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Shari'a, but...
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Fuel exports

Nigeria loses N24 bn in 6 months

By Henry Omonu

Nigeria lost N24 billion due to sharp practices by the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and major oil exploration firms operating in the country.

This was revealed yesterday in Abuja by the House of Representatives ad-hoc committee probing the importation of refined petroleum products between May 1999 and now by the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC).

Chairman of the committee, Rep. Ibrahim Ganyama (PDP), Jigawa, who made the revelation said between May and December 1999, the NNPC and five foreign oil companies overshot their crude oil lifting quota by 12 million barrels.

During the period, he declared that while NNPC figures (for June 1999) forwarded to the committee showed that it exported 34,710,364 million

barrels of crude oil, records at the Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) indicated that the corporation lifted 28,217,790 million barrels.

However, he added that investigations by the committee revealed that the actual crude lifted by the NNPC was 26,395,703 million barrels. Other companies involved in the scam and their level of involvement are Shell, 723,590 barrels; Mobil, 1,607,450 barrels; Texaco, 2,792,723 barrels; Chevron, 637,581 barrels and

Elf, 770,675 barrels.

Accusing the NNPC and the DPR of supplying the house committee with conflicting figures, the chairman, further said that his committee discovered that Shell also over lifted its annual crude oil quota by 1.2 million barrels from 9.6 million barrels to 10.86 million barrels.

Asked Rep. Ganyama: "it will be nice to know what is happening to all these crude, and if they were paid for, where is the money and who

authorized this."

Furthermore, he disclosed that the committee discovered that 20,000 bpd was reserved daily by the NNPC, since 1994 for the servicing of the loan obtained by the federal government to build the \$1.3 billion Eleme Petrochemical Refinery.

The committee chairman wondered why NNPC was still reserving such an amount of crude oil up till now, when there were no records to indicate how the crude is dispensed with and the financial records

of the sales.

Another sore point in the probe of the NNPC, was the discovery by the house committee, that of the 13 companies appointed by the NNPC to import refined petroleum products into the country, two companies, Transcatia and Sunray have profitted more from the import arrangement.

Apart from the fact that these two controversial companies based in Zurich, Switzerland and Nassau,

Contd. on pg 2

GSM: NCC to revoke defaulters licences

By Osborne Adi Jnr.

The Nigeria Communications Commission (NCC), said yesterday that it would revoke the provisional award given the three winners of the GSM licenses last Friday, if they failed to meet the 14-day deadline for the payment of the \$285 million fees.

Accordingly, it will issue award letters to the three new operators in the bid to hasten up payment of the fees which collectively stand at \$1.12 billion.

Besides, Communication Investment Limited (CIL), Econet Wireless Nigeria and MTN Nigeria, NITEL is the

fourth operator, whose payment procedures has already been worked out by both the ministry of communications and the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE), and is expected to be approved by the Federal Executive Council (FEC) at tomorrow's meeting.

NCC spokesman, Mr. Dave Imoko, told *Daily Trust* that the commission would stick to the guidelines earlier given to the bidders and that any violation would be met with appropriate sanctions. He said the commission would not extend the deadline for any rea-

son. "We have no intention of extending the deadline beyond the period stipulated in the guidelines and anybody who fails to make payment within the mandatory 14-working day ultimatum, would have his award revoked," he said.

According to the "Information Memorandum" the document containing all the bidding rules, it is stated in clear terms thus; "the licensee shall pay to the commission in cash and without set-off or counter claim, the license fee as a single amount within 14-business days from the date of the auction."

However, Imoko said following the lateness in the conduct of the exercise last Friday, coupled with the need to give the winners their letters

Contd. on pg 2



President Obasanjo (right) congratulating Justice Mustapha Akanbi, chairman, Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission at a symposium on National Re-birth organised by the commission in Abuja... yesterday. Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje

New ministers next week

By Ibrahim Modibbo,

Tomorrow's Federal Executive Council (FEC) meeting may be the last for some ministers of the Obasanjo administration as the president has intimated the

National Assembly of his intention to send a new cabinet list for confirmation next week.

The major cabinet reshuffle which is expected to come up within the next few days was announced at the National Assembly Complex by Alhaji Kasim Ibrahim Imam,

Presidential Liaison Officer, (PLO) to the Senate yesterday.

President Olusogun Obasanjo who was said to have kept the list of the new ministers very close to his chest because the Senate was on recess, has decided to remove some of his ministers for non-performance and is set to replace them with vibrant and dynamic minds who would move the country forward.

Alhaji Kasim Ibrahim Imam said that "after about 20 months of service as ministers, the president has studied critically and evaluated their performance with particular em-

Contd. on pg 2

Village razed

Batu village in Lamurde local government area of Adamawa state, has been set ablaze by unknown persons, suspected to be foreign bandits from neighbouring countries.

The arsonists were reported to have attacked the village in the early hours of last Thursday, setting every house

• V/head killed

on fire killing the village head, Malam Jauro Naşam.

The attackers also engaged in indiscriminate shooting which resulted in the death of hundreds of domestic animals.

Meanwhile, hundreds of displaced villagers are now

taking refuge in Shuwa village and other neighbouring villages as they have abandoned the razed village.

Presenting relief materials to victims of the incident at the weekend, the chairman of the

Contd. on pg 2



Notorious car thief, Mohammed Ibrahim (middle) alias "Gurgu" with other suspected criminals yesterday by the FCT police command.

Zico

NEWS

Border communities migrate to Cameroon

From Abdullahi Bego,
in Maiduguri

Thirty four communities in Sulumba-Wulaji and Amchaka districts in Bama local government in Borno state have migrated to the Republic of Cameroon due to acute water shortage in the area.

Reports from the area showed that due to prolonged periods of drought there has been shortage of water for animal and human consumption and that more people are bracing to vacate the area for the same reason.

Reporting the migration before the Borno House of Assembly yesterday Monday as "a matter of serious concern," the member representing Gulumba-Wuleji constituency Alh. Ali Mai Sangayama, said the district heads of Wulaji and Amchaka have written to report the matter to the Assembly and the government so that

boreholes, cement wells and earth dams would be provided to the affected communities to bring them back to the country and halt further migration.

Mai Sangayama said that communities are cattle rearers and farmers who needed constant water supply to sustain their livelihood. "In Cameroon, they pay the equivalent of N180 to have access to sources of water supply and they still pay because water is available. I am sure the people are ready to return and pay up to N200 if water would be made available to them, Sangayama said.

In his submission on the matter, the deputy speaker Alhaji Inuwa Kuba said the problem that led to the migration "is very serious and a matter of national integrity."

Alhaji Inuwa said it is unacceptable for so many people to migrate because of lack of water supply to a country that is, less endowment and less development than Nigeria.

The Deputy Speaker, along with several other members, therefore called on the federal, state and local governments to urgently address the problem to save the country

from "national embarrassment."

But dr. Yusuf Balami, representing Hawul constituency in the House wants the "fed-

eral government approached on more serious problems."

Arguing further, Dr. Balami said local governments receive enormous amounts of money monthly from the federation account and could not there-

fore understand why they were unable to provide as basic a service as water supply.

The House unanimously called on all tiers of government to immediately address the problem



Britain's Prime Minister, Tony Blair (2nd left) and deputy Prime Minister John Prescott (right) accompanied by community officials walk through the Ocean Estate in Stepney, East London. Blair and four high-ranking cabinet members visited the inner-city to launch a campaign for new commitment to neighbourhood renewal. Photo: AFP - Adrain Dennis.

New ministers

phasis to strength and weakness in governance and resolved to keep all those who have performed well, perhaps re-assign some but would definitely make changes to inject new hands."

"We should expect these changes before the end of this month, and a new list will equally be sent to the Senate for confirmation soon" he said.

Also speaking on the president's re-election bid, the liaison officer stated that such anxiety would be determined by the far reaching successes recorded by the president at the end of his tenure.

He said: "our achievements would determine whether or not the president would offer himself for re-election. I want to assure you that by the end of the next year 2002 there would be general clamour, not the military sponsored type but purely on the strength of what we have achieved, for the president to offer himself for re-election."

Ibrahim-Imam stated that the mere fact that everybody has the opportunity today to freely air his/her views without any hindrance or harassment by way of criticizing or even abusing the government is a plus to democracy in Nigeria.

The PLO who took on

critics of the administration who accuse the government for non-performance said it would amount to travesty of justice to assess the Obasanjo administration after only a year in office. He said the assessment is hasty.

He disclosed that the administration has laid solid foundation for development of the country, whose dividends would come to fruition in the next one or two years. He said the government has invested heavily

in infrastructure development with particular emphasis on power and steel, works and housing, water, electricity health and road construction.

Alhaji Ibrahim - Imam further disclosed that in each of the sectors enumerated, the Obasanjo government has spent over 100 billion naira for its development, so far.

The PLO who commended the administration for directing optimum resources towards a stable power supply said that be-

Contd. from pg 1

tween November and December last year, about 27 billion was released to Ministry of Power and Steel for that development.

The Presidential envoy commended Senators and Members of House of Representatives for passing the 2001 budget early and said that a bill on National Road Maintenance Agency would soon be sent to the National Assembly for ratification.

Fuel exports Contd. from pg 1

Bahamas respectively, have no board of directors, they however, quoted the highest price of \$400 (N4,000) for their products and

surprisingly, received the lion share of the total percentage of products imported, the chairman stated.

Also, the committee said

GSM Contd. from pg 1

of mandate, counting of the deadline would begin today so as to avoid any unnecessary pressure on them.

Apart from the 14-working day deadline, the operators would have to wait for another mandatory period of 50 days before they can deploy their network to commence service.

At the commission's head-

quarters in Abuja yesterday, representatives of the three companies were seen trying to tie up loose ends with officials at the commission to pave way for the mobilization of funds to pay up the funds.

Imoke also said that the commission was always ready to cooperate with the new operators so as to complete the entire process it started on a sound note.

Village razed Contd. from pg 1

local government council, Mr. Seth Crowther, said that government would do everything to fish out the culprits and called on the people to be security conscious and report any suspected individuals to the police.

Responding on behalf of

the victims, Malam Adamu Nasamu, called on the police to intensify their patrol in the area as there had been reported cases of influx of foreign bandits into the state.

The North East region comprising Yobe, Borno, Adamawa, Gombe and Taraba

it unearthed the loss of N26 billion in revenue from the non-payment of customs duties by the companies importing refined products into the country on behalf of the NNPC.

"The customs was stopped from collecting N26 billion as duties by the NNPC. We don't know who authorized this, but the NNPC has been breaking the law," Rep. Ganyanma opined.

He however stated that the findings of the sub-committee which uncovered the scam would be presented to the main committee on Thursday.

The sub-committee is headed by Rep. Lola Abiola-Edewor, (AD) Lagos.

states have been the scenes of various attacks by marauding bandits fleeing civil strife in neighbouring Chad, Niger and Cameroon republics.

The federal government had to deploy a joint police and military patrols in the region to bring down the wave of brutal attacks and lootings.

Corruption is deep-seated, says Obasanjo

By Uwem Umo

President Olusegun Obasanjo has expressed concern over what he described as "deep rooted" extend and scope of corruption in facets of our National life.

The President expressed the concern yesterday at a speech to mark the opening of a two day symposium organised by the independent corrupt practices and other related offenses commission.

The President noted that experience in privatization and

deregulation has shown that corruption is not limited to the public sector alone, adding that the private sector economy is also "neck deep" in corruption and corrupt practices.

According to the president, "persons who bribe NITEL officials to divert lines or pay lesser bills or the criminals who breach oil pipe lines or those who divert petroleum products and smuggle across the border are not necessarily public servants", adding that "they however share something in common"

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NEWS

Briefly

Poly expels 615 students for cert. Forgery

Lagos state Polytechnic, Ikorodu campus has expelled 615 students for certificate forgery. The institution's public relations officer, Mr. Laure Kuye said in a statement that 161 students were dismissed for forged National Diploma Certificates while 454 were implicated in ordinary level certificate forgery.

Hashidu tasks commissioners

All commissioners in Gombe state have been directed to register as members of the Nigerian Red Cross Society in order to join the crusade of rendering humanitarian services. The state governor Alhaji Abubakar Habu Hasidu gave the directive Friday while declaring open the 40th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Nigerian Red Cross Society at the Jewel Hall in Gombe.

Chief Imam urges Na'abba to be steadfast, God-fearing

The chief Imam of Waje Juma'at Mosque in Kano, Alhaji Mohammad Nasir, has urged the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Alhaji Ghali Na'abba, to be steadfast and God-fearing in the conduct of his official assignment. "You should always consider the injunction not to favour anyone, irrespective of his position in the country," Nasir, advised Na'abba. Na'abba was on a visit to the state during a special Juma'at prayer for the peace and progress of the country.

Communiqué calls for police presence at disputed borders

The joint committee on interstate boundary between Akwa Ibom and Abia states, rose from its meeting on Friday with a call for continued police presence in the disputed border communities in a nine-point communiqué read to newsmen by the Abia state deputy Governor, Chief Enyinnaya Abaribe, in Uyo. The meeting appealed to the disputed border communities to maintain the peace so as to enhance speedy development of their areas.

Tinubu's quit order: 300,000 cattle dealers now homeless.

From Abdulfattah Olajide in Lagos

Sequel to the one-week quit order given them by governor Bola Ahmed Tinubu, about 300,000 cattle dealers formerly squatting in the lirage section of Lagos state-owned Oko-oba abattoir have been rendered homeless.

Some of the cattle

dealers who vacated the lirage at the weekend to beat today's deadline given them by the governor to quit, have temporarily relocated to the overcrowded live cattle market in the abattoir. Others who couldn't get space at the cattle market were seen setting up their tents and make-shift houses on the railroad behind the abattoir yesterday.

Some of them who spoke with the *Daily Trust* said that they vacated the lirage voluntarily to avoid any skirmish with the law enforcement agents who have allegedly been instructed to storm the lirage to forcefully eject them.

Governor Tinubu who gave the cattle dealers a week quit order last Tuesday had threatened to

use a joint police and military team to effect the order.

The Sarkin Pawa of the meat market, Alhaji Usman Musa told *Daily Trust* that the cattle dealers were forcefully relocated to the Oko-oba abattoir from Apapa in 1998 by the Col. Buba Marwa administration in the state.

Alhaji Musa explained that if the governor relocates them to Epe or Ikorodu area of the state as he earlier offered there was no guarantee that they would not be ejected from there later.

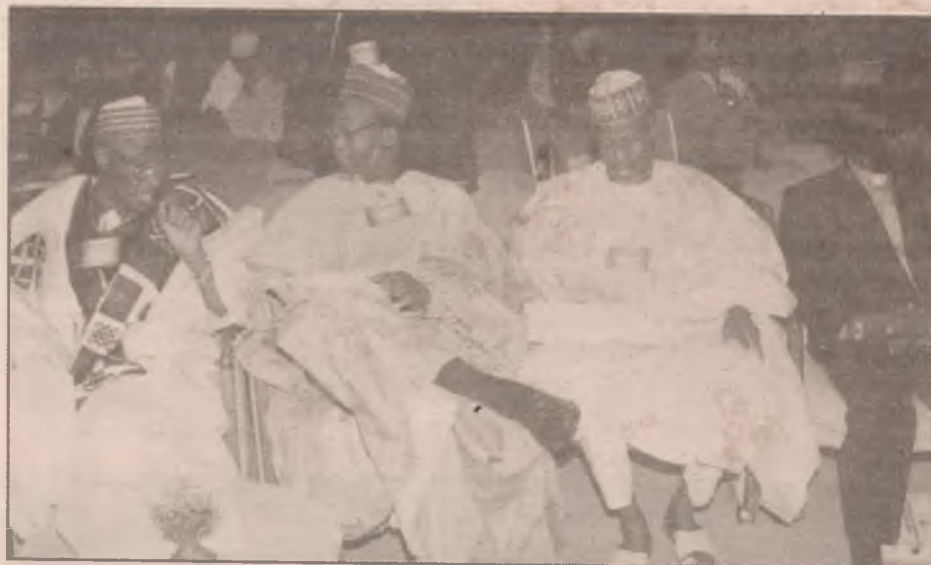
The Sarkin Pawa who said the cattle dealers were billed to hold a meeting with the state commissioner for Agriculture and

cooperatives, Mr. Kaolu Olusanya yesterday, added that they would reiterate their earlier plea for the government to rescind its orders.

He observed that their living in the abattoir was to facilitate their business and ensure the safety of their cattle and money.

His position was corroborated by the operations manager of Cattle Utilities Service Limited which currently manages the abattoir, Alhaji Sanni Dangama.

Alhaji Dangama who observed that the cattle dealers were exposed to health risks and attack by armed robbers in their new location. Pleaded with the government to have mercy on them.



L-R: Shehu D. Haliru, Mohammed Mahmud Maishanu, Zubairu Mohammed and Rev. Father Moses Adasu all members of Anti-Corruption Commission at a symposium yesterday.

FG to recover 2 billion dollars loot in foreign banks soon -Abubakar

The Federal Government is expecting to recover about two billion dollars of Nigerian money illegally stashed away in offshore accounts abroad, Vice-President Atiku Abubakar has said.

Presenting a profile of Nigeria's privatization programme at a meeting organised by 'corporate council on Africa, a U.S based investment outfit at the weekend in Washington, Abubakar said that arrangements for the release of the money was being concluded.

He said that although there was a court case in respect of the money, the federal government had made a headway towards ensuring that the money got into its coffers.

Abubakar, who was silent on the operators of the accounts, said that efforts to retrieve the money was part of government's effort to raise funds for its developmental programmes.

Commenting on the privatization programme, he said that the federal government hoped to realize N50 billion by the end of the second phase of



VP Atiku Abubakar the exercise, a 100 per cent increase over the N25 billion realized from the first phase. Abubakar invited

foreign investors to participate in the second phase, saying that there were business opportunities in the 39 companies, which the Nigerian government had slated for privatization this year.

He assured that the same efficiency witnessed in the implementation of the first phase would continue in the second phase, adding that the federal government was committed to making the private sector the engine of growth in the Nigerian economy.

Join in Nation building

-First Lady urges Nigerians abroad

The First Lady, Mrs. Stella Obasanjo has called on Nigerian professionals abroad to join hands with the present administration in its task of re-building the nation. Addressing a reception organized in her honour by the Nigerian community in Cape Town South Africa on Friday, Mrs. Obasanjo said Nigeria needed its qualified professionals overseas to assist in the endeavour "even if you cannot relocate to Nigeria immediately, visit home to

see in which way you can lend us a helping hand in re-building the country," she said.



Mrs. Stella Obasanjo

Police Boss Appears before House

From Abdullahi Bego, Maiduguri

Borno state Commissioner of Police Alhaji Uba-Bala Ringim yesterday appeared before the State House of Assembly to explain his command's role in the rampage by youths in Maiduguri during the recent moon eclipse.

