

DAILY TRUST

Trust Is A Burden

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Thursday Column

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Debate

Deregulation: Is it the answer to fuel crisis?
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Israel destroys Force 17 site

The Israeli Defence Force (IDF) on Tuesday destroyed houses and sites belonging to Palestinian leader, Yaseer Arafat's personal guard Force 17 in Rafah and Khan Yunis, South Gaza strip.

Some 100 soldiers of the IDF, supported by four tanks and military bulldozers, broke into the town of Khan Yunis to level a site of the Force 17 near Gosh Khatif Jewish settlement, witnesses said.

A fierce gun battle took place between the Palestinian and Israeli soldiers but the IDF continued levelling the site located inside an area controlled by the Palestinian national authority, according to the witnesses.

On Tuesday evening, the IDF attacked Al-Megraqa area, south Gaza city, with heavy artillery and machine guns for more than an hour but no casualties were reported.

Meanwhile, Israeli military bulldozers, supported by tanks, intruded the green line, the actual control line before the 1967 Middle East War, and the Palestinian-controlled area of Breig, Central Gaza, levelling several hectares of citrus olive and fruits.

Col. Khaled Abul-Ila, a Palestinian official in charge of the Palestinian-Israeli Liaison office, condemned the Israeli attacks and the levelling of the site of Force 17.

FG to spend N9.2 billion on poverty reduction

By Suleiman Mohammed

The Federal Government has approved a pilot project for poverty reduction in twelve states, expected to gulp a total of \$87.5 million (about N9.2 billion).

The project is expected to be executed in Abia, Cross River, Ekiti, Nasarawa, Kogi, Yobe, Benue, Delta, Enugu, Gombe, Osun and Zamfara States, while the remaining 24 states are to benefit, subject to the successful execution of the pilot projects.

Briefing State House cor
contd. on pg 2

Rich rush for N500 note

Rich men in Abuja yesterday rushed for the new N500 note introduced by the Federal Government.

Many businessmen and high-ranking government officials were reported to have jostled to get the new note in the Abuja branch of one of the leading commercial

By Osborne Adi Jnr and Suleiman Mohammed

banks in the country. Others who could not go to the bank were said to have made repeated calls to the bank to negotiate how they could exchange their old denominations with the new note.

Daily Trust gathered that in the said branch, over N5

million of the new denomination exchanged hands before the close of business yesterday.

The rush among wealthy individuals is said to be informed by the ease with which the N500 note can be handled either in the pocket or during business transactions.

The denomination whose arrival into the money market was initially greeted with mixed feelings became major attraction, especially among top flight businessmen and high ranking government officials.

President Olusegun Obasanjo who conducted the official ceremony heralding the introduction of the new note at the Aso Villa chamber, ordered its circulation among the 24 ministers

that attended this week's Federal Executive Council meeting.

But bank cashiers expressed apprehension about the new note while customers could not hide their excitement when the currency started circulation in the banks yesterday.

According to agency reports when the new notes were handed over to cashiers in one of the banks, one of them exclaimed "Gbese!",
contd. on pg 2



President Olusegun Obasanjo launching the N500 note shortly before the Federal Executive Council meeting at the State House, Abuja... yesterday.
Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje.

FG VS 36 STATES

Lagos opens defence

From Abdulfattah Olajide, Lagos

The Lagos State government yesterday declared that the Federal Capital Territory is the only territory over which the Federal Government can exercise control, saying that it was therefore not entitled to any revenue on the basis of derivation.

In a 53-paragraph statement of defence and counter-claim filed at the Supreme Court by the state's Attorney-General, Professor Yemi Oshibajo, on the Federal Government's suit against the 36 states of the federation over the issue of resource control, the state averred that no other part of Nigeria is owned by the Federal Government except Abuja, contrary to paragraphs 9 and 10 of the statement of claim earlier filed by the Minister of Justice, Chief Bola Ige.

Professor Oshibajo contended that the "geographical territory called Nigeria is a federation totally divided into 36 states and the FCT called Abuja, which is the only Federal Capital Territory recognised by the 1999 constitution."

He further urged that to be part of the country, the territorial waters, the continental shelf and the exclusive economic zone must be regarded as part of the territory of the adjoining
contd. on pg 2

NITEL PROBE

Former MD paid out N285m on unnamed minister's order

By Tashikalimah Hallah

The judicial commission of inquiry into the affairs of NITEL/M-TEL yesterday heard how the former Managing Director of M-TEL, Alhaji Isma'ila Mohammed paid N285 million to contractors on the orders of the former minister of communication.

However, Alhaji Mohammed could not recall the name of the former minister.

The former Managing Director gave a breakdown of the payments to include N193 million to a firm of solicitors, George Taylor and Co. in 1998 on the orders of the minister of communication.

According to him, the money was paid for the acquisition of seven properties by the company (M-TEL), which was also ordered by the same minister.

Mohammed further explained that the same minister had approved that a consultant, Savannah Associates, be paid
contd. on pg 2

Senate debates N800bn Shell contracts

By Reuben Yunana

Senate will today hear how Shell Petroleum Development Company awarded five contracts that led to the capital flight from the country to the tune of \$8.5 million.

The contracts were awarded by a Shell subsidiary, Shell Nigeria Exploration and Production Company Limited (SNEPCO), to three UK based companies, one French and a Korean company respectively.

Senator John Azuta Mbata (PDP Rivers East), who was contributing a motion on adjournment on the floor of the Senate yesterday, stated that the amount was higher than half of the capital budget of the country.

He lamented that though both Shell and SNEPCO are

55 per cent owned by the Federal Government through NNPC, no Nigerian company benefited from the contracts.

Senator Mbata said the contracts, which are for the Bonga Oil field in the Niger Delta have created over 1,000

jobs in the United Kingdom as reported by the *Financial Times* of London.

"How do we jumpstart the Nigerian economy and stimulate economic growth if we keep investing in other economies? Government
contd. on pg 2

Measles claims 15 children in Borno

Measles out-break in Gwoza local government area of Southern Borno State has claimed the lives of 15 children, even as unofficial sources put the number of deaths higher.

In a chat with journalists, the principal medical officer of the Gwoza General Hospital, Dr. Idriss Usman said a trend in the out-break of the disease started to be noticed early this year when children

From Abdullahi Bego, Maiduguri

were taken to the hospital for medical treatment but that the situation started to turn worse a few weeks ago as weather change in the north-east sub-region started ushering in the hot season.

Although no death has been recorded among children admitted in the hospital, said Dr. Idriss Usman, between five and ten patients
contd. on pg 2

NEWS

Senate debates Environmental Protection Commission Bill

Debate on the bill for the establishment of the Federal Environmental Protection Commission started yesterday at the Senate, with members expressing concern over the harmful effects of industrial effluents and human wastes.

The bill, according to its initiator, Senator Zego Aziz, is expected to assist in preventing and minimising environmental pollution, education of citizens on the dangers of unkempt surroundings and enlightenment on the proper means of waste disposal.

Aziz, who said it was an embarrassment for Nigerians to be found defecating indiscriminately in major cities and the rural areas, added that "all manners of industrial wastes are allowed into the environment and water resources."

According to him, communicable diseases, as cholera, typhoid fever, malaria fever and diarrhoea were trace-

By Reuben Yunana

able to the pollution of the environment and the failure of the people to adhere to basic sanitation rules.

"The vast amount of

Commission moves to restore Lake Chad's dwindling water

In an effort to check the steady drying up of the Lake Chad, the Lake Chad Basin Commission has concluded an agreement for the transfer of water from Oubangui basin in Central African Republic (CAR) to Lake Chad.

The Minister of Water Resources, Col. Bello Kaliel (rtd), told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) yesterday in Abuja, that the decision was taken at the 48th session of the commission held in Bangui last month.

He said that the project involved the transfer of water from Obangi river in CAR, through river Chari in Chad to the Lake.

He further disclosed that

money usually spent on the treatment and prevention of these diseases can be channelled to other areas of national development," he added.

He also informed his col-

leagues that the proposed commission, which should be managed by a Director-General, would be mandated to ensure proper policy formulation and administration of the environment.

Senators Idris Guda, Danlami Bamaayi, Nuhu Aliyu, Chuba Okadigbo, Ali Modu-Sherif, Florence Ita-Giwa, Mojisoluwa

the environment. Senators Idris Guda, Danlami Bamaayi, Nuhu Aliyu, Chuba Okadigbo, Ali Modu-Sherif, Florence Ita-Giwa, Mojisoluwa

versing the alarming deterioration of the land and the lake's ecosystem.

Patasse, for the project. They noted the efforts being made by the Global En-

Police deny killing students during demonstration

The Enugu State Commissioner of Police, Mr. Idris Mohammed, has described reports on the alleged killing of some students of the Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) in some national dailies as "motor park stories."

Mohammed, who denied the efforts on Wednesday in a news briefing with the vice Chancellor of the university, Prof. Sam Chukwu, advised journalists to "always do investigative or detective reports" rather than relying on a single source of information.

"It is necessary to verify from both sides of an event before publishing and if somebody says something and you have some doubts,

you investigate rather than just writing from one source," he advised.

On the alleged report, the police commissioner confirmed that no life was lost as the police used only tear gas when the students broke loose, adding that "this is a democratic dispensation and not a military government."

"It is in place to say that if anybody dies, it is the police that will remove the corpse and again, we (police) have not received any such report from anybody since the incident happened," he said.

He however, appealed to the media to enlighten the public that nobody was killed during the violent demonstration, reiterating that no weapon was used but tear gas.

The police commissioner warned against the use of tinted glasses in vehicles

without police permission, saying that offenders would be arrested.

Speaking on the occasion, the special adviser to the state governor on Media Affairs, Mr. Ogazimorah Igbonekwu, urged members of the public who had knowledge of the death of any student during the crisis to report to the police.



IGP Musliu Smith

FG contd. from pg 1

respondents at the end of the Federal Executive Council (FEC) meeting yesterday, Information and National Orientation Minister, Professor Jerry Gana, said the project would be funded by the International Development Association (IDA) to facilitate poverty reduction at the community level.

Professor Gana explained that a credit of \$60 million has been granted by the International Development Association (IDA), while the sum of

\$27 million was released as loan by the African Development Fund (ADF) in addition to the \$564,300 granted for the success of the pilot project.

Though Professor Gana could not expatiate on the specific projects to be executed, he assured that key areas that directly affect the ordinary citizens would be addressed accordingly.

Similarly, the meeting endorsed the earlier directive for urgent release of grains from

the strategic reserve to alleviate the suffering of the masses. The grains would be distributed to all the 774 local government areas for sale at subsidised rate in the markets.

Professor Gana explained that President Olusegun Obasanjo has approved the release of 12,000 metric tons of maize, 10,000 metric tons of sorghum, 8,140 metric tons of millet, 100 metric tons of rice and 30 metric tons of Soya beans respectively.

Lagos contd. from pg 1

state.

According to him, since the territorial waters of Nigeria are physically and geographically part of the coastal states, and that, although covered with water, they are a prolongation or continuation of that territory and any natural resources located therein derives from same, in accordance with the provisions of section 162 (2) of the 1999 constitution.

He therefore called for a declaration that the territorial waters, exclusive economic

zone and the continental shelf be regarded as a natural prolongation of the land of coastal states.

Other declarations sought by the Lagos State government, which is the 24th defendant in the suit are

*that any waters which are not deemed or considered a part of any state within the federation (which means any of the 36 states of Nigeria or the FCT) do not form or constitute a part of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,

*that the seaward bound-

ary of a state cannot be determined from the territorial waters Act, Cap. 428 laws of the federation (1990), as amended by Decree 1 of 1998, which is applicable only as between neighbouring foreign states and/or independent states in international law,

*that the Geneva Convention which gives Nigeria Sovereignty over its territorial waters gives it such sovereignty as against its constituent states, particularly the states.

Rich contd. from pg 1

gbese!" (meaning debt, debt), saying that if he mistakenly overpaid a customer, he was bound to refund the money.

Another cashier advised his colleagues to properly count to ensure that the amount was correct when paying customers notes in order to avoid over payment.

While some customers expressed satisfaction being

paid with the N500, others were not particularly enthusiastic about it.

A customer, John Adebisi said he was excited because the note was easy to carry, especially when making bulk withdrawal. Another customer Mike Njoku was not quite impressed because according to him, it would not encourage thrift.

Others expressed dis-

pleasure with the introduction of the note saying, the value of the naira may continue to drift, causing inflation.

It was also feared that the N500 launch is an indication that government not in any mood to intervene in saving the naira from unrestrained activities of market forces.

NITEL contd. from pg 1

N24 million as consultancy fees for the development of M-TEL's 8000 square metres property in the Asojoro district of Abuja. This time, however, payment was recommended by the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing.

In another instance, Alhaji Ismaila said that the minister had directed him to pay an unnamed contractor N3 million for the supply and furnishing of the minister's office.

Mohammed explained to the Justice Daniel Adeniyi led judicial commission, that when he received the minister's directive he declined, saying that he was in competent to do so but that the minister went ahead and paid the contractor.

Alhaji Mohammed also said that M-TEL gave a loan of N60 million to the Nigeria Communication Commission (NCC) and another N5 million on the ministry of communication on the directive of the same minister. He said the loans were not paid back to the M-TEL up to the time he left office.

Mohammed said that ministry directives for payment to contractors were

"very rampant" in the past administrations, a situation he said made the then Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Alhaji Gidado

Idris to issue circulars stopping heads of Parastatals from effecting such payments.

Senate contd. from pg 1

must ensure that its expenditure would generate fast lane investments locally," the Senator asserted.

He urged the Senate to look into the issue urgently because according to him "there is no guarantee that this trend would end. The Nigerian economy has lost multiplier effect."

According to him, the contracts as structured represent net outflow, while the attendant benefits of invest-

ment, growth and employment opportunities would be lost to the country.

He said further that awarding the contracts to foreign companies means that for every expenditure in excess of N300 billion, the Nigerian government would earn virtually nothing.

Senator Mbata therefore, urged Senate to legislate and ensure increased Nigerian participation in the upstream petroleum sector.

Measles contd. from pg 1

report to the hospital daily for measles or related complications.

This number may be much lower than the actual cases of measles patients as many parents are reportedly resorting to traditional medicine because drugs are not enough in the hospital.

Dr. Idriss Usman therefore appealed to the Borno

State Government to provide urgent assistance to the patients as the hospital can only diagnose and prescribe drugs to the patients but cannot provide the drugs.

Also, considering the setting in of the hot season, the health care department of Gwoza local government area has started vaccination against cerebro-spinal meningitis.

NEWS

Political affiliation won't affect execution of rural electricity projects — Goje

Minister of State for Power and Steel, Alhaji Danjuma Goje in Abuja on Tuesday that political affiliations of individual states were never a factor in the award of contracts and execution of rural electrification projects by the ministry.

Goje, who was reacting to a casual joke by Sokoto state governor, Alhaji Attahiru Bafarawa, that his state was being left out of the current rural electrification scheme because it voted for APP, said the Federal Government's resolve to

electrify Nigeria was "blind to any kind of political consideration."

Bafarawa had alleged that Sokoto State had suffered a long history of neglect and called on the present administration to strive to make a difference and give his people a sense of belonging.

He lamented that Issa town, the headquarters of his own local government, had no light and stressed that the town's situation was particularly bad because former Power and Steel Minister and later NEPA managing direc-

tor, Alhaji Bello Suleiman, was from Issa town.

"The rural electricity projects he started was abandoned immediately he left office and I am here to appeal to you to do something," Bafarawa stressed.

In his response, Goje said, however, that Sokoto state was receiving "a very special attention" in the rural energy projects because it remained the "least beneficiary of the scheme," in spite

of producing a former minister of power and steel and NEPA Managing Director.

He stressed that the present administration inherited 860 uncompleted rural electrification projects and that the Federal Government was compelled to prioritise their completion because "at least, N40 billion" was needed to complete all the projects.

"We have got only a few millions to continue the jobs

and I am proud to tell you that the Kaura Namoda rural electrification project in Zamfara State is among those topmost on the list," Goje said.

The minister said that the ministry would take a new look at the abandoned electrification projects in Issa, Tureta and Sabon-Birmi towns with a view to resuscitating them or terminating the contracts and re-awarding them to competent companies.



Danjuma Goje

UNIMAID joins ASUU strike

Two days after the commencement of the nationwide strike action embarked upon by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), lecturers at the University of Maiduguri have joined the strike even as students were gripped by panic and anxiety regarding the implications of the ASUU/government face-off on their studies.

In a chat with *Daily Trust*, the chairman of the Unimaid branch of ASUU, Dr. Ibrahim Dada, said the UNIMAID branch of the union did not join the industrial action early enough because he was just returning from the national executive meeting of ASUU held at Owerri and had to address congress before the strike commenced.

Dr. Dada said that the strike embarked upon by ASUU "will be total and indefinite as the union is not simply concerned about the issue of salary increases."

The chairman said that ASUU want a major revitalisation of the educational sector and an im-

From Abdullahi Bego, in Maiduguri

provement in the conditions of teaching and learning in the universities.

"The issue of salary is very negligible... we are talking about improving the libraries, equipping the laboratories, building more staff quarters, students hostels, etc," Dr. Dada said.

Meanwhile, lectures were held sporadically in some of the departments of the University of Maiduguri.

However, some students remained outside classes chatting among themselves.

Some of the students told our correspondent that they were highly saddened by the strike action. They blamed the Federal Government for being intransigent as regards the implementation of the December 2000 agreement reached with the academic staff union.

"Some of us will start packing out of the hostels soon because once it began, there is no end in sight," said one Faculty of Management Science student who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Resource Control: Omu asks for 50 per cent derivation

The Chief Whip of the Senate, Chief Stella Omu, yesterday in Abuja canvassed for the increment of the derivation formula from 13 per cent to 50 per cent to redress the current agitations for resource control by oil producing states.

Omu told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) that since the 1999 constitution provided for more than 13 per cent in derivation revenue from oil communities, "50 per cent will encourage us to preach to our youths to



Chief Stella Omu, shun violence and co-operate with government policies."

She frowned at what she called "marginalisation of those who own the resources" by other segments of the country and called for a special provision to enable her people participate in the auctioning of the marginal oil fields by the Federal Government.

"In spite of the fact that my constituency has the largest petroleum deposits in the country, no chairman of any federal board came from our place," she alleged.

She contended that it was

the politics of taking everything from the Niger-Delta without commensurate rewards that fuelled the protests by youths in the area.

"We are not saying we want to have everything because we are our brothers' keepers, but we should not be cheated," she said, adding that if government had built bridges around that Delta region, tension would have eased.

The Senator, who debunked claims that the Senate had resolved from its Calabar Retreat to ignore the issue of resource control, disclosed that the upper chamber noted that the matter was covered by section 62 of the constitution and that any change required an amendment of the statute.

Omu said that President Olusegun Obasanjo and the PDP were sympathetic to the cause of the Niger-Delta and called for a political resolution of the controversy on resource control between the Federal Government and the 36 states of the federation.

On deregulation, she said that it was not politically wise for the government to impose the policy on the people who were already faced with the crisis of hunger.

"I strongly feel that it is dangerous to talk about deregulation in a situation where people are hungry and they have no alternative for their condition," she said.



President Olusegun Obasanjo, right, shares a point of interest with Vice-President Atiku Abubakar at the Federal Executive Council meeting in Abuja... yesterday.

Pix Kennedy Egbonodje

Community protests non-payment of reparation for mining activities

Nafan Community Development Association (NACODA) in Barkin Ladi Local Government Area of Plateau State, has protested against the purported plan by the Consolidated Tin Mines (CTM) to remove mining dredge machine from their village without reparation.

A statement issued yesterday in Jos, signed by the chairman and secretary of the association, Mr. Dung Pam and Musa Bot respectively, noted that since the community had been consistently pursuing their de-

mands peacefully through dialogue with the management of CTM, the company should redeem its pledge without further delay.

It added that the villagers had vowed not to allow the removal of the machine until CTM provided a block of six classrooms, a bridge and a health clinic for the community.

The community called on the state government and well-meaning people of the state to prevail on the company and its agency to meet their demands.

Nigeria eyes oil in Sao Tome

Nigeria stands to increase her oil revenue as some of the benefits Nigeria would derive from the Joint Development Zone.

By Kevin Ebele Adinnu

Chief Onyia stated that the establishment of the zone would afford Nigeria the opportunity to play a key role in the Gulf of Guinea commission and beyond.

Nigeria, he said, could also use the zone's experi-

ment to woo the three countries bordering Nigeria in the Gulf of Guinea into ECOWAS.

The terms of reference of the committee include drafting of the tax and petroleum regulatory regime, drafting of the applicable laws for the zone, drafting of the regulations for appointment and remuneration of the Joint Authority staff and the

preparation for the setting up of the Joint Development Authority Headquarters in Abuja.

In his speech, the chairman of the committee and Director-General of the National Boundary Commission, Alhaji Dahiru Bobbo, said his committee would submit its reports before the inauguration of the Joint Development Authority.

NEWS

Ohaneze Ndigbo sets up legal team for Oputa panel

The Pan-Igbo cultural group, *OhanezeNdigbo* has set up a legal committee comprising three Senior Advocates of Nigeria (SAN) and other lawyers to prepare its evidence for the Justice Chukwudifu Oputa panel on human rights violation.

The three Senior Advocates are Chief Philips Umeadi, Anthony Mogbo and Chimeze Ikeazor, who will lead the team of lawyers to argue the case of violation of the rights of Igbos by successive governments.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the legal committee, to be presided over by a constitutional lawyer, Prof. Ben Nwabueze, had already started work, sifting through the materials and evidence to be presented before the commission.

The administrative secretary of the organisation, Mr. Nnayelugo Odunze, confirmed the setting up of the legal committee in a telephone interview with NAN, adding that *Ohaneze* was not leaving anything to chance.

Ohaneze Ndigbo had earlier issued a statement, inviting victims of human rights abuse to its GRA

Enugu Secretariat to meet with its legal team.

Reliable sources told NAN in Abuja that the Oputa panel will hold public sitting in Enugu on April

18, at the Old Eastern House of Assembly.

The panel had earlier been scheduled to begin sitting on April 2, but was postponed for adequate arrangements.

Nigeria to flag off conference on good governance

Nigeria has been selected to flag off the global campaign on good governance in Africa, in recognition of her efforts in fighting corruption, the Minister of state for works and housing, Mr. Garba Ali Madaki, has said.

Addressing a news conference in Abuja on the three-day global conference for good governance which will kick-off in Abuja on April 10, the minister said "the selection of Nigeria for the campaign is undoubtedly an acknowledgement of the present government's anti-corruption crusade."

He said that Nigeria accepted the challenge to lead the campaign because of her desire to demonstrate to the world that she is irrevocably committed to protecting democratic principles, adding "the country is willing to show that she involves civil society in all aspects of governance."

The minister noted that Nigeria was selected to be the starting-point for the programme at the regional Africa ministerial conference, which took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, last November.

Ali said the main objective of the campaign was to influence the climate of world opinion and "to build the constituency for change in values, behaviours, attitudes and approaches, particularly at the local government level."

"It will also target both local and national governments, as well as promote a change in the relationship between the two levels of government and between local governments and civil society," he stated.

All the commissioners for local government in all the Chieftains and representatives of some selected non-governmental organisations are to attend the conference. The minister said some of the

The *Breaking News* weekly newspaper realised a total of N2.1 million at the launching of the paper on Monday at the Sheraton Hotel and Towers.

Among major donors at the ceremony were the chairman of the occasion, Senator Haruna Abubakar who made a donation of one million naira. Special guest of honour and Governor of

Breaking News weekly paper gets N2.1m

By Ikenna Okpani

Nasarawa State, Alhaji Abdullahi Adamu donated N250,000 and Governor of Bauchi State, Alhaji Ahmed Adamu Mu'azu also donated N250,000.

Others were Managing Director, Inland Bank and Internet computers, Alh. A.B. Ismaila, N100,000; publisher, *Democrat* and Chairman Bullet Construction,

Alh. Ismaila Funtua, N100,000 and Chief Omole Agborin who donated N150,000.

The occasion also attracted Senator Idris Abubakar who donated N100,000, Alh. Isa Yagudu, the Minister of State for transport donated N5,000 while Alh. S.K. Danladi donated N50,000.

Breaking News, a weekly newspaper, is based in Abuja.

FG insists on deregulation, lambasts critics

By Suleiman Mohammed

Vice president Atiku Abubakar has described opponents of government's plan to deregulate the downstream petroleum sector as a "small clique" who are against the progress of the nation.

While insisting on government's determination to carry out the exercise, Vice President Atiku Abubakar told a delegation of small scale industrialists at

the state house on Monday that those against the plan were holding the nation hostage.

To him, deregulation is the plausible and logical solution to the current fuel crisis in the country, and "those who are against deregulation are a small clique representing nobody and want to hold the nation hostage."

Atiku insisted that deregulation would break the monopoly of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, (NNPC), liberalise the sector and allow competition.

While advising Nigerians not to be sentimental about deregulation but give a deep positive thought in the interest of the nation, Atiku commended the association for its various contributions stressing that the N5 billion set aside in the 2001 budget

Nigeria moves to curb import of generators

The Nigerian government has ordered that anyone wishing to import electric generators into the power-starved country must first have the permission of the

state power monopoly, NEPA.

New guidelines issued by the Central Bank of Nigeria released Tuesday, gave the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) veto power over individuals and companies who wish to import generators for use when its erratic service fails.

Generators have become a necessity of life in Nigeria, country which is plagued by prolonged and widespread electricity outages.

After years of unfulfilled government promises to improve electricity supply, Nigerians joke that NEPA stands for "Never Expect Power Again."

Late last year, Information Minister, Professor Jerry Gana accused some electric generator dealers of stocking demand for their products by sabotaging NEPA's efforts to improve the power supply.

Businessmen see this latest move as a government attempt to control the stream of generators coming into the country. NEPA's well-known administrative incompetence could create bottlenecks for importers of generators, further hurting industrial production by manufacturers forced to install their own power.

Importers also fear it could create a whole new avenue for corruption.

Atiku tasks SEC on awareness

Vice President Atiku Abubakar yesterday tasked the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) management to wake up from slumber and acquaint Nigerians of its activities, particularly on economic development of the nation.

The Vice President who gave the directive when the Director-General of the Commission, Alhaji Suleiman Ndanusa paid him a courtesy visit at the state house said Nigerians are yet to know much about the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

According to him, general public enlightenment on the activities of SEC became necessary because only few elites were conversant with its functions.

He said such situation, where the elites are not aware of the SEC activities, may negatively impact on its development, and noted the contribution of the commission in the ongoing privatisation of ailing public

By Suleiman Mohammed

enterprises.

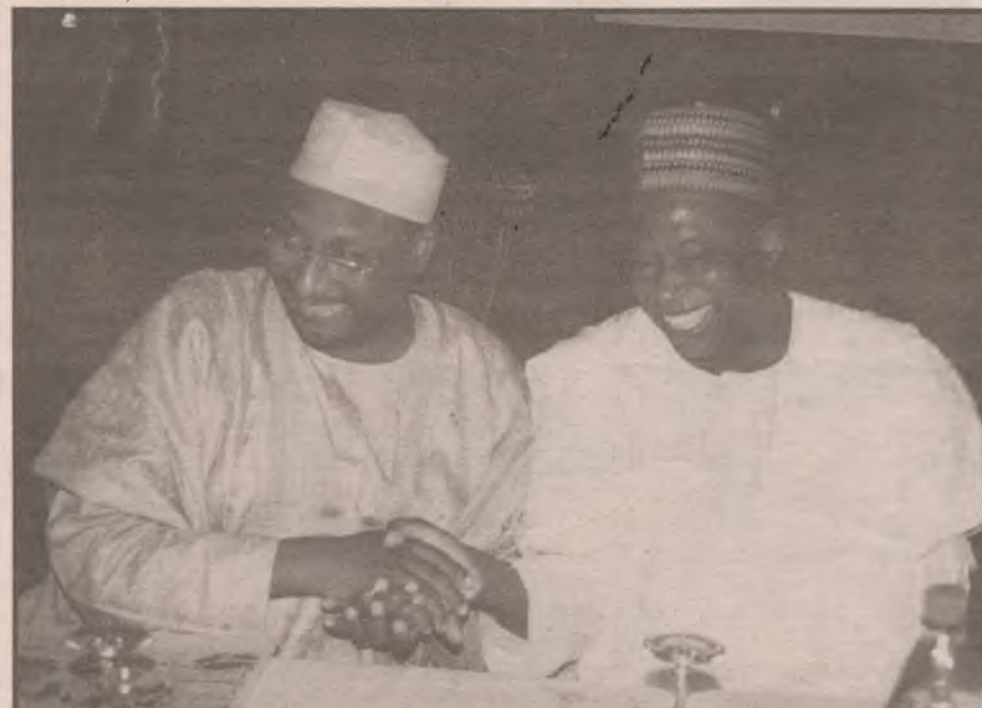
Government, he said would look at the problem of the commission and address them accordingly.

