

CHIEFTAINCY TUSSLE SEPARATES FRIENDS

JAN. 10 — 16, 1994. VOL. 5 NO. 2

Citizen

CONSTITUTIONAL
CONFERENCE:
THE EAST PLANS
A SHOWDOWN

N30 HARD ON NEWS, STRONG ON VIEWS.

BANKS

THE BIG RIPP-OFF

UK.....	00 1.3	The Gambia.....	04 04	Kenya.....	00 04 04	Germany.....	00 04 00
Canada.....	00 053 00	Ghana.....	00 0500	Saudi Arabia.....	00 04 00	Zimbabwe.....	00 252 50
CFA Zone.....	00 000	Liberia.....	00 0553 00	Sierra Leone.....	00 0200		
France.....	00 15F	Italy.....	00 0000 7	USA.....	00 03 00		



TREBOR
EXTRA STRONG
PEPPERMINTS

... for strong minty freshness you can share



CONTENTS

LEGAL DEPOSIT SECTION
SIGNATURE

Citizen

January 10 — 16, 1994

Vol. 5 No. 2

COVER STORY

Banks
Sitting in
limbo

Many banks and finance houses are distressed and face an uncertain future as liquidity squeeze and sharp practices cripple their operations.

Page 10

Chieftaincy tussle**Friends no more**

Controversy brews over the installation of Alhaji Jibrilla Abdullahi as Sarkin Hausawa of Orile-Agege, as his age-long associate and Sarkin Hausawa of Agege, Alhaji Mohammed Abbas vows to unseat him

Page 19

**DEPARTMENTS**

FROM THE EDITOR	4
LETTERS	5
VIEWPOINT	6
MOHAMMED HARUNA	9
COVER	10
NIGERIA	19
FORUM	22
DISCOURSE	26
BUSINESS & ECONOMY	27
SPECIAL FOCUS & AIB	31
AFRICA	32
WORLD	34
BILKISU YUSUF	36
PRIVATE EYE	37
POETS' NEST	38
MEDIAWATCH	39
SPORTS	40
DEFINITIONS	42

BRIEFLY

US president Bill Clinton Thursday lost his mother Virginia Kelly. The 70 year old whom he saw only 10 days ago, died of complications from breast cancer. On receiving the news, he cancelled all public appointments and flew home to Hot Springs, Arkansas. Due to visit Europe, Clinton has been dogged by allegations of underhand financial dealings and undue use of state resources for sexual gains.

*The legendary former speaker of the US House of Representatives, *Tip* O'neil also died Thursday. The diehard liberal who had seen many presidents come and go, was born in 1912.

* The former president of Georgia, Ghamshakurdia has been killed or committed suicide, but there was no firm word on the circumstances, the BBC reported January 5, quoting a report from Moscow. There was another confusion when his father later told newsmen that his son was not dead, but was hiding in the hills.

LETTERS

Halt the *takari* syndrome

Sir,

Islam does not permit undertaking 'Hajj' with a sole aim of committing all sorts of vices that are prohibited and which are capable of denting the image of the muslim *Ummah*

However, one area of concern for Nigeria is the issue of *takari* settlers. These are illegal settlers in the holyland with virtually no religious or moral obligations to be there. Their main aim of going to 'Hajj' or *Umra* is to make quick money through whatever means.

These *takari* are a disgrace to Nigeria. This affects innocent Nigerians who go there with the genuine aim of performing the 'Hajj' or *Umra*. They are harassed by Saudi security agents who from time to time invade *takari* hideouts and arrest them for deportation to Nigeria.

Most of these *takari* come from Nigeria. An innocent Nigerian can no longer feel safe and secured in Makkah and Madinah unless he carries along his passport for fear of being molested or arrested by Saudi security agents.

Some of the *takari* who illegally stay for two to three years in Saudi Arabia without making serious impact are faced with the problem of how to return home. So, they willingly give themselves up to the Saudi security while others prefer to provoke the security in such a way that the agents would understand that they are illegal settlers.

Government has to take drastic measures to stop these activities, otherwise we will continue to live with this dented image. Whenever a plane lands from Saudi Arabia, you find that majority of its passengers are illegal *takari* settlers deported from Saudi Arabia.

Adamu M. Imam
Bauchi, Bauchi State

©

Beef up security

Sir,

Now that the new federal mili-

tary government seems to have succeeded in winning the confidence and support of a majority of influential politicians and statesmen, it must also win the support and confidence of the people.

There is insecurity in many parts of the country. Armed robbery and murder have become rampant. This is frightening and the government must address it as a priority.

It is also important that economic problems of the people such as inflation and the fuel scarcity in the north which was forced on the people by the greed and irresponsibility of the rich businessmen are addressed immediately. The government can not afford to be nice about it. It must be tough and ruthless.

I saw a new crop of mobile policemen on our highways about the last days of the interim government I was proud of them. They were young, looked capable, were quite reasonable and efficient and at the same time polite. I hope this crop will be developed and enlarged.

AbdulHadi Ya'u
Gusau, Kebbi State

©

Good riddance

Sir,

The military's second coming was inevitable. The political class has failed us. They were greedy, selfish and confused. In spite of the impasse, the federal legislators were deliberating on football and impeachment of state governors. The state assembly members were plotting their second coming to loot the treasury.

There was no law but fear. And the common man is always at the receiving end. It was an unfortunate situation. I challenge anyone of them the (political class) to re-contest any future election and see the surprise that will greet them. They will fail woefully.

Sani Ibrahim
Festac Town, Lagos

Now who is better?

Sir,

The ING was ridiculed as being non-democratic and thus people that functioned in that government were given hell by the Nigerian media, pro-democracy activists and June 12 progressives.

Now a far worse (by standards of democracy) contraption in the shape and form of full military rule presides over the scene. And as the revelations in your cover story confirms, the progressives that are now serving in that government fought amongst themselves, pulling on private strings and connections to assist them in getting places on board Noah's Ark.

And if we loom into the details of the inauguration of both government, we will also notice another interesting feature. The ING was negotiated into place by the two extant political parties in the land together with the government of the day, while the present Provisional Ruling Council, PRC, is a sole endeavour executed by the same military we very much love to hate.

What is perplexing in all these developments is why the imposed military regime is being considered more democratic than the collectively negotiated ING?

Is this not traceable to the facts on the ground that the vocal minority who control and/or dominate the Nigerian media scene have been target — beneficiaries in this new shuffling of musical chairs?

Go over the list. Who has Abacha settled? Ayu, Babatope, Kingibe, Ibru, Rimi. Now we know why all has become silent on the political playing field. Now we can see very clearly why dictatorship is being adjudged as being far more democratic than four-fifths of democracy.

Talk about self-interest being greater than anything else? Progressives, we hail thee!

Kabir Dangogo
Apapa — Lagos

Letters to Citizen, carrying names, signatures and addresses, should be brief and to the point. They should be typed double space and addressed to Letters Page, Citizen, C.11 Unguwar Kanawa, PMB 2334, Kaduna. The Editor reserves the right to edit, publish or reject all letters.

Naira value

The Naira has been beaten into a pulp and has deteriorated through its own negligence, not stick it your fingers. It has lost all value, respect and purchasing power.

It was all because of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) which was supposed to have eliminated distortions in the economy, but has itself distorted it more than any of the problems it sought to cure.

One of the more urgent provisions of SAP was the decision to allow pure market competition. As pointed out times without number on these pages, this was never done in fact: the whole of Christendom. It was a failure to act and all it did.

The "unstructured" value of the Naira in 1987 was an artificially high, the result of open wars of auctions, rashings speculation and irresponsible monetary policies of the central bank: low value.

In the early 1980's it was at par with the American dollar. Today even officially the exchange rate is 25 Naira to the dollar, but the black market exchange is 45 Naira. This has not improved.

As we saw earlier (Editor May 4, 1987) neither import nor export have been allowed the unbridled free market enjoyed under SAP. It is a major failure that has been the sole determinant of

currency value. It might only be a guide—and just that. The government, in the light of many other variables, should decide, fix and announce it. We suggested that the dollar must not exchange for more than 3.50 Naira. And here we still stand. In this we support the recent call by Professor Sam Adiko that the dollar exchange for three Naira or less.

Part of the problem also has been the management of the foreign exchange demand. It was so controlled to give the balance of scientific sufficiency to the full Naira value. It has been much criticised but nothing has been done about. We urge the government to study the alternative suggestion by the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria for "a target zone approach" which permits the exchange rate to fluctuate within a given range of value say 2.50 Naira.

Already we have had the new regime has a special committee to "implement the new policies to strengthen the value of the Naira." This is good news but we have to see how we shall see the results. We have to see the new monetary guidelines.

In the final analysis the only guarantee for a stable Naira is to have a strong and stable independence to be accorded the Central Bank of Nigeria.

Probing the past

Remember the Federal Military Council then instituted a Board of Enquiry to investigate allegations of collusion and maladministration among military administrators in Benue State, Zambezi and Kwana. The five-man board led by Major General Chibuzo Terehwa presented its report to the Council on August 20, 1986.

The board's government had set up the

board to probe the activities of military administrators in Benue State, Zambezi and Kwana. The board's report was presented to the Council on August 20, 1986. The board's government had set up the

Justification for the probes is not far fetched. Some of the acting military administrators had indeed behaved like an army of occupation who saw their brief assignment as war booty. In one embarrassing case, a pricely sum of 136 million Naira was expended within twenty seven days.

The politicising of the judiciary, leading to its polarisation along political and even ethnic lines, are well known. Of recent, NNPC, the nations largest foreign exchange earner, has been at the centre of one scandal or the other. The corporation's former managing director and five other top officials are presently under investigation for an alleged theft of 41.1 million dollars. In the states, governance under the ousted civilian governors was akin to outright brigandage. Civilian governors behaved like military governors issuing orders in complete disregard for democratic principles of discourse and consensus. They showed little respect for accountability.

We however, draw government's attention to the apparent policy inconsistency in the ongoing exercise. The chief of general staff, Lt. General Oladipo Diya, said November 23 that this administration will not probe its predecessor as that would amount to "looking backwards," emphasising that thenceforth, corruption would be punished. Government, he said will be responsible and accountable. While the federal government probe of the acting military administrators accords with this policy, other en-

quiries do not. Although we agree with the generally held view that government's declared intention not to look backwards is misconceived, it is necessary for government to clarify if the decision to look back in the cases of the NNPC and the civilian governors amounts to a policy reversal.

If it is, then government must expand the scope of investigation to include all previous credible allegations of official misconduct. There had been weighty allegations of official corruption against public officers, particularly military governors. As serious as some of the allegations were, government showed little evidence that they were investigated. As commendable as this present effort to blow the whistle on official misconduct is, it is important however not to send the wrong signals to the public. For if preceding allegations remain uninvestigated the impression may be created that some citizens are beyond reproach. This certainly cannot be the case in a country governed by the rule of law.

Government therefore should use its security apparatus to carry out detailed investigation into past, credible allegations and prosecute those against whom a *prima facie* case has been established. Even then government should not spend too much time probing the past as the task ahead is daunting enough.

Finally we appeal that in all investigations the underlining principle must be justice and fair play. The intention must never be to discredit or witch-hunt anybody.

Rout this traitor

Last week, peace talks were expected to resume under UN auspices in Lusaka between the government of Angola and the treacherous rebel movement UNITA. These talks have been on since November last year to try to bring to an end the resumed Angolan civil war, now described by the UN as the bloodiest on-going conflict in the world.

Everyone's concern at the moment, of course, is to try to bring to a speedy end the hostilities which now claim 1,000 lives a day and visit untold suffering on the innocent

people of Angola.

But the world must never forget who is responsible for this carnage. Jonas Savimbi, this blood-thirsty megalomaniacal traitor who allied with South Africa in the hey days of apartheid, single handedly breached the UN-brokered 1991 peace agreement and resumed the 19-year civil war because he was defeated in UN-supervised elections in September 1992.

No effort should be spared to bring peace to the people of Angola. But the world also owes itself a duty to rout the criminal, Jonas Savimbi.

Business
Meetings
Made
Perfect



at the

16th Kaduna International Trade Fair.

Theme :- "Co-ordinating International & Local Efforts for Financing and Sustaining Economic Development."

Venue :- PERMANENT TRADE FAIR COMPLEX,
KADUNA - ZARIA ROAD, KADUNA

Date :- Saturday 29th January - Sunday 6th February, 1994.

Contact :-

THE DIRECTOR GENERAL,

KADUNA INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR,

KADUNA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, INDUSTRY & AGRICULTURE (NOC),

No. 24, Wall Road, P. O. Box 725, Kaduna, Tel: (082) - 214149, 211215, Telex: 71322, KADCHA,
Fax: 082 - 214149.

Africa's Most Famous Fair.

CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS LIMITED.

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Please enter my subscription to Citizen for the term I have indicated below:-

3 months (12 issues) at N350
6 months (24 issues) at N675
1 year (52 issues) at N1,300

Tick Box

I enclose a bank draft made payable to CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS LTD.

G. 11 Unguwar Kanawa
P.M.B. 2934, Kaduna,
Tel. 250165

Or

10A ACME Road, Apidighi
Off Isheri Road
P.M.B. 21742, Ikeja

Name _____

Address _____

Citizen, January 10, 1994



MOHAMMED HARUNA

personal aggrandisement.

Yet my belief that a national conference is a waste of time notwithstanding, no one should be afraid to hold it. Fears have been experienced that such a conference will lead to the break-up of the country. Such fears are truly genuine and I believe not only Nigerians but Africans and the black race will rue the day Nigeria breaks up. Even then

they fear they may never get through democratic processes.

