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Abuja's First Daily Newspaper

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VOL. 1 NO. 4

THURSDAY, JANUARY 18, 2001


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Gana alleges plot to destabilize FG
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Sardauna's Assassination:
Like Lamb to the slaughter
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Major-General Joseph Kabila, Laurent Kabila's son and successor.

Congo coup attempt: Kabila's son takes over

Tadaferua Ujorha, with Agency Report

Officials in Kinshasa continued to deny widespread reports of President Laurent Kabila's death but said his son, Joseph, had taken charge of the government and the armed forces.

Joseph was promoted Major-General and Chief of the Army by his father only last week. Foreign governments, including former colonial power, Belgium and Kabila's close ally, Zimbabwe, said he had died after being shot by one of his own soldiers on Tuesday.

Congolese Information, Minister Dominique Sakombi, told state radio that Kabila had been flown abroad for medical treatment.

"The government of public salvation met in a special session... and decided to entrust the running of the government and military command to Major-General Joseph Kabila."

"The government wishes the President a speedy recovery and a rapid return amongst us," Sakombi said, adding that the government was reopening borders and airports that were shut on Tuesday and relaxing an overnight curfew from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m.

The capital Kinshasa was quiet on Wednesday, being a holiday in remembrance of the abduction and murder of independence Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba.

The roads were mostly deserted except for patrolling army vehicles. The soldiers inside had little to do, passing small groups discussing Kabila's fate and the latest news from foreign radio stations, the main source of information since Tuesday.

"We may not like him very much but ending this way is saddening," said Louis Kalonji, a man standing with one such group in the Lingala district.

Information Minister Sakombi told Radio France International that

Pfizer Scandal: US agency disowns drug

By Sani Babadoko, with Agency Reports

The test of Trovan Pfizer drug that killed 11 children in Kano and deformed 200 has continued to generate controversy world wide with the United States agency responsible for drug control disowning the drug.

The agency, United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has absolved itself saying that it has refused approval for use of the drug, Trovan, on children in the US because it was not satisfied with the data collected from the controversial test in Kano.

Spokesman for the FDA, Mr. Jason Brodsky explained in New York yesterday that the data collected from Kano was inadequate. He said the authority refused to allow the use of the drug, Trovafloxacin (Trovan) by Pfizer in children but only al-

lowed it on adult meningitis patients requiring long term care.

He said the refusal to allow its use on children was based on the fact that the clinical study in Kano was inadequate for the US pediatric population.

The FDA explained that it had "concerns about the quality of the data, including amount of follow-up, obtained on patients from the studies in Nigeria" on the basis of which the Pfizer applied to market the drug in the US.

"This study was deemed inadequate for US pediatric population because epidemic meningococcal meningitis does not occur in the US", the FDA spokesman told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in New York yesterday.

The FDA said studies showed that juvenile animals exposed to

Cont. on Page 2

FG drops PAP, creates PEP

By Suleiman Mohammed

The federal government dropped the Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) it created to reduce poverty in the nation. In its place it has created Poverty Eradication Programme with a take off grant of N25.4.

The defunct PAP has consumed N10 billion before it was scrapped yesterday.

The new project would be operated under four

programmes namely Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RIDS), Social Welfare Service Scheme (SWSC) and the National Resources Development Scheme (NRDS).

Each sub-programme has been allocated specific grants for its operation. The YES will have N10 billion, RIDS, SWSC and NRDS, N5 billion each.

The sum of N410.7 million will be used for office

facilities and logistics in all the states and local government areas.

Information and National Orientation Minister, Prof. Jerry Gana told State House correspondents after the weekly Federal Executive Council meeting (FEC) yesterday that PEP will be supervised by Poverty Eradication Council (PEC) while all the activities will be coordinated by Poverty Coordination Committee (PCC).

Members of the supervisory PEC include President Olusegun Obasanjo as Chairman with Vice-President Atiku Abubakar as Vice-Chairman and Secretary to the Government of the Federal Government, Chief Ufor Ekeke as Secretary.

Other members of the council include the Minister of Agriculture, Water Resources, Education, Industry, Power and Steel, Labour and Housing, Envi-

Cont. on Page 2

1,000 workers sacked illegally in Plateau

From Buhari Bello, in Jos

Indications have emerged that about 1,000 of the 5,000 workers retrenched recently from the Plateau state civil service may have been sacked illegally by permanent secretaries in some ministries.

Daily Trust gathered that the retrenchment exercise has led to tension among civil servants in the state

who are pointing accusing fingers at some senior civil servants for perpetrating the illegal retrenchment.

It was alleged that some of the permanent secretaries based the exercise on personal vendetta by including the names of those that were not produced in the original list submitted from the SSG's office and approved by state's exco.

Cont. on Page 2

NEWS

Pfizer Scandal *Cont. from pg 1*

Floroquinolones, the group to which Troval belongs, have been shown to develop arthropathy, a disease of the joints.

"Until Pfizer conducts adequate studies assessing the musculoskeletal safety in pediatric populations, especially younger children, it should carry warnings of its adverse effects on juvenile-on its product labeling.

Pfizer in 1996 carried out the trial test of Trovafloxacin on children afflicted with meningitis epidemic in Kano.

Since a recent investigation into the ethical propriety of the test was reported in the Washington Post it has triggered a lot of uproar in the media with officials at the Ministry of Health in Kano who were in office then shifting blames.

Expressing concern the quality of Pfizer's data on Travon, the Washington Post report suggested that Pfizer did not take nec-

essary precaution before carrying out the trial of the drug in Kano.

The drug was tried on 200 meningitis stricken children in Kano out of whom

11 died while some of the survivors suffered related complications such as deafness, lameness, blindness, seizures and disorientation.

The Kano state govern-

ment has since set up a committee to investigate the incident, while a father of one victim has asked for a compensation of N2 million.

FG drops PAP *Cont. from pg 1*

ronment, Solid Minerals, Science and Technology as well as the Minister of National Planning Commission and related agencies.

Gana also announced that a National Poverty Coordinating Committee will be established in all the states and local governments for effective maintenance of the programme, adding that "the target is to eradicate absolute poverty but no one can eradicate relative poverty," he said, explaining that the programme would centre on the provision of food security, health, water, housing and education.

The Minister also announced the federal government approval of addi-

tional N1.196 billion from the ecological fund for flood control and soil erosion, covering 37 projects submitted by the ministry of special duties.

Delta steel company at Aladja, will also be reactivated with 140 million US dollars. The government has gone into partnership agreement with Oskar Steel company and Vox Espire Limited in a contribution ratio of \$40m, \$55m and \$22.5m while the sum of \$22.5m will come from the federal government equity share.

According to the Minister, the contract, which is aimed at reactivating the company and raising its capacity to 700,000 tonnes per year would be completed in

18 months.

He said, N123 million has been approved for the purchase of seven trucks from ANAMCO for the Nigeria Prisons Service, "for the evacuation of waste materials from the nation prisons."

Congo coup attempt *Cont. from pg 1*

point-blank range by a bodyguard, who was killed by soldiers as he tried to flee.

Belgium and Zimbabwe, Kabila's biggest allies in a war since 1998 against rebels backed by his former friends Rwanda and Uganda, stood by earlier reports that Kabila had been killed.

"President Kabila has died. It was a pure assassination," Zimbabwean Defence Minister Moven

1,000 workers *Cont. from pg 1*

Sources told *Daily Trust* that the act of illegality committed by these government officials has been generating a lot of concern to the state government.

This fraudulent practice, it was also gathered, resulted in heated arguments in the government camp when it was discussed last Monday. A group which claimed that the whole exercise was carried out based on sentiment and bias indicted the permanent secretaries and some heads of parastatals in the state for going beyond their briefs.

According to one of such vic-

tims retired at the Plateau Radio Television Corporation (name withheld) "On Wednesday 10 January, I was reliably told that my name was not among those involved in the retrenchment but on Friday when I came to the office, I was told by one of my friends that I should go and correct my letter of retirement. He was also given his own letter."

However, it was not quite clear if the state government would reverse its decision because of the alleged irregularities, but sources said the state government is not happy with the development.

Some observers are also of the opinion that the state governor, Chief Joshua Dariye should set up a high-powered committee to investigate the truth of the allegation with a view to fishing out all those who perpetrated the act.

However, it is generally believed that the decision of the government to reduce its work force at this time is wrong in view of the fact that labour in the state only settled their problem with the government, over the new minimum wages in December.

Nigeria, Algeria condemn attempted coup in DRC

By Suleiman Mohammed

Nigeria and the Republic of Algeria yesterday jointly condemned the developments in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and called on the international community to help restore peace in that country.

"We further condemn the resort to political assassination as a means of settling disputes or resolving the crisis, most especially by

national stake holders in any country involved in crisis situations," President Obasanjo and his Algerian counterpart, President Abdel-Aziz Bouteflika declared in a joint communiqué at the end of a one-day visit of the Algerian leader to Nigeria, Wednesday.

The communiqué noted with dismay the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo, stressing that the development went contrary

to the affirmation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) summit of Heads of State and governments made in Algiers in July 1999.

They called on the people of the Congo to unite, "at this resolution hour of national crisis, for the sake of peace and security of their beloved country and in the larger interest of African unity, peace and solidarity."

According to them, it

was only under an atmosphere of peace and security that the country's economic development and the improvement in the standard of living of the people of the Congo can be assured.

They further expressed readiness of both countries to continue to work for a peaceful the Congo crisis and expressed the hope that all stakeholders in the country would cooperate in genuine efforts to return that country to normalcy.

poised to check the increasing crime wave in the country, the federal government has set up a special committee headed by the Attorney General and minister of justice, Chief Bola Ige to retrieve small arms and light weapons in circulation.

This followed government adoption of the report submitted by the ministry of defence on the Bamako Declaration on African common position on illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

Information and national orientation minister, Professor Jerry Gana who briefed state house correspondents after the federal executive council meeting (FEC), yesterday said the objective was to cooperate with other African countries in reducing the circulation of light weapons in the country.

He said other members of the committee include the ministry of defence, police affairs, internal affairs and the National Security Adviser (NSA), adding that at the end of the committee's study, a target date would be announced within which members of the public would be asked to surrender all small arms and light weapons in their possession. "At the end of

FG sets up committee to recover small arms

the expiration period, anybody found with these weapons would be prosecuted," he declared, adding that, "out target is to reduce crime in the country"

"The level of insecurity in the nation is such that a very drastic action needed to be taken to support the efforts of the police and other security forces in reducing violent crimes in the country," Professor Gana said and called on Nigerians to cooperate with the government in this direction.

Professor Gana also announced government's ratification and approval of VAT and customs duty exemption irrespective of the 270-megawatt energy power purchase agreement between Enron, NEPA, the ministry of power and steel and the Lagos State government. He said the approval covers a period of 9 years with a hope that it will help in hastening the project towards reducing darkness in Lagos state.



L-R: Dr. (Mrs) Kema Chikwe, Aviation Minister, Mr. R. Audu, Permanent Secretary and Mr. E. Dangasa-Director, DPRS at a press conference... Tuesday. Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje

NEWS

Briefly

Upgrade Jega district

The people of Jega district in Kebbi State have called for the upgrading of their district to a full-fledged emirate council to ensure rapid development in the area. Speaking during a courtesy call at the government house, Birnin Kebbi, Alhaji Muhammadu Jega told Governor Alicro that the agitation was the second of its kind since the creation of the state about nine years ago.

FRSC gives reasons for accidents

The increasing spate of accidents on the highways have been blamed on the failure of some drivers to observe road signs. Sector commander of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) in Calabar, Mr. Egesi Ekekwe stated on the occasion of the 7th ECOWAS road safety campaign week in Calabar that "in spite of safety efforts of the FRSC to inculcate the tenets of several consciousness in our drivers nationwide, statistics show that these have not been heeded."

Sacked Plateau workers to get entitlements

The Plateau State government has assured all civil servants affected by the on-going rationalisation in the service, that they would soon be paid their entitlements. A statement signed by the state commissioner for information, Mr. Amos Azi, stated that already, the ministry of finance had been directed to work out all the entitlements due to them.

Katsina NOA starts campaign

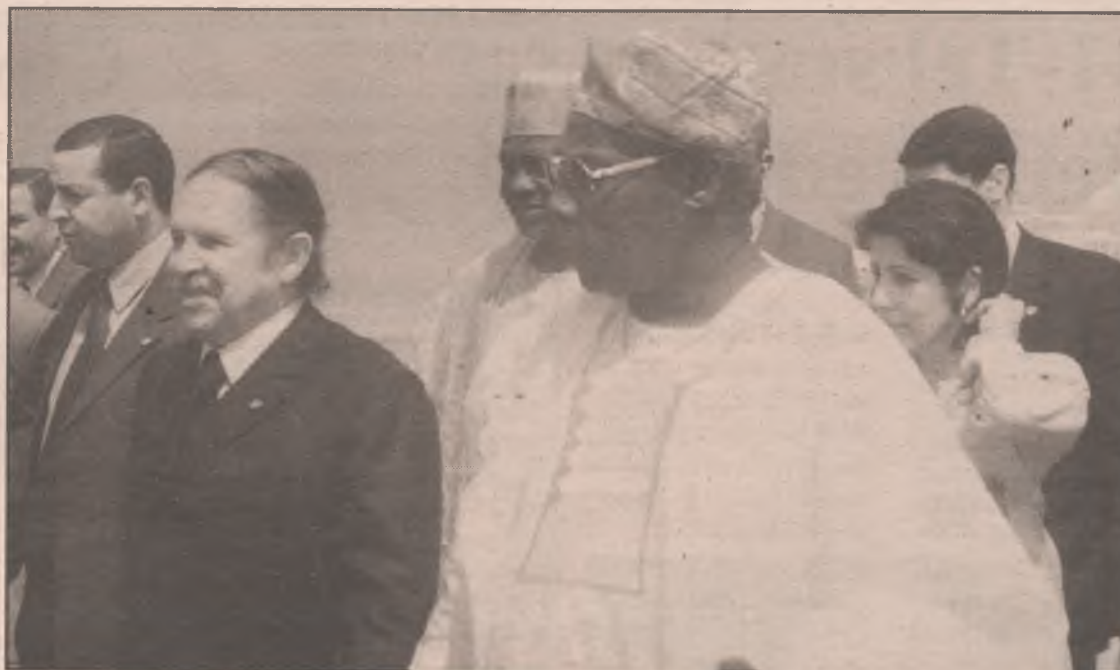
The National Orientation Agency in Katsina State will soon commence a state-wide campaign to sensitise elected representatives on what the electorate expected of them. The state's NOA co-ordinator, Alhaji Lamis Ibrahim told Daily Trust that this became necessary because of the continued erosion of confidence from the public, especially as concern about lack of moral uprightedness which has trailed some elected representatives in the state recently.

Suspended aide recalled

The suspension order placed on the Zamfara State special adviser on political matters Alhaji Gado Shinkafi by Governor Ahmad Sani has been lifted. Alhaji Gado was suspended early this month for alleged laziness, poor performance and disobedience among others.

Gombe State govt. revives TV station

The Gombe State government has spent N7m to revive its television station, which has been off the air for over one year, the special assistant to the governor on information, Alhaji Ibrahim Kawu, has said. Kawu told the NAN in Gombe on Tuesday that the repair was part of the state government's efforts to keep the populace abreast with the administration's policies and programmes.



Stop over visit by Algerian President Abdel-Aziz Bouteflika (third left in suit) and President Obasanjo with officials at Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja yesterday. Pix Kennedy Egbonodje

Save assembly plants from collapse—Shagari

From Dare Oyewole, in Kaduna

Former President Shehu Shagari has called on the federal government to save the automobile industry from imminent collapse.

He said a situation in which imported products were allowed to compete with locally made ones was not the best for the industry.

Speaking at the commissioning of Peugeot Automobile Nigeria Limited (PAN) numerically controlled blanking machine in Kaduna, he indicted successive governments for not giving adequate protection to the automobile industry in the state.

"We established many of these industries before. Where are they today?" he queried, maintaining that there was a lot of potentials in this sector and that all they needed was encouragement from the government.

Alhaji Shagari who recalled that the systematic programme of Nigerianisation of PAN which was planned to provide training for Nigerians in managerial and technical skills as well as the pursuit of backward integration were hampered largely because of inconsistent policies and strategies of successive governments over the years.

The former president however commended the company for what it called its "resilience and

abiding faith" in Nigeria which had contributed immensely to its ability to survive where others have failed and consequently were doomed to diminish to oblivion in Nigeria's industrial growth.

Alhaji Shagari also commended the company for its ability to compete effectively with imports of finished cars which seem to flood the Nigerian market.

"But we must accept that there is a limit to the art of grappling with

industry to save it from total collapse.

Earlier, the company's managing director, Mr. Philippe Beudet disclosed that PAN had in the last two years invested N700m towards improving the quality of its products and enhance capacity utilisation.

This, he said, was directly in line with government's vision to industrialise the country for the benefit of its citizens.

Mr. Beudet appealed to the federal government to re-visit the issue of unrestricted importation of built-up passenger cars in order to assist the motor assemblers create a conducive atmosphere necessary for production of viable venture and at the same time sufficiently attractive to prospective investors.

According to him, all countries that have recorded successful break-through in this economic sub-sector did so by embarking on deliberate and adequate protective policy in favour of the local industries.

Citing the Republic of South Africa and Mainland China as examples he said: "the only way out is enactment of a strong and consistent political will."

Mr. Beudet added that government and its agencies, institutions as well as companies operating in Nigeria must be forced to patronise locally produced vehicles and parts.



Alhaji Shehu Shagari

perpetually unfair competition which allows among other ills, the dumping of used cars and spare parts," he said.

He therefore pleaded with the government and Nigerians to give all the necessary support and encouragement to the automobile

Police Service Commission list ready

From Wisdom Patrick, in Lagos

The list of members of the Police Service Commission has been approved by President Olusegun Obasanjo.

This was revealed to the Daily Trust in Lagos by the Force Public Relation Officer (FPRO), Mr. Haz Iwendi an assistant commissioner of police (ACP).

Iwendi also disclosed that the commission would be made up of seven members including the president himself who is by the virtue of his office, its chairman.

Other members of the

commission include one retired senior police commissioner, one retired senior military officer, a representative of the media, a woman to represent the gender interest among others.

Meanwhile, Lagos State police commissioner, Mr. Mike Okiro has been summoned to appear before the Justice Famakinwa led panel investigating the recent ethnic crisis in the state. Summoned along with the commissioner were the divisional police officer of Shomolu, Ketu, Ojo, Bariga, Apapa, Ajegunle and Orile.

Mr. Okiro is billed to appear

before the panel on January 24, while the DPOs of Shomolu, Ketu, Ojo, Bariga are scheduled to appear before the panel on January 22. Those of Apapa and Ajegunle are to appear in February.

The police commissioner was urged by the panel to prevail on the DPOs who had rebuffed an earlier summon son the new dates.

The panel announced that it would visit the scene of the crisis in Kosofe local government area of the state on January 23 to verify the claims made by petitioners.

Zamfara govt. slashes hajj fares by 25%

From Salisu Zakari Maradun, in Gusau

The Zamfara State government has slashed the amount payable by intending pilgrims in the state by 25 per cent of the amount announced by the federal government.

A statement by the state's commissioner for budget and economic planning, Alhaji Hussaini Abubakar Moriki said intending pilgrims from the state will now pay N157,000.00 as against the over N200,000.00 announced for intending pilgrims from the northern parts of the country by the federal government.

The commissioner who disclosed this to newsmen shortly after the exco meeting also said the gesture would cost the state government the sum of N110 million naira.

According to Hussaini Moriki, the council has also approved the privatisation of some state parastatals among which are the state engineering and construction company (ZSECCO), fertiliser blending plant, Farmers Supply Company and State Transport Authority (ZSTA), in order to make them more vibrant.

The government, according to the commissioner, has at the same time changed the nomenclature of their chief executives from MDs to Gms and will be supervised by the state Investment and Property Company.



Gov. Ahmed Sani

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known and addressed as Miss. Gloria Uchechukwu Ndibe now wish to be known and addressed as Mrs. Gloria Uchechukwu Nwafor.

All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note.

NEWS

NITEL, M-Tel staff to be redeployed-

The outgoing permanent secretary in the office of the Head of Service, Dr. Cajetan Orjioko, yesterday in Abuja said that the federal government had directed the office of the Head of Service to re-deploy the staff of Nitel and M-Tel, who would be affected by the proposed merger.

Speaking while handing over to the new permanent secretary, Public Service Office (PSO), Alhaji Numan Dambatta, Orjioko said that the deployment of staff of merged government agencies was a continuous process.

Ojioko who moves to the ministry of science and technology as permanent secretary asked his successor to continue with the deployment of the former staff of those merged agencies like NALDA, FEAP, NACB and People's Bank of Nigeria (PBN).

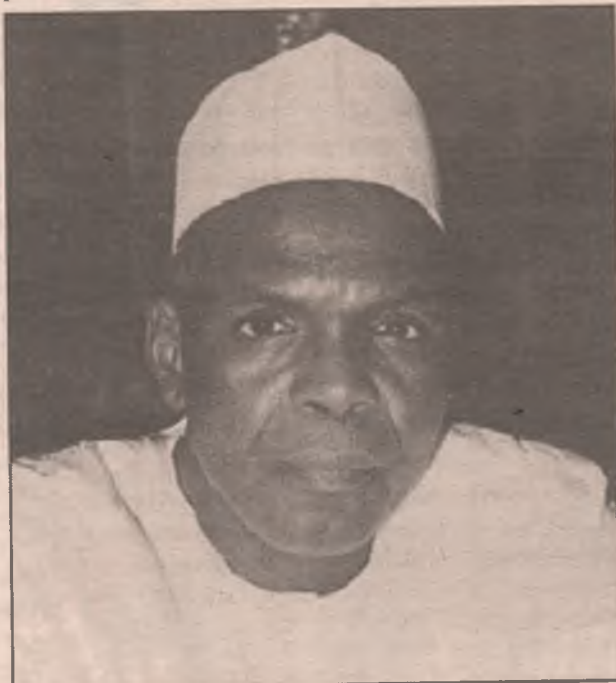
ON the fate of those affected by past retrenchment exercises, Orjioko said that out of the 9,000 applications received from those affected, 2,000 were consid-

ered, while about 800 of them had been reabsorbed.

He advised such officers yet to be re-absorbed not to lose hope as the exercise was a continuous process, adding that promotion of officers on grade level 8 to 13 had been completed and was awaiting the approval of the Head of Ser-

vice.

Also speaking, the new permanent secretary, Nu'uman Dambatta promised to continue with the good work done by the outgoing permanent secretary and called on all staff of the Head of Service to cooperate with him. (NAN)



Alh. Mohd. Arzika, Communication Minister

CRHA approves 2001 budget

From Bassey Ita, in Calabar

The Cross Rivers State 2001 Appropriation Bill has been passed by the State House of Assembly.

Sections of the Bill which were amended reflected additional N800 million for recurrent votes while N1 billion was approved for capital votes.

Overall the budget will

be pegged at about N18 billion as against N15.38 billion submitted by the governor.

Chairman of the finance and appropriation committee of the House, Mr. Mark Obi said the quick passage of the Bill was to assist the governor to implement the budget.

Mr. Obi said the committee will monitor all projects provided for in the

Bill to ensure proper implementation.

It could be recalled that November last year, Gov. Donald Duke presented a budget estimate of N15.38 billion to the house for endorsement.

Meanwhile the House which resumed sitting from Christmas and New Year recess yesterday has gone on another recess for three weeks.