Earlier, SEC Director-

General, Alhaji Ndanusa explained that the commission was established among other things to supervise and regulate the capital market in the country. He said SEC has a duty to ensure the success of the

privatisation programme.

Alhaji Ndanusa also asked for more funding, saying the commission has been neglected by successive governments, pointing out that SEC serves as the engine for the growth of the nation.



Governor of Bauchi State, Alhaji Adamu Mu'azu and Governor of Nasarawa State, Alhaji Abdullahi Adamu sharing a joke at the launching of *Breaking News* weekly newspaper at Sheraton Hotel and Towers, Abuja... Tuesday.



Atiku

for small scale industrialists was to enhance productivity.

Earlier, the president of the Nigerian Association of Small Scale Industries (NASSI), Dr. A.D. Akinyemi pledged support for the deregulation of the oil sector, stressing that it would move the economy forward, "it is a simple economic theory of supply and demand."

"It is logical that when people are empowered economically at the grassroot level and they feel the dividend of democracy, they will be prepared to fulfil their civic obligations to the government," he said and requested for early release of the budgeted N5 billion for NASSI.

DAILY TRUST
EDITORIAL

State Electoral Commissions and credible L.G. polls

During discussions at the National Assembly members of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) led by its Chairman, Dr. Abel Guobadia the thorny issue of State Electoral Commissions popped out like a sore thumb.

INEC officials were with the Senate President, Anyim Pius Anyim, to present to the National Assembly the draft Electoral Bill 2001. The bill adopted the computerized register of voters, guidelines and regulations for registration of political parties, government funding of parties to meet expenses for general elections and operating costs and regulating the conduct of local government elections by State Independent Electoral Commissions (SIECS).

The establishment, not to talk of the functions of the SIECs have generated heated debates across the country. Some states have appointed their SIECs while it has become impossible for some to have them less than a year to the scheduled local government elections in 2002.

In states where the SIECs have been appointed, opposing political parties and groups have alleged that the chairmen and some members of the state electoral bodies are card-carrying members or stalwarts of the ruling parties. This, they have argued, cannot ensure a free and fair local government election and demand that measures be taken by the national INEC to allay their fears.

The report of the Committee on Electoral Processes at the last Constitutional Conference (1994-95) recommended that each state shall set up SIECs comprising a chairman, who shall be Resident Electoral Commissioner of not less than 50 years of age. The members, one each from the senatorial districts of the state shall not be less than 40 years of age and shall be appointed by the governor and confirmed by the House of Assembly. Neither the chairman nor the commission members shall belong to any political party or participate in partisan politics.

The 1999 constitution provided full independence for the SIECs by making them not answerable to the state governors when carrying out their functions. However, politicians especially those of the rival hue, believe this is better said than done. What with the desire by incumbents to cling to power at all costs? The process of actualising a second-term bid by state governors starts from the local government elections. Given the allegation that some of those appointed into some of SIECS' are chairmen of the parties in control in these states, it would be impossible to ensure the credibility of any election conducted by such a body. This is clearly against the spirit and letter of the provisions of the 1999 Constitution.

The 1999 Constitution shied away from the provision for a state police force for the same argument that states' chief executives could use them for their own ends. This argument has been advanced in the case of state electoral commissions. The constitution provides that governors will nominate the chairmen of the SIECs to be confirmed by the state assembly. In states where the governor's party has the majority in the assembly, he could (and indeed some have) imposed people who are sympathetic to the cause of the ruling party.

Another suggestion is to allow the registered parties in the state to nominate a member each to be appointed into the SIECs with the hope that they will work harmoniously. However, experience has shown that during elections such members who belong to the rival parties are usually sidelined, if not arrested, when decisions on actual preparations for the conduct of elections are being made.

The other option, suggested to ensure that the SIEC's conduct of local government elections is uniform throughout the country is to appoint non-indigenes as state resident electoral commissioners. However, this has not taken into consideration allegations that such officials do not have to be indigenes to collaborate with powers that be to rig elections. Conversely, some state indigenes who are honestly bent on ensuring a free and fair contest have fallen out of favour with chief executives that appointed them.

Whichever option the National Assembly adopts should take into consideration the legitimate fears of politicians who do not believe that a SIEC appointed by an incumbent would be impartial in conducting elections. *Daily Trust* urges the National Assembly to deliberate on this controversial issue of State's Independent Electoral Commissions in a non-partisan manner and with the speed it deserves.

This is because the menace of political instability, which has retarded the development of most third world countries, including Nigeria, has its origins in electoral disputes.

THURSDAY COLUMN
Commission, don't flag off, roads

By Nick Dazang

Until some three weeks ago, the Abuja-Keffi road was a veritable commuter's nightmare: day-in and day-out, accidents occur on this road with an unbelievable abandonment and frequency; traffic hold-ups, reminiscent only of Lagos' asphyxiating traffic jams, choke this strategic road at rush hours and on a daily basis; precious lives, numbering not less than two hundred have been lost between the Sani Abacha Barracks and the Nyanya end in the past one year alone; a bloody riot was inspired by one of these carnages which in turn inspired a ministerial visitation to douse the people's sense of outrage and indignation.

Compounding all these, not less than fifty percent of workers in Abuja - government and private sector - reside in the Nyanya-Mararaba-New Karu-Masaka districts and most of the vehicular traffic entering the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) does so from this most strategic road. It was, therefore a huge relief when the Federal Executive Council (FEC) after one of its conclaves, decided that the Federal Government was going to dualise the Enugu-Port Harcourt road; the Ibadan-Ilorin road and the Abuja-Keffi road. This writer, in a previous piece, commended the Federal Government for taking such an audacious decision and implored it to further dualise the Ilorin-Bida-Abuja road and to extend the dualisation of the Abuja-Keffi road up to Jos. These additional measures, I believe, will not only consummate the government's lofty efforts at reducing the carnage on our roads, they will give Nigerians an easy reach to its food and electricity belt.

Lest I digress, the writer's relief - and that of thousands of Nigerians who commute on these roads - derives from the fact that dualising them will further expand them and reduce the number of hours commuters spend on them; dualising these roads will also make for easy and uninterrupted flow of traffic and reduce the accidents that occur on them.

The Abuja-Keffi road, apart from the fact that it carries the heaviest vehicular traffic in the country, is a different kettle of fish altogether: it is not only narrow and convoluted, the stretch from Sani Abacha barracks to Nyanya is a steep slope that is the scourge of trucks and heavy-duty vehicles. It is a measure of how this stretch of the road has assumed the status of the Achilles heel of heavy-duty vehicles that in the past one year alone, three of them failed to negotiate the slope and, in the process, caused the loss of not less than one hundred lives.

If the decision to award the contracts for the dualisation of these roads is a source of relief to Nigerians, especially those in the East, South-West and Middle Belt, the companies to which some of these roads were awarded have been a source of anxiety and disquiet. The construction of Enugu-Port Harcourt road and the Abuja-Keffi road was specifically awarded to a company whose pedigree in construction, to put it mildly, is doubtful. One would have thought that these two roads were strategic and that since their constructions called for urgency they be given only to construction companies in the league of Julius Berger, Strabag, P.W., G. Cappa, Bouygues, Stirling etc. Instead, these important roads were awarded to a nondescript company whose accomplishments can seldom be reckoned with in the industry. The company in question appears to be conscious of its failings and the perception of it in the popular imagination, for on the day of the flagging-off ceremony, it paraded its equipment and some nine trucks to boot. Intriguingly, a day after the ceremony, only four trucks were in view and only three were on active duty!

If the award to a company of doubtful pedigree has been a source of anxiety, the manner the Federal Government has gone about the task of constructing these roads must be nauseating, even noxious, to decent folks. Before construction commences in earnest, each major road must be flagged-off in an elaborate ceremony, where millions of naira are expended in the vain attempt to call attention to the task at hand. The Abuja-Keffi road was no exception to the sordid rule. Last week, in an elaborate ceremony at which the Vice-President, Alhaji Abubakar Atiku was in attendance with other dignitaries such as the Minister of Works, Chief Tony Anenih and the Nasarawa State governor, Alhaji Abdullahi Adamu, the Abuja-Keffi road was flagged-off in the full glare of television cameras and klieg lights.

One suspects that these elaborate ceremonies and efforts at chest-thumping are informed by the appalling image of the present regime and that of the Minister of Works and Housing and the desperate desire to redress this image. Probably until recently, the Obasanjo regime had been perceived as an abysmal failure. And Chief Tony Anenih had been cast, in the media, in the mould of enforcer and the yeoman who did the president's odd jobs to the detriment of his schedule. The roads being constructed, thus, provide a propitious opportunity for the embattled regime and Chief Anenih to underscore the fact that they are working hard at improving the lot of Nigerians and that the minister's turf is not

political jobbery only after all.

To whatever public relations end they want to deploy these ceremonies, they hardly excuse the sufferings into which commuters are plunged on account of these adle-brained flagging-off of roads and the millions of naira expended in these needless ceremonies. Consider: in the instance of the Abuja-Keffi road, the flagging off ceremony took place right at the dreaded and convoluted slope between the Sani Abacha Barracks and Nyanya. And for good measure, the ceremony started at 2.00 p.m. - two hours before rush hour. In fact, even as at rush hour, the ceremony was just approaching its climax. The consequences were that the worst traffic hold-up in the history of the road took place on that fateful day to the anguish of commuters even as our VIPs were busy regaling their captive audience with tales of their "accomplishments". Most vehicles which could not endure the hold-up overheated and broke down; some commuters walked from Sani Abacha Barracks to Mararaba, a stretch of ten kilometres; while even those who endured the hold-up reached home in the wee hours of morning. The next day, not less than twenty vehicles, abandoned by their frustrated owners, littered the slope.

The questions to ask in the aftermath of the flagging-off ceremony are: did the government have to flag-off this road to call attention to its efforts? By further inflicting suffering on commuters, has its attempt at public relations not back-fired? If it had to flag this road off at all, why didn't the government do so on a weekend when there would have been less traffic? Is it possible that our leaders possess such a mean and sadistic streak that even to grudgingly fix a road of a mere fifty kilometres, they have to punish the people as they did that day?

The sordid episode of last week recalls for me with nostalgia the efforts of the Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF) - during the regime of the late General Sani Abacha. Contracts for roads were given and the jobs were executed efficiently and unobtrusively and to competent companies - not the garden variety ones we see these days. One would admonish that the present regime borrows a leaf from Abacha. But if Obasanjo were to insist on celebrating each time a road is to be constructed, let it be at the end when the road has been constructed and is being commissioned. At least, at such a time, commuters can find their ways home even as the politicians wax lyrical with their kudos and eulogies.

Nick Dazang was Editor, Abuja Newsday and member, Daily Trust Editorial Board.

LETTER OF THE DAY

National ID card scheme, another probe subdued

The staggering amount of money reportedly sunk in the national identity card project is awesome.

For President Olusegun Obasanjo to suddenly pump more money into the ID Card Scheme without carrying out a thorough investigation into the controversy that greeted the previous failed attempt by Babangida's regime leaves much to be desired.

Currently, the Senate Committee on Public Accounts has been busy prying into the issue through open hearing, but one does not understand why the presidency has decided to distance itself from probing the ID Card scam. Instead, it has left it for the Senate and if one may ask, what has happened to Special Investigation Panel (S.I.P) The amorphous body which government engages in carrying out investigations?

It will be recalled that Mohammed Abacha, son of the late Head of State was reported to have allegedly soiled his hands on some financial transactions during

his father's reign as Head of State. Subsequently, the contraption S.I.P, was mandated by the Presidency to conduct investigations and slam charges on him. If the Obasanjo's government is consistent in its approach, why didn't it allow the matter to be handled by the Senate as it has done with the ID card scam?

Many questions are begging for answers regarding President Obasanjo's interpretation of fairness. From President's antecedent on probe and the intrigues surrounding the National ID Card probe, it may not be wrong to assume that because of Gen. Babangida's involvement, the approach to investigation is now different.

The President's injection of fresh funds into this more or less moribund project is tantamount to reminding us of George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, "All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others."

Engr. Shittu Bello, Coca-Cola Bottling Company, Lagos.

Opinion

Before we amputate again!

By Aisha Umar Yusuf

A recent cover story by *Weekly Trust*, titled: "Sharia governors in Dilemma" was quite revealing. It says a lot about the thinking of our modern *Ulama*, that when they decide to call Sharia governors to task, all they should dwell on is the issue of amputation.

This position of the *Ulama* not only narrows Sharia down to a code of punishments, it also lends weight to the claim by detractors of Islam, that the religion has no human face.

But as Muslims, we know that the criminal justice system is only a tiny portion of the Sharia. Indeed according to Professor Shehu Galadanchi "Ninety percent of the Sharia is outside the criminal justice system". He should know, since he not only studied this as an Islamic scholar, he also lived in a Sharia society, as Nigeria's envoy to Saudi Arabia.

Almighty Allah Himself has described His religion thus: "We revealed the Quran as a healing and a mercy for believers. Chapter 17 verse 82. The Holy Quran is the primary source of Islamic guidance, it forms the basis of the Sharia."

Now it seems amazing in the light of the above, that rather than calling Sharia governors to task over their failure to deliver sharia dividends, our *Ulama* are busy urging them to amputate. Dr. Datti Ahmed put it more explicitly when he said: "Sharia should not be about punishment and crime-prevention, it is about socio-economic upliftment, but it seems government is not doing anything to improve the living standards of the people".

This should have been the line that those *Ulama* take. They

should be asking questions like, "In what way is the Zamfara of today better than the Zamfara of the pre-Sharia days? Are Zamfara hospitals better than consulting clinics? Are all government schools rehabilitated and equipped? Do Zamfara indigenes in higher institutions get better attention with regards to scholarship allowances than before? How are the rural-dwellers faring? Is fertilizer given to farmers as and when due in Zamfara state?"

The choice of Zamfara here is not in any way vindictive, it is simply the longest-existing Sharia state in Nigeria and therefore the best example for measuring Sharia success or failure.

After satisfying themselves as to the answers to these questions, our *Ulama* can then go further to ask how the criminal justice system is being implemented.

This is not to say that thieves and adulterers should be allowed a field day while governors are being chased to deliver Sharia dividends, but this is to say that the governors have more to answer for, than their seeming reluctance to amputate.

Let us all look dispassionately around us, at both Sharia and non-Sharia states, if we are honest enough we will admit that the grinding poverty that is eating deep into the life of the Nigerian masses is everywhere. The official corruption and mismanagement that was characteristic of pre-Sharia days is as visible today as it was then. Sharia governors do not live low-profile lifestyles, even though they seek divine approval for their actions. Their *Umra*, *Haji* and

other foreign trips are even more frequent than during pre-sharia days.

A certain Sharia governor was said to have paid *Haji* fares for 1,000 pilgrims in his state. When confronted by well-meaning indigenes on the desirability of his action, he explained that he took that decision after due consultation with his *Ulama*. So that action was actually the result of a *fatwa* (Islamic ruling) given by them. In a true Sharia system both the governor and his *Ulama* will be taken to a court of law. The governor will be charged with abuse of public funds while his scholars will be charged with wrong interpretation of Islamic law with a view to aid and abet corruption.

So before we amputate again, let us look around and see just what we have put in place to alleviate poverty and uplift living standards.

Before we amputate again, we must ask Their Excellencies just who among them has kept his distance from public coffers and used only his personal wealth to achieve personal goals. Let only the one who is free from this sin cast the first stone (of amputation).

Finally, before we amputate again let us go back in history and take lessons from two amputation-related cases. The first was the only sure case of amputation that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was reported to have decreed. It concerned a noble woman of *Quraish* known as Fatima. Her relations approached Usama bn Zaid, because of the young man's special status in the Prophet's home, and asked him to intervene and get the Prophet

to waive off the punishment. The Holy Prophet was angry at the request and actually scolded Usama for allowing himself to be used in order to interfere with a divine decree. He concluded: "The previous nations were destroyed for visiting on the poor the punishments that they waive for the rich. By God if it were Fatima bint Muhammad, I would still have cut her hand".

The second incident took place during the *caliphate* of Umar bn. Khattab when many cases of stealing were recorded because it was a time of famine. Knowing that those people were forced to steal due to the hardship caused by food shortage the *Caliph* ordered all cases of amputation to be waived till circumstances improve. And that was done.

Sharia governors should remember that all those who unlawfully tamper with public funds are worse than those who steal donkeys and goats. For that reason, they should visit on them a fate worse than amputation of the right arm. Their crime is said to be a betrayal of trust, and though there is no specified punishment for it, the fact that it is prohibited in Islam means that it is punishable under the Sharia. The extent of their damage to the society should be quantified and an equitable punishment be given for it. This is the challenge before our *Ulama*. Islam is a religion of peace, justice and equity. Almighty Allah calls it "a healing and a mercy for believers", we must not give it a bad name by implementing Sharia insincerely.

Aisha Umar Yusuf is with the *Daily Trust Newspapers*, Abuja.

Interesting quotient of probe in Nigeria

By Dr. Asuquo Efanga

Nigeria is a somewhat predictable country and Nigerians themselves are almost very predictable. Nine times out of ten, a stranger who has lived in any part of this country for upwards of four weeks can safely tell you what a Nigerian would do under various circumstances. For example, a major victory of our national football team, no matter at any age level, be it under 17 or over 30, will have Nigerians pouring out of the streets for merriment. The sight of a lorry load of mobile police men, blaring sirens, will definitely set an innocent Nigerian running for cover even when he has not done anything wrong.

A poor Nigerian is a social crusader, but put him in the weakest public office and, lo and behold, a petty bourgeois will emerge. And of course, to most Nigerians, every government is bad, especially if they don't know anybody in it, you know, the "man-no-man" syndrome. In fact, there has been no government in this country, since independence, that has not attracted calls for probe after it has left office.

In fact, the Nigerian system is such that for everything, there is always somebody willing to give and somebody ready to take. It is really not a bad way of life, just that sometimes it could be frustrating for the few honest people and those who are not in a position to take. No society is really clean, but from time to time there is need to sanitize the system or satisfy the borderline people. It is a fact that every developed society in the world is built on the foundations of some corruption or the other- whether it is USA, UK or Japan. Nigeria is not different.

The Nigerian society is such that at every given time, somebody somewhere is trying to undo or outdo another person. Our system simply thrives on sophisticated deceit. The bus conductor and driver are forever trying to cheat passengers by increasing transport fares at the slightest sign of fuel scarcity. Your mechanic is out there trying to reap you off. The NEPA man will make a show of cutting your light because you have not paid your bills, only to return later to reconnect you, for a "small" fee. The Police at the check point are waiting patiently to ask "wetin you carry?" and the bus driver in order to avoid delay is ever willing to extend his left hand out of the window and pass on one "Muri" to the laconic gun-totting MOPOL. The man at the contract office will deliberately hike the quotation of a supply deal so that he will reap the company off and out there, a willing contractor is ready to play ball.

The history of Nigeria is dotted at intermittent intervals with so-called probes which have sadly led us nowhere. For example, when the late Chief M.K.O Abiola wanted to contest the Presidency of the country, there was loud proclamations demanding that he be probed over his activities during his ITT days. Of course, the probe achieved nothing substantial and Chief Abiola went to contest and even achieved more relevance in our national polity. Buhari and Idiagbon huffed and puffed about probes when they took over in 1983, but they ended up on the loosing side of history. Even the late General Murtala Mohammed breathed fire and conflagration over activities of the Gowon regime before him, but he also went the way of such zealous disciples of probe in Nigeria. The late General Sani Abacha tried his best to carry out a stable-cleansing exercise in the early days of his reign, but after setting up the Failed Banks Tribunal, he attempted to set up Failed Contractors tribunal but many saw it as a tool for victimization. Thus, he ran into a brick-wall which effectively put paid to his laudable intentions.

Today, the cry in most quarters has been that General Sani Abacha's regime should be probed and reprobated. Indeed, the interesting quotient in this demand for probe is that not only General Abacha's regime but also his family and close associates.

This position is very interesting for the multifarious implications it presents as a cogent action plan for the President Obasanjo's administration. For one, it will be important to define probe in the Nigerian context. Most Nigerians believe that a probe is necessarily an inquisition, given legal authenticity and designed, primarily to convict the person or persons in question for whatever accusation that has been labeled against the subject. In other words, probe in Nigeria simply operates on the principles of victimization which must necessarily find the accused guilty to assuage collective egotism.

Indeed government has responded very well by instituting some form of probe (albeit secretly). If the truth were told, probes in Nigeria have never yielded any substantial value. The reason for this is simple. For every man you decide to probe, there is a complex intertwining web linking too many others, some of them quite influential, in a complex network of greed, betrayal and exploitation. Again, most Nigerians who call for probe assume an annoying holier-than-thou attitude, which presupposes that they can do no wrong. As it stands in the country today, most Nigerians operate with the purported Eleventh Commandment which states that "Thou shall steal but don't get caught". It is, therefore not strange that Obasanjo's government opted for a secret probe on a dead man because it is all well and safe.

As far as this particular probe exercise is concerned in Nigeria, it is unnecessary, time-wasting, distracting and tantamount to witch-hunting because the truth can never be heard in the face of Abacha's death. Again, one would discover that Abacha did not act alone during the years of his regime. Thus, to single him out and transfer all the blame and purported corruption to him and his family is illogical. President Obasanjo should not be hoodwinked by those who want Nigeria to remain in perpetual quagmire, to institute secret probe panels. And to conduct such investigations on only Abacha, his family and close associates is really despicable. As it stands, the probe issue might end up throwing up more questions than answers particularly on the real intention of the probe especially when findings from such have been disclosed without necessarily allowing us hear from the other side. If indeed government is serious about this probe issue, let it do well by enlarging the scope of the probe beyond a defenceless dead man.

Indeed this secret probe is not what Nigerians need now, except if the probe can be conducted objectively. Otherwise, there are more pressing issues like the provision of fuel to Nigerians, arresting the depreciating naira, resolving crises in oil producing communities and employment for its citizenry to engage government's attention.

It is high time Nigerians learnt what is good for the country. Dr. Asuquo Efanga is of the Dept. of Political Science, ABU-Zaria.

Of messiahs and errand boys

By Asaph Zadok

Reading through Eniola Bello's piece on Orji Uzor Kalu, *Thisday*, Thursday, 15th February, 2001, I am compelled to differ with my good friend, whose depth of analysis and erudition have always confounded me.

Eni B conceded that Orji Kalu's scorecard, going by the trajectory of his march through power as Governor of Abia State, is studded with gold. That the people of Abia have, no doubt, accepted him as leader, does not empower him to presume that he is the re-incarnation of the Great Zik of Africa.

So to Eni B, Orji Kalu is an achiever, a fact that even Obasanjo, his current arch-opponent, has conceded. The quarrel is with his intellectual credentials or moral suitability; his lack of noblesse in diction, which does not vary dialogue from diatribe, his vaunting demagoguery and crooked antecedents. To summarise Eni B, is to conclude, that the messenger, is not as good as his message.

But to draw this conclusion, Eni B, went beyond the confines of tolerable illogicality to posit that the recipient should be spared the harsh and potentially inflammable impact of that message. That the President, must be blindfolded through the scary pitfalls of political or electoral tinkering with our collective destiny, such crude logic, is metaphorically undefinable.

To me Orji Kalu and President Obasanjo have a lot of things in common. Both suffer from a dangerous genre of political schizophrenia, known in Nigerian journalistic parlance as the 'Messiah Syndrome.' Both have defined political constituencies. For Orji Kalu, Abia state. For Obasanjo, the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Both have a penchant for territorial acquisitiveness. In the case of Orji, the Eastern Genghis Khan, the

neighbouring Igbo states of Imo, Ebonyi, Anambra and Enugu. He looked beyond the boundary of Abia and saw the vacuum in Igbo leadership and foisted himself nicely, as the emergent leader of a Biafran rebirth. Obasanjo, another Messiah in his own right, with a larger Nigerian constituency to govern, appears to present an inverted and narrowed scope of a penchant for territorial acquisitiveness. Having been sworn in as president of Nigeria, despite his history as a political exile from Oduduwa Republic, Obasanjo was not content on ruling Nigeria without annexing Oduduwa Republic, that he resigned the presidency of Nigeria and relocated it's headquarters to Lagos. Unlike Orji, and Biafra, in the case of Obasanjo's Oduduwa Republic, there was no vacuum of leadership. There was an active and ordered Afenifere headed by Chief Abraham Adesanya. There was also an organised social club for elitist resource control, known as AD, which Obasanjo is not a member. To ensure equity in the Republic's resource sharing, they have made a resident Nigerian exile, one Ambassador Yusuf Mamman their chairman.

It is here that one easily understands why Obasanjo has to factionalise the Oduduwa social club, run a parallel council of elders, even attempt to invent dissidents among the children of ousted Oduduwa leader, Abraham Adesanya. The Eni B of this world can not see the danger of Obasanjo's quest for the political epilepsy of opposing social clubs, in inducing to mutiny, our salary-starved, emaciated and eagle-eyed armed bandits in the barracks.

Another point of convergence is their manner of speech. While Orji has the crude

candour of an Onitsha market cellular-slinging, motor spare-parts seller, Obasanjo has the grotesque approach of an elevated illiterate military mechanic.

It is here that the difference between Orji Kalu and Obasanjo is pronounced. For Orji, he is an accepted, respected messiah of his constituency - Abia. For Obasanjo, he is a messiah doubted and apparently hated by his constituency, Nigeria. While Orji has put in place enough infrastructure in Abia to confound his critics, including those who question his intellectual credentials, Obasanjo has stopped the development of infrastructures in Nigeria, that it had to take the attacks of one underaged executive truant to wake him from his gigantic slumber to the inherent hazards on the Enugu-Port Harcourt expressway. Incidentally, the road complained of, passes through the sub-regional enclave of the Minister for Works, Chief Tony Anenih, Obasanjo's master-domo.

Like every messiah, Obasanjo and Orji Kalu, both need disciples. For Orji, the market men and women of Alaba, the notorious, half-pious Bakassi Boys, and the large chunk of Igbo floating labour, made up of unemployed youths and contract-speculators spoiling for action.

For Obasanjo, he has his harvest of discredited Abacha politicians, notably Jerry Gana, Tony Anenih, Barnabas Gemade, Solomon Ewuga, Ojo Maduekwe, and, the latest addition, the strange member of the amalgam, reputed for not sparing the 'human ecology' of her geopolitical proximity, from the 'voracious appetite of her gastronomic indiscipline' (to borrow form Prof. Jubril Aminu). I am here referring to the errand girl, Kema Chikwe

and her latest victim, Rochas Okorocho.

Kema Chikwe, an Igbo Minister for Aviation, does not know why her own brother, Rochas Okorocho was, sacked by Obasanjo. Why he was hurriedly replaced?