Some of us have been naive to think such advocates may indeed mean well for Nigeria. After Onagoruwa's interview with *Tell* (January 10, 1993), any such thinking is now banished from my own mind. It is obvious from Onagoruwa's words that he and his type are not out to heal wounds but rather to

The dangers of a sovereign conference

Any one reading this column will be forgiven to conclude from the headline that I am against the impending national conference which Dr. Olu Onagoruwa, the all-powerful attorney-general of the federation, has told us, in effect, will be sovereign, like it or not. Anyone who concludes I am against the national conference, sovereign or whatever, could not be more wrong. True, personally I believe it is a waste of time and I have said so at least once at a recent constitutional workshop on national issues organised in Abuja by the Lagos-based Constitutional Rights Project. My reason simply is that the problem with Nigeria has really been less the constitutions than a lack of good faith among Nigerians in implementing them (the constitutions). And no amount of constitutional conferences can ever remedy that.

The problem of badfaith, somehow, is not peculiar to Nigeria. As the reader will see from reading an article we are reproducing elsewhere on the experience of Francophone Africa with national conferences, that problem is truly widespread. A couple of years after the conference has been held successfully in say Benin and Niger, the only thing that has changed is the leadership. Beyond that the lot of their people have in fact only become worse. Obviously national conferences are little more than instruments for acquiring power, not for the benefit of the greatest number, but merely for

it is senseless to try and force a people together if their relationship seems unworkable. Unity, after all, cannot be an end in itself.

Long before General Babangida became an object of hate for the Lagos/Ibadan media and those behind them, assaulting northern institutions and leaders had always been their stock-in-trade. However the crudity and hate displayed in such attacks since June 12 is simply indescribable. I simply do not see why anyone should put up with this persistent denigration of his heritage and his whole being.

There are those who say that holding the national conference is submitting to blackmail, a crude one at that, by a vociferous section of the country. Blackmail clearly it is. Just look at the whole Onagoruwa episode. Here is a minister of justice whose integrity is dented by a questionable past. No one, not even himself, disputes at least one of the charges — that of examination fraud — against him. Yet when the issue is raised, the same crowd that will hang others on the flimsiest evidence, tell the world that Onagoruwa is being hounded because he is the chief advocate of the national conference! How crude and inconsistent can people get.

If this noisome crowd cares for the truth, the fact is that no one is afraid of any national conference on its own merit. If there is any fear, it is simply because it is as clear as daylight that its chief advocates see it as a means of acquiring the power that

denigrate and alienate the north, ill-defined as it is in their hate-filled mind. What he said is worth quoting in full for it just about summarises and symbolises the hidden agenda of the advocates (at least the influential ones) of the national conference.

Hear him: "A constitutional conference can be done within one year. As a matter of fact, it should not last more than three or four months. It is not terribly difficult. All that needs to be done is to look at the past constitutions, see what amendment you can make, discuss issues and the preponderance of certain ethnic groups in top positions, discuss the position of the minorities, the problem of mineral-producing areas etc. That is what the constitutional conference is all about. Having discussed all these, then they now draw a constitution to fit in the facts. However, nothing prevents the conference from abolishing election to the centre, so that nobody will contest election to the centre. It will remove this present conflict. The 1959 election was rigged by the British for the northerners.

"... It was rigged then. That of 1964 was also rigged, same with 1965 in the west which led to the civil war, also the same thing in 1979." (emphasis mine).

From these words, something tells me it will be a miracle if we still have a country called Nigeria after the national conference. I fervently pray and hope that we do, but with people like Onagoruwa in charge such a miracle is truly a long shot.

Sitting in limbo

Many banks and finance houses are distressed and face an uncertain future as liquidity squeeze and sharp practices cripple their operations

In the late 1980s and the first two years of the 1990s the scene of many university and polytechnic graduates was to go to work in one of the many commercial and merchant

and extended by the banks and the distant relations — finance houses mortgage banks and the community banks. Only last week the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) issued licences to 126 additional finance

approved by the CBN. These banks were to be licensed to carry out banking business. It is expected that the new entrants will be able to provide a wide range of other financial services and contribute to the growth of the economy.

The new entrants are expected to provide a wide range of services to the public. With the introduction of these banks to save the situation of the existing banks and the Nigerian economy. This is the intention of the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. These banks are expected to provide a wide range of services to the public.

NATIONAL BANK OF NIGERIA LIMITED



banks that were struggling on all over the country. The establishment of several new banks in the commercial centres of Lagos, Abuja and Port Harcourt would now number 126 with 2,346 branches across the country.

National Bank of Nigeria Limited houses bringing the number of those licensed by the CBN to 126. Although several are steadily falling into the list of distressed companies. Bankers disclose that the number of banks that have in principle approved

by the CBN who have commented on the matter have pointed out that the problems of the industry are very serious. The CBN Chairman, Chairman, Nigerian National Development Bank

NIDB, saw the proliferation of banks and other financial institutions which followed the deregulation of the economy as containing within itself the seeds of the trouble that was to come. Dr. Ibrahim Ayagi, an economist and one time managing director of Continental Merchant Bank, CMB, agreed with Gbadamosi's reasoning.

Sources close to the CBN told *Citizen* that all finance houses that met the stipulated requirements will be issued licences despite the liquidity crunch experienced in the sub sector. The source said the apex bank was determined to abide by the



Ebhohadaghe: confidence is low

deregulation policy that allows competition among the finance firms. According to the official, it is a free entry and free exit area for investors.

Deregulation, as one of the corner-stones of the Structural Adjustment Programme embarked upon in 1985, was aimed at leaving the economy, the finance industry inclusive, at the mercy of the almighty market forces. This meant that in everything they did the banks and others in finance industry must be competitive. Experience however showed that the competitive spirit was only visible in the struggle for

the foreign exchange on offer to the licensed banks. In fact Ayagi saw the new banks that came with the deregulation as those that came merely to reap where they did not sow. Thus unlike the older banks that have been there much longer, the new banks were mainly concerned with the foreign exchange operations. At the end of the day, Ayagi said such banks reaped tremendous benefits as against the small cost they incurred. Changes in the operations of the foreign exchange market by the CBN easily exposed the soft underbelly of the foreign exchange shops, a term used for the banks that flourished while the old order lasted.

Other measures like the withdrawal of government deposits from the commercial banks only added to their woes. With the removal of the ceiling on interest rates, it was only a matter of time before the casualties were recorded.

So what exactly is the trouble with the banks and by extension the finance industry? The most obvious expression of the problem is the inability of the banks to meet their obligations to their depositors. It is now common knowledge that some otherwise solid looking banks are unable to produce their depositors money when the depositors demand for such. Apart from putting to question the issue of trust banks and their customers, the trend indicates more serious problem in the industry. Without being declared so, a bank may be technically insolvent although it may still be able to meet its depositors' obligations. As at December 31, last year five cash strapped finance houses summoned a meeting of their creditors to re-schedule the outstanding debts of over two billion Naira owed by the sub sector. The criteria for determining healthy banks border on issues affecting liquidity ratio, capital adequacy, prudent and quality management, cash reserve and sectoral credit allocation. In a situation where care is not taken, the technical insolvency graduates to chronic insolvency in which case remedial action

is required to bring it back to good health. An economist in one of the specialised banks in Lagos attribute distress in the financial sector to inadequate capital base, poor management or the monetary policies of the regulating authorities.

By virtue of their position as the regulatory bodies, the CBN and the NDIC are responsible for nurturing back to good health banks that are experiencing liquidity and other problems which have combined to make the word distress the most commonly used word in banking circles today. Indications of what was in store for the NDIC came early



Osayameh: blames state-owned banks

in the day as the corporation had to, within the first three months of its existence in March 1989, cough out 2.3 billion Naira in support of insured banks with liquidity crisis. The mandate of the NDIC and the CBN on matters affecting banks does not stop at periodic bail outs as Ola Vincent, former CBN governor pointed out. The regulatory authorities can take over the management of the banks with a view to nursing them back to good health and then sell or merge them with a stronger bank. The first bank in Nigeria to experience a taste of the NDIC medicine, the National Bank, clearly



Forum Group headquarters: when the going was good

shows that in spite of the intention it is pretty difficult to raise the dead.

The experience of the National Bank clearly exposed the inadequacy of the measures adopted to turn around the ailing bank. At the end of the day there was little sign to show that all the hundreds of million Naira spent by the NDIC on that bank made any difference. All indications are that the NDIC will continue to have a terminally sick patient on its hand. The case of other troubled banks is not any different. Sometime in 1993 CBN in collaboration with NDIC dissolved the board of five state banks namely Pan African Bank, Mercantile Bank, African Continental Bank and Cooperative and Commerce Bank and appointed interim boards to oversee those banks. Even by NDIC account nothing has happened so far to suggest that the banks are anything other than costly sink holes into which more and more money is being poured.

While experts like the managing director of Commerce Bank and president of the Chartered Institute of Bankers, Ralph Osayameh prefer to see the issue of distress in the banking industry as almost the exclusive preserve of state owned banks, the evidence on the ground suggests that they are not the only culprits. It is true that state owned

banks are by the nature of their ownership subject to political rather than sound financial considerations but privately owned banks also have their own achilles's heel. On two separate instances the NDIC had to step in to arrest the deteriorating situation at Fidelity Union Merchant Bank and Alpha Merchant Bank, both of which are privately owned. Squabbles in the banks' boards led to physical combat in one instance, a situation quite contrary to the normally staid and conservative outlook of bankers. In his own observation on the matter, the managing director of the NDIC, John Ebbhodgegho said that a crisis ridden bank board is not likely to generate confidence, neither can the directors give the needed perspective direction to the affected bank.

And as the case of Continental Merchant Bank, CMB showed, confidence is rather scarce even in some of the banks previously seen as solid and stable.

Before its recent experience, CMB according to its one time managing director, Dr. Ibrahim Ayagi was the leading merchant bank in Nigeria. Its premier position was testified to by its asset base investment portfolio and the quality of its staff. For now if its romance with the NDIC is anything to go by, the CMB is in serious distress. *Citizen* learnt from

insiders that the bank is now in shadow of its former self. Ayagi traced the genesis of the bank's problem to the disregard of the bank as an avenue for making money and unnecessary overhead cost. What ever else may be responsible for the sorry state of affairs at the premier merchant bank, the party seems to be over. The CBN and NDIC have imposed a holding action on the bank in an effort to salvage what could be salvaged. A holding action entails certain measures usually taken to sanitise troubled banks. The measures include a ban on advertisement for new deposits, reduction in workforce, improving the capital base of the bank, sanction on new loans and loan recovery drive. So far it is clear that CMB has been quiet on the advertisement front for the whole of last year. The beginning of the year was also traumatic for a sizeable chunk of its staff including the overall personnel officers all of whom lost their jobs. Frequent visitors to the banks headquarters in Lagos easily notice the nearly half empty offices of the bank. In what may be considered the high point of the CMB affair, its managing director for the greatest part of 1993 was whisked away for interrogation along with two of the bank's directors after a CBN preliminary report allegedly indicted them on their activities as chief executive officers of their banks. While the former CMB chief has since been released and an acting managing director was appointed to replace him the problems of the beleaguered bank did not stop there. Since the banks generally seem to operate by *Omerta*, the mafia code of silence, it took the Technical Committee on Privatisation and Commercialisation, TCPC to blow the lid off the true situation of the banks. Although it was billed for privatisation, CMB with 60 per cent federal government holding is one of the three whose privatisation was deferred because of their present non-viable status which made them unattractive to investors. As the

TCPC made efforts to restructure the bank for privatisation, NDIC is also injecting hundreds of millions of Naira into the bank.

Nevertheless, the bank is still licking its wounds and unprepared to accept its image in the eye of the public. When *Citizen* sought to obtain the bank's side of the whole saga, the press affairs officer was uncooperative. Although *Citizen* was initially billed to interview the acting managing director, the officer, who was jittery, took exception to what she termed the "negative" questions listed and eventually called off the interview. Some CMB ex-staffers who voluntarily left the bank and who were more forthcoming rose to the defence of the bank. One such ex-staffer argued that CMB was just a victim of the prevailing harsh economic dispensation and should not be singled out for blame. He specifically blamed the bank's plight on the injurious level of interest rate on offer for inter-bank lending, use of stabilisation securities and the problem of long term borrowing backed by short term funds. In response to a question on the exodus of staff from the bank, another ex-staffer said that if anything was to blame, it is the excellent training given by the bank that made its staff valuable and attractive to other financial institutions who have been poaching on the CMB.

Whatever may be responsible for the problem, one cannot but agree with Sulaimon Akorede, a Lagos-based financial and management consultant who observed that it is disheartening that a hitherto viable bank like CMB should get messed up. Part of the blame according to some analysts should go to the regulatory bodies which they see as not being alive to its responsibility. Ralph Osayameh argued that the monetary authorities (CBN specifically) have not ensured the effective supervision and control of the financial system. The inadequate supervision created loopholes whereby banks violate the rules without being detected and adequately punished. Except for some verification checks,

the CBN relies on whatever returns the banks submit to it. The recent creation of a department to deal with other financial institutions leaves the banking supervision department with more time to do its primary duty. In spite of occasional tough talk, the CBN has not done much beyond the holding action it imposed on some of the banks, and the interim board appointed for others. The existing gap between rhetoric and action could only have encouraged the indiscipline and dishonesty that are currently prevalent in the banks. Lack of close supervision also leaves room for poor management and other lapses that encourage the bad habits of insider dealings. Under the counter deals, fraud and indiscriminate granting of unsecured loans are rampant. At the end of the day the sharp practices only leave the industry worse off.

