Minister of Information and National Orientation, Professor Jerry Gana, at the occasion of investiture into the papal order of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) National Secretary, Chief Vincent Ogbulafor, at Aba, Abia State, said "the registration of new political parties now is capable of bringing confusion which may truncate the present democratic experiment."

The Director-General, who expressed concern over the problems of transition in Nigeria's political history, urged Nigerian politicians to guard against any act ca-

pable of taking us back to the dark days.

According to him, instead of struggling and wasting energy and resources to register new parties, the agitators should fuse into the three existing ones and ensure that there is healthy rivalry in the political system.

The National Orientation Agency boss expressed confidence in the new electoral law, arguing that it will sanitise and strengthen Nigeria's political system. Dr. Chukwuka advised critics to look beyond their personal gains and support the law for the sake of our nascent democracy. He particularly called on state governors not to do anything that would portray the country as anti-democratic, pointing out that governors should not be seen as trying to destroy a process of which they are beneficiaries.

He further disclosed that the agency has plans to embark on a nationwide enlightenment campaign to sensitise Nigerians on the new law.

250 retired soldiers seal bank

No fewer than 250 ex-servicemen Monday sealed up the Trans-Amadi, Port Harcourt, branch of Oceanic Bank for their pensions.

Daily Trust gathered that as early as 8:00 a.m. the military pensioners took over the bank's premises, barring both bank workers and customers from entering the bank.

Investigation also revealed that some of the pensioners, 15 of them amputees, came from Akwa-Ibom and Bayelsa States insisting that their six months pen-

From Aisha Momoh, in Port Harcourt

sions be paid arrears as the Port Harcourt branch is the bank through which the Director of Military Pensions pays them.

In a chat with *Daily Trust*, the chairman of the Eastern zone of the association, Mr. Charles Sam-Nwadike, blamed the bank's staff for colluding with top officials in the Ministry of Defence for their woes, saying "our money is being stashed away some where to generate interest for some people while we are dying in object poverty."

NTA 2 CHANNEL 5 Victoria Island, Lagos Your reachout station PROGRAMME SCHEDULE	
TIME	WEDNESDAY
6.00-6.30	Aerobics
6.30-7.00	Peri. The Globe/ Cartoon
7.00-7.05	News
7.05-7.30	Reports
7.30-8.00	Traffic Watch
8.00-8.30	Humour on Ice
8.30-9.00	Crime Watch
9.00-9.30	Golden Cage(B)
9.30-10.00	Motor Magazine
10.00-10.10	
10.10-10.30	SNOOPS
10.30-10.45	SNOOPS
10.45-11.00	
11.00-12.00	One on One
12.00-12.30	Family Matters
12.30-1.00	Airborne(sp)
1.00-1.30	Super Story
1.30-2.00	(sp)
2.00-2.15	News of the Hour(N)
2.15-2.30	Expose®
2.30-3.00	SuperHighway®
3.00-3.30	SuperHighway®
3.30-4.00	Sledge Hammer
4.00-4.30	News Update
4.30-5.00	Talking Finger (N) Live
5.00-5.30	Talk French(N)
5.30-6.00	On Wheels(sp)
6.00-6.30	Business & National Events(sp)
6.30-7.00	IT Impact(sp)
7.00-7.30	News at Seven
7.30-8.00	Today's Woman(sp)
8.00-8.30	Maggi Family Menu(N)
8.30-9.00	Strides(N)
9.00-10.00	Network News
10.00-10.30	Sport Stars(N)
10.30-11.00	Household of God® sp
11.00-11.30	Jazz House II
11.30-12.00	Energy Summit(N)
12.00-12.30	Newscape
12.30-1.00	
1.00-1.30	Super Movies
1.30-2.00	Hour
1.00-2.00	NBA Action
2.00-2.30	
2.30-3.30	
3.30-4.30	Ramadan
4.30-5.00	Diet
5.00-6.00	Live



INSIDE POLITICS

Niger's exemplary conduct on LG creation

May I put it on record that the National Assembly admires the humility, thoughtfulness and thoroughness the government and people of Niger State have handled their pursuit of local government creation." With this commendation by the Senate President, Chief Anyim Pius Anyim, last Thursday, he received the request by the people of Niger State for the creation of 17 additional local government areas in the State.

Coming from Anyim, who had derided the way and manner his own state governor, Chief Sam Egwu, had handled the issue of creating more local government this is certainly a boost to our democratic experiment. The controversy over the creation of more local government councils has been a bone of contention between the National Assembly and state Houses of Assembly.

The controversy may not be of their own making because the 1999 Constitution gave the national and state assemblies jurisdiction over the local

By Sani Babadoko, Political Editor



Senator Isah Mohammed government councils at the same time.

This exemplary conduct at a time when there is another controversy over the electoral bill according to one of the prime movers of the gesture by Niger State, Senator Isah Mohammed, representing Niger North, is in accordance with section 7 (5) (a) which states that "the National Assembly shall make provisions for statutory allocation of public revenue to local government councils in the federation."

Niger State was first to conduct a referendum on the creation of more local government areas, thereby



giving the people the opportunity to make an input. "Niger State has satisfied our expectations and we are sure the citizens of the state were carried along and they did approve of more local governments," Chief Anyim noted.

Not surprisingly, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Ghali Umar Na'Abba whom the Niger State delegation called on, said "the beauty of this is that the rule of law is gradually taking shape. That is what

democracy is all about. Sometimes the process is long but at the end of the day, it is worth it."

Senator Isah underscored the consensus built on the quest for 17 additional councils. He said the delegation represented all the diverse political leanings in the state who are all in support of the popular demand for more councils.

In the delegation were Alhaji Abdullahi Muhammad, state chairman, Alliance for Democracy, Alhaji Umar Farouk Abdullahi state chairman, Peoples Democratic Party and Malam Hussein Ibrahim, All Peoples Party state secretary, Malam Baba Alfa Agaie AD secretary and APP chairman, Malam Umar Mohammed.

Also in the delegation was Senator Nuhu Aliyu, chairman of the Senate Committee on Security, who told the leadership of the National Assembly that they have searched the constitution as law-abiding citizens and followed all the rules required to create local government councils.

Consequently, he presented all the documents including letters from the

state governor, Engineer Abdulkadir Kure, Speaker of the State House of Assembly, Alhaji Usman Jikantoro, resolutions from the councils and the local government creation bill signed into law by the governor.

Apart from the three Senators from the state, also present were three eminent traditional rulers; the Etsu Nupe, Alhaji Umar Sanda Ndayako, and the Emir of Suleja, Malam Auwal Ibrahim and the Sarkin Sudan of Kontagora, Alhaji Sa'idu Namaska. Others present were the former FCT Minister, Major-General Mamman Kontagora (rtd.), the NACIMMA President, Alhaji Umaru Ndanusa, the deputy governor, Dr. Nuhu Zagbaya.

Also in attendance were the chairmen of the local government affected in the exercise, namely: Alhaji Abdullahi Sulaiman of Suleja and Abubakar Sulaiman of Mokwa local government.

Since the beginning of the year, the state Houses of Assembly have been locked in controversy with the National Assembly over who has the right to create new local government areas. The 1999 Constitution placed the

function in the concurrent legislative list and the federal and state legislators lay claim to it as being in their jurisdiction.

Matters came to a head when the Ebonyi State House of Assembly presented to the Senate a list of new councils created in the state.

Incidentally, the Senate President, Anyim, hails from Ebonyi, and he had the task of telling his kinsmen that it was not in their brief to create new LGs. He said then that his objection was based on the constitutional provision that only the Senate can appropriate funds from the Federation Account to the states and local governments and since the new LGs were not listed in the 1999 Constitution it could not possibly appropriate funds for them.

It is in the light of this and the controversy over the Electoral Law that political observers believe that in the midst of threats to our nascent democracy, there is still an oasis of hope by this exemplary conduct by the people of Niger State.

Interview

Electoral Law can cause anarchy - APP Vice chairman

What is your assessment of the recent APP NEC meeting?

That is the highest policy-making body of our party. And the Kwara meeting was very successful; because most of the issues that have been pending for quite sometime were dealt with. One of them, which is very important to us is the issue of constitution. The constitution was being looked into in the last two years, and it was given the widest circulation to all concerned stakeholders and shareholders in the party. And all our members both in states and National Assembly; and the elders and everybody was given a copy to go through and they came up with suggestions. All these were tabled and discussed in Ilorin and they were all collated and all the differences were harmonized. And the constitution is now waiting for the national convention, which is coming up in January to just ratify it.

That is very important because the original constitution we have, we have found out that it was very defective and deficient in many ways and we believe a party like APP needs a stable constitution. Also, a party which is repositioning itself to face the challenges of the 21st century must ensure that it got all the necessary ingredients to ensure that we meet the challenges, the yearnings and aspirations of our teeming supporters. And I believe that that aspect is so important to us, and it has been handled

Recently, the All People's Party (APP) National Executive Council (NEC) met in Ilorin, the Kwara State capital, to "harmonize" their positions on national issues. Alhaji Gambo Magaji, the party's Vice-Chairman (North) in this interview with our Reporter, Tashikalmah Hallah, assessed the Ilorin meeting, the controversial Electoral Act; the coming anarchy in the 2003 general elections and passed the verdict that, "the country is bigger than any individual." Excerpts:



Alhaji Gambo Magaji well.

One of the other issues of the Kwara meeting was the issue of the suspended members of our great party. The Kwara meeting also deliberated on the request of the committee and they have been recalled. In fact, they have returned to the party secretariat and assumed their offices. Now, I think everybody is around. One other aspect is that we looked into the issue of national interest. Another important discussion we had is the issues of crises all over the country. We looked at them and took a position is the position was very much enunciated in our communiqué. We also looked at some issues of the party, the way forward and what

have you. And we believe the Kwara meeting is one of the most successful NEC meeting ever held by the APP.

Dr. Saraki has been having a running battle with the executive. What is his position in the party?

Dr. Olusola Saraki; we said it there, he is a member of our party. One of our party elders. He was asked several questions about it, and up to today, neither the National Secretary nor Dr. Saraki has come out to tell us that he has left the party. We regard Dr. Saraki as one of our national leaders and we accord him that respect. In fact, he was outside the country at the time we were meeting in Ilorin, we had even arranged

and hoped that he would have come back before that time, and he equally hoped so. And also as part of the arrangement, we had wanted to go and pay some respect to him but unfortunately there was nothing anybody could do. And you know somebody who is internationally known. In earnest, you cannot prevent him from attending to some commitments outside the country. We should also understand that he cannot only do politicking without his business, because without the business, he cannot do the politics, so, that is the issue.

One of the most topical issues in our polity today is the controversial electoral law. How does the APP view it?

I think we have said more than 10 times that as far as we are concerned in APP, the constitution takes precedence over any other thing. As far as we are concerned, the electoral bill and any other bill must conform with the tenets of the constitution and that is our position.

Meaning you are in support of the governors' position or the verdict of the National Assembly?

We have said it in Ilorin. There is need for dialogue, because the current situation, if not properly handled, would lead to anarchy and truncate the democracy we are all trying to build. So, the issue is that there must be a dialogue. And we have said it and this is our stand. That we should have

dialogue. we should ensure that the provisions of the constitution are strictly adhered to.

How is the APP preparing towards 2003?

Well, as far as we are concerned, people should understand that this country is bigger than any one. The problems we are getting in this country, particularly, with regards to 2003 is this syndrome of *Tazarce*, it is most unfortunate that all elected officers, from local government to the national level, everyone is clamouring to come back. This is the most unfortunate trend, which has crept into our political system. And if care is not taken this would breed a lot of problems and confusion. The political class should understand that the electorate have the final say. Whoever thinks he has performed should submit himself to the electorate in a fair constitutional manner so that the people should make their choice. If you have performed, nothing stops you from coming back. If you have not performed, no matter how much you do, how much you spend; how much *Tazarce* you have in your mind, I believe we have reached a stage today in this country where people would definitely reject or accept you.

So, the issue is that if we want democracy to thrive, to continue; to blossom I think the issue of "*Tazarce*" should be handled with great care. People should be allowed to say what they want, and let the electorate make their choice and

not for people to force themselves on the electorate.

But as for APP, we are not going to impose anybody on the electorate from the ward level to the Presidency. Tickets in APP are open to all Nigerians, who are competent and who believe in the sanctity of the rule of law; that this country must survive, that this country needs people of integrity and vision; people who are committed to ensure the survival of democracy; people who are committed to the improvement of the living standards of Nigerians. Not people who are deceiving others. We believe these are the type of persons we require from the local government level to the national level and we have set up mechanism to ensure that these people are given the chance. We are not going to impose anybody on any state.