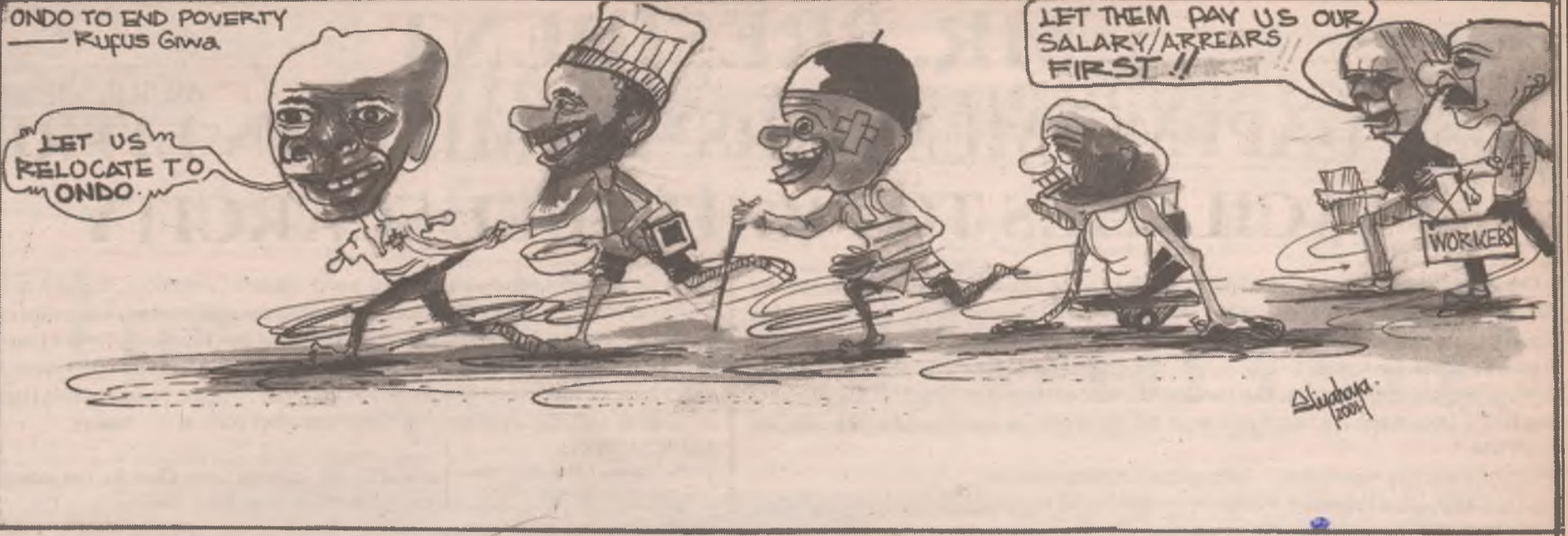
She has not cared to find out, why a reputed, internationally-known, (by Judeo-Igbo standards) broadminded and cosmopolitan Igbo-man, is being replaced with a provincial 'village squatter'. She would not see, or she's willing to overlook, the expressed rancour or insult of the collective Igbo intelligence. She has in good company Chief Ojo Maduekwe - modern Chakha the Zulu, who murdered his mother to demonstrate his royal power, and decreed that anyone that did not mourn her, be put to death!

In the vortex of the current verbal war raging with every prospect of turning internecine, we must concede that Orji's heroism is a product of Obasanjo's misrule in a democratic setting where IBB campaigners are locked and Obasanjo campaigners applauded; where the villages of Odi could be demolished and Ganiyu Adam's house in Mushin could not even be trespassed upon where for everyone Northerner or Easterner sacked, there are two Yorubamen to replace him, Nigeria will soon blossom with executive truants. As long as innocent people are humiliated without remedies and there's an impartial distribution of insanity in the ministerial cadre, while the president dozes on the wall like Humpty-dumpty, only God can spare us the impending great fall.

Nigerians can do without Messiahs and errand boys, what it can not do without are PRAGMATISTS!

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YOUR LETTERS

The Nigerian police and the anti-corruption crusade

What is actually wrong with our Police is not lack of funding. It is neither insufficient training nor numerical weakness. Since the demise of the first republic, the police have turned out to be the most corrupt security outfit in our nation. Honestly speaking, the decay stinks to the high heavens. It is a common knowledge that armed robbers cultists and 419ners have taken over our societies. They are having a field day. Obasanjo, for this reason, needs to be serious about the situation of this country.

The President should know that more than half of the Policemen are criminals. Take the Iyamu case and Anini saga.

Take ACP Hamzas case of 1995 and his subsequent execution at Kebbi state. Take the latest case of Aminu of Badiko Kaduna. Aminu, an armed robber being trained as a Police at Kaduna Police college! How on earth does Obasanjo expect the Police to fight.

For Obasanjo to succeed, he must give the security of this nation urgent and serious attention. All security outfits; be they Police, SSS, immigration, custom prisons must be well-organized to meet the present-day challenges of crime prevention. The more you recruit and train our innocent youths in the Police system, the more you endanger our hopes and the entire society. This is because

you are entrusting our innocent youths in the hands of vagabonds to be trained as the so-called Policemen. The genetic approach the President and National Assembly need to take is to purge fifty percent or more of the Police force.

Having purified the system, the recruitment and training of new blood into the force can commence. Otherwise, the dream for peace, stability, and transparency by Obasanjo, will remain elusive. All patriotic Nigerians must put hands on deck to help ensure a viable and efficient Police force.

Abba Ali Alkali, 5 Badiko new extension, Kaduna

Devils on rampage?

Three weeks ago, Plateau, its neighbouring states and the National Assembly, wailed for three mournful days. Alas, 23 youthful lives had been choked in all-girls secondary school, Bwaling area of Gindiri. According to a version of the story as to the cause of the incident, the girls were paying homage to their creator for a day well, spent when the devil appeared in human form. A small boy - presumably within the age bracket of the students - appeared from no where to dance to the rhythm of the chorus being raised to God. What a case of Satan intercepting prayers of the faithful! Before these innocent girls could drive the 'Satan' boy, he has infected or cheated them spiritually. The unwanted visitor was pushed out!

But came back to ignite a light to the ceiling which raged down the whole hostel. Trust Nigerian crude security system; iron bars and burglaries stood on the way of freedom for these girls. The barricades no doubt contributed to the early death of these future hopes of our nation.

While devil defeated the now 24 girls and authority of the school, it went on rampage again at Maiduguri, taking the fight straight to the Police Barracks.

According to the "Eye Witness News" programme of NTA on Saturday 10th March, mysterious fires have been burning the properties of the Police men and women. In what sounds like a typical film trick, some of those interviewed by NTA narrated their ordeals these way: once you hear that fire has engulfed a neighbour's apartment and you go out to

console him, before you get back home, your properties will also be up in flames.

These are few instances of satanic encroach on human beings that readily come to mind.

The question now is how do we curtail or control the devil's incursion into the human kingdom? This is definitely a multiple task for any class of religious preachers.

Meanwhile, true prayer to God, the Father Almighty, directly is the key. Distractions at prayer sessions could pave way for Satan since he has super-natural power to read one's mind to know when we are not truly communicating with God. Before you leave your house every morning, pray for protection from the hands of enemies.

James O. Ugwu, Television Kaduna,

Condolence message to governor Mu'azu

Kindly allow me space in your widely read Newspaper, to extend my condolence to our Executive Governor, Bauchi State, Alh. Ahmadu Adamu Mu'azu and entire families of the victims and the people of Bauchi State on the death of ten players of Zabgai Football Club which occurred on Sunday 18th March, 2001, along Abaji-Abuja Road on a motor accident.

May the Almighty Allah

grant them eternal rest Amen, and may Allah forgive them and the families affected the courage to bear the lost.

Special condolence to the family of Coach Arrow, and a friend of mine Ibrahim (Chibil). Finally, I wish to commend the Executive Governor for his effort and concern shown to the victims. I also wish those in the hospital rapid recovery.

Yunusa Alh. Babayo, High Court of Justice, FCT, Abuja.

The spate of controversies arising from the utterances of most professed men of God on the pages of our newspapers remind one of the maxim "the hood does not make the monk." The philosopher would readily submit that many men of God speak not for themselves but out of divine inspiration. But the way these clerics have gone about airing their views on some very sensitive national issues vindicates the Scriptures which admonishes us to be weary of the signs of end times which come with false prophets.

Nigeria as a society is not

Season of controversial prophecies

bereft of such happenstance because what the Scriptures say is gradually being fulfilled, but what is scary is the manner some clerics exploit the salvation-starved flock by churning out controversial statements and prophecies to prove their mettle. It is bemusing to hear prophecies by clerics relating to Obasanjo's ascendancy to the presidency. Apparently, prophecies do come true but there are prophets and there are eggs and there are eggs.

Bishop Obi Okeke's declaration in a recent

interview, he granted *Post Express* newspaper of 28th February, 2001 is a point of reference. In as much as there may be no need to begrudge Bishop Okeke's prophecy concerning Obasanjo, what raises some worry, however, is the part that has to do with his purported prophecy on late Gen. Abacha's death.

From every logical perspective, it is glaring that the General Overseer of God's Pentecostal Mission has forgotten that Nigerians know better than he posited. Providence has made death inevitable due to our mortal nature, thus it is demeaning

for God's anointed to celebrate one's demise, no matter the alleged sins of that person, Gen. Abacha inclusive.

Bishop Okeke should beware of playing to the gallery especially in relation to such issues. With the worsening conditions of living in the present Nigeria, one cannot just decipher why the self acclaimed man of God should shower praises on Obasanjo.

Willima Abioye, 5, Taiwo Soyomi, Opebi-Ikeja

Northern leaders where do we go from here?

The present generation of youths and indeed the future generations of this geographical location will never forgive you, if you continue to lead us without direction.

Before Sardauna left, he had a vision for a brighter future for us. He advocated education and industry as a way forward. This vision was abandoned after his demise.

The state of education has consistently remained abysmal in the North. The government primary and secondary schools in the region have been neglected by successive administrations. Well trained-teachers are lacking, teaching

facilities, and structures are not in place. There is no good educational management. Standards are not set against which performance is expected to be measured and improved upon. Today, the highest educational level of most of our youths is the senior secondary certificate of education. This is because they lack the basic foundation that should prepare them for enrolment into the higher institutions.

Why all these? Are there no resources to manage our educational sector as is supposed to be? We believe and know there are resources, you only fail to manage them or it is because your own children

don't attend government schools? Remember a lot of your kinsmen cannot afford private schools their wards.

Industry? What industries do we have in the North? You have failed to give us an industrial leadership that is capable of generating economic growth and development from which your kinsmen can earn enough to live above the poverty line. Motivational incentives to that effect are also lacking. Youths, who for the consciousness of the development of the North endured the pains of going through the hardship of the present educational system, are facing

unemployment problems. Most parents and youths are losing interest in Western education.

Those of you, who have been in the scheme of affairs for long acquiring wealth and experiences desire to invest your resources in places where your kinsmen cannot benefit there of, where as when ever crises arise your investments become subjects of attack by the enemies of the North. You possess a large share of investment in the private sector and you have held and still hold important offices in the government - ministries and parastatlas. You own shares in the oil sector and businesses abroad. How many of your

kinsmen are employed in all these places?

When power was in your hands you got intoxicated by it and lost control. *Power without control is nothing.* Good leadership entails intelligence, courage and control. Ultimately, it is leadership that gives life to dreams, meaning to vision and action to conceptions.

Self-centredness will not help or save the situation from getting worse. There is no doubt about it, in the hereafter, leaders will not only be questioned on how they lived their lives, but also, how they led their subjects. The responsibility of accounting for

whole resources of the society rests on the shoulders of our leaders. You prayed and strived for the positions you occupy and Almighty God answered. May he also direct your minds towards peity and service for the people.

We are not ungrateful for all that you have done. We have not lost hope in your leadership. We believe you are capable and have all what it takes to turn the North around, in all facets of life. But, we must remind you and wake you up from your slumber. May you reflect.

Dan Azumi Muhammed, Nadelu, P.O. Box 2966 Jos.

MR. PRESIDENT

USE DAPPMA MEMBERS' 210 MILLION LITRES FACILITIES TO FIGHT FUEL SCARCITY

1. Our attention has been drawn to publications in some major dailies which alleged that during the recent meeting of the Adhoc Committee on Petroleum Supply, the Independent Marketers National Executive led by Chief Bestman Anackwe, stated that they have recently acquired a petroleum storage facility capable of taking 10 million litres of petrol per day. The publication went further to state that the IPMAN National President urged his Excellency to stop NNPC from supplying fuel to petroleum storage depots owned by member companies of DAPPMA.

We hereby use this opportunity to inform the President that:

(a) The Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria (IPMAN) National Executive led by Chief Bestman Anackwe misinformed the President and the Adhoc Committee by telling them that IPMAN had acquired a Petroleum Storage Depot in Apapa, Lagos. **The fact is that IPMAN as an Association has no Licenced Petroleum Storage Depot.** The only licensed Petroleum Storage Depots in this country at present other than those of the NNPC and the major marketers are the Depots of member companies of the Depot and Petroleum Products Marketers Association (DAPPMA). Let it be known that member companies of DAPPMA also own petrol stations.

(b) If Chief Bestman Anackwe was referring to the 1/15, Dockyard Road, Apapa factory premises of Lever Brothers Nigeria Plc (LBN) presently in use for the storage of about 2 million litres of vegetable oil and processing of same into margarine, then it is unfortunate that he will want to mix 10 million litres petrol with 2 million litres of vegetable oil in a factory that is still in operation.

(c) The position is that Chief Bestman Anackwe is one of the Promoters of IPMAN Petroleum Marketing Company Limited (IPMCL): a limited liability company which in law is just like any other member company of the Depot and Petroleum Products Marketers Association. IPMCL has entered into an agreement with LBN to acquire its office and factory premises in the sum of 1.42 Billion for the purpose of establishing a petroleum storage depot. This amount was paid on their behalf by Standard Trust Bank Limited.

(d) In order to raise funds to repay Standard Trust Bank Limited the N1.42 Billion plus the huge 'preliminary expenses' of about N200 Million, for a company that is yet to start operations, as well as construct a petroleum storage depot, Standard Trust Bank on behalf of IPMCL has offered 199 Million Shares of N1.00 each at N12 Per Share (totaling N2.388 Billion) by way of a prospectus which Offer opened on the 16th March, 2001 and closes on the 13th April, 2001.

(e) It is instructive to note that it is only after the prospective shareholders of IPMAN Petroleum Marketing Company Limited (IPMCL) have fully subscribed to the Offer, the proceeds of the Offer used to pay Standard Trust Bank its N1.42 Billion, and LBN vacates the premises (by the end of the year in accordance with the agreement), that IPMCL should constitute its Board of Directors. The Board will then appoint a Management Team that can fully take physical possession of the premises and proceed to follow the due process known in the industry to acquire a petroleum storage license.

(2) The due process will require IPMCL to design its petroleum storage depot and obtain approval for same from the Lagos State Town Planning Authority before applying to the Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) for authority to construct (ATC) the proposed petroleum storage depot. Thereafter, the IPMCL will award a contract to construct their storage tanks, pipelines, loading equipment and install fire fighting facilities and other ancillary equipment. It is only on successful completion of the contract followed by a final inspection by the DPR that the Depot will be issued with a petroleum license. IPMAN Petroleum Marketing Company Limited (IPMCL) will then use the DPR license to apply to the NNPC for supply of bulk petroleum products to their depot for distribution to retail outlets.

(3) Whilst we commend the IPMAN National Executive led by Chief Bestman Anackwe for promoting this laudable project, we condemn in its entirety his using the privileged position of attending a meeting with the No. 1 Citizen and seasoned professionals like the Group Managing Director of NNPC, Mr. Jackson Gaius Obaseki to mislead his Excellency, the President and Commander In Chief of the Armed Forces, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, by asking that IPMAN Petroleum Marketing Company Limited (IPMCL) of which he and his colleagues in the National Executive are Directors, be supplied products by the NNPC into their non-existing petroleum storage depot whilst requesting that the existing DPR licensed storage and dispensing facilities of the member companies of DAPPMA which have 210 million litres capacity and can load 400 trucks a day be left to rot on false claims that DAPPMA member companies do not own petrol stations. This is against the principle of free enterprise without which we cannot make economic progress.

(4) i. Let us reiterate that the Depot and Petroleum Products Marketers Association (DAPPMA) member companies do have petrol stations of their own as well as customers with licensed industrial and commercial concerns that consume most of the AGO and all of the LPFO supplied by NNPC and by virtue of their petrol stations, are also members of IPMAN. We are therefore interested in the success of any project that will benefit the member companies of IPMAN.

ii. Depot And Petroleum Products Marketers Association (DAPPMA) as the name implies is made up of companies who have bulk storage facilities and has been formed as a core group of marketers because of the need to protect the level of our investments in bulk storage and dispensing facilities and the peculiar need of such facilities which are different from the needs of the average Independent Marketer that runs petrol stations.

iii. The products being sought for by members of DAPPMA for supply to and distribution from their storage depots are obviously not meant for consumption by the Depots themselves; but for distribution to the outlets of DAPPMA members as well as the outlets of other Independent Marketers, who are presently in a disadvantaged position vis-a-vis the major marketers. It is in the attempt to reverse this trend that DAPPMA in conjunction with the NNPC is planning to identify strategic outlets of responsible and reliable Independent Mar-

eters for supply of petroleum products under equitable conditions. It is indeed ironical that whilst the Federal Government is seeking to attract foreign investments into this country, local investors with over 3,000 skilled workers including 400 Petroleum Tanker Drivers and who have the facilities to pump over 400 trucks of petroleum products into the system daily, will be idle, whilst we have excess of some petroleum products in the Warri and Port Harcourt Refinery Depots; and scarcity of same in Lagos and other parts of the country.

CONCLUSION:

i. The Group Managing Director NNPC, Mr. Jackson Gaius Obaseki, has indicated his wish and plan to visit the Petroleum Storage facilities of member companies of DAPPMA and we hereby request that he does so at his earliest convenience to see for himself what we have on the ground. He can then discuss with us as to how these facilities which are presently operational can be used for the improvement of the supply and distribution of petroleum products. We believe that during his visit, he will also have the opportunity of confirming the state of affairs in the IPMAN Petroleum Marketing Company Limited (IPMCL)'s acquired land at Lever Brothers premises at the Dockyard Road, Apapa.

ii. In putting our facilities into use, it will be necessary that the terms and conditions of supply are equitable which means that we should be given equal or better conditions as the major marketing companies to enable us deliver products to Independent marketers outlets with appropriate margins. We assure you, Mr. President, that once we get the products at the price and the financial and other terms and conditions like the majors, we would deliver the products to retail outlets as will be directed by the NNPC. We believe that Nigerians in general and Independent marketers in particular led by the IPMAN National Executive should be proud of the fact that we have grown from the baby born by General Olusegun Obasanjo (as he then was in 1979) when he established the Independent Marketers Scheme, to now build and own bulk petroleum storage facilities. Let me remind us that these facilities were designed and built by Nigerians and are being operated by Nigerians without any foreign technical assistance whatsoever, and that they compare favourably and in some cases exceed the quality of the major marketers' facilities.

The Department of Petroleum Resources and not the IPMAN National Executive, is the appropriate Government department whose duty is to license petroleum facilities and hence determine what business an organization can do and how. The IPMAN National Executive members as individuals are certainly free under the law to establish and promote their private company IPMCL which is not synonymous with IPMAN. They can however take advantage of our progress by working with us towards ensuring that Independent marketers get increased allocation of petroleum products from the NNPC. This is without prejudice to their interest in IPMCL which will also be supplied products when their facilities are ready.

IPMCL is hereby invited to join DAPPMA and benefit from our capital and experience. To this end, we hereby jointly and severally offer the IPMAN Petroleum Marketing Company Limited (IPMCL) the following:

- Technical assistance in the design and construction of their petroleum storage facilities.
- Technical assistance as operating technical partners.
- As Core Investors to enable them payoff Standard Trust Bank Limited, take possession and put the IPMCL Depot operational within a reasonable time following the vacation of the premises by the end of the year. This will certainly be preferable to the present unconventional method being used to collect subscriptions from IPMAN members at the depots.

In the operations of IPMCL, it will be interesting to know whether products will be distributed according to share holding or according to the supply and distribution requirements of the system. Would the Independent Marketing company in Warri or Port Harcourt that is a major shareholder load products in Lagos to the Refinery towns of Warri and Port Harcourt from where the coastal vessels that supply products to Lagos would have loaded from? We want to seize this opportunity to request that as a core group of marketers whose storage and dispensing facilities exceed those of the majors and hence are of strategic importance in solving the perennial fuel scarcity in the country, we should be represented at the (1) Adhoc Committee on Petroleum Products Supply chaired by the President as well as (2) the Alhaji Gbadamosi led Petroleum Products Regulatory Committee. This will ensure that we contribute constructively to the shaping and execution of policy and prevent the President from being misinformed by other groups in the future.

Finally, we thank your Excellency for this opportunity to state our own side of the case in this manner.

Yours faithfully
MEMBER COMPANIES OF DAPPMA

- ASCONOIL COMPANY LIMITED
- EURAFRIC OIL & COASTAL SERVICES LIMITED
- M.R.S. GROUP
- HONEYWELL OIL & GAS LIMITED
- MARCA INTERNATIONAL LIMITED
- IBP-CHEM
- WABECO
- IBETO PETROCHEMICAL INDUSTRIES LIMITED
- ZENON PETROLEUM & GAS COMPANY LIMITED

S. O. TAIWO
Executive Director

GEORGE I. ENENMOH
Chairman

African Union is the way out (1) -Lamido

Can anything good come out of Gaddafi? That has become the attitude of analysts to the idea of the African Union because the Libyan leader was among its first proponents. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alhaji Sule Lamido, puts this and other issues in perspective in this interview with foreign affairs correspondents in Abuja, recently.



Lamido, addressing the press.

We heard from not quite a direct source about Nigeria's ratification of the Constitutive Act of the African Union. We did not hear that here until some foreign media started speculating that. So by way of confirmation, has there been any formal ratification of the Act by Nigeria?

Let me just answer that straight. Nigeria has signed the treaty. The President did so in September last year during the Millennium Assembly in New York along with South Africa and other countries. At the close of the OAU Mini-Summit in Lome, about 22 or 23 countries had signed while about 32 countries were reported to have ratified and deposited the instrument of their ratification at the Headquarters of the OAU in Addis Ababa. What is now pending as far as Nigeria is concerned is the formal ratification and that can only be done by the National Assembly.

Nigeria approved the formal treaty signature at the meeting of the Federal Executive Council (FEC). I wrote a memo and the FEC approved the signing of treaty and it is now to go to the National Assembly for formal ratification. We are not slow because we don't believe in it (the African Union), we are slow because that is the requirement of our own Constitution. That is the process and there is no other way by which you can make it faster than what has been provided under our own Constitution.

Sir, you had some of the initial reserva-

tion when you spoke in Lome and I am sure some other delegates had the same reservation that the high-speed approach to an African Union may not be very realistic because a number of other preconditions have not been met. Are those reservations like you expressed no longer there?

the African Parliament on which our Parliamentarians have been having a lot of discussions. The last time we met in Sirte, we now agreed that we will have, for the next five years, an arrangement which will make it possible for the existing assemblies to nominate members and they will run the affairs of the Parliament for the next 5 years. Thereafter, it will be reviewed and the membership will then be made to reflect the population of countries because what we have now is a benchmark per country and the Nigerian delegation at the level of Senior Officials, at the level of the Council of

Do we have a time frame?

The Union will come into effect the moment it is ratified by 36 members of the OAU and there is also a period of transition after which the OAU Secretariat will convert. The OAU will gradually and simply lapse and in its place will emerge the new African Union. There will be, among others,

Foreign Ministers and at the level of the Summit led by the President made a very strong argument to the effect that there is no way you can talk about a Parliament which implies representativeness without taking into account the population factor. Nigeria with a population of 125 million people cannot, in all respect, be seen to have the same allocation with another country with say half a million population. It makes no sense, democratically speaking. We made this case in the strongest of terms and it has been agreed that there would be a review by the time the transition period of 5 years is over when the next Par-

liament would be constituted by population, progressive representation, representation reflective of the population. In the mean time, the OAU Secretariat has been charged with facilitating the other African Union institutions.

What are the shortcomings of the OAU that the African Union is coming to redeem?

It is not a question of shortcoming really. It is a question of taking into account the emergent world order and its complexity. It is a reaction to the new world order. During the Cold War, for instance, you can align yourself to a socialist power and you get basically all your needs. Or you proclaim yourself a capitalist regime and your allies are automatic. Look at the case between Benin Republic and Togo. They are wonderful neighbours but each one was preaching a different social order and there was subsequently intense rivalry.

Arising from the realisation that in today's world order, we Africans, are essentially on our own, the leaders had to re-think. We have to look inward, to try to create a stronger, more effective process of continental interaction, something more integrative, merging our economies, markets and capacity. That's the only way out. We have to bring out our potentials so that our partners will be forced to engage us.

The Land issue in Southern Africa is proving testy. Where is the African solidarity for President Mugabe?

Before the Independence of Zimbabwe in 1980, the land issue almost marred the talks. It was only rescued by an agreement between Britain, the

colonialist and Zimbabwe, the colonized that after the independence there shall be made available to Zimbabwe some amount of money from Britain and other international donor agencies so that the land will be re-acquired and re-distributed to black folks in Zimbabwe. Somehow after independence, Britain and Zimbabwe couldn't understand each other anymore especially on the modality for implementation of the pre-independence agreement. And recently, the issue began to generate a lot of interests. At the Euro-African Summit in Cairo, last year, President Obasanjo midwifed a meeting between the British delegation led by the Foreign Secretary, Mr. Robin Cook and the Zimbabwean President, Mr. Mugabe. That marked the opening of discussions and although they didn't agree, it was important they agreed to be talking.

The African position is a clear position that the land issue is a very serious issue in Southern Africa. There is no way the Africans would accept a situation whereby 75 percent of their population control under 20 per cent of the land while a very tiny percentage control 90 percent of the fertile land area. In this respect, African solidarity is 100 per cent behind President Mugabe on the issue. Because there is no way you can fail to identify with this aspiration.

But while in solidarity hundred per cent with President Mugabe, we are also responsible and should be responsible enough to insist that there has to be an acceptable mechanism or procedure to address this issue taking cognisance of transparency, going by laid down rules and regulations and dialogue.

It is important for the British and the donor agencies to understand that it is a very serious situation and they should meet their commitment in terms of contributing the required amount of money. Like you said, the land issue in Southern Africa has the propensity to seep and even define politics in the area. Zimbabwe is obviously a test case but Nigeria's diplomacy now is trying to ensure that this is not understood as a racial issue.

Are we waiting for another Sierra Leone or Liberia before acting in respect of Guinea-Liberia?

Certainly not. Certainly not. We are very worried about this triangular flow of violence in the West Coast. The humanitarian dimension is worrisome. So it has been our worry, especially the potentials for escalating into a full-scale war. There have been meetings at the level of the Heads of State in ECOWAS. President Charles Taylor and Lansana Conte will soon be in Nigeria for a meeting where some arrangements should be worked out to avert escalation. Some measures have been taken. The Chairman of ECOWAS has been involved in some shuttle diplomacy on this issue to ensure that the situation is arrested.

To be continued on Monday, April 9, 2001

Our error:

Printer's devil was at play in our interview with Dr. Kizza Besigye's publicity secretary, Anne Mugisha which we published on April 3, 2001. We made her to say "...after the aborted regime..." and "Museveni is a one-man thunderbolt in the Ministry of Defence" when she actually said "...after the Obote regime..." and "Museveni is a one-man tinders board in the Ministry of Defence" respectively. The mix-up is regretted. -Editor.

"There is no way the Africans would accept a situation whereby 75 percent of their population control under 20 per cent of the land while a very tiny percentage control 90 percent of the fertile land area. In this respect, African solidarity is 100 per cent behind President Mugabe on the issue."

tion when you spoke in Lome and I am sure some other delegates had the same reservation that the high-speed approach to an African Union may not be very realistic because a number of other preconditions have not been met. Are those reservations like you expressed no longer there?

I don't think that there were or are reservations per se. The African Union is the ultimate fulfillment of the dream of Africa and Africans. It was the dream of our founding fathers when the OAU was first established in 1963. So, when

the African Parliament on which our Parliamentarians have been having a lot of discussions. The last time we met in Sirte, we now agreed that we will have, for the next five years, an arrangement which will make it possible for the existing assemblies to nominate members and they will run the affairs of the Parliament for the next 5 years. Thereafter, it will be reviewed and the membership will then be made to reflect the population of countries because what we have now is a benchmark per country and the Nigerian delegation at the level of Senior Officials, at the level of the Council of



Ambassador-designate of the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, Mr. Aliyen Habib Kentawi, (l) presenting his letter of credence to President Obasanjo at the State House, last week. Pix Kennedy Egbonodje

TRUST INTERNATIONAL

AFRICA & THE MIDDLE EAST

Besigye declares self Kampala president

Former presidential candidate, Dr. Col. Kizza Besigye, on Saturday declared that he was "president" of Kampala. He was speaking at 'victory celebrations' held at Nateete grounds, Lubaga Division.

Meanwhile, Al-Hajji

...challenges election results in court

The Supreme Court hearing of a petition challenging the March 23 presidential election results has opened to a packed courtroom.

The front benches were filled with sombre lawyers in dark robes - while the bewigged Supreme Court judges occupied the upper benches.

Onlookers gathered outside the gates, but were not allowed inside.

Journalists had to be cleared by officials - before entering the high court compound - where the hearings are taking place.

Dr Kizza Besigye, who finished second behind President Museveni in the election is seeking to annul the results.

He sat quietly in a neat suit near his supporter, Dr Paul Ssemogerere, who is the head of the Democratic Party.

To win the case his lawyers have to prove not just that there were irregularities and rigging but that these significantly affected the final result.