For now other options open to the CBN/NDIC to check the rampant cases of distress in banks include various restructuring options like merger, liquidation and buy out. As Ayagi pointed out, the fear of a run on the banks should not prevent the CBN from taking a decisive action. So if the true spirit of deregulation is to prevail, those banks that cannot survive should be allowed to go under. Jim Ovia, managing direc-



Umanah: first wonder banker



Abacha: to clip their wings

tor, Zenith International Bank thought otherwise. He argued that the CBN should not allow the distressed banks to go under. This is because although a good number of them are now down, they are not yet out. If they are allowed to collapse, it will cause ripples in the sector which will eventually affect even the most efficiently run banks. Ayagi however sees it differently. If the healthy banks have been doing the proper thing they will have nothing to fear in the event that the unhealthy ones fold up. An economist who spoke to *Citizen* anonymously pointed out that if the banks realise that they will be penalised, they will sit up and behave. At the end of the day, depositors will know that the remaining ones are not supported artificially and confidence in the industry will be maintained. These views are not entirely new as a committee which examined the problems of the banking sector in 1992 recommended to the CBN outright closure, merger, acquisition and rationalisation of the distressed banks. That committee did not appear to be swayed by arguments of Nigeria being underbanked; in fact it accused the CBN of overprotecting and subsidising the distressed banks. For now the only ingredient missing is the political will to carry out a police

stand they were making end of the year gifts for which cash was being given to contractors to go to London and things like that. All these contributed to make Continental Merchant Bank what it is today from what it was before and I guess it is the same thing that happened to most of the banks, especially those in depressed state.

Citizen: We also learnt that the bank (CMB) has been placed on what is called holding action by the regulating authorities viz Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) in association with the NDIC? A sort of procedure to quarantine the distressed banks by disallowing them to advertise for deposits, improve their capital base, cut down the number of their workforce and curtail new loans, etc. CMB has so far had its staff strength reduced and its former managing director replaced. Do you think these are adequate measures to bring back the lost fortunes of the one time leading merchant bank?

Ayagi: Perhaps the measures will bring it back to the situation it was before, that of a normal bank. You know, it is not easy, because the main thing in banking is confidence and trust. Once they are lost it is difficult to bring them back. Bank that finds itself in the situation of Continental today whatever anybody could do, it would take a long time before it reacts favourably to that kind of measure. For instance, I understand that one of the things the NDIC and CBN did was to come up with about 500 million Naira support programme for the bank. I think it was done sometime in 1992. But after some time, the money was dissipated and the bank is still in trouble. And people were withdrawing their deposits. Soon they were not even getting the money. So for a bank to have lost that kind of trust, it is not easy to bring it back it will take time. Whatever they are doing would not easily bring back the bank. It will take time, but it is quite possible that it may be done.

Citizen: Some analysts argue that the CBN and NDIC have not been doing enough to address the issue of distress in the banks. The two bodies are seen as treating the troubled banks with kid gloves, that is being too soft on them. The analysts argue further that what is needed is the closure or merger of those in chronic distress. How do you find this line of thinking?

Ayagi: Well, I agree with that, I think they are treating them like spoilt children. The reason, of course is that many of the banks are owned by influential figures in Nigeria. People who know who is what, where and what to do. That kind of treatment is inevitable. Because once they fall into the situation and they are distressed, ah, they would try to get the best treatment and the best treatment is the kind you described as the kid glove treatment, that is something that would probably support them to come out of the problem. But to think of doing the right thing, that is if they are bankrupt, to declare them as bankrupt or if whether to close them up and so on. It is not easy for them to do so because of the people behind the banks. For any bank in Nigeria today you will be sure to find one important personality who

knows where the powers that be are located. So even if the technical people in the Central Bank and NDIC would want to do the right thing, they would not be allowed to do it. But would this kind of treatment solve the problem? It cannot, it will just support the banks to linger on. And that is bad for the economy.

Citizen: Even the NDIC is not too happy with what is going on. There is a limit to the funds it can use to support those kinds of banks and NDIC wonders why the funds are given to these banks when it is the same management that might have mismanaged the place who are still calling the shots at those banks. At the same time there is the fear of a run on the banks in case some of them fail given the inter-connection within the banking sector. So what could be the best option?

Ayagi: A run on the banks should be okay. Especially at this time of privatisation and so on. This is a time when you expect only the best to remain. It is a time for competition, it is a time to allow the market forces to determine who should be there and who should not be there. It is good enough that the government gave them the licence to operate, but not to continue to support them at the expense of the public. If of course they are bad, they should be allowed to find their own way to solve their own problems and if a solution to their own problem is a run on then let a run on them be. You should not artificially stop them being run on. And there is nothing sacred about a bank being run on. No bank can have a run on unless they are bankrupt. Of course, I know the NDIC's responsibility is to give insurance to depositors, to protect them. But protecting them does not mean protecting banks from being run on by customers who want to get their money. Their responsibility is to make sure they honour depositors' demands. That is their obligation. People should allow the banks to operate properly. If people are not satisfied, they would like to take their money, if all of them at the same time run to the bank to collect their money that is when the trouble arises. If the banks have to close down some people have to lose their money, some customers have to lose money. But I think that should be allowed.

Citizen: What could be the implication of this on the healthy banks?

Ayagi: Well, the healthy banks, you know they are being treated badly. The healthy banks are the old traditional banks that have been in Nigeria before this new creation of banks. Those were okay banks. They suffered, they invested in Nigeria, they did it not just to come in for foreign exchange. They were in to develop themselves and the Nigerian economy as a whole not just the foreign exchange market. Now, the number of banks that came in from 1986 is large. Many of them will go out of business, I believe the business will be with the other banks. So in terms of benefit, I think they will benefit. It will not be detrimental to their interest.

By Mannir Dan-Ali

NEW YEAR
CREETINGS

HABIB NIGERIA BANK

Wishes You A
Happy And Prosperous
New Year



Habib Nigeria Bank Limited

The Bank with a difference

HEAD OFFICE: NIDB Building, 18, Waff Road, P.M.B. 2180, Kaduna.
Tel. (062) 235140 - 9, 200145 - 9; cable - HABIB BANK

CENTRAL OFFICE: 1, Keffi / Manuwa Street, S.W. Ikoyi, P.O.Box 54648, Ikoyi, Lagos
Tel. (01) 2691550 - 9.

AREA OFFICE CENTRAL: C17, Kachia Road, Kaduna South, Kaduna.

AREA OFFICE SOUTH: 8, Allen Avenue, Ikeja. AREA OFFICE NORTH: 14B, Post Office
Road, P.M.B. 3365, Kano.

BRANCHES: Abuja * Abokuta * Abuja * Apapa * Badeggi * Bauchi * Birnin-Kebbi * Ibadan * Ilorin * Ikaré * Ikeja
* Ikoyi * Izoim * Jos * Kachako * Kaduna Main * Kaduna South * Kano Main * Kano (Fagge Ta-Kudu) * Kankara
* Katsina * Maidugun * Makarfi * Makurdi * Malumfashi * Minna * New Bassa * Onitsha * Port-Harcourt * Sokoto
* Tafawa Balewa Square-Lagos * Turunku * Uyo * Yola * Zaria * Zangon-Daura

NIGERIA

Chieftaincy tussle

Friends no more

Controversy brews over the installation of Alhaji Jibrilla Abdullahi as *Sarkin Hausawa* of Orile-Agege, as his age-long associate and *Sarkin Hausawa* of Agege, Alhaji Mohammed Abbas vows to unseat him

Agege, a fast growing Lagos suburb is an admixture of commerce and industry. Located on the north-western part of Lagos, the former federal capital city, the settlement brims conspicuously with a large concentration of Hausa settlers. And for many years, members of the community have lived in harmony. But that relative peace is now seriously threatened as the *Sarkin Hausawa* leadership tussle brews controversy.

It started as an irony of life. When Monday, August 30 last year, Alhaji Jibrilla B. Abdullahi wrote a letter to inform his age-long friend Alhaji Mohammed Abbas, *Sarkin Hasawan* Agege, that he (Alhaji Abdullahi) had been conferred with *Sarkin Hausawan* Orile-Agege, he had anticipated a reply loaded with felicitation. But that he did not receive. Instead, Alhaji Abbas petitioned the former state governor, Sir Michael Otedola in a letter dated Thursday, September 30, 1993.

Barely two weeks after, Oba Sani Arewa Komolafe (Fagbaya III) the *Alayige* of Orile-Agege who conferred the title, was advised in a letter from the office of the state deputy governor to suspend the proposed installation of Alhaji Abdullahi. The letter, dated October 13, 1993 and signed by Kunle Abbas for the director-general in the deputy governor's office justified the suspension of the installation because "it contravenes the provisions of the Obas and Chiefs of Lagos State Law, 1981 and in order to stall any break down of law and order."

Unmoved by the letter sent from



Abdullahi: adamant

the office of the deputy governor, Oba Sanni Arewa installed Alhaji Jibrilla Abdullahi, 64, as *Sarkin Hausawan* Orile-Agege at dawn on Saturday, October 30, last year. Consequently, Alhaji Mohammed Abbas, *Sarkin Hausawan* Agege who is in his 80's, resolved to fight on. On Monday he sent two of his aides to do a follow-up on his petition to the state government and to notify the deputy governor that the installation had, after all taken place surreptitiously.

Informed of this development, Alhaji Abdullahi, who was born in Lagos of a Hausa father and a Yoruba Awori (Lagos main tribe) mother, headed for a Lagos High Court November 15 to validate his appointment and installation, and to restrain the state government from taking

any steps to undermine the performance of his functions as the *Sarkin Hausawan* Orile-Agege. Joined as defendants in the suit number ID/2468/93 were the state deputy governor, the director-general in the department of chieftaincy matters, the inspector general of police, and the state police commissioner.

About the same time, however, the deputy governor had invited the warring Hausa leaders to a meeting, ostensibly to avert imminent breakdown of law and order in the Hausa community. The meeting was fixed first for November 16 and later 23. But on both occasions dialogue was impossible as both factions were not fully represented.

On Tuesday, November 30 the meeting was eventually held. In attendance were Mr. Ajibola Olagbaya, the director-general in the deputy governor's office, Mr. Kunle Abbas, secretary in charge of chieftaincy affairs; Oba Sanni Arewa Komolafe with a few assistants and Alhaji Mohammed Abbas who was also accompanied by few aides. Citizens learnt that Mr. Olagbaya, who presided over the meeting, merely emphasised the content of his letter to Oba Arewa Komolafe dated October 13, 1993. And he assured Alhaji Abbas Mohammed that the state



Otedola: former governor of Lagos State

government would handle the matter accordingly.

In a surprise move six days after the supposed peace meeting, the *Sarkin Hausawa* of Orile-Agege was arrested and detained at Alagbon police station, Ikoyi on December 6. And for four days he remained in the *Kalakuta* cell where coincidentally he was made the *Sarki* of the inmates. *Citizen* gathered that even when a suit was filed on his behalf December 7, the case never came up for hearing until December 15 when Justice A.C. Holloway ordered his release which had been secured



Abiola: defunct SDP presidential flagbearer

seven days earlier.

Citizen gathered from reliable sources that the raging controversy over the *Sarkin Hausawa* title was borne out of misrepresentation of the relevant laws and complicated by the politicisation of the title under former governor Michael Otedola. Both *Sarkin Hausawa* of Agege, Alhaji Abbas and the disputed *Sarkin Hausawa* of Orile-Agege were believed to have worked together in the Hausa wing of Michael Otedola Campaign Organisation, MOCO. And together they ensured the realisation of Sir Otedola's gubernatorial ambition, under the defunct National Republican Convention, NRC.

But following the emergence of

Chief MKO Abiola as presidential flagbearer of the defunct Social Democratic Party (SDP), Alhaji Abdullahi was believed to have joined the Hausa wing of his campaign team. Thus he parted ways with both Sir Michael and Alhaji Abbas, at least politically. Unfortunately this political decision was to put him in the black book of the former governor. Twice, he was interrogated by officials of the State Security Service, SSS, believed to be acting on tip off from the governor's office. Beside this political undertone, *Citizen* gathered also that the spirited resentment of Alhaji Abbas to the appointment and installation of a *Sarkin Hausawa* for Orile-Agege was borne out of an ignorant misconception over his area of jurisdiction. According to a source, Alhaji Abbas feared that the new appointment would have curtailed his sphere of influence over and above the entire Hausa community in Agege. "But the reality," said a former chairman of Agege Local Government, "is that Agege is presently under two paramount traditional rulers with their respective areas of jurisdictions."

Citizen investigations revealed that Orile-Agege is being ruled by Oba Sanni Arewa Komolafe who was appointed the *Alayige* of Orile-Agege on December 31, 1981, while Alhaji Abbas is under the reign of Oba Muraino Olanrewaju Adebari who was appointed the *Olu* of Agege on September 25, 1991. "So where is the conflict?" asked the former local council chairman who preferred not to be named. Attempts to seek the view of Alhaji Mohammed Abbas was met with stone wall. When *Citizen* called at his 24, Darocha Street residence last week, the *Sarkin Hausawa* of Agege declined comment. The aged man disclosed that he had developed hypertension and he was on medical advice to rest. The *Alayige* of Orile-Agege was similarly not available for comment. When *Citizen* called at his palace twice last week, Oba Arewa Komolafe was said to have gone out.