The report of the police boss was however delivered in camera following a motion moved by representative Abdulrahman Abdulkarim who is the House Majority Leader, that the House dissolved itself into a committee of the whole House after which the gallery was cleared.

During the last moon eclipse, several youths in Maiduguri, while on traditional prayer march against the "evil" that befell the moon, took to destroying brothels, beer palours etc thereby sacking and injuring many prostitutes whom the youths accused of "committing the sins that invited the disaster."

Daily Trust reliably learnt that some of the prostitutes were forced to trek long distances from Mairi, Gwange and Bulabulin wards, among others to Bulunkutu Ngomari to take shelter. Many others reportedly left town due to fear generated by the attack.

4 clergy men burnt to death

From Akinade Adeniji in Minna

Four clergy men of the Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA), and two others were on Sunday burnt to death in a ghastly motor accident in Zungeru, Niger State.

The priests among whom were the District Church Council (DCC), Chairman Rev. Waziri Seidu, the DCC secretary, DCC Assistant Secretary and thier driver whose names were not immediately known were burnt beyond recognition.

The deceased were said to be coming from Tungan Magajiya where they had gone to attend a

DCC meeting when thier Peugeot 505 stationwagon car collided with a commercial vehicle in which two passengers died.

When the news of the death filtered into Minna, the premises of the ECWA church located at Mobil in Minna was in a mourning mood.

As a result of the severe burns suffered, the corpses of the deceased could not be identified.

The four clergymen were buried at the ECWA DCC secretariat premises in Minna with the ECWA national president, his vice, the state deputy governor, Dr. Shem Zagbayi Nuhu, among others.

NEWS

Politician tells Kano deputy Gov. to resign

A prominent Kano based first republican politician, Alhaji Aminu Dan-Nepu, has called on the state's deputy governor, Alhaji Abdullahi Ganduje, to resign his position, for his "unrepentant posture" on the outcome of Pfizer's 1996 CSM Trovan drug trial on victims.

As a result of the trial on children, 11 died and over 200 were reportedly impaired.

Aminu told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) yesterday in Kano, that it

was unforgivable for Ganduje to tell the people of the state in his recent chat with the press on the matter, that Trovan's trial test was not approved by the then state government.

"How does he want us to believe that Pfizer just came and started the trial without the consent of the state government, while he served as the works commissioner?" Dan-Nepu asked.

"He should realise that there is no need to politicise this matter because loss of

lives and impairment of innocent citizens were involved in the unfortunate trial test, done without the consent of the victims," he said.

If Ganduje did not know of the trial as an executive council member how come he told the press that "the outcome of the drug's test was not beyond scientific mortality rate?" Dan-Nepu asked.

"if the state government who not aware of the outcome of the trial how did Ganduje arrive at the conclusion that "the result of the trial test indicated that more people were cured compared with those who either lost their lives or got deformed?"

he asked.

The politician, was reminded Ganduje that he and his colleagues on the erstwhile State Executive Council would give account of their roles in the trial, before God, also wondered whether the deputy governor would not in future, disown certain decisions taken by the present regime that he was serving.

"I mean it is amazing for someone who claim ignorance of the action of government on 1996 Pfizer's Trovan drug trial to come up with conclusions I mentioned earlier even though he is not a medical doctor," he said.

"Those data reeled out are indicative of his knowledge as a member of the then Kano State Executive Council that something went wrong during the trial.

SSG condemns ban on fuel surface tanks

Akinade Adeniji, in Minna

The Federal Government's ban on surface tanks operators in the country has continued to receive condemnation among residents of Minna, capital of Niger State.

Secretary to the State Government (SSG), Alhaji Dahiru Awaisu Kuta in an interview said rather than ban the operators, the Federal Government should first solve the problems of inadequate supply of fuel.

(He berated the Federal Government's inability to direct its attention on the sordid and under the table practices of its agencies responsible for the production, procurement and distribution of the commodity.

"The actions of these agencies were enough to attract punitive measures from the Federal Government", Alhaji Dahiru said.

The SSG observed that banning the surface tanker operators in the face of inadequate supply of fuel to the state would certainly create hardship for innocent motorists.

"The State Government is not opposed to the ban per se, but as it is, the ban will compound the problems of the motorist and constitute social problems in the face of inadequate supply by NNPC", the SSG said. Recalling an instance when three million litres of fuel was said to have been allocated to Pogo depot in Minna, but no single litre was found.

He disclosed that the task force on petroleum had agreed with the State Government on the need to allow the black marketers operate until they receive further directive from their headquarters.

The government scribe said that on its part, the state government had been encouraging the black marketers otherwise known as "Kuwait Boys" to go back to school and promised them employment on graduation.

Those willing to continue with the fuel business, he said, would be organised with co-operative groups and tanks purchased for them and placed at some designated points.

Niger plans car loan for doctors

Medical doctors in Gombe state are to benefit from the over seven million naira car loans approved by the government towards encouraging and motivating them for an efficient performance.

Governor Abubakar Habu Hashidu, who announced this while launching the first round of the year 2001 National Immunisation Days (NIDS) in the state, said his administration was concerned with the welfare of doctors and other health personnel in the state.

According to him, over N7 million was also expected on the provision of basic facilities at the school of Health Technology, Kaltungo to enable it meet accreditation requirements of the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE).

He further revealed that the state government procured and utilised vaccines and syringes worth over N10 million for mass vaccination exercise conducted

last year against cerebrospinal meningitis (CSM) in addition to about N3 million released for logistics and other consumables to facilitate the control of child-killer diseases in the state.

Alhaji Hashidu reiterated the state government's determination to provide affordable health care services to the people, saying "government is aware of its primary responsibilities of providing qualitative, accessible and affordable health care services to the people" in order to enable them pursue productive economic activities.

The governor then urged traditional and religious leaders, public-spirited individuals and the organised private sector to contribute to the eradication of polio and other deadly diseases.

Earlier, the state commissioner for Health, Dr. Emmanuel Mailafiya Bukar who was represented by his permanent secretary, Alhaji Mato Yakubu solicited the assistance of local government chairmen to ensure successful exercise.

He appealed to the parents to avail their children under the age of five the opportunity of being protected against polio disease.

In his remarks, the national care-facilitator of NIDS in the state, Mr. Joseph Obute who acknowledge the efforts of the state government towards eradicating polio, called for continued zeal and commitment for the benefit of the people.



A gang of suspected armed robbery paraded before newsmen at the FCT police command, Garki yesterday. Photo: Kennedy Egbonodje.

Former SGF calls on north to embrace UBE

Former secretary to the Government of the Federal, Alhaji Gidado Idris has called on governments in the northern states to declare a ten year emergency plan to revive education in the region.

He said during the period the 19 northern government require to spend 40 per cent of their revenue on education while those with substantial population should integrate Islamic Studies into western education in such a way that the vestiges of suspicion or resistance are removed. The former SGF called on Northerners to support and patronize the Universal Basic Education Programme of President Olusegun Obasanjo's government.

He said only relevant

educational system can prepare the North to adequately compete and retain its place in Nigeria.

"By all means, all patriotic Nigerians should support and work towards the success of the Universal Basic Education Programme of this Administration and for the North in particular, this is a major imperative", he warned.

Alhaji Idris was speaking in Zaria, weekend at the Annual General Meeting of Zazzau Educational Development Association-his first public statement since he left office 19 months ago after being a civil servant for 46 years.

"For it is in the area of educating its young that the future of the North lies and nothing, I repeat nothing,

threatens the present and the future of the North in the context of a federated Nigeria than the present levels of official indifference, I would say even callousness of those who are in a position to effect a positive change in this direction, but choose not to", he cautioned.

Alhaji Idris pleaded that the best endowment of the North is its human resources but, "We need to embark on some bold steps and initiatives if the North is not to be permanently consigned to the rubbish dump of history, a community too blinded by its own self-imposed limitations to realize that God has blessed it with limitless bounties in its human resources," he

stressed.

Alhaji Idris emphasized that the North must do a lot to support a thoroughly-improved basic education programme, adding that it must recognize that its salvation lies in a radical, all-embracing programme which gives every child and young adult the best education available.

"This is the only line to the North's future, for without an educated citizenry which will in turn develop its vast agricultural potential, the North will never favourably compete in Federal Nigeria, and thus protect those interests which it considers vital to it," he disclosed.



Gov. Abdulkadir Kure

Tuesday Column

EDITORIAL

The lessons from Kabila's demise

By Attahiru M. Jega

In his intriguing book on the June 12, 1999 crisis, titled *The Tale of June 12* and published in 1999, Omo Omoruyi said that in the thick of things, he and General Babangida ruminated on the puzzling but critical question that all dictators often ask themselves, "Who guards the guards?" In other words, can a ruler ever guarantee his survival? Or, in spite of everything, when push comes to shove, would not those entrusted with the security of the ruler's life be the greatest threat to it?

The sudden (and untimely?) death of Laurent Kabila, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, from the bullets of one of his bodyguards, has made the concern with such a question even more poignant for all heads of state, dictators and democrats alike. Indeed, it is proving to be a deadly question, literally. President Baare Mainasara, a 'civilianized' military ruler of Niger Republic died in a manner similar to that of Kabila not so long ago. So did Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, after a lengthy period of unpopular rule under an imposed emergency. I suppose and a few insecure rulers in Africa and elsewhere are now wondering: who is next? How do I ensure that I am not the next?

Virtually all heads of state have elaborate security outfits meant to protect them by warding off danger and or confronting it decisively. Of course, some have by far more than others. Presidential bodyguards are in all countries, the elite corps of the security services. They are paid well, they are trained well and they are well-fed. The selection procedure for the BGs is vigorous in terms of physique, agility, endurance, intelligence and personal conduct. In addition, strenuous effort is made to extract loyalty from them, both to the nation and to the person they are supposed to protect.

In post-colonial, multiethnic and complex plural societies such as ours, heads of state take extra if not extra-ordinary measures to secure the loyalty

of their bodyguards. Knowing full well that there is no better way of beginning to address the question of who guards the guards, for one, they try to stack up the security detail with their own people, in terms of ethnicity, religion and region. For another, they try to keep the BGs so busy and detached from one another in order to prevent them from hatching conspiracies. Often, stringent control and supervision is exercised over them to prevent untoward behaviour. Then, the rulers literally pay them cash in return for loyalty. One account of this, security 'chiefs' are carefully chosen favourites of the presidents, the presidential bodyguards are carefully chosen favourites of the 'chiefs', and all of them got whatever they wanted and more. Inevitably, the 'chiefs' especially become so rich and often exceedingly powerful as power brokers and patronage dispensers. It is not for nothing that security roles are so secret and generally unaccounted for.

Given all the perks, perquisites and the "Rambo" status-symbol that they seem to enjoy, why should a bodyguard turn his gun sights on the person he is supposed to protect, as is evidently the case with Kabila's murder? Upon reflection, the reasons are as many as we may care to think of. In the charged and volatile political terrain, which is characteristic of our countries, virtually nothing is impossible. For example, when loyalty is to cash, then bodyguards may choose to sell their skills and privilege across to the highest bidder. If the price is right, many may well have no compunction in pulling the trigger in the opposite direction. Petty jealousies among the BGs, factionalism in the ruling junta and perceptions of discrimination induced and nurtured by the patronage system can also prove to be deadly indeed. Also, differing political beliefs and ideology in the context of heightened mobilization of ethnic and or religious identities can be a major critical factor. Indeed, more often than not, this seems to be

the over-riding consideration and motivation.

It is not yet clear as to what exactly was responsible for the assassination of Kabila by one of his bodyguards. What is clear, though is that Kabila was a ruler who shot himself to power and enjoyed it so much so that he became intoxicated by it. If he had any serious political beliefs and commitments, which served as the organizing principles for his seizure of power, they sort of evaporated once he became President Kabila. Many Zaireans or perhaps more appropriately, Congolese, may have been very happy to witness the demise of Mobutu and the ascendancy of Kabila some years ago. But as things went on, I doubt if there are many who continued to be happy with his carefree leadership style and reckless management of their country's resources. He developed a proclivity for fighting those who supported him to come to power, at the same time that he intensified fighting those who opposed him. His actions and inaction compelled an overwhelming majority of the masses to be apathetic and fatalistically resigned to the daily drudgery of coping with the demands of survival in a crisis-ridden political economy. As it has now turned out, not only did he alienate himself from the masses and his friends and foes alike, he evidently incurred the wrath of at least one of his bodyguards.

For the avoidance of doubt, Kabila's assassination is despicable and must be roundly condemned by all decent human things. It is barbaric, it violates civilized norms of political conduct and acceptable methods of effecting leadership change, and it is a dangerous trend that should be nipped in the bud, as Africa proceeds with the business of democratisation and dismantling legacies of authoritarian rule.

However, there are quite a few lessons I believe, for us to draw from this political assassination of a ruler by one of those detailed to protect him. First, as hard as they may try, whether they use carrots or sticks or both, despots systematically box

themselves into a corner, and a dead end. The more they strive to protect themselves against the people, using elaborate security outfits, the more such outfits contribute to their nemesis. The more elaborate, complex, intricate and costly, the security web erected around them, the more insecure they may become, and the greater the likelihood that security may easily give way to danger.

Second, rulers should realize that they cannot be the catalyst and pivot of crisis and yet escape its fatal consequences. The especially negative consequences of crisis would likely revolve around them for as long as they live and also live long after them, so long as they keep stirring it and fanning its embers. Rulers are like the proverbial goldfish, they have no hiding place, they live in glass houses and they ought not throw stones around and about.

Third, when rulers predicate their legitimacy upon the excessive and negative mobilization of ethnic, religious and other primordial identities, they may have no peace, just as their people and their nations may have no peace. Indeed, they would all be embroiled in distress and calamity and perpetual instability, a situation, which is inimical to national progress and development.

Lastly, the main lesson may well be that the people are the best defense for a leader. If their trust is cultivated, their good will tapped and their needs and aspirations satisfied; if the people are treated fairly, equitably, impartially, justly and humanely, their collective energy in support of the leader may well be his/her greatest security. Hence, although there are no absolute guarantees that the guards would be guarded, a leader who pays attention to these would have reinforced his/her armour with an additional coating of steel.

Professor Attahiru Jega, of the Department of Political Science, Bayero University, Kano, is a member of the Daily Trust Editorial Board.

The N80 Billion Aircraft

President Olusegun Obasanjo is fast-proving to be a master of the game of politicking; a political strategist of sorts; and one who is always determined to have his way.

We recall the furore and controversy generated when the president earlier sent a bill to the National Assembly seeking approval to buy a presidential Aircraft at the cost of N80 billion last year.

These lawmakers considered such a request outrageous and promptly rejected it, basing their argument on the fact that such an amount could be better used towards improving the lot of the Nigerians masses. At the time, Nigerians were happy with the Assembly men over their patriotic and courageous stand on the issue. The Executive lost in this power-game, however, not without extra cost to the National Assembly which from then on was bedeviled by one sort of crises or the other.

Not yet done, President Obasanjo again submitted another bill on the aircraft purchase to the legislators for the second time.

Reports have it that the leadership of the National Assembly has now given the president the go-ahead to send the supplementary budget for approval to purchase the aircraft.

This sudden u-turn by the National Assembly did not really come as a surprise. What is surprising however is the current 'romance' which is set to blossom between the Executive and the Lower House under Ghali Na'abba. Certainly, no right-thinking Nigerian will call for frequent confrontation between the Executive and the Legislature, especially not just for the sake of it. However, it is imperative that each arm of government should stand its ground and work honestly and with a clear conscience for the progress and development of the country. If the decision of President Obasanjo to change towards Ghali Na'abba, is only for him to secure easy passage for his bills, then, we are afraid that the interest of the country will be seriously jeopardized. The readiness of the assembly men to consider giving approval to the president for the purchase of this aircraft at the cost of N80 billion, especially at these hard times, is to say to least uncharitable. At most, it is a great insult on the poor masses of Nigeria. In a country where the average worker is always demanding, and rightly so, an increase in his minimum wage, where medical facilities are still in shambles, schools lacking in educational facilities, road network still in bad shape and the problem of electricity appears to be far from over, these and many other issues urgently require the N80 billion rather than the purchase of a single aircraft.

We feel that it is quite ridiculous for government to pursue the course of eradicating poverty or alleviating it on the one hand, while on the other hand it appears to be pursuing an agenda which runs contrary to such noble aims.

On the other hand, members of the National Assembly have a responsibility to once again demonstrate their loyalty and commitment to the nation by not succumbing to the Obasanjo blackmail and intimidation. In this respect, the senate has proved to be the greatest victim of the president's cunning as he now decides who and who occupies the leadership saddle of the house. The House of Representatives can still exercise its independence and agree with the executive only when the greater interest of the country is not being sacrificed.

For the president we have a word of advice. In politics it is unwise and suicidal to always insist on having one's way. A tactful politician may maneuver his way and achieve what he wants once in a while, but he knows quite well that most of the time it is the people's wishes that should see the light of day.

Whatever the case, we still have to maintain our stand that the purchase of this aircraft at such a whopping sum is unjustifiable, reckless and above all unreasonable.

We hope both the executive and the legislature will listen to the voice of reason.

I never knew that Governor Bola Tinubu is a member of Odu'a People's Congress (OPC) and Odu'a Liberation Army (OLA) until I read in your 3rd edition of *Daily Trust* (Vol. 1, No. 3) the story. "Tinubu threatens

LETTER OF THE DAY

Are we safe?

cattle dealers" and the story read "Governor Bola Ahmed Tinubu has given Arewa cattle dealers one

week to vacate the Oko-Oba abattoir or face forceful ejection".

Actually I read with shock

and grief the involvement of a governor in such devilish acts. Are we really safe in Nigeria?

Murjanatu A. Sa'eed,
Wadata Pharmacy,
No. 10 Ahmadu Bello Way,
Jos - Plateau State.

Opinion

Re: Secret Killings
Rock Gombe State

By Yahaya Abubakar

Our attention has been drawn to an article on the above subject written by one Bankole Makinde, of the *Nigerian Tribune*, and published in the Sunday edition of the paper on 10th December 2000, page twelve. Indeed, if not for the need to set the records straight, we would have ignored the write up because it was nothing but a catalogue of abuses, aspersions, innuendoes and lies manufactured by the author to suit the whims and caprices of the sponsors of the article. The serious distortions and misrepresentation of information on the security and socio-political composition of the State must therefore be cleared in order to put the facts in the right perspective.