He is challenging both President Museveni and the Electoral Commission.

A tired-looking Dr Besigye told me he was confident that he would win, adding he had faith in the judiciary.

Tuesday's hearing considered preliminary matters, including whether the electoral commission should be forced to give a copy of the voters roll, to the petitioners.

The hearing proper is expected to begin today.

The case has so far dragged in well over 140 lawyers.

The state owned *New Vision* reported that Dr Besigye's 40 strong legal team will be supplemented by a consultant to former US Vice President Al Gore, who lost the November 2000 Presidential elections.

Professor Richard Pildes will offer legal advice from the United States.

President Museveni's defence meanwhile, which he

Nasser Sebagala, who after the elections announced that the alliance between him and Besigye was over, attended the celebrations.

Sebagala was Besigye's special campaign man.

Besigye said since President Yoweri Museveni some

time said is being put together by 100 lawyers - is supported by two prominent Kenyans.

Six Supreme Court justices will judge a petition which is already more than 2,000 pages long.

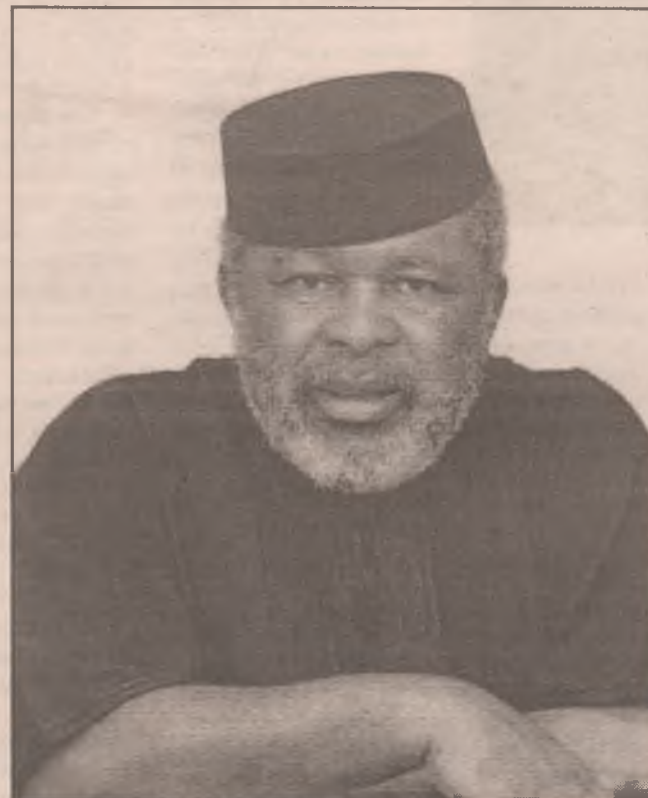
They are expected to reach their judgement within a month.

time back declared that he was representing Mbarara Municipality, he (Besigye) did not expect him to object if he told him he was President of Kampala.

In the just concluded presidential polls, Museveni defeated Besigye in Mbarara Municipality where Besigye's wife, Winnie Byanyima is MP. However, Museveni lost to Besigye in Kampala.

Besigye said he considered "stealing of votes" a small matter because he had other big plans which he would disclose at a later date.

The celebration was organised by Ddungu Matovu, a councillor in the division.



RUF leader, Foday Sankoh marked the 10th anniversary of the Sierra Leonean war in jail recently. He was captured in May, 2000. (AP)

Bus crash:

River current hampers recovery work

Kenyan emergency workers are having difficulty retrieving bodies from Sunday's bus crash from the Sabaki river.

Anxious relatives who have been looking on are getting increasingly frustrated with the slow progress.

The workers have been hampered by strong currents, and have found it difficult to attach cables to the vehicles so that they can be lifted.

Thirteen bodies have been retrieved so far, and dozens more are feared dead, their bodies are trapped by the wreckage in the river.

Survivors have said that the two buses had been racing each other.

A conductor of one of the buses told a BBC reporter in hospital that the buses had been trying to overtake for some 20km before the acci-

dent in a race to get to the coastal town of Malindi first to pick up passengers.

The accident happened on a bridge over the Sabaki river near Malindi, 96 km (60 miles) north of Mombasa early on Sunday evening.

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

The river is home to crocodiles and hippos.

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

Israeli and Palestinian leaders are meeting in Athens for the first high-level talks since Ariel Sharon became Israel's prime minister.

The meeting between Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and the Palestinian Minister for International Co-operation, Nabil Shaath, is being seen as an opportunity to resume peace talks between the two sides.

The talks follow a serious military escalation by both sides in recent days.

Overnight, Israel launched a major bombardment of the Gaza Strip in retaliation for a Palestinian mortar attack on a Jewish settlement in Gaza in which a baby was seriously injured.

The BBC's Jerusalem correspondent, Hilary Andersson, says the Athens talks provide a glimmer of hope amid the conflict.

Mr Sharon is reported to have approved the meeting - a significant step because of his election pledge not to negotiate with the Palestinians while the violence continues.

But our correspondent says the Israelis are likely to want to strictly about how to end the violence, while the

Mid-East talks begin in Athens

Palestinians would prefer more substantial negotiations.

Late on Tuesday night, Israeli helicopter gunships attacked Palestinian security targets in the Gaza Strip, injuring more than 30 people.

And six Palestinians were injured by gunfire while protesting against the bulldozing of Palestinian homes near Bethlehem.

Elsewhere, Israeli tanks shelled Palestinian targets in or near several towns on the West Bank, including Ramallah.

Hospital officials say at least 25 people were wounded in the air strikes near Gaza City, the town of Khan Yunus and a security compound near Rafah.

Offices belonging to bodyguards of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat were hit, as were naval bases and other security buildings.

The attacks came after the Israeli army accused Palestinian militants of firing mortars at a Jewish settlement in southern Gaza, wounding at least two people, including a 10-month-old boy.

A group calling itself Hezbollah-Palestine claimed

responsibility for the mortar attack.

The Hezbollah movement in Lebanon said it had no connection with the Palestinian organisation.

The Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, said Israel had no other choice but to strike because Mr Arafat's Palestinian Authority was failing to prevent anti-Israeli attacks.

Mr Sharon's reputation as a hardliner and his promises to provide security for Israelis were the key factors that won him the election in February.

It was Israel's third air attack on Palestinian targets in a week.

Last Thursday's bombardment in retaliation for a series of Palestinian suicide attacks, was the first major air raid against Palestinian targets since October.

Israel blames the Palestinian Authority for the suicide bombings, even though the militant groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad say they carried out the attacks.

It also blames Mr Arafat personally for releasing a number of militants from Palestinian jails over the past few months.

Zimbabwean troops leave Congo

Zimbabwean troops, who have fought rebels in the Democratic Republic of Congo for almost three years, have begun leaving the country for the first time.

A first group of about 200 soldiers flew out of Mbandaka, in Equateur province, with another 2,000 due to leave from the same area soon.

The repatriation of remaining soldiers from Zimbabwe's battalions will continue over the next few days. Two other contingents are expected to head home in the coming weeks, a mili-

tary spokesman said.

Shortly afterwards Uganda announced that it was also prepared to withdraw its troops.

Six foreign countries have been involved in the conflict since 1998.

Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia joined the fight on Congo's side after the state was attacked by rebels backed by Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi.

The fighting has since killed thousands, with two million people forced from their homes.

The head of the Congolese army, Brigadier-General

Francois Olenga, warned the rebels not to try to take advantage of the pull-out.

He said the government in Kinshasa and its allies had proved they were serious about peace, and the rebels should follow.

Zimbabwe has an estimated 10,000 to 12,000 troops in DR Congo.

The pull-out follows recent withdrawals by troops and rebels from the frontlines, in line with the resurrected Lusaka peace accord, which was signed by belligerents in 1999 but never respected.



Zimbabwean troops pulling out of Congo

TRUST INTERNATIONAL

World Report

US pressures China over spy plane

The United States has stepped up its pressure on China to release the crew of a spy plane without delay and return the aircraft.

However there is no sign that China is ready to meet its demands, with Chi-

"We have allowed the Chinese Government to do the right thing," he said.

"But now it is time for our servicemen and women to return home and it is time for the Chinese Government to return our plane."

Mr Jiang said the United

States "should bear all responsibilities for the collision incident", the Xinhua News Agency said.

But the White House has insisted that it will not apologise.

US military authorities say it was more likely that the faster, lighter Chinese plane brushed against the slower EP-3.

Chinese media, however, pin the blame firmly on Washington, with most major dailies running an article on Wednesday condemning US "hegemonistic" behaviour.

Several papers carried photos of the damaged plane, which they presented as "proof" that it was to blame for the collision.

The White House also disclosed severe damage to the nose cone and two engines of the plane. It dropped several thousand feet after its collision with the Chinese fighter, before the pilots regained control.



Huang Suey-sheng, Taiwan's Defence Ministry spokesman says they monitor the spy plane saga closely but no new development in the Taiwan strait. (AP)

nese President Jiang Zemin calling on Washington to publicly apologise for the collision between the plane and a Chinese jet fighter.

US officials are seeking further meetings with the 24 crew members who were detained when the spy plane was forced to land on the southern Chinese island of Hainan following the collision on Sunday.

But no specific date has yet been set for a meeting, and there are no signs that Beijing is about to free the crew.

And with each passing hour the crew look more and more like hostages.

US President George W Bush warned China on Tuesday not to undermine fruitful and productive bilateral relations by holding onto them.

EU defends Kyoto accord

A European Union delegation has said the EU will press ahead with the Kyoto climate change accord, even if the United States will not.

"We cannot allow one country to kill the process," Sweden's Environment Minister Kjell Larsson told reporters in Washington on Tuesday.

He is in the US as part of an EU effort to persuade the Bush administration to support the Kyoto accord, which is designed to combat climate change by reducing emissions of greenhouse gases.

President George W Bush has signalled his opposition to the 1997 treaty, saying it would harm US economic interests.

Our correspondent in Washington, Jonny Dymond, says the European delegation projected an air of determination rather than anger or despondency in Washington on Tuesday.

He said it would be difficult to ratify the Kyoto treaty without US support.

On Monday the EU delegation was left out in the cold when Bob Smith, head of the Senate's environmental committee, cancelled a planned meeting because it conflicted with the Senate vote on campaign finance reform.

And on Tuesday, the delegation met with relatively low-level officials.

They also met Christine Whitman, the head of the US Environmental Protection Agency. But recent events suggest Ms Whitman is not calling the shots when it comes to Washington's environmental policy.

One EU official said he got the feeling that the US administration did not give a damn about climate change.

The Kyoto treaty would require industrialised countries to cut their greenhouse gas emissions to roughly 5% below 1990 levels by 2012.

Because the US is the world's largest producer of such gases, the Kyoto targets would require extensive action by it. US emissions are now 15% above 1990 levels.

Mr Bush argues that a global-warming programme must encompass developing countries as well as industrialised ones.

The EU delegation said he was wrong to imply that developing countries were not involved in the protocol.

Clinton to visit Gujarat

Former US president Bill Clinton has arrived in Delhi at the start of a week-long private visit to India aimed more at aid than diplomacy.

Mr Clinton spent Tuesday night in the capital before heading for western Gujarat to inspect the aftermath of the devastating earthquake there.

His first trip to India as US president in March last year was hailed as a turning point in Indo-US relations.

This time, however, Mr Clinton is a private guest of the America-India Foundation, set up by influential Indians in the United States to help victims of the quake.

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee will host a dinner for Mr Clinton, but analysts say the Indian government is now focusing more on ties with the new George W. Bush administration.

Specific details of Mr Clinton's itinerary remain a closely guarded secret for security reasons.

It has been disclosed, however, that he will fly to Ahmadabad on Wednesday morning and spend the day in Bhuj, which bore the brunt of the earthquake.



Estrada.

(Reuters)

Prosecutors file charges on Estrada

Philippines prosecutors say eight charges of corruption and economic plunder will be filed on Wednesday against deposed President Joseph Estrada.

The hearing will take place in a special anti-corruption court, which will then decide whether to issue a warrant for his arrest.

Mr Estrada is alleged to have amassed as much as \$300m in bribes and kickbacks during his two and a half years in office.

He faces charges of plunder, graft, misuse of public

funds, perjury, illegal use of an alias, illegal gambling and violation of the law on ethical standards.

Mr Estrada's son, Jinggoy, and Estrada's wife, Luisa Ejercito, and business associates face similar charges.

The announcement came after the Supreme Court stripped Mr Estrada of presidential immunity and rejected his petition to be declared the legal president.

One of the charges facing Mr Estrada - that of economic plunder - carries a possible death sentence, although analysts say it is highly unlikely he would receive that penalty.

Mr Estrada strongly denies any wrongdoing.

Allegations of corruption were one of the major factors behind the popular revolt which led to Mr Estrada's removal from office earlier this year.

He was replaced by his deputy, Gloria Arroyo.

Mr Estrada's family has warned that attempts to prosecute him could create popular unrest.

In its original ruling, the court said Mr Estrada had in effect resigned at the height of the popular uprising against him.

The uprising was provoked by accusations of massive corruption in the Estrada administration.

Pressure grows to extradite Milosevic

UK Foreign Secretary Robin Cook is to visit Belgrade on Wednesday to press for the handover of former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic to the International War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague.

He is expected to make Mr Milosevic's extradition a condition for British help to bring Yugoslavia into Europe.

The visit comes a day after Mr Milosevic lost his appeal to be released from prison pending investigation on charges of corruption and abuse of power.

Mr Milosevic was arrested on Sunday along with several aides on suspicion of siphoning off state customs funds.

Yugoslav President Vojislav Kostunica on Tuesday ruled out any early extradition of Mr Milosevic to The Hague.

"The Hague court is not on my mind at all," he said. "We are not thinking about extradition now."

Mr Kostunica said Belgrade was ready to cooperate with the tribunal, but that Mr Milosevic must an-

swer primarily to his own people.

Mr Cook is due to meet Mr Kostunica to develop what is seen as a new partnership between the two countries.

A Foreign Office spokesman said that Britain was happy to help Yugoslavia's integration into European structures but that Belgrade had "certain obligations".

"One of the things that Robin Cook will be doing is to encourage them to work with the tribunal in The Hague... but we are not going there to seek any sort of confrontation," he said.

The United States agreed Monday to free up to \$50m dollars in loans to Yugoslavia after the country arrested Mr Milosevic.

Nuclear waste train reaches Germany

A train carrying nuclear waste from France to a storage facility in northern Germany has reached the unloading station in Dannenberg. Police say the train had experienced several delays on its last 25 kilometres, as dem-

onstrators occupied the rail tracks in cat-and-mouse encounters with police. Earlier, police cut free the last of five antinuclear activists who had blocked the train by attaching themselves with concrete to the tracks.

Russian journalists resist TV takeover

Journalists at Russia's only nationwide independent television station, NTV, have begun protesting against the takeover by state-owned Russian energy corporation Gazprom.

NTV journalists stood behind the anchor on the main evening news, with the word "protest" written in red over the company's logo.

NTV fell under the control of the state-run Gazprom on Tuesday, provoking fears that media freedom had been dealt a serious blow.

Some of its leading correspondents say they will defy any orders given by the channel's new director-general - Boris Jordan, an American investment banker.

NTV staff read out a dem-
ment on the air, ac-
-sident Vladimir

Putin of waging a campaign to stifle them.

"We have no doubt that Vladimir Putin, as before, knows full well what is going on and is thus responsible for the consequences" the statement said.

Meanwhile, police vans gathered outside the their studio "to maintain public order".

The new director general told the BBC he would defend NTV's editorial independence.

"If pressure is put on me as the director general and an attempt is made to use me to influence editorial policies, I will offer my resignation immediately" he said.

They accuse the Kremlin of masterminding the changes to punish the channel for its regular criticism of President Putin.



NIGERIAN NATIONAL PETROLEUM CORPORATION

NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON IMPROVEMENT OF LOCAL CONTENT AND INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION IN THE UPSTREAM SECTOR OF THE PETROLEUM INDUSTRY.

INTRODUCTION

Nigerian National Petroleum Investment Management Services (NAPIMS), a division of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), is organising a National Workshop on Local Content in the Upstream Sector of the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry.

THEME OF WORKSHOP

Improvement of Local Content and Indigenous Participation in the Upstream Sector of the Oil and Gas Industry.

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES ARE:

- To define, the scope of Local Content, what corporate entity should be classified as an Indigenous Company, and assess the present level of Indigenous Participation.
- To explore opportunities for expanding indigenous participation.
- To examine the role of Financial Institutions in promoting Local Content development and Indigenous Participation.
- To share in the experience of OPEC/non OPEC members in developing Local Content and Indigenous Participation in their home petroleum industry.
- To examine current Fiscal Policy and make proposal for enhancing Local Content Development and Indigenous Participation.
- To propose to Government, strategies for promoting the development of Local Content Development and Indigenous Participation in the Nigerian Oil Industry.

THE WORKSHOP

The Workshop will consist of a lead paper on each of the objectives followed by interactive discussions under a Chairman with a panel of discussants. The workshop is a two-day session slated for (Wednesday and Thursday) 18th and 19th of April 2001.

Issues and decisions emanating from the Workshop will form the basis for developing national policy and guidelines for NAPIMS in maximising local content and Indigenous Participation in the Upstream Sector of the Oil and Gas Industry activities.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The target audience includes relevant Federal Government Agencies (Ministries of Petroleum Resources, Industry, Environment, Finance/CBN, Planning, Internal Affairs, Niger Delta Development Commission, Nigerian Raw Material Research Council, Nigerian Investment Promotion Council, National Assembly (House of Representative and Senate), State Governments in the Oil Producing Areas, Chambers of Commerce, Financial Institutions (Banks and Finance Houses), Joint Venture/PSC Companies, NAIPEC, PETAN, Oil Industry Contractors, Manufacturers Association of Nigerian (MAN), Professional Associations (NAPE, SPE, NMGS, NSE, etc.), Universities/Research Institutes and Embassies (Countries with relevant experience on the issue-Brazil, Venezuela, Indonesia, Norway, Iran, Mexico and Malaysia).

VENUE

Congress Hall, Nicon-Hilton Hotel, Abuja

DATE

Wednesday, 18th and Thursday 19th April, 2001

Programme Of Events

Day One

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| i. Opening Remarks | GED, E&P, NNPC |
| ii. Welcome Address | GMD, NNPC |
| iii. Keynote Address | Presidential Adviser on Petroleum and Energy, Federal Republic of Nigeria. |

- | |
|------------------------------------|
| iv. Vote of Thanks |
| v. 1st Presentation/Discussion |
| vi. Tea Break |
| vii. 2nd Presentation/Discussion |
| viii. Lunch Break |
| ix. 3rd Presentation/Discussion |
| x. Tea Break |
| xi. 4th Presentation/Discussion |
| xii. Closing Remarks/Announcements |
| xiii. Dinner/Entertainment |

Day Two

- | |
|--|
| i. 5th Presentation/Discussion |
| ii. Tea Break |
| iii. 6th Presentation/Discussion |
| iv. Plenary Session |
| v. Closing Remarks and Vote of Thanks
GGM, NAPIMS |
| vi. Lunch |

RESOURCE PERSONS

Speakers are drawn from the public and private sectors locally and internationally.

SPEAKERS

Opening Remarks
Dr. Andrew C. Uzoigwe GED, E&P, NNPC
 Welcome Address
Mr. Jackson Gaius-Obaseki, JP GMD, NNPC
 Keynote Address
Alhaji Dr. Rilwan Lukman Presidential Adviser on Petroleum and Energy, Federal Republic of Nigeria.

1ST PRESENTATION

Mr G. E. Omene
 Managing Director, Niger Delta Development Commission
Topic:
 Definition of the scope of local content and indigenous company.
Discussions - Chairman- Mr. C. O. Oyibo, former GMD, NNPC.
Discussants - Mr. B. Omomokuyo - GED C&I - NNPC, Mr Jim Orife - CEO, Versa-Tech Nigeria Ltd, PETAN and SPE.

2ND PRESENTATION

Engr. A. O. R. Oladele, FNSChE
 Chief Executive Director, JEMMTEK Nigerian Limited.
Topic:
 Opportunities for Indigenous Participation.
Discussions- Chairman Engr. B. A. Soyode, President, B. A. Soyode & Co. Ltd.
Discussants- Alhaji Mansur Ahmed-GED R&P NNPC, NAIPEC, NSE and NAPE.

3RD PRESENTATION

Chief M. A. Olorunfemi
 Chairman/CEO, Makmera Nigeria Limited.
Topic:
 Role of Financial Institutions in promoting Local Content Development and Indigenous Participation
Discussions- Chairman- Dr Pascal Dozie, Chairman/CEO, Diamond Bank
Discussants- Chairman- Mr. O. C. Harry GED-F&A-NNPC, UBA (Executive Director, Corporate Banking), Nigerian Stock Exchange and Hamilton & Hammer Nigeria Limited.

4TH PRESENTATION

Mr. Erik Syrstad,
 Managing Director, Statoil Nigeria Limited
Topic:
 Norwegian experience on Development of Local Content and Indigenous Participation.
Discussions- Chairman Alhaji Dalhatu Bayero Former GMD, NNPC.
Discussants- OPTS, Petronas of Malaysia and Petrobras.

5TH PRESENTATION

President, Manufacturers Association of Nigeria
Topic:
 Fiscal Policies to support Local Content Development and Indigenous Participation.
Discussions- Chairman Mr. F. M. Kupolokun, Special Assistant to the Presidential Adviser on Petroleum and Energy.
Discussants- Engr. A. O. Ogedegbe- GED E&T NNPC, Director of DPR, Ministry of Finance and Nigerian Economic Summit.

6TH PRESENTATION

Dr. M. Ebi-Omatsola
 Managing Director, Consolidated Oil Limited
Topic:
 Strategies for Implementing Local Content Development and Indigenous Participation in the Upstream Sector of Oil and Gas Industry.
Discussions- Chairman Dr. Uduimo Itsuelli, Chairman/CEO, Dubri Oil Nigeria Limited.
Discussants- Petroleum Institute of India (PII), Venezuela National Oil Company (PDVSA) and Dr. A. O. Ayoola MD NPDC.

PLENARY SESSION

Chairman- Chief Aret Adams, Chairman, Multinational Expertise
Discussants- Dr. A. C. Uzoigwe GED E&P NNPC, Engr. A. O. R. Oladele, Engr. B. A. Soyode, Engr. F. M. Kupolokun and all Chairmen of Sessions.

Closing Remarks/Vote of Thanks - GGM, NAPIMS

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 Group General Manager
 National Petroleum Investment
 and Management Services
 Tel: 01-2670696-7

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Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation

-we touch your lives in many positive ways

NNPC TOWERS, Herbert Macaulay Way, Central Business District,
 P. M.B 190 Garki, Abuja, Nigeria. Tel: (09) 2348200-19.

BUSINESS DAY

PEF may regulate petroleum products' prices

There are indications that the Petroleum Equalisation Fund (Management) Board, (PEF), may be assigned the responsibility of regulating and determining the appropriate prices of petroleum products in the country. But this will take effect only after the downstream oil sector has been deregulated.

This will bring to three the responsibilities of the Fund. Its two primary responsibilities are Equalisation and Bridging of Petroleum Products across the country. Given the new mandate, the PEF will also determine the appropriate

By Ahmed Shekarau

pricing of petroleum products and also regulate their supply and distribution.

A dependable source at the Petroleum Resources Ministry confirmed to *Business Day* that "the government has concluded arrangements to mandate an agency to determine appropriate prices of petroleum products and the Petroleum Equalisation Fund may be assigned to do the job."

The source disclosed further that "the PEF would also be allowed to continue performing its responsibilities of equalisation and

bridging of products in order to ensure regular supply of products to all parts of the



Rilwanu Lukman, Presidential Adviser on Petroleum & Energy

country."

Given the mandate, our source added, the PEF would implement the recommendations of the Rasheed Gbadamosi Committee on the review of Petroleum Products Pricing, Supply and Distribution. It will also assess all indices relevant to the pricing of products at different times. In addition, it will also be its mandate to identify macro and micro economic factors and realities of living conditions of the populace to guide appropriate pricing of products. Further more, it will establish linkages with various segments of the society to ensure that its decisions or policies enjoy the support of the broad spectrum of Nigerians.

In a chat with *Business Day* however, the head of PEF's Public Affairs, Mr. Goddy Nnadi said: "the information has not been officially communicated to us and we've not heard anything about that. But we expect the government to mandate us to carry out that responsibility because we've

earlier on made our submission to the Petroleum Products Prices, Supply and Distribution Review Committee, urging the government to allow us handle that."

He disclosed further that the PEF, had in its submission to the Review Committee, urged the government to mandate it to supervise the whole downstream oil sector in view of its primary responsibilities of bridging and equalisation "which bring us close to the stakeholders in the downstream oil sector."

Meanwhile, President Olusegun Obasanjo has announced that the Federal Government would not scrap the PEF even after the deregulation of the downstream sector.

Obasanjo said last week in Abuja that the Fund had ensured that oil marketing companies did not concentrate their activities mainly close to the sources of supply, where the costs of distribution are subsidised, thus ensuring even development of the country.

According to the Presi-

dent: "There was a time in this country when the price of petrol in Lagos was different from that of Ilorin and the one of Ilorin was different from that of Kaduna, but the PEF erased all that. We are not going to abolish the PEF. It would still be in place even after the deregulation of the oil industry."

The President's statement has thus put to an end the rising clamour by some stakeholders in the oil industry that the PEF should be scrapped.

It would be recalled that the Federal Government set up a 23-man Petroleum Products Pricing Regulatory Committee on March 8, 2001, to be headed by former Minister of National Planning, Chief Rasheed Gbadamosi.

A two-page statement issued by the office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Chief Ufot Ekaette said the Committee, approved by President Obasanjo would come up with modalities on how to moderate volatility in petroleum products' prices, whilst ensuring reasonable returns to operators.

Ndanusa canvasses SEC's removal from BPE

The Director-General of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Malam Sulayman Ndanusa, said in Abuja that it was wrong to co-opt the Commission into the Technical Committee of Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE).

He told Vice-President Atiku Abubakar when a delegation from SEC visited him that the inclusion of SEC in the Technical Committee would hamper the discharge of its primary function of monitoring activities in securities trading.

Ndanusa explained that membership of BPE also put officials of the Commission in a precarious situation to answer questions from Capital Market Operators.

He said that for the ongoing privatisation programme to be more transparent, SEC should be pulled out of BPE, since it would not perform its functions creditably when it had to protect government interests during the sale of shares of public-quoted companies.

He observed that the first phase of the privatisation programme encountered problems, which led to litigations because the issues of indigenisation of some of the companies were not properly

addressed before shares were sold.

He argued that SEC should be allowed to serve as an adviser to the National Council on Privatisation and part B of the policy making body for the growth of the medium-term and long-term goals and objectives of the



Sulayman Ndanusa, SEC D-G.

Federal Government.

Ndanusa also said that SEC was finding it difficult to enforce laws that regulate activities of the capital market because of "entrenched interests".

He added that the Commission needed government's support that would give it the necessary powers to ensure compliance with regulations of the capital market.

He cited as example, problems being encountered in the Commission's bid to

enforce the Investment and Securities Act and the issue of what to do with unclaimed dividends and pensions funds.

"Entrenched interests had caused a major setback in these areas," he stressed.

Apart from the problems, Ndanusa also made a case for the funding of SEC, saying that since its 20 years of existence, the Commission had not enjoyed Federal Government's funding because of the belief that the agency made enough money to fund its operations.

He explained the reason for the request saying that Nigeria's capital market was the most difficult to raise market funding.

On government's economic programmes, Ndanusa said that SEC could provide medium-term and long-term programmes that would ensure the success of the poverty alleviation programme, so that efforts of economic growth would shift from a bank strategy to a market strategy.

According to him, bank strategy leads to problems of inflation and interest rates, while market strategy, which emphasises venture capital and re-investment of pension funds, erases problems of interest rates.

Chamber establishes infotech sector group

The Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) has established an Information Technology and Telecommunications Trade Group in recognition of the growing importance of the sector in the Nigerian economy.

The Chamber said in a statement made available to newsmen in Lagos, that the new trade group would promote and protect the interests of infotech and telecommunications operators in the economy.

It stated that members of the infotech and telecommunications group would also focus on expanding investment activities in the sector, and contribute to the development of an enabling environment for both investors, clients and consumers in the sector.