Alhaji Jibrilla Abdullahi, the disputed *Sarkin Hausawa* of Orile-Agege however described the controversy as "unwarranted and unfortunate." According to the former broadcaster with the defunct Northern Broadcasting Corporation, NBC, Alhaji Abbas was confused because "he was ready to accept another man for the title but not Jibrilla." Alhaji Abdullahi, who was also a former chairman of Kano State Broadcasting Corporation, alleged that Alhaji Abbas had no valid letter of appointment. Said he: "He became a *Sarkin Hausawa* by a contrivance in which *Sarkin Dongo* Ikataye was pushed aside in 1948 in the presence of Mr. R.E. Boss who represented Mr. Heastaw, the colonial district officer for Ikeja district office."

Alhaji Abdullahi also described as false the rejection of his appointment on the ground that it contravenes the Oba and Chiefs of Lagos Laws of 1981. *Citizen* investigation however revealed that section 33(1) of the said law confers the right to honour deserving citizens on an Oba while sub-section (2) limits such awardees to six in any calendar year.

Another controversial provision in the said law is section 34 which states "An Oba shall not confer on any person, an honorary title which had previously been conferred by him or his predecessor on any living person." But the argument, countered Alhaji Abdullahi, was misplaced. "The *Olu* of Agege, under whose jurisdiction Alhaji Abbas was, is an Oba different from the *Alayige* of Agege who has confirmed the *Sarkin Hausawa* of Orile-Agege on me," he explained.

By last Saturday, Alhaji Abdullahi was set to celebrate his installation and his 64th birthday. But *Sarki* Abbas has reiterated his resolve to abort it. Said he: "The result could bring a bloody riot and unrest in Agege if the ceremony is allowed to take place." The outcome should be part of history now.

By Moyo Akoshile and Tayo Odunlami

Marginalisation

The eastern agenda

The people of the seven eastern states warm up for the forthcoming constitutional conference with strong hopes of ending their alleged marginalisation in the country's scheme of things

There is one word which is bound to feature prominently in the contributions of the representatives of the eastern states whenever the proposed constitutional conference finally holds. That word is "marginalisation" a word which occupies a pre-eminent position in the vocabulary

of those from the seven eastern states of the country. Convinced that they have not been getting the deserved attention, the easterners will be going to the much-awaited conference to negotiate a better deal for themselves. *Citizen* gathered that opinion leaders from various parts of the east have already swung into action mobilising their people to participate actively in what they see as a chance of a lifetime to free themselves from the clutches of marginalisation.

Claims by the easterners that they are being unfairly treated, have refused to go away

since 1970 when they lost their three-year struggle for secession. Four months ago, the claims were given a new impetus by the Eastern Forum, one of the several mushrooming political alliances sent to an early grave by the burial, last November 18, of the still-born Third Republic. The forum, which brought together the eastern states' governors and like-minded politicians as a result of the political impasse occasioned by

the annulment of the June 12 presidential elections, threatened secession if due consideration was not given to the sensibility of the people of the area.

At one of their meetings held at Abuja, the nation's fledgling capital, in September, the governors lamented that there was scanty fed-



Nwodo: secession threat

eral presence in the east despite the enormous contributions of the area to the economy of the country. In a communique read on their behalf by Dr. Okwesilieze Nwodo, the ex-Enugu State governor widely credited with being the brain child behind the forum, they claimed that the east remained grossly marginalised while the country's growth was made possible by the crude oil resources, the bulk of which is ob-

tained from eastern soil. While the rest of the nation agonised over the secession threat by the governors, many easterners applauded what they believed was a bold attempt to give their axis a united voice after decades of enmity between the Igbo and the eastern minorities.

Investigations by *Citizen* showed that at the constitutional confab, the east will put up a strong argument for the citing of industries and other federal projects on its soil as a way of ending its long night of marginalisation. Another demand will be the revision of the oil revenue sharing formula in a way to favour the oil producing states. The current formula of apportioning the national cake has of late come under scathing criticisms from a growing number of prominent easterners. Among the leading advocates of its revision are Chief Etim Okpoyo, the immediate past deputy governor of Akwa Ibom State and chief Sylvester Ugoh, one time governor of the defunct rebel Bank of Biafra and National Republican Convention vice presidential candidate in the annulled June 12 elections. The duo would like to see a new oil revenue sharing formula that will give preference to the east "for producing the bulk of the country's wealth."

Another issue which is sure to be given lavish attention by eastern

Continued on page 24



Bako: Akwa Ibom State administrator

national conference, the civil coup d'état

against him. In fact, he was, and, apparently still is popular with the army. He therefore had the power to dissolve the national conference by force, as soon as it declared its autonomy. It was precisely to avoid a confrontation between the army and the national conference that certain delegates were opposed to the idea of autonomy. Even after autonomy was proclaimed on February 25, they were still convinced that the army would not accept the new situation.

Surprisingly, and what gave democracy a chance in Benin, was that this confrontation did not occur. The reasons behind Kerekou's acceptance are not clear. Perhaps he thought that the intervention of the army would have resulted in too much bloodshed without getting the desired results. Perhaps he knew beforehand that he would be accorded personal amnesty. The influence of the president of the conference, Archbishop DeSouza, was probably another determining factor.

A violent transition in Mali

The evolution of the conference in Mali was the complete opposite of that in Benin. Since it happened as a result of the overthrow of the existing regime, it can be called a violent transition. Certainly, in most African countries, violence has been a part of transition. Until now, however, Mali is the only country where violence led to the fall of the regime before the process of transition actually began.

The facts that led to this situation can be summarised as follows. Since 1990 Mali faced a rude awakening toward democracy. The measures recommended by the head of state, General Moussa Traore, were not enough. He promised only to have discussion about the liberalisation of politics within his single party, the Malian People's Democratic Union (UDPM). But stalling led to greater discontent, which reached

dangerous levels.

Until December 1990, opposition groups had been forming both within and outside the country. Three groups played an important role in overthrowing the government: the National Committee for Democratic Revival (CNID), under the leadership of a lawyer named Mountaga Tall, the Democratic Alliance of Mali (ADEMA), one of whose key figures was then Alpha Koumar, and the Students Association of Mali (AEEM).

The immobility of the government, as well as its refusal to undertake serious democratic reforms, led to the trouble that began in 1991 and which increased until the fall of the regime. The critical phase of this trouble was in February and March 1991. It was marked by demonstrations, the most violent of which took place on March 22-23, 1991. The demonstrations on those days rapidly turned into insurrections, which were suppressed by the armed forces. A state of emergency and curfew were declared in the major towns of the country. Several deaths were counted, but the figures themselves coming from different sources were often contradictory. A shopping center in Bamako, the Green Sahel, was burned down. The armed forces apparently trapped the demonstrators and onlookers in the center, blocked the exits and then set it alight. There were 65 deaths.

Opposition committee formed

On March 24, 1991, a committee for the coordination of the opposition was formed. It demanded the resignation of president Traore, the dissolution of the National Assembly and the constitution of committee for the well-being of the people. The committee supported the indefinite strike called by the only union in the country, the National Workers Union of Mali (UNTM), which began on March 25, 1991. The committee was made up of the Mali Bar Association, UNTM, the Mali Association for Human Rights (AMDH), AEEM, CNID, ADEMA,

the Associations des Diploes Initiateurs et Demandeurs d'Emplois (ADIDE), and the Youth Association for Democracy and Progress (JLD). Thousands of people assembled in front of the trade union center of Bamako where the members of the committee announced the start of an indefinite general strike until the fall of the regime. On the same day, March 24, 1991, seven persons were killed by gunshots following confrontations between the demonstrators and armed forces in different parts of the town. The death toll for the three days rose to 150.

On March 25, numerous international organisations protested the violence in Mali. The strike was successful. The second in command of the government party, Djibril Diallo, resigned, the government tried to appease the people by releasing 30 political detainees, but the liberation of the first prisoners set off a mutiny in the central prison of Bamako. The armed forces reacted and 15 persons were killed.

On March 26, the head of the lawyers of Mali announced that President Traore had been arrested during the night. The army and security forces that had overthrown him formed the National Reconciliation Council (CNR), led by Lt. Colonel Amadou Toumani Traore, and thus published a proclamation in which they explained the reasons for their action.

At the time of the fall of the regime, the civilians within the opposition coordination committee were opposed to the participation of the military within the CNR. They feared that the military would confiscate power for themselves, so that the result would be another military regime. It was in these conditions that on March 30, 1991, another body was formed, including the military and civilians. It was called the Transition Committee for the Well-Being of the People (CTSP), led by Lt. Colonel Toure. On April 2, the CTSP nominated Soumana Sacko as prime minister and it also announced the steps it would take toward a democratic transition.

To be continued



Enugu state minister

representative in the approaching conference to the need to end the alleged political marginalisation of the east. The debate on the issue will most certainly be an emotional one, as the east has been in the forefront of the administrative whose cooperation has been a source of a great anguish to the people of the eastern states. Although accolades have gone to General Sani Abacha for his thoughtfulness in forming a broad-based government, even the light-hearted in the new spirit of openness in the east, are complaining that it is wrong to leave the eastern minorities out of the Provisional Ruling Council (PRC).

Said Chief Chikwas Okorie, president of Enugu-based Igboezue Cultural Association and one of the strongest voices against the exclusion of the eastern minorities from the PRC: "As the highest legislative body of the nation, I am at pains to understand the depth of thought that went into the composition of an 11-

member PRC with one third of the country or precisely the entire eastern part of the country being represented by just one person, the chief of naval staff, Rear Admiral Allison Maduako," pointing to "the grave implication of this regrettable lack of adequate representation of the east in such an important body." Chief Okorie regretted that the entire people of the east now have "only one vote in the only council that has the power to make and unmake laws that affect all of us."

He therefore, "passionately" appealed "in the name of almighty God and for the sake of justice and fair-play" for the immediate enlargement of the PRC "to include at least one person from the Akwa Ibom/Cross River states axis, and one person from the Rivers State axis, to bring the eastern representation in the council to a minimum number of three persons."

Speaking in a similar vein, Mrs. Sarah Okoli, a businesswoman and political activist, condemned the new military regime for seeking to make peace with a certain part of the country "in the face of injustice to the east."

Apart from being piqued by the composition of the PRC, Mrs. Okoli is also saddened by the calibre of easterners appointed as ministers, and the posts given to many of them. Speaking in an interview with Citizen, she wondered why "majority of easterners appointed into the federal executive council are holding less significant portfolios," asking: "Does it mean that they are inferior or less educated than their counterparts from other parts of



Maduako: line minister

Nigeria?" Mrs. Okoli equally decried the appointment into the federal cabinet, of easterners who are "mainly non-politicians who cannot compete or understand the Sub-Saharan politics that always takes place at the federal level, when compared with the political heavyweights from other parts of the country appointed into the cabinet."

As easterners continue fashioning out their agenda for the constitutional conference, observers say that a demand for more states to be created in the east is a big possibility. The campaign for new states is already hotting up in Rivers State where endless ethnic skirmishes have given rise to repeated calls for the creation of a Port Harcourt state for the Ikwereans. Ndiibe Chinyama, popular novelist and publisher, believes that the easterners have waited long enough for their rights and should to gain a lot from their newly-claimed solidarity.

His optimism is shared by many, among whom is Paul Ukpoko, a senator from Cross River State in the short-lived Third Republic. Ukpoko, who broad his mind in an interview with Citizen, urged that the east should be given its due rights as a way of "healing old wounds." The nation should pursue for more of such arguments at the conference.

By Leon Umanna with Tony Oko in Enugu

I am at pains to understand the depth of thought that went into the composition of an 11-member PRC with one-third of the country or precisely the entire eastern part of the country being represented by just one person

Narcotics

The big haul

Drug law enforcement officers make the biggest catch in Africa

The new helmsman at 2 Ruxton road, Ikoyi headquarters of the Nigerian Drug Law Enforcement Agency, NDLEA, Bappah Jama'are had ample reasons to be all smiles penultimate Friday. As he sat in-between his aides and drug law enforcement officials at the high table in the agency's news conference hall playing host to a score of narcotic reporters that bright morning, he was every inch a happy man. The news hound who stared eagerly at the assistant inspector general of police, were not kept in suspense for too long as their host was equally eager to let the cat out of the mouse. A short exchange of seasonal compliments over, the curtain was raised on the business of the day.

"Today," said Jama'are, "we now have in our net, a suspect, that qualifies in any particular way you may want to asses him, a 'drug baron.'" The suspect was later identified as Mr Joe Browan Akubueze, arrested recently at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Ikeja, the nation's infamous "epicentre of drug trafficking."

Akubueze was apprehended on his return from Thailand where he had gone to seal a deal on the importation of what has now become the nation's biggest narcotic drug shipment. His co-operation with NDLEA officials led to the interception and

seizure of 248.3 kilogrammes of heroin street valued at 651 million pound sterling. At the official exchange rate, this translates into 28 billion Naira. A big haul indeed. And it is happening for the first time, for the public has always been told about couriers, never barons.

The blowing of the whistle on Akubueze's illicit drug trade was for Jama'are, who was recently elected chairman of Commission on Narcotic Drugs, CND, at the reconvened 36th session of the Commission in Vienna, an icing on the cake. Between October 25, when he took over at the NDLEA, and the close of the year, 76 drug suspects were netted by the agency. From the suspects, 469,929 kilogrammes of narcotic and psychotropic substances were impounded. 133,013 kilogrammes of the overall seizures from 37 suspects were at the MMA, Ikeja. Up North, 34 suspects had 175.51 kilogrammes of drugs impounded from them. This implies that the Kano zonal command encompassing Kano, Kaduna, and Katsina, is becoming a growing transit route. In other parts of Lagos namely Ogun, Oyo, and Osun states, five persons could not beat narcotic officials net as they were apprehended with 33.5 kilogramme of illicit drugs. The Port-Harcourt zonal command covering the Eastern states of Cross Rivers, Imo, Anambra, Akwa-Ibom,



Jama'are: threatens fire and brimstone

Enugu and Abia, recorded four arrests and a 4.0 kilogramme seizure.