Whosoever the people want at any level, those would be the people we are going to support.

Your view contradicts the zoning formula of your party?

No! As far as APP is concerned, we do not have any zoning formula, not at all. For instance, the position of presidency is open to all Nigerians. For us, the Presidency is open to all Nigerians. We are not going to zone it to any part of the country or geographical zone. It is for all Nigerians. Anybody who says he is competent enough; anybody who feels he can serve this country, anybody who feels that he can save this country from disintegration, such a person can aspire to the presidency in the APP.

This space is for sale

Power supply deteriorates in Old Karmo - Page 22

AMAC chairman makes case for permanent structures in burnt market - Page 22

Obasanjo's FCT tour in retrospect - Page 23

Useful addresses in Abuja - Page 23



Edited by Kevin Ebele Adinnu



Traders from the burnt Wuse New Market in Abuja protesting at the offices of the Ministry of Federal Capital Territory... Tuesday

Setraco begins demolition in Nyanya

By Emmanuel Ande

The long awaited demolition exercise along Abuja-Keffi road to pave way for the dualisation of the accident-prone road commenced yesterday with the demolition of structures in Nyanya, a satellite town in Abuja.

The contractor handling the project, Setraco Construction Company Nigeria Limited, rolled out its bulldozers as early as 8.00 am and commenced demolition of structures under the guard of armed mobile policemen.

Abuja Trust gathered that owners of the affected structures were fully compensated since last month and that government gave them enough time to vacate such structures.

Some of the residents who spoke to Abuja Trust however maintained that the money paid to them as compensation was not enough to even pay for a room for two years and wondered why a democratic government would impose hardship on the masses that voted them into power.

Mr. Vincent Okoro, who was shedding tears, told our reporter that his six-room family house and two shops were affected by the demolition, but only N170,000.00 was paid to him as compensation, adding that the money could not get him even a shop and a room for his family.

He said that government action towards the masses was undemocratic and unreasonable in a democratic society.

Alhaji Usman Maina, whose four-room apartment was affected by the demolition exercise, said that only N98,5176.00 was paid to him as compensation. He expressed the fear of not getting a room with the money since the cost of renting a room, has risen with many landlords demanding for payment of two years rent.

Maina who was rushing to pack his goods out of the house to avoid being damaged by the Setraco bulldozers wondered where he would be spending his nights with his family until he got a place.

"In fact I don't know where to stay now with my family because to even get a house now is not a two or three weeks job, you have to spend some time before you can get one, but here are my family members now turned into refugees," he said.

It would be recalled that early last month the Federal Government through the Ministry of Works and Housing, directed all those whose structures were marked for demolition and were paid compensation to vacate such structures to pave way for demolition.

The letter which was signed by the permanent secretary in the Ministry, Alhaji Musa Abubakar,

stated: "All property owners so affected have been granted the opportunity to salvage their property as a means of further cushioning the effect of the displacement."

Abubakar said that all the structures for which such compensation had been paid should be demolished in the public interest.

He stressed that "the compensation on the Nyanya/Keffi road project was not guided by the evaluation done by the speculative estate valuer who intentionally over valued the compensation to enhance their fees."

Abuja Trust learnt that the victims of the demolition exercise are threatening to sue

ROBBERY IN KUBWA Police kill one, arrest two in shoot out

By Uwem Umo

One armed robber was killed on Monday in Kubwa, a satellite town of the Federal Capital territory when a gang engaged the police in a shootout after a robbery.

According to reliable police sources, about six armed men stormed the Daughters of Charity Hospital located on Byazhin Road, Kubwa and robbed the occupants of goods and money.

The armed men were also reported to have stormed Plot 390 Annex, Hamza Abdullahi Road, also in Kubwa where one Nnamdi Akwaocha was dispossessed of money and a

Mercedes Benz 230 model with registration number AA 7 MLF.

Upon the receipt of the complaint barely one hour after the operation had been carried out at about 10 am, the police radioed their men on patrol who went after the fleeing robbers and succeeded in stopping them after a gun battle.

One of the robbers was shot dead while two were apprehended and a double barrel gun was recovered from them with two live ammunitions.

The stolen Mercedes car was also recovered from the robbers while the FCT police Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has taken over the case from Kubwa Division.

The Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) in charge of FCT Police C.I.D., Mr. Suleiman Abba, confirmed receipt of the case file two suspects and other exhibits from the Kubwa robbery to Abuja Trust.

the Federal Government for turning them to refugees in their fatherland as a result of greed on the part of some top government officials.



Dika Bwala, FCT Police Commissioner

Algerian embassy moves to Abuja

By Kevin Ebele Adinnu

The embassy of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria has moved to Abuja.

Speaking to Abuja Trust, the Algerian Ambassador to Nigeria, Mr. Abdelkader Mesdoua, said the Algerian President, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, took the decision.

The president, he said, took the decision to strengthen the country's good relations with Nigeria, despite the financial constraints faced by Algeria and other African countries.

The envoy thanked the Nigerian authorities for the help given to them to facilitate their movement to Abuja.

The Algerian embassy,

Mr. Mesdoua said, moved to Abuja on October 1 this year to coincide with Nigeria's national day.

The embassy, located on Plot 1398, Mamman Nasir Street, Asokoro, Abuja, according to the envoy, is open to all Nigerians.

"We are willing to work together with all national institutions and we will do our best to improve and strengthen the relationship between Algeria and Nigeria.

Ambassador Mesdoua said that the bilateral commission of cooperation between Nigeria and Algeria would meet at the beginning of next year.

The commission is headed by the Algerian President, Abdelaziz Bouteflika and Nigeria President, Olusegun Obasanjo.

The bilateral commission of cooperation will examine all fields of cooperation including commerce, trade, petroleum, mining, sports, education, health and partnerships.

"The decision taken by President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and President Abdelaziz Bouteflika to create a bilateral commission of cooperation will constitute a genuine tool for strengthening excellent relations which exist between Nigeria and Algeria", he said.

Abuja Trust

News

Power supply deteriorates in Old Karmo

Barely three weeks to the end of the year when President Obasanjo promised Nigerians regular power supply, the residents of old Karmo are witnessing serious deterioration of power supply.

The densely populated satellite town, which is presently serviced by only two transformers, has been having constant power failure especially in Church

Ikenna Emeka Okpani

road and Idowu Martins part of the settlement, which is serviced by one of the transformers.

Abuja Trust gathered from NEPA officials that the transformer servicing Church Road and Idowu Martins part

was overloaded and needed load shedding to be sustained.

"That is why we divided the part into two, so that they can have power alternatives in intervals of two days," a NEPA official said.

He further complained that due to illegal

connections, one could not really say how many homes the transformer served.

But residents who spoke to Abuja Trust said the load shedding did not bother them as does irregular power supply.

"Even on the days we are supposed to have light, we

don't. It keeps coming and going and when it comes, it does not shine brighter than a candle," a resident said.

He advised the Federal Government to ensure that satellite towns are not left out in their plans as majority of Nigerians live in such places.

NICON Hilton gets new GM

Mr. Andreas Searty has been appointed the General Manager of NICON Hilton Hotel.

According to a statement by the hotel management, Mr. Searty, 42, was until his appointment, the General Manager of Hilton Hurghada Plaza, Cairo, Egypt.

The new manager has been the General manager of the Grand PGENCY Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya.

Mr. Andreas Searty, in addition to the position, has put in more than 12 years working with Sheraton Hotels International in the Sultanate of Oman, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, United Kingdom and Germany.

He holds a first degree in Hotel Management and speaks German, Arabic and English.



Mr. Searty

Audu calls for permanent structures in Wuse new market

The chairman of the Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC), Mrs Esther John Audu, has said that a major solution to incessant fire outbreaks in the New Wuse Market would be the construction of permanent structures.

Speaking when she called at the scene of the fire disaster to inspect the extent of damage yesterday, the chairman called for an urgent meeting of stakeholders to work out a permanent solution to recurring cases of fire outbreaks in the market.

She lamented that the destruction of the market could lead to food shortages in the FCT as the market was

By Ikenna Emeka Okpani

the major food market in the city.

Chief Audu warned the Federal Government of the looming food shortage saying something should be done urgently to avert the development.

Meanwhile, victims of the market fire have called on the government to ensure that any kind of relief being planned for them is given

directly to them.

Speaking with newsmen at the scene of the fire where they were gathering the ashes of their burnt merchandise, the affected traders complained of the likelihood of self-appointed leaders cashing on the situation to make selfish gains.

Abuja Trust investigations have revealed that the FCDA is largely responsible for the non-construction of

permanent structures in the market.

The head of the information unit of Abuja Municipal Area Council, Mr. Cosmas Ihodinma told Abuja Trust that the FCDA whom he called the custodian of the Abuja master plan has not been able to indicate whether the location of the market would be permanent or not. A situation he said has prevented people from putting permanent structures.

Uphold ethics, FCT Minister urges journalists

The Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Engr. Muhammed Abba-Gana has advised journalists to be patriotic and uphold the ethics of their profession.

The minister who was represented by his Special Assistant on Land Matters, Alhaji Hassan Abeya made this call yesterday at the opening of executive meeting of the Zone D chapter of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ).

As he put it: "If the people are correctly and patriotically informed by

journalists, then our country and by extension all of us shall be better for it.

"But if people are negatively informed, then vices such as hatred, tribalism, religious extension, unpatriotism, bribery and corruption will wax strong and destroy our society.

"I therefore challenge our gentlemen of the press to do what it takes to ensure compliance with the ethics of the profession.

"I am aware that your code of conduct and ethics are in themselves very good set of rules and regulations,

which if complied with will restore the full glory of your respected profession."

The minister however noted that the task of information dissemination is sensitive.

In his speech, the National President of the NUJ, Prince Smart Adeyemi extolled the virtues of the minister saying that he is a man of integrity whose antecedents are worthy of emulation.

According to him, the FCT Minister "is one of the few ministers whose antecedents qualified them for their present position in government"



Kanu Agabi, Power and Steel Minister

Motherless babies home appeals for public support

Mrs. Pauline Okoronkwo, Nursing Sister at the Victory Motherless Babies Home, Idu, Abuja, has appealed to wealthy and public spirited Nigerians to always identify with the less privileged in the society, especially abandoned babies, by supporting their upkeep.

Okoronkwo made the appeal when the All Indian Universities Alumni Association, Abuja branch, paid an end of year visit to the home to present gift items including food, beverages, clothing and toiletries to the 36 babies at the centre, whose ages range between one and two years.

She said that it was becoming increasingly challenging for proprietors of such homes to run them and cater adequately for the needs of the inmates, stressing that managers of the centres needed to be encouraged and supported in their charity work.

"We wish to appeal to other organisations and individuals to follow suit, and bring whatever they can afford to us," she said, and thanked the association for the kind gestures.

Earlier, Mr. Isaac Uhuegbulam, the Vice-Chairman of the association, who led the members on the visit, had told Okoronkwo that their presentation was "merely a token."

He said that the alumni association was a non-political organisation, engaged in humanitarian pursuits and cared for the "down-trodden and disadvantaged

ones among us," adding that aside philanthropy, the welfare of its members came next on its agenda.

Uhuegbulam, apparently touched by the sight of some of the babies, three of whom had "full blown AIDS," said the association would soon make further presentations to give greater hope and comfort to the babies.



Members of Okubulu Youth Club, Abuja, present a bag of rice to Victory Motherless Babies Home, Idu, Abuja. Receiving the present is the nurse in-charge, Mrs. Pauline Okoronkwo. (middle)

Abuja Trust

Features

Obasanjo's FCT tour in retrospect

Penultimate week, President Olusegun Obasanjo was on a two-day state tour of the Federal Capital Territory to ascertain the level of development and to have an interactive forum with the traditional rulers, indigenes and other stakeholders in the nation's capital city Emmanuel Aunde of Abuja Trust who was on the presidential entourage for the tour reports.

President Olusegun Obasanjo, recently embarked on a two-day state visit in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). The president told Nigerians after his installation as the Garkuwan Abuja (the Shield of Abuja) by the Ona of Abaji and Chairman Council of Traditional Rulers of Abuja, Alhaji Baba Yunusa, at the old parade ground that the need to have a new capital city for the Federal Republic of Nigeria became necessary due to some problems militating against the federal capital in Lagos such as poor topography, traffic congestion, inadequate housing, lack of land for expansion, environmental pollution and the pressure of being a state and Federal Capital at the same time.