Reputable companies such as Siemens, JKK Computers, Multilinks, Disc Engineering, Mobile Systems Ltd and MIS Ltd are already members of the new group, the Chamber said. The statement, signed by

the Public Relations Manager, Mrs. Labake Adebisi, stated that membership was still open to other infotech and telecommunications companies in the country.

The inauguration of the new group has added to the long list of the Chamber's trade groups which include, the industrial trade group, the banking and finance trade group, the maritime and shipping trade group, small and medium scale trade group, and oil and gas sector.



Minister of Communications, Alhaji Mohammed Arzika (right) chatting with Alhaji Tijjani Abdullahi, BPE's Director of Operations, at the opening of a National Workshop on the Draft Telecommunications Bill last Tuesday (3/4/2001) in Abuja. Pix Felix Onigbinde.

Common Customs tariffs for ECOWAS region under way

The gates in all ECOWAS states would soon be open for free trade and uniform Customs tariff regime for the West African Sub-Region will swing to force by end of this year. The Minister of Integration and Cooperation in Africa, Dr. Bimbola Ogunkelu disclosed this while fielding questions from newsmen in Abuja.

The Minister who paid a courtesy visit to his counterpart in the Ministry of Commerce, Engr. Mustafa Bello noted that the uniform Customs duty within the sub-Region is aimed at promoting and encouraging cross-border trade and economic integration in the Sub-region. He stressed that already, ECOWAS member states are enjoying free border movement of persons and goods citing an example of Nigeria and Benin Republic,

By Angest Inyanjegabasi

where he said the two countries operate one Customs checkpoint at Seme Border.

Despite the free border facility, the Minister called on businessmen to always respect the laws and regulations of other countries while



Mustafa Bello, Commerce Minister.

conducting business in such countries.

Bimbola also disclosed that by 2004, the ECOWAS sub-Region will revert to the common currency administration just like it was before independence.

In his remarks, Engr. Mustafa Bello appealed to his counterpart to establish a good relationship with the American Ambassador to Nigeria. This, he said, would help open access to international funds to enable ECOWAS carryout some laudable projects in the region.

Bello stressed further that West African sub-Region need to develop a railway and road networks as well as airways services to step up efforts to boost trade within and outside the sub-Region.

BUSINESS DAY

NICON MD backs management buy out scheme

NICON Managing Director, Prisca Soares has said that she supports the idea of professionals running the Corporation to bid as core investors, instead of outright privatisation of the company.

She said outright privatisation would allow moneybags without professional expertise to hold the largest shares in the Corporation.

Speaking to newsmen at the end of NICON's management conference in Enugu, Soares said her views were justified by the fact that NICON had the largest number of insurance experts who could manage the company profitably.

"With the expertise we have in the organisation, I believe that we are better positioned to take over the other portion of shares that the government wants to sell," the NICON chief executive officer said.

Soares maintained that NICON could live up to the challenges of management buy out, saying "the management of NICON is poised to take it to a greater heights

by ensuring greater efficiency.

"NICON has been a profitable organisation and as long as it maintains profitability, government will not privatise it".

On universal banking, the NICON chief executive urged those in the insurance industry to study the guidelines with a view to applying them strictly.

On concrete strategies for repositioning the Corporation to meet the demands of universal banking and privatisation, the chief executive said "we are keeping most of the strategies cost to our chests because of our competitors".



Adamu Ciroma,
Finance Minister.

Commenting on NICON's monopoly of government business, Soares said it was not true, because it always shared government business with other insurance companies.

The chief executive pointed out that if government did not insure with NICON, it could send a wrong signal to the public.

"If you have an insurance company and you do not patronise it, you are telling the people that you do not have confidence in that company.

The Director of Banking Supervision in the CBN, Mr. O. I. Imala delivered a paper on the guidelines for the practice of universal banking in Nigeria.

He urged insurance operators to embrace the policy with optimism, adding that the policy is being in practice in industrialised countries.

Mrs. L. A. Mesele of NICON, also presented a paper on the effect of universal banking on the insurance industry, urging insurance operators to embrace the policy with dynamism and vision.

NSE All-Share Index closes at 9,211 in 1,717 deals

A total of 15.01 million shares worth N161.38 million were exchange on Tuesday, April 3, 2001 in 1,717 deals on the floor of the Nigerian Stock Exchange with 95 companies participating, according to information from its Abuja Trading Floor.

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

Price Movement:

The Nigerian Stock Exchange All-Shares Index closed at 9,211, an increase of 0.26%. The Index opened at 9,186.70. While the market capitalisation closed at N544.57 billion, an increase of 0.26%, it opened at N543.13 billion.

The trading took a new turn on the floor with the bears in the lead, a total of 25 companies losing and 20 gaining in their share prices.

Gains were recorded in the Banking, Food/Beverage & Tobacco, Chemicals & Paints, Real Estate, Breweries, Insurance, Petroleum marketing, Conglomerates and the Construction sub sectors.

Union Bank of Nigeria Plc led the price gainers, as it appreciated by 150 kobo to close the day at N34.50 per share, followed by United Bank for Africa Plc, which appreciated by 64 kobo to close at N13.45 per share.

Other price gainers include NNFM (60 kobo); DN Meyer (44 kobo); GTB (25 kobo); First Bank (24 kobo); Seven Up (23 kobo); UTB (21 kobo); NBC (20 kobo); Guinness (10 kobo); Liberty (9 kobo); Flour Mills and LASACO (3 kobo apiece) and eternaol and UTC (2 kobo apiece).

Losses were recorded in the Construction, Petroleum Marketing, Conglomerates, Agriculture, Packaging, Food/Beverages & Tobacco, Industrial/Domestic Products, Automobile and tyre, Health Care, Textile, Printing & Publishing, Banking, Engineering Technology, Computer & Office Equipment, Insurance, and the Foot Ware sub sectors.

WAPCO Plc led the price losers, crashing by 102 kobo to close at N20.00 per share, followed closely by Texaco and Agip, which both lost 100 kobo, to close at N67.00 and N23.50 respectively per share.

Other price losers include PZ (57 kobo); Okomuol (50 kobo); Delta Glass (44 kobo); Cadbury (30 kobo);

IGL (22 kobo); Vitafoam (21 kobo); Dunlop (19 kobo) and May & Baker (17 kobo).

Nigerian Stock Dealings (NSE)

Gainers/Losers as at 03/04/2001

Gainers

COMPANY	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE
UBN	33.10	34.50	1.50
UBA	12.90	13.54	0.64
NNFM	12.18	12.76	0.60
DNMEYER	8.92	9.36	0.44
GUARANTY	5.17	5.42	0.25
FIRSTBANK	27.99	28.23	0.24
7UP	4.70	4.93	0.23
UTB	4.35	4.56	0.21
NBC	17.20	17.40	0.20
BERGER	2.91	3.05	0.14
UAC-PROP	2.22	2.33	0.11
GUINNESS	34.00	34.10	0.10
LIBERTY	1.87	1.96	0.09
FOURMILL	11.82	11.85	0.03
LASACO	0.78	0.82	0.03
ETERNAOIL	1.00	1.02	0.02
UTC	0.86	0.90	0.02
WEMABAK	2.04	2.05	0.01
JBERGER	50.66	50.67	0.01
NEM	0.51	0.52	0.01

Losers

COMPANY	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE
WAPCO	21.02	20.00	1.02
TEXACO	68.00	67.00	1.00
AGIP	24.50	23.50	1.00
PZ	12.50	11.93	0.57
OKOMUOIL	12.00	1.50	0.50
DELGLAS	8.84	8.40	0.44
CADBURY	29.80	29.50	0.30
IGL	5.42	5.20	0.22
VITAFAM	4.20	3.99	0.21
DUNLOP	3.80	3.61	0.19
MAY&BAKER	3.52	3.35	0.17
UNTL	3.41	3.25	0.16
UPL	3.95	3.80	0.15
JOHNHOLT	1.74	1.66	0.08
AVONCROWN	1.51	1.44	0.07
SAVANNA	1.26	1.20	0.06
CHARTERED	4.46	4.40	0.06
MANNYBANK	1.95	1.90	0.05
ABPLAST	1.12	1.07	0.05
ECOBANK	1.14	1.10	0.04
NEWICABLE	2.33	2.30	0.03
TRIPLEG	1.41	1.38	0.03
UNIC	2.20	2.18	0.02
BATA	0.52	0.50	0.02
POLYPROD	0.51	0.50	0.01

Summary of Transactions

	OPENING	CLOSING	%AGE CHANGE
MKT. CAP	543,133,487,691.06	544,572,683,051.11	0.26
INDEX	9,186.70	9,211.04	0.26

DEALS	VOLUME	VALUE	No. OF COMPANIES
1,717	15,010,749	161,379,448.84	95

Source: NSE, Abuja Area Office.

BUSINESS DAY

D-8 to execute 56 projects in member-states

The organisation for cooperation among 8 developing countries, otherwise known as D-8 has identified 56 projects, which member countries have agreed to cooperate and execute.

The project areas include, trade, industry, telecommunications and information, science and technology, human resources development, agriculture, energy and health.

Science and Technology minister, Professor Turner Isoun, who disclosed this at a meeting of the group in Abuja said an ad-hoc working groups of experts have

By Osborne Adi Jnr.

also been established for each of the identified project among member states to work out areas of implementation.

While Nigeria has been assigned the chairmanship of the group on energy, Bangladesh, Egypt and Indonesia are in charge of rural development, trade and human resources development respectively.

Iran has been charged with the responsibility of coordinating telecommunication and information, science and technology; Malaysia will oversee finance and

banking as well as privatisation. Pakistan is to coordinate agriculture and Tur-



President Olusegun Obasanjo. Key is to handle industry and health. Isoun enjoined members

to take into consideration certain salient points before embarking on selection of



Mrs. Pauline Tallen Minister of State, science & Technology projects. These include, the feasibility, practicability,

pragmatism and capability of producing concrete results within a reasonable time frame and those that are beneficial to the common interest of D-8 countries.

Others are projects that could enhance economic cooperation and complimentary as well as having potentials to contribute to poverty alleviation.

Meanwhile, work on seven priority projects has reached advanced stages of completion. These are the establishment of international marketing and trading company being handled by Egypt, poverty alleviation by Indonesia formation of in-

dustrial and technology data bank by Iran and formation of insurance for D-8 companies by Malaysia.

The minister also identified some of the projects to include cooperation for the development of inland and coastal agriculture by Pakistan, the design, development, production and marketing of agricultural aircraft being chaired by Turkey and a rural development programme also being drawn up by Bangladesh.

However, he expressed dissatisfaction that Nigeria has the only outstanding priority, which the Abuja meeting would evolve.

Union Bank retires 39 top managers

As part of its re-engineering exercise, Union Bank of Nigeria Plc disengaged 39 sen-

From Bose Musari, in Lagos

ior management staffers with effect from Friday,

March 30, 2001.

A statement signed by Kabir Dangogo, Manager Corporate Affairs, said the retirees are four Deputy General Managers, Eight Assistant General Managers, Eleven Principal Managers and sixteen Senior Managers.

He disclosed further that the retired staffers have been given one year upfront payment of their basic salary and all allowances, in addition to gratuity calculated on total emoluments and automatic pension.

Among the retirees were eight top management staff who were promoted to the next grades so as to enhance their benefits. "Also, there medical needs will continue to be borne by the bank in accordance with the existing policy" he added.

Meanwhile, the bank has promoted three assistant general managers to deputy general managers and five principal managers to assistant general managers.

The affected staff, according to Mallam Dongogo, have either put in the maximum 35 years of service or attained 55 years of age.



Joseph Sanusi, CBN Governor.

Union leader warns against casual labour in banks

The Deputy-General Secretary of the National Union of Banks, Insurance and Financial Institutions Employees (NUBIFE), Mr. Mohammed Mamman has warned against slave labour and casualisation of employment in the banking and financial industry.

Mr. Mamman who said this in a chat with *Business Day* in Lagos described the practice as fraudulent and anti-democracy.

He said workers have the right to associate with any union of their choice adding that employers should embrace industrial democracy in the interest of equity, justice and business security.

He berated the banks which are opposed to industrial labour unionism, saying "they are fraudulent, that's

From Bose Musari, in Lagos

why they don't want checks and balances. A management that has intentions to defraud oppose unions," he said.

According to him investors in these banks are not helping the democratic setting of the country as there is job insecurity of workers and therefore anti-human right.

He lamented over the unsafe banking environment obtainable in these banks as workers have no say in their organisation of employment and urged the regulatory agencies such as the Central bank of Nigeria (CBN) to look into the matter.

He also sees sacking of workers in these banks as uncalled for at this time saying banks that do this are

with high fraud degree. As in the case of Union Bank, he said workers were not laid off against their will.

Explaining further, he told *Business Day* that these workers were those that joined the bank long ago and have put in so many year of service most of whom were already due for retirement. Others are those that could no longer meet the challenges of the modern banking system and the bank has done well to compensate them.

Mr. Mamman also disclosed that NUBIFE has declared trade disputes against banks who has forced their workers out of the union so they could pay the minimum wage negotiated for members of the union and stop the mass retrenchment of workers.

Elf boosts manpower development in host communities

TotalfinaElf Nigeria Ltd., gave practical expression to the Federal Government's Poverty Alleviation Campaign



Mr. Georges Buresi, M.D. TotalfinaElf S.A.

at the weekend as 100 trainees graduated under Elf skills Acquisition Scheme.

The Federal College of Education (Technical) coordinators of the scheme, held a special convocation for the graduands, who successfully completed various courses of study under the scheme.

The graduands were trained in building technology, catering, carpentry and joinery, electrical works, welding and fabrication for a duration of nine months.

Speaking at the convocation, which featured the awards of certificates and donation of take-off equipment and grants to the

graduands, the Executive Director, Human Resources and Communication of TotalfinaElf, Mr. Emmanuel Chiekina, said that the programme was introduced last year as part of the group's comprehensive development programme for the host communities.

Chiekina explained that the scheme was aimed at preparing unemployed youths in the host communities for life-long employment by providing them with relevant skills in various trades.

"The objective is to make them responsible, self-employed and, in the long-run, employers of labour," he emphasised.

Earlier in his address, the provost of the college, Prof. Addison Nwokocho, said that in 1992, the College had introduced short-term certificate programme, in addition to its regular programme, to cater for persons who could not enrol in the regular programme of the institution.

Nwokocho added that in our "efforts to contribute our quota to the quest for a peaceful and harmonious relationship between multinationals and their host communities, the college designed a skill-acquisition scheme with well tailored curriculum in skills that are practicable, sustainable and profitable to the host communities.

IPMAN proffers solution to fuel scarcity

The Independent Marketers Association of Nigeria (IPMAN) has warned that unless government flushes out middlemen in the petroleum sector, the quest for adequate fuel supply would be a mirage.

Reacting to a statement by Depot and Petroleum Products Marketing Association (DAPPMA) that the organisation lacks the ability to supply adequate fuel to the nation, the Independent Marketers stressed that the current approved rate of N22 per litre is mostly been abused by middlemen engaged in the distribution of petroleum products.

The IPMAN, in a statement signed by its National President, Chief (Dr.) Bestman Anekwe said it was determined to cooperate with the law enforcement agents and the NNPC to expose

By Suleiman Mohammed

"any erring members who want to thwart these efforts".

It is important to state here that the DAPPMA lacks outlets to achieve government objective on fuel supply," it stated adding that unregistered service stations formed the bulk of middlemen that sale fuel at N40 per litre particularly in Lagos State.

According to the Association, it has acquired storage facility with capacity of 16 million litres and not 2 million as claimed by the DAPPMA, adding that the facilities located at No 1 and No 15 Dockyard Road, Apapa are capable of taking in 10 million litres of fuel with immediate effect.

I said that plans are underway to expand the facilities to accommodate 70

million litres of petroleum, adding that with these on ground, "IPMA is the most strategically positioned to ensure availability of products and at approved price."

The Depot and Petroleum Products Marketing Association (DAPPMA) had recently claimed that it has 210 million litres facilities to fight fuel scarcity in the country.



Jackson Gaius-Obaseki, NNPC GMD.

The Bajju is the majority in Zonkwa, a community in the southern part of Kaduna State. In Zonkwa you do not need to climb the great rock before you come into contact with the rich and diverse culture of the people.

First, you hear of the seven massive trees, which mark the spot where a masquerade used to perform a while ago. It seems that the masquerade was part of the 'voice' of a *Dodo* or 'being' which had benevolent

Zonkwa: What games

By Tadaferua Ujorha

qualities. This spot lies outside Zonkwa within a complex of sprawling farmlands. Our guide mentioned that the *Dodo* once had a hut at the spot within which it lingered

while the masquerade performed to the accompanied of stirring music. Our guide states "They started all these things when we were young. We were not allowed to even come here. The *Dodo* protects the environment. It

is a being and it does not have an evil nature. The masquerade is in honour of the *Dodo*. The activity is just like the worship of the *Dodo*, because in those days there was no religion".

At the site, the trees are massive and yield a stretch of exceedingly green leaves. The great trunks of the mighty trees are also compelling too.

It is easy to imagine that not too long ago a great cultural event must have taken place around the base of these lofty trees.

At Zonkwa, there are a series of big rocks. We gathered that the Bajju first lived up there and later descended to the site where Zonkwa is presently located. Thus up the rock we went, in the wake of retired ASP Madaki Kantiok-Sheyin who was our knowledgeable guide.

After walking for some twenty-five minutes we found ourselves within the shadow of the rocks and we could then form a better impression of it.

Upon the hill top, our guide drew our attention to a number of historical spots. First, he showed us the old fence made up of stones, which the ancestors of the Bajju used to secure their residences, and this was significant in those days when there were a plethora of warlike neighbours, or foes from further afield. The fence spread outwards and formed a fine circle as far as one could see.

There was the spot where the chief of the Bajju used to congregate with his principal men for the annual prayers. Here were two massive, almost royal, bits of rocks, which sat close together.

According to our guide 'the chief called *Gado* used to sit here with his assistant, and the other elders used to sit here. They would pray here just once a year".

We were also shown the grinding spots used by the ancients to grind herbs or other items, which they required as part of their culinary tradition. These are a number of oblong depressions dug into the solid rock, and it seemed as though the grinding spots could still play a similar function today. The rock



On the right, the fence expands into the background



The cluster of trees beneath which the masquerade danced



The draught stone



Was this a man?

eature

Did the ancients play?

could be identified by means of little sign boards. For instance, the stone which is held to be an ancestor could be identified as such. This would prove to be fascinating and exciting information to any tourist, even if it maybe difficult for them to come to terms with the basic fact.

Zonkwa is a rich cultural experience. There are dancing masquerades, ennobled trees, the games the ancients played, rock fences, traditional rainmaking, and vanishing heroes.



summit is also made up of a series of undulations so that you simply keep on climbing up and down, with some trees and other forms of vegetation providing cheer to the environment.

Also we were told of how one of the warriors of long ago was turned into a stone as he strove to escape from some of the enemies of the Bajju, that is when they were up on the hill. We were also shown the particular stone, which stood quite boldly in the evening sunshine.

There was a stone, which had about sixteen depressions on it, and ancestors had used to play draught.

This seems to be a form of 'local draught' as our guide informed us. The little object, was supported by stones to form a balance. To play the game in that environment would have been a beautiful experience, we thought. To the left we could see Zonkwa down in the distance, and to our right, there were trees and the stirring majesty of the setting sun.

We also encountered a tradition of the miraculous up on the rock summit. Apparently, the ancients were rainmakers also. We were told of a hole in the rocky ground within which the ancients had to place a stick as a basis for generating rain. We imagined that they would have uttered a chant or a stirring prayer as a prelude to the manifestation of rain. In the words of retired ASP Kantion "There is a hole in the ground. During that time when there was an absence of rain a stick would be found and pushed into the hole, and before you have descended from this rock, rain would have started to fall.

We were also shown a spot where there were clear indications of the foundation of a building or residence. The rocks formed a clear and suggestive line there.

It was easy to imagine the ancients living upon the rock summit which was naturally very significant in terms of defence purposes and wherever there has been a big rock, people have lived right on top of it or close to it. This is true of Kagoro as well as Zonkwa.

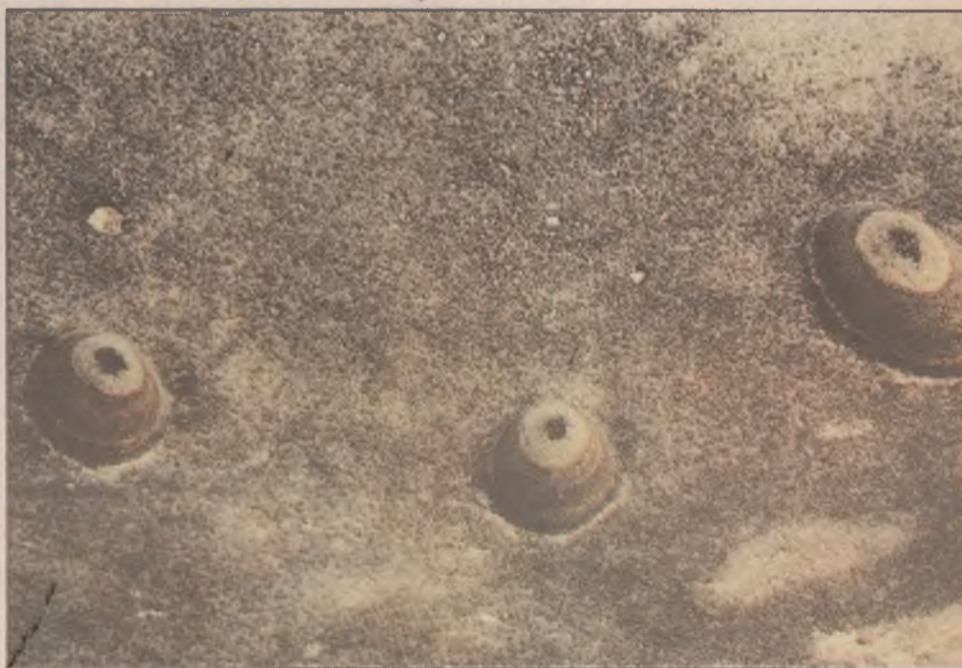
relics at Zonkwa are open to abuse and destruction. This is because the rock summit where all these relics lie is not fenced or demarcated in any fashion, which could be useful for purposes of securing the place from the hands of cultural marauders.

Anybody could just climb the rock summit, and do as he pleases. For instance the rock summit could be fenced, and a token fee charged the visitor.

Also the particular historical spots on the rock



One of the rocks at Zonkwa



Some of the grinding spots on the rock summit



Retired ASP Madaki Kantiok - Sheyin makes a point.

Focus

YAR' ADUA: Footprints of a

On April 7, 2001, distinguished Nigerians will gather in the Federal Capital Abuja to honour one of the most influential and patriotic Nigerians that ever lived, Major General Shehu Musa Yar' Adua. The occasion is the third commemoration programme for an icon who rested in the Lord December 3, 1997 when he paid the supreme price to free Nigeria from the shackles of authoritarian rule and the misery of misgovernance.

Shehu Yar' Adua etched his presence in the political landscape with his novel and visionary approach to politics immediately he formally made his entrance into the power game, sometime in 1987.

He served as the pivot around which other notable Nigerians desirous of purposeful and visionary leadership revolved.

Speculations about a powerful political group revolving around the Katsina-born General gave way to exciting political observation by the close of the 1980s. From the Constituent Assembly of the Babangida Transition Programme onward, Yar' Adua provided the leadership with a political group that has since become the dominant political force in the country.

Such dominance, however, is not the legacy of Shehu Yar' Adua in Nigerian politics. Unlike other such groups before it, the Yar' Adua political machine is a visionary and national political group. As conceived by its mentor and leader, the Yar' Adua group does not glorify in ethnic jingoism or sectional irredentism. It conceives Nigeria as one. Yar' Adua himself articulated this at the declaration of his interest in the presidential election in 1991. His words: "Our vision is for a new Nigeria with a common destiny.

A Nigeria that is neither North, South, West nor East but dedicated to the common good of all" Yar' Adua never believed in riding to power on the crest

of ethnicity
n o r
sectionalism,

By Mustapha Abisoye

which explains the assemblage of a rainbow of political juggernauts from all parts of the country in the Yar' Adua group. He was not an armchair politician, rather, he believed in working in the political field for the achievement of his political goal. Throughout his active political life, Yar' Adua was never tired of telling his associates that he believed in meeting the voters on their turf through politicians who are in direct contact with the people.

His drive for a national political group was anchored on his belief in God and his works. He believed that since God has put Nigerians together in one coun-



Late General Shehu Musa Yar' Adua

try, Nigerians must accept this divine design and work for a common glorious destiny.

He demonstrated this conviction in all his engagements, As a Major in the Nigerian Army, he

fought at the Onitsha front in the Nigerian civil war and even received a gun shot in his limb,

"He demonstrated this conviction in all his engagements, As a Major in the Nigerian Army, he fought at the Onitsha front in the Nigerian civil war and even received a gun shot in his limb, As a businessman, he was in partnership with Nigerians of different ethnic backgrounds including the late Bashorun Moshood Abiola. In politics, he built political bridges that confounded observers of Nigerian politics who had believed that Nigerians could not rise above ethnic and parochial politics."

tently condemned ethnicity and the politics of exclusion which had characterised Nigerian politics for decades. He announced his determination to break the "siege mentality" which had sustained mutual suspicion among Nigeria's ethnic groups and the establishment of a new ideology of oneness.

founded observers of Nigerian politics who had believed that Nigerians could not rise above ethnic and parochial politics. Indeed, General Yar' Adua had consis-

His first bold attempt in this respect was the historic support he and some leading Nigerians of Northern origin gave Chief Obafemi Awolowo in the 1983 presidential election. Yar' Adua believed Awolowo had the best credentials to govern the country and did not allow the ethnic or sectional factor to blur his vision of economic prosperity and social well-being for all Nigerians.

This conviction was concretised with the formation of the Yar' Adua political group which has metamorphosed from the Peoples Front of Nigeria (1990) to become the dominant force in the defunct Social Democratic Party (1990-93) and the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

It is a testimony to the national vision of the political group that the cream of its leadership feature eminent Nigerians of varying ethnic, sectional and religious backgrounds. For instance, the torch bearers of the group today include Vice President Atiku Abubakar, (Adamawa State), Chief Tony Anenih (Edo), Chief Sunday Afolabi (Osun), Dr Chuba Okadigbo (Anambra), Dr Farouk Abdulazeez (Kogi), Alhaji Lawal Kaita (Katsina), Chiefs Yomi Edu and Dapo Sarumi (Lagos), Prof Ango

Abdullahi (Kaduna) to mention a few.

Yar' Adua however, never believed it was enough to have a national representation in governance. His urge for a national party was combined with a con-

Abdullahi (Kaduna) to mention a few.

Yar' Adua however, never believed it was enough to have a national representation in governance. His urge for a national party was combined with a con-

viction about the purpose of governance. He ascribed to the leadership, the task of actualising the dreams of Nigerians. In his words, "it is the leadership that gives life to dreams, meaning to vision and action to conceptions". To him, "it is the responsibility of the leadership to ensure that Nigerians are given opportunities and provided a conducive atmosphere to develop their innate capabilities and uplift the country."

Yar' Adua demonstrated a commitment to national unity and purposeful government, attributes that were in very short supply among his contemporaries. He never believed in violence but in dialogue and proper planning to achieve political goals. And he was never afraid of government to the point of shirking his responsibilities to the public.

In 1994-96 when other politicians danced to the music of tyranny provided by the Abacha government, General Yar' Adua dared the tyrant by sponsoring a motion at the Constitutional Conference that General Abacha should handover power to a democratically elected government by January 1, 1996.

Abacha never forgave him and initiated Yar' Adua's arrest, trial, imprisonment and subsequent death. As William Shakespeare said, "All the world is a stage and all the men and women merely players, they have their exits and entrances" History has recorded Yar' Adua as playing his part well with his legacies in Nigerian politics.

Mustapha Abisoye writes from 14 Abdul-Kareem Shita Street Omole, Lagos.

"Unlike other such groups before it, the Yar' Adua political machine is a visionary and national political group. As conceived by its mentor and leader, the Yar' Adua group does not glorify in ethnic jingoism or sectional irredentism. It conceives Nigeria as one. Yar' Adua himself articulated this at the declaration of his interest in the presidential election in 1991."

NEWS

Nas chides Obasanjo for fighting Abacha in the grave

From Dare Oyewole, in Kaduna.

As the government tidies up its papers towards the prosecution of the late head of state, Gen. Sani Abacha's second son, Abba, for alleged criminal offences, the former Special Duties Minister under Abacha, Alhaji Wada Nas, has chided President Olusegun Obasanjo over the running battle he is waging against the late General.