Expectedly, news of the big haul attracted speculations on the backers and collaborators of Akubueze. Jama'are refused to confirm speculated involvement of top army officers in the president Ibrahim Babangida regime, saying he had no information and cannot probe the officers. But NDLEA sources told *Citizen* that more disclosures threatening to open a can of worms is in the offing this week. Perhaps the end is nearing for the notorious invincibility of the drug masquerades, as drug law enforcement officers are threatening fire and brimstone. Already, Jama'are has indicated the agency's intention to retry 11 drug convicts recently deported from the United States of America. They were convicted after the promulgation of Decree No. 33 of 1990 which compels the agency to prosecute deported illicit drug pushers. The thinking in government circle is that its determination to visit the full weight of the law on drug offenders may deter those who want to persist in the illicit trade. May be, but Jama'are's success will depend largely on his ability to take on the real men of the jumbo dollar trade speculated to have iron clad contacts in very, very, high places.

By Bolaji Adebisi, with additional report from Akinyele Aluko, in Lagos.

"Today," said Jama'are, "we now have in our net, a suspect, that qualifies in any particular way you may want to asses him, a drug baron."

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

The Naira

Power in the fall

The Naira keeps the budget in the cooler as its battered condition generates sleepless nights at Dodan Barracks

For the second consecutive time, the budget, penultimate week, was not delivered on the traditional New Year's eve. Last year, the four-week extension of the budget announcement was attributed to the late inauguration of the Transition Council, whose head, Chief Ernest Shonekan, was saddled with the responsibility of its (the budget) reading.

This time, the new General Sani Abacha administration pleads end-year assumption of office and the determination to evolve a blueprint for economic revival as the reasons behind the delay in announcing the budget. The first reason sounds escapist; the second technical: it is the latter that sounds acceptable. When deciphered, it attempts to find a reasonable value for the Naira to enable it oil the real sectors (manufacturing and agriculture), regarded worldwide as the engine-room of any economy.

Even as Dodan Barracks was abuzz last week with surgical plans for the economy, the ailing currency once again went on the dive. It plunged to an all-time low of 48 Naira and 70 Naira to the dollar and pound respectively at the parallel-black and bureaux-de-change-markets. Officially, the rates remained within these long-standing brackets: 21.9 Naira to the dollar and 32.6 Naira to its sterling counterpart. But since when have official rates ceased to command any meaningful consideration in the nation's business transactions and economic analyses?

Paradoxically, the Naira's drastic fall is now its strength. Within the overall context of articulating a sound budget and consequently

realising some measure of economic revival this year, national planners are having sleepless nights over resuscitation plans for the currency.

Alongside nagging worries over falling oil prices — Bonnycrude sold for 13.62 dollars last week — the Naira is receiving its closest atten-

Plc. Now as CBN helmsman, he has been impressing it upon government that the only way out of the woods is by strengthening the value of the Naira, according to the deputy director.

For the beleaguered currency, it has been a long travail. In 1984, one Naira exchanged for 1.3 to the dollar and 0.8 to the pound sterling. But some economic experts in the country, thinking along with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, believed it was overvalued. So its devaluation formed the thrust of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) introduced



Ogwuma: wants government's involvement

tion for the first time in eight years.

From signals emanating from government, the Naira is bound for resurrection. A deputy director at the Central Bank of Nigeria confirmed this hope to *Citizen* although he would not explain how. It is learnt that the bank's favourable drive for the Naira was influenced by the stance of Mr. Paul Ogwuma, its governor. Ogwuma has been an apostle of government's involvement in the foreign exchange market ever since his days as managing director of Union Bank of Nigeria

in 1986. What happened was the introduction of the Second Tier Foreign Exchange Market (SFEM) and the gradual devaluation of the Naira. The belief was that a devalued currency would encourage exports and generate foreign exchange, discourage imports and in the long run find the desired level for itself through the interplay of market forces.

Eight years later, it is clear the economy has been sold a dummy and the Naira sent the wrong way. Mr. Adeola Alatise, a senior manager at the Union Bank, Lagos, ac-

cused the Babangida administration of "treachery" in its implementation of SAP and the operation of the foreign exchange market. To Alatise, parallel forex market, uncontrolled ports are not encouraged in an environment of currency devaluation. He specifically condemned government's harmonisation penultimate market rates. In March that year, Naira further directly devalued the existing official rate of 10.50 Naira to a dollar was increased to 18.50 Naira to match the rate obtained in the black market.

Contrary to government's thinking at the introduction of SAP, the real sectors of the economy began to

Hopefully, all that may change this year, if government's promises are anything to go by. Last Monday at Dodan Barracks, Sokoto state administrator, Colonel Yakubu Mwa'zu told reporters after an all-day deliberations on the budget between all the state administrators and members of the Provisional Ruling Council (PRC), that government is committed to ensuring stabilisation of the Naira in terms of foreign exchange. He argued: "If you enhance the value of the Naira, then you are bound to make the economy better."

But government's effort may go down the drain, Alatise feared, if certain drastic measures are ignored. For one, black market and bureau-de-change operators need to be per-



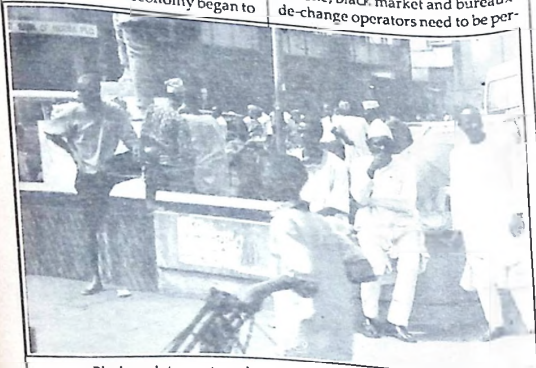
Kalu: finance minister

tion seriously on the low, inflation results. Experts therefore maintain that the parallel market is a danger to the economy as its activities are largely illegal and do not reflect the free market forces of demand and supply.

There are calls, too, that imports be controlled. An industrialist, Mr. Paul Akhaze, said a stronger Naira would reduce the dependence on imported goods. Even now, the practice is made possible with the tariff policy which imposes high tariffs on spare parts and raw materials but low ones on finished products. The Manufacturing Association of Nigeria (MAN) will especially be eager to see how the proposed revitalisation of the Naira will affect its members as regards importation of their needs and imports of finished goods.

Whatever budgetary intentions for the revitalisation of the Naira this fiscal year, magic will not be one of them. Akhaze and Alatise did not see the Naira, and by extension, the economy revived by any mere budgetary document, no matter the sincerity in implementation. To Akhaze, the debt problem and falling oil prices would greatly slow down the recovery of the Naira. And to Alatise "it has never been easier to repair than to destroy."

By Tayo Odunlami



Black market operators along Broad Street in Lagos: our bane?

experience a tumble. Manufacturers' complaints are annually legion: low capacity utilisation; high interest rates, thereby discouraging loans from banks to import raw materials and repair or bring in equipment and machinery, and runaway inflation. Production became stifled. And with the liberalisation of imports, all sorts of goods were brought into the country. Eventually, the fate of every Nigerian product and service was tied to the fate of the Naira. Whenever the currency squeezes, the nation trembles.

manently put in check. Infact, such operators have always been accused, with the connivance of some officials of bidding banks, of vitiating CBN's efforts at pegging the value of the Naira. Foreign exchange bought on the floor of the forex is always said to be diverted to the parallel market by corrupt bank officials. Other unclean hard money was also routed and laundered on the market. When it leaves there and is pumped into the economy, it (the economy) becomes awash with excess money supply. With produc-

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Change Naira's name

An unregulated foreign exchange environment is detrimental to the economic well being of the country. This was disclosed by EMWAI Centre for Political and Economic Research, in Kaduna. According to the body, falling value of the Naira has resulted in an unequal exchange mechanism, the cheapening of Nigeria goods (oil) and more expensive import bills.

The resultant effect of this was inflation, manifested by fall in real wages

and high prices for finished goods. The body recommended that the government should abolish the foreign exchange market, parallel market and Bureaux de change. The government should fix a reasonable price for the Naira exchange, and that the name of the Naira should be changed.

The body charged the government to impose import restrictions, ban the import of luxury items and impose financial discipline within the Nigerian fiscal and economic systems.



Chief Michael Olorunfemi, group executive director, National Petroleum Investment Management, a subsidiary of NNPC and his wife admire the award plaque he won during the Black Gold lecture and press Award organised by the National Association of Energy Correspondents

Bureau de Change

	Buying	Selling
Dollar \$	N40.00	N47.50
Pound Sterling	N60.00	N67.50
German Mark	N20.00	N27.50
Dutch Guilder	N2.00	N2.50
French Franc	N 7.00	N 8.50
CFA Franc	N 1.40	N 1.50

Parallel market

	Buying	Selling
Dollar \$	N46.50	N47.00
Pound Sterling	N66.50	N67.00
German Mark	N26.50	N27.00
French Franc	N 7.50	N 8.00
CFA Franc	N 1.40	N 1.50

KADUNA

Average Banks' Interest rates

Prime	48%
Current	10%
Savings	25%
30 days	30%
6 months	32%
12 months	34%

Commodities market

International commodity prices at weekend

(1) Crude oil (as estimated by petroleum argus)	
(a) London (1) Brent (dated)	\$13.14
(11) Dubai ()	\$12.12
(b) New York Light crude ()	
Gas oil ()	\$144
Nimex heating oil No. 2 ()	\$44
(2) Sugar	
(a) London (1) Raw Sugar	\$270.4
(1) White Sugar	\$285.5
(11) Delivery	
(b) New York delivery	
(3) Cocoa (a) London ()	\$386.70
(b) New York ()	\$1293
(4) Wheat Chicago ()	\$3280
(5) Soya Beans Complex ()	\$201
(6) Corn New York ()	
(7) Cotton New York ()	67.20c
(8) Aluminium	
(a) London (Settlement price)	\$1121
(b) London (Three months)	\$1139
(9) Gold (a) London	\$386.70
(a) New York ()	
(b) Hong Kong ()	
(10) Tin (Settlement price)	\$4805
(Three months)	\$4860
(11) Coconut oil (Philippines)	\$650
(12) Palm oil (Malaysia) ()	\$422.5
(13) Rubber London (a)	61.50p
(b) Kuala Lumpur	61.50p
(14) Tin: (a) Kuala Lumpur	12.12r
(b) New York	224.5c

Stock watch

Nigerian Stock Exchange Turnover 1.8m (+11.4)
Ibadan Stock Exchange Turnover 1.4m, 155 deals
Lagos Stock Exchange Turnover 1.4m deals
Kaduna Stock Exchange Turnover 5.3mt, 59 deals
Date 31/12/93

Oil monitor

Bonny light	\$13.65
Urals Med	\$12.40
Es Sider	\$12.70
Iran Hysk	\$11.75
Forties	\$13.30
Suez Blend	\$10.60
Eko risk	\$13.35
Duba:	\$12.15
Brent	\$13.30
WTI	\$14.13

Note: The OPEC is planning to meet earlier than scheduled in order to mop excess oil supplies and shore up prices.

Update: Africa's total share in the world market has continued to fall steadily and now stands at less than two per cent. To stem this trend, there is the need to establish an international fund for Africa to help widen the continent's economic base.

By Shoyebi Abayomi
with agency reports

SPECIAL FEATURES

Focus on Agriculture and Nigerian economy

The livelihood of the largest proportion of the Nigerian population has continued to depend on the activities in the agricultural sector in spite of its relative decline especially since the advent of petroleum.

The agricultural sector engaged 80 per cent of the labour force in 1960 and 61 per cent in the 80s. In the same token, agriculture was the major source of revenue for Nigeria in those years. With its large contribution to total domestic output, the sub-sector dictated to a large extent the pace of growth and development of the Nigerian economy.

However, the observed positive role of the agricultural sub-sector during the past independence period was not sustained in the 1970s and early 1980s, a period which coincided with the emergence of the virile petroleum sector.

Over the years, the fundamental constraints against agriculture include problems of hostile environment, inadequate or poor quality of land resources, labour and manpower shortages, insufficient capital investment and technological inadequacies. Unfortunately, successive government policies and programmes towards the improvement of the agricultural sub-sector had not been effective. These include the introduction of the agricultural development projects, the establishment of the River Basin Development Authorities, Operation Feed the Nation and Green Revolutions.

Agricultural experts believe that some of the policies and programmes were badly con-

ceived and implemented and therefore failed to achieve their aims. While acknowledging the facts that governments have been trying to improve on the performance of the agricultural sub-sector, keen observers of the sector point out that capital allocation to agriculture has not been encouraging. For instance, they contend that in the past, when agriculture was the major revenue source for the country, the surplus was being used to develop other sectors of the economy and now that agriculture is no more viable, the surplus from other sectors is not being used to develop agriculture.

National Fertilizer Company of Nigeria NAFCON with four local blending plants produced



Ciroma: Agric minister

established in 1988. The impact of the scheme has not been felt in the agricultural sector. Save for the big banks such

With the dwindling revenue from oil, concerted efforts from governments, financial institutions and individuals are required to once again give agriculture its place of priority in our economy

about 50 per cent of our fertilizer requirements during the 1992 cropping season. However, in spite of impressive performance by NAFCON, it cannot produce our total fertilizer requirement which has been put at about 1.6 million metric tonnes per annum.