The president told Nigerians at the old parade ground where he inspected guard of honour that his visit in Federal Capital Territory (FCT) was to give him the opportunity to interact with the indigenes, traditional rulers, market women and other stakeholders who were committed to the development of the federal capital. At the old parade ground, the royal fathers got the shock of their lives, as the president declared war on any traditional ruler that is caught in the business of land allocation. In his words: "No traditional ruler will go unpunished if caught in the unlawful habit of selling land to the public. By constitution, nobody owns land except government and the power of allocating land is vested on the president alone who can direct the FCT Minister to do so on behalf of the government."

As the royal fathers were battling to control the shock they received from the Garkuwan Abuja (Obasanjo), the president dropped another bomb at Berger junction while inspecting the overhead bridge.

The president who was visibly angry directed the FCT Minister, Engr. Muhammed Abba-Gana to demolish all the illegal structures in the federal capital, including all the bungalows in the Central Area of Abuja, Wuse and Garki, with no compensation to the owners of those structures.

He said, "My administration cannot fold its hands and watch some disgruntled elements and unpatriotic people destroy the federal capital just because of their personal interest. I will fight them to the end." Some Nigerians who legalised illegality see the president's demolition order as unlawful in a democratic society. To such people, law exist only in foreign countries, back home law is a huge joke.

For President Olusegun Obasanjo to succeed in his fight against distortion in building the federal capital as envisaged in the master

plan, he must be prepared for a bloody war since majority of structures are owned by the military generals, ex-ministers and some of these structures are owned by government herself, like the headquarters of Federal Ministry of Works and Housing located at Mabushi District and many others including the Present Presidential Villa (Aso Rock).

The president's state visit in FCT was very

lamented on the attitude of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) towards university education and vowed to fight them to the end. "My government will no longer welcome any unconstitutional demands from ASUU. Before I came into power, some of the university teachers were taking N4,000.00 as their monthly salary, but now they are taking N80,000.00, yet, it

Hall, he told the indigenes to bury their dreams of getting an elected Mayor for now. "I cannot release government money to a Mayor that is elected because I lack the constitutional power to checkmate the operations of an elected Mayor." He further added that a mayor cannot meet the financial dreams of FCT for the development of the city. "From which source will a mayor generate N26 billion

any Nigerian university and that they don't have people to represent the indigenes at the National Assembly. He said further that FCT indigenes have no second-tier government, a situation he blamed on the constitution fashioned out by military juntas only to satisfy their personal interest.

The president assured residents of Abaji that very soon there would be steady

erosion is life threatening in our society, my government will do everything possible to ensure that the problem is addressed," he said. He expressed his appreciation over the massive people-oriented projects executed by the chairman, Alhaji Alhassan U. Sokodabo, saying that the chairman is a grassroots politician.

At the foundation laying ceremony of FCT/FHA CITEC International Estates Limited, 5,000 housing unit at Mboru district of FCT, the president said that if the project is well executed, he will extend it to other states to assist state governments to alleviate accommodation crisis in the country. He expressed the hope that if the project is completed, accommodation problems in FCT will be solved. He advised the contractor (CITEC) to provide adequate space for expansion. The president strongly warned the contractor that no boys quarters should be built in the estate. He pleaded that the prices of the houses should not be increased so that low-income earners too can benefit from the scheme. He further assured the contractor that the Federal Government would try to meet its contract agreement, which is to provide infrastructures in the estate.

The Asokoro General Hospital, which was started since 1990, was also among the projects the president commissioned during his two-day state visit. The Asokoro General Hospital is a 60-bed hospital, which has the capacity to compete favourably with any hospital in the world.

During the President's two-day state visit in FCT he inspected and commissioned a total of over 15 projects. It is certain that as the president has now come face to face with reality in the federal capital, he will go back to his drawing board to redesign new programmes that can accommodate all Nigerians living in the federal capital. The areas that need serious attention include electric power supply in FCT, water supply, health sector and provision of more affordable houses in the city for the residents.

The president has already directed the FCT Minister, Engr. Muhammed Abba-Gana to demolish all the bungalows in the Central Area District of the city, without making adequate provisions to accommodate the people to be displaced by his actions. Instead he will end up aggravating accommodation crisis in the city. Many issues were left untouched, for example, the problem of resettlement of indigenes was not properly looked into and the political structure of FCT which denied the indigenes second-tier government. It is only when these few but important issues are addressed that total peace will be guaranteed in FCT.



L-R The Minister of Agriculture & Rural Development, Mallam Adamu Bello, second left is MFCT Minister, Engr. Muhammed Abba-Gana and President Olusegun Obasanjo after the president's installation as Garkuwan Abuja



President Olusegun Obasanjo commissioning Asokoro General Hospital, next to him is MFCT Minister, Engr. Muhammed Abba-Gana, watching from the president's first left is Senator Adbulrazaq Khariat Gwadabe, the only senator representing FCT.

important because it gave the president a first hand information on issues that need immediate attention like the provision of basic infrastructures and enough security personnel in the federal capital to protect lives and properties. It was in this regard that the president promised to upgrade the library facilities at the Nigerian Law School in Bwari to enable the students to get quality education. In the auditorium of the Bwari law school, the president

is not enough for them to give our children a quality education," he lamented.

Obasanjo was unsatisfied with ASUU members whom Mr. President sees as the brains behind the collapse of education in the country, particularly their refusal to back pedal in their decision on funding of universities and recalling their sacked members in university of Ilorin. In Abaji Area council where the president commissioned the Mallam Adamu Shuaibu Memorial

for execution of projects in Abuja," he queried. Hon. A. B. Mamman who was also a member of the Abaji interactive forum lamented the position of FCT indigenes, saying that they (indigenes) have no quota in

power supply in the area when the 4,000 transformers imported by government arrived. On the problem of erosion in Abaji the president promised to assist the council to combat the soil disaster. "The problem of

My administration cannot fold its hands and watch some disgruntled elements and unpatriotic people destroy the federal capital just because of their personal interest. I will fight them to the end.

Abuja Trust

News you can use

Useful addresses in Abuja

Hotels and Guest Houses

Rock View Hotel Plot 789 Cadastral Zone A8 Wuse II, P.O.Box 5879, Abuja. Tel: 09-5236722-8	All Saints (Anglican) Cathedral Church Guest House Off Douala Street, Zone 5, Wuse District Abuja. Tel: 09-5234570-1	Banex Hotel Plot 570 Aminu. Kano Crescent Wuse II, Abuja. Tel: 09-5236420-5	Abuja, Tel: 09-5233444-5. New Rendezvous Hotel Makeni Street, Zone 6 Wuse, Abuja. Tel: 09-5231195.
National Mathematical Centre Guest House Plot 890, Asaba Close, Area II Garki, P.O. Box 3827, Abuja, Tel: 09-2345575.	Kantoma Resort Manbolo Street, Zone 2, Wuse District, Abuja. Tel: 09-5234668, 5234667	Royalton Hotel Gongola Street, Off Festival Rd., Area 2, Section 1, Garki - Abuja.	Admiralty Suites Guest House Plot 656, Asokoro District, Abuja, Tel: 09-2342697.
Ruconio Hotel Plot 1392 Abidjan Street, Zone 3, Wuse District, Abuja Tel: 09-5234570	Omega Hotel Lome Street, Zone 7 Wuse District, Abuja, Tel: 09-5236770-4	Air Wave Hotel Adetokumbo Ademola Crescent Wuse II, Abuja. Tel: 09-5232215	Niger Link Hotel Zone 4, Wuse District, Abuja, 09-5235291
Aso Guest Inn Plot 7 Cadastral Zone A3 Garki II, Abuja. Tel: 09- 2347207	Abuja Guest Inn Federal Housing Maitama District, Abuja.	Bolingo Hotel & Tower Airport Road Central Area District, Abuja Tel: 09-2344701.	Peace Guest House Samuel Ladegoke Akintola Boulevard, Garki II, Abuja, Tel: 09.2347206
Arewa Suite Central Area Business District Abuja.	NUJ Guest House Area II, Garki .Abuja	Chida Guest Inn Plot 302 Cadastral Zone A4 Asokoro District, Abuja Tel: 09-2344714	Rita Lori Hotel Plot 473, Ahmadu Bello Way, Garki II, Abuja
Women Development Centre Guest House Central Area District, Abuja.	Sanfil Hotel Plot 35, Off Aminu Kano Crescent Wuse 2, Abuja. Tel: 09-5234551.	Optima Hotel Plot 2005 Owo Close Area 10, Garki P.O.Box 1970 Abuja.	Day Spring Hotel Plot 2382 Juba Street Wuse Zone 6, Abuja Tel: 09-5238714-5

Embassies and High Commissions

Phillippines Danube Street Off Ibrahim Babangida Way Maitama District, Abuja Tel: 5237649	Russian Federation Gana Street, Off Shehu Shagari Way, Maitama District, Abuja. Tel: 09-5235374	Niger Republic Off Alvan Ikoku Way, Maitama District, Abuja.	Embassy of (Japan) c/o Rm 329 Hilton Hotel Maitama -Abuja, 09-5231811-40 DL 09-5237667
Britain Plot 503, Mississippi Street, Off Shehu Shaagari Way, Maitama District, Abuja.	Zimbabwe High Commission 2908, Off Aminu Kano Crescent Wuse District Abuja. Tel: 09-5237554	Chana High Commission Plot 301, Area 10 Garki - Abuja.	Embassy of the Peoples of Democratic Republic of Algeria Plot No. 1395, Mamman Nasir Street, P.O. Box 10739, Garki - Abuja Tel: 9/3142840, 314 28 41 Fax: 9/314 2842
Visa Office: Pot Dangote House Plot 779 Aguiyi Ironsi Street Maitama District, Abuja.	Republic of Korea 16 -Usuma Street. Maitama District P.O. Box 6870, Abuja. Tel: 09-5236524	United State of America 9, Mambila Street, Off Aso Drive, Maitama District, Abuja. Tel: 09-5230966, 5230916.	Australian High Commission 3A Bobo Street, Off Gana Street, Maitama - Abuja Tel: 4139910, 4139911
Netherlands Gana Street. Off. Shehu Shagari Str., Maitama District, Abuja.	Uganda High Commission Plot 347 Bamako Street, Zone 1, Wuse District, Abuja, Tel: 09-523424-5	Zambia Plot 313 Cadastral Zone A8, Wuse District II P.M.:B. 6173, Abuja. Tel: 09-5232215.	
European Union (European House), Usuma Street. Maitama Abuja Tel: 09-5233144, 5233146-7	People's Republic of China Plot 34, Bamako Street. Zone 1, Wuse District, Abuja, Tel: 09-5236105-6	Indonesia Gana Street, Maitama - Abuja	

Just arrived Abuja? Are you bothered about where to relax and organise yourself? Below are some of the hotels, suites and guest houses in the city, depending on the depth of your pocket:

Where to stay in Abuja

Rate/Standard Room	Hotel/Guest House	Address
N1,000 - N3,000 per night	1. Duhu Guest Inn. Ltd.	Plot 21/29, Ladi Kwali Way, Zone 4, Wuse
	2. Amanda Guest Inn.	Ibrahim Sani Abacha Estate, Wuse Zone 4,
	3. Elyte Guest Inn	Zunguru Close, Off Jos Street, Area 3, Garki
	4. NUJ Motel	NUJ National Secretariat, Area II, Garki
	5. A. Avision Hotel	Plot 456, Kontagora Close, Area 3, Garki
N3,000 - N5,000 per night	1. Amana Suites	Off Michael Okpara Street Zone 5, Wuse
	2. Arewa Suites	Central Business District, Tel: 52338925-3
	3. Dayspring Hotel	Juba Street, Zone 6, Tel: 09-52338714-5 Area
	4. Savannah Suite	3, Garki, Abuja. Tel: 09-2340090
N5,000 and above	1. Sheraton Hotel & Towers	Maitama, Abuja FCT.; Tel: 09-52302325
	2. Agura Hotel	Area 10, Garki. Tel: 09-2341758
	3. Bolingo Hotel & Towers	Area 10, Garki. Tel: 09-2344701-00
	4. Chelsea Hotel	Central Area, Abuja FCT.
	5. Nikon Hilton	Maitama, Abuja. Tel: 09-4130801

Bus Schedule

Ifesinachi Transport (Berger Junction)

Abj - Lag	-	N1,500 (Busscar)
Lag- Abj	-	N1,500 (Busscar)
Abj-Enu	-	N450.00 (MB 800)

Departure: Morning and Evening

E. Ekesons & Sons (Berger Junction)

Abj - Lag	-	N1,750 (Busscar)
Lag- Abj	-	N1,750 (Busscar)
Abj-Osha-PHC	-	N1,650 (Busscar)
PHC-Osha-Abj	-	N1,650 (Busscar)

Departure: Morning and Evening

Chisco Transport (Berger Junction)

Abj-Lag (Morning)	-	N1,760 (Busscar)
Abj-Lag (Evening)	-	N1,720 (Busscar)
Abj-Osha - PHC (Morning)	-	N1,760 (Busscar)
Abj - Osha - PHC (Evening)	-	N1,720 (Busscar)

Departure : Morning and Evening

TOMMORROW'S FLIGHTS

Albarka Air Services

Abj-Lag:	8:30am, 12:00pm
Lag-Abj:	10:00am; 2:00pm
Maid-Lag:	6:50am.
Lag-Maid:	2:00pm.
Abj-Maid	4:00pm.