Stop cement dumping

-CCNN chairman urges FG

From Musa Umar Kazaure, in Sokoto

Federal government's policy of importing cheaper cement from South-East Asia has been identified as one of the major bottlenecks to indigenous cement production in Nigeria.

The protem chairman, Cement Company of Northern Nigeria (CCNN), Alhaji Musa Abubakar who made the assertion during the 21st Annual General Meeting of the company in Sokoto, also listed inadequate fuel supply, lack of essential spare parts, lack of working capital and inflation as serious constraints and disruptions

that were experienced by the company during the year under review.

Despite these problems, the company made a pre-tax profit of 12.4 million naira as against the 11.6 million recorded last year, adding that the company gross earnings stood at N702,136,000 as against N689,774,283 the previous year.

Cement production at the end of the year under review dropped to 104,653 tonnes representing a decrease of 5,077 tonnes from last years. The drop, according to the chairman was the result of fuel scarcity, government support for imported cement and continued depreciation of local

currency against foreign currency.

The managing director, Alhaji Ibrahim Gobir, the Sardauna of Gobir stated that a life-line of 20.9 million dollars will be injected into the company within the next 5-years by the core-investor, Scandinavian cement International of Norway, saying "the fresh fund will go along way towards resuscitating the cement company by producing 500,000 tonnes annually."

He called on the federal government to ban the importation of bagged cement into the country which he said is stifling local production of the commodity.

From Akinade Adeniji, in Minna

Bangi, headquarters of Mariga local government area of Niger State is to be connected to the national grid, the state governor, Engineer Abdulkadir Kure has said.

Other villages to benefit from this connection include Shadadi and Koton Koro, all of which are to be carried out this year.

Speaking at the commissioning ceremony of the N64m Tegina electrification project, Governor Kure also disclosed that communities like Pandogari, Maikiyeri, Kuserki and Tunga would also benefit from the government's rural electri-

Gov. Kure assures of rural electrification

fication programme.

Engineer Kure said the state government would collaborate with Mairiga local government council for the purpose of connecting Bobi Community to the national grid.

Other goodies promised the people of the local government include the provision of submersible pumps for boreholes and assured that the Bi-water tower pump would be connected to the national grid.



Gov. Kure

Ulama kicks against USAID

From Musa Umar Kazaure, in Kano

The Kano State chapter of the Nigerian Council of Ulama has said that the activities of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Northern Nigeria is a Jewish conspiracy against Islam.

The vice chairman of the state Council of Ulama, Ustaz Tijjani Tukur Yola who stated this in Kano said the attempt by USAID to discourage early pregnancy among youths in northern Nigeria is a plot to deceive the Muslim Ummah to believe in the imperativeness of the project. He was reacting to a two-day workshop organised by John Hopkins University funded project in the north on Family Planning and sex education.

The Islamic scholar maintained that moral values had been firmly entrenched in the Holy Qur'an which every Muslim was content with. He stressed that America's major preoccupation was to introduce ways and means against the Muslim Ummah with the sole aim of reducing the ever-increasing population of the faithfuls worldwide.

Reacting to the accusations, a senior programme officer of the organisation, Dr. Bola Oyeledun explained that the philosophical thrust of the project was to enlighten the youths on issues affecting their lives.

Dr. Oyeledun debunked critics of the NGO of not having an established and adequate grounds to but-

press their criticisms, pointing out that the John Hopkins project was in line with the provisions of the Holy Qur'an.

Despite the protest by Kano Chapter of the Council of Ulama, the organisers of the two-day sex education conference went ahead with the planned seminar and almost all the stakeholders in the USAID programme from twelve northern states attended the conference.

In a message to the occasion, the Kano state

Speaker of the House of Assembly, Alhaji Ibrahim Gwarmai said such conference would be advantageous to the society.

The programme coordinator, Hajiya Hadiza Baba Yaro said, contrary to insinuations, most of the participants and coordinators are good Muslims and they would do everything to promote the Islamic religion.

The Ulamas who were to be participants in the two-day conference however boycotted the occasion.



Chief Yomi Edu (left) and Alhaji Ibrahim Bunu at the Federal Executive Council meeting yesterday.

Pix Kennedy Egbonodje

THURSDAY COLUMN

Faith without works...

By Nick Dazang

When Nigerians went to the polls some two years ago to elect their President, they were obsessed with the notion of firmly enthroning a man who was at home with presidential authority and a man who was, also on first name terms with world leaders and statesmen our circumstances couldn't have better. On account of the mendacious and nightmarish dictatorship Nigerians went through and the country's sullied image abroad, they preferred a man whose presence at Aso Rock would signal, salubriously, to the international community that Nigeria was once more being steered by a sober and wise captain.

These factors and our quest for a larger-than-life hero in the mould of Nelson Mandela prompted Nigerians to vote massively for General Olusegun Obasanjo. Nigerians were enamoured of, and charmed by his unique chastening, his unjust imprisonment and his rugged and sometimes rustic ways. And his handlers were quick enough to exploit the parallels between him and Mandela: Both came to office after unjust incarceration, and both replaced haughty ancient regimes which carried on as if they originated from some extraterrestrial region. Nigerians, in addition to these were turned on by General Obasanjo's religiosity. On his way to what seemed ineluctable perdition -until divine intervention came -General Obasanjo saw the light and became a spiritually changed person. After such a prolonged period of darkness and being swayed by persons who seemed to excel in consorting with the devil himself or his legions, Nigerians longed for a spiritually uplifted person.

In the beginning, General Obasanjo seemed to have governed by faith itself. And faith did not only undergird his initial actions to the admiration of Nigerians, faith and a proper way of doing things assumed the lofty status of the regime's leitmotif. Decisions were taken and committees (made up of men of knowledge and integrity) were set up with lucidity and dynamism that gave inkling, not only of exalted vision but of hope that things will change for the better. Some of us were beginning to heave a sigh of relief that General Obasanjo was about to re-enact the finest hour of the Murtala -Obasanjo era which endeared him to Nigerians in the first instance.

Almost two years after, and in spite of an oil windfall and an almost unprecedented goodwill in the annals of leadership in Nigeria, this regime cannot boast of a 200-kilometre stretch of road which it has so far constructed. The hospitals are comatose. What a pity.

Our schools are in a shambles. NEP A continues to excel only in dispensing darkness in spite of whopping sums allocated to it. Communication by telephone is a nightmare. And our people who entered a covenant with General Obasanjo so that their weal can be improved have been further pauperised and traumatised. True, General Obasanjo inherited a sad and sorrowful Nigerian union -a union on the verge of a break-up on account of iron-fisted misrule. But the nation is sadder and more sorrowful today and were a poll to be taken, most Nigerians will rue at the day they voted for him. Instead of reconciling the nation, General Obasanjo has sundered it either by the deliberate neglect of some parts, and the wilful pampering of others or by his sheer and outright ham-handed and unstatesmanly pronouncements. He is not only a spinmeister's nightmare, he is the first head of state to be at odds with his predecessors.

As if these were not bad enough, the morality quotient which General Obasanjo raised several notches to the upper reaches of state policy has been lowered and besmeared. The upshot is that government officials steal the nation blind without sanctions being applied to them. One female minister was reported to have kept a room at the Nicon Hotel for her trysts with a young paramour but all the government did was to keep a deafening silence on this salacious and sickening disclosure. In fact, the so-called anti-corruption crusade has been so derided as a huge joke that one wag has dismissed it as the equivalent of a lurid lullaby rendered to children at night to lull them to sleep. It is a measure of how bad things are that the usually reticent and sober Institute of

Directors (IOD), a concourse of the eminence grises of Nigeria's big business had to issue a withering excoriation of the Obasanjo regime. Permit me to quote from a speech rendered by their President, Chief Emmanuel Ijewere, at the annual dinner of the Institute held last month: "We have... watched with dismay, sometimes helplessly, as we see the continued fall of the standard of living of the average Nigerian. This average Nigerian is poorer today (December 5, 2000 than he was on 5th January 2000). We have also watched helplessly as your appointed officials have flaunted official and unofficial wealth with reckless abandon."

If things are bad, the president has not helped matters either. Esconced in the sumptuous comfort of Aso Rock, he does not seem to be in touch with reality. If the President was in touch with reality he would not have flaunted NEP A, which seems at best to be jinxed, as one of his accomplishments. He could not also have latched onto the mere financing of the Aluminium Smelter Company (ALSCON) at Ikot Abasi as one of his achievements.

After all, the working capital released to ALSCON has long been approved by General Abdulsalami Abubakar before he handed over to General Obasanjo. All that General Obasanjo did was to ascertain the veracity and appropriateness of this approval, via the Christopher Kolade Panel. What is most revealing is that even after ascertaining the veracity of this approval the money was released to ALSCON tardily, and after it has lost millions of tax payers' money on account of a long and unwarranted shut down. It is premature to dismiss the president as drowning man. But to latch onto NEP A and ALSCON and to flaunt them as his achievements is akin to a drowning man grasping at a straw.

Otto Von Bismarck, the German Chancellor, (of Iron and Blood) who superintended over the partition of Africa used to say that the requirements of leadership were so lofty and rigorous that if possible leaders ought to wait in ambush for God Himself. And as He walks by, they should hold onto His coattails so that they can govern their people aright. In spite of this president's claim of being born again and Godly, he thrives, when it matters most, on the small and the vindictive. Witness his hounding and hectoring of Dr. Chuba Okadigbo and Ghali Na'abba for daring to assert their offices and the precious time invested in these hectorings. Which is why drawing parallels between Mandela and Obasanjo is deeply flawed and misplaced. In spite of his prolonged imprisonment, Mandela came to the Union Buildings on a large and edifying pedestal: the forgave his tormentors. And though his imprisonment was unjust, he came to jail convinced of the justness of his people's struggle for independence from servitude.

In spite of his sundry failings and the daunting tasks ahead of him, it is still soothing that the president exudes confidence in his comportment and some of his pronouncements. Mercifully too, he is merely coasting into mid-term and he has some two more years to go. The General should consider them as his make or mar period: a period for which he will zing his presidency, and etch it into history for good or ill and a period he should use to boldly and unswervingly confront the bottom line: provide good road networks across the country; provide potable water in as many rural areas as possible; fix hospitals, especially the teaching hospitals; fix the education sector; make as many Nigerians as possible have access to communication facilities and information technology and create jobs.

It is true that General Obasanjo did not invent Nigeria's difficulties. But he was not elected to compound them either. At the end of the day, the benchmark for judging his presidency will be the extent to which it has ameliorated the Nigerian condition.

These are the works by which General Obasanjo's faith shall be tested, just as by faith our patriarch, Abraham, left Ur of the Chaldeans for Canaan and his faith was tested by his sacrifice of Isaac. As Saint James once aptly put it, "faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead." Where is President Obasanjo's action? What are his works?

Nick Dazang, former editor of Abuja Newsworld is an editorial board member of Daily Trust.

EDITORIAL

Congo: From bad to worse

Mr. Laurent Kabila, President of the Democratic Republic of Congo is dead. He was apparently killed by his own bodyguards!

Two and a half years ago when Mobutu Sese-Seko was forced out of power in the Democratic Republic of Congo, there was much jubilation about the end of one more African dictatorship. But even then, analysts experienced in the politics of the continent were much more cautious. Given his antecedents, Mr. Laurent Kabila, a radical of the 1960s and a man with an unusual appetite for the good life, many concluded that Mobutu may be gone, but another Mobutu may have replaced him.

As usual, caution won over enthusiasm, Mr. Kabila easily proved the doubters right. It soon became clear that for him the struggle for democracy ended the moment he entered the presidential palace in Kinshasa. Old comrades soon became new enemies. He alienated first the internal democratic movement in Kinshasa led by long-time Mobutu nemesis Etienne Tshishekedi. Then the very people who helped him shoot his way to power, the Rwanda-backed Banyamulenge guerrilla army, turned against him. He soon quarrelled with President Museveni of Uganda. He rebuffed a United Nations mission which was mandated to investigate the alleged massacres of Hutu refugees, thus alienating the world body. Lately, he rejected the mediating role of former Botswana President, Mr. Quett Masire, rendering inoperative the delicate peace agreement reached with the rebel forces that are occupying a large chunk of Congo.

Mr. Kabila had thus become a study in how to make enemies and alienate friends. Not surprisingly, he was the president of a deeply divided country. Armies from several African countries were operating in the Congo. Some like those of Zimbabwe and Angola were supporting his regime. Others such as those of Rwanda and Uganda were backing rebels that were seeking to overthrow him.

It was predictable that things would soon come to a head, with Mr. Kabila facing the fate of the man he removed from power. Unfortunately, while Mr. Mobutu died quietly in a hotel in Morocco, Mr. Kabila may have killed by his own bodyguards.

The question is what does this mean for the Congo? The people of this ill-fated country so abundantly blessed by nature, but like most African countries, much less lucky with their leaders. Now with Mr. Kabila's death, any of the three guerrilla factions operating in the country may attempt to take power in Kinshasa with terrible consequences for the civilian population.

Yet even if the men around Kabila could find a suitable successor and stop the possibility of civil unrest, the challenge of rebuilding the country after 40 years of misrule is almost beyond human capacity.

We fear that though things were bad under the former president, they may now head for the worse. We know that President Obasanjo will need no invitation to exercise a bit of statesmanship in the Congo. He was after all billed to travel to Congo the very day Mr. Kabila was killed in his palace. We caution that while Nigeria and other African countries should do all they can to help a sister African country, our people too can do with some more government attention at home.

LETTER OF THE DAY

Message of goodwill

I am delighted to see that your dream of publishing a daily newspaper, which culminated in the birth, three years ago, of *Weekly Trust* has crystallised into the debut, early this week of *Daily Trust*. Your unrelenting optimism in the middle of a sea of doubt; your tireless efforts against powerful waves, strong enough to sink the Titanic; your selflessness and your rock solid faith, have now become pillars on which future dreams would

be built.

More than anything else the birth of *Daily Trust* has shown that the old saying, where there is will, there is a way as timeless and one that holds true in publishing as much as in anything else. We now know, thank God, that we won't have to wait for a Donald Trump to get our side of his-

tory out of the rest of the world. We also know, thank God again, that there is nothing genetic about our inability to keep newspapers afloat.

One feat however, bigger than all you have accomplished so far, is still ahead of you. That feat is, to continue to keep the trust, and to keep naysayers and doubters guessing when you will follow in the foot-

steps of your predecessors to the graveyard. That day may or may never come. Either way, the people at *Weekly* and *Daily Trust* have acquitted themselves by keeping the faith for three years non-stop. The rest is up to us.

Congratulations *Daily Trust*.

Bashir Yusuf Ibrahim, Sharada, Kano.

Opinion

Fallouts of Governor Dariye's trips

By Haruna Danbaki

While Governor Joshua C. Dariye jockeyed for the exalted office he currently occupies, and while he campaigned on the hustings, a refrain ran through the them of his speeches: he pledged to uplift Plateau state to a height befitting of its status as the foremost tourist gateway and haven in Nigeria. In doing this he solemnly promised, he would spare no effort of energy. Again when he assumed office on May 29th, 1999 he pledged – for the umpteenth time – to re-engineer and reposition Plateau State, such that it becomes first among equals in the comity of Nigeria's thirty-six states.

The viable option left for the state is to look outward and scout for business persons and organisations abroad willing to invest in Plateau State's tourist potentials, and set up industries that would employ the thousands of graduates stomping the street in search of jobs.

Yet even this option (of scouting for foreign investors) is an uphill task which required a lot of perseverance and persuasion. This is because shortly before the advent of democracy, our national image abroad had been sullied and our standing internationally had plummeted to its nadir. Besides, Direct Foreign Investment (DFI) had dried up and foreign investors had left Nigeria's shores in droves under military rule. Given this unsalutary state of affairs at the national level – which has direct effect on Plateau State – few investors would, on their own accord come here and invest simply because we have turned a new leaf and are now democratic. They have to be cajoled. They have to be enticed. This explains the Governor's having to travel abroad on a number of occasions.

Permit me to use this opportunity to explain that some of Governor Dariye's trips were financed by his humble self and others by the Federal Government. Plateau state, as everyone is aware, is richly endowed with a scenic beauty unsurpassed by any other in the country. It also has a clement weather and it is fertile land. These attributes account for its hosting the Nigerian Film Corporation and before now, the largest expatriate population. As a consequence of its scenic beauty and its warm, receptive people, the Jos – Plateau has been the location of exquisite and epic films. On account of these endowments, the President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo and the Vice President, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, have graciously and kindly invited Chief Joshua Dariye to be apart of their delegations where interests germane, or peculiar, to Plateau State are discussed abroad. On Chief Dariye's part, he has exploited these opportunities to showcase and market the state's endowments and potentialities, and to woo prospective investors to the state.

The fact must be underlined, however, that foreign investments will not be spontaneous or even commensurate in volume with the sorties the governor has made. They will come in trickles and will hopefully improve as Mr. President, the Foreign Affairs Minister and diplomats, strewn across the world, continue to aggressively and tirelessly market the country and its potentials to foreign investors. In spite of this circumspection, one is delighted to report that Chief Dariye's travels have begun to bear fruits. Among others, Chief Joshua Dariye travelled to Argentina and the United States of America. Six weeks ago, two American Rotarians that Governor Dariye met in Argentina visited Plateau State and have since made a recommendation to Rotary International to site some agricultural projects in the State and also look at the possibility of providing boreholes to needy communities. As I write this article, a twenty-man Argentinian trade delegation is in Jos to explore areas of trade and investment.

Also, some three months ago, Governor Dariye attended the Inaugural governing board meeting of the United States – Nigeria Development Institute in Abuja. This is also a culmination of his visits to the United States. Plateau State's pivotal position in the Institute is better appreciated against the background of the African Growth and Opportunity Act signed recently by President Bill Clinton. Under the auspices of the Act, African countries are expected to take advantage of the huge opportunities for trade and investments offered by the United States. The United States – Nigeria Development Institute of which Plateau State is a foundation member, is established as a private sector-led development and business promotion organisation committed to expanding and diversifying the sale of products and services of Nigeria to the United States market opened to us by the African Growth and Opportunity Act aforementioned.

Also worthy of mention is the fact that Chief Dariye has been invited to the United States of America by the Zumunta Club (the Umbrella organisation for Nigerians from the Northern part of the country resident in the United States) to speak on the gains of democracy and also showcase the investment potentials of Plateau State. This event took place on 12th to 17th October 2000. During this period too, the University of Michigan will host Chief Dariye to conclude arrangement for the siting of a faculty of Mining Engineering at the Plateau Polytechnic. This will be funded by the University of Michigan.

These accomplishments by no means exhaust the fallouts of Chief Dariye's sundry trips. They merely underline and consummate the earlier recommendation of the Plateau State Economic Summit which urges the Governor to canvass for direct infusion of outside capital into the state in form of joint ventures, bilateral assistance and new projects in order to uplift Plateau State.

RECEPTION 2000: Has a northern messiah emerged?

By Sani Babadoko

Does being a vice-president from the north necessarily confer on the incumbent the leadership of the region? It is in search for answers to this and many questions that curious observers thronged the Ahmadu Bello stadium, Kaduna venue of the Reception 2000 on Saturday November 18 at which Vice President Atiku Abubakar was honoured with the leadership of the north on account of his being number two northerner in the Obasanjo administration.

Some observers however consider this to be a dubious attribute because precedence has not shown that a northern leader needed to be number one or two in the federal government. In the first republic when late Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was prime minister, the undisputed leader of the north was late Premier of the north, Sir Ahmadu Bello Sardauna "sent" Tafawa Balewa to Lagos. Observers also believed that the late premier earned this leadership through consistent and exemplary leadership and did not have to be awarded it at a rally. So huge was his stature that not even President Shehu Shagari, in his time in office as number one northerner, could pretend to be stepping into his shoes.

Several others who watched the rally from a distance also worry that it was a meaningless jamboree in the face of the myriad of new problems confronting the northerners in the Obasanjo administration. Some openly asked what vice-president Atiku Abubakar Turakin Adamawa and Sardaunan Ganye has done to deserve such an honour.

Indeed a group of youths which goes by the name of Northern Democratic Forum (NDF) denounced the occasion and condemned the actions of the Northern governors who orchestrated the event. The forum which included Amalgamated Northern Human Rights Group, the Northern Socialist League, said in a statement by its Public Relations Officer, Malam Mohammed Sani that

the event was an attempt by a group to perpetrate its grip on the less privileged in the north.

The reception which sources said was planned within three months saw the full participation of all the 19 northern state governors and the FCT authorities who must have spent fortunes in ferrying and feeding thousands of party supporters from all the political parties especially PDP and APP. In attendance were the Sultan of Sokoto Alhaji Mohammad Maciddo, Shehu of Borno Alhaji Mustapha Umar El-Kanemi, former Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon who was chairman of the occasion and speaker Ghali Umar Na'Abba whose appearance was something of a surprise given the chilled executive/legislature stand off worsened by the latest bribery scam at the House of representatives.

This led some into believing that the occasion was a desperate attempt to bridge the yawning gap between the legislative and the executive in the belief that if Na'Abba drowns he likely to pull others along. In the event not everyone was sure if the embrace by Atiku of Na'Abba at the podium signalled a wrestling about or a hug.

Also in attendance were Senate President Ayim Pius Anyim, Dr. Hamza Zayyad, Dr. Solomon Lar, Chief Barnabas Gemade, Rev. Fr. Hussan Kukah, Information and national Orientation Minister, Prof Jerry Gana as well as several religious, political, traditional and opinion leaders from the north.

However, there were several political leaders from the region who were more conspicuous by their absence. They include former President Shehu Shagari, Abdulsalami Abubakar, Abubakar Rimi, Alhaji Uman Ciroma, Liman Katagun, Yahaya Gusau, Olusola Saraki, Alhaji Umaru Dikko, Bello Maitama Sule, Ibrahim Babangida, Umaru Shinkafi, MD Yusuf, Lema Jibrilu, Adamu Ciroma, Bamanga Tukur and S.B. Awoniyi. The absence of the northern leaders and associates

of the late Ahmadu Bello led not a few observers into believing that the occasion was more of a celebration of the victory of the Yar'adua Collective and his peoples from a very strong tendency in the present administration.

Whatever might be the motives of the organisers of the Reception 2000 it was no doubt a unique opportunity to heed the call to unity in the north. Not too long ago the vice-president had not endeared himself to the mainstream North by his pronouncements that they have contributed nothing to the development of the north and by his open challenge to their leadership of the region in the Arewa Consultative Forum. But like Reverend Fr. Hassan Kukah observed, any occasion aimed at uniting our people is worthwhile especially in Kaduna which has been the scene of several sectarian violence, with the last ones in the form of the Sharia mayhem only last February and May.

In his speech the vice president, who was presented with a painting of himself lifting a map of Nigeria above his head, urged northerners not to allow the mistakes of the past to becloud their vision for the future. He promised to rededicate himself to protecting the interests of the North which he said was his primary constituency.

After recounting the woes that has befallen the north since independence the Vice president called for a reawakening to the reality in the north and called on religious, business, traditional and political leaders in the region to give the needed leadership to the masses.

He said, "we are all aware that over the years, the north has suffered untold hardship and unwarranted calamities. Relationships, developed over the years were shattered by the actions of a misguided few among us. We have failed to develop our potentials and live up to our cherished values. We need to stop all these and open a new chapter in this new millennium".

Then it was time for the

governors to articulate the current misgivings of the North about the political, economic and social situation the North has found itself in the scheme of things in the country. Their speech, which was read by the Nassarawa State Governor, Alhaji Abdullahi Adamu, was a virtual call to arms by a people pushed to the wall by the south west from where President Obasanjo came. Some south-western leaders he said, "regard the north as a parasite on the Nigerian nation because it does not produce crude oil".