In a bid to find a lasting solution to the adverse affects of natural hazards, which had for long rendered agriculture unattractive to farmers and investors alike, the Nigerian Agricultural Insurance Company (NAIC) was

as African International Bank, (AIB), United Bank for Africa (UBA) and Union Bank, Bank of the North (BON) and Afribank most banks are shying away from giving the Central Bank prescribed proportion of loanable funds to agriculture.

With the dwindling revenue from oil, concerted efforts from governments, financial institutions and individuals are required to once again give agriculture its place of priority in our economy.

By Tola Sunday

Nothing compares to our support

The consistent loyalty of our customers continues to bring out the best in us. That's why we offer nothing less than profitable banking support... just because they deserve it. You can be part of this beneficial relationship.



AFRICAN INTERNATIONAL BANK LIMITED

... your patronage is our strength

Registered Office:
18, Ibrahim Taiwo Road, P. O. Box 5488, Kano.

Central Office:
42/44 Warehouse Road, P.M.B. 1040, Apapa, Lagos, Nigeria.
Tel: 803820-9, Telex: 22377. Fax: 877174.

Branches:	Aba	Abayo	Abuja	Azare	Bakura	Bauchi	Benin	Bimawa
	Chediya	Efurun	Enugu	Enugu	Fikayel	Gusau	Ibadan	Ibom-Egbeda
	Illo	Ilorin	Lagos	Lagos	Apapa	Ikeja, Ilupeju	Ketu, Marina	T.B.S.
	V/Island	Kano Ibr. Taiwo Road	M. Mohammed Way	Kumasi	Kano City	Tofa	Ladi-Bida	Joe
	Kaduna	Kaiama	Maiduguri	Ngelzama	Nnung-Ndoe	Odokpe	Ohafia	Okija
	Oluponna	Onitsha	Pilgani	Port-Harcourt	Sokoto	Yagaya	Yola	Zaria.

AFRICA

Angola

Savimbi's games

Four days to the resumption of peace talks, UNITA bombs oil fields in Cabinda

Early in the morning on Sunday, January 2, a new year gift of sorts arrived from rebel leader Jonas Savimbi. Three mortar bombs landed in the Malongo oil installations in the northern Angolan enclave of Cabinda, owned and operated by Cabinda Gulf Oil Corporation, a subsidiary of the San Francisco-based Chevron oil firm. The bombs damaged several buildings and destroyed two vehicles in residential compound for 450 workers. An expatriate Indian worker was also injured. The Malongo fields, 30 kilometres north of Cabinda, are Angola's largest and produce 290,000 barrels of oil a day, or 60 per cent of the country's total production.

The next day, the *Journal de Angola* said the bombs were "probably" fired by UNITA guerrillas, who, along with another rebel group, the FLEC, are active in Cabinda. The Portuguese news agency LUSA also quoted a military source as saying that UNITA was behind the attack. Still, the damage inflicted was minimal. Cabinda Gulf Oil managing director, Robert Connon said production was not affected and that evacuated workers had returned. "It was psychological terrorism," Connon said the attack took place without warning against the base, which has 500 workers and a storage capacity of 3.5 million barrels.

The attack itself came a day before the arrival in Angola of an American senate delegation, the first visit to the country since the US government established diplomatic relations with Angola last May. The senators were to spend two days in the country, and it was possible the UNITA attack was meant to impress the delegation. UNITA, however, had blamed the government it-

self for the attack. General Abilio Numa Kamalata, commander of UNITA troops in the northern parts of Angola, said there was no way he would have organised that feeble attack.

Despite the uproar over the Malongo attack, it was announced last Tuesday that a meeting of Angolan and UNITA military commanders has been scheduled for January 10 in Sao Tome and Principe. The date and venue were apparently fixed at a meeting last Tuesday between President Miguel Trovoada of Sao Tome and UN special representative to Angola Alioune Blondin Beye. Mr. Beye has been mediating in the talks between the government and UNITA in Lusaka since November. The talks were

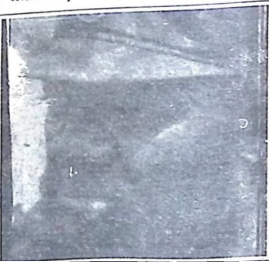


Dos Santos and Savimbi: another round of fighting?

adjourned on Christmas eve last year and were to resume last Wednesday after a two-week break. Mr. Beye had imposed a news-blackout on the talks in order to prevent posturing by the parties, but last week he revealed that legal and military deals had been finalised. Issues yet to be settled, he said, were ones such as power-sharing and UNITA's military withdrawal from areas it recently overran. Diplomats at the talks also revealed that the two sides have

agreed to a ceasefire, though no date for its commencement was announced.

UNITA spokesman Jorge Valentin threatened late last year that UNITA will not return to the talks because the government is preparing another military offensive, but last week, Savimbi said on his rebel Radio Vorgan that his organisation will return to Lusaka for "serious discussions" and is ready to sign an immediate ceasefire in order to allow the free flow of humanitarian aid. Before the talks adjourned in December, Mr. Beye had said he had "guarantees" that both sides will attend when they resume last week. Last week's talks in Lusaka were expected to focus on national reconciliation, the distribution of cabinet posts and the restoration of government administration to areas recently overrun by UNITA. Also to be discussed is Mr. Savimbi's proposal that he be given a "special status" and exempted from the law that requires political parties to



operate from Luanda. Savimbi wants to continue to operate from his stronghold of Huambo, but the government sees this as an attempt to run a parallel government.

Last Wednesday, the day the talks were due to resume, only the government delegation had arrived in Luanda, but UNITA and Mr. Beye were yet to arrive.

By Mahmud Jega
with agency reports

Somalia

Now for reconciliation

Somali warlords agreed for peace talks arranged in Kenya

The Somali warring factions agreed last week to put their heads together in a secret peace talk sponsored by Kenyan president, Daniel Arap Moi in Nakuru, 160 kilometre north-west of Nairobi.

Earlier, in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa, the UN secretary-general, Boutros Boutros-Ghali convened a conference of Somali's warring factions of which even the main factional leader, General Mohammed Farah Aideed was persuaded to sign a frame work for peace. A UN peacekeeping force, was assembled in the central capital, Mogadishu.

As one problem follows another, UN and US forces are pulling out from war-torn Somali capital Mogadishu. About 450 members of the US army's 2nd Battalion — 14th Infantry regiment lined up a fortnight ago in full battle dress for their departure from Mogadishu. According to the commander of US troops, Major-general Thomas Montgomery "it's hard when you come here to feed people and you wind up fighting for your life." Similarly, South Korea had also withdrawn its military contingent to the UN forces for fear of drastic changes that might threaten the security of the unit. Report said, the engineering unit code known as Evergreen Unit might be moved out of Somalia before the stipulated date.

Issa Mohammed Siad, foreign-affairs secretary for General Mohammed Farah Aideed's Somali National Alliance (SNA) told journalists in Mogadishu that the peace convention arranged by President Arap Moi was exclusively made for General Aideed and the representatives of the "Vanguard Group of Twelve" which is purely a coalition faction headed by Ali Mahdi Mohammed.

Siad further disclosed in Moga-

dishu that "We are ready to sit down with factions in any discussion about Somalia, but what we refused to adhere to is to let foreigners decide upon our future government." Contrary to this view, the United Nation Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) has made new initiatives, for the formation of a transitional national council, which all the factions in Somalia agreed on in March last year and it is now ready for inauguration by January 15. Moreover, Aideed's faction blamed the United Nations operation for secretly sabo-



Moi: the sponsor



Aideed: ready for peace

taging the peace talks, arguing that the world body lobbied the anti-Aideed faction not to reach agreement.

UNOSOM, was long disappointed with the adamant attitude of General Aideed who had refused to negotiate with it. Aideed then told journalists in Mogadishu that he had stopped sending representatives to the weekly security advi-

sory committee which brings together delegates from main Somali clans and UN officials. According to him foreign interference in Somali is antithetical to his wishes and therefore, he is not obliged to listen to UNOSOM dictating for his people in Somalia.

However, the agreement by Aideed to go for peace talks in Kenya is still suspect as fighting continues in areas close to capital Mogadishu. A US Army armoured vehicle bombarded a landmine in Mogadishu last week, but there was no report of any injury. The ve-

hicle, an M-88 was travelling in a five-track convoy on its way to a scheduled assignment outside Mogadishu when it struck at the mine. Also in Hawade clan there was guerrilla attack between Aideed's warring faction and other soldiers, 300 kilometres away from the south-east of Be let Uen.

By Yabagi Kolo
with agency reports

WORLD
PLO/Israel

Deadlocked peace

Peace is yet to reign in the volatile Middle East

The dawn of peace is yet to emerge in the Middle East. The Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel are still locked in wranglings over fine details on the proposed Gaza-Jericho peace accord.

The principal dramatis personae, Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, his foreign minister Shimon Peres, the PLO chairman Yassar Arafat and his shadow foreign minister have been engaged in buck passing on who was to be blamed for delaying the peace process. Rabin claimed that Israel still abides by the declarations and that it was the PLO that is deviating from agreed principles. Arafat for not sticking to agreed terms. Mr. Shaath, an Israeli spokesman states that on such intricate negotiations, no party could issue ultimatums, adding that "no side can accept such a blackmail."

Both parties are thus dragging the peace agenda that has come under considerable pressure from objectionists to the peace formula. Some Jewish ultra rightist bodies have just moved into East Jerusalem. The Islamic Resistance Movement (HAMAS) claimed that the PLO has humiliated Palestinians by the peace agreement and has continued the resistance. Violence intensifies as more people are killed on both sides of the divide.

Arafat has also come under criticisms from members of his group who accused him of autocratic tendencies. The reformists appealed to him to broaden the basis for decision making.

The knotty issues in the PLO/Israeli dilemma remains the control of border crossing in Jericho and the Gaza strip, the size of Jericho to be involved in the peace process, gen-

eral security of Israel in the region and the size of Israeli army to remain in the occupied territories. Jordan has also complained of insecurity in relations to the peace accord. Jordan is particularly concerned about who controls King Hussein's (Alleby's) bridge in Jericho. King



Rabin: delay tactics



Arafat: desperate

Middle East is well noted, the British foreign minister, Mr. Douglas Hurd has called on Syria and Lebanon to join in the general comprehensive Middle East agenda. He however stated that Israel should withdraw their troops from southern Lebanon.

Mr. Hurd also praised Arafat, but asked him to prepare for the hard job ahead. He praised the treaty as a sign of courage and wisdom on the part of all. Mr. Rabin on his part is not too keen to encourage more foreign intervention in the peace process. Because of this he has asked the US to stay off further negotiations. Rabin's action portrays Israel

Arafat has also come under criticisms from members of his group who accused him of autocratic tendencies

Hussein is angry that Arafat did not clear issues with him on the peace process. There was also the issue of Jordanian-Palestian co-operation or confederation.

In the flurry of activities and shuttle diplomacy for which the

as deliberately adopting delay formula since the more peace is delayed, the more Arafat will grab at just anything to forestall further resistance from his people.

By Shoyebi Abayomi
with agency reports

Mexico

Zapatista's rage

Poor social and economic conditions push Indian peasants to the wall. Violent uprising leaves 100 dead

Until the new year, few people in Mexico or anywhere else were aware of a group known as the Zapatista National Liberation Army. It therefore came as a complete surprise when this well-armed group kidnapped several prominent people, occupied San Cristobal de las Casas, Ocosingo and three other towns all in Mexico's South-East state of Chiapas and declared war on the Mexican government.

As it took control, the group, which the Mexican government initially denied all knowledge of, released more than 150 prisoners from jails and said that it had been organising for ten years to draw attention to the plight of the indigenous populace in Chiapas. It complained of poor living conditions, years of government repression of the indigenous people, lack of child care, the North American Free Trade Agreement, NAFTA, arguing that it would further marginalise them, demanded land reform and generally wanted a better deal in what is one of Mexico's poorest 31 states.

The group demanded land reform and accused politicians of generally lying their teeth in addressing their social and economic problems. It also wanted the installation of "socialism" in this federation.

The government of president Carlos Salinas de Gortari moved in quickly to stem the rebellion from spreading. It was massive and devastating with as much as 12,000 military personnel. After four days of intense fighting, the army retook control of San Cristobal de las Casas, Ocosingo and the other towns. Reports spoke of the road leading to San Cristobal being littered with bullet shells, dead bodies and wrecked government buildings.

Government officials said the

army had taken complete control of all the occupied towns but that the peasant fighters still occupied villages and many had taken to the hills. It was in the attempt to head them off that the Mexican Air Force initiated heavy bombardment of the outlying areas.

Isolated exchange of fire between government forces and the ZNLA were heard throughout the week as the fighting continued on the outskirts of San Cristobal with planes attacking the fleeing peasants in the hills. Several accounts suggest that government's bombing had been indiscriminate and destructive. A



President Salinas: better deal?

Mexican television crew, for example, was hit though nobody was hurt. Wednesday, the officials said nearly 100 people have been killed in the fighting, but the figure will definitely be higher. In the fighting around San Cristobal alone, 51 peasants and seven government soldiers were killed. There are reports of wholesale massacre of the peasants by government troops outside the war. Juan Mendez of the Human Rights Watch/Americas alleged that there had been massive human rights violations in the handling of

the conflict. In retreating, the peasant fighters destroyed government buildings and took away the 40 kidnapped residents of San Cristobal.

The uprising caught the people of Chiapas by surprise. Many people in Mexico sympathise with the plight of the indigenous people, even though they disagree with the resort to violence to make the point. Most people feel that they had nothing to lose by joining in the struggle. The region is mostly populated by indigenous Indian peasants many of whom refuse to speak Spanish and insist on wearing traditional dresses.