Bellview Airlines

Abj - Lag:	8:20am, 1:00; 5:30pm.
Lag-Abj:	6:50am; 11:15am 3:25pm
Lag-PHC:	7:30pm; 3:15pm.
PHC-Lag:	9:00pm; 5:05am.

Chanchangi Airlines

Abj -Lag	8:00am, 11:45am; 1:40pm 2:15pm; 3:00pm; 5:30pm
Lag-Abj:	7:15am; 10:00am; 11:15am 1:10pm; 3:30pm; 4:45pm
Kad-Lag:	7:30pm; 12:40pm
Lag-Kad:	10:00am; 5:00pm
Lag-PCH:	9:30am; 1:30pm; 4:15pm
PHC-Lag:	8:00am; 11:30am; 3:30pm
Lag- Cal:	4:pm.
Cal-Lag:	8:00am.

EAS Airlines

Abj -Lag	10:30am; 2:30pm; 4:30pm
Lag-Abj:	7:15am; 9:30am;
Abj-Jos:	11:00am.
Abj-Jos-Lag:	11:00am.
Ow-PHC-Lag:	7:45am.
Lag-PCH-Ow:	4:15am.
PHC-Lag:	8:30am

Nigeria Airways

Abj -Lag	8:30am; 4:00pm
Lag-Abj:	7:00am; 12:30pm;
Lag-PHC:	9:00am.
Lag-Enu-PHC:	4:00pm.
PHC-Lag:	10:30am; 6:20pm.

For the record

Electoral Law 2001 (III)

k) being a person employed in the public service of the Federation or of a State, he has resigned, withdrawn or retired from such employment 30 days before the date of the election:

l) is not a member of a secret society;

m) has not been indicted for embezzlement or fraud by a Judicial Commission of Inquiry or an Administrative Panel of Inquiry or a Tribunal set up of under the Tribunals of Inquiry Act, a Tribunal or Inquiry law, or any other Federal or state government law which indictment has been accepted by the Federal or State Government respectively: or

n) has not presented a forged certificate or a forged or false declaration to the Commission.

o) has not within a period of 10 years preceding the election been convicted of any drug-related offences and/or money laundering

p) has not within the preceding period of 10 years has not presented a falsified document or given false information for the purposes of nomination

(3) In the case of election to the Office of the president or vice-president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria or the governor and deputy governor of a state, the Affidavit sworn at the High Court of a State shall indicate in addition to the information required in subsection 2 above, that the candidate: has attained the age of 40 years for President and vice-president: and 35 years for governor and deputy governor of a state.

(4) The list of the nominations and the Affidavits shall also be sent by the Political Party to the Commissioner of Police of the State where the election is to be held, and to the Attorney-General of the Federation.

(5) The Commission shall, within 7 days of the receipt of the personal particulars of the candidates, publish same in the constituency where the candidate intends to contest the election.

(6) Any person who has reasonable ground to the Commission, the State Commissioner of Police, and the Federal Attorney-General specifying the grounds for such petition, with evidence to support the allegations.

(7) If, after appropriate investigations by the aforementioned bodies, it is discovered by the Commission that any of the information provided by the candidate is false, he shall be automatically disqualified from contesting the elections and if already elected, he shall automatically vacate the office concerned and the next candidate with the highest number of votes and who meets the constitutional requirements for the position shall be declared elected. Provided the aforementioned bodies shall state the reason(s) for the disqualification.

(8) The Attorney-General of the Federation may also initiate criminal proceedings where appropriate against the candidate and if convicted he or she shall be sentenced to a fine of N200,000 or to imprisonment for two years or both.

(9) Any Political Party which knowingly or recklessly presents to the commission the name of a candidate who does not meet the qualifications

stipulated in this section shall be guilty of an offence under this section, and on conviction shall be liable to a fine of N500,000; and be disqualified from participating in future elections for that particular office in the same Constituency for a period of five years.

(10) The decision of the Commission as to the qualification or disqualification of a candidate for an election may be challenged by a candidate. Any legal action challenging the decision of the Commission shall commence within five working days and be disposed of not later than one week before the election.

CLAUSE 26: (1) No persons shall nominate more than one person for an election to the same office.

(2) Any person who contravenes subsection (1) of this Section shall be guilty of an offence and on conviction be liable to a fine of N20,000 or one month imprisonment or both but his action shall not invalidate the nomination.

(3) No account shall be taken of the signature of a person on a nomination paper where the candidate had died, withdrawn or where the nomination paper was held invalid.

(4) No person who has subscribed as a nominator shall so long as the candidate stands nominated withdraw his nomination.

CLAUSE 27: (1) Any candidate being a member of a political party who wishes to contest an election on the platform of another political party may signify his intention in writing to his party and the Independent National Electoral Commission not later than 30 days to the date of election.

CLAUSE 28: The Commission shall, at least 14 days before the day of the election publish by displaying or causing to be displayed at the place or places appointed for the delivery of nomination paper and in such other places as it deems fit, a statement of the full names of all candidates standing nominated and the persons nominating them with their respective addresses and occupations.

CLAUSE 29: (1) A candidate may withdraw his candidature by notice in writing signed by him and delivered by himself to the Political Party that nominated him for the election, and the Political Party shall convey such withdrawal to the Commission. Withdrawal shall only be allowed not later than 14 days to the election.

(2) Where a candidate withdraws as provided in subsection (1) of this Section, his Political Party shall be allowed to nominate another candidate.

(3) Renomination under this Section shall only be allowed not later than 14 days before the date of the election.

CLAUSE 30: (1) If after the time for the delivery of nomination paper and before the commencement of the poll, a nominated candidate dies, the Chief Electoral

Commissioner or the Resident Electoral Commissioner shall, being satisfied of the fact of the death, countermand the poll in which the deceased candidate was to participate and the Commission shall appoint some other convenient date for the election.

(2) The list of voters to be used at a postponed election shall be the official register of voters, which was to be used if the election had not been postponed.

CLAUSE 31: If a nomination form, signed by a candidate and by the persons nominating him, is lodged in more than one constituency, his candidature shall be void in each constituency.

CLAUSE 32: Where at the close of nomination there is no candidate validly nominated, the commission shall extend the time for nomination and fix a new date for the election.

CLAUSE 33: (1) A candidate and his party shall campaign for the election in accordance with such rules and regulations as may be determined by the Commission.

(2) State apparatus, including the media shall not be employed to the advantage or disadvantage of any political party or candidate at any election.

(3) Media time shall be allocated equally among the political parties at similar hours of the day.

(4) At any public electronic media, equal airtime shall be allotted to all political parties during prime times at similar hours each day, subject to the payment of appropriate fees.

(5) At any public print media, equal coverage and conspicuity shall be allotted to all political parties.

(6) Any public media that contravenes subsections 3 & 4 of this section shall be guilty of an offence and on conviction be liable to a fine of N500,000 in the first instance and to a fine of N1,000,000 for subsequent conviction.

CLAUSE 34: Subject to the other provisions of this Act, if after the latest time for the delivery of nomination papers and the withdrawal of candidates for an election under this Act, more than one person remains validly nominated, a poll shall be taken.

CLAUSE 35: A poll shall take place in accordance with the provisions of this Act with respect to the following:-

(a) in the case of an election to the office of the President or Governor of a State, whether or not only one person is validly nominated in respect of such office;

(b) in the case of an election in respect of any other office, if after the expiry of the time of delivery of nomination papers there is more than one person standing nominated.

CLAUSE 36: (1) If after the expiry of time for delivery of nomination papers and withdrawal of candidates and the extension of time as provided for in this Act there is only one person whose name is validly nominated in respect of an election, other than to the office of President or Governor, that person shall be declared elected.

(2) Where a person is declared elected under the provisions of subsection (1) of

this section, a declaration of result Form as may be prescribed shall be completed and copy thereof issued to the person by the Returning Officer while the original of the form shall be returned to the commission as in the case of a contested election.

CLAUSE 37: The commission shall establish sufficient number of Polling Stations in each ward and shall allot voters in such Polling Stations.

CLAUSE 38: The commission shall provide suitable boxes for the conduct of elections.

CLAUSE 39: (1) The commission shall prescribe the format of the ballot papers which shall include the symbol adopted by the Political Party of the candidate and such other information as it may require.

(2) The ballot papers shall be bound in booklets and numbered serially with differentiating colours for each office being contested.

CLAUSE 40: (1) All political parties may be notified in writing signed by and addressed to the Electoral Officer of the Local Government Area appointed person(s) in this Act referred to as a "Polling Agent" to attend at each polling station in the Local Government Area for which they have candidate(s), and the notice shall set out the name and addresses of the polling agent(s) and be given to the Electoral Officer before the date fixed for the election.

(2) Notwithstanding the requirement of subsection (1) of this Section, a candidate shall not be precluded from doing any act or thing, which he has appointed a polling agent to do on his behalf under this Act.

(3) Where in this Act, an act or thing is required or authorized to be done by or in the presence of a Polling Agent, the non-attendance of the Polling Agent at the time and place appointed for the act or thing or refusal by the Polling Agent to do the act or thing shall not if the act or thing is otherwise done properly invalidate the act or thing.

CLAUSE 41: The Commission shall, not later than the 14th day before the day of the election, cause to be published, in such manner as it may deem fit a notice specifying the following matters, that is to say (a) the day and hours fixed for the poll, (b) by way of indication, the persons entitled to vote; and the location of the polling stations.

CLAUSE 42: For a particular election voting shall take place on the same day and at the same time throughout the Federation.

CLAUSE 43: (1) At the hour fixed for opening of the poll, before the commencement of voting, the Presiding Officer shall open the empty ballot box and show same to such persons as may lawfully be present at the Polling Station and shall then close and seal the box in such manner as to prevent its being opened by unauthorized person(s).

(2) The ballot box shall then be placed in full view of all present, and be so maintained until the close of poll.

CLAUSE 44: (1) Every

person intending to vote shall present himself to a Presiding Officer at the polling unit in the Constituency in which his name is registered with his voters' card.

CLAUSE 45: A candidate or a polling agent may challenge the right of a person to receive a Ballot Paper on such grounds and in accordance with such procedures as are provided for in this Act.

CLAUSE 46: The Presiding Officer shall separate the queue between men and women if in that area of the country the culture is such that it does not permit the mingling of men and women in the same queue.

CLAUSE 47: (1) Voting at an election under this Act shall be by open secret ballot.

(2) A voter on receiving a ballot paper shall mark it in the manner prescribed by the commission.

(3) All ballots at an election under this Act at any Polling Station shall be deposited in the Ballot Box in open view of public.

CLAUSE 48: (1) No voter shall vote for more than one candidate or record more than one vote in favour of any candidate at any one election.

(2) Where the votes cast at an election in any constituency or polling station exceed the number of registered voters in that constituency polling station, the election for that constituency polling station shall be declared null and void by the commission and another election shall be conducted at a date to be fixed by the commission.

(3) Where an election is nullified in accordance with subsection (2) of this section, there shall be no return for the election until another poll has taken place in the affected area.

(4) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections (2) and (3) of this section the commission may, if satisfied that the result of the election will not substantially be affected by voting in the area where the election is cancelled, direct that a return of the election be made.