He said the plot by the south-west was to economically strangulate the North as a prelude to its political subjugation. This has led, he said to the suggestion by these governors that each state should collect and retain VAT within its territory pointing out that, "their argument is that since some state in the north introduced the sharia Muslim legal system which prohibits the sale of alcohol, they should not be entitled to VAT, paid on the sale of alcohol in other states of the federation".

The north the governor said may not produce oil but they are no different from the south-west adding that, before the oil boom days, the defunct northern region contributed handsomely to the national coffers through its mineral resources such as tin, gold and columbite, and its agricultural produce such as groundnuts, cotton and hides and skins. Oil wealth has destroyed agriculture and physical discipline in our country. The region has the capacity to fully support itself and its developments through the exploitation of its minerals and agricultural resources.

For now only time will tell if the reception 2000 is the turning point in the increasingly polarised relationship among northern leaders or if like the youths in the NDF claim "a wasteful event cunningly aimed at serving purposeless but elusive political advantage in northern Nigeria".

Who will save Obasanjo now?

By Paul Mamza

Weekly Trust January 12 – 18, 2001 was incisive, as it sought to send fear to the heart of our President. Sanusi Lamido Sanusi Captured the role of Weekly Trust as the hypothetical thermometer and barometer of the North. I have reservations and identified some defaults, on analytical and conceptual grounds in Sanusi's lead comment on Faseun and the North's moral dilemma from legal and moral angles, which it aimed to pursue. Weekly Trust opined that Obasanjo has lost the confidence of the people in the North when it asserts that "Efforts to mobilise support for the president in the North is not making any headway. Even those that were picked are reluctant to identify themselves with the move for fear that we would tarnish the im-

age. Many people on the region consider Obasanjo a bad product that cannot be marketed by the best salesman." The assertions no doubt endorses the president's political naivete, which made him enmeshed in a state equivalent to that of a political regicide. It is obvious that the national question, which subsequent manifests as the problem of the country can only be resolved when Nigeria is viewed as a component of three parts, with each part being distinctive without necessary imposing a blanket quarantine on the nation. Anybody that thinks otherwise is advocating a micropluralism of power, which is currently non-existent.

For those of us who never care to lobby for appointments, make a chase of contracts allocation and a show of sycophancy similar to a class pupil's appetite to impress his

school tutor, we were blunt in the objective assessment and expose of the domination traits that obtain at the helm of affairs since the civilian government was inaugurated on May 29th 1999. The idea is to quickly rescue the nation from the ailing patriarchal institution.

At a personal level I tried to give a classic recipe for recuperation "Obasanjo's Government Democracy at crossroads" Weekly Trust, July 14-200, "On the Obasanjo Paradigm" New Nigerian, Njune 23rd, 1999. "Nigeria, still in "Babylon" "New Nigerian", August, 31st, 1999, "For he sake of Nigeria", New Nigeria October 20th, 1999. "Another flagpole of hope" New Nigerian November, 5th, 1999. There were attempts by the writer within the limit of human wisdom to offer an objective reflection of the landscape of the political experience of

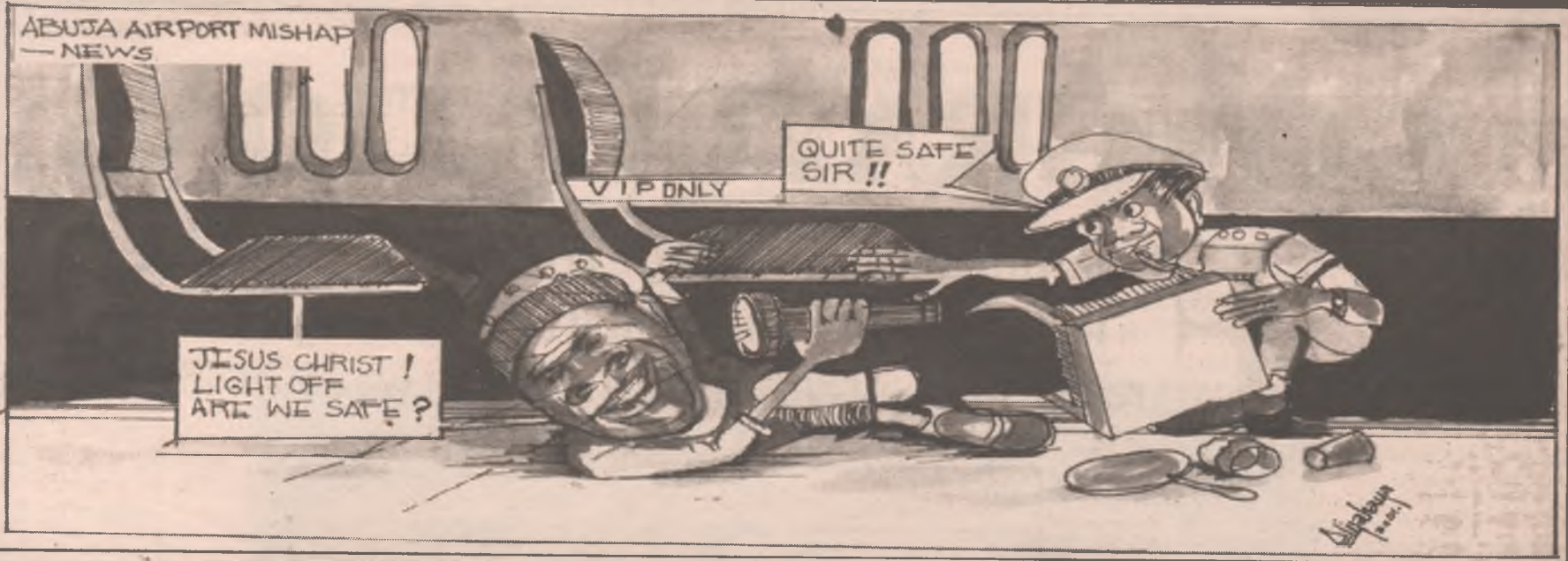
the country.

The Niger Delta people's have high hopes but will these be realised. The Yoruba's of the South Western part which the government visibly tries to pacify and favour are not fully at peace with the donor hand. It was the leader of the foot-soldier arm of the race, Chief Frederick Faseun that once said in an interview with Tempo immediately after his release that the President was yet to say publicly that he is a Yorubaman and that he is likely to return to lizards and reptiles after his tenure.

With old friends being made enemies overnight and old enemies not willing to reconcile with Obasanjo, the major question that requires a logical answer now is come the year 2003, who will save Obasanjo?

Mamza is a lecturer with ABUZaria and the Chairman of Arewa Foreign Front (AFF) a non-government organisation.

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YOUR LETTERS

Short 'n' Sharp

Adams Oshiomole; a born-again Afenifere

When has the NLC turned to being a tool for actualising the dreams of Obasanjo and Afenifere? Adams should be busy asking questions about the new minimum wage of the executive and Legislature. For example, the take-home-pay for councillors is N126,000.00 and all the state governments seem to have paid the arrears without any problem and it is only the workers minimum wage that is giving them problems.

Ghali Na'abba has never been and can never be intimidated or stampeded by anyone, good or bad let alone a born-again Afenifere of an area boy called Adams Oshiomole whose myopic and vindictive traits are very clear.

Ahmed Isah Haruna, Geology Programme, A.T.B. University, Bauchi.

Support our northern press

As most newspapers in the North appear on and off due to several factors that affects their services, it will be better if our Northern Governors should lay more emphasis on these media houses, so that their newsstand would be stable.

The northern press are not only informative, entertaining and educative, they are also protecting the interest of entire Northerners.

Kawu Babari, Gombe Local Govt. Gombe.

Home truths for President Obasanjo

There is more to it than meets the eye when a woman that has two issues for a man decides to paint the man black in public. That was exactly what Mrs. Taiwo Obasanjo; former wife to President Obasanjo did in an interview with *The News* magazine of November 27, 2000.

In the interview, Mrs. Taiwo Obasanjo described Obasanjo, a.k.a. (OBJ) as a wicked man, saying that the myriad of problems facing the country today is as a result of OBJ's traits of wickedness.

President Obasanjo should be told some home truths. He should organize his family properly before he can beat his chest to tell Nigerians that he is really competent to lead a democratic government, not a military dictatorship.

Mrs Elizabeth Yemeni, First Bank Kano.

Bauchi state law-makers, toothless bull-dogs

Indeed, it is disheartening that it is almost one and a half years since the establishment of Democracy in Nigeria. It seems up till now the Bauchi State law makers are still sleeping. It is not a crime if someone says they don't know why they were given the mandate.

What we expect from them is to help and make Bauchi a better place, not that they should go about marrying pretty girls, wearing gorgeous dresses and riding elegant cars in the town, while the common-man is suffering.

Yusuf Abdullahi, Bauchi State Polytechnic, Bauchi.

Simply Good!

Daily Trust is simply good. The maiden edition has given the promise of a great future, may you remain busy, happy and well.

I observed that many mistook the Daily Trust for Daily Times. It took a very close look before I too picked the paper from my vendor.

I suggest you differentiate the Daily... from the Weekly Trust by not enclosing the stories in boxes.

Hassan Mahmood Ibrahim, Kawo, Kaduna.

The evil of World Bank/IMF

The testimony of one Mr. Davison Budhow who is an IMF official was frightening. Mr Budhow has worked with IMF for more than a decade on missions to a number of third world countries. In his letter of resignation Mr. Budhow wrote "I have no illusion that the way we operate could be summoned up this way; devalue your currencies, tax the poor, remove all transfers and subsidies to the under privilege, fire the people, cut out social services, let the children starve, let malnutrition of all in the shanty towns be our performances criteria, increase the prices of bread, yam, soap, and water, negate the constitutions, kill all the hopes and aspirations from the hearts of the down trodden. Go back again begging in the streets, turn back the clock two hundreds years and let us again be the masters and you the slaves."

Secondly, the disclosure by Lyndon La Rouche, a

presidential candidate at the last US presidential primaries is chilling. He exposed how the west planned to use AIDS deliberately to reduce the population of the black people. La Rouche in 1974 launched a campaign to defeat the biological holocaust by west-

ern controlled institutions like IMF/WORLD BANK, Club of Rome (Paris Club), WHO etc.

I don't know what we need from them (IMF/World Bank), are they helping us by exploiting the poor, cutting us from social services,

removing subsidies, letting children starve and so on. It's time for our leaders to do away with them. We want a new Nigeria. A Nigeria that we and our children would be proud of. That is all we need.

Aliyu Wada Nas, Bayero University, Kano.

Gen. Babangida's travails

I noted with amazement the editorial comment of the Punch Newspaper of Friday, November 10, 2000 tagged Babangida and history. In the said editorial, ugly insinuations against the North and particularly its leadership was exhibited in its crudest form. Such antics that characterize information being published in the said Newspapers have now climaxed with Northern leaders being picked one by one for periodic bashing.

We are all living witnesses to such attacks on the persons of Alhaji Shehu Shagari, General Muhammadu Buhari, General Gowon in the recent

past. However' General Babangida takes most of the insults from the irredentists through their powerful mass media.

My advise to General Babangida is not to bothered himself with such insults. He is not the first Northerner to be so maligned by the irredentist. It all started with our great leaders in the persons of the late Sardauna and Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. So much was the hate promoted by these irredentis that they influenced the mass killing of such leaders in cool blood. Today, history seems to be repeating itself.

On the part of the average Northerner, the rantings of these collection of failures should not discourage anybody from pursuing his constitutional rights. If we go back to history, the same method was employed by the irredentist in the First Republic with a view to coercing the other parts of the country into accepting Late Chief Obafemi Awolowo as the Head of Government of this Country. The late Sage died without the irredentists attaining their goal. They re-enacted the same scenario during the last Presidential Election but yet again failed.

The vocal few using their powerful mass media branded our president (Obasanjo) with all sorts of names including a CIA agent and a stooge of the Hausa/Fulani but could not stop him from being elected as the president of Nigeria

by the other ethnic nationalities. The fact is, and remains that, the Policy of exclusion, as being pursued by the irredentists, who are nothing but ethnic bigots, cannot work in a country like ours. The solution to their myopic stand on national issues is for them to abandoned these negative traits and offer a hand of friendship to other Nigerians, the late Alhaji Moshood Abiola did the same and it worked out well but was scuttled by the military.

To sum up, I would like to appeal to General Ibrahim Babangida to ignore unending criticism from this ungrateful lot. They will never praise him no matter the steps he may take to redeem his dented image in the "civilised west". Babangida should take solace in the fact that he can still influence the course of events in the other parts of the country. He has done it before, and it is the same devilish lots that are today benefiting from it.

It is rather sad that this area that claims to be the most civilized part of the country has once again turned itself into a jungle. The Europeans in the medieval period used their high level intellectual attainment to embark on civilisation mission to other parts of the World, but ours have employed theirs to kill and maim an in the name of agitation for a Sovereign National Conference.

Dalha Adamu, Abattoir Quarters, Katsina.

Governor Saminu Turaki Deserves thumbs up

Two years ago Jigawa State was just like any other state in the nation. It lacked a visionary leadership, yet the state was in desperate need of rapid from backwardness into a self-supporting state capable of promoting both human and natural endowments of its people. Such needs includes education, housing, viable infrastructure, effective health care and Industrialization etc. Our people needed someone to inspire their self-confidence and to provide a rallying ground for economic and social emancipation.

In this regard our prayers was answered through the election of Alhaji Ibrahim Saminu Turaki as the Executive governor of the state.

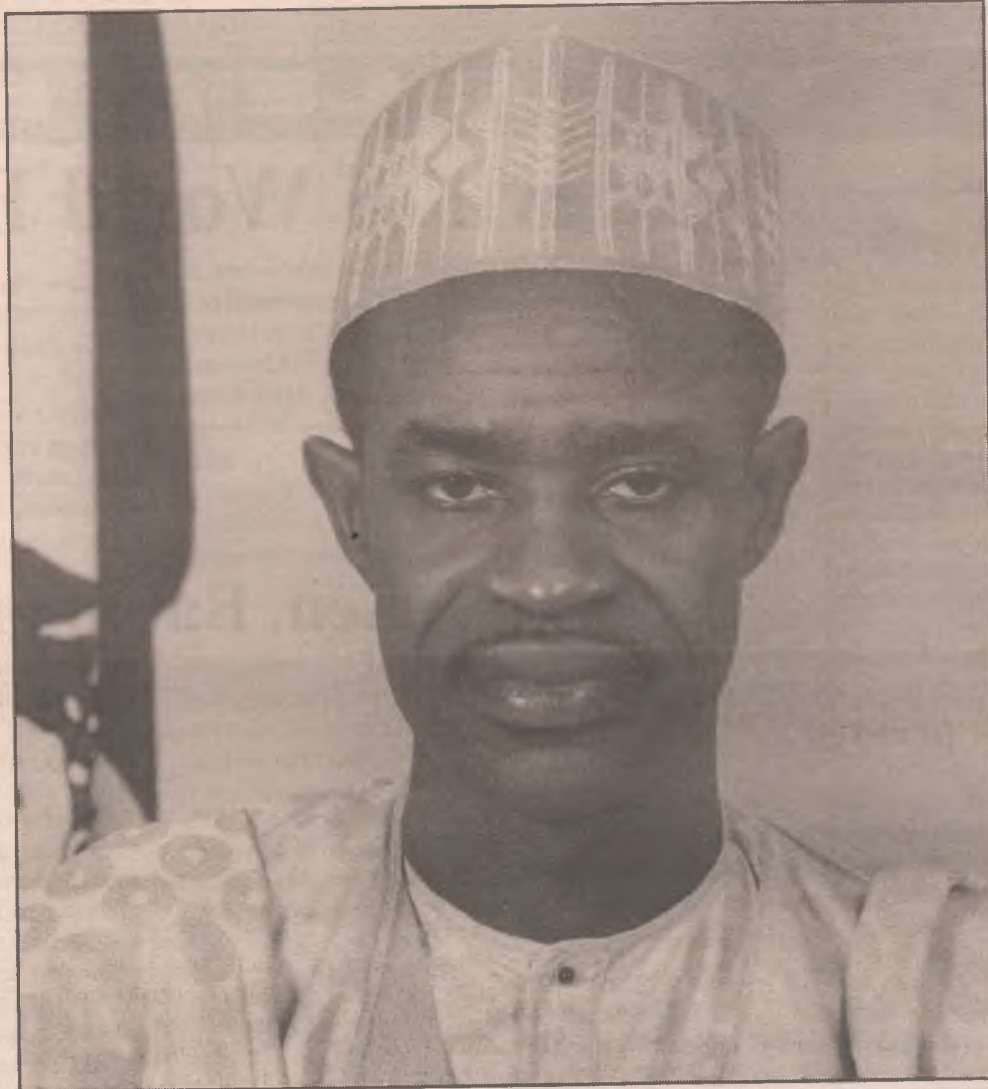
Sir, your program on rural development is highly commendable. Your vision on millennium village, sugar cane production, small town and villages water scheme, permanent housing scheme, 100% Teacher's inducement allowances, and your assiduity towards medical and health centres in the state are receiving salutation.

Sir, we wish you a successful tenure in *The new world*, and Allah's guidance.

Abubakar Abdullahi Guri, Department of Nursing and Nursing Services, Hadejia General Hospital.

CONGRATULATIONS

From the on set, *Weekly Trust* has proved to be a formidable mass medium. It has defeated all odds to remain the best among equals. When we are in doubt, we read *Weekly Trust* "Pick of the week."



Boni Haruna

Executive Governor, Adamawa State.

Now that *Daily Trust* has come on board, more efforts should be ejected to nurse the new tabloid into another watershed story. On behalf of Adamawa State Government and the people, I sincerely congratulate the entire management of Media Trust Limited on this giant stride.

Once again, congratulations.

Long live Daily Trust

Long live Adamawa State

Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria

TRUST INTERNATIONAL

Foreign & Diplomatic

AIDS pandemic deadlier than war
-US Intelligence Office

David F. Gordon, the national intelligence officer for economics and global issues with the U.S. National Intelligence Council, spoke at a January 11 meeting of Africa chiefs of mission in Nairobi, Kenya. Gordon, a

and exceeds the toll taken by the bubonic plague in 1347. And the bad news is that we probably are still only in the early phases of the AIDS pandemic. Seven countries have HIV posi-

Even given the budgetary dominance of AIDS, few countries will be able to afford the high cost of multi-drug treatment for AIDS, which can be \$10,000 to 15,000 annually. AIDS will take an even greater toll on po-

ports as militaries and military recruitment pools experience increased deaths and disabilities from the disease. The greatest impact will be among hard-to-replace officers, non-commissioned officers, and enlisted soldiers with specialized skills and among militaries with advanced weapons and weapons platforms of all kinds.

—HIV/AIDS prevalence in the militaries of the heavily affected countries is considerably higher than their civilian populations, owing to risky lifestyles and deployment away from home.

—Mounting infectious disease-caused deaths among the military officer corps in military-dominated and democratizing polities also may contribute to the deprivation, insecurity, and political machinations that incline some to launch coups and counter-coups aimed, more often than not, at plundering state coffers. It is difficult to make a direct connection between high AIDS prevalence in military forces and performance in battle. But, given that a large number of officers and other key personnel are dying or becoming disabled, combat readiness and capability of such military forces is bound to deteriorate.

The negative impact of high infectious disease prevalence on national militaries is likely to be felt in international and regional peacekeeping operations as well, limiting their effectiveness and also making them vectors for the further spread of diseases among coalition peacekeepers and local populations.

—Although the U.N. officially requires that prospective peacekeeping troops be "disease free," it is difficult to enforce this rule with such methods as HIV testing, given the paucity of available troops and the likely noncompliance of many contributing states.

—Healthy peacekeeping forces will remain at risk of being infected by disease-carrying forces and local populations, as well as by high-risk behavior and inadequate medical care. Such issues are already coming to the fore in the discussions of PKOs [peacekeeping operations] and threaten to loom even larger in the future.

The International Politics of AIDS AIDS is now a prominent feature of the international community's agenda, but it was late in coming, and still is not a priority in the very countries that are hardest hit. Most countries have responded positively to increased US efforts against AIDS. Europe and Japan are very concerned about infectious diseases including AIDS and anticipate cooperation with the US, but in resource terms the US remains by far the dominant contributor to international efforts. Developing countries that are actively mobilized on the AIDS issue—such as Uganda, Thailand and Botswana—welcome the disease's higher profile on the world agenda. Russia, China, India and some other G-77 countries have opposed efforts to raise AIDS in the UN Security Council, not wishing to set a precedent for interference in their internal affairs. But such opposition is beginning to wane; indeed, the Security Council will hold another session on AIDS.

Most governments have refrained from making AIDS a high priority issue. The few that have—Thailand, Uganda, Senegal, and Brazil—have significantly reduced HIV and AIDS infections.



Family members checking on young Nkosi Johnson at his home in Johannesburg, where he is suffering from AIDS (PHOTO AFP)

former congressional staff member, helped work on a "National Intelligence Estimate" of global infectious diseases and their impact on the United States that was recently sent to President Clinton and other top government officials. Excerpts:

My only regret is that the occasion for this conference is a sad one: the devastating impact of AIDS on the most heavily affected countries and the prospect that the pandemic is likely to get. In his 1947 novel *The Plague*, about a fictional epidemic in a sleepy North African town, Albert Camus wrote, "We tell ourselves that pestilence is a bogey of the mind, a bad dream that will pass away. But it doesn't pass away. ...It is the men who pass away."

My remarks today will examine the broad social, economic, political and security implications of the AIDS threat in Africa. They are substantially taken from the National Intelligence Estimate we produced last year that played at least some role in alerting US policy-makers to these issues. I will conclude with brief comments about the international politics of AIDS.

A Potentially Catastrophic Health Threat

Over 55 million people have been infected with HIV over the last two decades and at least 36 million are currently living with the HIV virus, 5.3 million of which are projected to have been infected this year. The disease has killed over 23 million people, 3 million of them this year. "There is a strong case to be made that AIDS is the most serious health threat in recorded history. It has already killed more people than all the soldiers killed in the major wars of the last century,

and exceeds the toll taken by the bubonic plague in 1347. And the bad news is that we probably are still only in the early phases of the AIDS pandemic. Seven countries have HIV positive rates exceeding 20 percent and 9 exceeding 10 percent. Furthermore, AIDS is a gateway disease. By attacking the immune system it spurs on other killer diseases such as TB and pneumonia.

Social, Economic, Political, and Security Impact

The conventional view among social scientists and even health experts long has been that social and economic decay, political upheaval, and conflict are a major cause of poor health and infectious disease spread. Only recently have we begun to realize that the obverse also is true: that poor health and infectious diseases like AIDS can contribute to social and economic decay, political malaise, and conflict.

As many as a third of the children under 15 in hardest-hit countries—some 42 million—are expected to comprise a "lost orphaned generation" by 2010.

Because AIDS in the hardest hit countries is socially neutral, it is also making major inroads into the professional classes of teachers, civil servants, engineers and other skilled workers, who have formed the social backbone of recent advances in both political and economic life.

Economic impact likely. AIDS will take an increasingly heavy economic toll. While difficult to measure precisely, the economic costs of AIDS are already substantial for the most seriously affected countries, despite the partially offsetting impact of declines in population growth.

—Threshold effect after 5% prevalence rate. At 20%, cost of over 1% of GDP annually.

AIDS likely to strain budgets. AIDS will make large budgetary claims on national health systems' resources.