It goes without saying, that Gombe State is relatively young, created in 1996, with eleven Local Governments and a multi-ethnic and multi-religious population similar to that of Kaduna State. It is also true that the Gombe North comprising seven Local Governments is predominantly Muslim, while the Gombe South consisting of four Local Governments has more Christian population. What is however a negation of fact is how the seven Local Governments in Gombe North have only 29 notable towns while the four Local Governments in Gombe South have 37 notable towns? If population variable is the main factor that determines the "notable towns" the fact of the matter is that there should be more towns in Gombe North than South. According to the 1991 Census figures projected to Year 2000, the present Local Government Areas in Gombe North have a total population of 1,420,708, representing 73.76% of the total population of the State, which is 1,926,196. Whereas, the four Local Government Areas in Gombe State have a combined population of 505,488 representing 26.24% of the State population. Taking thirty thousand people as the baseline, Gombe North has towns like Gombe, Kumo, Pindiga, Kashere, Tumu, Daba, Kwadon, Dukku, Bajoga, Ashaka, Nafada, Birnin Fulani, Birnin Bolewa, Mallam Sidi, Kwami, Gadam, Bojude, Doho, Komfulata, Gombe Abba, Malala, Tongo, Hinna, Difa, Zambuk, Dadin Kowa,

Jagali, Kurjale, Akko, Lawanti, Wuro Dole, Kuri, Tarbra, Kalshingi, Kashere and Tukulma. In Gombe South, the towns and villages in this category are Billiri, Banganje, Tal, Filiya, Gwandum, Boh, Talsse, Gelengu, Lalaipido, Kaltungo, Awak, Tula, Ture, Bambam, Cham and Degri.

While it is true that the people of Gombe State are politically conscious and voted in the last election on the basis of merit, rather than religious or ethnic affiliations, which undoubtedly worked in favour of Governor Abubakar Habu Hashidu, it is not correct that the People's Democratic Party (PDP) won all the elections in the last general elections. For instance, in the Local Government elections, even though the PDP has seven Chairmen while the APP has four, the APP has the highest total votes cast. Although the PDP won a landslide victory in the presidential election, the APP in the National elections, won two Senatorial seats, while the PDP got only one. In the gubernatorial election, the difference is clear, where APP emerged winner with over 96,578 votes. The fact of the matter is that the APP, in terms of total vote cast in most of the elections in 1999. Thus it is erroneous to say that the APP won less popular in the State.

It is true that the Governor Abubakar Habu Hashidu's mandate transcended the boundaries of religion. He contested on Muslim and Christian ticket with himself as a Muslim and his Deputy, barrister Joshua Lidani a Christian. Indeed, all the three political parties that contested the gubernatorial election in the State contested on the basis of Muslim-Christian arrangement, which is a reflection of the religious plurality in the State. Governor Abubakar Habu Hashidu has maintained that he did not campaign on the basis of religion and his manifesto, as encapsulated in his publication, "My Dream for Gombe State" did not say anything about religion. He always acknowledges, with gratitude, the tremendous support he got from the Christian community in the State. It is therefore unfair to attribute the present agitation for Sharia in Gombe State to Governor Abubakar Habu Hashidu.

To be continued

Yahaya Abubakar is the
Gombe State Director of
Press.

"It is true that the Governor Abubakar Habu Hashidu's mandate transcended the boundaries of religion. He contested on Muslim and Christian ticket with himself as a Muslim and his Deputy, barrister Joshua Lidani a Christian. Indeed, all the three political parties that contested the gubernatorial election in the State contested on the basis of Muslim-Christian arrangement, which is a reflection of the religious plurality in the State".

Usama-mania in Maiduguri

From Abdullahi Bego,
in Maiduguri

Usama Bin Laden, America's most wanted man, is a citizen of the world. Or so it seems. He lives a quiet unruffled life, reports say, in different spots between Kabul and Kandaha in Afghanistan and other places around the world. He may not pass as a man of the New World, not with the mien of a conservative Muslim cleric, but he enjoys its enormous endowments. He uses satellite phones, taps the Internet and follows stock markets.

Bin Laden, reports also indicate, is a vastly influential man. Though only a handful of lieutenants stay around him, a whole legion of like minds listen to and follow his teachings, his credo being the struggle to enthrone world Islamic justice and dethrone "the forces of evil and global arrogance".

A former CIA collaborator and star of the Afghan Mujahideen against Soviet invasion, Bin Laden's stand on American international political, economic and military relations had given him more than what he probably bargained for.

Enter 1998. Determined to begin the new millennium in a more peaceful and more prosperous World, the West, led by the United States elevated the phenomenon of terrorism to the global agenda. The bombing of US embassies in Nairobi and Dar as Salam in which over two hundred died,

became more than enough provocation for an all out war against terrorists.

Relying on sophisticated intelligence - and probably Bin Laden's tendencies of the United States, rightly or wrongly, blamed the East Africa embassy bombings to a Bin Laden sponsored network and thus raised him to the status of one of the most wanted sponsors (or is it executors?) of international terrorism.

Along with the bombing of a US military facility in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and, more recently, the U.S.S Cole in Yemen to which he was linked, Bin Laden-bashing has continued to flower in Western, and particularly American media.

Paradoxically however, and probably mysteriously, rather than passing that to a captive international audience, the media (mostly negative) portrayals of Bin Laden have somewhat helped to increase, rather than decrease, the shine on Usama's armour, making him something of a hero among many, particularly in northern Nigeria.

These days, the pictures and portraits of Usama Bin Laden are not only becoming fashionable on the windscreen of cars, taxis and buses, they are increasingly becoming so much in vogue one may think he was a Nigerian campaigning - through posters for some political office.

Paradoxically too, many of the people in Kano, Jigawa, Borno and Yobe states, *Daily Trust* checks show, who so

passionately affix Usama's pictures to their vehicles or shops seemingly know little about the knitty gritty of the international system or the fineries of the US led new world order to appreciate the dynamics of the Bin Laden America confrontation.

Yet they display them and are proud to do so. One Baba Yusuf, a Yoruba bus driver in Maiduguri said he likes Usama because "he teaches America a lesson". Two other taxi drivers and a shop owner also in Maiduguri also like "Usama's defiance against the Americans... he champions an Islamic movement that opposes American domination."

Most other people interviewed adduced similar reasons for liking Bin Laden and cited international radio stations as their source of information concerning one of the most avowed American enemies.

But just why so many people attach heroic insignia to a man who stands up against the US remains a subject of deferring interpretations.

In a chat with *Daily Trust*, Abubakar Othman of the department of English of the University of Maiduguri said people admire Bin Laden because he singly stands against America, which has "appointed itself as the superpower of the world... pock-nosing virtually every aspect of life..."

With its "no permanent friends but permanent interests" approach to international relations,

Professor Kyari Tijani of the Centre of Trans Sahara Studies of the University of Maiduguri told *Daily Trust*, "I used to believe that after the fall of communism, the next target (of the West and America) is Islam because Islam is one of the most organised forces against Western interests." Thus people's love for Bin Laden, the Professor said, may not therefore be unconnected with his position "as a son of the cradle of Islam who is completely unhappy with the (present) status of Islam itself... and is spearheading the struggle against those who undermine it."

But Bin-Laden mania, as represented in the wide-spread use of Usama's pictures, may have other under pinning, too, said Dr. Umar Pate of the department of Mass Communications at the University of Maiduguri. While "it is a sign of protest against American ideas as they concern Islam," the mass printing of Bin Laden's pictures "is more of commercial exploitation than a deliberate policy. Some people who are in the marketing business feel that by promoting him (Bin Laden), they are likely to attract business profits."

Whichever way one looks at it, a trend seems to have been started in public perception of America's standing in the international system. It has happened before with Ghaddafi and Ayatollah Khomeini. Bin Laden could be the new bridge and only time could tell what the future portends.

Between NECO and WAEC

By Habeeb Idris Pindiga

For decades, the conduct of Secondary School Leaving Certificate examinations rested on the arms of the West African Examinations Council (WAEC), which had the sole responsibility of administering examinations to Students in Secondary Schools, and Subsequently awarding certificates to that effect. This trend was on until 1999 when the regime of Abdulsalami Abubakar founded the National Examination Council (NECO), in order to among others, break the monopoly hitherto enjoyed by WAEC. To many watchers, this development was going to sow a kind of rift between the two bodies, which are apparently two sides of the same coin.

According to the federal government, NECO would take over the conduct of May/June Senior School Certificate Examinations (S.S.C.E) for regular Secondary School Leavers, and WAEC and continue with the November/December S.S.C.E for private candidates.

Although the government did not lend credence to various popular grievances against the WAEC by the public, the elements of WAEC's guilt cannot be separated from the decision.

True cases of missing results, pending, leakages, malpractices and a legion of other problems were rife. Normal writing period for results were six months. Thus the idea that students were too many for the council to make a proper job alone, and consequently the need for NECO as a supplement.

Whichever the real reason might have been, NECO was founded, and it emerged to checkmate the WAEC, and of course as a solvent to the enigmatic tendencies of WAEC. However, looking at the happenings during debut of NECO last year, one wonders which is more problematic between NECO and WAEC.

In the year 2000, NECO shared the conduct of May/June S.S.C.E with WAEC, and candidates were allowed to choose any or both. Side by side the exams took place with majority of the candidates opting for NECO. Conduct of the exams by NECO was more or

less a farce. Mix-ups and similar hitches face by WAEC had been the order. Consequently, a not-so-good session was held where candidates tell of how they were freely allowed to commit malpractices.

When the results were released just few weeks after the 90-day deadline set by NECO, the need for a revisit to procedure of the whole thing became palpable. WAEC also released its results before the conventional six-months span.

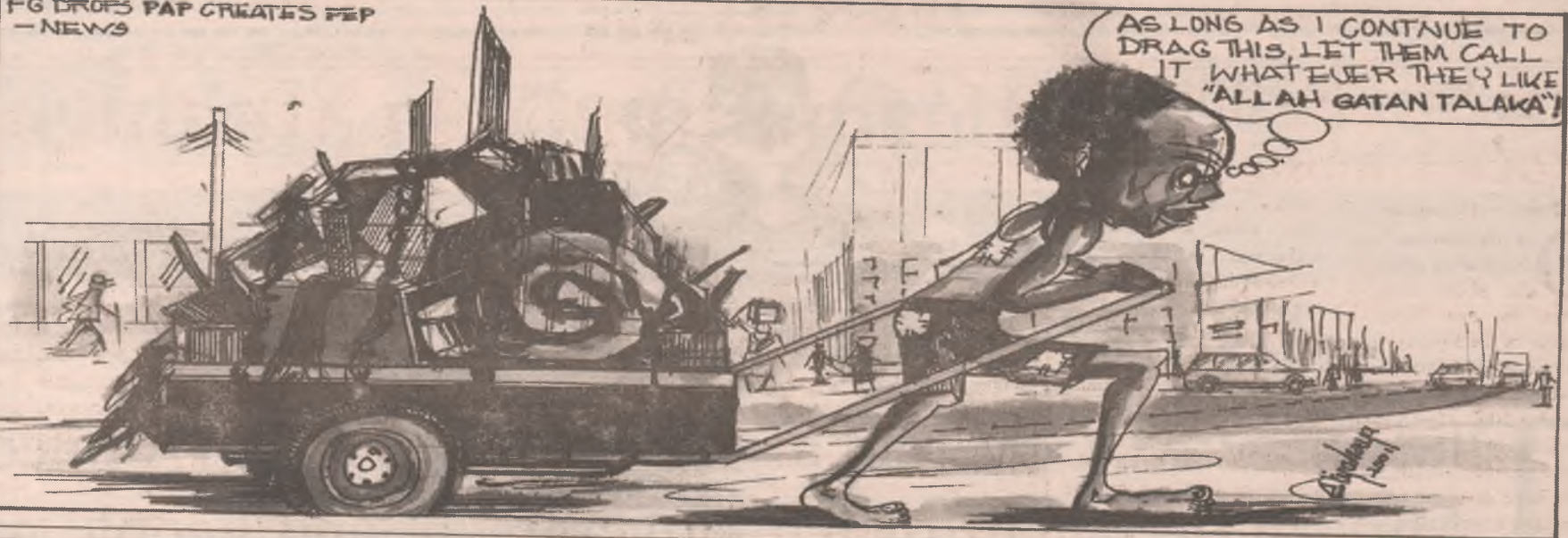
Many students as usual woefully failed the WAEC exams with a sizeable number getting "flat" or "9 x 9" or "81" etc. In NECO, it was a very different story. The council was generous to release thunderbolts of distinctions and credits. One student who only scored a pass in the whole of nine subjects taken in WAEC exams, the remaining were of course fail; "scored" 9 distinctions in NECO. Another candidate was luckier, for he registered but did not sit for a paper, yet NECO was so philanthropic as to score him a distinction. One other candidate claimed to have "laundered" (a euphemism for "copied") all his answers for a certain paper from a colleague and got A1, while the colleague failed the subject. Such altruism is most catastrophic.

Operating with no syllabus to call its own, and with a handful of staff and computer sets, and allegedly plagiarizing WAEC's copyrighted materials, one is forced to doubt the authenticity of this nebulous philanthropy. As an aberration from WAEC's strict method of hiring the services of PhD's and Professors, NECO exams scripts were said to have been marked by University students. Being so precocious and yet to get proper legal backing, the major problem with NECO's attitude is that standards are going to suffer. Agreed WAEC has been notorious over the years for releasing poor results. The question, however, is had it been deliberately failing the candidates or had they been so deserving?

Breaking WAEC's monopoly amounts to deregulation and competition, two concepts which are not always healthy in the education sector. What is expected this year is that WAEC will have no choice but to score its candidates "correctly" by all means. Failure will amount to aggravating the eroded goodwill the council had. From NECO, already good tidings of more benevolence are an open secret. End result will be showers of credits and distinctions that are unauthenticated by both councils.

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FG DROPS PAP CREATES FEP
- NEWS



YOUR LETTERS

God used Gov. Makarfi

Short 'n' Sharp
Thanks to Dr. Datti Ahmed

I would like to use this opportunity to express appreciation to Dr. Datti Ahmed over his interview which appeared in your Trusted paper vol.31 page 2 September 15-21, 2000. Titled 'Sharia is greater than Nigeria', I read his interview and was very happy with the way he enlightened us (Muslims) about President Obasanjo and Sharia in Islam.

Haruna Ibrahim Hamidu, Turaki Ward, Nya Street Jalingo, Taraba State

Don't be vengeful Mr. President

Mr. President, if you could remember when you were in prison, you never dreamt of coming out, nor of being a president of this nation again.

It is the will of God that brought you out, and made you the president, and in the History of Nigeria you are the only person that ruled this country twice.

Therefore, in the interest of Justice, Peace and Stability, kindly forget what has happened in the past, and release, Mohammed Abacha and the others. Their continued detention is wrong.

It is better for you to continue to pardon all your enemies, rather than take to vengeance.

Long live Mr. President, long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Alh. Mohammed Musa (Hon.) Former Vice Chairman Zaria Local Govt.

Where is Yakasai?

The Messiah has come, the Saint is here. But whose saint or messiah? President Obasanjo has been in office for nearly two years, yet, Col Yakasai accused of killing only a person has been detained without trial. Frederick Faseun is however moving freely on the streets, his organization was responsible for the deaths of thousands of people.

We can see that the principles of Rule of Law have been violated. And we cannot expect any dividends of democracy without adhering to the rule of law.

Aliyu Wada Nas P.O. Box 158 Funtua, Katsina State

Late Idiagbon was right!

One wonders what the North has done to check the Lagos-Ibadan media propaganda? Speaker Ghali Na'abba should have taken

'Thisday' newspaper to court for damaging his reputation when it erroneously reported that he refused to attend the Nation's 40th Anniversary Celebration, when actually he was abroad on official duty and he in fact celebrated with Nigerians there.

This our God would fight for us stand is further worsening the situation. The right way to make a chronic ethnicist adhere to principles is not only to educate or enlighten him/her, that's where late Awo was wrong, it is to make them pay for their actions and inactions; that's where Idiagbon was right!

Aliyu Mohammed KawuKawu.sc@abu.edu.ng

Since the creation of Kaduna state, for those who have been following developments in the state with keen interest, we have had only two governors that should be made mention of, any time people oriented administrations are being x-rayed in the state.

These 'peoples' governors could have been three but one of them, due to the Northern machination of not seeing anything good in their fellow northerner, destroyed him by impeaching him on a Sunday when most people were either praying in churches or having their peaceful rest at home. And since the wrongful impeachment, guilt did not fail to punish those that were the actors on the impeachment of Gov. Balarabe Abdulkadir Musa. The people (governors) one is referring to are:

- a. His Excellency - Balarabe Musa
- b. His Excellency - Brig.-Gen. L. J. Isa
- c. His Excellency - Ahmed Mohammed Makarfi

These three people have full knowledge of how Kaduna State is and knew how to go about the administration of the state.

The youngest of the three happens to have been the one that sat on the throne when the seat was too hot for comfort. Yet with that he was able to do what anybody of his age would not have ventured to do as a youth. The way he has approached the issue of peace in the state is highly commendable. This singular act of Ahmed Makarfi should prove to everybody that Kaduna would be better managed by those who know Kaduna and are part and parcel of it.

The broadcast Ahmed Mohammed Makarfi, Governor of Kaduna State made was not his own but God

simply used him as a trumpet. The knowledge. Understanding, wisdom came from God because God saw Makarfi as a person with a clean mind. Secondly, despite the persistent bloodshed in Kaduna, God still has a special favour for the citizens of Kaduna State, that is why he used the young man to build the rented fences for us. The broadcast was God's design.

God used Makarfi to remind the entire citizens of Kaduna State and indeed the entire nation that whether we implement Shariah here on earth or not God's Judgment is a must on all the human race on the Last Day. We truly accept the pronouncement made by the Governor Makarfi. We are truly repenting to God for the wrong we have done to each other, ignorantly. We wish God to forgive us and we promise to

be each others keepers by loving our neighbours as ourselves.

I want to use this chance to commend the Inter-Religious Committee of Kaduna State for handling our problem maturely and objectively. What the people expect of any responsible government, justice and fairness, has been demonstrated by the young governor Ahmed Makarfi.

For anybody to create any problem in Kaduna State again, after this fair dispensation of justice, means the person or persons simply wants to create an avenue to loot other people's properties or such person or persons simply hates the Governor for serving the masses. It is time for the poor to know themselves and refuse to be used by selfish groups in the name of religion. No religion preaches violence.

The government is ap-

pealed to, to encourage peaceful co-existence by making most occupants in Kaduna township land lords rather than tenants. Let people be encouraged to own their personal houses in Kaduna, so that people would not be moving up and down creating confusion at the slightest misunderstanding.

Whether we like it or not our children would always eat, play together and inter marry. It is better we encourage them to co-exist. The future belongs to them and as such we should build a sound future for our children.

Our problems in the entire north are poverty and ignorance, the best step in addressing these two monsters is unity and not to use religion as a cloak to destroy the little we acquired with difficulty.

We would serve God best if we love one another.

Ben Z. Yayork
Teacher, G.G.S.S., Doka, Kaduna state

Clarify these issues Obasanjo

The disclosure made by Taiwo Obasanjo (Nee Martins) in The News magazine about President Olusegun Obasanjo, if true, has the potential of sending a President out of office in any part of the world that upholds moral discipline as a strong quality for leadership.