Speaking at a news conference in Kaduna last Tuesday, he wondered why a government that claimed to be of the people should continue fighting a dead man.

"For over two years now, Obasanjo has been fighting Abacha and he has not succeeded in defeating him even in his grave," he said, adding that the government should stop chasing

shadows.

According to the former minister, the only way the present administration could succeed in defeating the late Abacha is for the government to provide the basic needs of the masses.

Alhaji Wada Nas also expressed the view that the government not out to fight corruption, but to practice selective vendetta.

He argued that if the government was really out to fight corruption it would not fail to take action on the alleged loss of about N8.9 billion through illegal duty exemptions, adding, "had those engaged in the duty waivers been in the bad books, we would have heard stories today."

The former minister also expressed worries over the indifferent attitude of the National Assembly to the

alleged take-over of the country's military by the Pentagon.

Describing the National Assembly's silence on the issue as "unwanted collaboration" between the legislature and the executive, Nas said, "while it is good for the two to work in harmony, they should equally engage in productive agitations."

He called on the National Assembly to take active interest on the matter as no government with a foreign power could be building on Nigeria without the authorisation of the National Assembly.

The national legislature, he said, would be abdicating its responsibilities if it refused to be interested in how the American military were imported through the back door of the constitution.

"Ours, as we all know, is an IMF-American government and so National Assembly members should not fold their arms and watch us drift into an American colony in the name of democratising our military.

"We had good reasons to protest the defence pact in the 60s. The reasons are still very sound," he stated.



Alhaji Wada Nas

Retrenched NEPA staff appeal to FG for gratuities

From Yinka Oladoyinbo, in Ibadan

Retrenched workers of the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) have appealed to the Federal Government and NEPA management to pay them their gratuities and stop playing politics with their lives.

The workers who spoke through their spokesman, Mr. Femi Afolabi, at a press conference in Ibadan, said six months after the retrenchment of 4,000 NEPA officials have not being paid their gratuities.

He further stated that the sacked workers almost went on a rampage before NEPA management could pay them six months' arrears of their, adding that after the payment, they have persistently demanded for their gratuities, which he said were the bulk sum with which they will start a new life.

Afolabi alleged that there were conflicting stories concerning the payment of their gratuities with the Federal Government, that it had released money to the management while the management kept claiming that it was awaiting the disbursement of

the money from the Federal Government.

He further hinted that information at their disposal revealed that the federal government had released a sum of N4.5 billion for the exercise, alleging that the money had been ledged into a particular bank in the country to yield interest for NEPA's executive directors.

"We are now at a loss as to who is actually toiling with the lives of thousands of "re-structured" workers on well as their extended families," he lamented.

He further lamented that since the retrenchment exercise was carried out, 25 of their colleagues had died in mysterious circumstances.

Afolabi, however, revealed that a series of efforts including letters have been made to convince the federal government and NEPA management to pay them their gratuities.

While ruling out any violence to drive home their demands, the spokesman appealed to the Federal Government, "in the interest of poverty alleviation," to respond to their demands urgently.

Rivers state govt. donates 25 buses to schools

From Aisha Momoh, in Port Harcourt

Twenty-five secondary schools in Rivers State have taken delivery of 25 18-seater buses donated by the Rivers State Government.

Presenting the keys of the buses to the principals of the benefiting schools at the government house, in Port Harcourt, Governor, Dr. Peter Odili who told them that the gesture was meant to improve the working condition of teachers in the state.

Governor Odili who promised to furnish the office of principals and that of vice-principals after the current furniture distribution to schools, said that the donation of the buses marked the beginning of a new phase in the fulfillment of government's promises to teachers.

The governor reiterated that his government was committed to restoring the lost glories of the school and urged principals who are yet to benefit to await their turn.

Responding on behalf of the principals, the Rivers State chairman of All Nigerian Conference of Principals of Secondary Schools (ANCOPSS), Mr. Gershon Adoki, thanked the governor for the donation and for his deliberate policies to raise the

status of teachers in the state.

Adoki told the governor that his welfare package for teachers has changed the attitude of teachers towards

their profession.

Meanwhile, the state government has so far renovated 80 schools while work on many others is in progress.



L-R Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alhaji Sule Lamido, his Agriculture counterparts, Alhaji Mohammed Adamu and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Chief Dubem Onyia, during the the Federal Executive Council meeting held at the State House, Abuja... yesterday.

Pix Kennedy Egbonodje.

Aliero identifies cause of low productivity among civil servants

From Kabir Dogon-Daji, in Birnin Kebbi

Lack of adequate and appropriate manpower training and retraining have been identified as factors responsible for the non-performance of civil servants in the Northern states.

Kebbi State Governor, Alhaji Muhammadu Adamu Aliero, made the observation when he received the chairman of the board of the Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCN), Alhaji Abubakar Koko (Garkuwan Gwandu) in his office recently.

He explained that since he assumed office, he had understood that there was need to refresh civil servants in the state to enable them to discharge their responsibilities effectively.

According to him, in

order to ensure prudent management and transparency in the management of public funds, civil servants at all levels need adequate and proper training.

He stressed, that public servants at the local government levels need the training more than their state counterparts. He disclosed that this was because people at the grassroots are yet to see the dividends of democracy after two years, due to lack of judicious utilization of public funds entrusted to local government councils. "Most of them have not done anything," he maintained.

Aliero assured the

ASCN board members of his administration's commitment to the training of civil servants and pledged full patronage of the college.



Gov. Aliero

Katsina state govt. to boost agriculture

From Hassan A. Karofi, in Katsina

Governor Umar Yar'Adua of Katsina State has promised to harness the agricultural potentials with a view to making the agricultural sector economically vibrant so that it would generate income for the state and provide job opportunities for indigenes of the state.

He said the agricultural sector is capable of sustaining the state if properly harnessed, especially in the light of agitations for resource control by southern states.

Governor Yar'Adua therefore urged farmers in the state and all stakeholders in the business of agriculture to genuinely resolve to perform creditably towards the sustainability of the sector. "Only this genuine resolve," he said, "could enable us attain the desired height needed to develop our state."

Governor Yar'Adua disclosed that his government had commissioned an agricultural consultant in conjunction with the Institute of Agricultural Research, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria to conduct research on cotton, cereals and other agricultural produce in the state with a view to maximising their production.

Governor Yar'Adua further revealed that his government had concluded plans to



Gov. Yar'Adua rehabilitate all farm centres in the state, after which such centres will be handed over to agricultural associations formed by the various communities for proper utilisation.

"We have decided to achieve this noble goal but whatsoever efforts we put, our success rests with your resolve to achieve same," he said.

Earlier, the chairman of the board of Katsina State Farmers Supply Company, Ambassador Ibrahim Bindawa, reiterated the commitment of his board to ensure the success of government's efforts towards agricultural growth.



Gov. Odili

NEWS

Senior staff threaten strike at FCE, Oye

Academic activities may soon be paralysed at the Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo, Oyo State, as the Senior Staff Union of Colleges of Education (SSUCOE), Oyo Branch, has threatened to proceed on industrial action to press home its 10-point demands.

According to a 12-page bulletin of the union entitled, 'Why SSUCOE FCE (Sp), Oyo, May Go on an Indefinite Strike' and made available to the press on Tuesday, the union stated that a 21-day ultimatum had been issued to the management of the institution with effect from Friday 23 March, 2001.

The Chairman of the union, Mr. Makanjuola Ologunde, while speaking with newsmen, further clarified that the demands of the union included the payment of the 35% approved allowances for senior, non-teaching staff which have amounted to almost N16 million due to management's delay.

Highlighting further on the demands of SSUCOE, Mr. Ologunde, said that they

From Yinka ... In Ibadan

included: the upgrading of appointments of senior, non-teaching staff, discriminatory treatment against the senior



Prof. Aborisade

non-teaching staff, attendance of conferences among other things.

The union said that responses by the college authorities on the matters have been discouraging as the issues had been a recurring decimal in discussions with management.

Ologunde also alleged that staff of the school have

been paying taxes to the state government without being issued a tax-clearance certificates.

"Many staff have been to the tax office to obtain tax clearance certificates and have met brick walls occasioned by inappropriate records of their taxes at the tax office," the union leader added.

Meanwhile, academic activities were again, last Tuesday, paralysed for the second consecutive day at the University of Ibadan due to the on-going strike embarked upon by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU).

A visit to the institution by *Daily Trust* showed that lecture rooms were deserted and students were seen at various spots discussing the strike and its effect on their studies.

Daily Trust further learnt that some department that held lectures on Monday had fully joined the industrial action, thereby halting all academic activities in the campus.

Attempts by *Daily Trust* to speak with the chairman of ASUU, U.I. Branch, were abortive as he was said to be out of office.

Keep Mopol from public functions - Rep. tells FG

The chairman, House Committee on Transportation, Labour and Employment, Hon. Ibrahim Lawal Funtua, has called on the Federal Government to henceforth stop the deployment of Mobile policemen to public functions in order to check the brutalisation of ordinary Nigerians by the law-enforcement agents.

Speaking to *Daily Trust* in Kaduna, Funtua said we were not in a military regime and as such it was imperative to do

From Ibrahim Ka-Almasih, in Kaduna

away with all paraphernalia of the military, adding that a bill was being contemplated over the matter.

The lawmaker noted that in a democracy, "the human being is a prince" and advised that members of the force should be deployed to quell riots and to contend with other security problems in the country.

While also suggesting that the deployment of such forces to the president and

governors should be downplayed, the legislator posited that the conventional police should be trained to take over their (mopol) engagements as these are purely civil so as to save the common man from undue harassments.

He said, "the police should know that brutal force is undemocratic as there is no force in democracy, but persuasion and dialogue because force deprives us of our fundamental human rights".

The lawmaker also called for political enlightenment of the populace in order to change their psyche on the current dispensation, so they could help defend democracy while also reaping the dividends.

Hon. Funtua further commended the president for the releasing about 30,000 metric tones of cereals to his constituency (Funtua) to soothe nerves over the rising cost of foodstuffs in the area and the award of contracts for the construction of the Maska and Tumburki dam projects.

He said prior to the president's sympathetic gesture, a 100kg bag of corn was N3,200 and a 50kg bag N1,800, but now the costs were N1,800 and N900 respectively. He hoped the gesture would continue because, besides reducing the market prices, it would also check social tension.

No less than 1,500 people have so far received soft loans under the Edo government micro-credit scheme, the state Commissioner for Arts, Culture and Tourism, Mr. Victor Uwaifo, said yesterday in Abuja.

Speaking during the Edo Day at the on-going state's and local governments' trade and tourism fair (NIGERSTALG). Uwaifo said that N10 million had been given out under the scheme to traders and small-scale investors in the state as a demonstration of the government's resolve to re-vamp the economy.

"Edo is harnessing the exploitation of its raw materials through the medium and small-scale industries," he said.

1,500 people benefits from N10m micro-credit scheme in Edo

NAN reports that Uwaifo, who represented the state governor, explained that a number of projects were also being worked out by the government to harness the state's tourists attractions and monuments.

He called on private investors to come to Edo for business, adding that the state was rich in artifacts, farm produce and other mineral resources.

The chairman of the national organising committee of the fair, Mr. Oliver Ohanweh also said that the establishment of industries in the rural areas would be of immense benefits to the rural populace.

He said that more impor-

tantly, was the fact that ethnic tension, communal unrests, crime and violence,



Gov. Igbiniedion among youths, would reduce if small and medium-scale enterprises were encouraged in the rural areas.

FG wants ministries inputs into midterm review

The federal government has directed all its establishments, as primary agencies in the formulation and implementation of its policies and programmes, to undertake

sectoral reviews of their operations.

The Secretary to the Government, Chief Ufot Ekaete, stated in a press release issued in Abuja yesterday, that the inputs would be incorporated into a mid-term review of the Obasanjo administration, which clocks two years on May 29.

"The administration's four-year tenure ends in 2003. The government agencies have up to April 12 to make their submissions", Ekaete stated.

Ekaete stated that the mid-term review offered government a unique opportunity to carry out a comprehensive review of its performance, highlight its achievements and examine the challenges of democratic governance.

The review could also be used to map out strategies for consolidating the gains of the past two years and set the tone of governance for the second half of the tenure of the administration and beyond.

Ekaete stated that the review must embody key achievements within the mandate of the establishments, key initiatives or strategies taken by the establishments which had economic and social impact on the society and an assessment of impact.

"This is particularly applicable to policies, programmes or projects initiated or consolidated by the administration, which are in the process of being implemented. But have no defined time states for completion," he explained.



Ufot Ekaete



President, Plateau State indigenes in United Kingdom Mr. Erickson Fom (right), presenting hospital equipment to Chief Joshua Dariye at the Specialist Hospital, Jos, ... recently.

Jigawa govt. buys FHA houses

The Jigawa State Government has bought 952 housing units worth N100 million from the Federal Housing Authority (FHA), the General Manager of the state housing authority, Alhaji Aminu Abus, has said.

He told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Dutse at the weekend, that the houses were paid for two weeks ago, adding that already, clearing of the site had commenced.

According to him, contract for the completion of the uncompleted houses would be awarded very soon, as bill of quantity had been conducted.

The general manager said that the state government bought the houses with a view

to completing them and allocating them to the people of the state on owner-occupier basis.

Abus said that the Yadi housing estate, Dutse, had been allocated to the tenants on owner-occupier basis, adding that already some tenants had completed payment of the N200,000 per house.

He noted that the Takum housing units, also in Dutse, would be converted to owner-occupier system to help more people own houses.

He appealed to the tenants to settle their rents promptly so that the authority could use such money to renovate other houses.

Council chairman hails PDP's November convention

From Abdullahi Bego, in Damaturu

The chairman of Nangere Local Government Council in Yobe State, Dr. Adamu Garba Talba, has described the planned national convention of the Peoples

Democratic Party (PDP) slated for November, 2001, as a good idea that could enhance unity within the party and improve its national standing.

In a chat with *Daily Trust* in Damaturu, Dr. Adamu

Talba, said the PDP was plagued by internal crisis because many members of the party had misgivings regarding party's ability to evolve into a big and united family.

INSIDE POLITICS

COMMENTARY

PDP's "convention 2000" - An anticlimax

By Reuben Yunana

Last Saturday's convention of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) was an anti-climax of sorts.

Many, who concluded from the recent rumblings in the party that the convention, tagged "Convention 2000" would witness "the mother of all crises" were disappointed.

It was a surprise that instead of breaking up into different factions as a result of contending views and rigid positions on national and party issues, delegates at the convention decided to bury the hatchet, at least temporarily, for the sake of party unity. Before the convention, contending views among party faithfuls were as many as the political heavyweights that came together to form the party which was launched on August 31, 1998.

There were five groups that fused together to form the Peoples Democratic Party. These were: All Nigeria Congress (ANC), the People's Consultative Forum (PCF), Social Progressive Party (SPP), People's Democratic Movement (PDM) and the People's National Forum (PNF).

However, these five groups could be divided into three distinct ideological camps, namely: The N.P.C./N.P.N group, the Progressives and the "Yar'Adua group."

It is believed that the "Yar'Adua group," headed by Vice-President Atiku Abubakar, emerged as the strongest among these groups and forced Obasanjo on the party as its flag bearer in the 1999 Presidential election.

The two other groups felt slighted and have never forgiven those whom they thought sidelined them. President Olusegun Obasanjo did not help matters as he seemed to have sidelined the groups in terms of appointments as well as other government largesse.

Another aggrieved group within the party is the Sunday Awoniyi group which is resent-

ful that its candidate was prevented from clinching the position of party chairman as a result of alleged executive interference in last year's convention which produced the present party executive, headed by Chief Barnabas Gemade.

The face-off between the executive and the legislature, the removal of former Senate President, Dr. Chuba Okadigbo and his replacement with Pius Anyim, as well as alleged attempts to unseat Speaker of the House of Representatives, Alhaji Ghali Umar Na'Abba, contributed immensely in creating more schism within the ruling party. Forces within the party also sought to extend the tenure of the party executive at the federal, states and local governments from two to four years while attempts were also made to extend the tenure of the President and other elected officials. This further divided the party.

The motion to extend the tenure of the party executive was subsequently endorsed by the National Executive Committee of the party and it was now left for the party convention of last Saturday to ratify this decision.

First to oppose this move was a group within the party that called itself "Committee for the support of counter motion."

In an advertorial placed in national dailies last week, the group said it was opposed to attempts by members of the PDP exco to bypass the electoral process and "elongate their tenure beyond the two years stipulated by the party."

"It is in keeping faith with the PDP democratic tradition that we members of the "Com-

mittee for support of counter motion" disagree with the unfolding agenda of some of our party executive members to gleefully elongate their tenure mid-stream beyond the two years stipulated by our revered constitution to four years by bypassing the electoral process," the group said.

The statement described the

new ones by the factions."

Early last week, the PDP caucus in the Senate dissociated itself from attempts to make Gemade and his executive benefit from the proposed extension of tenure.

Speaking after a caucus meeting, Senate PDP leader, Alhaji M.T. Liman, said the Senators supported the extension

exco benefit from the amendment.

In a press statement issued by the group, they noted that the proposal of giving "an automatic extension to the exco was unacceptable to party members.

With this scenario, it was expected that the convention last Saturday would witness fire works or crisis that would destroy the party.

However, it was an anti-climax as the convention turned out to be a reconciliation meeting of sorts.

All the speakers made emphasis on the supremacy of the party, unity, reconciliation and discipline.

To set the pace was President Obasanjo, who described the PDP as a movement whose singular achievement has been the ability to weather a difficult transition from military to civil rule.

His words: "In reality we are no more than a dynamic amalgam of interest-groups, and what has held us together if anything at all is that our party is in power and there is a strong expectation of patronage."

Giving further low marks to the party, the President continued, "our party lacks cohesion, we have no order or tradition to speak of and our rank and file seems devoid of simple decency and respect which are hallmark values of the African society. All good products of traditional African upbringing will show respect for age and authority. Any one amongst us who has no regard for these moral values and qualities casts doubts on his cultural background and upbringing as an African."

He expressed the hope that the constitutional amendments by the convention will go a long

way in strengthening the party executive at the local, state and national levels so that they can ensure discipline.

"Any human organisation which cannot discipline itself deserves no respect, neither can it be called upon to achieve great heights," he said.

Also speaking, party chairman, Barnabas Gemade, said the party has had to contend with issues of reconciliation, disharmonious relationship between the executive and the legislature which are both controlled by the PDP as well as religions and communal clashes in different parts of the country. Noting that crisis is to be expected within an organisation with diverse interests among members, Gemade expressed the hope that the constitutional amendments would put an end to the problems.

In his speech, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Ghali Na'Abba, deplored the lack of unity in the party.

He attributed this to the inability of contending ideologies among party members to fuse into one, saying the PDP was not a true party.

Giving low marks to the party executive and the PDP government, Na'Abba lamented that government had been unable to come out with a clear-cut policy of managing the economy.

He said that "the economy of the country remains unviable, while insecurity is increasing, with issues like resource control, Sharia, and deregulation threatening the country.

While stressing that, the party's problems started from its last convention, the Speaker pointed out that only PDP members in the National Assembly were committed to party interest while other elected officials belonged to different factions.

Governor Victor Atta of Akwa Ibom State, who spoke after Na'Abba, exonerated state governors from the speakers' allegations. The governor who said he had no intention of replying Na'Abba said the achievements of PDP governors were "there for any one who cares to see."

Nobody spoke of Chief Barnabas Gemade and his executive benefiting from the proposed constitutional amendment.

And so, when PDP chairman, Chief Gemade, moved for the adoption of the constitutional amendment for a four year term it was unanimously passed without any reference to the present executive.

The convention was not without its funny sides, members of the women's wing, led by Senator Stella Omu, Jr sephine Anenih and Senator Khairat Gwadabe staged a protest, demanding for the new party identification cards launched at the occasion. The protest yielded immediate result as they were given their own cards to avoid embarrassment.

All the cards brought to the venue belonged to male members of the party like President Olusegun Obasanjo, Vice-President Atiku Abubakar and party chairman, Barnabas Gemade.



Barnabas Gemade

proposal as "reprehensible and dishonourable," stressing that the experiment could be likened to the unsuccessful attempts by former Head of State, General Sani Abacha, to perpetrate himself in power.

The group warned that "any attempt to go against the party constitution would lead to a break up and the formation of

but advised that "those in the executive who are interested to recontest in November this year when their term of office comes to an end.

Also, a splinter group within the party led by its National Secretary, Emmanuel Ibeshi, kicked against the plan to amend article 16 of the party's constitution which would make the present

Senate to hold public hearing on delayed salaries

The Senate yesterday in Abuja cautioned the Federal Government to be wary of recommendations of the IMF and the World Bank in the execution of its fiscal policies.

"It is apparent that their past advice and prescriptions, such as the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), the Second-tier Foreign Exchange Market (SFEM) and the devaluation of the naira, have spelt doom for our national currency and further impoverished our people," the Senate noted.

The upper chamber of the National Assembly which considered the report of its joint committee on the delayed payment of salaries in the federal public service, also sought severe punishment for anyone caught involved in the "ghost worker" syndrome.

The chairman of the committee, Sen. Olabiyi Durojaiye, told his colleagues that government workers, including those in foreign missions, were be-

ing owed their salaries for up to three months in some cases.

He recommended that the Central Bank of Nigeria be directed to investi-

gate reports that some commercial banks were found delaying the crediting of salaries of workers to allow illegal use of the funds.

He also suggested that the office of the Accountant-General of the Federation be made to publish monthly, the dates that cash warrants for payment of salaries were signed.

The Committee, which was granted permission to hold public hearing on the matter, further recommended that pay officers in the nation's armed forces should embark on pay parades for the purpose of checking ghost soldiers.

Senators Mike Ajegbo, Mohammed Alkali, Tunde Ogbeha, Abubakar Na'mu and Haruna Zeego-Aziz, in their contributions to the debate, noted that delay in the payment of workers' salaries was capable of instigating corruption.

The Senators said that salaries of all political appointees should not be paid until the workers were settled.

South-East caucus in the House of Representatives rejects Ofodile's expulsion

Members of the South-East caucus in the House of Representatives, have rejected the purported expulsion of one of their members, Rep. Chudi Ofodile, from the PDP.

Ofodile's expulsion from the party was announced last week by the Anambra State wing of the PDP.

Addressing newsmen in Abuja yesterday in reaction to the purported expulsion, chairman, South-East caucus in the House of Representatives, Mr. Mao Ohabunwa, rejected the expulsion,

stressing that Ofodile was still a member of the House of Representatives.

Ohabunwa, who was flanked by all the members of the caucus, decried the purported expulsion of their colleague, saying that the executive of the party at the state and national levels had not made any allegation against Ofodile.

Ohabunwa, who is also PDP deputy leader in the House of Representatives, said that the caucus had not taken any decision regarding the expulsion of Ofodile.

Last month, Ofodile,

representing Awka North and South constituency, had accused the Anambra State governor, Dr. Chinwoke Mbadinuju, of using some elements in the state vigilante group known as "Bakassi Boys", to settle personal scores.

In a petition he sent to the Inspector-General of Police, the lawmaker urged the police to investigate the activities of the "Bakassi Boys", saying that the group should be disbanded if its members were found to be involved in political activities.



The Debate



DEREGULATION: Is it the answer to fuel crisis?



Queues at one of the filling stations in Abuja

Deregulation is innovative slavery - Zango

Deregulation is a word very new to our ears yet an old word. Those who want to tarnish and destroy the economic livewire of our nation have just brought it to the fore.

Deregulation as an economic policy has never been applied in the civilised countries of Europe and the Americas. Nobody in Europe or the Americas would ever succumb to such I.M.F. and World Bank mechanism. It is a project to bring about innovative slavery to the country which is believed to have a bright economic future. The agents of the I.M.F. and the World Bank are desperate to use every mechanism in their quest to weaken the economies of countries with potentials, which in future could compete economically with the civilised and heavily industrialised nations.

Nigeria is such a country that is endowed with mineral resources such as oil, which is now becoming the world's most desired commodity.

I will like to call upon Nigerians to see with their eyes the problems engulfing other countries in Africa. For example, Angola and Congo DR, are presently in turmoil as a result of internal disputes over who should control their mineral resources. Sierra Leone, with oil and gold, is also at war. So, I believe that the authorities in Nigeria will not allow anything that will disrupt the peace and unity of our dear country. Therefore, the government must think twice before it succumbs to IMF and World Bank conditionalities.

One thing we must bear in mind is that America wants democracy to prevail, but with the common man living in abject poverty. If not, why should the I.M.F.,

in which America has a 45 percent share, insist that subsidy should be removed if we want to remain in the comity of nations? It is wicked and, therefore, unnecessary to insist that de-

regulation is the only alternative.

Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), the only body that could fight the government through industrial action should, first be made to

understand the circumstance that is forcing Obasanjo government to insist on the deregulation of our oil and economic sector.

The I.M.F. and the World Bank must know that

Nigerians are in dire need of proper education, potable water, electricity and good health system rather than deregulation.

Ibrahim Abdu Zango, writes from Kano.

It will nail the coffin on the common

man — Santuraki

Deregulation! Deregulation!! Deregulation!!! This twelve letter word has dominated the pages of newspapers and the electronic media for sometime now.

Deregulation is not the answer to the fuel crisis that has pervaded the country. Instead, the government has to initiate strong measures and strategies which have to be adopted and implemented to end the fuel crisis.

Government has to rehabilitate the refineries that have virtually collapsed

due to the problems of old age and some unmentionable factors. Deregulation would only bring untold hardships upon the people of this country. My opinion is that by deregulating government will be compounding an already tense situation. In fact, what the government needs to do rather than deregulation is to use its legitimate power to ensure that petroleum products are available where they are supposed to be, i.e. in the filling stations and not surface tanks or black markets.

By planning to deregulate the oil sector, the government is taking the vast majority of the people of this country for granted. Every attempt at deregulation will spell doom for the country and the people would surely resist it. What the government needs to do is to know the cause(s) of the fuel crisis and get the solution to the problem which has bedevilled the country.

The whole idea of deregulation, to my understanding, is to stimulate the growth of private sector participation in the industry that is considered as the most strategic the Nigerian economy. Furthermore, deregulation will not make fuel to be available or stem

the scarcity and it is not the most viable solution to the shortages of petroleum products. Government has to curb the menace of the smuggling of petroleum products.

The main reason why we are facing fuel crisis in this country is because there is a cartel that foists suffering on the people of this country by acts of smuggling, black-marketing, and hoarding of the petroleum products to create artificial scarcity. The government has to deal decisively with the marketers, distributors, etc, who perpetrate these acts simply because they have big "ogas" as accomplices.

Government should not be insensitive or indifferent to the needs and aspirations of the people who voted them into power. The government needs to deploy its arsenals against the messy and stinking NNPC and purge the bad ones that usually collaborate with the

cartel to perpetrate acts that cause the shortage of petroleum products in the filling stations. I don't really subscribe to President Obasanjo's statement that "there is a jinx in the form of fuel scarcity," the real issue of fuel scarcity is man-made.

Finally, the whole idea of deregulation is not the panacea to the lingering fuel crisis that has engulfed the country for quite some time. Rather, it is digging the grave of the common man in this country that is blessed with abundant resources which, if properly utilised, could have taken the country to greater heights. Therefore, deregulation is not and will never be the answer to the fuel crisis.

Usman Garba Santuraki, writes from No.75 Tafida Street, Jimeta, Yola, Adamawa State.

Let it have a human face - Ifedi

Critics of the deregulation scheme in the oil industry are not mere cynics. What they are really asking for: is deregulation with a human face. Appropriate groundwork should be done prior to deregulation. The oil sector, especially the depots, should be positively reformed and revamped for improved efficiency and effectiveness. The prevailing corruption and diversion in the oil distribution process should also be eradicated. In addition, lasting repairs should be carried out on the rickety refineries. Deregulation with the current instability, corruption and chaos in the oil industry will only do more harm than good.

Clifford Ifedi writes from Lagos.

Challenge to the National Assembly — Lawal

If the members of the National Assembly should fold their hands and allow the federal government to increase the price of petroleum products despite the devastating consequences of such act on the Nigerian citizens, then, of what use are the members as the peoples' representatives?

Abbas Rabiu Lawal Rijiyar Lemo, writes from Murtala Mohammed Way, Kano.

The Debate

DEREGULATION: Is it the answer to fuel crisis?