The impact of AIDS at the sector and firm level already appears to be substantial and growing and will be reflected eventually in higher GDP losses. Several individual firms and their AIDS consultants paint a bleak picture in recent surveys. —Using broad measures of AIDS-related costs, such as absenteeism, productivity declines, health and insurance payments, and recruitment and training, they project profits to drop by 6 to 8 percent or more annually and productivity to decline by 5 percent.

The political impact of AIDS threatens to result in many countries in a downward cycle of increasing disease impact weakening state capacity which in turns results in further increases in the impact of the disease. The severe social and economic impact of AIDS and its infiltration into the ruling political and military elites and middle classes of these countries are likely to intensify the struggle for political power to control scarce state and societal resources; reduce the capacity of governments to provide needed services and benefits; and thereby erode their legitimacy.

—The human losses from AIDS in the most affected countries also will hamper the development of a civil society and other underpinnings of democracy and will increase pressure on democratic transitions in the region by limiting new investment, encouraging emigration of the best and the brightest and in general adding to economic misery and political decay.

While so far, AIDS has not loomed large in national-level political life; this may be changing.

International security peacekeeping

AIDS threatens to hamper international security and peacekeeping ef-

BRIEFLY

INSHASA

President Laurent Kabila was reported killed by one of his bodyguards in the Democratic Republic of Congo, plunging the war-ravaged country at the heart of Africa into new uncertainty.

SAN SALVADOR

Bulldozers advanced through the rubble of hundreds of homes destroyed by a mudslide as El Salvador shifted from recovering bodies to cleaning up after an earthquake that killed at least 675 people.

GAZA

Israeli troops partially reopened key roads and crossings in the Palestinian-ruled Gaza Strip in gradual lifting of restrictions imposed after the killing of a Jewish settler.

BAGHDAD

President Saddam Hussein said in the 10th anniversary of the Gulf War over Kuwait that Iraq would emerge victorious in its struggle against the United States.

MANILA

Tens of thousands of people joined hastily organized rallies across the Philippines on Wednesday, bitter a Senate decision in President Joseph Estrada's impeachment trial and demanding the former actor stand down.

SHANGHAI

Shanghai did everything it could to keep an apparent visit by North Korean leader Kim Jong-il under wraps on Wednesday, despite plenty of circumstantial evidence he was in town.

JAKARTA

Indonesian police fire tear gas on Wednesday at about 3,000 rowdy students outside parliament two were protesting over two financial scandals linked to embattled President Abdurrahman Wahid.

SACRAMENTO

A big-rig truck rammed into California's state capital building setting off a fiery explosion just as state lawmakers were finishing an emergency bill designed to ease the state's critical power crisis.

NEW DELHI

India successfully test-fired a longer-range version of its intermediate-range Agni ballistic missile from its eastern coast the defense ministry said.

SCHLEM

As NATO's Bakans veterans fret about health risks from uranium munitions, a generation old enough to remember the last great European war is happily paying for a bit of extra radiation exposure.

LONDON

Britain's Interior Minister Jack Straw, pitching into a bitter translating battle over twins sold twice on the Internet, said the buying and selling of children was "frankly a revolting idea".

TRUST INTERNATIONAL

AFRICA & THE MIDDLE EAST

BRIEFLY

KINSHASA

President Laurent Kabila was reported killed by one of his bodyguard in the Democratic Republic of Congo, plunging the war-ravaged country at the heart of Africa into new uncertainty.

BRUSSELS

The situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo remains confused one day after the reported killing of President Laurent Kabila, Belgian Foreign Minister Louis Michel said.

GABORONE

Former Botswana president and Congo peace negotiator Ketumile Masire said the reported death of Laurent Kabila would not bring a swift end to the fighting in the central African country.

HARARE

Zimbabwe, Kabila's main ally during nearly four years of war, pledged support for his family and his country following his reported assassination on Tuesday.

KAMPALA

Uganda said the apparent assassination of President Laurent Kabila could help effort to end the chaotic war in Democratic Republic of Congo.

UNITED NATIONS

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan voiced concern about bickering between Ethiopia and Eritrea over the withdrawal of their forces from a buffer zone United Nations forces intend to monitor.

BUJUMBURA

More than 100,000 people are suffering from malnutrition in central and northern Burundi as a result of drought and malaria epidemic, and nearly 60 children died last month in one medical center alone, aid workers said.

LONDON

British Foreign Office minister Peter Hain said Britain's ambassador in Kinshasa had confirmed that Congolese leader Laurent Kabila was dead.

"Our ambassador has just confirmed that Kabila is dead," Hain told BBC Radio. "It is very important that stability is restored."

He didn't say what was the source of the ambassador's information.

Haid said: "There must be an end to fighting in the Congo." It was crucial that "the UN peacekeeping force, which Britain backs, gets in as quickly as possible."

"It appears that Kinshasa is stable...It's not obvious whether (Kabila's) death has affected stability in the rest of this vast country, the size of Western Europe," Hain said.

"But what is important now is that all the different rebel forces, the different opinions with the country...come together in a national dialogue, to establish a consensus approach and achieve stability with eluded President Kabila."

KINSHASA

There was confusion over whether Laurent Kabila is dead or alive, following reports that he was killed and government source saying that he is alive.

Marxists closer to power in Cape Verde

The Marxist African party for the Independence of Cape Verde (PAICV), in opposition for a decade, claimed victory on Monday in parliamentary elections in the tiny West African archipelago.

Although only some 40 percent of votes had been officially counted, PAICV leader Jose Maria Nevers said that his party was heading for a clear majority in the 72-seat parliament.

Official returns showed the PAICV with 45.4 percent of the vote against 43.5 percent for the ruling Democracy Movement (MPD) of Prime Minister Antonio Gulaberto do Rosario.

The premier acknowledged the likelihood of defeat in a statement early on Monday, although he stopped short of officially conceding that his opponents had won.

"It is too early to draw conclusions," he said. But if the MPD has to go into opposition, as everything suggests, it will do a good job there."

Nevers, like Gualberto do Rosario fighting his first national election, told journalists he expected his party to take between 37-40 seats in the new legislature.

"I feel an enormous responsibility," said the 432-year-old leader who took over as party chief just a year ago.

Although there were no reliable opinion polls ahead of the

vote, the election was widely seen as being the closest since full democracy was installed a decade ago.

The centrist MPD had been in power since defeating the PAICV in 1991 in the first multi-party elections to be held since Cape Verde won independence from Portugal in 1975.

It took 61 percent of the vote in the last elections in late 1995 and 50 of the seats in parliament, with the PAICV winning 21

seats. The election was marked by accusations from opposition parties that up to 10 percent of the islands 262,000 electorate could be barred from voting by official delays in the issuing of new voter registrations.

Three smaller parties were also taking part, with one of them, a coalition including some former MPD members, looking likely to pick up two to three seats.

The free-market economic policies of the centrist government have been credited with slashing

inflation but they have done little to dent high unemployment which independent economists say is running about the officially admitted 19 percent.

Political analysts said the government was also hurt by allegations of corruption in its sweeping privatization programme and by the weariness of voters with a party that has been in power for so long.

In contrast, the PAICV, which once ruled Cape Verde as a single-party state, succeeded in rejuvenating its image under its new party leader.

Neves has promised a 90-day emergency programme to focus on improving state finances, guaranteeing foreign exchange stability and boosting employment.

Opposition in Zimbabwe witch-hunts Mugabe

The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), the opposition in Zimbabwe contesting the country's leadership with President Robert Mugabe, has stepped-up its relentless campaign against the ruling ZANU-PF.

The MDC, in its latest backlash against the NDC, has described Mugabe's victory at this week's parliamentary bi-elections as a "victory of evil over good."

Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe's ruling party on Monday won a parliamentary by-election seen as a key test of its support in rural area before next year's presidential ballot.

The state News Agency ZIANA quoted Registrar-General Tobaiwa Mudede as saying the ruling ZANU-PF party's candi-

date polled 12,993 voters against 7,001 for the main opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in the rural constituency of Bikita West, 330km (200miles) southeast of Harare. But the MDC are not happy.

"This is a victory of evil over that which is good," MDC spokesman Learnmore Jongwe said following the announcement of the election outcome.

He could not say whether his party would accept the result, but added that the MDC planned to issue a detailed statement on Tuesday.

The MDC won the seat, in one of ZANU-PF's traditional strongholds, in the June 2000 general election but it fell vacant in November when its member of parliament died.



Mugabe

Analysts had said on MDC victory could be a sign that the near clean sweep of urban seats in June.

Officials said voting at the weekend had been mostly peaceful, apart from the arrest on Saturday of three MDC supporters for allegedly stoning the vehicle of Chenjerai Hunzvi, leader of the self-styled liberation war veterans who invaded white-owned farms in the run-up to the June poll.

The Bikita result reduces to 56 the number of seats the MDC holds in parliament.

Mugabe's ZANU-PF, which has ruled since the former Rhodesia won independence from Britain in 1980, has boosted to 63 the number of seats in hold out of a total of 120. It enjoys larger majority through 30 additional deputies appointed by Mugabe.

Clashes between the two parties in the run-up to the Bikita West by-election killed one ZANU-PF supporter and left several other people injured.

At least 31 people, mostly MDC supporters, were killed in run-up of the June election in violence linked to the farm invasions.

The opposition, which poses the greatest challenge to Mugabe's 20-year hold on power, is contesting the validity of 39 of the votes ZANU-PF won in the June poll.

This week the Supreme Court is scheduled to hear a challenge administration passed in December, which says courts cannot mollify the results of electoral results "even if corrupt of illegal practices were committed".

FPI loses election to opposition in Cote D'Ivoire

The just-concluded legislative bye-elections in Cote d'Ivoire has robbed the ruling Ivorian Popular Front (FPI) of president Laurent Gbagbo of a comfortable control of the parliament.

Fifteen of the 24 seats contested in the elections went to the former ruling party, PDCI, thereby giving the FPI 96 seats and 94 to the PDCI.

Also of note in the bye-elections were the four seats won by the RDP of Alassane Ouattara which had called for a boycott of the polls.

Even some seats were won by independent candidates who are members of the PDCI but refused to con-

test under the umbrella of the party.

The RPR had boycotted the elections following the disqualification of Alassane Ouattara, the party leader, following doubts about his nationality.

Under the Ivorian constitution, the president of the House of Assembly is next to the president in the case of any incapacity of the later to remain in the office and so, the position of the Senate President is now a straight fight between the two parties.

The bye-elections recorded a very low voter-turnout due to fear and intimidation mounted by the RDR

which controls the northern part of the country where the election were held.

For example at Worodougou which recorded less than eight percent voters, some stations had just 40 voters out of 381 that registered, while in the Soromara and Massane polling stations in the Seguela district, the polling officers were on holiday as not a single electorate showed up at the 216 polling stations.

The bye-election, thus was a nightmare for the FPI which obtained not a single seat out of the 24 that were contested on Sunday.

Barak counts on peace-talks for re-election

Barak wants progress at peace talks to boost his chances of securing re-election. Opinion polls show right-winger Ariel Sharon with a big lead ahead of the February 6 vote.

Barak was boosted by a decision by trade unions to delay a public sector strike that had been threatened since Wednesday. The walk-out was delayed until Monday, allowing time for more talks.

Barak, who called a snap election under pressure from parliament, launched his television and radio campaign on Tuesday with a promise to correct his mistakes if the Israeli public re-elects him.

"I want to tell you that even though there were also mistakes in our way...I am positive it was not

a mistake to go on the path of peace," he said.

Sharon, a former army general who masterminded Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, used the broadcasts to try to recast himself as a peacemaker rather than a hawk.

Sharon said he would not honour any deal that lacked parliamentary approval.



Sharon, a rising profile challenging Barak

TRUST INTERNATIONAL

Gulf War Anniversary



Fragments of US missiles launched at Iraq during the Gulf War in 1991 displayed in an exhibition in Baghdad

Iraq still defies America

Iraq marked the 10th anniversary of the start of the Gulf War with a rally joined by American peace activists after a top official said Baghdad would reciprocate any positive move by the new US administration.

Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz, who represented Iraq in failed last-minute negotiations to avert the war, also warned that if the United States resumes what he called its anti-Iraq policy under President-elect George W. Bush, Baghdad would fight back.

The rally outside the UN headquarters in Baghdad began shortly after midnight, around the same time a US-led coalition launched Operation Desert Storm to expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait a decade ago.

Hours later, church bells tolled as mosque loudspeakers started broadcasting prayer in memory of the thousands of Iraqis killed in the war.

The climax of Iraqi events marking the Gulf War anniversary is a televised address by Saddam at 11am (0800 GMT) on Wednesday.

Aziz challenges Bush

Aziz, the man who represented Iraq in last-minute failed negotiations to avert the war 10 years ago, said it was early to know what policy the Bush administration would adopt towards Iraq and found out the results.... "Their policy of aggression did not achieve any results," Aziz said.

He was referring to several top Bush aids who served under his father who was (US) president during the 1990-1991 Gulf crisis.

"If they want to change (their policy) and the change is for the better, we will be open to see what they suggest...and we have always been reasonable enough to respond, to reciprocate any positive gesture," Aziz said.

The senior official said Iraq would never reconsider its rejection of a UN Security Council resolution that stipulates it allows back UN arms inspectors, expelled in December 1998, before sanctions are lifted.

Aziz reiterated that Iraq did not expect a positive outcome from a dialogue with UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan expected to start next month, because of US and British domination of the Security Council.

Asked about the health of Saddam, after reports by the exiled opposition said he had suffered serious illnesses, Aziz said: "The president is in good shape, thank God."

The Gulf War, which Saddam called "Mother of all Battles", in-

flicted widespread damage to Iraq's military and infrastructure and left thousands of Iraqi civilians dead.

Iraq has since been under UN economic sanctions and has been subjected to several military strikes, mainly from Washington which says it wants to keep Baghdad contained.

The United States and Britain enforce two no-fly zones to protect the Kurdish minority in the north of Iraq and restive Shi'ite Muslims in the south.

US and British planes patrolling and zones frequently fire at Iraqi air-defense challenging them.

The climax of Iraqi events marking the Gulf War anniversary was to a televised address by Saddam at 11am (0800 GMT) on Wednesday.

Aziz said it was too early to know what policy the Bush administration would adopt towards Iraq after it is sworn in on Saturday.

"Those who will come to power have tried fighting against Iraq and found out the results.... Their policy of aggression did not achieve any results," Aziz said, referring to several top Bush aides who served under his father, US president during the 1990-91 Gulf crisis.

"If they want to change (their policy) and the change is for the better, we will be open to see what they suggest...and we welcome positive gesture," Aziz said.

He said Iraq would never reconsider its rejection of a UN Security Council resolution that UN

arms inspectors expelled by Iraq in December 1998 must be allowed back before sections are lifted.

Conflict a victory, says Saddam

President Saddam Hussein of Iraq has declared that the Gulf War conflict is a victory for Iraq, saying his country will emerge victorious in its ongoing struggle with the United States.

Saddam made the declaration in a televised nationwide address to his countrymen.

Iraq marks the 10-year anniversary of the Gulf War yesterday with sad recollections of the bombardment of the county by the allied force led by America and Britain.

In his address Saddam Hussein praised the bravery of the people of Iraq, condemning those who had opposed the country during the war.

"Some of you have forgotten (but) I do not think that many of you have forgotten who were on the other side of the encounter," the BBC Cable Network transmitted his translated speech

"there were the debased, the enemy of Allah and those who have Satan as their protector. There were those who missed no chance to confirm their character which was destined for disgrace and shame whose marks would never disappear till dooms day", read part of the translated speech.



Saddam

day. Aziz, speaking at a news conference, defended Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, which triggered the war that Iraq trumpeted as "Mother of all Battles".

"Iraq was the victim of a conspiracy against its sovereignty, national interest and Kuwait was part and parcel of the conspiracy. So Kuwait deserves what it got in 1990," Aziz said.

Asked about Uday's recommendation to parliament, published on Monday, Aziz said: "What the son of the president said is his personal view. He is a member of parliament and can express his views freely."

Uday's claim angered Kuwaiti officials who said it proved that Saddam remained a threat to his neighbour.

AUS-led coalition launched Operation Desert Storm against Iraq on January 17, 1991 and evicted Iraqi troops from Kuwait six weeks late at a heavy cost to Iraq.

But he distanced his government from a call by President Saddam Hussein's eldest son Uday to include the emirate's territory in an Iraqi map on the emblem of the national parliament.

At the rally, Iraqis and Arabs burned the American flag amid chants of "down, down USA, down British crown". The crowd hoisted pictures of Saddam and Iraqi, Lebanese and Palestinian flags.

A score of Americans from the International Action Centre, opposed to UN sanctions in Iraq, was at the rally. He told journalist that the war was tantamount to a "genocide and has to be remembered and has to be prevented to happen again".

Michel Wolff, a 36-year-old truck driver from San Diego, told Reuters: "We have been to hospitals and schools and saw first hand the misery caused by the sanctions."

Wolff said he understood the anti-American feelings in the crowd but hoped that Iraqis would distinguish between the American government and the American people.

"I don't blame them. After what the US government has done to them, their feelings are normal," he said.

Mohamed, an Iraqi, said he took part in the rally to show the world the Iraqi people had not been defeated in the Gulf War.

"Ten years after the aggression, we are here still chanting death to American," he said.

FELICITATIONS

In the "Land of Equity", we know that every move *Weekly Trust* makes is in complete understanding of the needs of its immediate constituency. We shall associate and identify with you at all times. We hope and believe that *Daily Trust* publication shall be a success.



Alhaji Muhammad Adamu Aliero

Excutive Governor, Kebbi State.

Kebbi State Government and it's entire people welcome the birth of DAILY TRUST.

Long live Daily Trust

Long live Kebbi State

Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria

₦ £ \$

BUSINESS DAY

₦ \$ ¥

OPEC slashes exports by 1.5 million barrels

By Aliyu Ma'aji,
Business Editor

The organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries, OPEC, formally announced its decision to cut oil exports by 1.5 million barrels per day (bpd). This conclusion was reached at the end of the cartel's Ministerial Conference held in Vienna, Austria yesterday.

OPEC said it wants to prevent oil prices from slipping below 20 dollars (bpd), let alone collapse back into the single digit prices of \$9.00 recorded in 1998. The reduction lowers limits for the 10-member nations to 25.2 million bpd. Iran was initially pushing for a larger reduction of 1.7 million bpd. Major oil guzzling western nations are worried that rising energy costs, especially that of heating oil, could spell trouble for their slowing economies at a time when a very harsh winter is envisaged.

"Stocks are increasing and in the second quarter we saw a sharp fall in prices

coming," said OPEC Secretary-General, Ali Rodriguez. "We wanted to maintain the stability of the market and of course of prices."

"This is significant because it is the first time that OPEC has cut production to defend the new higher price level of \$25 a barrel," said Gary Ross of U.S. Consultancy Pira Energy.

"This deal should do the trick but there are risks that the economy slides out from underneath them."

OPEC was blamed last year for stirring inflation by moving too slowly to restore output curbs that propelled oil prices from the lows of 1998 to a 35 dollars high for Benchmark Brent three months ago. Inventories of crude and petroleum products slipped to record lows. Consuming nations are worried that OPEC cutbacks will prevent stocks rebuilding and keep prices volatile.

"OPEC is showing that it is more determined to defend the floor of its 22-28 dollars target price than the

ceiling," said Raad Alkadiri of Washington's Petroleum Finance Co. The United States and the European Union had urged OPEC to consider maintaining output or at least to make only a modest reduction.

As at the time of going to press U.S. light crude traded at the London Mercantile Exchange at just over 30 dollars a barrel, while OPEC's basket of lower quality crude were valued at 25 dollars.

GSM: Bidding closed at \$150m, continues today

By Osborne Adi Jnr.

The five firms vying for the three Global System for Mobil Communication (GSM) slots put up for auction by the federal government ran neck to neck in a keen contest to win the licences at stake.

At the close of bidding yesterday at the Nicon Hilton Hotel, Abuja, venue of the auction, all the five contenders bided up to \$150m each, signalling indications that the race may

take more cash stakes before the completion of the exercise.

Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC), Chairman, Alhaji Ahmed Joda at a news conference signalling the end of the day's business said the process would continue today as none of the participants showed any sign of withdrawal.

The companies which were being sponsored by major players in the

Nigerian economy with additional cash and technical backing from their foreign partners showed that they were ready to go all the miles it was only a matter of cash,

Indications that it was going to be a tough battle emerged earlier in the day when at the end of the first round of bidding all the bidders offered \$110 million each giving a difference of \$10,000 above the starting benchmark of \$100 million stipulated by the NCC.

Also at the end of the second round, the firms jerked up their offers by 10% when they each pushed bids to \$121 million.

The amount peaked at \$130 million at the end of the third round. It was however, \$140 million at the close of round four and by the time the exercise closed by 4:45 pm, offers stood at \$150 million.

The NCC Executive Vice Chairman, Engr. Earnest Ndukwe who briefed the press at the end of each round said the exercise was hitch-free. He was confident that the going will end well.



OPEC CONFERENCE: From Left: Dr. Aboki Zhawa, Mr. Ali Rodriguez, OPEC scribe and Dr. Rilwanu Lukman

CBN predicts economic boom in 2001

From Bright Ewulu
in Lagos

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has envisaged an efficient and booming economy in the country this year with the introduction of some structural changes in the Year 2001 Fiscal Policy measures.

The Deputy Governor of the CBN, Dr. Shamsuddeen Usman made the prediction at the opening of a seminar on "Year 2001 Budget and CBN monetary, credit, Foreign Trade and Exchange Policy Guidelines" in Lagos.

Dr. Usman, who conceded that the Year 2000 budget failed to meet the expectations of the populace, asserted that some achievements were recorded, stressing that this year's budget is structured to consolidate and strengthen the gains of the preceding year.

He noted that the policy thought of the new budget is to make the nation's economy more efficient,

market oriented, private sector-led and technology driven.

The Deputy Governor denied allegations that he was at the vanguard of the campaigning for the imposition of 45 years age-limit as requirement for ascending management position in banking.

He expressed the apex bank's hope that the interest of players in the nation's financial sector will be focused on exploiting the gains of the newly introduced Universal Banking System.



Chief Joseph Sanusi
CBN Governor

Standard Trust Bank to host investment summit

By Ahmed Shekarau

Standard Trust Bank Limited (STB), is organising an International Investment Summit that will expose investment opportunities in the North-Central Zone.

The Regional Director, North-Central zone of the bank, Mr. Charles Nwodo Jnr., disclosed at a press briefing yesterday in Abuja that the summit, scheduled to hold at the Sheraton Hotel and Towers on January 30, 2001, will highlight "the agricultural and solid mineral potentials of the zone and ways of developing them for the commercial benefit of the region."

Mr. Nwodo Jnr. Disclosed further that the summit, whose theme is, "Investment Opportunities in the North-Central Region: The Challenge of Solid Minerals and Agro-Allied Business Financing," also aims at achieving other objectives which include:

(a) To facilitate a fast track approach in the development of the Solid Mineral sector; (b) to create a forum for cross fertilisation

of ideas between the government and private sector in policy formulation and to support the government's initiative of involving the private sector in economic development; (c) to underscore the role of STB as a developmental facilitator and strategically reposition the bank to take full advantage of emerging opportunities.

The Regional Director said STB's decision to organise the investment summit is informed by its desire to play a catalyst role in developing the

community or environment it operates.

He said STB's role in this direction will not just be limited to the solid minerals and agricultural sectors, but also education, health and environmental degradation, among others.