Undermining the President's claim of being a born-again Christian, stories that make the rounds paint a different picture of

him. It behoves the President to brace up and be courageous enough to apologize to Nigerians for these stories and be remorseful about the present and possibly the future.

In a situation, where the President of a nation is supposed to act as a role model for the entire citizenry, it is unfortunate that no other person than a close associate of him, is presenting him as a misfit. Indeed, I doubt if there is any right minded parent that would allow his

child to emulate a President that is said to be a Christian yet has so many women frolicking him as mistresses.

Taiwo Obasanjo's disclosures about her ex-husband, though a disappointment of the highest order, need some clarification. Let the President find time to talk on these issues bordering on his personality. He cannot continue to wash the outside of the dish while the inside remains filthy.

The President must realize that his call for sanitization of the polity or probe in whatever form, whether it is the Abachas or the National Assembly, will mean nothing except he cleanses himself first.

Betty Ogwude
7 Toyin Street, Ikeja Lagos

A job well done

Let me use this opportunity to thank the executive governor of Jigawa State Alhaji Ibrahim Saminu Turaki, for his commitment to improving the educational standard of our young state. A very

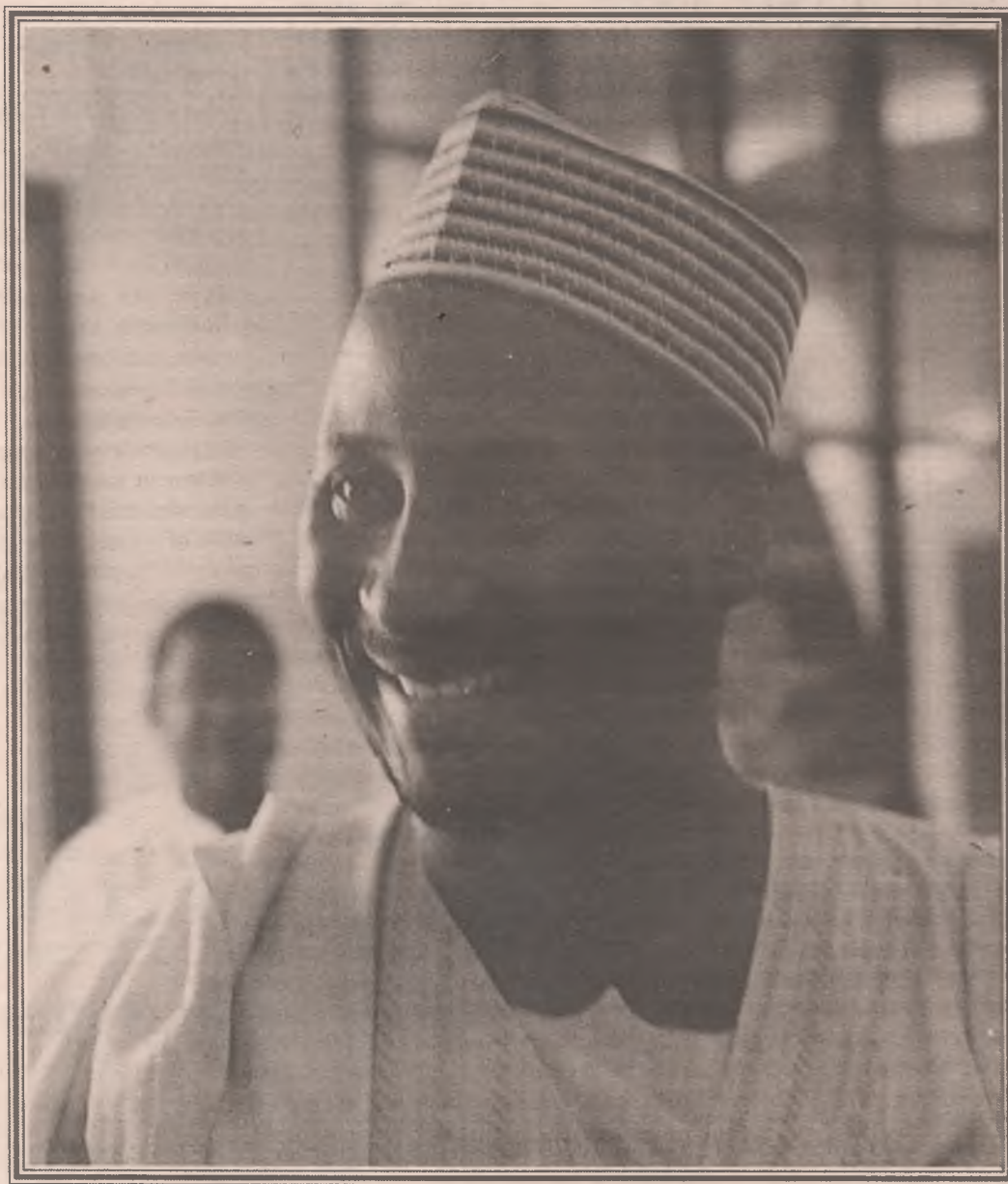
sound education is unarguably the backbone of development of any community, so please keep it up.

M. S. Zakari
No.3 Kadpoly qtrs.
(CST) Tudun Wada Kaduna



CONGRATULATIONS

The Executive Governor of Bauchi State, Alhaji Ahmed Mu'azu on behalf of the Government and People of Bauchi State congratulate the Management and Staff of Media Trust Limited for the introduction of *Daily Trust*.



Alhaji Ahmed Mu'azu
Executive Governor of Bauchi State

It is our prayer that the new publication will be among the leading papers in terms of objectivity and maintenance of high professional excellence. Good luck and congratulations.

Alhaji Ahmed Mu'azu
Executive Governor of Bauchi State

TRUST INTERNATIONAL

Foreign and Diplomatic

Israel opens borders for Palestinian workers

Israel opened its borders with Gaza and the West Bank yesterday to 16,000 Palestinians granted Israeli work permits last month, easing a travel ban as negotiators held in Egypt.

"They began leaving for Israel this morning. At the moment only some have gone through," said Yarden Vatikay, spokesman for Israel's military-run Civil Administration in occupied parts of the two regions.

He said 16,000 Palestinian labourers, aged 35 and over and married with

children, were given work permits after passing Israeli security checks. Israeli considers family men less likely



Barak

to carry out guerrilla attacks.

The permits were granted in December but entry was frozen for several weeks in response to violence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, where a Palestinian uprising has been raging since late September.

The number of workers allowed back in Israel was only a fraction of the estimated 120,000 Palestinians legally or illegally employed in the Jewish state before the bloodshed erupted.

The decision coincided with a last-ditch bid by Israeli and Palestinian nego-

tiators in Egypt's Red Sea report of Taba to reach an agreement ahead of Israel's prime ministerial election of February 6.

"Only several dozens have actually crossed into Israel today because the announcement was made only late last night," said al-Mudallal, head of the employment department of the Palestinian Labour Ministry, told Reuters.

Witnesses said Israeli soldiers at the Erez crossing with Gaza stepped up their security inspection procedures on Monday as they let workers through.

Earlier, a soldier was seriously wounded in a bomb blast near the Jewish settlement of Netzarim in the Gaza Strip.

Bush warns staff on high ethical standards

President George W. Bush directed his staff on Monday to uphold the highest ethical standards and to never take for granted the honour of working in the White House.

In his first event in the White House East Room after taking office on Saturday, Bush presided over the swearing-in of his White House staff.

"Today everything is so promising and new. My hope is that the day will never come when any of us talk ethics place for granted, and this honour for

granted," Bush said.

He told his staff to "stay will within the boundaries that define legal and ethical conduct," show civility and avoid arrogance, and remember they are here to make progress, not just mark time."

Bush said the staff should confront each other, even him, if they feel there is an ethical or legal violation. "We're all accountable to one another, and above all, we're all accountable to the law, and to the American people," he said.

Arroyo takes charge in Manila but Estrada may fight

New Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo took charge at Manila's Malacanang yesterday but there were signs that Estrada, the man she ousted, may mount a rearguard challenge.

Arroyo, the vice-president who was dramatically handed the top job at the weekend, attended a flag-raising ceremony and announced a series of cabinet appointments from the palace, her home in the early 1960s when her late father Diosdado Macapagal was president.

Financial markets cheered her arrival with the stock market index closing a record 17.56 percent higher and the peso gaining strongly before falling back to near Friday's closing levels.

But Arroyo's taking office could soon be engulfed by a constitutional

crisis. Senate President Aquilino Pimentel said he had received a letter from Estrada on Monday saying he was only giving up power temporarily.

A copy of the letter, dated January 20, said: "I am unable to exercise the powers and duties of my office. By operation of law and the constitution, the Vice-President shall be the Acting President."

Under the constitution, the president can re-assume the presidency later if he states he is able to.

Although there has been no formal challenge to Arroyo taking over, Pimentel told reporters: "It looks like the basis for a constitutional challenge is being laid down by this letter."

Officials at the House of Representatives said a similar letter from Estrada had been received by Speaker Arnulfo Fuentesbella.

The Supreme Court stripped Estrada of his powers last Saturday after the military, the police and most of the cabinet said they could not serve under him.

They then joined hundreds of thousands of people demanding Estrada's removal and condemning last week's breakdown of his Senate impeachment trial on charges of bribery and corruption.



Arroyo

China woos rival Taiwan, warns US to stay out

China's top foreign policy official urged Taiwan yesterday to move toward political talks and warned the United States to stay out of the dispute between the Communist-ruled mainland and the self-governing island.

In a speech carried by Xinhua news agency, Vice-Premier Qian Qichen also urged Taiwan to accept direct trade links with Taiwan's people during and after reunification of the two rivals.

Qian blamed Taipei for the impasse in relations, saying its refusal to acknowledge that Taiwan was part of China was "the source of current tension across the Taiwan Strait".

And in a message to new US President George W. Bush, perceived by China as being friendlier to Taiwan than his predecessor, Qian said China "resolutely opposes any foreign forces interfering with China's resolving the Taiwan problem".

"We hope that a big power with major responsibility for world

peace... will honour its solemn pledges to the Chinese government on the Taiwan question and not take any actions that lead to heightened across-Strait tensions," Qian said.

Last week, US Secretary of State Colin Powell reiterated America's long-standing commitment to the "one China" principle, core demand of Beijing.

But Powell also said he opposed reunification by force and promised to provide for Taiwan's defence needs.

Death toll from Indonesian landslides hits 51

The death toll from landslides that slammed into several villages in remote islands in eastern Indonesia at the weekend has risen to 51 with the discovery of 20 more bodies, police said yesterday.

The slides swept through villages in the sparsely populated Sangihe Talaud islands, 2,500km northeast of Jakarta, after heavy rains burst the walls of a dam on Saturday.

"By 10 o'clock this morning, we found 20 villagers buried in the landslides," Police Commissioner Ruslan Aspan of the Sangihe Talaud island district said by telephone, 200km north of Manado, capital of North Sulawesi province.

Police, who are carrying out the rescue operations, said it was not clear how many people had been injured or left homeless.

The landslides were fol-

lowed by a series of earthquakes that shock the same area on Sunday, the strongest measuring 5.8 on the Richter scale. It was unclear if any tidal waves were triggered.

No casualties had been reported due to the quakes, but officials said they were having trouble contacting remote areas.

Earthquakes regularly hit Indonesia and occasionally cause widespread damage.

Production of cocaine, heroin drop—UN

Production of cocaine and heroin, the world's main problems drugs, is falling substantially and has narrowed to fewer countries than ever, the United Nations said in its World Drug Report 2000 yesterday.

The Vienna-based US office for Drug control and Crime Prevention (ODCCP) said coca leaf and cocaine manufacturing fell some 20 percent between in the past year alone.

The principal consumer markets also stabilized or even experienced a decline in numbers, the report added.

"The time has come to change the way we think about drugs," ODCCP Executive Director Pino Arlacchi said in a statement.

"The world community must end the psychology of despair that has gripped the minds of a generation and instead focus on a pragmatic, long-term approach to reducing both the supply of and demand for illicit drugs," he added.

Supported by a "get serious" approach by most major coca and opium poppy producing coun-

tries, production had now narrowed down to fewer countries.

Afghanistan and Myanmar account for around 90 percent of illicit opium production, while Colombia produces two thirds of the world's coca leaf.

The report said drug trafficking and its routes had fanned out as a result of globalisation, and the number of countries reporting seizures increased to 170 in 1997/98 from 120 in 1980/81.

The UN reckons that

roughly 180 million people, or 4.2 percent of the world's population aged 15 and over, consumed drugs in the late 1990s.

Cannabis was the drug of choice with some 144 million users, followed by amphetamine-type stimulants (29 million), cocaine (14 million) and opiates (13.5 million). The figures do not add up to the 180 million estimate due to poly-drug use.

The most marked increase worldwide in drug consumption in the last decade was of amphetamine-type stimulants such as methamphetamine and Ecstasy.

Cocaine use in the United States fell around 70 percent during 1985-1999, while overall drug use dropped 40 percent. In Germany, heroin abuse was stable and in Spain and Italy it fell in the last decade.



Kofi Annan

TRUST INTERNATIONAL

AFRICA & THE MIDDLE EAST

Landslide buries Tanzanian village, 15 feared dead

At least 15 people are feared dead after a landslide buried a village in a remote part of western Tanzania after heavy rains, police officials said yesterday.

Regional Police Commander Placid Chaka told Reuters the landslide, which occurred last

Thursday, had buried about 30 houses including a refugee reception center in the tiny fishing village of Mtanga on the shores of Lake Tanganyika.

"We had real heavy rains for about one hour and the village which is on a slope is completely covered in mud," he said. "We

suspect over 15 people are dead, either buried or down in the lake."

Tanzania's short rainy season is just coming to an end but the rain has been particularly heavy this month.

Chaka said marine police were searching the lake for bodies but none had been recovered by Monday.

Saudi Arabia has banned Ugandan pilgrims from the annual Muslim hajj pilgrimage next month because of fears over the deadly ebola fever, a pan-Arab newspaper reported yesterday.

Uganda says that 173 people have died in an ebola epidemic first spotted last September.

Ebola has no cure and most victims die from shock after days of high fever, chest pains, vomiting and extensive bleeding.

Saudi bans Uganda pilgrims over ebola fears

The London-based Asharq al-Awsat quoted a hajj Ministry official as saying that Saudi Arabia had refused to issue visas to

Ugandans for hajj.

"The Saudi government move was intended to ensure the safety of the pilgrims from all Muslim states, including Saudi Arabia," it quoted the officials as saying.

Some two million pilgrims from around the world perform the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, Islam's birthplace.



King Fahd

Taylor alleges "big Hands" were behind Kabila's death

Liberian president Charles Taylor has alleged that "big hands" were behind the killing of President Laurent-Desire Kabila of the Democrat Republic of Congo.

"What happened to Kabila is sad. But you can rest as-

sured there are (big) hands under it," Taylor's private radio quoted him as telling his cabinet on Friday when it held its first session in 2001 in Monrovia.

Analysts in the Liberian capital believed Taylor was apparently referring to the world's big powers.

The late Kabila,

shot thrice by a bodyguard at his official residence in Kinshasa, the DRC capigtal, died a few days later in Harare, Zimbabwe, where he was flown for medical attention.

"Liberia has serious concerns about what happened in Congo (Kinshasa) Taylor said in a tone that suggested fear.

The Liberian president has been blamed by the United Nations and several countries for his alleged dealing in diamonds illegally mined by the rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone.

He is also accused of supplying the ruthless rebel group with arms.

Chiluba asks parties to keep DRC peace process on course

The mediator in the Democratic Republic of Congo conflict, Zambia President Frederick Chiluba on Saturday appealed to belligerents in the Congolese conflict not to take advantage of President

Laurent Kabila's death by undertaking activities likely to complicate or delay the DRC peace process.

Chiluba urged the parties to the Lusaka peace agreement to exercise maximum restraint and also allow the family, people and

government of the DRC to mourn their departed father and leader in peace.

"The Onus is now on all peace-loving Congolese people as well as those that are involved in the conflict in that country, no not to take advantage of the situation by under-

taking activities likely to complicate or delay the DRC. His mediation efforts will be intensified within the framework of the Lusaka ceasefire agreement.

"The assassination of the president of the DRC, Laurent Desire Kabila has been received with great sadness and deep sorrow. His death is a tragedy for the DRC, which has been desperately searching for and has not known peace and stability in the past two years.

"The circumstances of his death have also yet again, cast a dark shadow on the rule of law in our continent," Chiluba mourned.

Kinshasa mourns Kabila

Hundreds of people queued on Monday to see the body of slain Congolese President Laurent Kabila, brought back to Kinshasa on Sunday amid an outpouring of grief and now lying in state ahead of burial on Tuesday.

Ordinary Congolese trooped past the coffin of the murdered president in the People's Palace where it lay beneath the blue flag started with gold that Kabila reintroduced when he toppled the late Mabutu Sese Seko in 1997.

AS a line of mourners snakes around the courtyard, some wept softly for Kabila, shot dead by a bodyguard last Tuesday.

"We have lost a real nationalist who was there for the unity of the country," said one mourner.

Pierre Onto. According to official accounts, Kabila had been talking to an adviser when the bodyguard came into the room and shot him three times. The stricken president was flown to Harare for treatment, where authorities said he died.

Both Monday and Tuesday have been declared public holidays, so few businesses were open and the streets were quiet.

"For now we are still mourning," said Bengo Kabelenge, an air freight agent. "We're waiting to see what will happen after Tuesday. That is what we are still unsure of."

Kabila's 31-year-old son, Joseph, is to be sworn in as president once the funeral is over.

Government sources said Kabila was likely to be buried at the Palace of the

Nation, a Belgian colonial building on the banks of the River Congo that served as the Central African country's first parliament.

State television said there would be a flypast and a 21-gun salute during the funeral and asked people not to worry.



Late Kabila

Congo rebels describe brutal killings in northeast

Rebel officials said yesterday at least 200 people had been massacred in the past few days in a gruesome wave of killings involving rival ethnic groups in northeastern Congo.

Jacques Depelchin, a senior rebel official, told Reuters that severed heads had been paraded around the town of Bunia on the Democratic Republic of Congo's border with Uganda after violence between the Lendu and Hema groups erupted on Friday.

"Vehicles went around town parading cut off heads that had been spiked on sticks - it was horrible," Depelchin said by satellite phone from Bunia.

Uganda, which has thousands of troops deployed throughout northeastern Congo, has tried unsuccessfully to quell the conflict between the pastoralist Hema and the agriculturalist Lendu, which claimed thousands of lives last year.

But many local aid workers have accused the Ugandans and their local Congo-

lese rebel allies of actually fuelling the conflict and rivalry between the two ethnic groups by favouring the Hema over the Lendu.

The violence in the remote northeast came just days after President Laurent Kabila was shot dead in Kinshasa by a bodyguard. He has been replaced by his son Joseph.