CLAUSE 49: (1) Where a voter makes any writing or mark on a Ballot paper by which he may be identified, such Ballot paper shall be rejected provided that any print resulting from the staining of the thumb of the voter in the voting compartment shall not be or be deemed to be a mark of identification under this section.

(2) The commission shall use indelible ink for any thumb mark by voters on ballot papers.

CLAUSE 50: A voter who by accident deals with his ballot paper in such a manner that it may not be conveniently used for voting, may deliver it to the Presiding Officer and if the Presiding Officer is satisfied that the ballot paper is spoilt he shall issue another ballot paper to the voter in place of the ballot paper delivered up, and the spoilt ballot paper shall be immediately marked cancelled by the Presiding Officer.

CLAUSE 51: A voter who is blind or is otherwise unable to distinguish symbols or who suffers any other physical disability may be accompanied into the polling station by a person chosen by him and the person shall, after informing the

Presiding Officer of the disability, be permitted to accompany the voter into the voting compartment and assist the voter to make his mark in accordance with the procedure prescribed by the commission.

CLAUSE 52: No voter shall record his vote otherwise than by personally attending at the polling station and recording his vote in the manner prescribed by the commission.

CLAUSE 53: No person shall be permitted to vote at any polling station or unit other than the one to which he is allotted.

CLAUSE 54: (1) If at the time a person applies for a ballot paper and before he has left the polling station or unit, a polling agent, polling station official or security agent informs the Presiding Officer that he has reasonable cause to believe that the person is under the age of 18 years or has committed the offence of impersonation and gives an undertaking on a prescribed form to substantiate the charge in a court of law, the presiding officer may order a Police Officer to arrest that person and the presiding officer's order shall be sufficient authority for the Police Officer so to act.

(2) Person in respect of whom a polling agent, polling station official, or security agent given an information in accordance with the provisions of subsection (1) of this section shall not by reason of the information, be prevented from voting but the Presiding Officers shall cause the words "protested against for impersonation" to be placed against his name in the marked copy of the register of voters or part of the register of voters.

(3) Where a person in respect of whom a declaration is made under subsection (2) of this section, admits to the Presiding Officer that he is not the person he held himself out to be, he shall not be permitted to vote and shall be handed over to the Police.

(4) A person arrested under the provisions of this section shall be deemed to be a person taken into custody by a police officer.

CLAUSE 55: (1) If a person claiming to be entitled to vote applies for a ballot paper after some other person has voted in the name given by the claimant, he shall, upon satisfactory answers given to any questions put to him by a poll clerk be entitled to receive a ballot paper in the same manner as any other voter; but the ballot paper (in this Act referred to as "the tendered ballot paper") shall be of a colour different from the ordinary ballot papers. The Presiding Officer shall require the voter to deliver the tendered ballot paper to him instead of allowing it to be put in the ballot box, and the Presiding Officer shall endorse on it the name of the voter and his number in the register of voters. The ballot paper shall on delivery to the Presiding Officer and in view of all present be set aside by the Presiding Officer in a packet intended for tendered votes. No tendered ballot paper shall be counted by the Returning Officer.

(2) The Presiding Officer shall, when he tenders a ballot paper under this section, enter the name of the voter and his number in the register of voters on the list to be called tendered vote list; and the tendered vote list shall be produced in any legal proceedings arising out of the election. (to be continued)



NIGERIA SOCIAL INSURANCE TRUST FUND

Established by Decree 73 of 1993

Corporate Headquarters

Plot 794 Muhammadu Buhari Way, Central Business Area, P.M.B. 446, Garki, Abuja, FCT Tel: 09-2340121-3 Fax: 09-2340112

FINANCIAL REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE NIGERIA SOCIAL INSURANCE TRUST FUND

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2000 PREPARED BY THE FINANCE DEPARTMENT

ORGANISATION

The Finance department is under the supervision of an Executive Director Finance & Investment Division through the General Manager Finance. The department has two main sections, Accounts Payable and Final Accounts.

The Final Account section is made up of Staff Advances, Budget and Monitoring, Branch Accounts and Management Accounts units. The Accounts Payable section is made up of Pay/Cash office, Payroll and Other Charges units.

In addition it has accounts departments in all the Fund's branches nationwide. At the moment, the Fund maintains its presence in 49 locations nationwide through Zones, States and District offices. Adequate funds are transferred on monthly basis to all the locations and returns received from them.

FUNCTIONS

The importance of a Finance department cannot be overemphasised in any entity and Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund, is not an exception. The primary objective of the Finance department is to report every financial detail that affect the entity using **Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP)** with a view to producing financial statements/reports that are relevant, reliable and sufficient to enable informed decisions to be made by all the users of the statements in their various capacities at all times. **Sections 29-30 of the NSITF Decree 73 of 1993** requires that this responsibility be carried by the Fund.

In order to meet this responsibility, the Finance department has designed and instituted a good internal control system and an Accounting Manual that meets the needs of the department and provides the necessary guidance to its accounts staff. The department is manned with professionally qualified and trained personnel. In addition the department has computerised its record keeping to enable it produce financial reports timely.

OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE

The internal control system in place is to provide full accountability and to ensure adequate transparency through the following: 1. Keeping adequate accounting records of assets and liabilities. 2. Pre payment audit of expenditures.

3. Authority to incur expenditure through defined level of authority/approval limits.

4. Preparing annual Budgets to guide management.

5. Preparing management accounts and annual accounts. 6. Auditing of annual accounts by external auditors.

7. Approving of annual budgets and accounts by the Board of Directors.

8. Distribution of audited financial statements to relevant authorities in accordance with Section 30 of the NSITF Decree e.g. President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Auditor General Of the Federation, Accountant General of the Federation etc.

9. The latest audited financial statements for the year ended 31 st December 2000 accounts are on the Internet on our website www.NSITF.com

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

In preparing financial statements, the department receives all financial returns from the various departments that have financial transactions such as

1 Investment department to show what was collected through the members' contributions, income realised and the investments made together with any expenditure related there on.

2 Benefit department to show what was paid out as benefit claims and the various contingencies covered.

3 Branch accounts unit to show the consolidated and fully analysed returns from all the outstations.

4 The other relevant units within the Finance department to show the amount and types of recurrent and capital expenditures incurred.

These returns, through monthly Journals, are further collected and analysed by the Final Accounts unit before being posted into the General ledger to extract the Trial Balance.

REVENUE ACCOUNTS AND NET ASSETS STATEMENT

The Fund produces two statements of accounts -namely; the **Revenue Account and Net Assets Statement**.

The **Revenue Account** enables the Fund to examine the total revenue generated from the statutory members' contributions and the investment income realised and the expenses incurred within the period under review. The net result shows the fund available for investment and acquisition of tangible fixed assets.

In line with insurance business and pension management the Fund, is essentially interested in the pooling of funds from all available sources to meet benefit payments on the contingencies currently run by the scheme. The **NET ASSET STATEMENT** shows the aggregate financial position as at end of each financial year of the Fund, which is January to December. The net assets are represented by investments and fixed assets. There is no corresponding liability side but instead there is a reconciliation of the changes in the net assets position. The Fund as pointed out earlier on is interested mainly in meeting the financial obligation of its members through the payment of adequate benefits. It follows that the long term solvency of the organisation as reflected by the net assets is very important. The five-year summary in the annual accounts and the graph on performance indicators has shown a continuous growth in the long-term assets position of the Fund.

STATUTORY AUDIT

Like any other reporting public entity, the **NSITF DECREE 73 of 1993** under section 29(2) requires the accounts of the Fund to be audited by external auditors at least six months after the end of the financial year. It is on record that the accounts have been audited within the statutory time limit.

The latest set of annual accounts is for the year ended **31st December 2000**. The Revenue Account and Net Assets Statement already on the Internet are hereby produced.

NIGERIA SOCIAL INSURANCE TRUST FUND REVENUE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 2000

	2000		1999	
	N'000	N'000	N'000	N'000
Contribution		1,613,707		1,262,367
Investment Income		534,353		327,185
Other Income		6,757		6,291
Total Revenue		2,154,817		1,595,843

EXPENDITURE

Benefits Paid		18,473		10,081
Administrative Expenses				
Staff Cost	851,933		581,569	
Office & Gen. Expenses	241,956	1,093,889	224,212	805,781
Depreciation		106,504		168,266
Total Expenditure		1,218,866		984,128

Net New Money Available For Investment		935,951		611,715
--	--	---------	--	---------

NIGERIA SOCIAL INSURANCE TRUST FUND

NET ASSETS STATEMENT

AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2000

	2000		1999	
	N'000	N'000	N'000	N'000
INVESTMENTS	4,806,254		3,976,488	
FIXED ASSETS	537,598	5,343,852	597,753	4,574,241
CURRENT ASSETS				
Stock of Stationeries	23,774	52,148		
Debtors and Prepayments	313,236	328,741		
Bank and Cash Balances	526,929	400,486		
	863,939	781,375		
Creditors due within one year	172,232	256,008		
Net Current Assets	691,707		525,367	
NET ASSETS	6,035,559		5,099,608	

RECONCILIATION OF THE MOVEMENT IN NET ASSETS OF THE SCHEME

Net Assets as at 31 st January	5,099,608	4,487,893
Net new money available for investment	935,951	611,715
Net assets as at 31st December	6,035,559	5,099,608

NIGERIA SOCIAL INSURANCE TRUST FUND

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2000

BENEFIT CONTINGENCIES PAID

	2000	1999
	N'000	N'000
Old Age Benefit	-	3,218
Survivors Grant	1,356	398
Survivors Pension	567	92
Retirement Grants	5,588	1,611
Retirement Pension	122	0
Emigration	565	153
Invalidity Grant	329	54
Funeral	6	0
Differed NPF Benefit	2,356	3,267
Transitional Basic Pension	7,584	1,288
TOTAL	18,473	10,081

NIGERIA SOCIAL INSURANCE TRUST FUND

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2000

FIVE YEAR FINANCIAL SUMMARY

	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996
	N'000	N'000	N'000	N'000	N'000
ASSETS					
Investments	4,806,254	3,976,488	3,484,121	2,973,776	2,096,443
Other assets (Net)	1,229,305	1,123,120	1,003,772	968,716	1,083,836
Contributors' fund	6,035,559	5,099,608	4,487,893	3,942,492	3,180,279

REVENUE ACCOUNT

Annual Contribution	1,613,707	1,262,367	1,183,423	1,112,640	1,018,626
Investment Income	541,110	333,476	249,008	387,029	364,569
Benefit Payments	18,473	10,081	9,144	12,087	12,957
Staff Cost	851,933	581,569	270,832	214,887	233,324
Office & Gen. Exps.	241,956	224,212	453,834	392,307	282,206
Depreciation	106,504	168,266	153,219	118,175	94,270
Net new money available for Investment	935,951	611,715	545,402	762,213	60,438

ANNUAL GROWTH RATIOS

	%	%	%	%	%
Growth in Investments	21	14	17	42	20
Growth in Contributions	28	7	6	9	50
Growth in Investment					
Income	62	34	-36	6	101
Growth in Ben. Payments	83	10	-24	-7	170
Growth in Staff Cost	47	115	26	-8	69
Growth in Other					
Overheads	-13	-55	19	36	114
Growth in New Money					
Available for Investment	53	12	-28	0	40