Participants at the summit, which will be kicked-off by Vice President Atiku Abubakar, include the Presidency, Federal Ministries of solid Minerals, Agriculture and Finance, government of the North-Central states comprising Nasarawa, Plateau, Benue, Kogi, Kwara and Niger,

Local Government Chairmen from the zone, operators in the mining sector, leading Agro-allied companies in the region, business consultants, researchers and other stakeholders in the sectors.

Answering questions from journalists, Mr. Nwodo said that his bank is not going headlong into intensive agricultural financing; "We believe in the philosophy of corporate social responsibility. So we are inviting stakeholders to come and discuss the issue at stake and possibly, from their submissions, get a major rallying point."

MMA terminal reconstruction to gulp N.2billion

From Kemi Meseke
in Lagos

The terminal of the Murtala Mohammed Airport (MMA), Lagos razed by fire last May, 2000 is to be reconstructed at the sum of 2.65 million dollars, about N265 million.

The Minister of Aviation, Dr. Kema Chikwe disclosed in Lagos, early in the week while she was formerly handed over the burnt terminal by members of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry set up to investigate the cause of the fire disaster.

The reconstruction project, which is to be implemented via a contractor-financed arrangement, has been awarded to a Canadian Construction company, Messers Sanderston Ventures Limited.

Dr. Chikwe said the contractor-financed arrangement will ease the financial burden of the government and ensure speedy implementation of the project. The contracted firm, Sanderston Ventures is also billed to manage the MMA for the next ten years.

Meanwhile, the Justice Nasir Ajanah-led Commission of Inquiry set up to unravel the

circumstances surrounding the fire outbreak at the terminal has since submitted its report to President Olusegun Obasanjo.

In another development, Skypower Aviation Handling Company Limited (SAHCOL) a subsidiary of the Nigeria Airways Limited (NAL) has refurbished the two-grounded high loaders belonging to the Airways Company.

The NAL's highlanders, No. 13.14 and MDL 40 fleet No. 3/1, have been grounded for over eight years.

According to SAHCOL's Public Affairs Officer, Mr. Basir Agbaorinmi, refurbishing the two high loaders would have cost about 40 per cent more if it was contracted to expatriates.

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BUSINESS DAY

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ENERGY

Expert makes case for alternative energy

Green environmentally friendly energy, such as solar, wind and wave power, is one of the most pressing issues facing mankind in the new millennium, the Executive Director of United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), Klaus Toepfer told a meeting on renewable energy in Paris.

"Green energy must be put at the heart of sustainable development if the threats of climate change and the need to tackle poverty and ill health in the developing world are to be truly addressed," Toepfer warned.

"Sustainable development, or not cheating on your children, means things like ensuring our ever-growing cities function as stimulating and vibrant places to live and work; to ensuring that the poorest people in the world are not forced to chop down forests full of precious wildlife for wood to cook or keep warm," he added.

Toepfer noted: "I cannot

frankly see how these problems can be overcome without the widespread introduction of non-or lesser-polluting forms of energy which conserve the planet's finite resources of coal, oil and other fossil fuels."

Toepfer's exhortations come in the run-up to UNEP's 21st session of its Governing Council in which ministers from around the world will meet in Nairobi from Feb. 5 to Feb. 9 when renewable and sustainable energy will be among the key issues on the council's agenda.

UNEP believes that the reality of the promise of green and less polluting energy schemes, able to bring heat and light to rural communities or help pump water to rural communities and rapidly expanding cities, may hinge on developing a pioneering network of advice centres across Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Such centres will also be able to act as Brokers,

helping to bring together governments, communities, development banks other loan agencies and technical experts, to overcome financial and other hurdles which can slow down the introduction of renewable energy projects, UNEP suggests.

Meanwhile, John Cristensen, head of the UNEP collaborating laboratory in Denmark said an informal network with two centres in each of the three key regions has been established and is already helping countries such as Tanzania develop less polluting forms of energy.

"We have identified regional centres of expertise and now wish to formalise these relationships. We have found that working this way, we can move rapidly and more flexibly to deliver sustainable energy schemes in some of the places where they can make a real difference to people's lives," Christensen said.

... As study reveals that Bio-diesels are cancerous

Rapeseed oil used as a green alternative to conventional vehicle fuels can produce 10 times more cancer-causing emissions and pollutants than diesel, a Swedish research report has shown.

Rapeseed oil or Rapeseed Methyl Ester (RME) had been considered one of the best alternatives among Bio-diesels. Its use as a green alternative was rising in Europe, especially in Germany, Associate Professor Jim Olson at the Department of Physical Chemistry at Chalmers University of Technology in the Southwestern city of Gothenburg has said.

In the study, scientists

burned rapeseed oil at temperatures equivalent to those in a combustion engine and compared the emissions with those formed when burning a superior grade of diesel oil.

"Rapeseed oil and RME produced factor 10 more 1-Alkenes, Dienes and Benzene in comparison with diesel SCEI," the report said.

"The reactive intermediate organic compounds produced during Oxidation of rapeseed oil and RME have strong Ozone forming potentials. Subsequently they can promote formation of organic smog," it said.

Some of the rapeseed products such as Alkene, 1,3 Butadiene and Benzene are also

considered to be carcinogenic, it added.

"When it comes to Alternative fuels people often advocate the advantages and overlook the disadvantages. I think this is a disadvantage which has been overlooked," Olsson said.

Somewhat lower and less dangerous emissions could be achieved if engines were optimised for rapeseed oil but this would only reduce, not eliminate the disadvantage compared with diesel, he said, adding: "People tend to use rapeseed oils in ordinary diesel engines, and that is a problem.

COMPANY REPORTS

TOTAL NIGERIA PLC: Unaudited results for the third quarter ended 30th September 2000 show a turnover of N20.1 billion, compared with N15.6 billion in the corresponding period of 1999. Profit after tax stood at N1.2 billion, as against N1.1 billion in 1999.

ACADEMY PRESS PLC: Unaudited results for the half year ended 30th September

2000 show a turnover of N201.1 million, as against N201.5 million in the corresponding period of 1999. Loss after tax stood at N8.9 million, compared with N15.6 million in

1999.
BERGER PAINTS NIGERIA PLC: Unaudited results for the third quarter-ended 30th September 2000 show a turnover of 805.9 million, compared with N777.8 million in the corresponding period of 1999. Profit after tax stood at N13.6 million, as against N 11.6 million in 1999.

AFRICAN PAINTS NIGERIA PLC: Audited results for the year ended 31- December 1999 show a turnover of N194.7 million, compared with N156.2 million in 1998. Profit after tax stood at N3.7 million, as against

a loss of N52.1 million in 1998.

INTERLINKED TECHNOLOGIES PLC: Audited results for the year ended 30th June 2000 show a turnover of N19.0 million, as against N17.7 million in 1999. Loss after tax stood at N13.5 million compared with a profit after tax of N5.0 million in 1999.

NEM INSURANCE PLC: Unaudited results for the second quarter ended 30th June 2000 show a gross earning of N85.8 million, as against N81.7 million in the corresponding period of 1999. Profit after tax stood at N10.3 million, compared with N5.8 million in 1999.

Gainers

COMPANY	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE
TEXACO	59.70	62.68	2.98
NESTLE	47.00	49.34	2.34
GUINNESS	35.69	37.47	1.78
NB	32.18	33.78	1.60
UBN	30.42	31.94	1.52
JBERGER	31.97	33.45	1.48
AGIP	25.35	26.61	1.26
LEVIBROS	21.67	22.75	1.08
UBA	16.96	17.82	0.84
NBC	14.65	15.38	0.73
PZ	13.34	14.00	0.66
AFRIBANK	9.17	9.62	0.45
DUNLOP	4.72	4.95	0.23
BERGER	3.50	3.67	0.17
AIICO	3.50	3.67	0.17
UTB	3.25	3.41	0.16
UACN	3.32	3.47	0.15
INLANDBANK	2.00	2.09	0.09
NIWICABLE	1.90	1.99	0.09
MANNYBANK	1.80	1.88	0.08
SAVANNA	1.75	1.88	0.08
COOPBANK	1.39	1.45	0.06
COOPDEV	1.11	1.16	0.05
EKOBANK	0.95	0.99	0.04
LASACO	0.88	0.92	0.04

Losers

COMPANY	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE
CHARTERED	4.00	3.81	0.19
CRUSADER	1.85	1.80	0.05
7UP	5.55	6.50	0.05
FIRST BANL	30.04	29.99	0.05
UAC-PROP	1.90	1.86	0.04
DNMEYER	7.20	7.18	0.02
NASCON	0.86	0.84	0.02
ORIENTBANK	0.68	0.66	0.02

Summary of NSE Transactions

	OPENING	CLOSING	%AGE CHANGE
MKT. CAP	531,003,311,413.69	548,305,786,390.38	3.26
INDEX	9,241.27	9,542.39	3.26

DEALS	VOLUME	VALUE	No. OF COMPANIES
1,709	35,697,682	478,477,844.99	87

Source: NSE, Abuja Area Office.



BUSINESS DAY



Finance

CICO declares bonus shares as earnings dip

Aliyu Ma'aji, Business Editor

Based on a Revenue Reserve of N65.87 million, the shareholders of Central Insurance Company (CICO) have passed a resolution directing the Board to issue a bonus share of 3 for 1; this amounts to N33 million to existing shareholders as at December 1999. The balance of N32 million will be reserved as undistributed.

According to a statement made available to *Business Day*, this decision was reached at the company's 6th Annual General Meeting (AGM) held recently at the Eko Meriden Hotel in Lagos. Lamenting the poor performance of the

company in the financial year under review, CICO Chairman, Senator Udoma Udo Udoma said the year was quiet a difficult one for the company with the departure of the pioneer Chairman and a time the company was operating without a substantive Managing Director/CEO. Consequently, gross premium fell to N138.39 million from N209.58 million in 1998, which resulted in an underwriting loss of N6.99m. The profit on Ordinary activities before taxation and exceptional items was 6.2 million. This also includes N5.05 million of investment written-off. Profit of the year transferred to Revenue Reserve was N55.64 million.

Meanwhile, paid up capital, Contingency, Revenue Reserves and total assets of the company stood at N188.42 million and N504.86 million respectively. Investment increased to N270.63 million from N188.24 million in 1998. Total claims paid by the company stood at N35.10 million, an increase of 24% over the 1998 figure of N28.18 million.



Alhaji Adamu Ciroma Minister for Finance

Exploit AGOA, Minister urges investors

By Basey Ita, in Calabar

The Organised Private Sector (OPS) in the country has been urged to utilise effectively the opportunity offered by the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) of the United States government and invest massively in small and medium scale industries to turn the economy around.

Minister of Commerce, Alhaji Mustapha Bello made the call in Calabar at the weekend at a sensitisation workshop on AGOA organised by the Ministerial Committee for publicity on AGOA.

The Minister urged Nigerian entrepreneurs to utilise the opportunity offered

by the workshop to produce good quality of goods for export freely to the United States of America within the eight years tenure of the Act.

Alhaji Bello who was represented at the occasion by the National President of Nigeria Association of Leather and Allied Products, Chief Ebenezer Ibiama stated that Nigeria will witness "a multiplier effect on the economy through the expansion of business generation of employment and alleviation of poverty," only if the organised private sector would harness the benefits of the Act.

The Commerce Minister further advised the three tiers of government to facilitate the take off of AGOA by promoting trade and investment in their various

spheres of responsibility since entrepreneurs, producers and manufacturers reside in their domain.

According to the Minister, however, "through our co-operative efforts, we would be able to mobilise the OPS through their various umbrella organisations, such as Chambers of Commerce, the Manufacturers' Association of Nigeria (MAN) Association of Nigerian Exporters among others to ensure that Nigeria derives maximum benefits from the improved favourable market access offered by the United States government.

Earlier, the Special Adviser to Governor Duke on Trade and Investment, Barrister3 Attah Ochinke said that the Cross River State government was equally ready to implement all the programmes of the Act.

Kaduna Trade Fair takes off next month

From Dare Oyewole in Kaduna

Exhibitors from parts of the world are expected at the 22nd Kaduna International Trade Fair which is scheduled to hold from February 17 - 25.

Addressing newsmen on Monday in Kaduna, Alhaji Munir Ja'afaru, Yarima Zazzau and 1st Deputy President of the Kaduna Chamber of Commerce, industry, Mines and Agriculture (KADCCIMA), said that exhibitors from about 10 countries had confirmed their participation.

He said that

confirmation had come from such countries like Argentina, Pakistan, Turkey, Niger Republic, Egypt, Iran and South Africa are expected at the fair, while discussions were on with potential participants from the U.S., the United Kingdom, China and Italy.

The Yeriman Zazzau, who is also the chairman of KADCCIMA' main organising committee on the fair said the theme of the 22nd fair is: "Harnessing Nigeria's Resources endowment for fostering economic development.

The theme had been deliberately chosen to promote the new investment

climate in Nigeria and sensitise the business community both within and outside the country on the need to use the nation's potential," he added.

Alhaji Ja'afaru also disclosed that sub-committees to take charge of various aspects of the fair, had been constituted, while other logistic arrangement were being finalised. He called on Nigerians, particularly the government and people of Kaduna State, to give special consideration to the calendar and enjoined the to collaborate with KADCCIMA ensuring the success of the forthcoming fair (NAN).

Nigeria's sugar production up by 50 per cent

By Ahmed Shekarau

Nigeria's annual production of sugar, which at the moment stands at about 800,000 metric tonnes has been increased by 50 per cent with the production of 400,000 metric tonnes annual by Dangote Sugar Company, an arm of Dangote Industries Limited (DIL).

This was disclosed exclusively to *Business Day* by the Group Representative of Dangote Group of Companies, Alhaji Isa Tata Yusuf in Abuja.

Alhaji Tata said though the Dangote Sugar refinery took-off since 1998, it actually started production in 1999 and that "the Company is producing 1,000 metric tonnes a day, which is about 400,000 tonnes in a year."

is still above the country's total production level at the moment.

According to Tata his Company "is hoping to boost its production ceiling when the proposed sugarcane estates the Group is establishing through a joint venture agreement with Jigawa and Bauchi States, take-

and 7,000 hectares of land respectively for the proposed sugarcane estates, adding that "we'll be able to produce about 200,000 tonnes of sugarcane from these two estates through which about 1.5 million metric tonnes of sugar can be produced."

This feat, Tata said, would be achieved in the next four years in view of the period it takes such estates to be fully developed."

He also refuted allegations by some Nigerians that the Dangote Sugar Company packages refined sugar and distribute to its consumers, arguing that "we have actually been refining raw sugar into white sugar, contrary to the belief that we only package."

He said developing a sugar company is capital intensive and so, the President of the Group, Alhaji Aliko Dangote decided to start refining sugar before it will finally be integrated to the proposed sugar estate



Stephen Akiga Industry Minister

The Dangote Group representative said even though the nation's domestic requirement for sugar, which is over one million metric tonnes,

He told *Business Day* that the Jigawa and Bauchi States Governments allocated 10,000

NITEL, M-TEL probe shifts to Lagos

The Federal Government's Commission of inquiry investigating into the activities of the management of Nigeria Telecommunications Limited (NITEL) and the Nigeria Mobile Telecommunications Limited (M-TEL), has shifted the venue of its sittings to Lagos.

The Commission, under the Chairmanship of Hon. Justice Daniel Ishola Adeniyi (rtd), will commence public sitting on Monday, January 22, 2001, at the chambers of the National Assembly, Tafawa Balewa Square, Lagos.

A statement signed by the Secretary of the Commission revealed that the Commission's terms of reference include: (a) to investigate and determine the level of illegal crediting of customers' accounts without corresponding entries in the

ledgers to show actual payments; (b) determine the person or persons responsible for the illegal crediting of customers' accounts; (c) unearth the riddle existing between the Commercial and Accounts Departments of NITEL and M-TEL; (d) investigate the payment into and disbursement of funds from the domiciliary account of NITEL into which N16 billion was credited for the development of NITEL through External Lines Plant (ELP) and for which there is no evidence of the installation of an ELP, and such other domiciliary accounts of NITEL and M-TEL; (e) inquire into how much of the N16 billion was disbursed and expended by NITEL without corresponding achievement of the objective for which the fund was

established; (f) determine the assets and extent of liabilities of M-TEL since its incorporation and examine all relevant documents especially in relation to acquisition of moveable and immovable properties with particular reference to all transactions with the Federal Capital Development Authority; (g) examine the process of allocation of direct mobile lines and make appropriate recommendations to forestall official abuse; (h) and, to make appropriate recommendations aimed at eliminating all loopholes in the management of NITEL and M-TEL with a view to revamping their general output to the public in particular and the nation in general, among others.

SUMMARY OF KEY STATISTICS IN THE NIGERIAN BANKING INDUSTRY

Parameter	1996	1997	1998	1999*
Gross Domestic Product (N' billion) at Current Market Price	2,833.19	3,127.94	3,123.9	3,250.67
Number of Banks in Nigeria	115	115	89	90
Total Assets of Financial Services Industry (TAFSI) (N' billion)	693.8	860.3	903.8	1,270.06
Total Assets of Banks (N' billion)**	491.5	627.3	760.6	1,108.09
Ratio of Total Bank Assets to GDP (%)	20	20	24	34
Ratio of Total Bank Assets to TAFSI (%)	70.8	73	84.32	87.3
Total Deposits of Banks (N' billion)	258.9	326.0	375.8	569.80
Ratio of Total Bank Deposits to GDP (%)	9	10	12	17.5
Total Loans and Leases of Banks (N' billion)	213.6	223.7	327.2	370.2
Total Assets of Distressed Banks (N' billion)	65.1	56.3	29.9	16.85
Ratio of Total Assets of Distressed Banks to GDP (%)	2.3	1.8	0.95	0.51
Ratio of Total Assets of Distressed Banks to Total Assets of the Banking Industry (%)	11.0	9.9	3.9	1.5
Total Deposits of Distressed Banks (N' billion)	29.3	29.4	13.3	9.23
Ratio of Total Deposits of Distressed Banks to GDP (%)	1	0.93	0.43	0.28
Ratio of Total Deposits of Distressed Banks to Total Deposits of the Banking Industry (%)	11	9.0	3.5	1.6
Total Loans and Leases of Distressed Banks (N' billion)	50.6	47.5	21.2	18.16
Ratio of Total Loans and Leases of Distressed Banks to Total Loans and Leases of the Banking Industry (%)	23.7	21.2	6.4	4.9
Non-Performing Loans and Leases of Distressed Banks (N' billion)	40.3	38.9	16.8	15.72
Ratio of Non-Performing Loans and Leases of Distressed Banks to Total Loans and Leases (%)	79.8	82.0	79.2	86.6
Required Recapitalization of Distressed Banks (N' billion)	42.4	42.4	15.47	15.26

Note: * Provisional
 ** Excluding Off-Balance Sheet Items
 Source: NDIC Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, Various Issues, CBN Annual Reports, 195, 1996 and 1997 National Planning Commission

Star Interview

Ahmadu Bello's successors were his opposite – Abubakar Tuggar

By Suleiman Mohammed

Senator Abubakar Tuggar was the National Secretary of the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC), the political party that led the First Republic with Sir Ahmadu Bello as Premier of Northern Region. In this interview with Suleiman Mohammed in Abuja, the Second Republic Senator discussed his experiences with the late Sardauna among other things.

Daily Trust: As one of the key officials of the defunct NPC, how did you receive the news of the assassination of Sir Ahmadu Bello on January 15, 1966.

Tuggar: I was indeed flabbergasted and lost a lot of

hope. Not only myself, but almost every person who was ever associated with the late Sardauna lost hope, and knew that the incident was a serious loss particularly to the north and the country in general. I believe some of his good works are still being enjoyed by Nigerians and even some African countries.

DT: How close were you to the late Sardauna?

Tuggar: We were very close. But I was drafted to NPC by my education officer who was earlier on my headmaster at the Bauchi Middle School (now Bauchi Secondary School).

DT: The politics of Sir Ahmadu Bello is today considered as the most



Sir Ahmadu Bello

detrimental in the north, despite various ethnic groupings and religious differences. How do you compare the activities of the defunct NPC and what we have today in Nigeria?

Tuggar: Right. Sir Ahmadu was never a tribal leader because northern Nigeria was a conglomeration of many tribes. It is composed of so many tribes out of which you can hardly call any one tribe as the majority.

So Northern Nigeria was a model of a number of nations, which agreed to come together in order to salvage their people from similar circumstances.

DT: Critics are of the view that northern elites (both civilian and military) who benefited from the late Sardauna have betrayed the Premier by not carrying on with his policy

of northernisation devoid of ethnic and religious differences.

Tuggar: Well, I may share the same view but not to the extent that people think. I believe that the opportunity opened to Sardauna in which he helped in uplifting the northern people irrespective of tribe and religious differences had even increased after his death. But unfortunately those that were in a position, those that Sardauna trained to behave like him only went about looking after themselves and their immediate families.

Their kind of patriotism, if they have any at all, is absolutely the opposite to the kind of patriotism Sardauna had for his people, to uplift their status and provide good welfare for the masses.

ECONOMICAL
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Star Feature

Like lamb to the slaughter

By Aisha Umar Yusuf, *Features Editor*

When he answered "I have finished with him" in response to Sheikh Abubakar Gummi's request to convey the body of late Sir Ahmadu Bello to Sokoto, little did Major Chukwuma Nzeogwu know that it was the beginning of the end for him too.

The fact that he later had second thoughts and withdrew the permission, the fact that Sardauna ended up buried in Kaduna in opposition to his personal wishes, did not in

anyway detract from the enormity of his loss nor the gravity of Nzeogwu's crime.

By his own admission, Nzeogwu killed Sir Ahmadu Bello because of his Northernization policy. Acting very much like the hero he thought he was, eye-witnesses said that Major Chukwuma Nzeogwu declared this when he met with Northern cabinet ministers and permanent secretaries on January 16th 1966.

He reasoned that he did

not like the idea that a Nigerian was a foreigner in his own country.

This was a very negative view of the Northernization policy. This policy was much hated by those who felt disadvantaged by it then and even today, there are those who write and talk about it in uncomplimentary terms.

In this category are the people who say it heightened disunity among Nigerians and led to uneven development, even though thirty-five years after its abortion, Nigerians are nowhere near a unity of pur-

pose and direction.

Among those who believe the uneven development theory is Ambassador Mahmud Yahaya who submitted that the North remained backward educationally and depended on other means to catch up with the rest of Nigeria, through Northernization policy in those days and federal character today.

Writing in the June 2nd 2000 edition of the *Weekly Trust* in an article titled: "The Hypocrisy of it all", Amba-

Continued on page 18



Sir Ahmadu Bello



Service at affordable rates

...ys been the lowest. They still are. With on-
SERVICE however, our low cost services now

...ans and security escorts that ensure your mail
...d, with 10 mail exchange centers, several
...ction of a new postcode system, you can now
...il and parcels.

...STAL SERVICE

...asantly surprise you.

Like lamb to...

Continued from page 17

sador Yahaya opined that the state of education in the North at the time of independence was no later than it is today.

These statements would not have caused a stir if they had come from a Southerner writing in a Southern medium, because these are sentiments one reads about every other day in the Southern press. But coming from a Northerner who possibly lived through part, if not all of the days of this Northernization policy, these claims cannot be dismissed off-hand.

To fully understand this misunderstood, much-maligned exercise, one needs to step back in history to examine what factors led to it and why it caused the Sardauna his life and those of others.

When in 1953 at the Federal Legislature in Lagos, Chief Anthony Enahoro stood up on behalf of his party, the Action Group and moved a motion, calling for independence for Nigeria from Britain by 1956, it was the Northern Peoples Congress members who opposed it.