The government, backed by Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia, has been fighting for more than two years against rebel movements supported by Uganda and Rwanda, which control the north and east of Africa's third largest country.

Depelchin said Friday's troubles had begun when a group of Lendu fighters attacked Bunia's airport and radio station apparently targeting Ugandan troops deployed there.

Around 80 Lendu civilians living in the town were hunted down and brutally murdered afterwards by Hema gangs armed with machetes.

Casamance rejects independence

With a 96 per cent "yes" vote in Senegal's January 7 referendum, the country's southern region of Casamance, which has been fighting for independence for some 20 years, has said "no to independence," Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade declared on Saturday.

"The independence solution has been brushed aside definitely because the Casamance people voted for a one and indivisible republic,"

Wade said to reporters on arrival from the African-Franco summit in Yaounde in Cameroon.

He noted that Casamance was among the regions where the highest voters turnout and the "yes" vote to the referendum were recorded.

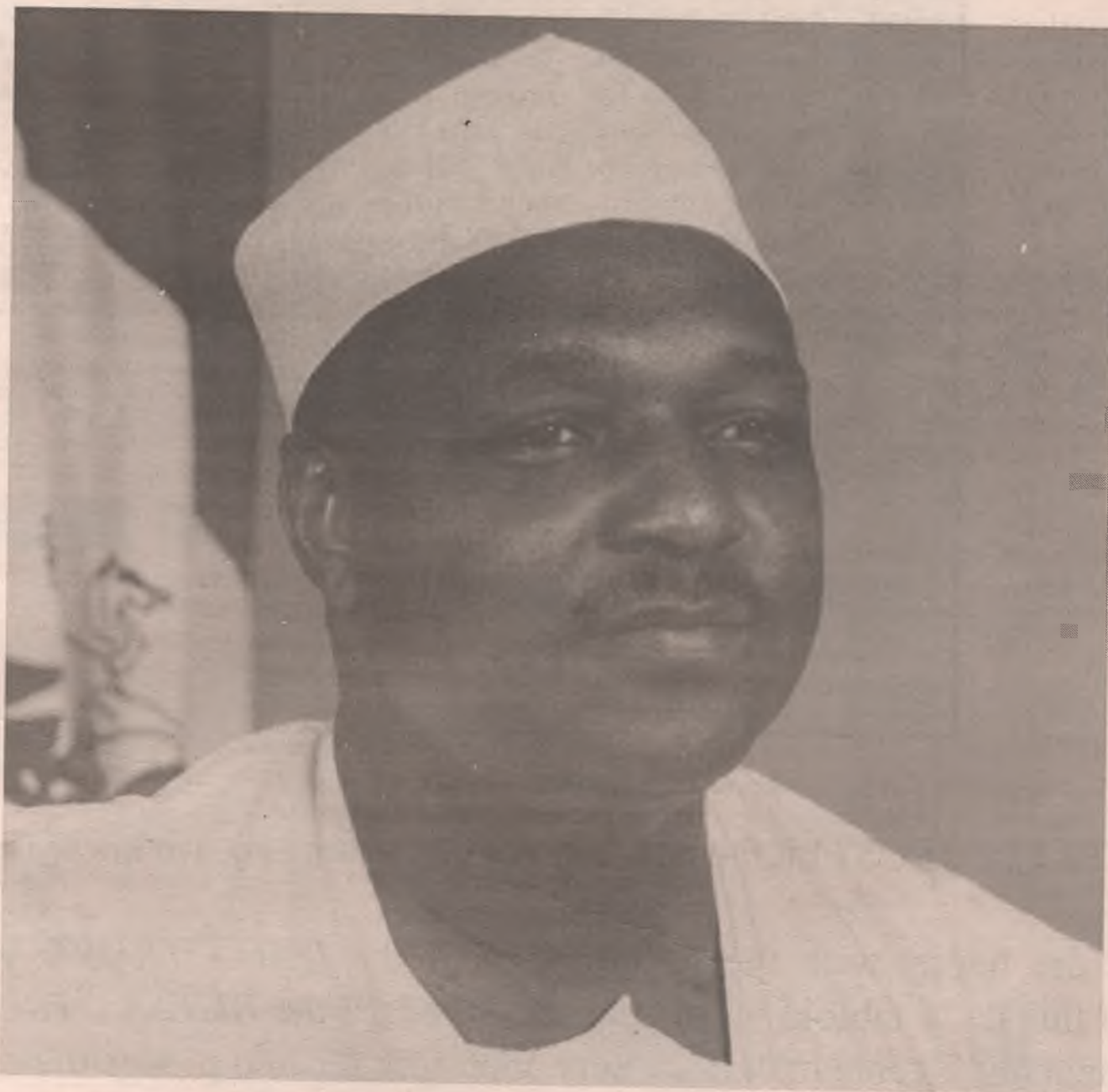
"They have said yes to the president of the Republic, yes to Senegal," said Wade, adding that he would be compelled to "take measures imposed by the law" against those who take up arms.

Wade, however, reiterated his will to hold talks with the movement of democratic forces of Casamance.



CONGRATULATIONS.

What a liberation.
It is marvellous.
We've never had it so soon.
Trust has defiled all odds.



Rev. Jolly Nyame
Executive Governor of Taraba State

The coming of *DAILY TRUST* is very timely and noble. Both the Government of Taraba state and the entire people rejoice with Media Trust on this great achievement. It is a welcome idea that will lead to **TRUST INTERNATIONAL**

Rev. Jolly Nyame
Executive Governor of Taraba State



GOODWILL MESSAGE FROM GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF JIGAWA STATE



**Governor Ibrahim Saminu Turaki
of Jigawa State**

When *WEEKLY TRUST* hit the newstands three years ago, we knew it was not the end.

We are therefore happy with the introduction of the *DAILY TRUST*. We are also confident that this daily tabloid will match the standard the *WEEKLY TRUST* has set. The Government and People of Jigawa State therefore wish to pledge their support for the success of the *DAILY TRUST*.

Once again, we congratulate you on this great achievement and hope that it will fill the vacuum created by past newspapers in this region.

May the Almighty Allah give you all the strength to sustain this efforts in educating and informing the people of the North in particular and the country in general.

Long live DAILY TRUST;

Long live Jigawa State

Long live Federal Republic of Nigeria.

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BUSINESS DAY

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NNPC lambasts pipeline obstructors, to take legal action

By Aliyu Ma'aji, Business Editor

The Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) has vowed to deal ruthlessly with those erecting illegal structures on oil pipelines rights-of-way (ROW).

A statement made available to Business Day, yesterday, signed by Mr. Ndu Ughamadu, General Manager, Group Public Affairs Division said that "it is unfortunate that some products marketing companies, among others, that are fully aware that the laws of the country are against building structures on rights-of-way are engaged in these acts". Concerned by the increasing rates, at which these structures are

springing up, especially in the Federal Capital City, the corporation said it had lodged complaints with Federal authorities to invoke the full wrath of the law on defaulters.

The statement added that "The most disturbing in this encroachment dexterity is near Abuja where three marketing companies have built filling stations on oil pipeline rights-of-way in Abaji and Kotokarfi and are presently dispensing products at the centres".

Towns near Abuja with commercial and residential buildings on rights-of-way include Gegubeki with the structures at kilometres 327, 328 and 329 of the ROW.

At Sensanyi-Ozi, a commercial structure is

presently being built at kilometre 308 of a crude oil rights-off-way, added the statement.

Members of the public were therefore cautioned that "these occurrences, among other implications,

post a danger to human lives and the environment, aside being a source of oil pipeline vandalism and

the attendant siphoning of the products or crude", which negatively impacts on fuel distribution nationwide.



The national power supply problem is a monster we have to slay; but how do we go about it? Alhaji Danjuma Goje, Minister of State for Power and Steel (right) seem to be saying to Senator Liyel Imoke, head of NEPA's Technical Board, (left) while Dr. Olusegun Agagu, Power & Steel Minister (middle) listens with rapt attention; at a recent parley with NEPA management in Abuja.

Debt relief: Group advocates improved mechanism

Jubilee 2000, a UK based advocacy group insists that creditor nations should go further than the debt relief measures taken thus far under the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative.

The Pressure Group said that although the IMF and World Bank promised that 24-25 countries were to have reached the decision point or halfway stage in the enhanced HIPC by the end of 2000, the figure was less than half the number requiring urgent

But the overall assessment of Jubilee 2000 is that the enhanced HIPC was providing too little relief for those countries

getting enough Relief.

"Even after HIPC relief," the movement insists, "these countries are still paying over one and a half

times more in debt service than they are spending on health."

Jubilee called on creditors to immediately stop taking payments from the poorest countries, and ring-fence the money for the poor, to demonstrate their political commitment to cancelling debts and ensure the money released



President Olusegun Obasanjo

relief.

Jubilee 2000 UK, the London wing of the worldwide coalition campaigning for the cancellation of debts owed by developing countries, published these views in its annual update on debt issues for 2000.

It welcomed the agreement of the U.S. congress to provide 435 million dollars of funding towards the HIPC initiative, and the announcement of the British government in December to cancel outright or hold in trust all payments made by HIPC countries to the U.K.

earmarked for the initiative.

It argued that the process was moving very slowly and excluded many indebted countries.

Some 17 countries, including 13 from Africa, began receiving debt relief on December 21, 2000 under the scheme.

Although the 17 nations were promised debt relief of 11 billion dollars, Jubilee 2000 laments that the relief was spread very thinly and delivered in reductions in debt service payments over the next 25 years.

Jubilee 2000 maintained that countries admitted into the HIPC initiative were not

was used to tackle poverty debt.

It also asked credit institutions including the World Bank and IMF, to commit themselves to the outright cancellation of debts for the poorest countries.

It wants assurance that countries excluded from the HIPC list, yet heavily indebted and impoverished, such as Nigeria and Haiti, become eligible for debt cancellation.

Jubilee also called for the establishment of a new mechanism for lending that will ensure non-recurrence of the debt crisis in the new millennium.

Chevron releases Y2K safety report

The highlights of oil giant, Chevron Nigeria Limited's safety report show that there was zero employee and one contractor fatality throughout last year.

Confirming the report to Business Day, Alhaji Umaru Ribadu, head of Chevron's Government Relations Unit said in Abuja that Employee and Contractor lost Work Day (LWD) Rate have significantly improved in comparison with the 1999 results. According to him the Company's Employee LWD Rate and Total Recordable Rate (TTR) were

0.06 and 0.22 for the year, when compared to 0.11 and 0.433 for 1999. These figures are below Chevron Overseas Petroleum incorporated's (COPI) 2000 Chevron Success Sharing (CSS) target LWD rate of 0.17 and the Corporation's TTR rate of 1.00. In order to maintain and even improve on the present record, Ribadu said the Company has been organising portable fire extinguisher workshops to make employees proficient in the handling of such equipment. Chevron also has other safety courses

scheduled to hold this year.

The courses are to be conducted by the company's Safety & Environmental Department.



Mr. Ray Wilcox, Chevron Boss.

FG, Intercity Bank to launch shares purchase loan scheme

From Dare Oyewole with Agency Reports

The Federal Government will launch a shares' purchase loan scheme next month, Vice-President Atiku Abubakar said in Washington.

Addressing a meeting of investors during a forum organised by Corporate Council on Africa, Abubakar said that the scheme would enable more Nigerians participate in the on-going privatisation programme.

He said that about N5 billion would be committed to the scheme, adding that the target would be low income earners, who

otherwise, would not have the ability to buy shares from companies that were being privatised.

Speaking on the same scheme, Director-General of Bureau for Public Enterprises, (BPE), Mal. Nasir el-Rufai explained that up to 320 banks, especially the "Big Banks" would participate in the scheme.

He said that participating banks would be the ones to work out criteria for eligibility of beneficiaries.

Each eligible person would get a maximum of N15,000 and that cheques would be issued in respect of the shares being bought directly to the company.

The lending banks would hold the shares certificates as collateral

pending when a beneficiary completed payment of the loan.

He concluded however, that multilateral agencies had not shown interest in the scheme because of scepticism arising from the failure of a similar programme in Russia.

In the same vein, Intercity Bank Plc is making available N200 million as loan to interested buyers of shares in companies slated for privatisation. The Bank's Managing Director, Alhaji Falalu Bello told newsmen at the weekend, during the commissioning of the bank's Kaduna South branch that both low and high networth individuals will be financed in this direction on mutually acceptable terms. "Such loans will be repayable over a maximum period of 18 months," Bello said.

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2001 budget could jumpstart the economy – FBN MD

From Bright Ewulu
in Lagos

The Managing Director of First Bank of Nigeria plc, Mr. Benard Longe has commended the federal government for the timely release of year 2001 budget which he said could mark the beginning of a sustained



Mr. Bernard Longe
MD- First Bank (Nig.) Plc

growth for Nigeria if it is effectively implemented.

Mr. Longe expressed this view during a discussion he led on "Strategies for business improvement and earnings maximisation within the framework of year 2001 FG budget and the CBN monitoring policy guidelines" organised by the Financial Training Centre (FITC) in Lagos.

The First Bank boss reiterated that year 2001 promises a lot of opportunities and urged the private sector to exploit these in order to move the nation forward.

Speaking specifically on banks, he advised them to position themselves to enter new market area like Capital Market activities, insurance marketing, micro-financing and the financing of small and medium scale enterprises within the framework of Universal

Banking.

He stressed that Banks should endeavour to develop new products and services, grow market share in key market segments, maintain strict control of credit quality and costs.

In addition, Longe urged banks to foster close co-operation, exploit synergies both within the Nigerian economy and internationally, saying that their interests should be in emerging areas like project/infrastructure, financing, leveraging on expertise and resources of international financial institutions to provide structural finance services.

Pertaining solutions for global strategies, he declared that since the 2001 budget is largely reflections there is possibility of excess liquidity in the economy, which the CBN could address this through tight monetary policy.

Ship tally; defaulters to face embargo

From Tokuubo
Oloke, in Lagos

Embargo will henceforth be placed on the activities of any Shipping Company that fails to participate in the ship-tally operations of the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA).

The Chairman of Out-turn and claims Committee of the authority, Mr. Lawrence Adekanye who disclosed this to *Daily Trust* said ship tallying was to enable the NPA get accurate figure of the content of any vessel that arrives Nigerian ports.

"Joint tally enables us to know whether the cargo landed in a safe condition

and intact or not", he stressed, adding that it would be difficult for cargo owners to get claims for vandalised or lost items if the ship tally was not conducted.

Mr. Adekanye, however, noted that the ports management had not received any claims due to the meticulous way NPA's inspection officers have been monitoring vessels' movement at the ports.

Meanwhile, shipping companies and clearing agencies at the nation's sea ports have been urged to work on Saturdays and observe the rules and regulations guiding their operations.

Area Comptroller of

Customs, Apapa command, Alhaji Ardo Hamidu who said this at the end of a meeting with stakeholders in the industry noted that every hand must be on deck to achieve the goal of decongesting the Apapa Sea port this year.



Chief Ojo Maduekw
Minister for Transport.

As the battle for blue-chips accounts gets fiercer in the advertising industry, USP Communications has made new appointments to reposition itself for the challenges ahead.

The key appointees who will co-ordinate USP's new strategic business units are Friday Erhabor, Deputy Manager, Media Research and Strategy,

BUSINESS BRIEF

USP

restructures

Ebere Bieni, Deputy Manager, Creative; and Obi Nwosu, Assistant Manager, Client Services.

Other appointees are Rowland Ojemeh, Assistant Manager, Production; Wasiu Ola Abiola, Assistant Manager, Media;

Moses Taylor Oyedepo, Assistant Manager, Administration; and Gloria A. Kanu, Management Secretary.

Dada Ajai-Ikhile, USP's Media Head said in a statement made available to *Business Day* that the new appointees would collectively guide the Agency's clients through today's stiff business terrain and help them achieve much desired success.

The Nigerian Stock Market Gainers/Losers as at 19/01/2001

Gainers

COMPANY	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE
J BERGER	33.60	34.05	0.45
PRESTIGE	3.30	3.46	0.16
HALL BANK	2.20	2.31	0.11
OWENA BANK	2.50	2.60	0.10
INLAND BANK	1.91	2.00	0.09
TRADE BANK	1.00	1.04	0.04
LION BANK	1.16	1.17	0.01

Losers

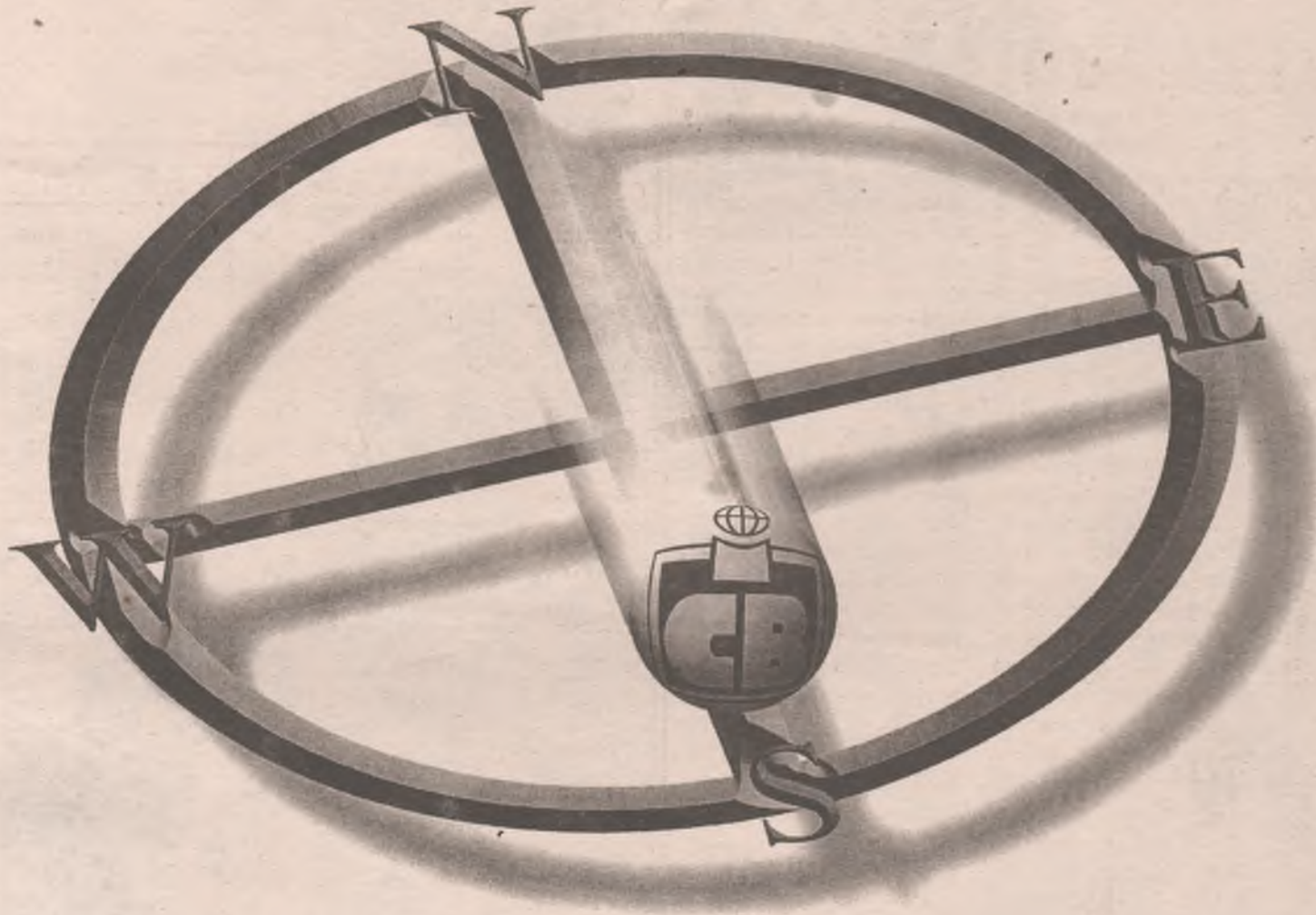
COMPANY	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE
NESTLE	69.50	66.03	3.47
GUINNESS	48.99	46.55	2.44
NB	30.50	28.98	1.52
AGIP	29.33	27.87	1.46
UBN	28.84	27.41	1.43
FIRST BANK	27.32	25.96	1.36
LEVBROS	25.07	23.82	1.25
UBA	17.78	16.90	0.86
NBC	15.90	15.11	0.79
PZ	13.98	13.29	0.69
FLOURMILL	12.95	12.31	0.64
AFRIBANK	10.00	9.50	0.50
IGL	8.42	8.00	0.42
NIGERINS	7.70	7.32	0.38
DELTGLAS	6.83	6.49	0.34
GUARANTY	5.38	5.12	0.26
7UP	5.00	4.75	0.25
DUNLOP	5.13	4.88	0.25
UNTL	4.72	4.49	0.23
UACN	3.80	3.61	0.19
UTB	3.75	3.57	0.18
NCR	2.31	2.20	0.11
MANNY BANK	2.06	1.96	0.10
ACCESS BANK	1.42	1.35	0.07

Summary of NSE Transactions

	OPENING	CLOSING	%AGE CHANGE
MKT. CAP	539,618,085,182.24	521,258,256,971.47	-3.40
INDEX	9,376.18	9,057.16	-3.40

DEALS	VOLUME	VALUE	No. OF COMPANIES
1,146	1,887,800	131,807,645.48	94

Source: NSE, Abuja Area Office.