The Mexican government has offered to negotiate with the ZNLA, but it came with strong conditions: that the fleeing rebels give themselves up without any guarantees of amnesty, that they handover the kidnapped people and surrender a large quantity of dynamite stolen shortly before the uprising.

Bishop Samuel Reese who has strong links with the peasants has called for a ceasefire to enable the Roman Catholic church to mediate, but a spokesman for the ZNLA said they had had enough of the empty promise of politicians and have refused the government's call to lay down their arms. Leaders of the uprising said they had withdrawn to await orders and that they did not fear government troops and the struggle would continue.

Wednesday, the head of the Guatemala's rebel movement, Hector Rosandez, travelled to Mexico for talks with representatives of the peasants following Mexican government's allegations of Guatemalan and Venezuelan complicity in the uprising. He said he saw no evidence to support such a claim.

Whatever the outcome, the uprising has drawn international attention to their plight forcing the authorities to acknowledge that social conditions in Chiapas needed improving. The local congress has even published plans for "change."

By Mohammed Boini
with agency reports

BILKISU YUSUF

policy spread like the seasonal harvest to federal parastatals and state administrations. Whether or not this portends a genuine attempt to rescue the country from the edge of the precipice to which corruption has pushed it remains to be seen.

In Yobe State, 70 civil servants formed a ghost workers' syndicate that connived to cart away 35 million naira in the two year period of

who steal public funds is nothing new. It happened during the Murtaala/Obasanjo regime when public officers were probed and the civil service was also purged. Taking the cue, the Buhari/Idiagbon administration tried and convicted many Second Republic officials.

However, instituting probes, sacking or jailing erring officials as a deterrent measure are oddly inconsistent with the pardon extended by the Babangida administration to those convicted for embezzlement of public funds. In addition to being "forgiven" and rehabilitated, their illegally acquired assets confiscated by government 18 years ago were returned to them.

Certain established canons of public accountability were shattered by such an ill-advised policy. Of what use are probes and convictions if the next military regime that comes into being would reverse them? Someone ought to spare us the circus show that probes have become.

Another factor is public's uneasiness about the selective nature of the probes. Take the case of the NNPC group managing director, Mr. Daukoro and six management staff who were charged to court last year for theft of 41 million dollars. The case was later withdrawn from court with the explanation that it would be transferred to a tribunal. Of course such a tribunal was non-existent. Rather, sources disclosed that the case was abandoned because the accused persons threatened to blow the lid off other equally scandalous deals in which some sacred cows were also involved.

Now that the NNPC probe panel has been asked to scrutinise all payments of over one million Naira and above made by the NNPC in the past three years, Daukoro and his team should talk and the nation will benefit from what they would have to say.

Perhaps then we will understand why petrol is scarce in an oil producing country that exports it.

Season of probes

Like a lightning bolt, the military government has reversed its earlier decision not to probe the previous administration. Such probes, according to General Sani Abacha were time-consuming and not productive. Since then, a lot has happened. How could the government ignore the allegations of wrong doing against the military administrators. Apparently lulled into false security by the no probe stand of the Abacha regime, the military administrators decided to maximise the opportunity their brief tenure provided to make money. So they dipped their hands into the money pot and also made deals with desperate contractors. One of them expended 136 million in only 27 days. In Sokoto, there were allegations of irregularity in the 23 million naira hurriedly paid to contractors. Equally disturbing was the false claim by the military administrator that he left 166 million naira in the treasury when the actual amount was only 74,134,000 naira. The administrators in Osun, Yobe and Kano also had cases to answer. Chief of general staff, General Oladipo Diya explained that the probes were necessitated by the seriousness of the allegations and the administration's policy not to condone corruption at any level. And to convince the public of its sincerity of purpose, the probe and attendant sacking of the

state's existence. They have since been sacked and directed to cough up the money. At the Nigeria Postal Services, NIPOST, the postmaster general and three management staff were suspended for awarding aircraft lease contracts worth 43.75 million naira without clearance from the minister. The contracts were neither executed nor could the sum of 50 million naira paid for a separate contract be traced in the organisation's books. The police force, long hampered by poor funding and inefficiency has also carried out a purge in which 700 police officers lost their jobs.

Investigation panels have also been set up to probe and reorganise the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation, NNPC, Customs and excise department, Nigerian Ports Authority, NPA, National Electric Power Plc, Nigerian Telecommunications, NITEL, and the Nigeria Airports Authority, NAA. The corruption in these parastatals has reached an all time high that accountability cannot be restored without a far reaching probe.

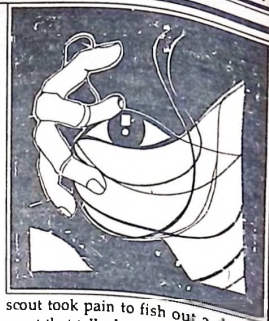
Yet the story of probes has always included chapters of abuse and distortions. The painstakingly compiled reports of some probe panels are buried in the cooler of many regimes. They are never allowed to see the light of day. So expressing self righteous indignation or cursing the men (rarely are women involved)

Onagoruwa's agony

In the words of one of those immortal poets, we are made to understand that "politicians can be impervious to reason." But today we can extend that observation to other groups because my scout, a busy body news sniffer — which reporter isn't? — stumbled on one of the causes of Dr. Olu Onagoruwa's headache. Since he assumed office as the attorney-general, the former human rights activist and member of the Movement for National Reformation, MNR, a body that believes in splitting Nigeria into 250 ethnic

units, Onagoruwa's past dealings have tormented him. Apart from the controversial court case where his cousin accused him of theft, having dispossessed her of 40 plots, the attorney general also has another skeleton in his legal cupboard.

As a student at the Nigeria Law School, the erstwhile human rights activist was accused of sneaking papers into the examination hall. He was caught red handed and as a disciplinary measure, made to repeat the examination by the council of legal education. My indefatigable



scout took pain to fish out a document that tells the story as it is.

Copy
Ref. No. CLE/ST/158/29
Confidential

Chairman,

Re: Dr. G.O. Onagoruwa — Nigeria bar final examination
Please see from pages 20-28.

2. The facts are stated in my p.20, but briefly — whilst the examination on Civil Procedure and Evidence were being written on Thursday, 21/5/70 at 9 am, during my investigation, I discovered with Dr. Onagoruwa page 21-23 on his writing table almost fully covered up except for a figure "4" at the bottom of p.22 which aroused my suspicion. I asked to see the papers but Dr. Onagoruwa attempted to cover them up. I however succeeded in recovering the drafts on which were written:

- (a) Draft specimen of "MOTION ON NOTICE"
(b) " " " a "WRIT OF SUMMONS" pp.21/22, and
(c) " " " "STATEMENT OF CLAIM" — p. 23.

3. I sought to know from him why the papers were there contrary to express instructions (a copy of which he had — at back cover) that papers of any description should NOT be brought into the examination hall and despite my repeated warnings since the examination started particularly the morning of that incident that examination instructions should be strictly adhered to. He replied that it was a mistake. It is pertinent to say that the rough papers discovered are relevant to the examination in progress at the particular time. It would appear that he anticipated questions on drafting and all he would need do would be to fit in the facts of the questions to suit the already prepared drafts brought into the hall.

4. The drafts were discovered within 10-15 minutes that the examination started.

5. I consulted with the director, and, in order not to jeopardise his interest unnecessarily in view of his extemporaneous defence of mistake, we decided that he should be allowed to continue his papers without prejudice to any decision that would be taken later.

6. A query was issued as at p.20 and his replies are at pp. 24/28.

7. The board of examiners met on Monday 25th instant to consider the case and it was unanimously agreed that the defence of mistake put up by Dr. Onagoruwa was untenable. The civil procedure lecturer did say that the students were told during revision to expect drafting questions in form of motions, summons and/or pleadings, so that the papers found with the student would have been brought in as precedents in anticipation of the drafting questions. Indeed, there was a compulsory drafting question (a copy of the questions on civil procedure and evidence is at the back cover of file).

8. The board of examiners after full consideration decided that as this case is substantially similar to that of Lucas in 1967, the very minimum disciplinary measure that can be meted out to Dr. Onagoruwa would be what was given to Lucas.

9. The board accordingly recommends that as in the case of Mr. Lucas (p. 18 of the attached file), Dr. Onagoruwa should:-

- (a) be strongly reprimanded; and,
(b) be disqualified for the bar examinations of May 1970; and
(c) NOT be permitted to repeat the examinations before the expiration of one year from the date of the last examination; and
(d) be placed under surveillance for a period of one year to ascertain that he is a fit and proper person for enrolment.

10. You may wish to direct so that a decision may be conveyed to Dr. Onagoruwa because the result of the examinations would have been published before the next council meeting.

Signed
(Jacob A.O. Sofolahan)
Secretary,
29th May, 1970.

Does it make you shudder? The justice minister's skin is thicker because he's still glued to his survival chair.

POETS' NEST

New year resolutions

It is the dawn of a new year, it is a season of hope. A period of stocktaking, a time for resolutions. A time to plan and work for a fruitful year.

New year ballad

Come! has the new year
Good news we hope to hear
Less pains we hope to bear
Poverty we hope to tear
Daily rags we hope to wear
Daily meals in a square
Come on forward my dear
Come with me so we cheer
God's will shall we steer
Luck and success shall be near
All enemy shall we not fear
To the ill-wishers we shall jeer
For they shall be at the rear.

On new year

It's five in the morning, today
The light has cast its ray
I can't think well as I lay
I wonder what friends will say
Parties, they threw but I can't pray
All I can now do is pray
The Lord may bring in a way
That will take my worries away
This is supposedly my birthday
But it tends to be a bad day
Worse, my dearest cannot stay
To dine with me and say hurray.
Nura Usman Almajiri

A new day

When the moon and the stars tarnish
And night begins to lose his grip
There is a smile on the east's lip
As we watch darkness vanish.

A pale light on the heaven's brow
And the owls flee in to hide
Now the earth's looking so wide
As the light continues to grow.

A new day — and our world is young!
Light from the sun spills

Upon the mute, dewy hills
Hark at the canary's merry tongue!

A new day, today, has been born
And the child is as bright as gold
Yes, I know my world is old
For lots of its days have gone!

Ibrahim Sheme

Xmas day

Xmas day
There're slaughtering
Of cows
Of goats
Of fowls
And the drinking
Of libations
For Christ was born
The Xmas day
After coming out the lynch gate
Reminds me
Of our *ahijoku* day
When equally we slaughter
Cows
Goats
Fowls
And drink libations
To the yam and god and of the farms
And of the lands
As the name of the father
And of the holy ghost
We r'laughter
And drink
For bumper harvest
Of soil's seeds
And of man's sweat.

Obinna Chikeze

At dawn

As the cock crows
Signalling yet another day
The sun appears
With characteristic radiance
Beneath, man struggles in earnest.

Towards the farm farmers move
As the fishermen head for the sea
The women, pestle in hand
Mortar on the ground
Ready to pound that at hand.

poets'
nest

EDITED BY BILKISU YUSUF

Others, before grinding stones they kneel
Crushing to powder, nuts with zeal
From the playground
With children running around
Screams, cries and wailings
Continued without failing.

The indolent and lazy, though still in bed
Remains the people's object of hate
He, doing nothing with zest
Is seen as but a standing jest.

Mohammed Garba Bawa

Better things

Let's find some time to laugh
For it is better to
Let's find some time to laugh
For in laughter we lose nothing
Let's make someone smile
For it is better to
Let's brighten someone's day
And make the world a better place.
Ahmed Efebeli

Tomorrow

Man builds an architecture of hopes
Always drawing tomorrow's shape
Colouring it in a marble of solid structures
While tomorrow is only an egg
It could hatch or get rotten
For it is wrapped in the womb of time.

Abba Gana Shettima

MEDIAWATCH

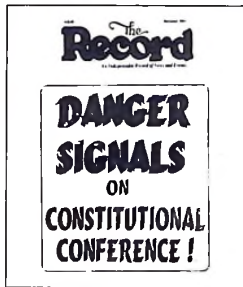
The Record

Recording on the beat

The nation's media scene is enriched with the presence of a Kano based monthly news magazine.

The modest crowd of distinguished personalities gathered at Kano's Daula hotel during the Christmas holidays precisely on December 28 to launch *The Record*. Associated Media, publishers of the monthly news magazine weathered the publishing industry's hostile setting to embark on the venture last July. According to the chairman of the magazine's editorial advisory board, Dr. Ibrahim Ayagi, the first edition of the magazine hit the newsstands in August 93. Not intimidated by the proliferation of magazines and newspapers, *The Record* publishers believe that the near absence of news magazines in the northern states must be corrected. *The Record* therefore set for itself, the traditional role of informing, educating and entertaining the people. Dr. Ayagi however told guests at the launching that the magazine's main motivation was the urge to provide balanced news and analyses. The biased reporting of many publications according to the chairman, should be neutralised by publications like *The Record* with the unflinching determination to provide "a credible medium for views and ideas that would foster public awareness of problems of our time, particularly on the issue of nation building." As a step towards achieving this goal, the magazine's editorial advisory board is loaded with achievers in various fields. Among them are Alhaji Magaji Dambatta, a veteran journalist and former editor of *Gaskiya Tafi Kwabo* Alhaji Tanko Yakasai, a seasoned politician, Dr.

Junaid Mohammed, a public commentator and medical doctor, Alhaji Isiyaku Umar Tofa and Alhaji M.S. Umoru, two prominent Kano businessmen and chairmen of Tofa Commercial Press and Ceramic Manufacturers respectively. Other members are Hajija Zainab Kabir of the sociology department of Bayero



An edition of *The Record*

University, Kano and Mr. Tim Uzoaka.