Led by the late Ibrahim Imam, the NPC voiced the view that the North was not ready for independence then because it was not equipped enough to face the challenges of independence. Explaining this position, to me during an interview in 1998, Alhaji Liman Ciroma, a former Sec-

retary to the Government of the Federation said, "Northerners were then the gardeners, the labourers and the guards in Northern ministries. At the top of the Northern civil service were the white men, in the middle were Ghanaians and people from Southern Nigeria. It was at the bottom rung that our people belonged".

The reasoning of the Northern leaders was that once independence was granted and the white men withdrew, then Ghanaians and Southerners will automatically take over the Northern civil service and leave Northerners at the lowest cadre, even on their own land.

Though the debate was won by the NPC and independence was deferred till 1960, the NPC-led Northern Regional government could not close its eyes to the passage of time and the need for quick action in terms of educating and training Northerners to take over their rightful place in their own civil service.

This vigorous recruitment of Northerners into schools, the armed forces, their enrolment into crash courses and the establishment of schools, colleges and training centres during the period preceding independence and soon afterwards were the crux of the Northernization policy. Sir Ahmadu Bello himself confirmed that between 1952 and 1963 the number of secondary schools alone had risen from two to 53. (See Sir Ahmadu

Bello's speech below).

According to John Paden, Sardauna's driving theme was to catch up with other regions in order for even development to prevail all over Nigeria. Even though preference and priority was given to Northerners in both educational provision and job recruitment, there were no known cases of sack or refusal to enrol, people of Southern Nigeria in either Northern schools or the civil service. Indeed, if such a thing had happened it would have resulted in an exodus of Southerners from the North in the First Republic. Yet, such a thing was never recorded in Nigeria until the "Aware" riots of 1966 which followed the counter coup of July the same year.

So to all those who care to know, Northernization policy was not the great anti-unity demon that Nzeogwu and co wished us to believe. Indeed, historians claim that the same strategy was used by other regions at the same time i.e. preference for natives in educational and job provision, it was just that in the North, it was a publicised state policy that the Sardauna and his colleagues didn't think of as something to hide.

Disparity between the North and the South in terms of education was caused by factors that preceded this policy by several decades. Western education, which was introduced to Southern Nigeria by European missionaries

started in the South-West 70 years ahead of the North and in the South-East 50 years before the North.

Geographical as well as historical factors contributed to this. Geographically, the coastal cities of the South were easily accessible to Europeans and as such Southerners were the first people they interacted with and introduced their religion and way of life to.

Historically, the North had a distinct and organised socio-political lifestyle based on the religion of Islam. When white men finally found their way into the hinterland after Mungo Park's discovery of the River Niger, they found not just political resistance as a result of the existing, sophisticated state structure that obtained in the North, but a refusal to accept their education and way of life which came along with an alien religion - Christianity. This refusal to accept western education continued among Muslim Northerners till the colonialists decided to establish government-owned schools, devoid of any religious colouration in major Northern cities. The first of such western-type schools was established in Kano in 1909.

A seven-year head start is unlikely to be overtaken or even caught up with without deliberate or concerted efforts but a 70 year head start can never be overtaken however much the effort. Attempts can be made at bridging the gap but it wouldn't take a genius to know that overtaking it is an

impossibility any day. Now, this is the story of the disparity between the North and the South in terms of western education. Sardauna's Northernization policy, was actually an attempt to bridge that gap. It never had anything to do with creating the difference.

As for the federal character exercise, which Ambassador Yahaya compared with the Northernization policy and a more unfair comparison cannot be found anywhere. It was aimed at giving all Nigerians access to Federal Government jobs which were hitherto filled with people from particular sections of the country. That became necessary when most Nigerians were forced to work under their state governments or go private because jobs in federal ministries and parastatals had become the preserve of certain Nigerians, to the exclusion of all others. This was the anomaly the federal character exercise was established to address. It had nothing to do with noble aims of the Northernization policy - for which the Sardauna paid with his life.

Yes Nzeogwu believed he had finished with Sir Ahmadu Bello on January 15, thirty-five years ago. And though he

died two years later - fighting on the side of Biafra - and was inexplicably given a heroes funeral, no well-meaning Nigerian will ever consider him a hero.

It was the Gowon administration's wisdom to remember the armed forces on the day they did their worst atrocity in Nigerian history. (The civil war actually ended on January 12th, but his "no victor no vanquished" speech was delivered on the 15th).

Whoever subsequent Nigerian government choose to remember on this particular date, we know that the real heroes of that day were those innocent sons and daughters of Nigeria who were led, like lambs to the slaughter, to an early grave, by fake revolutionaries and tribal zealots.

On January 15 each year, there are many who like me weren't even born when they were killed but who will say a solemn prayer for the repose of the souls of Sir Ahmadu Bello, Hajija Hafsat Bello, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Chief Samuel Akintola, Chief Festus Okotie-Eboh, Brigadier Zakariya Maimalari, Brigadier Ademulegun, Mrs. S.A. Ademulegun, Colonel Kur Mohammed, Lieut. Col. J.Y. Pam, Lieut. Col. A. Largema, Col. S.A. Shodeinde, Major S. Adegoke, Alhaji Ahmed Ben Musa, Baba Zarumi and Lieut. James Odu the true heroes of democracy.

"We know that the real heroes of that day were those innocent sons and daughters of Nigeria who were led, like lambs to the slaughter to an early grave, by fake revolutionaries and tribal zealots."

No room for free passengers

Excerpts from a speech delivered at the Government College, Zaria in September 1963

The theme of my speech today is on the urgent need for higher academic achievements and a higher moral tone in all Secondary Schools and Institutions of learning in the Region.

In other words, my Government is not satisfied with the standards set by you. This is not meant to belittle your past achievements which were quite good. But when you pause and compare the steep rise in the number of Secondary Schools with the number of boys and girls of Northern origin who have gained admission into Universities, you will agree with me that your recent achievements are not good enough for Northern Nigeria.

There has been a remarkable development in Secondary education since 1952. In 1952 when Ministerial system of Government was introduced there were only two Secondary Schools in the Region. Now, there are fifty-three at different stages of growth.

In view of this remarkable growth can you sincerely say that your academic achievement in the past ten years has been proportional to this development?

No doubt, one or two schools can rightly answer this question in the affirmative. But that is a small minority.

I note with deep regret that one of those schools which have failed to rise to the occasion and set the pace and standard of high academic attainment is my alma mater. Last year 50 per cent of the boys of this college who took the West African School Certificate examinations failed.

If I may ask you, staff and boys of Government College, Zaria, why must you lag behind? You have a great history behind you. Many of the leaders of this country are Old Boys of this College. You must wake up from your slumber and pull your weight.

This reprimand is equally applicable to many of our Secondary Schools. You have wonderful opportunities. You must take them. If you let them pass, you will never have them again. You may wonder why

Sir Ahmadu Bello, 1963

I should say that you have wonderful opportunities and that if you let them pass you will never have them again. The explanation is simple.

The demand for boys and girls who have completed Secondary education has been great during the past ten years. This great demand, as you are no doubt aware, has been caused by the implementation of the Northernisation Policy of my Government. Every boy and every girl who had that qualification, has been either absorbed in the public service of the Region, or offered scholarship for higher education.

This great demand for secondary school leavers will not continue indefinitely. There will come a time when secondary educational qualification will not be enough to gain you a good job. Perhaps by the time the lowest forms pass out of school, they may be faced with very fierce competition for well-paid jobs. Perhaps by that time most if not all the executive grades, the intermediate grades in the public service would have been filled. And

all well-paid jobs might require high academic and professional qualifications. There will then be no room for idlers and free passengers in our schools, who have no ambition, and no intention to be ambitious.

I hope you do now appreciate what I mean when I say you have wonderful opportunities, if you fail to take full advantage of your education now, you may live to regret it for the rest of your lives.

I have been told that little effort is being exerted by some boys and girls in schools and that teachers are somehow failing to get the maximum effort from their pupils. But I would like to make a distinction between students who are slow at their work and those who fail through idleness to develop their natural talents. My Government is considering a proposal to transfer the boys of the former category who have shown little academic promise to institutions which provide practical training. As regards the latter category, the lazy and indolent ones, I see little point in Government giving further

financial assistance to their education. With the growing interest for education in the Region and the resulting fierce competition for places in Secondary Schools, they can be expelled and substitutes found without difficulty.

My Government has been for some time now reluctant to expel boys from schools. That is the reason why there is no "weeding out" at Secondary II. But if the result of Government leniency is to remove incentive to work, then we must consider a drastic measure to deal with boys who waste the money of the country.

Idleness and indolence go hand-in-hand with indiscipline. I have been told of many cases of indiscipline; of bad and disgraceful behavior in the towns which are visited by students at will, regardless of school rules and of neglect of religious observances. This country cannot tolerate such cases of indiscipline and indolence. As future leaders of this country you must be prepared to learn how to obey.

"There will then be no room for idlers and free passengers in our schools, who have no ambition, and no intention to be ambitious."

Let me dispel some false notions which you may have. My Government will give her whole-hearted support to any measures which Prefects, Teachers and Advisory Boards might propose to the Principals in their efforts to maintain and where necessary improve discipline and raise the moral tone of the boys and girls.

I regret to say that there is also a fall in standards even in the field of sports. You must shine in both the fields of sports and of learning. If I may make (a personal) reference, I would like to tell the teachers that as games-master during my teaching career, I did everything possible to raise the standard of sports. I can see no reason why teachers and students should not Co-operate to win highly prized national and international trophies for the glory of their schools, the glory of Northern Nigeria and the glory of Nigeria.

Culled from Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto Values and Leadership in Nigeria by John Paden.

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NEWS

Victims of OPC violence claim N40m compensation

From Adamu Mamman & Bose Museri, in Lagos

Tanker drivers whose vehicles were torched during the Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC)-inspired carnage in April last year have demanded N40 million compensation.

The drivers belonging to the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG) in Lagos were represented by the Apapa zonal secretary of the organisation, Alhaji



Gov. Tinubu

Najeemdeen Korodo at the Lagos State panel investigating the spate of ethnic clashes which characterised Lagos state for the better part of last year.

Korodo who is a petitioner at the Justice Victor Faminwa led commission told the commission that on October 17, 2000, strange persons suspected to be hoodlums went on rampage at the NNPC depot located in Apapa following a misunderstanding between the tanker drivers and "area boys," because of parking space levy.

According to the NUPENG chief, badly affected were tankers belonging to Unipetrol, AP, Total, Agip, and Mobil. He said the above mentioned companies had their tankers, which normally lift petroleum products to various parts of Lagos State and environs from the Apapa depot damaged.

He also stated that he would claim the sum of N600,000 which according to him, was the amount spent on transporting persons killed by the hoodlums.

Meanwhile, the leader of Arewa Community in Lagos,

Alhaji Jubrilla Abdullahi wept profusely at the Commission.

The octogenarian community leader could not hold back tears while trying to recount the ordeal thousands of his kinsmen went through during the October 17 bloody clash in Lagos.

Alhaji Abdullahi described as unfair, untrue and mischievous reports in some sections of the media (not the *Daily Trust*) that he had refused to appear before the commission to represent the interest of his kinsmen, who he added suffered an unprecedented material and human losses in the hands of the OPC.

He described as ironical, an attempt made by the Lagos state House of Assembly to pass a resolution justifying the actions of OPC against northerners in Lagos, saying, "when in actual sense the lawmakers are actually squatting on Hausa land, now referred to as Alausa."

More than 1,000 northerners lost their lives during the October 17, OPC and Hausa-Fulani clash in parts of Ajegunle, Apapa and Agege.



L.R. Dr. Jibril Martins Kuye, (Mrs.) Titi Ajanaku and Chief Graham Douglas at the Federal Executive Council meeting yesterday. Pix Kennedy Egbonodje

Edo Customs Command realised N1.4 billion in 2000

From Shehu Abubakar, in Benin city

The Nigeria Customs Service, Edo State Command has exceeded the revenue it was expected to collect for last year by about 16.75% despite the refusal by Motor Dealers to pay import duties.

The command's expected revenue for last year was N1,406,874,691.00 which was realised in 1997 when there were seven excise factories.

The State Area Comptroller of Customs, Alhaji Dauda Buba Gwary told the *Daily Trust* that though the earlier seven excise factories in the state have been reduced to two while the over ten dutiable products are now only two, his command was able to generate N1,642,337,794.42 as excise duties and N440,511.25 as import duties all in the year 2000 totalling N1,642,839,375.38, an increase of about 16.75 per cent.

Alhaji Gwary said when his command attempted to impose the collection of import duty on all motor dealers in the state in respect of motor vehicles whose duties were either under paid or not paid for at all, the motor deal-

ers allegedly attacked his men.

He said the attackers then reported to the State Government and the State House of Assembly levelling serious cases of alleged bribery against the Custom officers.

"The Edo State Government and the State House of Assembly restrained my command from collecting the duty saying they were going to investigate the allegation," Alhaji Gwary added.

From April 26 last year, which was the date of the incident with the motor dealers to date, there were sixteen correspondences between the Customs and the representatives of the Edo State government including the House of Assembly. "It is however, very unfortunate and sad to note that nothing concrete has been brought to bear over the resolution of the case of extortion labelled against us. They only succeeded in restraining us from collecting Government revenue to the advantage of the motor dealers," he added.

Alhaji Gwary also said that "the import revenue collection of this command would have been higher but for the unpatriotic attitude of Edo motor dealers and "our concern for peace and order." It is simi-

larly very unfortunate that in the pursuit of our legitimate mandate of duty collection, we have been exposed to devious tendencies of some rich, powerful and vocal members of the business community and their political allies," he further pointed out.

The Chairman of the Edo State House of Assembly Committee on Works and Transport, Alhaji Abubakar Momoh confirmed the intervention of the House on the Federal Revenue matters and also confirmed restraining the Customs from collecting the import duty but said it was only an interim measure to avoid a break down of law and order.



Gov. Igbinedion

Accommodation racket at UNILAG

From Samson Ojo, in Lagos

To beat the economic crunch in the country and ensure their survival on campus, some students of the University of Lagos are now selling their hostel accommodation spaces to fellow students for between N25,000 and N30,000, the *Daily Trust* has gathered.

Our investigations revealed that the female students of the institution are the worst offenders in the accommodation deals.

According to sources, the accommodation deals began soon after the student affairs office released the accommodation list for final year students toward the current academic session. When contacted last week in his office, Segun Ogunshola, the acting Director of Public Affairs disclosed that "the report has got to the university authority, and the authority is already making moves to arrest the situation".

Daily Trust learnt that the university has 13 halls of resi-

dence with students' population of over 24,000, which has made it difficult for the university authority to meet the demand for bed spaces.

According to Zainab Mohammed, a final year student in the Department of Guidance and Counselling, those students who are lucky to secure one bed space accommodation prefer to sell it off to the highest bidder. She disclosed further that "those involved in the



Prof. Adeniran, Education Minister

shady deals are mostly female students who sell a bed space for as high as N30,000 at Moremi and Amina Halls, while at Fagunwa and Newest Hall (1) a bed space goes for N35,000", she said.

The male students are not an exception in the accommodation deal. At Mariere and Jaja Halls, bed spaces are exchanged for N15,000 and N20,000 and in other male halls such as Eni Njoku, Makama Bida and Sodeinde, bed spaces were sold for between N10,000 and N15,000.

When *Daily Trust* visited the university last week, it was further discovered that some final year students who are sportsmen and women and have been offered accommodation in the first list got their names again in the sports list prepared by the Sport Director and there is already suspicion about their intentions.

Meanwhile, the university authorities through Mr. Segun Ogunshola, the acting Director of Public Affairs, told *Daily Trust* when contacted in his office for comments, that disciplinary action would be taken against any student found to have sold his or her bed space. Ogunshola reiterated that though the available hostel cannot go round, still the university would not condone any sharp practice, while noting that no such students have been apprehended.

Professor Sophie Oluwole, Dean Students Affairs of UNILAG, while corroborating Mr. Ogunshola's explanation, said further that "the students have no right to sell their bed space and there is a process of checking into the halls through the course adviser, hall administrator and her office which issue the clearance."

Minna to regain lost glory

Minna, the Niger State capital is to regain its lost glory as the neatest state capital in the country, General Manager of the Niger Urban Development Board [NUDB], Architect Nura Mohammed has said.

To this end, the board has commenced the demolition of all illegal structures in Minna and its environs. He said the affected traders acquired the land upon which the structures were erected through illegal process adding that his board has the responsibility to ensure orderly development of structures in the state.

Architect Mohammed told *Daily Trust* in Minna that owners of the structures demolished did not possess Certificates of Occupancy which would have entitled them to some forms of compensation.

Daily Trust investigation revealed that the victims of the demolition exercise bought the plots of land from community leaders in their areas.

We'll not recognise Afenifere, YCE Leadership

The National Council of Muslim Youth Organizations (NACOMYO) has said that it will not recognise the Yoruba Council of Elders (YCE) or the *Afenifere* as Yoruba spokesmen if they continued to exclude Muslim leaders in their Zone. NACOMYO said in a communiqué at the end of the southern Zonal Conference of NACOMYO held at Akure central mosque, Ondo State at the weekend.

The Communiqué jointly signed by the National president of NACOMYO, Alhaji Ishaq Kunle Sanni and the Vice president (Southern Zone), Alhaji Ganiyu Lawal urged the Federal government to drastically reduce the fares announced for this year's Hajj to enable more Muslims perform the fundamental religious obligation.

While commending the Edo State governor, Chief Lucky Igbinedion for hosting the Muslim and Christian leaders in his state during the last religious celebrations, the council frowned at the attitude of the Ondo State governor for using public funds to purchase a luxurious car for retiring Bishop Bolanle Gbonigi as a parting gift and urged him to similarly purchase a car for the Chief Imam of Akure land.

The Communiqué enjoined all State governors to be fair in dealing with the various religious adherents in their respective states and also urged the Jamatul-Nasirul-Islam Imams in the North and the league of *Imams* and *Alfas* in the South to meet a week before the commencement of Ramadan to take a common stand on the sighting of the moon.

On the issue of *Eid-el-Kabir*, the council urged Muslim leaders in Nigeria to follow the authority of Saudi Arabia in the observance of the celebration.



INSIDE POLITICS

Gana uncovers plot to destabilise govt

By Suleiman Mohammed

The Federal Government said it had uncovered a plot by some politicians to incite the general public against the Obasanjo administration.

Information and National Orientation Minister, Prof. Jerry Gana who disclosed this to State House correspondents yesterday said it was unfortunate that even some PDP stalwarts and elected public officers are involved in the integrated design to destabilise the government.

Though Prof. Gana refused to mention names of those involved, he however stated that govern-



Prof. Jerry Gana

ment was watching with keen interest, saying "if they don't change their stand, we will be forced to tell the nation who they are."

"It is unfortunate and irresponsible the way some

people are making statements and misleading the public about the activities of this government", he declared, stressing that though public officers were restrained from making unguarded statements, however, some have disregarded the instruction.

He alleged that those involved, were bent on ridiculing the regime and the office of the President which according to him ought to be respected. "We are surprised that some of these statements are coming from people elected even on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)", he said.

Prof. Gana said, government will soon introduce what he described as "Operation with back" aimed at checking disgruntled public officers against unguarded utterances.

No automatic second term for AD govs - Abdulkadir

By Henry Omu

The Alliance for Democracy (AD) has disclosed that only governors of AD controlled states, that have performed creditably well shall be allowed to contest for a second term in the 2003 general elections.

National Chairman of the party, Alhaji Ahmed Abdulkadir who read the party's riot act to AD governors yesterday in Abuja, advised any governor of the party who has performed woefully to forget about another term in office, "as the party will not even allow them to contest the primaries".

The chairman made the pronouncements when he received a delegation of AD leaders from Ondo state, led

by the chairman, Dr. Omotayo Dairo. He said emphatically that in the AD, "there's nothing like automatic second term".

Speaking on the conditions to be met before any governor can qualify for a second term, the national chairman said, "Their tickets to contest primaries will depend on what they've done in terms of physical development and in improving the well being of the commonman in their respective states".

Alhaji Abdulkadir however, informed the Ondo state delegation, that no state party executive will be allowed to unilaterally endorse any candidate in the 2003 elections, without due clearance from the party's national secretariat.

According to him, the

same performance barometer will similarly, be used by the AD to assess all its councillors and council chairmen aspiring for a second term.

Said the chairman, "they should realise that the time of free lunch is over, for any chairman or councillor that has not performed".

Furthermore, Alhaji Abdulkadir listed other conditions that governors and other aspirants are expected to meet before they can be considered for a second term to include loyalty and assistance to the party at both the state and national levels.

He continued: "Am only trying to tell the AD governors to brace up. They've not gone half way in their present tenure, so it's not too late to brace up and do something tangible".

2003: There's vacancy in Aso Rock ...

By Ibrahim Modibbo, Political Editor

Dr. Ahmed Lawal, Deputy Chairman, House Committee on Gas Resources, represents Bade/Jakusko Fed. Constituency of Yobe State. He spoke to our Political Editor, Ibrahim Modibbo. Excerpts:

DT: You were reported to have spontaneously reacted to an alleged nod by leaders of the lower house for President Olusegun Obasanjo to bring back the N80 billion presidential aircraft supplementary bill. What prompted such a reaction.

Dr. Lawan: First and foremost, this bill is a second attempt by the Presidency to get the approval of the National Assembly to purchase an aircraft which the National Assembly rejected. Then, it was premised on the fact that there was nothing much done to the ordinary citizens of this country, to warrant such a very huge expenditure on just one aircraft for the presidential fleet. This I feel would amount to insensitivity and callousness. The argument is still very valid, as of today. We are about two years now in office, and little or nothing has been done to bring relief or succour to the lives of our people. We are still battling with the problems of portable water, electricity, health, access road, and what have you. And generally, the education system has almost collapsed now. Even the Universal Basic

Education (UBE), the Presidency is talking about hasn't even taken-off in earnest. So why should the leadership of the National Assembly feel that it is time for the President to send the supplementary budget to the National Assembly for an approval to purchase an aircraft. We represent our people here and our obligation and commitment would first and foremost be to our people. I have the strongest conviction that if the Presidency or the executive would be able to implement this year's budget, then certainly we would see some positive changes in the lives of our people and it is only then, that we would be in a position to approve such stupendous expenditure.

DT: Just this week, some members of the National Assembly as led by the Speaker, Alhaji Ghali Umar Na'Abba paid a solidarity visit to the President and some people argued that such a visit might mortgage the independence of the legislative arm of government. What is your position on this?