In Kaduna City, Intercity opens a Kaduna South branch

at

24B Inuwa Abdulkadir Road,
Kaduna South Industrial Layout,
Kaduna.



Intercity Bank Plc.

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Star Interview



Governor Hashidu

I will introduce Shariah, but . . . - Gov. Hashidu

Why did you join partisan politics to occupy the exalted seat of Governor?

My decision to join partisan politics is borne out of a clear desire to improve the living standard of our people and also to improve the economic activities of Gombe state, industrially and above all to raise the level of education of our people which would be compared to any group in Nigeria. This would also give indigenes of Gombe State enviable latitude of relevance in the international circles, so that when a son or daughter of Gombe state has gone out of the country, he/she can comfortably be compared, educationally, and exposure-wise to any group, internationally.

As Governor of Gombe state, what could you say are your achievements since taking over the mantle of leadership of the state?

When we came in, Gombe was almost in a state of siege by the "Udawa" cattle rearers and armed bandits. We made it a point of importance to

Alhaji Abubakar Habu Hashidu, the Executive Governor of Gombe State is a man with a vision and a mission. This interview with Ibrahim Modibbo, our Political Editor confirms this point. In the interview his vision range from agriculture, through education to water problems. He also comments on Shariah in Gombe State. Here are warm, enlivening and candid comments

tackle this and God in His own way has assisted us to do that. By the help of the people of the state and also the cooperation of the Federal Government through the joint operations team, we were able to curb the excesses of these undesirable elements. We also improved the educational standard of our people. We raised the scholarship of the indigenes of Gombe State by 100%, and have also increased feeding allowances to all boarding schools in the state by 100%. We contacted the institute of Education, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria which came and organized refresher courses for our teachers. We

renovated our schools to give our students and teachers a conducive atmosphere for learning. Before doing this, some of our schools were in tatters, with walls and roofs either cracked or blown off, while in some cases our students learn under trees. All these have now changed. To give incentives to teachers, we also renovated many of their quarters which were not renovated for the past 16 years. These have been given a face lift. With all these, our enrolment of pupils and students has tremendously increased last year, this increased by 23%. We are not resting on our oars as we are building more schools and

renovating many more.

In Agriculture, which is the main stay of our economy, we renovated and reinvigorated a poultry project that has been lying dormant for many years, as we now encourage our people to go into poultry farming. We also established a fertilizer blending plant to assist our farmers in producing fertilizer for the farming season. Mr. President who recently visited Gombe, commissioned the plant for us and right now we have raw materials to produce over 10,000 tons of fertilizer. We also repaired all our tractors to face the challenges of the next cropping season, while the

government also bought ox-drawn farming implements which were distributed to farmers on loan. We also bought and sold irrigation pumps and its assorted implements to our farmers at subsidized rates and at liberal repayment period.

During our first 100 days, we rehabilitated all our hospitals in the state. At a time, there were no functioning x-ray machines in our hospitals while the generating sets were also not functioning. This is no longer the case as all departments of our health sector has been given a facelift. We did this through a task force whose chairman is the Deputy-Governor with all commissioners as members. We bought and distributed drugs to all our hospitals.

Gombe is one of the very few states in the country where teachers have not gone on strike since the present dispensation came in. How did you go about this?

Well, the teachers and I are all human beings. I have children who go to

school, and as such I have to take care of the teachers. Even if one decides not to pay other workers, the teachers salary must be paid. I never joke with teachers salary. Even if there is dispute, we made it a point of duty to pay them their salaries while negotiations continue. Even if some Local Governments are having problems of paying their teachers we augment in our own way to pay teachers salaries. We have a mission and a focus and I want to assure you that anything that would disrupt free flow of education in the state would not be tolerated by this administration. Apart from paying all their outstanding allowances, we have also paid their leave grants for the year 2000. We also advanced loans of about N20m to our civil servants which included the teachers to buy shares in the current privatisation exercise.

The perennial problem of portable water has been a major problem in your state. What has your

Contd. on Pg.18

"Nigeria is a secular state and therefore no religion is a state religion, but if people want to follow a certain religion, they have the right to do so. When we appointed the Sharia'ah Committee in Gombe, we equally appointed a Christian committee comprising of members from all over the state to tell us exactly what the Christians feel about the proposal."

Star Interview

Contd. from Pg. 16
administration done to address this?

Immediately we came in, we reorganized the water board and made it a corporation headed by an Executive Chairman who is directly under the Governor's office. Water falls within our biggest priorities, and all the boreholes which had been rehabilitated in Gombe had generating sets attached to them for effective performance. We created a Rapid Performance Force (RPF), a task force with the mandate to take care of the states' water problems 24 hours. The task force has a walkie-talkie and fleet of vehicles at their disposal for communication so that any problem that effects water would be attended to promptly. We increased water rates a bit to augment governments purse in providing diesel to run the generating sets which propelled the boreholes. For now, Gombe has water every where for people to drink. We have also reached advanced stages of preparation to drill 13 more boreholes for different wards in the city. We are also working on the Gombe regional water supply from Dadin Kowa. We are also in close contact with Pakistani government who will deploy their technical know how to improve our water supply in Gombe.

Most states in the North are cautious on the issue of Emirates but we learnt that you created new Emirates recently in Gombe state. Why the urgency?

To me this is a natural sequence. We were

I will introduce Shariah, but . . . - Gov. Hashidu

Northern Nigeria and today 19 states were created out of it. Before, we had Sokoto province but today it has been segmented into Kebbi, Zamfara and Sokoto states while Kano gave way to Kano and Jigawa. The idea behind the creation of states is for rapid development, and this could be translated to the emirates, which brings government closer to the people. When Gombe state was created, the Northern part of Gombe had seven Local Governments and the Southern part had four. We had 5 Emirs and chiefs graded in the Southern part, while in the northern part we had the Emir of Gombe alone in all the 7 local governments. So, we decided to create more Emirates in Northern Gombe. The Emir of Gombe is the chairman of the council of Chiefs. Although the Emirs might not have laid down roles under the present dispensation, yet we got very viable minds who had track records of service to become Emirs in the New Emirates. For example, a former secretary to the state government of Bauchi state has accepted to be Emir of Akko Emirate and my former commissioner of local government is now the Emir of Gona Emirate. Similarly an educationist who was a member of the primary education board is now the Emir of Nafada Emirate. The injection of the new breeds in the Emirate system is meant to mobilize and sensitize their

people so that security and education could be maintained and pursued with vigour. We want to use the Emirs as tools for development, dissemination of information and enlightening the grassroots on government policies and programmes.

What is your relationship with the legislative arm of government in Gombe state?

To me, democracy is government of the people by the people. We are not quarrelling but we argue. And we have always allowed superior arguments to prevail, whether it is from the Executive or the legislature. Whenever I go out on official assignment I always consult the speaker to appoint members from the legislative arm to join my entourage. Our relationship is very cordial as I give members an open access to see me at any time to discuss issues of importance. We don't play politics now and as such irrespective of one's political inclination, we move and act as a team.

What are your investment potentials and policy thrust towards investors willing to invest in Gombe state.

First of all we shall create industrial areas in Gombe state this year. The industrial areas according to my vision is not going to be too big but reasonable where road network would be laid. Electricity, telephone lines and water

would also be provided. Any industrialist that comes would be given a place to pay some small amount to cover the developmental cost, but we will give him tax relief for 5 years to enable him establish the industry very well. The land as I said would also be given free but only the developmental cost on roads, electricity, phones and water would be charged.

Most states are adopting shari'ah in the north, is Gombe joining the league of Shari'ah states?

Well, we have already appointed a committee on that but the most important thing I want you to understand is that the situation in Gombe is very peculiar. You cannot compare Gombe to Zamfara, Kebbi, Katsina or Kano. So, what we did is to appoint a committee, as majority of people in Gombe state are Muslims. In a democratic setting, nobody should dictate what people should do with their private lives. Nigeria is a secular state and therefore no religion is a state religion, but if people want to follow a certain religion, they have the right to do so. When we appointed the Sharia'ah Committee in Gombe, we equally appointed a Christian committee comprising of members from all over the state to tell us exactly what the Christians feel about the proposal. What do they want to see in place so as to fit into the system. The Muslims have given me

their report, and the Christians have also submitted their report to me. While Khadi's are looking at the Muslim report, I intend to set up a committee to look at the two reports with a view to harmonizing them on the basis of the geographical structure as well as the religious complexity of the state. We have local governments with a large percentage of Christians and also some with a reasonable percentage of non-believers of the two most important religions.

Each and everyone of them has the right to practise his/her own religion. So, it is because of this that we are studying the reports carefully, systematically and having discussions with each groups. I am not going to prevent the Muslims from having Shari'ah and I am not going to introduce Shari'ah in areas that are predominantly inhabited by Christians. We are living in peace in Gombe and you can see that in one family half may be Christians while the remaining half could be Muslims, and in such circumstance, what do you do? You can't say that they break their house to give reflection to their religious status. We want to ensure that each section is given the right to practise his religion without hinderance.

How is your budget 2001 going to look like. What are the highlights?

The priority of the budget would be on water

"I am not going to prevent the Muslims from having Shari'ah and I am not going to introduce Shari'ah in areas that are predominantly inhabited by Christians."

supply, Education, Agriculture, health as well as rural development. All these sectors have over one billion naira allocated to them, so we are going to concentrate on that aspect. In the year 2002 Education may take over from water supply as most of our problems on water may be solved this year.

Sir, how do you compromise your internally generated revenue, federal allocations with your developmental profile? How are you getting money for your projects?

We made it a point of duty to cut our coat according to our size. I do tell my commissioners that if I give them money on a capital project, next time I wil not do the same, until when I go round to meet my obligations and they all know this. When we award contract we pay the contractor without any variation and if we don't have the money to pay our contractors we borrow so that banks do not hang onto their necks.

The under-50 politicians are mobilizing what do you think is the political implications of such a gang up on our body polity?

There wouldn't be any implication as far as am concerned. Politics is changing. In the past there were governments headed by under 50's and over 50's. To me it is not the age that matters. It is how you apply what you know to improve the lots of your people. We are looking and assessing the situation with keen interest, and I am assuring you that when the time comes, the question of age would be irrelevant. It would be the question of delivery or what you can do to your people not minding whether you are under 30 or over 60.



Governor Hashidu

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NEWS

NAN boss calls for maintenance of environment

By Wisdom Patrick, in Lagos

Sustained maintenance of the Nigerian environment has been identified as a crucial factor in poverty alleviation and economic development of the nation.

The managing director of News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), Malam Wada Maida who held this position in his address at a training workshop on environmental reporting in Calabar said that for sustain human development, a number of environmental problems must be tackled.

Malam Wada listed such problems as industrial and domestic waste, air and water pollution, oil pollution, loss of bio-diversity, drought, desertification, deforestation, flooding, and gully erosion. Others, ac-

ording to NAN boss are land degradation, depletion of the layer, urban decay and squatter settlement, boundary movement of toxic material, wildlife conservation among others.

He, however, noted that the Nigerian environment was blessed with natural resources which, if properly managed, will boost socio-economic activities.

Malam Wada who was addressing NAN reporters all over the country on en-

vironment reporting added that in order to appreciate issues and address them analytically and responsibly, the skills of media practitioners must be constantly sharpened on local and global events on the environment.

He said that the workshop was part of activities lined up for journalists to fully equip them to adequately inform the public of trends on environmental issues.

Fear has gripped civil servants in Oyo state following the resolution of the state government to start a total re-organisation of the state civil service.

The state governor, Alhaji Lam Adesina had hinted of the determination of the state government to build a virile civil service with competent hands.

He said as a result of this, the state government would retrench unfit workers, adding that a number of civil servants have been slated for retrenchment.

This development has put pressure on civil ser-

Retrenchment fever grips Oyo Civil Servants

...Olubadan cautions Gov. Adesina

From Yinka Oladiyongo, in Ibadan

vants that are apprehensive of the move and have consequently been running from one politician to the other so as not to be affected by the exercise.

A visit to the state secretariat, Agodi Ibadan by Daily Trust revealed that the state workers now take their job more serious than ever, as various offices were fully occupied as early as 7:30am.

Also gripped by the anxiety of the impending retrenchment exercise were high cadre officers ranging from heads of departments, assistant directors and directors who have put in many years into the service.

Daily Trust reliably gathered that civil servants with bad records who are sure to be affected by the exercise are also not left out of the last minute manoeuvring so as to retain their jobs.

The state government had hinted that it would consider redundancy, old age, fraudulence, and inadequate qualification among other hinges to determine those to be affected by the

retrenchment exercise. According to the state governor, there are some of the civil servants holding posts that are higher than their qualifications, "this kind of people have to leave for those that are qualified to hold the post," he added.

He further stressed that some of the workers entered the civil service with primary six certificates as far back as 1961 and up till today they had not updated their educational qualification.

The state executive had also alleged that some of the civil servants were at one time or the other indicted by various panels set up by the government and were directed to refund the money allegedly mismanaged by them, but the governor stated that the only way to help these people was to let them go.

The state government said however that it plans to inject new blood into the civil service so as to make it more effective and productive.

The goal Daily Trust gathered would reduce the number of unemployed graduates roaming the streets of the state.

Lagos begins airlift of pilgrims Feb. 11

By Abdul-Fattah Olajide, Lagos

The airlifting of pilgrims from Lagos state for this year Hajj will begin on February 11, even as the state said it would handle its Hajj operations independent of the federal government.

Commissioner for home affairs and culture, Alhaji Musiliu Obanikoro gave this hint while inaugurating the state's pilgrim welfare committee weekend, saying that the state government was determined to make hajj operations hitch-free.

Alhaji Obanikoro said the government considered it necessary to set up the committee in order to have a smooth hajj operation especially given the fact that the state's pilgrims welfare board was yet to be re-constituted.

The committee which is headed by Alhaji Yakub Balogun was charged with the responsibilities of ensuring proper arrangement for the airlifting operations; ensuring adequate healthcare for Lagos pilgrims, ensuring equitable distribution of accommodation spaces among pilgrims, and monitoring pilgrims conducts in Mecca, among other things.

Alhaji Obanikoro explained that the government had already acquired befitting accommodations for Lagos pilgrims in the Holy cities of Mecca and Medina, adding that five medical doctors were deliberately selected as members of the 10-man hajj committee to ensure proper healthcare of pilgrims in the Holyland as against three in last year's committee.



Air Commodore Paul Dika, Commander Presidential Air Fleet briefing the press on the recent mishap at the Nnamdi Azikiwe Airport, Abuja. With him is Dr. Doyin Okupe

FG to spend N2.5 b on Adamawa roads

The Federal Government has voted N2.5billion for the execution of road projects in Adamawa State in this year's budget, the Minister



Chief Tony Anenih, works minister of State for Works and Housing, Mr. Garba Ali, has said.

Speaking at the weekend in Yola when he visited the Lamido of Adamawa, Dr. Aliyu Mustafa, the minister said that the government was committed to completing projects already started to guard against the "abandoned projects syndrome," saying that his visit was to assess the progress of work on the projects as well as address whatever problems the handlers might be facing.

The minister expressed satisfaction at the prompt passage of this year's budget by the National Assembly so that payment of contractors would not be delayed as was the case last year when the lawmakers withheld the approval of the budget till June.

He said that government

was taking full advantage of the dry season to make significant progress in the area of road construction and called for full support from beneficiaries of the projects.

He announced that the Federal Government had set up a roads maintenance agency to ensure quick attention to road cracks and ensure that they did not deteriorate to potholes and gullies.

In his response, Dr. Mustapha promised continued support to the Federal Government and called for the resuscitation of work on the Song-Zume road which was awarded by the military in 1993 and later abandoned.

The News Agency of Nigeria reports that Ali later inspected work on the bridges along the Mayo-Ganye road as well as the construction work on the Ganye-Sugu-Jamtari road.

Bayero urges Nigerians to eschew bigotry

From Musa Kazaure, in Kano

The Emir of Kano, Alhaji Ado Bayero has called on Nigerians to eschew all forms of bigotry in the interest of unity and economic growth of the nation.

Alhaji Ado Bayero made the call in Tamawa village of Rimin Gado local government area of Kano State, while commissioning an ultra-modern Juma'at mosque built by the community.

The emir also called on wealthy individuals and philanthropic organisations to join hands with the government towards the achievement of the Universal Primary Education Programme (UBE).