Gaius Obaseki



Rilwanu Lukman



Rasheed Gbadamosi



Prof. Jerry Gana



Oshiomhole



President Obasanjo

Obasanjo is insensitive to our yearnings —Tajudeen

The impending hike in the prices of petroleum products is an indication that the Obasanjo government is having problems in fashioning out solutions to the many problems confronting the nation.

It leaves much to be desired that almost two years after Obasanjo came on the saddle, the problem of fuel scarcity has continued to stare Nigerians in the face.

That the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) is at loggerheads with the Federal Government over the purported deregulation of petroleum products is a welcome development. The NLC President, Adams Oshiomhole's assertion that Nigerians were prepared to stake their lives if the government did not soft-pedal on the deregulation policy is very much in order. Because any administration that is not responsive to the yearnings and aspirations of its citizens is synonymous with military totalitarianism.

It is even more annoying that Obasanjo's cronies are ignorantly supporting the deregulation of the prices of petroleum products because they live in affluence while the majority of Nigerians don't know where their next meals will come from.

It is surprising that

Obasanjo cannot give Nigerians a new lease of life. Instead, his stock in trade is to blame his inadequacies and misadministration on the late Gen. Abacha's administration. Whereas, during the Gen. Abacha's tenure, pump price of fuel was N11.00.

The deregulation of petroleum products, which invariably means fuel hike, will adversely affect Nigerians, as it will lead to the escalation of prices of goods and services as well as putting the national psyche in jeopardy. The President should be up and doing to contain the fuel crisis, otherwise it will bring the economic status of the average Nigerian family to nothing.

The present fuel crisis goes to show that Obasanjo is yet to have the interest of the masses at heart. Here is an administration that is proposing to buy an aircraft worth more than N20 billion when Nigerians do not have 'garri' to drink and yet the deregulation of the prices of petroleum products is being contemplated. If I may ask: is this proposal meant to heighten the economic problems of Nigerians?

No matter the amount of image-laundering carried out for Obasanjo government by its Ministry of Information on the review of petroleum

products supply and distribution as published in most newspapers recently, nothing meaningful will be achieved. The government will be

doing Nigerians a world of good if it fashions out an effective and permanent channel for distribution of petroleum products which will

eliminate scarcity. It is only when this is done and results are not achieved that Nigerians will be satisfied that there is indeed no solution to fuel

scarcity. And that will be the time when deregulation will make sense.

Bashir Tajudeen, writes from NTA, Kaduna.

It is not feasible now —Ayozie

According to the Group Managing Director (GMD) of Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Mr Jackson Gaius Obaseki, three refineries in the country for the first time in so many years are functioning simultaneously; with Port Harcourt producing 75 percent of its installed capacity, Warri 60 percent and Kaduna 66 percent.

Speaking at the just concluded Kaduna trade fair, he said that additional 30 percent increase was expected next month when the fluid catalytic cracking (FCC) units in Warri and Port Harcourt would have been completed.

This disclosure by the NNPC boss, no doubt, is heart-warming and equally suggests that there is light at the end of the tunnel in our quest to meet the petroleum products needs of the country.

Going by the report of the Special Committee on "the review of petroleum products supply and distribution," which noted that the four refineries in the country could meet the domestic fuel needs of the country if run at installed capacity without saboteurs and smug-

glers disrupting the distribution, one can say that the end to lingering fuel scarcity is around the corner. All it requires is to sustain the efforts being made by NNPC and at the same time intensify surveillance on our borders and pipelines right of ways to forestall activities of hoodlums.

In view of the fact that one of the factors which made it imperative to consider deregulation as an option was to encourage other marketers to import along with the NNPC, it would be wise to have a rethink now that the NNPC seems to be rising up to the challenge.

As the Special Committee members unanimously noted, any addition to the pump price of fuel will reflect on every sphere of life. In other words, the effect would be spiral. Therefore, those calling for deregulation should be cautious in order not to inflict more hardships on the already traumatized people of this country.

More efforts should be geared towards exploring alternatives to petroleum products; like the coal and gas which could substitute kerosene for domestic cooking. Also, the railways should be rehabilitated

and more engines and coaches put in place to provide an alternative to road transport which hitherto has remained the most popular means of transportation.

In the same vein, the allegation by the labour group in the Special Committee on distribution and supply of petroleum products, that "entrenched forces of mafia importers of fuel, spare parts and chemicals, are responsible for scarcity of the products in the country", should be looked into with a view to forestalling it.

The group's suggestion that the Federal Government through NNPC, should take strategic and innovative steps to tame the problem of intractable products supply and distribution by using the Abidjan refinery in the spirit of ECOWAS co-operation, to refine our crude oil for domestic needs and pay refining fee, should be considered.

Equally, urgent steps should be taken to shore up the value of the naira, as it has been noted that since the advent of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) when the depreciation of the naira began, there has never been stability in petroleum products prices.

The lapses in the NNPC, like low-capacity utilization, gross mismanagement, excessive unit operating cost, bloated

over-heads, intolerable profit losses, low productivity, sabotage and inadequate technological inputs, as identified by the special committee on review of petroleum products supply and distribution, should be addressed with a view to making the organisation more efficient.

The Federal Government had done well by the appointment of a governing board for the NNPC, with Alhaji Rilwanu Lukman as chairman. In that direction, similar boards should be appointed for all refineries to make them self-accounting in order to reduce the workload on NNPC which, hitherto, oversees the affairs of the refineries.

All categories of saboteurs of government's efforts to make the products available, ranging from those who sell them in jerry cans along the roads, smugglers who divert them to neighbouring countries, pipe line vandals and bunkerers amongst others, should all be made to pay dearly for their offences. There should be no sacred cows. All of them have to be exposed.

When all the options suggested would have been exhausted and the situation refuses to abate, then, deregulation may be considered. What the consumers detest is the hush-hush attitude to deregulation as if it is the only solution to the scarcity of the products. Considering the number of times the pump-price has been increased without the scarcity abating; it becomes illogical that further increase would do the magic.

The resolve to stop the perennial fuel scarcity should be all-embracing. The president, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, in his anti-corruption posture, should release all the arsenals at his disposal to fight the cabal of artificial scarcity of petroleum products. When this battle is won, it would have provided enough democracy dividends for the citizens.

Isaac Iheanyi Ayozie, writes from C/o NUJ Press Centre, Abuja.

It is the marginalization of the poor - Mamza

The intended deregulation of the oil sector by the present civilian government is a hopeless strategy apparently motivated by a hopeless political ill-will in order to impose a hopeless situation on the already poor and corrupt system in Nigeria. The action will not only increase the state of frustration in our system, but I see it as a perverse method of further crippling and constricting the already embattled and pestilential state of poverty-stricken Nigerians. Instead of deregulation, government should explore a plausible and viable option of eradicating smuggling activities at our borders and the pursuit of a vigorous turn-around maintenance of our refineries.

While we appreciate past mistakes, we should equally accept success-stories because government is a continuous process and it is the attempt to short-change past policies, no matter how meaningful, to make them nugatory that has hindered progress and prosperity in Nigeria.

In this regard, therefore, the Obasanjo government needs to revisit and adopt the approach of Gen. Buhari and Late General Abacha to enable us handle the smuggling at our borders. The government should also embark on the maintenance of the petrochemical sector of the economy, so as to save us from the monster of the proposed deregulation of the oil sector which will mean increasing the price of fuel. Deregulation is another name for marginalisation of the poor and the poor in Nigeria need not be depressed further, else, they may exceed their elastic limits.

Paul Mamza, wrote in from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.



The Debate



DEREGULATION: Is it the answer to fuel crisis?

Guided deregulation is the answer - Kachallah

With well over two thousand kilometres of pipelines criss-crossing the country and connecting the four oil refineries to the several supply depots, the structures and super-structures of an ideal distribution and supply network of petroleum products are already on ground. We should also not forget Nigeria's position as the sixth largest producer and exporter of oil in the world. Additionally, large hydro-carbon deposits have also been discovered around the Lake Chad Basin in Borno state and in some parts of Bauchi state. The Benue trough is also said to be another zone blessed with such deposits. Surely, Nigeria's overall prospects in the world energy sector are extremely bright.

Currently, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) enjoys sole monopoly of the down-stream oil sector, right from refining, distribution, to supply and marketing, including initiative of fixing prices of the petroleum products. The major and independent oil marketers/companies, as the retailers, sell the products to the public through outlets such as the accredited filling stations, surface tank operators (both legal and illegal), down to the roadside hawkers and the housewives, who sell in gallons and bottles.

Government subsidises the prices of petroleum products by N250bn annually, but only a few sacred cows benefit from this largesse. Neither the system, nor the masses to whom the subsidies are meant enjoy these benefits. Instead, these benefits are being hijacked by a cabal of greedy, corrupt and unpatriotic top bureaucrats (bureau-rats), high-ranking military officers, party big-wigs and financiers, their families, friends, cohorts and hangers-on in collaboration with the major and independent oil marketers. These are the real culprits who are busy sabotaging government's petroleum subsidy for Nigeria. They are the big-timers who connive with

the bad eggs in the security agencies to smuggle fuel across our porous borders and who engage in bunkering on the high seas. The unemployed road-side hawkers and the poor housewives are mere appendages in the black-marketing business who, do so only to survive the hard economic situation in the country.

Persistent fuel crisis in Nigeria is, therefore, the result of the inordinate ambition of the business and the political elites in collaboration with the top bureaucrats (bureau-rats) and high ranking military officers to get rich over-night and perpetuate the *status quo* in a nation already divided into two socio-economic classes of the haves and the have-nots, (thanks to the imposition and adoption of SAP

by IMF/World Bank and successive regimes respectively). Exploitation, aptly described as man's inhumanity to man, cuts across religious, ethnic, tribal or sectional sentiments in Nigeria today.

Consequently, subsidy or no subsidy, it is all the same for the common man. It is a fact that since the 80s, the majority of Nigerians residing outside Abuja and Lagos have been buying petroleum products at an average of 100-300 percent over and above the controlled prices per litre anyway! Subsidy or no subsidy, the prices we have been paying per litre all these years could not be higher or the conditions be worse than at any time before or after! Subsidy or no subsidy, the reality is that fuel has disappeared from the accredited

filling stations and is only available in the black markets at cut-throat prices. The mere announcement of the intention of Government to withdraw subsidy and liberalise the down-stream oil sector should not be a subject of such heated debate

except for the uninitiated. In fact, the news should have been a welcomed relief to the poor masses who constitute over 90 percent of the populace.

In this context, *Guided Deregulation* with some safety valves simply means liberalising

the downstream oil sector of the economy by creating a level playing ground for the participation of competent private investors.

Kachallah Dawi, wrote from Prison Ward, Potiskum, Yobe state.

It is not the answer - Ladan

I participated in one of the NTA's Tuesday Nightline live discussion on deregulation of our oil sector with Frank Olize. Well, to start with, I would like to commend and also quote Fela Kuti in his song *I.T.T* that, "dem go write big English for newspaper dabaru the Africans". They are now using big English with their friends; the IMF and World Bank to further impose unnecessary hardships on the masses of this country.

To deregulate the oil sector is not the answer because we are talking of just 300,000 barrels of crude oil per day for our internal consumption while over 2 million barrels are sold every day through our OPEC quota

and with prices now shooting to the highest level for a period of over one year. This government is the luckiest government ever produced as far as prices of this commodity are concerned. The representative of the Federal Government at the NTA Tuesday Live programme, said that the proceeds derived from deregulation will be used for other social amenities like roads, water, education, etc. We will ask here that since the scraping of the PTF, what has this government been doing with the other proceeds derived from the increase of fuel price from N11.00 to N22.00 per litre? Does it mean

that the job well-done by the PTF in this country is not recognized by this administration?

In the first place, why are our four refineries not working or are working far below capacity after spending large sums of money on them? Take for instance the Kaduna refinery. Even the peasant farmer knows that there has been so many forms of "chuwa chuwa" as regards putting it in good shape because one will think the way a Hausa saying goes "wanda ya daure akuya shi ya san yadda zai kwance ta" and that since Chiyoda is the sole company that constructed the Kaduna refinery, why not call them to even construct another one all together instead of wasting time and resources?

Unfortunately, Chiyoda refused to dance to the tune of the Nigerian music of inflating contract sums. One other important issue for the Federal Government to put into consideration is the use of out-dated vehicle statistics. The general consumption rate or the amount of fuel needed daily have been greatly under-estimated, as such 300,000 barrels per day is not enough to meet our demand, so the system needs more litres pumped into it. The arithmetic is, if a barrel of crude oil gives approximately 150 litres of petrol, then it means that 45 million litres is produced or about 1,363 tankers of petrol are produced daily, which is not enough for the whole country. It is for this reason and coupled with our broken down refineries and sabotage on the infrastructure like pipelines, pump stations and even some of the depots that we have to import petrol, kerosine and diesel for local consumption. So, in a nutshell, the one major problem is inadequate supply of petroleum products on the part of the NNPC.

This brings us to the problem of smuggling, hoarding and diversion of petroleum products as claimed by the Federal Government. Yes, these illegal acts happen, but only when the products are scarce. It is only when the supply of a product is reduced at a constant demand that its prices go up and if this happen, say in Gusau, then petrol meant for Kano will now be diverted to Gusau. So, one can say it is only when products are scarce in an area that products are diverted there.

As regards hoarding, marketers hoard products in a situation like now when an increase in price is expected. Hoarding is characterized by an intentional cutting of the supply of the products by government so that the general populace will call upon it to increase the price so as to get relieved from the hardships caused by restricting supply. So, if at a given time, the supply of all the products are maintained and products reach all the depots of this country, the spread of the products will not allow marketers to either divert or hoard products.

Alh. Ibrahim Ladan, Kajtraco Nig. Ltd., Hotoro STV, Kano.

Nigerians do not trust government

- Idris Abubakar

The fundamental thing in my mind is really the hasty way the present government is trying to handle the issue of deregulation. It has been handled to a level at which Nigerians don't trust what the government is saying about deregulation. The statement earlier made about deregulation was that a decision has already been taken.

Thereafter, when there was a lot of heat, when there was a lot of hostility to it, the government now said, we are now consulting, we are discussing, we have not come to a position. Then they sent the Petroleum Pricing Regulatory Agency bill to the National Assembly. But by then, Nigerians had already marked the earlier statement that there was no going back on the deregulation. That statement was made by the President of the country and the Minister of Information. You cannot go higher than the policy statements of government. So, it has happened that Nigerians are looking at whatever action the government takes with scepticism. Because they have already made a final statement. So, of course, there is no doubt that the way and manner the government has been going about de-

regulation would mean the increase in the pump-price of petroleum products. There are some hardships. For example, fasting, you fast not because you enjoy hunger, but in expectation that you're satisfying your Creator's injunction and there will be blessings and reward for it. So, there is no doubt that it will bring hardship. Now, if Nigerians could identify the benefit that could come in, then you have no problem. But you find that most of the reasons given for deregulation are reasons that have been given before. And that if that exercise is done, there would be efficiency in the performance of our refineries; supplies would be available; distribution would be perfect so that you will get fuel as you want. There would be no smuggling, inefficiency and wastages would be checked. These are the traditional arguments. Nigerians have not seen anyone of them work. Secondly, if deregulation were meant to create additional resources, you find that we had a huge surplus over and above budgetary provision in 1999 and year 2000. So, what are these excesses meant for? The income generated from petroleum prod-

ucts, that is, crude, PPC, gas flaring etc, was N1.5 trillion, the budget for last year was six hundred and something billion naira. So, how do you reconcile this now, when you have excess from your earlier projection? Use that excess money and fund whatever projects you want to execute.

Thirdly, there is no need for increase of prices in the so-called deregulation. Rather, it should break the monopoly of Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), that should be the focus. If you are to do that, you would now get some refineries and give them the concessionary price you give NNPC, and hold them to a price regime as a consequence of the concessionary price they are getting. So, if you do, Nigerians would get fuel at a subsidized rate. When you hear about fuel shortage in the country, then it means there are long queues in Lagos and Abuja. But the rest of the Northern part of the country for example, fuel shortage is a normal phenomenon. In the North, we have been buying fuel at N40 per litre. So, we are not afraid of the deregulation and price increase to N30. In fact, it

would be a relief. What we are afraid of is, as long as the system remains as it is, if you increase price to N30, then we would start buying between N80 and N100. That is the fear of everybody in this country. The inefficiency, the incompetence, leakages, the corruption are still there in the system. So, if you increase prices you are doubling the burden of the ordinary man, because he would buy the product at a higher rate.

Well, I think that advise has come almost from every well-meaning Nigerian. There is the need to have a minister of petroleum resources. If you appoint a minister of petroleum resources, this agency that is being set up, can be set up under his office very conveniently. Just as the minister of education can set up a committee to review university accommodation or university curriculum, so, a minister of petroleum resources can set up an agency for petroleum pricing regulation. So, they will be able to advise him after detailed and professional work about what should be done. How the price should be structured, how it will be done with minimum hardship on Nigerians.

Senator Idris Abubakar, is the Chairman, Senate Committee on Public Accounts.



A regular features at filling stations in Nigeria

Pix Onigbinde Felix

Arts & Entertainment

The Story of the New Nigerian Part X

The will to flourish!

Yesterday, we saw how the New Nigerian flourished in spite of the numerous problems that assailed it. In today's account we are shown some more of the dynamic qualities of this young newspaper.

After he typed it, I read it over and signed it, took my car and drove to the New Nigerian office. When I got there, I insisted on seeing both the Acting Editor Mr. Rasak Aremu and the then Managing Director, Mr. Charles Sharp. It was arranged and I saw, both of them together. I gave them the article and told them that I wanted it published. They read it. Rasak was very cautious, Charles too was cautious, true of all seasoned journalists. But Sharp said one thing: that it was the responsibility of every responsible citizen to speak out against the ills of the time. It is the discretion of newspaper to respect that courage and to publish it. So I could go and I left.

The following morning the article came out virtually unedited. It was really a shock to everybody. The first person that sent for me on that Tuesday morning April 19 was Alhaji Haman Maiduguri, the then Commissioner of Police for the Northern Region. He summoned me around 2.30 PM, and questioned me on the article. I owned up completely by saying that nobody pushed me into writing it. I also told him that the Hausa version was also coming out in *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo*. He then begged me to go to Gaskiya and ask them to drop the article. Because he pleaded with me, I drove down to the *New Nigerian* and asked Alhaji Usman Mairiga, the Gaskiya Editor, and asked him not to publish it. This was because if the Hausa version had been published, the counter-coup and the civil war would have come earlier.

QUESTION: Since you were a senior broadcaster, why didn't you use the material over the radio?

ANSWER: If I gave it to the radio, they will not use it because for one I was a staff there. Two, even though the radio service was virtually regionalised, we had our own controller and news editors, the overall control of radio was with the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation in Lagos. So they wouldn't permit it to be carried because as a result of that write-up in the *New Nigerian*. the then Director of Administration withheld my increment for nine months. I was harassed here and there. My

house was searched by military and police combined on about five occasions but they could find nothing."

Commenting on why he authorised the publication of Sule Takuma's letter, Mr. Sharp in his notes to me in the year 2000 long after the event -said:

"I realised I was taking a chance when I ran Sule Takuma's letter. Conscience getting the better of expediency? It was a period in which editorial fence-sitting developed into a form ...But I was struck by the brand of courage displayed by Sule Takuma in his letter"

Alhaji Sule Takuma's letter summarises very well the mood of the people of the North at that point in time.

Their silence had been mistaken for acceptance of the change of government and the violent way it had been accomplished. In particular, as the selective nature of the murder of the political leaders and the innocent Army officers of the Northern and Western origin became known gradually by the masses, in the North, the opposition to the Ironsi regime began to gather momentum.

The Ironsi regime's appointments and promotions and its style of consultation did not help matters. The appointment of Francis Nwokedi especially to a one-man committee was viewed with suspicion. He had been constituted into a one-man committee to report on "the establishment of an administrative machinery for a united Nigeria... and the unification of the public services and the judicial services." He went about his assignment by touring the country and

Books

conducting himself in a manner many considered arrogant and high-handed. The reference to him in Alhaji Sule Takuma's letter was important for two reasons. Firstly, Nwokedi had let it be known that the civil services of the country will be merged and controlled from Lagos. This declaration accentuated the fears of the Northern leadership that the January coup was part of a



Mr Charles Sharp, Managing Director (1964-1969)

grand plan by the Igbos to take over the country. Secondly, Nwokedi's assignment to devise ways and means of unifying the civil service pre-empted the work of another study group on the review of the constitution. The debate was whether Nigeria should be a Federation or a Unitary State, General Ironsi himself preferred a unitary system of government. In all the speeches he delivered on the subject, he insisted on one government for the whole country. He worked at the issue from a military perspective of a unified command system.

"I-am convinced that the bulk of our people want a united Nigeria and that they want, in future, one government and not a multitude of governments" -a clear evidence that Ironsi did not even understand what a Federal system of Government was all about.

Four days after Sule Takuma's letter, the *New Nigerian* on 25th April, wrote an editorial cautioning General Ironsi on the rush by his regime to introduce a unitary system of government for the country:

"...despite the desire for a new national identity, most people do not want to achieve this if it means sacrificing cherished links with the past. Here in the North this is becoming increasingly obvious and it would be foolish and dangerous

to pretend it was not so. At this crucial point in the nation's history, no-one wants to rock the boat or do any thing to hamper efforts to build a united country but at this time it would be jolly to suggest that tribal or regional loyalties had disappeared over-night."

However, General Aguiyi-Ironsi was not to be deterred. After his meeting with the Supreme Military Council including the Regional Governors he made his dramatic move on 24th May, 1966 by announcing in a radio broadcast the abolishing of the Federal system of Government in Nigeria. In a special "One Nigeria" edition the *New Nigerian* carried a bold headline "FEDERATION ABOLISHED." Nigeria was simply to be called Republic of Nigeria, according to General Ironsi. The Regions were abolished and Nigeria grouped into a number of territorial areas called provinces. In order to avoid any major dislocation "the present administrative machinery coincided with the former regional boundary."

"But, this is a transitional measure and must be understood as such. The present grouping of the provinces is without prejudice to the constitutional and administrative arrangement being embodied in the new constitution in accordance with

the wishes of the people of Nigeria", he added:

"The national Military Government assumed the exercise of all administrative powers throughout the Republic, subject to such delegation to the Military Governors that is considered necessary for purposes of efficient administration". He said there would be a Provincial Public Service Commission for each group of provinces.

The Supreme Commander also announced a new national development plan.

The *New Nigerian* realised the importance of this broadcast. As a

good newspaper it strove to obtain the full text of the speech over night in spite of the poor communications facility. The management of the paper expressed its gratitude to its staff who "volunteered their services long beyond their normal hours of duty in order to produce this history-making edition."

"We are grateful to them -as indeed we are to our drivers -who took their vehicles along darkened roads in many parts of the country to ensure that readers got their newspapers on time."

"And lastly, our thanks go to Reuters who transmitted the lengthy statement from Lagos to our offices in Kaduna. It was a splendid piece of work by any standard. Our hats are lifted too to the boys of p and T who kept the lines to Lagos open all the way, There wasn't a single snag.

This particular edition of the *New Nigerian* was in great demand. It was as historic as the editions of January 17, 18 and 19. There was a scramble for the paper in the North. According to the management although the newspaper arrived late because of the delay in order to carry the full text of Ironsi's broadcast, "double the normal sales were recorded."

"From Jos, Kano and Zaria came reports of 'sold out' by 8 am.

"By 10am copies of the newspaper enterprise was asked for."

On the *New Nigerian's* previous stand it is surprising that

the *New Nigerian* reversed itself and

gave its editorial support to the new measures. In the edition that carried the report it declared the abolishing of the Federal system of government as "the only path to nationhood"!

And for a good measure it added:

"None will mourn the passing of the Federation.

It is not the first that was born out of convenience but which, ultimately, had to bow to practical expediency. To be continued.

"This particular edition of the *New Nigerian* was in great demand. It was as historic as the editions of January 17, 18 and 19. There was a scramble for the paper in the North. According to the management although the newspaper arrived late because of the delay in order to carry the full text of Ironsi's broadcast, "double the normal sales were recorded."

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BRAND MANAGERS (Ref.: BM/01/2001)

Reporting to the Group Brand Manager, key job accountabilities include:

- Developing the brand plan and ensuring implementation of a brand marketing strategy.
- Ensuring that brand objectives are achieved through the application of best practice in brand management to optimise efficiency and effectiveness across all elements of the marketing mix.

Applicants must demonstrate experience in and understanding of business management, product development, trade and consumer insights, copy strategy and ATL/BTL communication.

Applicants must have over three years' FMCG experience in a similar role and prior experience in Trade Marketing.

REGIONAL MANAGERS (Ref.: RM/01/2001)

Reporting to the Head of Trade Marketing, key job accountabilities will include:

- Developing and implementing a regional trade marketing plan which meets the objectives of the National Trade Marketing and Distribution Plan and is in line with brand strategy and the needs of the trade.
- Managing key regional trade customers through the development and implementation of account strategies and plans, and regular communication with the account team.
- Establishing close working relationships with the trade in order to gain high levels of trade support and loyalty, whilst enhancing understanding of the trading environment.

Applicants should have over 3 years experience at an Area Manager level in a FMCG company that has incorporated a trade channel and account management and negotiation, good communication skills, and well-developed team leadership skills.

AREA MANAGERS (Ref.: AM/01/2001)

Reporting to the Regional Manager (Trade Marketing), key job accountabilities include:

- Development and implementation of an Area Trade Marketing and Distribution Plan which meets the objectives of the Regional Trade Marketing and Distribution Plan and is in line with brand strategy and the needs of the trade.
- Managing the implementation of account plans for merchandising and promotion in the outlets of account chains in order to achieve brand, volume and set targets.
- Effective and efficient management of Trade Marketing and Distribution Team.

Applicants must have over 2-3 years' experience in a similar role in a FMCG company, experience in human resources management, good communication skills, on the job training skills and team leadership skills.

BRAND EXECUTIVE (Ref.: BE/01/2001)

Reporting to the Brand Manager, key responsibilities are to:

- Execute the activities stipulated in the brand plan to ensure that brand objectives are achieved.
- Analyse and report marketing research data to ensure brand issues are understood and corrective action identified.
- Execute all brand activity in line with brand strategy and corporate guidelines.

Applicants should have a minimum of 2 years' marketing experience gained in an FMCG company, and be able to demonstrate an interest in and awareness of product development, trade and consumer insights, copy strategy and ATL/BTL communication.

ACCOUNTANTS (Ref.: AC/01/2001)

The successful applicants will be responsible for:

- Preparation and monitoring of budgets and operating expenses, and the maintenance of accounting and internal control systems.
- Providing management with financial information reports and Key Performance Indicators on plans and activities, to facilitate effective decision-making and reporting.
- Ensuring that credit control policies are followed and that all despatch and invoicing procedures are implemented correctly.
- Assisting with the implementation of an effective system of controls for branded and non-branded expenditures.

Applicants should possess an ACA qualification. A minimum of 2-5 years' post-qualification experience in the manufacturing or service industry is essential.

TAX MANAGER (Ref.: TM/01/2001)

Reporting to the Financial Accounting Manager, key job accountabilities are:

- Keeping up-to-date with all changes and aspects of the law and regulation of taxes in Nigeria.
- Ensuring that knowledge of tax law and regulation is communicated to the appropriate employees
- Ensuring that all monthly returns are submitted to the relevant authorities by the due dates.
- Ensuring that all payments of taxation are made to the correct authorities by the due dates

- Liaise with Finance Department colleagues to ensure that tax calculations are correct for all company reporting of results, plans and estimates.

Applicants should possess an ACA, CIMA or ACTI qualification with over 3-6 years' post-qualification experience as a tax specialist, preferably with a major accounting firm or in the manufacturing industry.

AUDIT MANAGER (Ref.: AUM/01/2001)

Reporting to the Head of Audit, you will be responsible for:

- Carrying out and supervising internal audits and ensuring compliance with the company's financial control procedures.
- Supervision and conduct of independent risk-based operational audits to help ensure that the systems and procedures support the achievement of business goals.
- Preparation of written reports for the relevant audit committees and senior management that clearly and accurately explain the findings and action plans for improvement.
- Monitoring the implementation of the agreed action plans for improvement.
- Provision of formal training for the operating company's management and staff to raise the awareness of risk and control.

Applicants must possess an ACA qualification. Suitable candidates must have gained experience in the manufacturing industry or worked in a reputable audit or consulting firm. A minimum of 4-5 years' post-qualification experience is required. Ability to speak major Nigerian languages is preferred. French language skills is an advantage.