Dr. Lawan: I would like at this juncture to say that, the relationship and rapport between the executive and legislature, especially the House of Representatives which has just been forged, should not be portrayed to be a gang up against Nigerians. We must do our jobs as true representatives of the people. Where there is a clash between the President's interest and our peoples' interest, then we would go along with our

people. Until we are able to achieve this, then we would be failing in our responsibilities. And believe you me, Nigerians would hate us more than when we had problems with the President. The leadership of the National Assembly is only a symbol. There is nothing like mortgaging the independence of the House. If



Dr. Ahmad Lawan

the leadership tries to be very realistic and practical about the relationship, between us and the executive, then there would be nothing like mortgaging and it would continue to enjoy the support and loyalty of membership and the followership of the House. But if the reverse happens which I don't hope and pray for, then certainly we are all independent minded members who would make their judgement based on the right and wrong. But I for one would certainly continue to give the leadership my support as long as the support I give protects the interest of my people first

- Rep. Ahmad Lawan

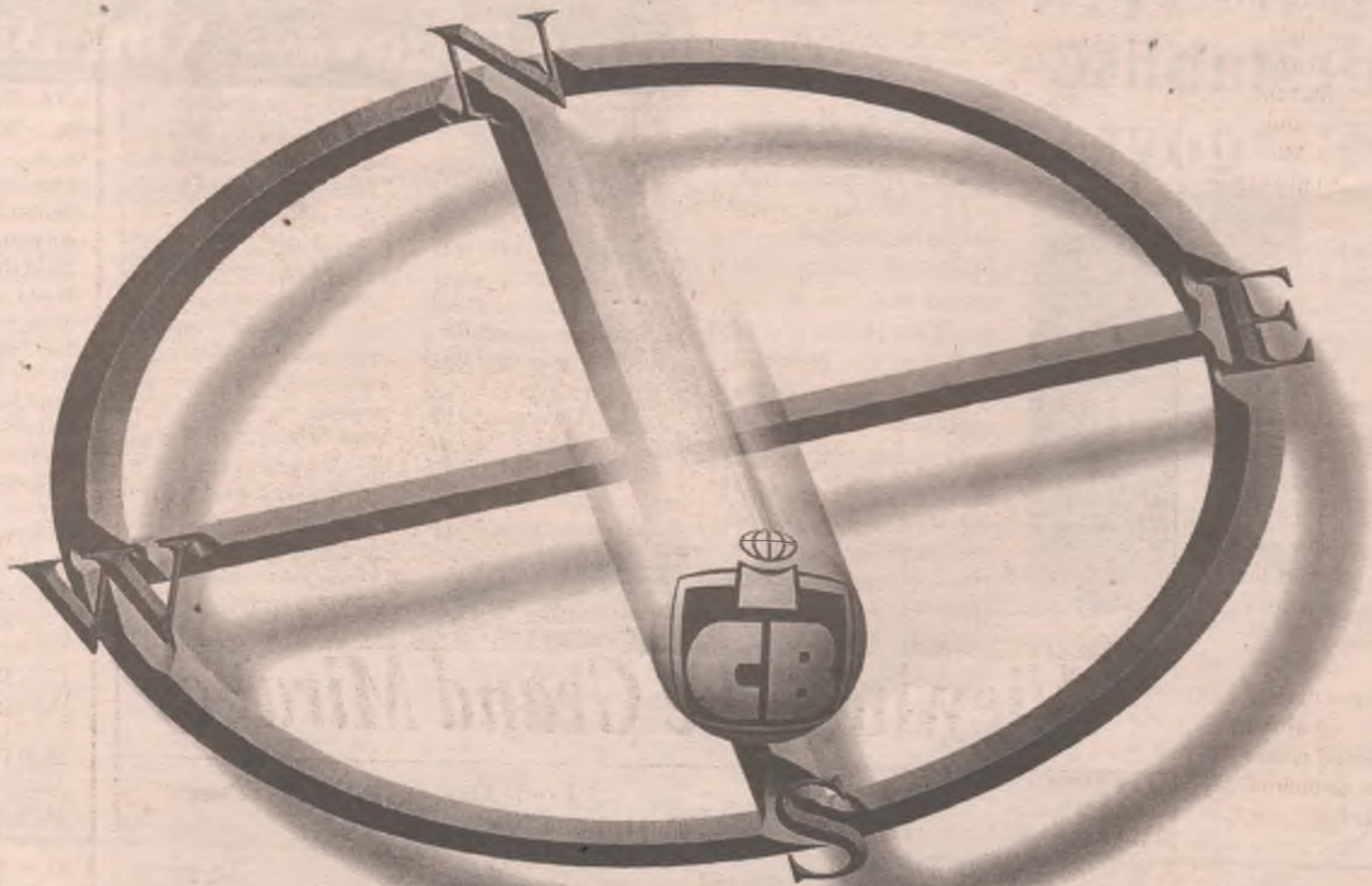
and not that of the President. And of course, I cannot say the same if there is an apparent display of short-sightedness that would mortgage the sovereignty of the House for the

they have been able to right, when they came into office. And as far as I know, I can't put my hand on one thing, which this government has achieved since coming into office. If you are talking of even fuel, which it claims to achieve, the queue is still there or even worse, education is still in comatose, health is still not improving and whatever you are talking of has not been bettered. I think on the whole I can say that the government has done virtually nothing. In fact, nothing is even a pass mark because we had a more stable polity with less religious or ethnic strives before this government came in, but as soon as we came in, for some reasons everywhere in the country was having one ethnic or religious crises. The security generally deteriorated beyond redemption and the government seems to have lost ideas as on what to do. I have the feeling that the government has done nothing to justify the sufferings the people of this country went through to justify our hard earned democracy.

DT: President Obasanjo has just confirmed his readiness for 2003 elections. What are his chances in this endeavour.

Dr. Lawan: (Laughter) His chances are with Nigerians. Based on his performance, I believe that Nigerians are now wiser and we are more politically conscious.

Based on his performance and the assessment of people at the grassroots, the workings of this government, the President has the right to aspire for a second term and Nigerians have the right of choice come 2003. I for one belong to a different school of thought about Obasanjo because for me, Obasanjo has failed, and therefore there is no need for him to even attempt to come back. He should give chance to other people to try their hands for the improvement of the lots of the commonman. For other Nigerians, they have the right to choose if he is the right person to lead us to the promised land or we need a change. But I would advise that we should be very wary of one thing; there shouldn't be any amount of intimidation by anybody who either likes Obasanjo to come back or doesn't, to force us to decide. Recently, it was reported very widely that one of his ministers, Chief Tony Anenih to be specific, was quoted as saying that there is no vacancy in Aso Rock. This is not a military area where Tony Anenih played a very big role to have come out with this reckless and unguarded statement. This is a democratic setting where Obasanjo should finish his tenure and give space to other people who can perform. If he wants to come back, let him try it along with other keen contestants. I want to say with all amount of responsibility that, there is vacancy in the Villa come 2003.



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GUSAU

35, Canteen Area, Gusau.
Tel: 063-204732. Fax: 063 - 204731.

IKARA

7, Secretariat Road, Ikara, Kaduna State.

JOS:

3, Beach Road, Jos. Tel: 073-451611-4.

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Kantin Kwari, Kano
Tel: 064-641785.

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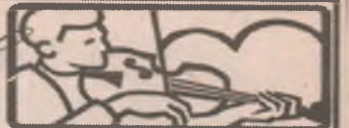
Kofar Wambai Cash Centre
69/71, Babban Layi Kasuwar
Kofar Wambai, Kano. Tel: 064-642754.

MINNA

Minna Market Agency Store,
A1, Central Market, Minna,
Niger State.



Arts & Entertainment



By Tadaferua Ujorha

The Grand Mirage is an Abuja based Night club which caters to a refined clientele. These include bankers, lawyers, insurers, and the wealthier classes. Pat Michaels is the operations Executive of the Grand Mirage, and she explained to Daily Trust that the establishment is about three years old now, and that a strict dress code is enforced. The Grand Mirage is very different from other outfits, she added. In her words, "when you go to these other night clubs, you find them jam packed with youths, and they smash bottles, and it is so unsafe, but here we have mature adults who can comport themselves. The security here is very tight".

The Grand Mirage is about to complete a suite of twenty-five rooms to be known as fantasy Suites, which, indeed, is strongly related to the near-wondrous element suggested in the name The Grand Mirage. There are plans to have a conference Centre and a gym within the complex. Two types of members exist here. The higher category holds the Gold Card membership which amounts to some fifty-thousand Naira per annum. The other is the silver card which amounts to twenty-five thousand Naira per annum. Both forms of membership attract privileges too, Pat Michaels explained. In addition to its basic functions, The Grand Mirage looks like the kind of place that would be most ideal for an Art exhibition or a poetry recital, what with the swinging Masquerade plants, and the expanding Yellow bush plants that confront you as a splendid arcade at every turn

NIGHT CLUBS

Outside of Magarita Restaurant



Viewing The Grand Mirage

Front View of the Nite Club



The Grand Mirage is made up of a Night Club, a restaurant, a Boutique and a garden bar. The Grand Mirage unfolds to satisfy the exquisite taste of an ennobled class within Abuja!.

Prime Viewing

M.N.E.T. Channel

- 06:00 BBC World Service
- 07:00 K-TV Transmission
- 09:00 Hornblower: The Examination For Lieutenant
- 10:00 Dead Poets Society
- 13:00 The Oprah Winfrey Show
- 14:00 K-TV Transmission
- 17:00 Egoli-Place of Gold
- 17:30 Where Ya@ Music Show
- 18:00 Harsh Realm
- 19:00 Ruby's American Pie
- 19:30 Extremely Dangerous
- 21:30 Love Letters
- 23:30 Ernest Rides Again
- 01:30 Smoke Signals
- 03:30 Passport To Paris
- 05:30 Entertainment Now!

The Series Channel

- 06:00 Magnum P.L.
- 07:00 Falcon Crest
- 08:00 Fame
- 09:00 Get Smat
- 09:30 Maude
- 10:00 The Jerry Springer Show
- 11:00 The Bill
- 12:00 Dukes of Hazard
- 13:00 The Waltons
- 14:00 NYPD Blue
- 15:00 M*A*S*H*
- 15:00 Kate & Allie
- 16:00 The Jerry Springer Show
- 17:00 The Darling Buds of May
- 18:00 Barnaby Rudge
- 19:00 Chicago Hope
- 20:00 L.A. Law
- 21:00 The Simpsons
- 21:30 Three's Company
- 22:00 The Jerry Springer Show
- 23:00 Battlestar Galactica
- 00:00 Hunter
- 01:00 Knot's Landing
- 02:00 The Practice
- 03:00 Dharma and Greg
- 03:30 The Doris Day Show
- 04:00 The Jerry Springer Show
- 05:00 The Man from U.N.C.L.E.

By Tadaferua Ujorha

Carnival

The Minna Branch of the Association of Nigerian Authors is working towards the successful hosting of a carnival for schools which would hold from Monday 5th.

Thursday 8th February, 2000. The venue would rotate between UK Bello Arts Theatre and New Horizons College, Minna. Many exciting activities



Some school children at a recent event

have been set aside for this gathering. Some of these include on the spot poetry and short story writing, together with painting

Swinging Carnival at Minna!

which would hold on Monday 5th February. The entire event is geared towards stirring the innate talents of the young ones.

Tuesday 6th would see a Drama presentation and Quiz

involve a Quiz, song, craft, cultural display and prizes presentation. It would be four days, of fun, drama, learning and laughter when the little minstrels gather at Minna. Mr. Dikko Umar, the Public Relations Officer of ANA, Minna, mentioned that the Minister of Information has promised to assist the event in

elimination. Wednesday 7th would witness a Cultural display, a Quiz and craft display. Thursday 8th February would

terms of coverage by the media. He also added that all hands are on deck to see to the successful hosting of this years Carnival.

Art Watch!

On the last Saturday of each month the Minna Chapter of the Association Of Nigerian Authors (ANA) meets for its monthly Reading Session, Venue: Rotates between the houses of members, and why not? The same association meets On Saturday's at the U.K. Bello Theatre, Minna, for a Writer's Workshop. Time: 5:00-7:00pm Also Engineer Abdulkadir Kure, the Governor Of Niger State has provided the state chapter of ANA with an office at the State library complex Minna.

Centurion Cultural Collaborators,

a group that is keen an Education and entertainment would soon begin its work in Minna, the Niger State Capital. Will keep you posted'

Stirring Lines!

I must have Beauty, and Brilliance, and Light.

--Richard Wagner.

Congratulations

The government and people of Borno state wish to congratulate Media Trust Nigeria Limited on the occasion of the debut of its new addition, **DAILY TRUST**.

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With the publication of the **DAILY TRUST**, we are confident that you are aiming for the highest in the field of journalism in this country. We wish you God's guidance and blessing in the years ahead.

Amen.

Long live Borno state
Long live the Federal Republic of
Nigeria
Long live **DAILY TRUST**



Alhaji Mala Kachalla

Executive Governor, Borno State

News Analyses

Death drama in Congo!

The Democratic Republic of Congo is in the news again! What with the news making the rounds that President Laurent Kabila has been killed on the one hand, and the converse as at 2.00pm (BBC World) on 17th January that Laurent Kabila was injured on the 16th instant, and that he had been flown abroad for treatment.

Congo has a long history of these occasional political hiccups, which often threw the nation into turmoil. In the 19th Century, Congo was a significant issue in European politics, especially in the context of the Belgian Potentates expansionist hopes.

In the sixties, the Western powers had a major encounter in Congo, and it gradually began to appear as though the Cold War was being fought on Congolese soil. Development in the country was virtually frozen during decades of the reign of the late dictator Mobutu Sese Seko. However there was an increasing flourish in the despots private resources.

Two accounts have primacy now. One avers that Laurent Kabila is alive, the other that he is dead. Out of the basic rhythm of their lives, the power-hungry have always moulded an array of legends around themselves. But aren't these contradictory accounts the sort of stuff upon which Legends are formed? Beneath is a chronicle of events as as they broke in Congo on January 16th as reported by Reuters.

Laurence Desire Kabila was born in 1939 in Jadoville in what was then the Belgian Congo. He studied political philosophy at a French University and became active in politics when Congo gained independence in 1960.

Stocky and bald he once counted among his comrades the late Argentine-born revolutionary leader Ernest "Che" Guevara, who fought in Eastern Zaire in the early 1960s.

In 1965 Kabila joined a rebellion in the east led by

Fierce Mulele, a minister in Patrice Lumumba's government when the former Belgian Congo just avoided

Another regional source said Kabila was wounded and taken to hospital, where he was in inten-

The area makes up 2,345,409 sq km (905,562 sq miles), making it the third largest African country. It

A pact reached in 1963 with Tshombe, who had declared his province independent, led to Tshombe

ised elections for April 1999. April came and went, without polls. Spring time failed to yield a democratic harvest. But now it seems that Laurent Kabila is dead and the next question quite naturally is considering who will fit into his shoes.

Potential candidates would be Kabila's personal chiefs of staff. Edy Kapend, who came on television on Tues to announce a state of alert, and Interior Minister Gaetan Kakudji, who had summoned Wednesday's emergency cabinet meeting.

Zimbabwe, whose President Robert Mugabe was close to Kabila pledged support for Kabila's family and his country, Namibia said its 2,000 troops would remain deployed in Congo.

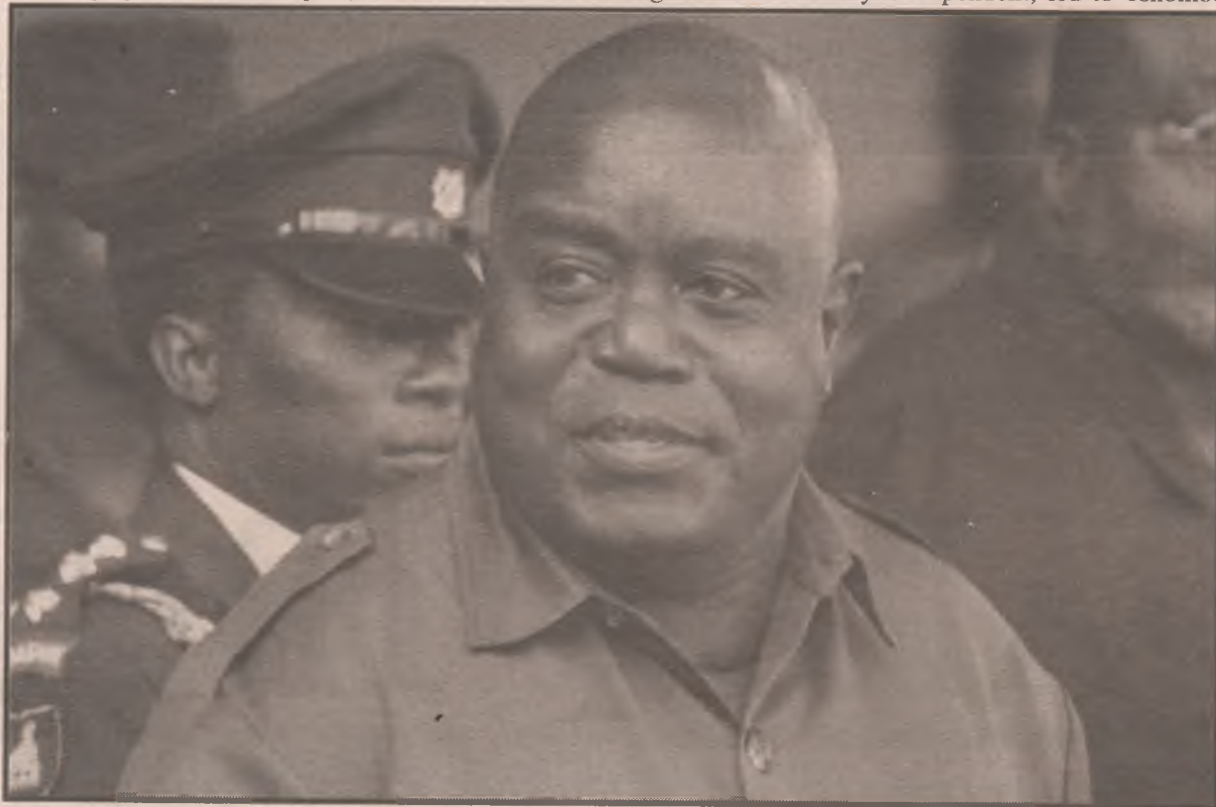
Regional security sources said a Congolese aircraft had flown members of Kabila's family, to Harare early on Wednesday. A Reuters correspondent saw a Congolese aircraft in the military section of Harare airport.

Kabila sprang from obscurity in 1996 at the end of a rebellion with Rwanda and Uganda backing that fought its way across the country, then known as Zaire in barely eight months.

A year later he fell out with his former allies. Renewed fighting has crushed hopes of ending the war. 18 months after a peace accord was signed in the Zambia by the conflict and a quarter of, million have fled to neighbouring countries as refugees.

Meanwhile, reliable sources in the Congolese government announced on Wednesday evening that Major-General Joseph Kabila, son of Laurent Kabila has been invested with the reins of power and that he would rule in his father's stead, at least for now. It seems that Congo's fascinating ability to throw up rare political circumstances, with the attendant dramatic moments, has reached heights of perfection, if we should use the last forty-eight hours as a yardstick.

Tadaferua Ujorha, is a staff of Daily Trust.



Laurent Kabila

break-up after independence.

Mobutu crushed that rebellion, but Kabila stuck to his mission.

Some African states argued at the time that Kabila — who was not an ethnic Tutsi but had forged close links with Tutsis over the years — was at the head of a plot to carve out a "Tutsiland" in central Africa. Kabila denied it.

Married with six children, Kabila fulfilled a 30 year old dream when he toppled Mobutu at the head of his Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo — Zaire (AFDL), spearheaded by Banyamulenge ethnic Tutsis.

A coup attempt appeared to be underway in the Democratic Republic of Congo on Tuesday, diplomats said, and an aide to President Laurent Kabila ordered the army to block Kinshasa's airport and river borders.

"He has died. He was shot by unknown people... earlier today a source in Kampala told Reuters by telephone, saying his information came from intelligence sources in Kinshasa.

"The situation now is very unclear," he said, adding that he did not know who was in control of the city.

sive care. A government resource in Kabila's ally Zimbabwe said he had been wounded and not killed.

Earlier, Kabila's personal chief of staff read a message on state television saying the airport and river borders had been closed.

"I am asking the commander in charge to block the airport and to block our border (with neighbouring Congo Republic) along the River Congo," Colonel Edy Kapend said.

"It is forbidden to use arms without prior orders" he added.

Civilians were also asked to remain calm.

Congolese television continued broadcasts of music and cultural programmes, interrupted occasionally by a still picture of Kabila.

The Democratic Republic of Congo has a population of 51.75 million (2000 estimate), of whom 30 percent live in the cities. Ethnic groups: mainly Bantu tribes (80 per cent), as many as 250 tribal groups in all.

The official language is French. Main local languages are Lingala, Swahili, Kingwana, Kikingo, and Tshiluba. Main religions are Roman Catholic (50 per cent), Protestants (20 per cent) Kimbanguist (10 per cent), Moslem (10 percent). Capital: Kinshasa.

borders Central African Republic in the North, Sudan in the northeast, Uganda, Rwanda, Brundi and Lake Tanganyika in the east, Zambia and Angola in the south and Congo Republic in the northwest. It has a short South Atlantic coastline between Angola and the Angolan enclave of Cabinda. The territory varies from tropical rainforests to plateau, savannahs, dense grasslands and mountains.

The Army totals 55,000 personnel (1999 estimate).

The size of National police force (paramilitary) is unknown.

In February 1998, GDP was reported to be 65 per cent lower than when the country gained independence from Belgium in 1960. History Formerly Zaire. Gained independence from Belgium on June 30, 1960, and was immediately plunged into five years of bloodshed and rebellion. An uprising led by Katangan leader Moise Tshombe nearly dismembered the country.

In September 1960, Mobutu Sese Seko, then an army Colonel, seized power from elected Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba and President Kasavubu. Mobutu arrested Lumumba, who died in mysterious circumstances, but in 1961 returned rule to Kasavubu.

becoming premier in 1964.

In November 1965, Mobutu, who had become army chief, seized power in a bloodless coup and Tshombewas dismissed. Rebel activity continued in mineral-rich Shaba (formerly Ktanga).

Tutsi rebels staged an armed rebellion in Kivu province in 1996. Mobutu's government alleged intervention by Burundi and Rwanda and declared a state of emergency.

The Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL) led by Laurent Kabila began driving Zairean forces out of Kivu, and later took control of eastern Zaire. They then marched on Kinshasa. Mobutu fled in May 1997 and died within months in exile in Morocco. Kabila took power and changed the name of the country.

In August 1998, a Tutsi-led rebellion backed by Rwanda and Uganda attempted to oust Kabila.

Rebels took control of most of the east and parts of the north of the country. Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia sent troops and equipment to support Kabila.

Immediately after coming to power, Kabila banned all political parties but the AFDL, alienating the political opposition. He prom-



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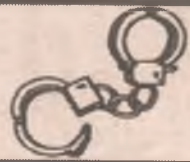
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Chief Executive Officer



Crime & Punishment



IG orders probe of N250 million 419 scam

By Wisdom Patrick, Lagos.

The Inspector-General of Police, Mr. Musliu Smith has ordered the Commissioner of Police, Special Fraud Unit (SFU), Mr. Ade Ajakaiye to furnish him with the details of investigations into the 250 million dollars scam involving some Nigerian businessmen and a US bank.

The order according to sources was sequel to series of complaint, regarding the manner in which detectives attached to SFU are currently handling the case. *Daily Trust* learnt Smith was also irked by reports that police detectives from two police formations were at loggerheads over who should control the investigation of the multi-billion Naira international fraud case.

It was gathered that the suspects involved in the alleged scam were trying to cover the deal to ensure that the scam case met its untimely death. To live up to their words, sources informed *Daily Trust* that frantic efforts have been made at seeking an audience with the Inspector-General of police but met stonewall.

It would be recalled

that in December last year, the Inspector-General of Police received a petition from one Mrs. Queeneth O., an Enugu based businesswoman, alleging threat to life and suspected murder. The petition was referred to detectives at SFU for investigation.

Following the IG directives, detectives from the unit launched a manhunt for an Enugu based scam syndicate in connection with

the fraud. It was further gathered that the exercise paid off as an Enugu-based business man was arrested by detectives.