He described the UBE programme as laudable and appealed to parents, teachers and school administrators nationwide to co-operate with government to ensure the success of the programme.

In his remarks, the State deputy governor, Dr. Abdullahi Umar Ganduje

asked wealthy Muslims to show greater interest in the establishment of Islamiyya schools and mosques in the



Alh. Ado Bayero

interest of Islamic growth. Dr. Ganduje re-stated the commitment of the state government towards the promotion of Islamic education and the sustainability of the Sharia legal system in the state.

Also speaking, a one time Nigeria's permanent representative to the United Nations, Alhaji Yusuf Maitama Sule (Dan Masanin Kano) emphasised the need for the fear of God among the Muslim Ummah in the interest of national cohesion.

NEWS

Save ECOWAS

-Adedeji pleads

One of the founding fathers of the Economic Community of West Africa State (ECOWAS), Prof. Adebayo Adedeji, has called for concerted efforts to save the regional organization from derailing.

Adedeji, speaking on Monday on a Voice of Nigeria (VON) programme, 'in the news', said that in spite of its survival for 25 years and the stabilizing efforts and effectiveness of its security wing (ECOMOG) in West Africa, future prospects for the regional group were bleak.

He observed that the

revival in the past three years of the eight-member nation monetary and economic community of French-speaking West African States had created divided loyalties and weakened ECOWAS.

Adedeji, a former executive secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), described the development as unfortunate, noting: "you can not serve God and mammon at the same time and I think the earlier we can go back to a unified ECOWAS pursuing the same goals, the better."

He said it was sad that the recommendation of the Yakubu Gowon-led committee of

eminent persons of which he was a member, and which in 1991 called for the dissolution of other regional bodies to strengthen ECOWAS, could not be implemented.

On Mauritania and Cape Verde quitting ECOWAS, Adedeji said it was regrettable that there did not seem to be any concerted effort to dissuade them from the move and hoped it would not become a trend. Mauritania, he said, had given a two-year notice of withdrawal.

"I don't think there was any effort to woo Mauritania back at the level of Head of State, but all those countries in ECOWAS today were wooed by Nigeria and Togo," he said, adding that "to have allowed Mauritania and Cape Verde to leave ECOWAS is not good news."

He noted that a recent report by the executive secretary of ECOWAS painted a gloomy picture of the state of the regional body, highlighting the lack of focus of the leadership of member states, and wondered how seriously the report had been taken.

Commending the courage of the executive secretary in releasing the report, Adedeji said that ECOWAS' leaders must be reminded that "the purpose of ECOWAS was to be an engine of economic integration in West Africa."

Adedeji called for concerted efforts to save ECOWAS as "the principal negotiator" of the ECOWAS treaty, and the person who addressed the Post-ECOWAS founding press conference on May 29, 1975. Adedeji stressed that he had a stake in ensuring that the regional body retained its focus as a development-oriented organization.

A Kaduna based engineering consultancy firm, Excelarc Partners, at the weekend got a two-week ultimatum to complete the designs of 18 bridges on the N6 billion Bali-Mararaba road project in Taraba, or risk the termination of the contract. The Minister of state for Works and Housing, Mr. Garba Ali, gave the ultimatum in Bali following complaints from Mr. Goani Dinimi, the executive director in charge of operations, who said that the delay in completing the designs had affected the job.

"I will send some one here in

Firm gets two weeks ultimatum on bridge designs

two weeks time and you can be sure the contract would be terminated if there is no improvement," Ali said, adding: "no one can hold us to ransom."

He said that the federal government's resolve to use local engineers was to enable them contribute their quota to national growth and warned that such decision should not be abused.

Ali said that the contract would not only be terminated but that

all monies paid to the firm would be recovered in full to serve as deterrent to other contractors, who were not committed to their jobs.

He promised prompt payment to all contractors for all certified jobs, stressing that the move was to guard against contract abandonment for which past administrations were well known.

The Minister said that it was the quest for such promptness in contract execution that made the federal government to venture into direct purchase of bitumen from NNPC for major highway contractors.

Lagos plans truck terminal for Orile

By Abdulfatah Olajide, in Lagos

In a bid to reduce the chaotic traffic congestion in Lagos metropolis, the state government is set to build a N225 million truck terminal at Orile-Iganmu in the Apapa local government area within the next three months.

Governor Bola Ahmed Tinubu made this known while meeting with the representatives of the organised private sector at the state secretariat, Ikeja, over the weekend.

The governor who stated that the proposed terminal would accommodate 120 trucks at a time explained that Apapa was chosen for the project because of the high preponderance of trailers and trucks in the area.

He enjoined the private sector to finance the project, adding that the government would provide the land for the project.

Governor Tinubu also hinted that the state has purchased 2,000 heavy-duty motorbikes that would be used by the state's traffic officers to monitor traffic.

He added that the state government would also buy 100 mass transit buses that would ply the Victoria Island, Ikoyi and Lagos Island routes.

PEP second phase kicks off March

The second phase of the Poverty Eradication Programme (PEP), is to commence in March, the Minister of state for Works and Housing, Mr. Garba Ali, has said.

Addressing his Ministry's staff in Yola at the weekend, Ali said that the first phase during which youths were given some minor jobs to do on a monthly stipend of N3,500 was a temporary measure.

He said that under the next scheme, participants would be trained in various skills, after which they would be given loans to start projects and employ other colleagues.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the federal executive council on Wednesday approved N24 billion for the scheme, which Madaki said would involve the training of participants in various trades like bricklaying, sewing, soap making, welding and poultry.

The Minister said that the Nigeria Bank for Commerce and Industry was currently being

invigorated to enable it issue the loans at "very low interest rates of about 10 per cent."

Ali further said that some of the participants would be absorbed by government and companies while some would work in the Nigeria Railway Corporation currently being resuscitated.

He said the PEP scheme was initiated to better the lot of Nigerians, stressing that it had become a cardinal government policy with the recent conversion of PEP to a Parastatal and the appointment of a permanent Secretary on it.

He said that government was determined to check idleness which he blamed for the prevailing social crisis, especially armed robbery and social unrest among the youths.

The Minister also cautioned the people against rumour mongering which he described as a "very destructive element in Nigeria."

He pointed out that there was also the need for peace and called on Nigerians to eschew violence and embrace dialogue in resolving disagreements.

FG awards N223 million erosion control contracts in Niger state

The federal government has awarded a N225 million erosion control contract in three major towns devastated by the disaster in Niger state, the Minister for Special Duties, Chief Yomi Edu, has said.

Edu told NAN in Minna at the weekend that work on the project would commence in two weeks time, adding that a N139 million drainage network had been approved for Kuta, the headquarter of Shiroro local government while the projects in Kontagora and Kutigi received a total of N84 million.

Edu said the federal government was deeply touched by the plight of communities devastated by ecological disasters and was committed to erosion control. The Minister said N271 million had been given to the state government on different occasion to cushion the

effect of ecological problems in the state.

The money he said, covered the N15 million relief materials sent to the 1999 flood disaster victims in Mokwa local government area and N79 million released later to aid their resettlement.

He further said that the federal government would in collaboration with the state government plan and construct a permanent resettlement centers in the flood prone communities in Mokwa, Borgu and Lavun local government areas.

He said no less than 50,000 people who were displaced by the flood disaster resulting from the discharge of excess water by Kainji, Shiroro and Jebba dams would benefit from the resettlement project.

According to him, the federal government has discussed with the Niger state government to find ways of undertaking the resettlement programme.



Hon. Ghali Umar Na'abba, Speaker House of Representatives laying a wreath for the Armed Forces Remembrance Day at the National Arcade in Abuja, last week. Photo: Kennedy Egbonodje.

Crisis stalls Arewa project in Edo

From Shehu Abubakar, in Benin City

The crisis in the Arewa Community of Edo state has militated against the development of a piece of land allocated to it by the state government in Benin City.

The outgoing chairman of the community, Alh. Buba Abubakar who is also the chairman of the state chapter of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Arewa wing, told the Daily Trust that the community has since been issued a certificate of occupancy for the land along with its master plan which provides for an Arewa village comprising of residential houses, hospital, school, mosque, church, market and a burial ground.

The land which is located at Orora along Benin Abuja road could not be developed due to the crisis of leadership in the community he said.

Malam Umar Fagge, a staff

of a Federal Government Commission in Benin City told Daily Trust that the Sarkin Hausawa of Benin City arrogated to himself the power of control of the community and single handedly dissolved the community and leadership without reason.

According to him, since then, the Arewa Community especially the civil servants refused to attend all meetings called by him and so could not replace the dissolved exco.

"We accept and recognize the leadership of the Alhaji Buba Abubakar led officials and would re-elect them anytime there is another election," he said.

When contacted, Alhaji Buba Abubakar said he was not after the leadership but the unity and progress of the Arewa Community in the state. "I want to see that all newly transferred workers to the state who are Arewa origin and visiting business men and women are well taken care of

and accommodated. I can not do much as an individual and that is why we want to have an executive of the community in place," he said.

Alhaji Abubakar said if the Sarkin Hausawa failed to organize an election as soon as possible he would summon a meeting to officially dissolve his cabinet and organize a fresh election in order to make progress. He promised to bring the workers, business class and all other sectors of the Arewa community together with a view to fostering unity.

"I would like to see the Arewa village developed and occupied within the shortest possible time. We shall seek for the assistance of the state government and the 19 northern state governments to develop the land. The state governor and indeed Benin Monarch have promised to assist us in their own ways to make a better living here. We are enjoying relative peace in this state" he added.

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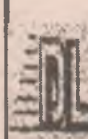
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INSIDE POLITICS

U-50 politicians are military apologist

A frontline politician in Niger state, Alhaji Ahmed Yaro Sabo has described the governors and other elected office holders meeting under the aegis of "Under-50" politicians as military apologists.

Alhaji Ahmed, second

From Akinade Adeniji, Minna.

republic chief whip in the Niger state house of assembly stated this in a release issued in Minna.

He said the politicians were conversing the position of their former military pay masters who imposed a blanket ban on the so-called old politicians of that era.

"The stalemate of that

transition and the political chaos experienced in those years showed what is meant by leadership of selected youths", the former chief whip said.

Alhaji Ahmed said the

blanket ban on old politicians failed because it was done without any altruistic reasons but just for the sake of giving leadership opportunity to young, and inexperienced politicians who were in a haste to push aside the old and talented hands.

"These young but aggressive politicians are products of military democracy, they lack both wisdom and merit," he added.

"The so-called Under-50 governors should realise that they were elected based on a

manifesto and programme for a purpose and tenure and should not introduce age as an issue for their re-election campaign. Wisdom is not the monopoly of the youth", he said.

Alhaji Ahmed who was until recently the treasurer of the All Peoples Party (APP) in Niger state enjoined Nigerians with patriotic zeal, irrespective of age to sustain the current democratic governance, which he said transcends age barrier.

Join APP Yerima urges Obasanjo

The governor of Zamfara state, Alhaji Sani Yerima Bakura has called on President Olusegun Obasanjo to abandon the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and join the All Peoples Party (APP) as the PDP-controlled federal government has failed the nation.

Briefing the press in Kano, Governor Ahmed Yerima stated that president Olusegun Obasanjo is doing well as a person, despite all the problems confronting him, but PDP as a political party has failed".

Yerima Bakura then advised President Obasanjo to abandon PDP and join APP which he said is more organised and has principles. He noted that PDP has no focus, that is why it is having problems within itself.

On the issue of Sharia, governor Ahmad Sani said Mr. President has understood it very well. "All the

comments he was making are by the side", adding that there was strong relationship between Zamfara state and the Federal Government. He also believe every Nigerian should be given equal right of religion.

However, the governor of

Zamfara said that APP has never discussed the issue of fielding any presidential candidate in its recently concluded meeting in Sokoto. But rather he said, it discussed its own problems and how to move the party forward.

including the possibility of bringing Obasanjo and Atiku to join APP which is a more organised party, he claimed.

"I assure you both Mr. President and Vice-President are likely to come back to APP and run for their second term".

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- Change in the Geo-Ethnic military clique ruler ship of Nigeria.
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Chief Imam advises Na'abba

The Chief Imam of Waje Juma'at Mosque in Kano, Alhaji Mohammed Nasir, has urged the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Alhaji Ghali Na'abba, to be steadfast and God-fearing in the conduct of his official assignment.

"You should always consider the injunction of your religion and you must not bend any rule in the conduct of your assignment to favour anyone, irrespective of his position in the country", Nasir advised Na'abba.

Na'abba was on a visit to the state during a special Friday Juma'at Prayer for the peace and progress of the country.

"You should remember that you will one day, render your stewardship to Allah", the Imam said, adding: "You should also know that only God gives and He is the only one who takes away power".

The Chief Imam further told Na'abba to avoid denying any person or group of persons their rights, pointing out that "God would always be with anyone, who depends on him". He urged the speaker to guard against taking wrong advice stressing "You should know the people you work with and the type of advice you receive from them for you to succeed in your

Arts & Entertainment

Concert

Singing against AIDS

By Olayemi Olakitan

As part of the global effort aimed at checking the scourge of the dreadful Human Immundo-deficiency Syndrome (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) the performing Arts, which includes Music, Dance and Drama are increasingly being used to educate the public on the disease.

A recent effort in this direction was undertaken by the Center Stage Communications, a multi-media outfit with its offices in Lagos. The media outfit is organiz-

ing a musical concert which is titled 'Youth Against AIDS.' The concert takes place next March, and preparations have already started for the programme.

The Managing Director of the organisation, Mr. Richie Adewusi told Daily Trust, in Lagos that the concert will educate the people on the reality of HIV/AIDS.

He explained that his company has since been running Drama and Dance performances on the dreadful disease on some television stations in Lagos.

Daily Trust visited the rehearsal venue for the con-

cert where many up coming musicians were present. Mr. Clement Ileanyi, the project manager of the outfit stressed that the project will go along way in combating the spread of HIV/AIDS in Nigeria especially among the youths, since the performance touches the minds of the people more rapidly than any form of communication.

Members of 'The Revelation', a musical group at the rehearsal ground spoke with Daily Trust on the forthcoming concert. They said they are particularly excited about the project because it given them an opportunity to exhibit their musical tal-

ents. They said, they featured in a television programme last week Saturday, expressed hope that they would do their best in the planned stage performances.

Daily Trust gathered that the concert against AIDS is going to be a big event as various corporate organizations have expressed interest to serve as co-sponsors. The Lagos state government is said to have expressed its readiness to support the programme in various ways. Centre stage communication officials said, they have tentatively budgeted five million naira for the project.

Art Watch!

All stories by Tadaferua Ujorha
Arts & Entertainment Editor

... Book launch

Hajj guide by Aishat Kande Abubakar will be launched on Saturday 10th February 2001 at the Conference Hall of the National Mosque, Garki - Aby 9.00 a.m.

Chief launcher will be His Excellency Alhaji Ahmed Sani, Yariman Bakura, and Executive Governor of Zamfara state.

Guest of Honour is the Saudi Arabian Ambassador to Nigeria, while the Guest Speaker will be Professor A.A. Gwandu, Chairman, National Committee on Hajj Affairs.

... ANA Abuja

The Abuja chapter of the Association of Nigerian Authors is preparing for an AGM and Gala Nite which should hold on February 28th 2001 by 4.30 p.m. at Halal Restaurant, Women Centre, Abuja. The day would feature a guest address, a book presentation, poem readings, elections, dinner and the conferment of merit awards.

... Encounter

Recently, I bumped into Aaladdin, a popular performer who is as cheerful as he is

kind and talented. It was as though we had met for years. He was seated in a friend's car and kept on beaming at me as the discussion, in progressed. The story on him would be featured shortly. Readers should look forward to this story on this performer whose name evokes childhood memories of Eastern genius and talent. Many would remember Aladdin who, I think featured so much in the Arabian Nights tales. This performer would throw us all back to those rare and enchanting moments of our childhood.

...Workshop

The Creative Writers Club of the Ahmadu University meets every Thursday at Room 68, Faculty of Arts, A.B.U. by 5.00 p.m.

... Gallery

Signature Art Galleries is located at Plot 654, Aminu Kano Crescent, Wuse 11. All lovers of paintings, and other works would enjoy visiting this place.

... Book launch

Beckoned To Serve. The autobiography of Alhaji Shehu Shagari will be launched on February 22nd 2001 at the Africa Hall of the International Conference Centre, Abuja.

Stirring Lines!

Music, when soft verses die, vibrates in the memory

- Shelley

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BBC PRIME

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- 09:00 The Biz
- 09:30 Ready Steady Cook
- 10:00 Style Challenge
- 10:25 Change That
- 11:00 Going For A Song
- 11:30 Top Of The Pops
- 12:00 Wildlife
- 12:30 Learning At Lunch: Crater Of Death
- 13:30 The Antiques Show
- 14:00 Ready Steady Cook
- 14:30 Style Challenge
- 15:00 Doctors
- 15:30 Classic EastEnders
- 16:00 Change That
- 16:25 Going For A Song
- 17:00 Bodger and Badger
- 17:15 Paydays
- 17:35 Get Your Own Back
- 18:00 The Biz
- 18:30 Top Of The Pops
- Classic Cuts
- 19:00 Gary Rhodes's New British Classics
- 19:30 Doctors
- 20:00 Classic EastEnders
- 20:30 Zoo
- 21:00 To The Manor Born
- 21:30 2 Point 4 Children
- 22:00 City Central
- 23:00 Ripping Yarns
- 23:30 Top Of The Pops
- Classic Cuts
- 00:00 Castaway 2000
- 01:00 Casualty
- 02:00 Transmission Ends

- 12:15 Mummies Alive
- 12:35 Pinky, Elmyra & The Brain
- 13:00 Gullah Gullah Island
- 13:30 Allegra's Window
- 14:00 Clarissa Explains It All
- 14:30 The Wild Thornberrys
- 15:30 Kablam!
- 16:00 Double Dare 2000
- 16:30 Figure It Out
- 17:00 Rugrats
- 17:30 Aahh!!! Real Monsters
- 18:00 Hey Arnold!
- 18:30 Rocko's Modern Life
- 19:00 We'll Be Back

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- 06:00 Wild Things
- 06:55 Total Fishing
- 07:20 Greg And Max's Just For Starters
- 07:50 Two's Country
- 08:15 Antiques Challenge
- 08:45 Running Repairs
- 09:10 These Four Walls
- 09:40 The Diceman
- 10:05 How Did They Build That?
- 10:35 Connections
- 11:00 Walker's World
- 11:30 Emergency Vets
- 12:00 Profiles Of Nature
- 12:30 Plane Crazy
- 12:55 State Of Alert
- 13:25 Flightline
- 13:50 Discover Magazine
- 14:20 Infinite Voyage

K WORLD

- 07:00 Animal Shelf
- 07:10 Dream Street
- 07:15 James The Cat
- 07:25 Elliot Moose
- 07:45 Franklin
- 07:55 Thomas The Tank Engine
- 08:00 Barney & Friends
- 08:25 Animal Stories
- 08:30 Barnar
- 09:00 Hi-5
- 09:25 Maisy
- 09:30 64 Zoo Lane
- 09:40 Zoboofafoo
- 10:05 Tic Tac Toons
- 10:25 Little Bear
- 10:35 Misterjaw
- 10:40 Blaster's Universe
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- 16:10 Frontiers Of Construction
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- 18:00 Flightline
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- 22:00 Lonely Planet
- 21:30 Tanks!
- 00:00 Beyond 2000
- 00:25 Outback Adventures
- 00:55 Going Wild
- 01:20 Connections
- 01:50 Crocodile Hunters
- 02:45: Future Tense
- 03:409 On The Inside
- 04:35 Battle For The Skies
- 05:30 The Elegant Solution

Living picture!