Continued on Page 27

Continued from Page 26

NIGERIA SOCIAL INSURANCE TRUST FUND

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2000

FIXED ASSETS

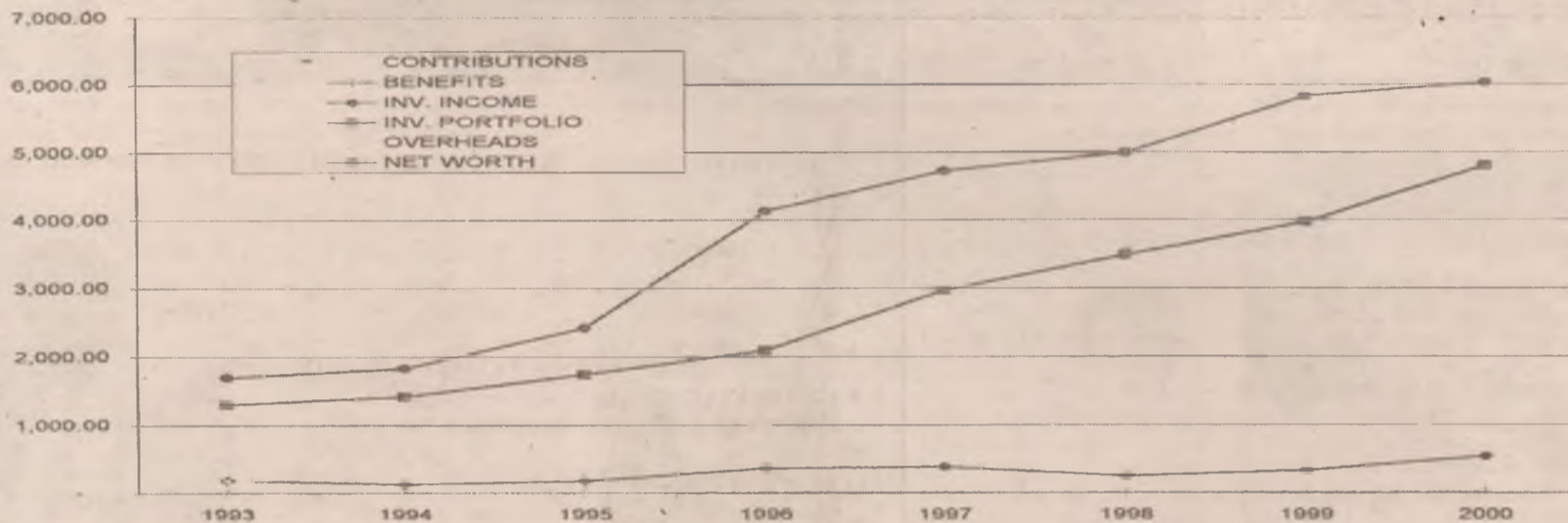
	Land & Buildings	Office Furniture & Equipment	Motor Vehicles	Total
	N'000	N'000	N'000	N'000
Cost As At 31 st December 2000	488,695	676,276	98,689	1,263,660
Depreciation As At 31 st December 2000	40,312	596,761	88,989	726,062
NETBOOK VALUE				
At 31 st December 2000	448,383	79,515	9,700	537,598
At 31 st December 1999	458,093	114,262	25,398	597,753

NIGERIA SOCIAL INSURANCE TRUST FUND

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2000
STATEMENT OF VALUE ADDED

	2000 N'000	%	1999 N'000	%
Revenue	2,154,817		1,595,843	
Cost of Materials and Services	494,136		507,399	
	1,660,681		1,088,444	
% of value added to Revenue		100		100
DISTRIBUTION				
Employees				
Salaries and benefits	599,753	36	298,382	27
Contributors				
Benefits paid	18,473	1	10,081	1
Furniture Maintenance				
Depreciation	106,504	7	168,266	16
Revenue account	935,951	56	611,715	56
	1,660,681	100	1,088,444	100

**NIGERIA SOCIAL INSURANCE TRUST FUND
PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 1993 TO 2000
FIGURES IN NAIRA MILLIONS**



*Constituency Office of
Hon. Ibrahim Zailani L.L.B (Hons)BL
Member, House of Representatives,
Toro Federal Constituency, Bauchi State.*

9 December, 2001
The Editor,
Thisday Newspaper, P. O. Box 54749, Ikoyi,
Lagos.

Dear Sir,

**DEMAND FOR RETRACTION OF PUBLICATION IN PAGE 6
OF YOUR PAPER OF 7TH DECEMBER, 2001.**

I write to demand a retraction of your publication of 7th December 2001 in page 6 vol. 7 No: 2420, in which it was reported against me as follows:-

"Meanwhile, some Members of the House have alleged that certain provisions were "smuggled" into the Electoral Act signed into law yesterday, accusing the leadership of the Senate and the House of conniving in this regard. The Members included Hon. Ibrahim Zailani, the Chairman of the House Committee on Justice, Human Rights and Legal Matters who incidentally was a Member of the Joint Harmonization Committee on the Electoral Bill, Hon. Tony Anyanwu, Hon. Idris Yahuza who is the House Committee Chairman on Rules and Business as well as Hon. Uche Maduako. They claimed that the aspect of the Electoral Act, which forbids new political parties from contesting general and presidential elections until they win 15 percent of the Local Government elections, was not part of the bill passed by the House of Representatives.

They claimed that the aspect of the clause 81, which deals with registration of political parties should fill 15 percent of the local government chairmanship seats in two thirds of the 36 States and the Federal Capital; Territory and not the winning of 15 percent of chairmanship of the Local Government election".

I wish to categorically state that as from the 1st December 2001, I did not meet any of your reporters who filed in the report, in the persons of Peter Umar Omale, Bature Umar, Iyefu Aoba, Chucks Okocha, Chucks Akunna in Abuja and Oma Djebah in Lagos, nor granted them any interview. I don't know how they came about this story to the extent of crediting same to me.

Your Newspaper is enjoying some credibility with many Nigerians, as anything published by you is believed by millions. This unhealthy development will certainly erode the confidence Nigerians seems to have in your Newspaper.

If I may ask, what was the intention of your reporters in filling the report on my behalf, which I did

not say? I am convinced it was intended to discredit "my person, set me against the leadership of the Senate and the House of Representatives, my colleagues in the Harmonization Committee, Members of the National Assembly in particular and Nigerians in general, as somebody who is incapable of position of trust and confidence. It was also intended to create suspicion in the minds of Nigerians on the Act and justify your reporters position on the same as having heard from a Member of the Harmonization Committee, that clause 81 was smuggled into the Electoral Act.

I wish to confirm to you that I participated fully on the processing of the Act from the date it was presented to the House by INEC until conclusion by the Harmonization Committee. At no time did I ever disagree with the decisions arrived at by the Committee. It is therefore wicked and mischievous that your reporters will fire report on an interview I did not grant. That is nothing but yellow journalism.

Consequently, the said publication has lowered my image and integrity before the leadership of the National Assembly, my colleagues, my family members and Nigerians in general.

I THEREFORE DEMAND a retraction of the interview and an unreserved apology from your Newspaper within 14 days from the date of this letter, for the extreme/damage done to my character, image and Integrity by the said publication, You should give the retraction and apology the same publicity you gave the reported Interviews, If after 14 days, I do not hear from you, I will take appropriate legal steps to redeem my image without further notice or recourse to you.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

HON. IBRAHIM ZAILANI
Chairman, House Committee on Justice, Human Rights and Legal Matters

NIPC/UNIDO HOLDS SENSITISATION WORKSHOP IN KADUNA

The Nigeria Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC) and United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) held a one-day sensitisation workshop on formulation, appraisal and promotion of policies at Arewa House on Monday, 10th December, 20001. These pictures captured the event.



Chief Operating Officer, Suraj Balarabe Yakubu welcoming a director of NIPC, Mr. Ezekiel Uche to the workshop.



COO, Suraj B. Yakubu presenting his welcome address at the workshop.



Mr. Stephen Amase, Deputy Director NIPC presenting a paper on International Industrial Partnership at the workshop.



Mr. Ezekiel Uche a Director of NIPC presenting his paper at the workshop on the "New" NIPC: Mission and Vision.



Mr. A. A. Ajani, UNIDO Representative and Mr. Ezekiel Uche at the workshop.



NIPC Consultants at the workshop. Left Engineer Bolaji and Mr. Niyi.



Mrs. Amina Mohammed a representative of Women Entrepreneur in Africa, Nigeria Chapter asking questions.



Mr. Stephen Amase, a Deputy Director of NIPC, directing the programme at the workshop.



COO, Suraj B. Yakubu of NIPC responding to the questions posed at him during the workshop.



Engineer Bolaji, NIPC Consultant and a participant at the workshop.



Group photograph of the participants with the NIPC officials.



A representative of Arewa-Textile Limited, Kaduna, Mr. Oshinubi asking question at the workshop.

Capital City Classified

CORRIGENDUM

The recent announcement on pre-qualification invitation to tender for Revenue Mobilization Commission (RMAFC) Headquarters Building Phase II and that of construction of completion of work on Block of Flats at Garki, the submission of tender is six (6) weeks and three (3) weeks respectively instead of the reverse. Readers should note, however, that this mistake originated from the advertiser - Advert Manager.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known as MISS ANTHONIA INIBOKUN EBARE now wish to be known and addressed as MRS ANTHONIA INIBOKUN NJOKU.
All former documents remain valid. Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria, UMTN to note.

TOSHIBA **olivetti**

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OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

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- v. Secretaries, Local Government Councils;
- vi. Chairmen, Local Government Service Commissions;
- vii. Permanent Secretaries/Secertaries, Local Government Service Commissions; and
- viii. Directors of training, local government service commissions.

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TIME: 9:00am prompt.

Accreditation: Starts Monday 17th December, 2001 same venue from 8:00am.

For further information contact:

The Seminar Consltant

Dr. A. E. Obot

Tel:/Fax: 09-4130878

08033116444



SPORTS



Aku queries NFA

By Patrick Andrew

The Sports Minister, Ishaya Mark Aku, has wielded into the contentious decision to award Athletico FC of Lagos the maximum points 10 months after a local derby with Stores FC.

The minister queried the NFA on the matter and directed that a fresh investigation be carried out to address the alleged immoral decision.

Aku was apparently reacting to a sternly written petition

consigned to the Sports Ministry by the Akwa Ibom State government sequelled the controversial decision that eased off Akwa United from the list of clubs promoted to the proleague division two.

Akwa United had placed second behind Union Bank at the end of the amateur division one matches. But almost two months after the season ended and 10 months after the Stores and Athletico match was played, the latter protested at the emergency delegates convention of the NFA in Kaduna and was awarded the maximum points.

The award catapulted Athletico to the top thus edging out Akwa United, which had been second.

The Akwa Ibom State government questioned the morality of the decision, especially after the proleague final arbiter, the Disciplinary and Organising Committee

had thrown out the protests for lack of merit.

Besides, the petition wondered why the convention acceded to arm twisting tactics employed by the Lagos State FA, noting that even the mandatory N50,000 protest fee was not paid as stipulated until few hours before the decision was taken.

The Akwa Ibom government cried foul over the politisation of football, not-

ing that the trend represents an ugly precedence, which would be detrimental to the country at large.

Before this latest controversy, the NFA had been accused of manipulating points unduly to Crown FC which is owned by a Baptist Pastor with the Presidency. But Ogbino Babes protested and the immorality was unearthed and the misdeeds corrected, leading to Igbino's rightful promotion.

Though the Organising and Disciplinary Committee met yesterday it was not clear whether the minister's petition was deliberated upon, even as *Trustsports* learnt that the NFA may have resolved to delay response to the query to enable the league kick-off on Saturday.

Proleague fixtures

Div. I week I

Berger	-	Rangers
El-Kanemi	-	Insurance
Gombe Utd	-	Yobe Stars
Plateau Utd	-	Yobe Stars
Golden Stars	-	Sunshine
Nationale	-	Kano Pillars
Gabros	-	Lobi Stars
Sharks	-	Jasper Utd

Div. IIA

Tornadoes	-	Wambai
Zamfara Utd	-	Bida Lions
Kwara Utd	-	Ranch Bees
NEPA	-	Mighty Jet
BCC Lions	-	Black Stars
J. C. Raiders	-	Kogi Utd
Adamawa Utd	-	Katsina Utd

Div. IIB

Ogbino Babes	-	Ebonyi Angles
Union Bank	-	Kwara Stars
3SC	-	Air Safety
NITEL	-	Okomu Oil
Udoji Utd	-	Athletico
Delta Utd	-	Dolphin
Bayelsa Utd	-	Bendel Utd



Aku, Sports Minister



Oneya, NFA boss

Sampras gets wild card for Australian Hardcourt

Pete Sampras has accepted a wild card entry for the Australian Mens Hardcourt Championship, which starts in Adelaide on New Year's Eve, tournament organisers said yesterday.

The former world number one will be looking to win his first tournament since 2000 and ends poor run of form which has seen him top to 10th in the world, his lowest ranking since 1989.

Sampras joins Britain's world number nine, Tim Henman, Chile's former world number one, Marcelo Rios,

German Nicolas Kiefer, Sweden's Tomas Engvist and Australia's Mark Philippoussis a big name entrants for the event.

World number one, Lleyton Hewitt, will miss the event after playing in it every year since he won it in 1998.

Tournament director, Colin Stubs, attributes Sampras' decision to play in the event to his recently appointed coach, Tom Gullikson, Australian Associated Press reported.

"Gullikson's a bit of a taskmaster and he's probably said to him listen Pete, you always



Henman come down to Australia a little bit underdone," Stubs was quoted as saying.