INTERNAL AUDITORS (Ref.: IA/01/2001)

Reporting to the Audit Manager, you will be responsible for:

- Providing internal audit and ensuring compliance with the company's financial control procedures.
- Enhancing the quality of audit and contributing to the development of the Audit Department.

Applicants should have an ACA and experience in the manufacturing industry or in a reputable audit or consulting firm. A minimum of 2-3 years' post-qualification experience is required. Ability to speak major Nigerian languages is desirable.

For all positions, applicants should have a sound first degree (minimum of Second Class Lower). In addition to a challenging career, all positions attract very competitive salary packages and a generous performance-based incentive scheme.

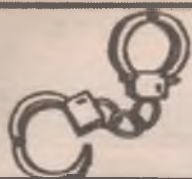
Interested applicants are invited to send in their hand-written applications together with a comprehensive CV, photocopies of credentials providing details of current remuneration and contact telephone numbers, in strict confidence, quoting the appropriate reference number, not later than 2 weeks from the date of this publication to:



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The Human Resources Manager (Resourcing),
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Only short-listed applications will be acknowledged.



Crime & Punishment



Rent: Firm drags Attorney-General, SGF to court

The Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Mr. Ufot Ekaete and the Attorney-General of the Federation, (AGF), Chief Bola Ige have both been sued before an Abuja Senior Magistrate Court over govern-

ment's indebtedness on a rented house at Imani Estate, Maitama, belonging to Imani and sons (Nig.) Ltd.

Also joined in the suit is the Special Assistant to the Minister of Inter-Govern-

mental Affairs, Alhaji M. B. Liman, who is said to be the occupant of the house.

The presiding magistrate, Bala Haruna, on Tuesday, upheld a motion moved by counsel to the plaintiff, Barrister Samuel Etukakpan, seeking the

court's order to put the case on the court's list for continuation.

In the motion exparte, Mr. Etukakpan said the accompanying affidavit contained five paragraphs and

that they were relying on all the paragraphs.

He told the court that the defendants were contacted in writing on July 1, 1998, on the imminent expiration of the lease agreement on December 31, 1998.

He further informed the court that they wrote again on January 29, 1999, reminding them of the expiration of the lease on December 31, 1998, and the fact that they had neither signified their intention to renew the lease nor paid the rent for their spill-over tenancy without formal application for renewal from January 1, 1999 to December 31, 2000.

The counsel for the plaintiff disclosed it was only on December 8, 2000, that the defendants wrote, promising to consider the renewal of the lease after about one year but have since failed to do so.

The plaintiff is claiming N1.8m, being two years rent with effect from January 1, 1998 to December 31, 2000.

Meanwhile, the magistrate has ordered that the case No. CV111/2000, earlier struck out on January 23, 2001 for some technical reasons, be re-listed while hearing has been fixed for April 25, 2001.

The magistrate also ordered that hearing notice be issued to the defendants.

Stories by Uwem Umo

N255m fraud:

AGF takes over prosecution

The office of the Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF) has taken over from the police the prosecution of



Chief Bola Ige, Attorney-General & Justice Minister

former Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Defence, Dr. Julius Mankanjuola and four others involved in an alleged theft of N255 million naira.

At the resumed hearing into the case yesterday at an Abuja High Court, a Principal Legal Officer in the Federal Ministry of Justice, Mr. J. Abulkarim informed the court that the office of the AGF has just taken over the prosecution of the case from the police.

He, therefore, applied for a short adjournment to enable them study the case file.

Counsel to Dr. Julius Mankanjuola, Mr. Alexander Iziyon (SAN), leading four

other counsels and counsel to one of the other accused persons, Alhaji Abdullahi Ibrahim (SAN), did not raise objection.

However, presiding judge, Mr. Sidi Bage, adjourned the matter to May 21 and 22, 2001 for hearing.

It will be recalled that Dr. Mankanjuola, chief R.O. Igbasan, Mr. Iro Matazu, Chief Rowland Okeke and Mr. Razak Ayodeji Ope are facing an 18-count charge of criminal breach of trust, using fake documents purportedly issued by certain communities in Anambra State to defraud the federal government of 255million naira.



Chief Ufot Ekaette, SGF

Man bags two years for stealing Supreme Court louvres

A 33-year old man, who broke into the premises of the Supreme Court, Abuja, and stole 128 sheets of louvres, has been sentenced to two years imprisonment.

Frederick Uvi, who was arraigned before an Abuja Upper Area Court, pleaded guilty to the charge which the Prosecuting Police Officer, Mr. Sani Yakubu, of the State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID), Abuja, said was

contrary to sections 348 and 287 of the penal code.

The convict said to be a staff of Alumaco company, Lagos, allegedly committed the offence on March 23, this year.

When the charges were read to him, Frederick Uvi, broke down in tears and pleaded for leniency.

The presiding Upper Area Court Judge, Alhaji Aliyu Abdulrahman, sen-

tenced him to one-year imprisonment, on the first charge of trespass or N3,000 fine while he bagged another one year on the second charge of theft or N5,000 fine. The sentences are to run cumulatively.

Meanwhile, the same Upper Area Court Judge, Alhaji Aliyu Abdulrahman, has ordered the police to remand two suspected car-thieves, Messrs Akeem Tijani and Adisa Atiku, in prison custody till May 10, 2001, when their case will come up again for mention.

According to the Prosecuting Police Officer, Mr. Ijafu Bukar, the two men attempted to steal a car (reg. No. AJ 94 JJA) during a church service at Area One, Abuja, on March 4, this year.

The offence according to the prosecution, is contrary to section 95 of the penal code.

Akeem Tijani, who gave his address as No. 3 Isaac Okomu Street, Ojota, Lagos, and Adisa Atiku as E5B/348 Oje, Ibadan, Oyo State, were caught allegedly trying to open the car's door.

They both pleaded not guilty while the Area Court Judge refused them bail because the prosecution objected on the grounds of their non-residency in Abuja

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Police IG to launch security monitoring system

In a bid to ensure a crime-free society, the Inspector-General of Police, Mr. Musiliu Smith, will before the end of this month launch a digital security outfit, known as Security Alarm and Safety Monitoring System (SASMOS), in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

The Force Public Relations Officer (FPRO), Mr. Haz Iwendu, told newsmen in

Abuja that the Nigeria Police Force, in a partnership with SASMOS, a private security organisation, would use the capital city as a pilot project.

"All arrangements in connection with the project have been concluded, the city has been digitalised, response centres have been mapped out for easy and quick response from the police," he said.

The Force PRO also said that when the project was fully operational, residents of the capital city and its environs would subscribe to the out-fit for quicker responses to armed robbery and other crime related offences.

"If one is attacked by robbers, he should press his security button to alert the police and they will be there in five minutes," Iwendu said.

He described the project as a real plan to get rid of criminals in the country.



Steve Akiga, Police Affairs Minister.

Abuja News

Abba-Gana tasks contractors over Jibi resettlement work

The Minister of Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Engr. Muhammed Abba-Gana, has ordered contractors handling the phase one of the Jibi resettlement work to speed-up their work in order to meet government deadline.

He gave the order on Tuesday while inspecting the progress of work at the phase one of the resettlement site. Abba-Gana said that every year, government will be budgeting heavily for the resettlement exercise.

The minister stressed that government would have gone far with the exercise, but that the past administrations kept sleeping on the project.

By Emmanuel Ande

He told the contractors that infrastructural



Engr. Abba-Gana development such as the provision of roads, electricity

and water will be carried out together with the construction of the houses.

He expressed displeasure over the non-provision of kitchen space for each of the mini two-bedroom flats, saying that the contractors ought to have considered the class of people that the houses were meant for and that they should accordingly have provided external kitchen for each house.

The project supervising engineer, Engr. Abdulkadir Maina, told the minister that about 390 houses were ready for use and that another 680 would be ready before the end of the month.

He said that each of the mini-flats was constructed at the cost of N1.8 million.

Maina stated that about 2,000 houses are to be constructed in the first phase of the resettlement exercise.

Engr. Abba-Gana disclosed that work will begin on the second phase of the project immediately after compensation had been paid to the land-owners.

He also said that contract for the construction of the fence for the phase one had been awarded and that work would soon commence.

Commenting on the provision of infrastructure, he disclosed that money had been approved for the project.

Gana endorses AMAC boss for second term

The Minister of Information and National Orientation, Prof. Jerry Gana, has endorsed the Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC) chairman, Mrs. Esther John Audu, for a second term.

By Emmanuel Ande and Elizabeth Ikyanyon

"You are a facilitator, you should continue with your good work, you are promoting democracy and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) through your good leadership," he stated.

Prof. Gana who gave the endorsement yesterday in Abuja when he paid a courtesy call on the AMAC boss, said she did not need to campaign for her second term as the numerous projects executed by her were already speaking for her.

The minister intimated that his visit was to commend the AMAC chairman for the people-oriented projects she was executing in AMAC.

He said that with the able leadership of Mrs. Audu, anybody wishing to contest any election with her would suffer serious political injuries that would put such a person permanently out of politics.

The Information Minister pleaded with Nigerians to embrace peace and shun acts that could jeopardise our nascent democracy.

"This democracy has to be sustained. We should not take it for granted because some Nigerians are bent on destroying it. We have to guard it jealously," he maintained.

He further lamented the shameless introduction of "ethnic armies" in 21st century Nigeria which our founding fathers like late Chief Awolowo, Dr. Azikiwe, Sir Ahmadu Bello and Senator J.S. Tarka, saw their divisive potential and jettisoned.



Mrs. Esther Audu

Gana advised all elected officers to govern well because they were in office to serve the people.

Earlier in her remarks, Mrs. Audu, said the high influx of people into Abuja on a daily basis was choking infrastructural facilities to the point of collapsing.

She blamed the situation on the civil unrest in other parts of the country, citing Sharia crisis, Odua People's Congress (OPC) and the Egbesu which forced people to relocate to Abuja either to work or look for work.

Mrs. Audu pointed out that AMAC has a population of 1.2 million people, noting that "the facilities on the ground cannot stand this huge population because of their age."

The AMAC boss also disclosed that soon, all the councillors and heads of department in the council would begin computer training to make them computer literate.

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Abuja News

Minister to organise seminar on Africa union treaty in Abuja

The Ministry of Co-operation and Integration in Africa is to organise a two-day seminar on the Africa Union Treaty, the Minister, Chief Bimbola Ogunkelu, has said.

Ogunkelu, who made the disclosure during a courtesy call on the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Chief Dubem Onyia, on Tuesday, said that the seminar had been tentatively fixed for May 14 to 15 in Abuja.

He said that President Olusegun Obasanjo gave the order to organize the seminar to enable Nigerians to understand the aims and objectives of the union.

"As of now, there is a high degree of ignorance among Nigerians about what the union is all about," he stated.

The minister said that the seminar was aimed at explaining the union to the people so that they would be in a position to appreciate why Nigeria was rooting for it.

He described the union as a strong and effective institution for unifying and integrating Africa, saying

that it had become necessary following the changing



Sule Lamido complexity of the world which was now unipolar.

Ogunkelu said that about two-third of the African countries had already ratified the union treaty, saying, "the OAU would cease to exist as soon as the union comes into effect."

Ogunkelu told Onyia that there was the need for ministers to work together, as this would facilitate the achievement of the objectives of the present administration in the country.

He commended the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the co-operation it was giving his ministry, saying that he had always been well received by Nigerian embassy officials any time he travelled outside Nigeria.

Accident in Nyanya: One dead, four injured

Stories by Emmanuel Ande

For residents of Nyanya, a satellite town on the outskirts of Abuja, yesterday was a day of grief as an over-speeding Peugeot 504 veered into a pit, squeezing the driver to death and leaving others seriously wounded.

An eye-witness told *Daily Trust* that the 504 Peugeot station wagon, with registration No. FG 100 A3, was heading towards Keffi, when the driver, in an attempt to evade an on-coming car, lost control and crashed into the pit.

Daily Trust learnt that the other occupants of the wagon were taken to Garki General Hospital for treatment.

The accident occurred at a scene that has become

notorious for accidents. Investigations revealed that between August last year and last month, accidents at the very spot have claimed over 100 lives.

It was the quick response of members of the Federal Road Safety Corps that the others were helped to the hospital, another source said.

Some of the residents who spoke to *Daily Trust*, blamed the accident on the recklessness of the driver.

Mr. Charles Ode, a staff of Ministry of Federal Capital Territory (MFCT), appealed to officers of the FRSC to enact and enforce laws that would keep unlicensed or drunken drivers from driving in order to minimize deaths on the highways.

He also called on the government to prevail on the contractors handling the dualisation of the Nyanya-



Engr. Abba-Kyari Wakilbe Keffi road, SECTRACO Construction Company Ltd., to complete the project on schedule, so as to ease traffic congestion in the area.

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Applicants, MFCT security clash

Tension gripped staff of the Ministry of Federal Capital Territory (MFCT), yesterday, following the bloody clash between applicants seeking employment in the ministry and MFCT security men at the secretariat gate.

Daily Trust learnt that trouble started when the security operatives denied the applicants access into the secretariat for enquiries in respect of previously submitted applications.

The applicants, most of them ladies, numbering over 200, subsequently barricaded the entrance to the MFCT secretariat in the early hours of yesterday.

However, Alhaji Musa Abdulkadir, a staff of Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA), told *Daily Trust*, that "most of these ladies that you see here everyday are not looking for jobs, they are looking for men for their daily bread".

He said that the authorities of MFCT "should do something in order to curtail the entry of these calibre of ladies into MFCT secretariat."

Alhaji Abdulkadir noted that the prevention of these ladies from entering the National Assembly was making them to flood the MFCT secretariat as they have shifted business from there.

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SPORTS



Masters champion Singh has much to mull over

Vijay Singh has more on his mind this week than just following up his brilliant U.S. Masters triumph last year with a good performance.

There is also the matter of stopping world number one Tiger Woods completing a sweep of golf's four major championships at this year's tournaments. Starting on Thursday.

"Woods has to try and get all four," Singh said after his practice round on Monday. "It's hard to win just one."

"Woods won the last three majors of 200—the U.S. Open at Pebble Beach, the British Open at St Andrews and the U.S. PGA championship at Valhalla in record fashion.

Woods comes to Augusta National with the goal of becoming the first to hold all four majors at the same time.

"He's phenomenal, but we're going to try and stop him," said Singh, who won last year's Masters by three shots over South African Ernie Els. Woods was fifth, six strokes behind.

Woods has won his last two tournaments, edging out Singh by a stroke at the Players Championship, but the

Golf

38-year-old Fijian has been the second hottest player in the world and is eager to do battle.

"It's pretty exciting. I've been looking forward to it the whole year," Singh said. "Finally it's here."

"It's a new tournament this week. You have to forget about what happened last year."

Singh will have to be distinctly non-traditional as Singh has ordered Thai food for the menu served at Augusta National's stately club house.

"We're going to get some stomachs stirred up," joked Singh.

Singh won last year's tournament largely on the strength of an astonishing two-under 70 in a third round played in some of the worst weather to hit Augusta in recent Masters memory.

"By contrast to the violent winds the whipped through the stately pines of Augusta National in that challenging round, Monday's warm-up was held in gentle weather with a warm sun peeking through the clouds.

Singh said the fast greens predicted for Tuesday and

Wednesday, but the long-range forecast was for sunny skies for the 94-man field on Thursday.

Singh said the fast greens will take time to adapt to again, but the defending champion looked right at home on the ninth hole when he sank a shot from the fairway.

"It means nothing today," said Singh. "I'm just getting to know the golf course, the greens and the speed of it again. It feels good."

"I'm hitting the ball good today," he added. "But today is only Monday. I don't want to peak today."



Gearing up... Colin Montgomerie shot a final round at BellSouth Classic, perfect preparation for the Masters.

Blatter lauds African soccer standard

FIFA President Joseph Sepp Blatter has expressed satisfaction with the standard of football in Africa, saying that the game keeps getting better and better.

In an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Sunday in Addis Ababa, venue of the just-concluded 12th African Youth Championship, Blatter said he was particularly impressed with Angola which defeated Ghana 2-0 to win

the competition.

"I am impressed with the performance of the Angolans who played in the final of this tournament for the first time and were able to defeat the defending champions. If anything, it shows that the game of soccer is developing all over the African continent just like what obtains in Europe and other parts of the world," he said.

"From what I have seen here, I can confidently say

that the world championship in Argentina will not be dominated by teams from a particular section of the world, Africa's four representatives are as good as any other team that will take part in the championship," the FIFA boss added.

Angola, Ghana, Egypt and Ethiopia will represent Africa at the 11th FIFA World Youth Championship scheduled to hold in Argentina in June.

There are no minnows in Africa-Experts

Angola's victory in Sunday's final match of the African Youth Championship proves that there are no longer minnows in football especially in the continent, according to soccer agent Chris Eseka.

Reacting to the victory of Angola over Ghana in Addis Ababa, Eseka told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) that it also showed how strong most of these countries have become, "it proves that football does not belong to the big nations like Nigeria and Ghana. They deserve their victory, they got better with every match and it is a characteristic of a good team."

"The victory is a confirmation that no country is a pushover again. They must be taken seriously, especially considering the fact that by the win they have become African champions and have also qualified for the World Youth Championship in Argentina," Eseka added.

In his reaction, Chuka Momah, President of the Nigeria Tennis Federation, said the Angolan victory confirmed that there were no small nations in soccer, adding that it showed the level of funding and preparation for tournaments.

Former NFA secretary, Patrick Okpomo said that

Angola's victory at the 12th African Youth Soccer Championship showed that "we should stop taking things for granted in Nigeria."

According to him, Nigeria preparation towards the championship was faulty, saying that Addis Ababa and Eritrea were the high altitude of Africa and that any player who wanted to play in those countries should have been three weeks if no months ahead.

"I said at the draw here

in Lagos that we will not win the championship, because when the players were camped in Benin and are already to go for the competition I warned that it was too late for them to leave," Okpomo told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Lagos.

He, however said that it showed that soccer was progressing in the continent and that victory of the game was now only meant for serious countries with youth devel-

opment programmes.

According to him, the issue of handshake for sportsmen should also be stopped by the federal government, saying that it was capable of killing morale.

Segun Odegbami (MON), former Green Eagles captain, said "the whole system is not well."

According to him, Nigeria would continue to go down in continental and world soccer championship until the right pegs were fixed in the right hole.



Inspirational... Bayern Munich's Steffen Effenberg inspired the German champions to a 1-0 win over Manchester United at Old Trafford on Tuesday.

Ghanaian handler wants foreign coaches out

Emmanuel Kwesi Afranie, coach of Ghana's under-20 National Team, has urged Football Associations in Africa to do away with the practice of employing foreign coaches to handle their senior teams.

Afranie told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in an interview Tuesday in Addis Ababa, that the high standard of football witnessed at the 12th African Youth Championship showed that if given the opportunity, indigenous coaches would perform much better than their foreign counterparts.

The coach, however, said that if Football Associations in Africa loved foreign coaches so much, they should employ them to coach under-17 and under-20 junior teams before graduating to the senior national sides.

"For instance, I have been with this Ghanaian under-20 team for five years. I have taught them the rudiments of soccer and they are doing well. Tomorrow, many of them will graduate into the senior national team and if they win any tournament with a foreign coach, the glory will go to him when I was the person who laid the foundation for that success," he said.

"I strongly believe that our Football Associations should not employ foreign Coaches to come and build on the foundations indigenous Coaches have laid. The local coaches should be allowed to build on the foundation they have started," Afranie concluded.

NAN reports that of the eight teams that participated in the championship, only Ethiopia had a foreign coach, Diego Gazieto.



African Youth Championship fall-out Ethiopia apologises to Nigeria ... Over robbery case

By Patrick Andrew

The Ethiopian government has apologized profusely to Nigeria sequel to the robbery assault on a Nigerian official in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, during the African Youth Championship, last month.

The Nigerian, an NFA staff, was assaulted and robbed of 50000 dollars in MasterCard by hoodlums while shopping for mobile cellular phones for some Flying Eagles players in a super market.

The Ethiopian government in a most obsequious manner pleaded with the Nigerian government to overlook the ugly incident noting that it was highly embarrassed by the criminals act.

The Ethiopian government conveyed the unreserved apology in a fax letter to the NFA penultimate stressing that the government and people of Ethiopia were regretted the discomfort the ugly incident must have

caused the Nigerian contingent during the youth fiesta. The commissioner of police Addis Ababa City Administration, Lieutenant Deralegn Antichu who signed the diplomatic letters pleaded with the Nigerian government not to allow the incident to cause a breach of understanding between them.

Meanwhile, the three Ethiopian hoodlums who committed the robbery have been apprehended.

The Police boss of Addis Ababa City Administration, Zone I, Woroda Lt. Derelegn Antichu confirmed the arrest and detention of the hoodlums through a fax letter consigned to the NFA last Tuesday.

The Police Commissioner said that the hoodlums were apprehended on March

29, when they attempted to cash the MasterCard in a Bureau de Cheque, adding that they were subsequently detained for further questioning while the necessary papers were being processed for them to appear in court soon.

The Eagles were in Ethiopia to seek one of four African tickets for the 11th World Youth Championships in Argentina, later in the year. The youth fiesta ended last weekend with Angola beat-

ing Ghana 2-0 to emerge champions. The NFA staff who was robbed had explained that the hoodlums had embraced him jovially while ransacking his person to relief him of his possession. After the ordeal, he quickly reported the incident to the police and Mastercard company who equally informed all banks and bureau de cheques giving them the numbers of the stolen mastercards.

Umeh wants Keshi to stay on

Chief Mike Umeh, the Chairman of Anambra State Football Association (ASFA), has suggested that Stephen Keshi, head coach of the Flying Eagles, should be allowed to continue in his job, in spite of the team's poor performance at the 12th Af-

rican Youth Championship which ended in Addis Ababa on Sunday.

Umeh, a former team manager of the national Team, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Onitsha, Anambra, Monday that "Nigerians should give Keshi time to stabilize with the team" instead of judging him by the African Youth Competition.

According to him, the team's poor performance must be blamed on poor preparations.

"Even if there is no excuse in this kind of job, he cannot be blamed and let us not blame him. It is all part of history, there is no point crying over split milk.

"So my advice is that we should allow him to continue. He is in a better position to do that and if you give him free hand, let him have this team and then from there we will build him up for Super Eagles.

"You can't blame him, he did his best and as a player, he did very well and as a coach, He can't play now, the boys have to play," he said.



Indigenous coaches: Stephen Keshi, Shuaibu Amodu and Joe Erico. Umeh wants Keshi to remain as Flying Eagles head coach despite dismal outing in Ethiopia.

Ekarika allays fear over Eagles

By Patrick Andrew

Former Flying Eagles goal poacher, Uwem Ekarika, has allays fear that Nigeria may not qualify for the Japan-Korea World Cup 2002.

Ekarika said that the Super Eagles in spite of their present predicament will qualify provided the Eagles beat the Leone Stars of Sierra Leone on April 21.

The former Eagles star noted that the fears being expressed by anxious soccer fans were genuine considering the fact that Nigeria had been expected to pick the group ticket without much

opposition. "The Super Eagles will qualify. There is no doubt about that. All the Eagles need to do is beat Sierra Leone and then Liberia in Lagos. Once this happens, then our match with Ghana will be a forgone conclusion," he analysed.

The former Eagles now coach of Akwa United though advocating the establishment of a home-based national team comprising entirely of local boys, cautioned against rejection of foreign-based stars.

He observed that reliance on foreign-based has become a vogue, noting that rather than discard their services the foreign-based players should be re-orientated on patriotic fervour.

Ekarika, who believes that the pro-league can produce players that can feature in the Super Eagles' World Cup campaigns, further observed that condemnation of the foreign-based stars was unhealthy and disheartening.

He said that, rather than condemn them especially those who are dwindling in performance, the authority

should bring fresh legs to replace those who evidently have peaked.



Kanu



Anne Otutu during the women's shot-put finals of Mobils Track & Field Championship...last year.

Obiora wins tennis tourney

Emmanuel Obiora has won the maiden edition of the Orange Drug Port Harcourt Club Tennis Classics.

Obiora beat hard-fighting Alfred Koripamo 7-5, 7-5 to win a video CD player while Koripamo went home with an audio CD player. "I feel fulfilled after three attempts," Obiora said, "I thank God I have been able to accomplish this one. I dedicate this victory to God and my colleagues."

In other matches, Fidelis Pepple steamrollered Emmanuel Ihesie 6-0, 6-0, to win the court one category.

Stelle Epegu outplayed Dr. Patrick Ugorji 2-6, 6-3, 6-3 to win the court two category.

Pepple and Stella won audio CD players while Ugorji and Ihesie each won an electric iron.

Emmanuel Emordi beat Kemi Prefa 6-3, 6-4 to win the veterans category, Emordi won a 24-inch colour television set while Prefa got an audio CD player.

In his speech, the managing director of Orange Drug Nigeria Ltd, Chief Vincent Mgemena, said his company

sponsored the tournament to improve the standard of the game and to keep members of the Port Harcourt Club busy.

He said his company would make the tournament an annual affair, adding that they would assist the club to rehabilitate some of its tennis courts.

Earlier, the president of Port Harcourt Club, Mr. Lawrence Dublin-Green had commended Orange Drugs for sponsoring the tournament.

He urged other companies to emulate Orange Drugs by sponsoring tournaments as a way of improving sports in Rivers State.

In his speech, the captain of the tennis section of Port Harcourt Club, Chief Mike Okechukwu, said for sponsoring the tournament, Orange Drugs had shown that it was deeply committed to the development of sports in the country.

"Given the impressive participation by our members, we would like to appeal to the management of Orange Drugs to please make this tournament an annual event," he said.

One person in every 25 plays football - FIFA

More than 240 million people play football worldwide, according to FIFA survey. The sport's governing body said its big-count survey indicates that one in every 25 people takes a regular and active part in the game.

The FIFA website said this finding "corroborates football's position as the number one sport in the

world." The survey found there were almost five million referees, assistant referees and officials directly involved in the game.

Twenty million women play football, 80 per cent of whom are juniors or still in

the survey. Nearly 80 per cent of them respo...

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Nigeria confronts Trinidad & Tobago

The Golden Eaglets, Africa's U-17 champions are to engage their Trinidad and Tobago counterparts in friendly clash on April 25 and 28.

The friendly duel is intended to shape up the Eaglets for the World Cup U-17 Championship to be hosted by the visitors between August and September this year. The Eaglets, currently on recess, are to resume camping in Ibadan on April 9 through 16.

Chief coach of the Golden Eaglet, Musa Abdullahi told *Trustsports* yesterday that he would use the friendly clash to expose some of the fledglings recently invited to camp.

Already, coach Abdullahi has extended invitation to 17

By Patrick Andrew

grassroots lads to team up with the 18 others who participated in the Africa U-17 championship in Seychelles, last February.

Coach Abdullahi said the decision to invite more players was to allow them the opportunity to give those already in camp stiff challenge for shirts as well as beef up the squad in areas of observed inadequacies.

He objected to the argument that new invitees would destabilise the squad, which towered above others to win the African

championship.

Instead, coach Abdullahi said, their presence would ginger up the entire team compelling each one to produce his best to merit selection for the Trinidad and Tobago friendly duel and the championship.

He was of the view that the two-legged encounter with Trinidad and Tobago would enable the technical crew to appraise the players' individual skill and match fitness.

Trinidad and Tobago is on Africa tour. They are to play Mali and Burkina Faso before facing the Eaglets.



Golden Eaglets player contesting the ball with an Ethiopian opponent during an international engagement at Ahmadu Bello Stadium, Kaduna. The Eaglets will face their Trinidad & Tobago counterparts on April 25.

Pix: Joe Oroye



Sergio Garcia hits his celebrated recovery shot in the 1999 USPGA Championship at Medinah. It was voted the fourth greatest shot of all time by Golf aficionados.

Pix AFP

Golden Eaglets new invitees

- Tunde Tijani
Gabriel Emmanuel
- MIDFIELDERS**
Obiora Hector
John Akmien
Osundu Chinyere
Mamuda Isah
Mustapha Haliru
- ATTACKERS**
Andrew Esealoka
Emenike Ezeogu
Franklin Ukan
Mukhtar Isa
Nasiru Hussaini
- DEFENDERS**
Efosa Eguwakan
Victor Adufor
Francis Ugonwanne
- GOALKEEPER**
Olushola Fatodu
Ahmed Jibril

RESULTS

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

- Manchester Utd 0,
Bayern Munich 1
Galatasaray 3,
Real Madrid 2

- Abuja FA Cup**
Semi-Final Replay
NEPA Abuja 2,
NASS 0

Professor Nomau's travails, written & illustrated by Bulama Mustapha