In his remarks at the occasion, Alhaji M.S. Umoru stressed the need to make *The Record* a unique and qualitative publication and called on the business community to support the publication. Indeed, he set the ball rolling by launching it with 10,000 Naira and advertisements worth 50,000 Naira for the rest of the year. The chief launcher, Senator Magaji Abdullahi expressed dismay at the lack of foresight and indifference of wealthy northerners to the urgent need to set up publishing houses in this part of the country. He

cited the hysterical campaign of disunity that was embarked upon by the dominant sector of the press after the annulment of June 12 election as one of the disturbing effects of the dearth of virile publications in the northern states. Senator Abdullahi then appealed to wealthy businessmen to establish well funded newspapers and magazines to sell news and views that will correct the current lopsided coverage of the country. Alhaji Isa Kachako, another senator who spoke at the launching highlighted the need to approach the forthcoming constitutional conference with an open mind, devoid of ethnic and religious sentiments. Senator Isa Kachako identified the media as the controller of events through balanced news reporting and urged media practitioners not to lose sight of their role as developmental journalists and promoters of a national agenda.

Speaking in his capacity as an editorial advisory board member, Dr. Junaid Mohammed observed that unless a massive public awareness campaign is embarked upon, the geopolitical region referred to as "the north" would be caught napping when the constitutional conference is finally convened. According to Mohammed "We must have our own agenda because blackmail, intimidation and noise making is the vogue if one wants to be heard. Unless we have a robust voice and demand equity we would always be shortchanged." Said Mohammed, "*The Record* will not embark on mischief making or go after people's reputations with the sole purpose of tarnishing them. We can say what we want to say with the truth and even the truth can be mischievous." The hall roared with laughter even as the publisher and editor-in-chief of *The Record*, Dr. Abba Abdullahi rose to thank those who turned up for the event. Dr. Abdullahi promised to make *The Record* live up to its slogan as an "indispensable record of news and events."

By Bilkius Yusuf in Kano

SPORTS

Yekini's year of glory

Rashidi Yekini, Nigeria's most prolific striker and one of the world's best goal scorers, has been crowned 1993 African best footballer of the year for memorable and selfless services to clubs and country



Yekini: doing what he knows best

His career story began quite unnoticed 12 years ago. In 1981, a tall, gangling ebony skin young man joined the defunct second division United Nigeria Textile Limited (UNTL) football club of Kaduna as a struggling amateur, yearning to mature into a player of substance. A few years

well deserved honour when on December 19, 1993, Confederation of Africa Football, CAF, named Yekini 1993 African Footballer of the year. Yekini polled 21 votes to beat Ghana's Abedi Pele Ayew, Liberian George Weah and another Ghanaian Tony Yeboah to second, third and fourth places respectively. The Su-

later, his burgeoning scoring talent, though raw but promising, caught the attention of the handlers of the national team, the Green Eagles. Since then, Rashidi Yekini has transformed into an irrepresible prolific striker, a scoring sensation whose prodigious feats for the national team and clubs, have ranked him the most successful striker ever produced by Nigeria.

It was therefore a

per Eagles' striker who plays professional soccer with Portuguese first division club, Victoria Setubal, could not have been more deserving of the award. His performance at the World Cup qualifying rounds ranked him as the most successful striker in Africa in 1993. Yekini has the distinction of being the highest scorer in the African World Cup qualifying matches, having scored eight of the 17 goals recorded by the national team, the Super Eagles that earned Nigeria a place in the 1994 World Cup finals coming up in USA in June.

Yekini's rise to fame began on a modest scale in 1983 when former Green Eagles coach Festus Adegboyega Onigbinde, then handler of division one Shooting Stars of Ibadan, saw him play with the potential and discerned in him the potential of a great striker. Onigbinde took Yekini to Shooting Stars and later in 1983 when Onigbinde took charge of the national team, Yekini was one of the young players invited to camp for the 1984 African Nations Cup in Cote d'Ivoire. He later played for Nigeria at the 1984 Nations Cup. But his full potential as a gifted scorer began to blossom in 1986 when he moved from Shooting Stars of Ibadan to the defunct Abiola Babes of Abeokuta, a premier division one club. He combined his gangling stride with his powerful frame to become the goal scoring sensation of 1987 national league, winning the Bournvita Highest Goal Scorer award at the end of that season. The same year he crowned his exploits at the local club level by helping Abiola Babes to win the national challenge cup.

By the end of 1987, Yekini, who was once described as "a daredevil striker" by Onigbinde because of his uncanny ease at scoring goal, dumped his amateur status and crossed the country's border to Cote d'Ivoire to pursue a professional career. He joined Africa Sports, one of the three top premier division clubs in Cote d'Ivoire and took the

club to league victory at the end of the season with 28 goals, and again secured the league crown for the club the following year with 31 goals. Yekini was such an indispensable asset for Africa Sports that club president Simplicie Zinsou several times frustrated his plan to further his career in Europe. Yekini got his chance in 1990 when he moved to Victoria Setubal of Portugal.

After overcoming contractual irregularity that sidelined him for half of the season, he laced his boots and scored 13 goals to emerge fifth in Portugal. The following season, Yekini took Portugal by storm, scoring 21 goals to emerge the highest scorer, but his best came in 1993 when he raked in 34 goals to help lift Setubal back to division one. Such exploits for clubs and country in 1993 clearly combined to make Yekini Africa's number one player.

Even before the CAF's honour, Yekini has become the most popular figure among players currently playing for the national team, the Super Eagles. This is borne out of his consistency for goal scoring, and many contributions he has made to the country's efforts in international competitions. After his debut in Nations Cup finals in 1984 in Abidjan, where Nigeria won silver, Yekini has featured for Nigeria in other African Nations Cup finals in 1988 in Morocco, 1990 in Algeria where his vital goals lifted Nigeria to the final, and again in Senegal '92 where he won the golden boot as the tournament's highest goal scorer. Yekini has also been playing for Nigeria consistently for several years now in the qualifying matches for Olympic Games, African Cup of Nations, and the World Cup. But Yekini is perhaps more popular and more admired by fans and the country sports administrators than other national team players because of his cool-headedness, and dedication to the service of the nation. He once told a national soccer magazine that "my happiest day would always be anytime I wear the national team's jersey." No wonder he is always among the first players to respond

to invitation to play for the national team. Not for him the arrogant outbursts that are the trade marks of most of his colleagues who play professional soccer outside the country; and not for him those stringent demands and frustrating conditions handed out to the Nigeria Football Association, NFA by many of his overseas based professional players before they honour invitation to the national team.



Yekini: ready to strike

What really makes Yekini think as a super scorer that is dreaded by defenders and goalkeepers anytime he is on the field? Yekini's durable assets include his height (he is over six feet) and strong physical frame, which he usually transforms into a deadly shot at goal from his right foot whenever he is in possession of the ball. Although he is usually criticised for lacking dribbling skills that were the hallmark of such strikers like Pele, Maradona and Segun Odegbami, Yekini made up for that with his speed and precision striking at goal whenever he is in possession of the ball. Without the ball, Yekini has a deceptively slow approach to the game, but once he has the ball to himself and an inch space advantage to operate, his strikes at

goal are usually dangerous and damaging to the opposing team.

Yekini's goal scoring efforts have also won lots of acclaim not just from fans but also from coaches and ex-great players of the game. Former Green Eagles' captain and a great goal scorer in his playing days, Segun Odegbami said "Without doubt, Rashidi Yekini can lay claim to the crown of the greatest goal scorer in the history of Nigerian football." Odegbami in his assessment of the Super Eagles striker, said "Yekini has become the greatest delight of Nigerians," and concluded by liking him to a human goal scoring machine. Former chief coach of Stationery Stores, Augustine Ofokwu described Yekini as a quintessential striker. "That guy is marvelous, he has sharp reflexes and that explains why he is able to take those powerful shots in split seconds despite the hard tackles from defenders," Ofokwu said. To Christian Chukwu, Super Eagles' chief coach, Yekini "is an exception among the present bunch of strikers we have in the country today." BCC Lions' chief coach, Shuaibu

Amodu is even more impressed with Yekini's unassuming personality and dedication to national service. Amodu advises other players to look up to Yekini for guidance "because he is a dedicated player that knows his mission in the field."

It is therefore a befitting honour for Yekini and an achievement of distinction as the first ever Nigerian to be so named African footballer of the year since the award was instituted for African footballers in 1970. But Yekini, going by his current exploits, his consistency at the age of 30, is still a rising star. He is Nigeria's biggest asset for next June World Cup finals in USA, and that championship may be where his best would be unfolded.

By Joe Olajuwon

ADAMU ADAMU S

DEFINITIONS
IN HUMOUR

Sexploitation

Sometimes in the past, advertising was described as the science of arresting human intelligence long enough to get money from it. The definition still holds true except that now, in addition to money, some of them take the decency out of the audience. They are the hidden persuaders — and they make no bones about it. They go on creating wants instead of meeting genuine needs.

They manipulate and misdirect those powerful emotions innate in every normal being — anger, desire and imagination. They balance and combine the appeal using images to create appetite for what the body can often do without. In the past it was directed subliminally, though even then the attempt was to excite the base urges until parting with the dollar or Naira became irresistible, but there were thresholds the creative artist aren't cross.

Now they are getting more daring, modern and raunchy. But boldness in lechery is no virtue, is it? No is it the best response when your product is accused of having problematic constituents.

The other day *The Sunday Times* of London ran a story about a person claiming to have cracked the highly secret concentrate formula of Coca-Cola. *The Sunday Times* of course is not a junk newspaper, and its story says Coke contains alcohol. The debate of course is endless whether it is industrial alcohol, lager or — as you will expect — the bottlers will deny it. They did — and went to

whose idea of life is cruising on a motorbike with girls in very suggestive poses. Of course. While the decency standards committee of Advertiser Practitioners Council of Nigeria, APCON, is put together, there is the real fear that these guys may undress. And you are on your own.

Meanwhile, you wonder whether they are going to summersault. Or whether it is *summer salt* — adding summer salt to injury, in winter? Well I never.

Rainbow man

One wrong thing the whiteman has done — trivial as it is — is naming his subjects coloured. And it required the perceptive unit of someone who had lived amongst them to open my eyes — Dr. Mohammed Dada Ibrahim, or Dada, as we all call him.

Last week he asked whether I had ever thought who they could be coloured. "Is it a blackman who is coloured or the whiteman who so named him?" he asked.

Under normal circumstances, a whiteman, Dada said, is white, isn't he? When cold, he turns blue; when he? When cold, he turns green; if envious he turns and turns green; if cowardly, he is yellow. When he holidays in the sun, he turns and turns brown; when angry he turns red; and if frightened, he turns white, again.

He has traversed all points of the spectrum. He is the one who is truly coloured (indeed, multi-coloured) yet calls the others so. But then a rainbow is white light split up by atmos-

work. Aggressive advertising is it!

A guy drinking Coke — and the inevitable ubiquitous advertising, half-clad or curvaceous lady is brought in to push the product. There is always fun, isn't there? for those

phoric condition as the whiteman is *lekyl and fydad* by his emotions.

EPI

Catch them young. Yeah? And castrate them. I have no way of knowing whether that's the motto of the Expanded Programme on Immunisation, EPI, adopted. If it isn't, the EPI has missed the best opportunity of its life.

Since most adults — especially religious adults — in the developing world are tough-minded strong heads, unlikely to change their ways, especially their manner of procreation, the best way to check them is to castrate them without their knowledge — and when they are most helpless and needy. With the help of poverty the need can be created. It is called disease and many aspects of it affect infants; and who can be more helpless than them?

The other day I asked a high-ranking doctor what control tests and diagnostic analyses they do on the drugs we receive almost free from aid and international agencies, which as we all know, are worried about our high birth rate. I didn't get a very satisfactory answer. And I wasn't convinced that those who didn't want us to bear children immediately turn into such *philinjan* philanthropists and donate free drugs to keep them alive and well after they were born. It doesn't add up.

If I were a speculative science fiction writer, I could easily have invented slow-acting gonad-attacking vaccines, ovary-shatters, uterine sperm-count depressors, uterine inverters and other such injectable drugs and reagents. At least we should be able to test to see if there is something funny going on. Ha! ha! do we even have the expertise? I dunno.

But if within the next decade or so your EPI-baby doesn't give you a grandchild to play with your beard, do not blame nature for sterility induced by artificial means. Perhaps Ransome-Kuti has prepared a programme for all this. Expanded Programme on Immunisation. *Shikenan*.

Outside it's Nigeria



Tee off

Inside it's pure Sheraton



Tea Time


Abuja Sheraton
HOTEL & TOWERS
THE NATURAL CHOICE

Ladi Kwali Way, Maitama, P.M.B 143, Abuja, F.C.T., Nigeria Tel 09-5230225 - 44. Telex 91520 SHERABU NG. Fax: 09-5231570.

Sheraton
WORLDWIDE HOTELS, RESORTS & ALL-IN-ONES

The Abuja Sheraton Hotel & Towers is owned by Capital Hotels Ltd and operated by Sheraton Overseas Management Corporation as its agent.

MENT

nt



makes it resistant to chemical and corrosive
and marine construction.

believable in concrete structure by any

ure bestow an appealing lustre.

arket price per 50kgs bag.

de.

of SOKOTO CEMENT had been
its numerous applications from
blocks to residential buildings,
ty-scrapers, etc.



ity

NIGERIA

No. (040) 234806.

NO TEL (040)