"He hasn't been all that successful in the Australian Open over the last few year."

Sampras joined forces with Gullikson, a former US Davis Cup captain, last week after parting with his coach of seven years Paul Annacone who he dismissed last month.

Vietnam offers Frenchman U-23 coaching job

Frenchman Rene Le Lamer has been offered the job of coaching Vietnam's Under-23 team, the nation's football federation said yesterday.

Pham Ngoc Vien, General Secretary of the federation, told *Reuters* it was still awaiting Le Lamer's response to the offer and expected an answer by the end of the month.

Le Lamer would take charge of the squad's preparation for the 2003 South East Asian Games, which Vietnam will host.

Vietnam's official media said Le Lamer once played with various French clubs, including Nantes, and was currently coaching French amateur side Etelloise.

It said he was recommended by France's national technical director, Aime Jacquet.

Vietnam remains without a coach for its senior national team after Brazilian, Dido Silva, the country's fifth foreign coach in as many years, was fired in September.

Dido's contract was terminated after the failure of Under-23 squad, for which he was also responsible, to win a medal at the Southeast Asian Games in Malaysia.

Another official of the federation told *Reuters* that since the national team had

little in the way of competition next year, the post might be left to a local coach.

He said a final decision would be made in March or April.

Proleague kicks off this weekend

The 2001/2002 proleague season kicks-off this weekend in over 20 centres across the federation.

The commencement of the season which had suffered previous postponements due to lack of sponsors would eventually materialise despite failure to secure any sponsors.

However, the Nigeria Football Association (NFA) has been negotiating with a Milan, Italy-based sports outfit which had indicated interest to bankroll some aspects of the league.

The Milan firm had initially adduced the sum of \$350,000 as its sponsorship covering only the kitting of all proleague teams, thus leaving all other aspects for other sponsors.

But the NFA delegate convention in Maiduguri turned down the offer on the ground that the amount proffered was paltry. It went further to suggest a minimum of sum of \$500,000.

Pamodzi - the marketing agent of the Glass House took

up the matter with the firm L'Sporto which response was still being expected barely 48 hours before the proleague season comes alive.

The NFA had following Pepsi's withdrawal of its sponsorship of the league insisted on a consortium of 10 sponsors with a major sponsor leading the pack.

Though *L'Sporto* responded no other known corporate organisation has yet taken up NFA's offer to sponsor the nascent Nigeria proleague.

Acting NFA scribe, Mr. Patrick Okpomo, had during the emergency delegate convention in Kaduna, last month, dropped the hint that an unnamed British firm was interested in bankrolling the league. But nothing has been heard from the unnamed firm.

HOD proleague, Salihu Abubakar, disclosed yesterday that negotiations with various corporate organisations were on even as he declined to state in specific terms which corporate organisations have shown interest.

"The season would definitely begin this Saturday. But we are starting without any major sponsor. We are still even negotiating with *L'Sporto* which wants to sponsor only the kitting of the teams," he said, declining any further comment on the would-be sponsors.

The season would begin with Yobe Stars, which failed to nib promotion at the end of the formal season, plying

their trade in the elite clubs courtesy of a play-off organised to raise the numbers of teams to the maximum of 18 as allegedly demanded by *L'Sporto*.

Plateau United, Jasper United and Jigawa Golden Stars had been successful in the play-off while Katsina United and Bendel United failed to take advantage of the "dash" given to them.

Interestingly, Plateau United which had been at the centre of controversy following an alleged ministerial feat for them to be retained in the elite class survived the scourge of the play-off along with Jasper and Golden Stars.

But the NFA would be hard put cleansing the stench of manipulation and sports immorality levelled against it for bringing in Athletico of Lagos from the back door at the expense of Akwa United which had legitimately garnered the maximum points for promotion to the proleague division two action.

Abubakar though offered no explanation since the decision to upturn the formal end-of-season standing was out of his purview.

The emergency convention in Kaduna had altered the earlier decision of the Organising and Disciplinary Committee which had dismissed the Athletico-Stores case, for want of merit.

The new season would be drastically different from the past according to Salihu because clubs were forced to purchase insurance cover far all players.

Bewarang eyes league shield FA Cup

Bitrus Bewarang, the technical adviser of Wikki Tourists FC of Bauchi, said he hopes to either lift the professional league division one trophy or the FA Coca Cola Challenge Cup next season.

Bewarang told a post-match conference on Saturday in Bauchi shortly after his club's 2-0 victory over Black Stars FC of Gombe in a friendly match that the club hopes to present either cups to Governor Ahmadu Adamu Mu'azu in appreciation of his tremendous support.

He said that the management of the club has recruited new and vibrant players for the task ahead, adding

"from all indications, the club will lift the trophies."

Bewarang said he was satisfied with the outcome of the friendly match against the Gombe side, adding that the technical crew would work on the lapses noticed in the team before the league.

The match played at the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa Stadium, Bauchi, was watched by hundred of spectators who defied the Ramadan fasting to support their team.

New recruit, Daniel Moses, scored the opening goal in the 13th minute of play, while Kayode Segun increased the tally in the 40th minute of play.



Juventus' Edgard Davids of The Netherlands, right, struggles for the ball against A.C. Milan's Gennaro Gattuso during an Italian first division soccer match at the San Siro stadium in Milan, Italy on Sunday. Davids along with other Orange Roys will trade tackles with the Super next year in Port Harcourt.

SPORTS

Magee takes 'World' title

It took Brian Magee less than two minutes to win the International Boxing Organisation (IBO) Super-middleweight title in Liverpool on Monday.

The 26-year-old Belfast man gambled by going for a 'world' title in only his 14th professional fight and it paid off against experienced Argentinian Ramon Britez.

Magee had his opponent down three times before referee Paul Connor counted the champion out.

The IBO is not a recognised world sanctioning body in Britain.

"I was ready for a hard 12-round battle, but once my first punch landed I knew I had the beating of this guy," said Magee.

"Once I saw the opportunity to finish him off early I just kept up the pressure and it paid off.

"This was a big step-up in class for me, but I've come through it in great style and now I'm confident I can go all the way," he added.

Magee can now enjoy a

happy Christmas and look forward to lucrative bouts in the New Year.

He is under the management of Barry Hearn's Matchroom stable and the well known promoter is targeting Magee for the big time.

Matchroom spokesman John Wischhusen said: "Britez came here having stopped Adrian Dodson at Wembley a few months ago and in a lot of people's eyes was the favourite.

"For Brian to stop him in the first round was an excellent result. I think Brian had an aggressive strategy and it really did pay off big time.

"It's all come very early on in his career but there's no reason why he can't build on that win and go from strength to strength.

"We'll sit down with him and plan out a strategy for 2002 - and it could be a very exciting year for him.

"One of the reasons he came with Barry Hearn was to become more busy and I'm sure Barry will keep to his word," he said.



Ghanaian striker, Tony Yeboah, has quit his German club Hamburg to take up a new contract in Qatar.

Samaranch returns to sports administration

Juan Antonio Samaranch, who fell ill shortly after giving up the presidency of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in July, has returned to sport's corridors of power.

The 81-year-old attended a dinner of the IOC's executive board on Monday night ahead of Tuesday's start of a three-day meeting of the organisation's ruling "cabinet".

The Spaniard, who held world sport's most prestigious job for 21 years before Belgian, Jacques Rogge, was elected in Moscow in July, was taken to hospital with breathing problems caused by his exhausting schedule in the Russian capital.

Samaranch has received regular hospital treatment in his native Barcelona. He looked healthy when he attended the dinner at a central Lausanne hotel.

The veteran is now the IOC's life president and will continue as head of the foundation that looks after the Olympic Museum on the banks of Lake Geneva.

The three-day IOC meeting is expected to be dominated by preparations for February's Salt Lake City Winter Games.

Security has become a key issue after the September 11 attacks on the United States and the Games, which open on February 8, will be the most heavily-guarded Olympics in history.

Olympic sources said the board would be also be discussing a report on preparations for the 2004 Summer Games in Athens.

Organising Committee Chief, Giannis Angelopoulos, met IOC executive board members on Monday evening.

Last year the IOC flashed a yellow card at Athens and said the Games could be in danger if the country did not improve its organisation. Olympic sources said the Greeks were still under serious pressure to keep up to schedule.

The board was also due to discuss internal disputes in the triathlon federation.

The sport made a spectacular debut at last year's Sydney Games and the IOC

is keen to make sure that administration problems do not obstruct its Olympic future.

Boca Juniors accounts frozen over Caniggia debt

Boca Juniors owe Ranges striker, Claudio Caniggia \$3.25 million and an Argentine judge has ordered a freeze on their bank accounts and transfer deals until they pay up.

The South American champions, World Club Cup winners last year, plan to appeal after being shocked to lose the case against Caniggia, who played for Boca in the late 1990s alongside, Diego Maradona.

"Of course this complicates our lives," an unnamed Boca director told Argentine newspapers on Tuesday.

"Our accounts are blocked and...now let's hear from the brains who said we'd

win the case walking. Some heads will roll for sure."

Boca made a deal with Caniggia to pay him match by match until June 1999. Caniggia took the club to court when coach, Carlos Bianchi, who took charge in 1998, decided the striker was not in his plans.

Caniggia, who played for Argentina in the 1990 and 1994 World Cups, then sought to further his career abroad, initially returning to Italy's Atalanta.

He was signed by Scottish Premier League Dundee, whose manager is Italian, Ivano Bonetti, in October 2000 and moved on to Rangers in June.

Desailly denies reports on Manchester United move

Chelsea captain, Marcel Desailly, has denied English newspaper reports that he is set for a three million pound (\$4.30 million) move to Manchester United.

The Sun reported on Tuesday that Sir Alex Ferguson wanted the French international to solve his de-

fensive problems after the English champions conceded 27 goals in 15 games.

Desailly, who has missed the last six games due to an Achilles injury, said on his personal website: "I don't know where these noise are coming from, but one thing I am sure of is that it is a classic case of false rumour.

"I wish people would leave me in peace on the subject. I will not speak about it."

Desailly, part of France's World Cup-winning side, added: "My sole concern today is to return peacefully to the Chelsea squad. I am on the point of getting back to 100 per cent and, God willing, I will be able to train with my Chelsea team-mates next week.

"Sadly I won't be playing against Liverpool but I hope my mates will do what's necessary to win."

Ferguson's team have struggled since the controversial sale of Dutch international, Jaap Stam, to Lazio at the beginning of the season.

Ferguson is due to stand down as manager at the end of the season.

Ventura named coach of Udinese

Giampietro Ventura has been named as the new coach of Serie A Udinese.

The former Sampdoria, Lecce and Venezia coach has signed a two-year contract and will be presented to the press on Tuesday evening.

"We can confirm that Mr. Ventura has joined the club and look forward to a successful reign under his command," Udinese spokesman, Guglielmo Querini, told Reuters on Tuesday.

Ventura replaces Roy Hodgson, who left the club on Monday.

Udinese are currently night in Serie A and face Parma in the Italian Cup on Tuesday evening.



Tiger Woods continues to top golf world rankings.

Blackburn humiliates Arsenal

Blackburn Rovers have romped into the Worthington Cup semi-finals after crushing a weakened Arsenal side 4-0 on Tuesday night.

The game was over as contest after 21 minutes after Blackburn raced into a three-goal lead thanks to brace from Matt Jansen and one from Mark Hughes.

Jansen completed his hat-trick midway through the second half.

It was a result that brought Arsenal back down to earth after they had secured manager Arsene Wenger's services until 2005 and been given the provisional go-ahead for a new stadium.

Wenger had included just two players from the team that had beaten Aston Villa 3-2 on Sunday - and it showed. Individual errors contributed to three of Blackburn's goals.

On 11 minutes, the first error saw Tugay dispossess the dithering Junichi Inamoto, allowing the Turk to send Jansen clear with a pass inside Matthew Upson.

Jansen checked back inside Upson before curling his shot into the net.

Four minutes later, the Arsenal goalkeeper Stuart Taylor was unable to hold a Keith Gillespie cross.

Taylor redeemed his error by blocking Damien Duff's shot, only for the ball to end up at Tugay's feet.

Although his shot was going wide, Jansen deftly diverted the Turk's mishit effort into the net.

Arsenal were soon undone again by some more abject defending.

A poor defensive header by Giovanni van Bronckhorst landed at David Dunn's feet.

And though Martin Keown managed to block Dunn's shot, Hughes ended

up in possession and calmly finished from 12 yards to score his first goal in 30 games.