The petitioner, sources revealed is the wife of one of the members of the gang who died under a very questionable circumstance. Mr. Ade Ajakaiye had confirmed the story to *Daily Trust* and also the arrest of the business man following the petition.

He also added that, an unregistered revolver pistol was recovered from the suspect's Enugu home. Also the investigating police officer stated further that the suspect had been charged with illegal possession of firearms at the Igbosere Magistrate's Court.

The officer said after he has filed his case with the court, he was surprised that the court

granted the suspect bail, adding "we are trying to transfer the case to a high court before something go wrong". This is a case I cannot afford to toy with," the officer said.

Investigation by *Daily Trust* gave details of the scam as a bank computer fraud. It was learnt that a total sum of 250 US dollars was illegally obtained from the US based bank, under



Gen. Jemibewon, Police Affairs Minister

Embattled councillors get bail

The 10 embattled councillors arraigned before the Katsina Magistrate Court on charges of assault on the state's permanent secretary in the Finance Ministry, Alhaji Abdulhamid Abdallah were granted bail; as the court ordered continued detention of Jibia local government secretary, Alhaji Abdurashheed Jibia, until the five others accused with him were brought before the court.

Reading the judgement, the presiding Magistrate, Hajiya Hajaratu Sani said that the court has exercised its discretion to grant bail in view of the earlier request by the defence counsel. The defence counsel cited sections 33, 34 and 36 of the 1999 constitution and urged the court to consider the bail on liberal grounds.

However, the Magistrate warned the accused persons that should any

unlawful act or any breach of the peace occur in the state with or without their



Gov. Yar'Adua

knowledge, the court will not hesitate to revoke their bail.

She therefore, urged the accused persons to restrain their supporters and be law abiding.

The presiding Magis-

trate urged the prosecution to arraign the other accused persons and adjourned the case to 21st January, 2001 for hearing.

In a related development, the court equally ordered the immediate arraignment of five other accused persons in respect of unlawful assembly, breach of peace and physical assault on the state permanent secretary of Ministry of Finance, Alhaji Abdulhamid Abdallah.

Magistrate Hanjara Sani adjourned the case for hearing to the 31st of January and ordered immediate arrest and arraignment of the suspect before the court on the said date.

It would be recalled that the councillors rummaged into the Katsina government house last month, abducts and assaulted the state's permanent Secretary, alleging deliberate delay in the release of money sought by local councils for the settlement of the councillors' allowances.

Police kill 5 robbers in Jos

From Buhari Bello, Jos

The police in Jos, Plateau state have shot dead five persons suspected to be armed robbers during an exchange of gunfire.

Alhaji Mohammed Abubakar, the Plateau State Commissioner of Police, disclosed this while addressing a press conference in Jos.

According to him, the incident took place when some of the bandits earlier arrested, took the police to their hide-out to recover some weapons.

He said the police detectives were met with a hail of bullets by people believed to be members of the gang.

Alhaji Abubakar said during exchange of gun fire, five of the bandits were fatally wounded but two of them managed to escape with bullet wounds.

After the gun ex-

change, the police said one locally made pistol, two unexpended bullets, charms and some quantity of dry weeds suspected to be Indian hemp were recovered from the hideout.

Other items also recovered by the police include electronics and other household items estimated at over N2 million.

The Police Commissioner said the robbers had earlier during interrogation confessed to committing robbery at various times and places including the robbery incident which took place at the residence of Ngo Hannatu Chollom, a politician and woman activist, Mr. Joshua Waklek, Sanni Mohammed and Ibrahim Gambo all in Plateau state.

The gang members were also alleged to have carried out a robbery operation along Abuja-Keffi express way in which a white man was the victim while his se-

35-year-old man in court for robbery

LYN.

The prosecution also alleged that the victim also lost a cellular phone along with other valuables in the car.

The accused person whose address was given as No. 11 Veronica Street, Off Mela Hotel, Benin City, Edo State, however, pleaded not guilty to the charge.

Counsel to the accused

person Mr. Friday A. Obainoke argued for bail of the suspect but the presiding Magistrate, Mrs. Grace Inyang ruled that the charge was not ordinarily bailable.

She advised counsel to seek the bail of the accused person by way of a motion on notice with a sworn affidavit and adjourned the matter to March 14, 2001 for further mention while the accused was to remain in prison custody.

By Uwem Umo

A 35-year-old man, Femi Ebowon has appeared before an Abuja Magistrate Court to answer charges of conspiracy and armed robbery.

The offences are contrary to sections 97 and 278C of the penal code law.

According to the police prosecutor, Mr. Harrison Omeoka, an Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP), the accused person in conjunction with three others who are now at large allegedly attacked one Alhaji Tanimu Abdullahi at Unipetrol filling station along Kubwa expressway, Abuja, on October 10, 2000 and robber him of his Mercedes 230E saloon car with registration number AA 111

Police to start 24-hour patrol in the East

The Nigeria Police is to embark on special vehicle patrol in the eastern parts of the country soon, the Minister of Police Affairs, retired Maj.-Gen. David Jemibewon, has said.

A statement signed by a press officer in the minis-

try, Mr. Adekunle Adeliyi, said the minister gave the indication while addressing senior police officers at the force headquarters, Abuja.

"The exercise, which would be similar to the one now going on in Abuja and Lagos, is part of government's efforts to ensure safety of lives and property of the citizens", the minister said.

He said the choice of the particular state where the patrol would commence, would be taken by the inspector-general of police.

He charged the "F" department of the force, which is in charge of research, logistics and planning to look into ways of deploying officers and men of the force effectively in order to

achieve maximum results nationwide.

The minister also directed that general duty policemen should as much as possible, be confined to their catchment states and zones. And therefore, should not necessarily be provided with accommodation in the barracks.

He further said that the professionals could be posted to other areas outside their zones and be provided accommodation in the barracks.

Jemibewon had earlier commended the police for the modest success recorded in the country last year, and urged them not to relent in their efforts in the new year.

Armed robbery suspect dies smoking Indian hemp

An armed robbery suspect died at the weekend in Lagos after taking an overdose of weeds suspected to be Indian hemp, the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), reports.

Police sources told NAN in Lagos that the incident occurred at Festac

Town in Lagos, adding that the corpse was recovered by the police after it was dumped in the bush around 6th Avenue in Festac Town by his colleagues.

NAN further gathered that after recovering the corpse, the police gave the dead suspect's colleagues a hot pursuit and subsequently arrested three of

the and impounded their vehicle, with registration number AL 832 EPE.

A senior police officer investigating the case told NAN that one of the suspects, Nduko Okonkwo, confessed that he sold Indian hemp to the deceased and that he died while smoking the substance.



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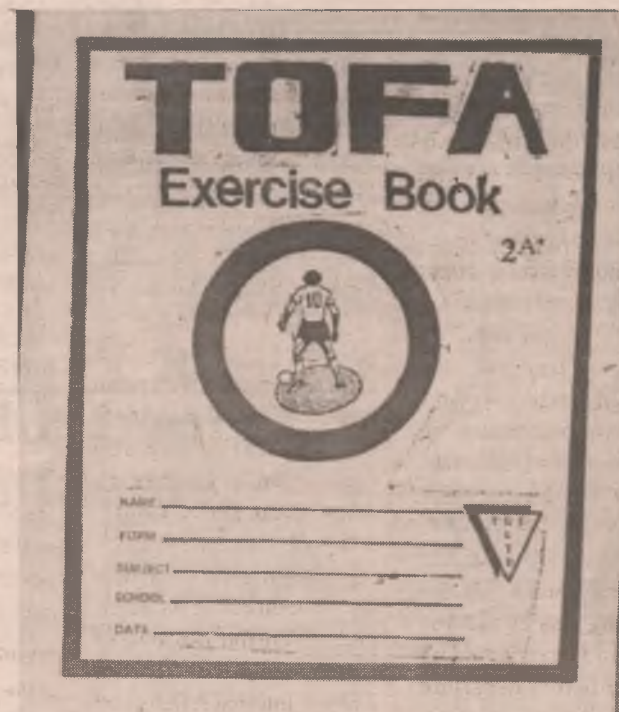
Alhaji Isyaku Umar Tofa, **Managing Director/CEO** on behalf of Management and Staff sends his congratulations to the Board, Management and staff of Media Trust Ltd on the debut of *Daily Trust*.

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Abuja News

Separation of FCDA from MFCT underway

Modalities for the separation of the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) from the Ministry of the Federal Capital Territory (MFCT) are currently being worked out by officials of the ministry, a competent source in the ministry said.

The source said "already, a committee is working out the easiest way the FFCDA can be separated and function as the decree setting it up stipulates".

Asked what was causing the delay in the separation, he said: "there is no delay at all, rather, you know the two have functioned to-



Arc. Ibrahim Bunu, MFCT Minister

gether for a long time, so it would take a little longer to separate them".

He said that the newly-constituted board for the FCDA would be inaugurated on Thursday by the Minister of the Federal

Capital Territory, Alhaji Ibrahim Bunu.

The source said that the ministry was expected to place advertorials in newspapers on the existence of the post and vacancy of the Managing Director/Chief

Executive of the authority.

He also said that the Federal Government was expected to announce the appointment of a managing director/chief executive for the FCDA, adding that the decree setting up FCDA with a board headed by a chairman and eight others.

The departments under the FCDA include engineering services, public building, land and survey, maintenance services, finance, personnel and health services.

The FCDA, which was originally supposed to function on its own, was later merged with the ministry by the administration of retired Lt.-Gen. Jeremiah Useni.

Court jails man, 23, for stealing

A 23-year-old man, Jelili Mustapha was sentenced to one year imprisonment by an Abuja Upper Area Court, for stealing two topcylinders worth N15,000.

The prosecution told the court that one Oni Olayemi had reported that Mustapha came to his shop and stole the topcylinders.

The accused pleaded guilty to the charge. The

presiding judge, Aliyu Abdulrahman, sentenced the accused to one year imprisonment with an option of N3,000 fine.

He was also asked to pay N15,000 as compensation for the topcylinders.

Abuja may host ECOWAS parliament secretariat

Abuja may host the permanent secretariat of the ECOWAS community parliament, the chairman and integration in Africa, Chukwuemeka Chikelu, said in Abuja.

The parliament was inaugurated on November 16, last year, in Bamako, Mali, by the ECOWAS chairman and the President of Mali, Alha Omar Konare.

Addressing a news conference, Chikelu said that already, President Olusegun Obasanjo, had indicated the country's willingness to host the parliament.

He said that Obasanjo had offered the old National Assembly building within the International Conference Centre Complex, Abuja, to be used as the permanent secretariat.

The lawmaker said that the country would also host the first session of the parliament in Abuja from January 20th to 27th at the ECOWAS secretariat.

He said that the two committees set up during the inauguration of the parliament in Mali to work out the parliament's budget and its draft, adding that the par-

liament would deliberate on them during the session.

The chairman further said that the parliament was competent to consider any matter concerning the community, particularly issues relating to human rights and fundamental freedom.

He said that the parliament might also be consulted on important issues like the inter-connection of communication links, telecommunications, energy network, public policies, community citizenship, scientific and technological research, environment policy and treaty reviews.

It would be recalled that each member state was guaranteed five seats in the 120-member parliament while the remaining seats would be distributed on the basis of population.

The allocation of the remaining seats showed that Nigeria has the highest number of 35 seats, Gambia and Ghana eight seats each, Cote d'Ivoire, seven, Niger, Senegal and Guinea, six seats each while Burkina-Faso, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone and Togo, have five seats each.

Chikwe says FAAN is to be re-organised

The Federal Aviation Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) is to be re-organised as a result of the Thursday night's incident, involving a presidential aircraft, the Minister of Aviation, Dr. Kema Chikwe, said on Tuesday in Abuja.

Addressing newsmen on the power outage at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja, in which all the landing lights went off just as a presidential aircraft was landing. The minister said that the overhaul was necessary to inject a sense of responsibility in FAAN.

The airport experienced power outage, which resulted in a blackout just as President Olusegun Obasanjo's flight from Iran, after a three-day official visit, was about to land.

Chikwe said that the re-organisation would affect only officials of FAAN and that it was going to be broad and encompassing.

She said that the ministry viewed the incident with serious concern, pointing out that all the agencies and officials operating at the airport were aware of "a standing order that the generating sets at the airport should be switched on one hour before departure or arrival of important personalities whether or not there is supply from the national grid".

She said that her personal assessment of the situation

had made her to conclude that aviation was a sensitive sector that demanded the highest level of commitment and dedication to duty.

Regarding preventive measures to forestall re-occurrence the minister said that the ministry had in September, applied and obtained approval from the

presidency for the installation of a 33KV dedicated NEPA feeder line to Abuja airport.

According to her, the ministry will also improve on the inter-ministerial agency communication network at the airport.

She added that the incident was caused by human factor, bordering on culpable negligence, complacency and dereliction of duty".

FG sets up committee on retrieval of illegal arms

The Federal Government has set up a committee headed by the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, Chief Bola Ige, to retrieve all illegally acquired weapons from the public, Information and National Orientation Minister, Prof. Jerry Gana, announced in Abuja.

Gana told state house correspondents at the end of a meeting of the Federal Executive Council (FEC) that the decision was in line with a report on the African position on the proliferation, trafficking and circulation of illicit small arms across the continent.

The minister said that other members of the committee were the Ministers of Defence, Police, Foreign Affairs, Internal Affairs and the National Security Adviser.

year, highlighted the need for all African countries to take drastic measures to curtail the spread of small weapons within their territories, which he said, had led to frequent outbreaks of crises in different parts of the continent.

Gana said that the small weapons were known to fuel up crises within the continent, adding that Nigeria on its part, had gone further to set up the committee to retrieve such arms that had been illegally acquired for purposes of visiting mayhem on innocent Nigerians.

According to him, the committee has been mandated to set out a deadline within which all such illegal arms must be surrendered to the constituted authorities, adding that government was concerned about the grave security situation in the country.

Obasanjo needs a 8-year-tenure, says youth leader

The National President, Association of Youths of Nigeria (AYON), Mr. Edozie Madu, has called on Nigerian youths to support an eight-year tenure for President Olusegun Obasanjo's administration.

Addressing newsmen in Abuja, Madu commended "the giant strides which the Obasanjo's administration had taken within the first quarter of its expected tenure in office in the socio-economic and political re-engineering of Nigeria".

He noted the rapid development and restructuring going on in the country, saying that if the tempo was sustained, Nigeria might not be too far from the promised land.

"If this much had been achieved in twenty months, much greater achievement shall be recorded by the year 2003 and beyond", Madu said.

The youth leader lambasted critics of the Obasanjo's regime, who he noted, were now growing nervous "after unsuccessfully adopting all kinds of tactics, crude political manoeuvres and subterfuge to destabilise the administration".

FCT NDE gets new co-ordinator

By Musa Badamasi

The first woman co-ordinator has been appointed for the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

The new co-ordinator is Hajiya Alawiyya Fatima Kuliya Umar, a former Chief Research Officer at the NDE headquarters.

She succeeded Barrister Ibrahim Usman who was co-ordinator from 1995-2000 and now re-deployed to the NDE headquarters.

The changes recently disclosed by the personnel management department, which equally affects other staff is designed to reposition and strengthen the directorate to tackle the scourge of unemployment.

Hajiya Wawiyya Umar is the eight co-ordinator to oversee the affairs of the NDE in the FCT since its inception in 1987.

The new co-ordinator is a graduate of 1981 with B.Sc and M.Sc chemistry from Bayero University, Kano.

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SPORTS



Tijjani can check Bonfrere, says Obienu

Mr. Nwabufor Obienu, vice chairman of the NFA, said Tuesday in Lagos that if given a free hand, Tijjani Yusuf, the Secretary-General of the association is capable of checking the national technical adviser, Johannes Bonfrere.

"There is need for somebody to stand up to the demands of the coach," Obienu told newsmen at the Ogunlana Drive secretariat of the association.

He said that he was happy that only Yusuf challenged the coach after he requested to have 24 players for last Saturday's Nigeria/Zambia Nations Cup qualifier match. Nigeria won that match 1-0.

Obienu said that the Secretary-General slashed the number to 18 players, adding

that Yusuf also challenged the Dutch's demand to replace his assistants, Shu'aibu Amodu and Stephen Keshi just days to the Nation Cup match.

"We in the NFA are ready to sanction Bonfrere whenever he goes wrong, but it appears that he is being shielded, which is not helping discipline," he said.

Obienu said that he was not saying that Bonfrere was not a good coach, but was only interested in him doing a better job.

He said that many board members had not been able to contribute effectively to the association because the board had not met for sometime due to the lack of funds.

He said that the secretariat was being starved of funds and urged the government to hands off or provide the funds to run the association effectively.



Jo Bonfrere

Nigeria for weightlifting tourney

Nigeria has been formally invited to participate in this year's Africa Weightlifting Championships scheduled for between April 8 and April 15 in Stellenbosch, South Africa, the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports.

A fax message from the organization committee to the Nigeria Weightlifting Federation (NWF) stated that the country was expected to register a full team - eight male and seven female weightlifters for the event.

It reminded the federation that a dope test would be conducted during the competition in accordance with the international weightlifting federation (IWF) rules, stating further that female weightlifters were expected to carry along certificates of femininity.

According to the committee, weightlifters billed to represent the continent at the maiden Afro-Asian tournament scheduled for between November 3 and November 11 in New Delhi, India, would be selected at the competition.

It noted that four weightlifters would be selected from each of the 15 weight categories of the meet.

NWF chief coach Ivan Ganev in a chat with NAN, described the invitation as timely, adding that the championships would

serve as the first step toward Nigeria's preparation for next year's commonwealth games.

Ganev, who just returned from a vacation

from Bulgaria, his country, said that the federation would also strive to participate in other international meet to further expose the weightlifters for the games. (NAN)

FEYSOC boss bags Chieftaincy title

The Secretary-General of the Federation of Youth Soccer Club (FEYSOC), Alhaji Zubairu Mohammed has been conferred with the chieftaincy title of Ndejin Minna by the Minna Emirate Council.

A letter from the council dated 15th of January, 2001 and signed by Alhaji Garba Musa Kuta, secretary of the emirate council, said the conferment takes immediate effect. The letter with reference number MEC/CON/5/Vol. II/27 enjoined the sports administrator to be "loyal and always protect the interest of the institution at all times."

As Ndejin Minna, Alhaji Zubairu is expected to conduct

himself in a dignified manner and carry out all duties to him in a manner devoid of shame, ridicule and contempt to the royalty.

A seasoned sports administration, Alhaji Zubairu was the General Manager of the now disbanded IBB Homers Football Club of Minna.

Alhaji Zubairu was also a player with Niger Tornadoes Football clubs of Minna playing alongside such notables as Alhaji Dattijo Aliyu, now chairman Chanchanga local government council of Niger state and Senior Apostle Wole Mosadomi, now a seasoned sports journalist in Minna.

HFN to feature in 11 tourneys

The Handball Federation of Nigeria (HFN) says its plan to participate in 11 international competitions this year.

Mr. Emmanuel Igbinsosa, the then secretary told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Lagos today that the participation would cover the Africa Cup winners in March at a yet to be determined venue, the Norway Games in June in Drammen, Norway and the Pastile Games in June in Sweden.

He said that the federation would also participate in the Terrano Cup in July in Spain, the Drannilula Cup in July in Denmark and the Commonwealth Under-19 Handball competition billed for Australia in August.

Igbinsosa said that the HFN would participate in the Under 12 and U-15 championships in August billed for the Czech Republic, and the Africa club championship in December, the secretary said that the federation was seeing funds to enable it attend the championships. (NAN)



Anthony Okoronkwo of Katsina state during the National Sports Festival, Bauchi. Nigerian Weightlifters will participate in African Weightlifting Championship in Stellenbosch, South Africa.

SNAPSHOTS

A digest of African soccer stories...

Egypt:

Zamalek striker Osama Nabih has been ordered by the Egyptian Football Association (EFA) to pay his former agent a percentage of his earnings from a spell in Turkey last year.

Agent Galal Mamoud complained that Nabih had reneged on the deal to give him a percentage of his earnings, and took his grievance to the association.

The EFA said on Sunday it had reviewed the case and set a deadline of February 7 for Nabih to pay outstanding dues or face suspension.

Nabih played at Altayspor in Turkey last season but made just one starting appearance.

Mozambique:

Army Club Matchedje said on Monday they were considering withdrawing from this year's African Cup Winners' cup because they were rather us the 25,000 dollars entry fee to sort out internal problems at the club. Matchedje have been drawn against Ethiopia's Coffee FC in the first round in March. A withdrawal will cost the club a fine and two-year ban from continental club competitions.

Cote d'Ivoire:

The season in Cote D' Ivoire will open early next month with the traditional pre-season coupe Houphouet - Boigny, which will feature the top four teams from last season.

A change in the format for the one-off cup was announced by Ivorian officials over the weekend, with champions Asec Abidjan, rivals sports, stade Abidjan and Sabe de Bouna to play in the event.

Thee will be semi-final matches on February, 1 and the final in Abidjan on February 4.

South Africa:

Scottish-born entrepreneur Dave King has spent 20 million Rands to buy control of the South African Club Amazulu, it was reported at the weekend.

King, who is based in Johannesburg and made a fortune in risk management, invested a sum more than 10 times larger in Scotland's Rangers last year.

Amazulu are one of the country's most popular teams and a founder member of the professional league in the country, but were relegated for the first time last year. The club is making a strong bid to return to the premier league.

Botswana:

Botswana's football officials have given new coach Heinz Maotske one day a week to prepare the country's team for international matches this year, it was announced on Sunday.

The National team is to train together and play a match against a local side each Wednesday.

Botswana, ranked 150th in the world, meet Malawi in March 17 in the regional Casafa castle cup, a competition where they have failed to win a game over the last five years.

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Koeman: Figo's departure was a big mistake

Former Barcelona player Ronald Koeman said the Catalan Club had made a massive mistake in allowing Luis Figo to be bought by rivals Real Madrid.

"I am afraid that it is an historic error on the part of the Barcelona," Koeman said in an interview with the Barcelona-based sport newspaper published on Tuesday.

"The worst thing of all is that not only have we lost him but that, at the same time, we have strengthened our rivals. We have allowed Real Madrid to become even stronger than they were before."

Figo, who was recently presented with the European player of the year award, moved to Real for a world record 56.1 million dollars last July.

The Portuguese international has been in fine form in recent matches and scored the opening goal in Real's spectacular 4-0 win over Real Oviedo Sunday. The win took them three points clear of Valencia at the top of the Spanish first division and gave them a five-point cushion over Barcelona. The reigning European champions also have a game in hand over all their rivals.

Dutchman Koeman, who scored the winning goal in Barcelona's only European Cup triumph in 1992, said he found it hard to get used to the former Barcelona idol sporting the colours of their eternal rivals.

"I have to say that at first my eyes were stinging when I saw him kitted out in white. He gave everything, even in training and we shouldn't have let him go in the way he did."



In the white corner... Luis Figo's departure to Real Madrid has been described as a big mistake

Ali in world sports awards dinner

Muhammad Ali, the only man to win the world heavyweight title three times was special guest at Tuesday's world sports award at the Royal Albert Hall, London.

Ali, who was accompanied by his wife Lonnie, celebrated his 59th birthday at a private ceremony Monday.

He attended the occasion along with other celebrated sportsmen and women including American sprinter Michael Johnson and Marion Jones.



Trial of the fittest... African athletes blazing the tracks in readiness for IAAF Classic.



Miami Heats Tim Hardaway inches his way through Chicago Bulls rear guard during an NBA contest recently.

Professor Nomau's travails, written & illustrated by Nelson Nkomo