Just past the half-hour, Duff nearly made it four, but his left-foot shot hit the post.

During the game's opening exchanges there was no sign that Blackburn would be so dominant.

Inamoto had a shot that flashed past the post and Brad Freidel had to be out quickly to deny Sylvain Wiltord.

Arsenal started the second half equally brightly. Within two minutes of the restart, Jermaine Pennant had a good chance to reduce the deficit, but he dragged his shot wide.

But the night belonged to Blackburn and even more so to Jansen, who on 68 minutes secured his hat-trick after another sweeping Blackburn move.

The former Crystal Palace striker was sent clear by Duff, giving Jansen plenty of space and time to calmly strike the ball into the corner of the Arsenal net.

If Jansen's goals caught the eye throughout the evening, so too did Tugay's exquisite midfield play as well as Gillespie's inspired performance on the right wing.



Kanu, featured in the match.

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EDITORIAL

Rimi VS FRCN

An unnecessary and disturbing controversy is brewing between the authorities of the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) and the former Governor of Kano State, Alhaji Mohammed Abubakar Rimi over the unilateral cancellation of a contract which was signed, sealed and delivered. According to reports, Alhaji Rimi had entered into a contract with FRCN Kaduna worth over N12 million to feature him in the popular Hausa language phone-in programme *Hannu da Yawa* over a one-year period. Only one programme was aired before the contract was suddenly terminated by the Director-General of the Corporation, Mr. Eddie Iroh and even the Executive Director of the FRCN Kaduna station queried.

In a letter to Alhaji Rimi, the FRCN D-G justified his termination of the contract because the Kaduna National Station neither consulted him nor his legal department before the contract was entered into. Secondly, according to him, the contract had violated Section 7.8.2 of the Broadcast Code of the NBC which regulates political broadcasting and advertising. The third reason advanced for terminating this contract was that the timing of the broadcast of 27th October, 2001 breached 'protocol' and "the ethics of the profession that we should not have scheduled your appearance the same day and time when the President of the Federal Republic was making an appearance".

We at the *Daily Trust* find the termination of the contract and the reasons advanced as ridiculous, untenable and out of tune with civilised and democratic norms and practices. In the first instance, why would the contract be terminated because of the internal communication problem of the FRCN? As far as we know, FRCN Kaduna is a legal entity that can enter into any contract with anybody and at any amount. But if the Corporation's internal rules demand that the Headquarters must be notified for any contract exceeding certain amount, what has Alhaji Mohammed Abubakar Rimi got to do with that? Also if it is true that the contract violated some sections of the NBC Code, why would it be terminated and the money paid refunded instead of simply inviting Rimi to review the contract?

We also find the suggestion that the appearance of a citizen in a different channel and frequency with the President was a violation of any 'professional ethics' laughable. The contract entered with FRCN Kaduna was with a Hausa service of the Station, which operates differently from the English Service, which transmits all English programmes including the appearance of the President who is not known to conduct national broadcast in any other language but the national language.

This action by the FRCN authorities has thus raised some fundamental questions regarding the conduct of public officials, respect for rule of law and the management of public airwaves. As the culture of democracy is gradually being entrenched in the polity, the military hangover of impunity must be dispensed with. The era of arbitrariness where public officials either because of sycophancy to please the powers that be or arrogance run public institutions autocratically must be over. Public institutions including the FRCN must therefore be conducted with decorum, fairness and according to known civilised rules and procedures.

This brings us to the issue of management of the airwaves that are held in trust by the government on behalf of the people especially as it relates to political advertisement and campaigns. In discharging this enormous responsibility, FRCN must not only be fair to all, it must be seen to be doing just that at all times and places. With the termination of this contract, there is no way that insinuations will not be made that this action was ordered by the Federal Government considering the fact that so far it is only Alhaji Rimi who has declared his intentions to contest the presidency against President Obasanjo. The denial of Eddie Iroh notwithstanding. And even if the FRCN were not being manipulated, this unilateral action is sending dangerous signals as the campaigns for the 2003 general elections gather momentum. Thus, in order to have a level playing field, FRCN should publish all the rules and regulations guiding political campaigns and advertisements for everybody to know including the management of their Kaduna Station. This is the only way the credibility and impartiality of the Corporation will be maintained. Meanwhile, we call on the Director-General of FRCN to publicly apologise to Alhaji Rimi and re-validate the contract which is a good revenue for the Kaduna Station in this era of commercialisation and privatisation which is the soul of the Federal Government's economic policies.

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THURSDAY COLUMN

Why Nigerian polytechnics are backward

By I. M. Bugaje

The new millennium has started and though the Y2K anxiety and the millennium bug scare are over, the challenges of this new age are getting more glaring by the day. The information age and globalisation are key factors in this new world order. If Nigeria fails to rise and meet up to these challenges, we may eventually be cut off from development and may continue to lag behind other nations of the world. To avoid this, we must now address these realities and the polytechnic sector has an important role in leading the nation in this endeavour.

Technological development and industrialisation have continued to become a mirage in Nigeria due to the wrongful place accorded polytechnic education - which because of its practicality is supposed to be the backbone and foundation of any industrialisation programme. Products of polytechnics are still discriminated against vis-a-vis graduates in new employment and in the pursuit of higher degrees.

The polytechnic sector is indeed at a crossroads. According to this sector its rightful place and providing it with the necessary resources would surely determine the place of Nigeria in the high tech world of the new millennium. Surely, the polytechnic sector is recognised world wide as the bedrock of industrial and technological development. Universities are expected to carry out basic researches and polytechnics apply these to develop machines and equipment to enhance the standard of living of our people. The role played by the Cranfield Institute of Technology in the UK especially during the Second World War and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the USA are typical examples. In those countries, these polytechnics were and are still accorded their due position. Nigeria is yet to accord a fraction of this status to its polytechnics, not even the old generation polytechnics such as Kaduna Polytechnic and Yaba College of Technology.

The information revolution and Nigerian polytechnics
Today, Polytechnic education has changed very significantly the world over, except probably in Nigeria where we are still using the tools and curricula developed since colonial days. These global changes are mainly due to the information revolution which affects not only communications but the learning processes. Computers are increasingly taking prominent roles in the educational sectors. We are now in an age of 'smart schools', schools without teachers but only facilitators, the computer being the centrepiece of the learning process.

Taking engineering as an example, we are now in an age where the bulky drawing boards are no longer in use, and instead CAD suites are the order of the day. Computer Aided Design and Computer Aided Manufacture (CAD/CAM) are important components in mechanical engineering training. Heat transfer, thermodynamics, fluid mechanics, material and energy balances, etc are now courses taught not just from textbooks, but reference must be made to relevant software such as Fluent, Hysys, Aspen, Computational Fluid Dynamics (CFD) software, etc. Data collection in the laboratories and analysis of the data collected are all computerised in most other educational institutions the world over. The data files are easily imported into spreadsheets for analysis and graphical presentations. This not only provides more accurate data, but minimises manipulations by students.

When will Nigeria pick up and join others in the race, no one knows. The only encouraging move was the recent UNESCO sponsored initiative on Technical and Vocational Education (TVE), which the NBTE is coordinating. However, the initiative aims mainly at achieving computer literacy for graduating engineers and technologists but not real production of *Knowledge Professionals*.

Development of indigenous technology
Nigerian polytechnics have a very critical role to play in the development of indigenous technology in the country. We are aware of the difficulties in doing this, such as the dwindling finances and almost total absence of research grants to polytechnics, infrastructural problems in the country, etc. In spite of these difficulties, we need to work harder. Let's for example, select a few key sectors of the nation's economy and make our impact felt in these areas. Some typical examples are highlighted:

Agro-allied industries:

There is need to develop viable small-scale industries to process our vast agro-allied products. Nigeria is indeed blessed with so much potentials in agricultural products and we are not making the best out of this blessing. We import "Five Alive" from Europe while our oranges rot away. Other vegetables such as tomatoes, mangoes, pineapples, etc are left to waste annually and our polytechnics have failed to develop simple processing and preservation technology.

Even where the development of prototype equipment are capital intensive, why can't our polytechnic consultancy companies join hands with the private sector in the establishment of such catalytic pilot plants. This is the only way we can convince government and other private sector entrepreneurs to come in and invest in Research and Development. Nigeria should surely adopt the small-

scale industry model as the most viable model of industrialisation as found in Japan, Taiwan and several other Asian countries.

Solid minerals processing industries

The lucrative potentials of the solid mineral sector of the economy have been well expounded in the past several years. The Federal Government of Nigeria has created a full-fledged Ministry of Solid Minerals Development. Some states, such as Nasarawa, have even adopted their state slogans as "home of solid minerals". It also seems that the more some people talk of "resource control", the more others talk of the solid minerals potentials. Yet Nigeria has not developed enough technological capacity to harness its solid minerals sector. Rather the entire sector is left at the mercy of the so-called 'illegal miners' who exploit these resources for the benefit of Asian (mainly Indian and Lebanese) controlled cartels with little benefits to the governments or communities. Further to this, the solid minerals are exported from Nigeria in a very raw state without any significant value addition. Value addition would surely ensure better prices for our products and more local employment for Nigerians. By value addition, I mean using simple technology to beneficiate, purify and improve the quality of the minerals to achieve higher grades. The technology needed to add value to these minerals is simple, mostly physical processes and in a few cases chemical processes are involved. Nigerian polytechnics, especially their schools of engineering, would have a very important role to play in addressing this challenge.

There could be other areas where polytechnics could really make significant impact in Nigeria's industrialisation drive. These include energy, transport, communications, educational materials, etc. The sky is really our only limit.

Financing the polytechnic educational sector

A major area of challenge to the polytechnic sector is in the area of finance. The situation seems to be getting worse by the day. Polytechnics and other sectors of education are now facing uncertain and erratic financing from government. This does not augur well for Nigeria's technological growth. It is not just capital grants that are being withheld, but even the unusual [personnel cost] are being slashed and delayed. Yet we are being asked to present 2002 budget proposals when 70 percent of 2001 capital budget is yet to be released one month to the end of the year. Does this make any sense?

It must be pointed out that Polytechnic education is capital intensive, more capital intensive than that of a university or college of education. Polytechnics require expensive equipment for their laboratories and workshops due to the practical nature of the training. Yet government continues to allocate less to the polytechnic sector. Government agencies such as the Educational Tax Fund (ETF) allocate less to polytechnics compared to universities. It costs at least 10 times to train an HND electrical engineering graduate than a B.Sc. economics university graduate. Lumping polytechnics with colleges of education does not help matters. Polytechnic products stand at par with university graduates (in fact some employers prefer polytechnic graduates), while college of education graduates usually serve as feedstock to universities. Each sector should therefore be properly recognised and allowed to grow in its own way and contribute its quota to the socio-economic transformation of the nation.

Several polytechnics had to resort to other legitimate means to generate more revenue to run the institutions. These included satellite/part-time programmes. This initiative was also helping the nation's economy by training managers and other manpower needs of the economy, people who would otherwise have no other chance to pursue education.

Surely some institutions especially the universities abused this by providing substandard services. Government should have issued necessary guidelines and subjected these programmes to accreditation. Yet an order was given for all satellite campuses to close down. It seems a game of monopoly is going on.

Government must address its priorities. The funding policy of polytechnics and other sectors of education must be revised. There is no greater investment any nation can make more than the education of its citizens. This is the only sure way to lift Nigeria from its present state of underdevelopment to one of technological takeoff and industrialisation. Nigerians also need to have a 'vision', a 'dream' towards which all hands must be on deck for its full realisation. Such a vision, once adopted, should be pursued religiously by all governments that may be in power. In line with tills, Nigeria's earlier Vision 2010, drawn along the direction of Malaysia's Vision 2020 by a previous military government, needs to be revived and updated.

Conclusion

The polytechnic sector in Nigeria is at a crossroads. It is either made or marred. The challenges of the new millennium require us to upgrade our curriculum with the latest advances in information and communication technologies. Polytechnics must also take a more prominent role in the development of indigenous technology in the country. The future looks bright for the recent poor and erratic funding of polytechnics that must be addressed so that polytechnics could have a commission of their own and get quarterly funding directly from the Federation Account.

This is a paper presented by Dr. I. M. Bugaje of the Federal Polytechnic, Nasarawa at a national seminar on "The Challenges Facing Nigerian Polytechnics in the New Millennium" organised by the Federal Polytechnic, Mubi.