Dance Troupe of the FCT Council for Arts and Culture at a recent event.



BOOKS

A place called Shagari

Muhammadu, the elder brother of my great, great-grandfather Usmanu, belonged to the Alibawa ansar group, and lived at Kungurki village, near Kaura Namoda. In about 1805, he and his Alibawa followers volunteered to join Dan Fodio's standing army of Islam. Muhammadu was a man of means, and took with him his many flocks and herds and horses, as well as his wives, children, servants and Barebari slaves from Borno. While it is not clear at what point they joined the Shehu's forces, it is evident that the entire Muhammadu household was part of the Shehu's entourage that moved from Gwandu to settle at Sifawa in 1810.

During the movement to Sifawa, the entourage stopped briefly to pray at a valley near a river called Gawan Gulbi, about ten kilometres from Yabo. With the prayers over, Dan Fodio suggested to Muhammadu that given his large number of people and animals, it was advisable for him to settle there because the place had water, grazing land and firewood. Here, Dan Fodio reportedly said, you can remain and "sha (enjoy) your gari (millet flour)" - a staple food which the Fulani, having adopted it from Hausa people, mixed with yoghurt (nono) rather than water. Hence, the place came to be known as Shagari, and its leader as Muhammadu Shagari. But the Late Liman Bande, the venerated chief imam of Shagari, had a slightly different account. He maintained that Muhammadu had earlier settled in the place before leaving his family and herd of cattle and sheep behind to join the Shehu's forces elsewhere. It was when Dan Fodio later arrived at the place that he advised Muhammadu to remain there as he was already getting too old to fight.

Anyhow, when Muhammadu Shagari died he was buried some twenty-seven kilometres away at Sifawa, where Dan Fodio was now resident. Dan Fodio himself led prayers for him, and the simple grave which harbours his corpse has been kept in good form ever since. The visiting mourners from Shagari subsequently had audience with Dan Fodio. They were led by Usmanu and Iggi, the younger brother and eldest son of Muhammadu Shagari respectively. When Iggi was introduced to him as the eldest son of the deceased, Dan Fodio was said to have wondered somewhat affirmatively whether Iggi was the "Magajin Shagari", that is, the heir apparent to the Shagari throne. So, everyone present assumed that Dan Fodio had formally recognized Iggi as the Magajin Shagari, a title which successive rulers of Shagari have adopted ever since.

On their return to Shagari, Magaji Iggi and his uncle Usmanu mobilized their people in the task of ensuring the physical security of their settlement. As was usual in those days, a wall (ganuwa) was erected around the village and reinforced by a circular ditch. The villagers in the vicinity of Shagari readily participated in the project and many of them subsequently moved into the village. Shagari soon developed into a flourishing commercial centre, occupying a vantage point on the main caravan route from Sokoto to the south. Many traders and travellers usually spent the night at Shagari - finding it a convenient stop-over. The

In this first part of Beckoned to Serve, Alhaji Shehu Shagari's autobiography, the book begins with the historical origins of his home town, Shagari, and also traces his family roots. We see Alhaji Shehu Shagari as a child, imbued with agile perceptions examining an ever changing universe. Welcome to Shagari!

Shehu Shagari:

Beckoned to Serve



The book

inhabitants were friendly-and hospitable and the place soon became widely known throughout Hausaland and beyond.

Some of the people of Shagari also began to travel out; many went as far south as the Gold Coast (now Ghana) in pursuit of work and trade. This was long before the British occupation of Hausaland. These pioneer traders brought back kola-nuts, clothes and other goods, which were hitherto either unknown or very rare in their own community. Items like blankets, lanterns, teapots and canvas shoes were seen only at Shagari in those days! But Shagari was, and still is, essentially an agricultural community endowed with rich farmlands and grazing fields. Its people were blessed with a spring in the middle of the village; it streamed for just over 1 km into a nearby river. Unfortunately, the spring has now ceased flowing, while the river itself has been gradually drying up as

a result of droughts since the 1950s.

Shagari remained a halcyon settlement, its inhabitants going about their business undisturbed by the intermittent warfare which characterized the 19th century. The administration of the village was in the hands of the Magaji who was answerable only to the Sultan in Sokoto. His obligations to Sokoto, besides the task of maintaining law and order in accordance with Shari'a (Islamic law), included regular contribution in men and materials to the jihad efforts of the Sultan. These also included the supply of horses, arms and food as well as occasional manual labour for the proper maintenance of Sokoto city walls and its trenches. Successive rulers of Shagari strove loyally and diligently to fulfill these obligations.

Magaji Iggi was succeeded by Shekare, the son of Usmanu, and Shekare was succeeded by Sulaiman, the son of Iggi.

Magaji Sulaiman's leadership, however, soon ran into trouble; for it was his rival, Ahmadu Rufa'i, the son of Shekare, whom the community preferred as its leader. Many unsuccessful attempts were made by the people to depose Sulaiman. Then an opportunity presented itself when Magaji Sulaiman was instructed by Sultan Mu'azu (1877-81) to send some men for the rebuilding of Sokoto city walls. The people bluntly refused to go unless they were led by Ahmadu Rufa'i. When they did eventually reach Sokoto under his direction, the Sultan was convinced that Sulaiman no longer enjoyed the support of the Shagari people.

Sultan Mu'azu deposed Sulaiman but refused to appoint Ahmadu-Rufa'i as Magaji of Shagari. Instead, Sultan Mu'azu appointed his two teenage cousins, Bayero and Mahmudu, as his Vice-Regents in Shagari. Sons of the late Sultan Ahmadu Rufa'i (1867-73), the two young men had been under the care of Sultan Mu'azu. Later, Sultan Mu'azu made Bayero the Marafa of Shagari and installed my grandfather Ahmadu Rufa'i as the Magajin Shagari. The Marafa and his younger brother Mahmudu were now placed under the new Magajin Shagari. The deposed Magaji Sulaiman went into exile with his son Manu first to Kesoje, near Kajiji, and later to Rikina in Dogondaji district where he died.

With these developments, the hitherto peaceful atmosphere of Shagari began to be disturbed. Quite apart from the obvious complications posed by the existence of a triumvirate (Magaji Rufa'i, Marafa Bayero and his brother Mahmudu) in such a small place, the presence in Shagari of two Sokoto princes in itself attracted the attention of a hostile neighbour, the Sarkin Kebbi of Argungu, just some forty-eight kilometres away. Argungu, now under the great Sama had persisted with the history of resistance by its previous Kebbawa rulers to the hegemony of Sokoto and the Caliphate. Such was the implacability of Sama's campaign that he was reckoned to have burnt down ninety walled towns under the Sokoto Caliphate. Shagari was thus to become a target of incessant attacks by the Argungu marauders called 'Yan Samame (Hausa for Sama's partisans). They often struck at odd hours and places, snatched whatever they could lay their hands upon, and returned quickly to Argungu. One victim of such raids around 1890 was my own father, Aliyu, the son of Magaji Rufa'i. It is customary among the Fulani to engage their young ones as shepherds to their cattle. Aliyu, then a young boy, and his younger sister, Asma'u, were tending the family cattle outside Shagari when they were suddenly kidnapped by some Argungu horsemen, leaving the cattle behind. The practice then was for parents to pay ransom or risk the hostages being retained as slaves. However, the captors were usually reluctant to exchange girl hostages even for a generous ransom, especially if the girls



Arts & Entertainment



BOOKS

were attractive. So, it turned out in this case that only my father was ransomed while his sister remained there as a slave.

Many years later, after the British occupation of northern Nigeria, my father and his cousin Bawa (the father of my first wife, the late Amina), embarked on a long search for Asma'u. They eventually found her happily married in Timbuktu where she had originally been sold into slavery. My father and Bawa managed to bring her back home but she soon returned to Timbuktu to rejoin her husband and two children. In May 1972, I was fortunate to make contact with one of her daughters who was then married and living in Ghana. The daughter came to see me in Lagos, and later visited Shagari briefly. But she, like her mother, is now sadly deceased.

The menace of Argungu marauders to neighbouring towns and villages continued unabated. Sultan Abdurrahman (1891-1902), the son of Sultan Abubakar Atiku (1837-42), mounted a massive expedition against Argungu in 1902 aimed at subduing them for good. The expedition failed in spite of the heavy casualties incurred by the Argungu people. That same year, the Sarkin Kebbi launched even more vicious retaliatory attacks on his neighbours. Shagari was not spared. One night, the Sarkin Kebbi and his troops staged a commando-type assault on the village, forced their way through its walls and set it ablaze. There was pandemonium, made worse by the fierce resistance put up by the Shagari people. The attackers suffered serious casualties and eventually withdrew but not without plenty of booty.

This tragedy occurred when Mahmudu was the Marafa of Shagari in succession to his late brother, Bayero. Marafa Mahmudu abandoned the town and returned to Sokoto, leaving Magaji Rufa'i alone to superintend the task of rehabilitation. Marafa Mahmudu's departure was just after the ascent of a new Sultan, Muhammadu Attahiru I, to the throne in late 1902. Attahiru's impending plans for a vigorous onslaught on Argungu was forestalled by the invasion of the British, an intervention that was to change the course of history of the Sokoto Caliphate and indeed of the Western Sudan.

The British onslaught on Sokoto in March 1903 was launched from two directions by the West African Frontier Force (WAFF). They were dispatched by Sir, later Lord, Frederick Lugard, Britain's first High Commissioner in the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria and subsequently the first Governor-General of Nigeria. One contingent from the east, which had captured Kano on February 16, 1903, was scheduled to join another from the west, the one that had taken Argungu. The two contingents joined up at Shagari in preparation for their march on Sokoto. It was a difficult situation for Magaji Rufa'i who, much against his wishes, was faced with having to host an invading foreign army. Magaji Rufa'i, therefore, decided to sneak out of Shagari at dawn and headed for Sokoto to alert Sultan Attahiru I of the impending peril. He was never to return home and nothing was heard about him ever since. The general belief, though, is that he remained in Sokoto to participate in the battle for its defence.

Whatever transpired, Sokoto fell to Lugard's forces on Sunday, March 15, 1903 after a brief but fierce battle whose apparent goal was to remove what the British



At a Fulani camp called Gezawa near Yabo

invaders alleged to be the oppression of the Hausa peasantry by their erstwhile Fulani liberators. Sokoto's estimated 2,000 cavalry and 4,000 infantry, all armed with quaint weapons, were defeated by the invaders who were equipped with maxim machine-guns and other advanced weaponry. Nothing with less excuse had been so savagely perpetrated in the history of British imperialist aggression. In the meantime, Sultan Attahiru I, who had organized the resistance at Sokoto, fled eastwards with a number of his people. Alas, he was killed during a subsequent encounter over 900 kilometres away at Burmi, near Gombe, in July 1903. Magaji Rufa'i might also have been killed during one of these battles. He was survived by his only wife Hajo, and four children. These were Muhammadu Basharu, my father Aliyu, and their two sisters Utiya and Asma'u. The latter, as we have seen, had been abducted and subsequently enslaved. But she was, in a twist of good fortune, reunited briefly with her relations at Shagari. Hajo, their mother, came from a family of aluminium smelters among the Zoramawa Fulani clan who migrated from Sokoto to Gurawa, a suburb of Shagari.

Shagari After The Caliphate

After the new British colonial administration was firmly established in Sokoto, new districts were created, with Shagari placed under the jurisdiction of Yabo District. Marafa Mahmudu, who was by then the Village Head of Shagari, was eventually deposed because he found it difficult to accept Yabo's primacy. His descendants are, however, still living in Shagari although they have lost their distinct family identity as a result of inter-marriages. Muhammadu Basharu, the eldest son of Magaji Rufa'i, was next installed as Magajin Shagari.

A few years later, however, Basharu was also replaced by Dangkaladima Muhammadu, the son of Muhammadu Riskuwa, the District Head of Yabo, following Basharu's failure to produce the full amount of poll tax (haraji) levied upon Shagari. Dangkaladima died soon afterwards, having reigned for only one year. He was succeeded by my father Aliyu in 1914, the year the British amalgamated

the Northern and Southern Protectorates into what is now Nigeria. My father was a herdsman, a farmer and a trader prior to his installation as the Magajin Shagari. The family of Shekare, to which he belonged, was associated with a wide range of occupations, including animal husbandry, tailoring, traditional medicine, and trading in horses, cattle and sheep.

When Aliyu was young, he used to travel as far as Bida in Nupeland to sell horses and bring back Nupe gowns, glass-beads and bangles to sell in Sokoto and other towns. While in this trade, he came into association with a Yabo prince called Muhammadu Riskuwa who was also in the same business as himself. Prince Riskuwa later became the Village Head of Bengaje, a satellite of Yabo. Since our custom forbids rulers from trading, Riskuwa asked Aliyu to look after his business. He also gave away his daughter Mairamu to Aliyu in marriage. She was to be my mother. Muhammadu Riskuwa was later made Sarkin Kabin Yabo, the District Head of Yabo. While his business associate and son-in-law Aliyu subsequently became the Magajin Shagari.

Mairamu, my mother, was born at Bengaje by one Hauwuru. The latter had two other children from a previous marriage to a respectable and wealthy Fulani man in Bengaje. Following his death, she married Prince Muhammadu Riskuwa, the father of Mairamu. Riskuwa was the son of Ahidjo, himself the son of Moyijo of Yabo, the founder of Yabo dynasty which had distinguished itself as one of the pillars of Dan Fodio's jihad. Moyijo was known for his exemplary loyalty to the Shehu and the Islamic cause.

The story is told of a visit Moyijo made to Sifawa when Dan Fodio was resident there. Moyijo, accompanied by a thousand horsemen, left Yabo for Sifawa to pay his respects to the Shehu. After Moyijo left Sifawa, some of Shehu's followers expressed doubts as to how such a powerful chief could have genuinely and voluntarily subordinated himself to a simple preacher that the Shehu then was. In order to test Moyijo's loyalty and disabuse the minds of doubting Thomases, Dan Fodio sent a peremptory message to Moyijo to return to Sifawa immediately. The messenger delivered Dan Fodio's instruction to Moyijo just as he was about to enter Yabo. Moyijo accordingly complied with the instruction, without allowing any of his horsemen to enter Yabo. Extremely impressed by this show of loyalty, Dan Fodio thanked Moyijo and asked him to go back to Yabo with his blessings.

In view of the proven loyalty of the Yabo dynasty since then, the Sarkin Kabi of Yabo is still recognized as one of the Sokoto kingmakers, and a traditional councillor in the Cabinet of the Sultan of Sokoto. It is perhaps worth mentioning here that a brother of Moyijo called Usumanu had, as a Muslim missionary before the Fulani jihad, settled among and converted many pagan people in southern Zaria. Indeed, he founded Jema'a town and his descendants are still the rulers of Jema'a Emirate whose headquarters is now at Kafanchan.

Sarkin Kabi Moyijo was succeeded by his son Muhammadu Yalli, who reigned for a very long time and wielded considerable power that he became a legendary figure not only in Yabo but throughout Hausaland. Fascinating stories have been told of his

generosity, prowess in battle, and his somewhat arbitrary decrees which together demonstrate a curious mixture of kindness, passion and caprice. At one stage, Sultan Atiku (1837-42) had to force him to abdicate. But no sooner than the Sultan died, Muhammadu Yalli deposed the incumbent Sarkin Kabi of Yabo, his own grandson, and reinstated himself. He continued until his death as a notably astute and an over-bearing ruler.

The glory and privileged position of Yabo later suffered a setback when the leadership of its suzerain village of Dandi was assigned to Mallam Mahe, the son of Sultan Abdurrahman. Mallam Mahe tried in various ways to undermine the territorial integrity of Yabo so much so that its elders had to make a vigorous protest to his father.

It was largely the arrival of the British soon after that helped to diffuse an already explosive situation. Dandi was restored to Yabo while Prince Mahe was deposed. Muhammadu Riskuwa, who became Sarkin Kabin Yabo during the colonial era, tried his best to restore Yabo's glory as well as its traditional cordiality with, and its loyalty to, the sultanate. Later, Riskuwa abdicated in favour of his son Shehu Usmanu, who was the Sarkin Kabi of Yabo when I was born in 1925 and reigned until 1954, the year I first entered the Federal Parliament as member for Yabo constituency. He, too, abdicated in favour of his son, Muhammadu Maidamma.

We have seen how Aliyu became Magajin Shagari after the death of Dangkaladima Muhammadu who was the eldest son of Riskuwa, Sarkin Kabi of Yabo. Magaji Aliyu used the advantage of his being the son-in-law to Riskuwa, the then Sarkin Kabi of Yabo, to improve the strained relationship which had existed between Shagari and Yabo since the former was merged with the latter. When Magaji Aliyu's brother-in-law Shehu Usmanu became the Sarkin Kabi, the latter gave away his daughter Sume to Muhammadu Bello, my brother and the eldest son of Magaji Aliyu. That marriage also helped to strengthen the ties between Shagari and Yabo. After the death of our father in 1930, Muhammadu Bello succeeded him that same year as the Magaji of Shagari, and it was Bello who would send me to elementary school at Yabo in 1931. Muhammadu Bello continued as Magajin Shagari until his death in 1984. He was succeeded by his immediate younger brother Abubakar Garba (1984-1995). Garba was succeeded by my younger brother Abdullahi (1995-).

Unlike our grandfather Ahmadu Rufa'i, our father Magaji Aliyu was survived by a large family of four wives and eleven children. The first wife, Mairamu Riskuwa, had six children, three of them male, Muhammadu Bello, Abubakar Garba and Shehu Usmanu (myself). The three females were Amiru, Motti and Habsatu. His second wife, who did not have any child, was Alje, the daughter of his uncle Manashi, himself the son of Magaji Sule. The third wife was Assibi, the daughter of Gago Basharu, the leader of the Hausa community in Shagari. She had three children, two of them male, Abdu and Balarabe, and a female, Amina. Balarabe died when he was only six years old. The fourth wife was Ba'u, the daughter of Marafa Mahmudu. She had two children: one son called Alhaji and a daughter, Altine. Both died when they were young.

To be continued

NEWS

Teenage mother prefers Sharia to Canadian intervention

From Ibrahim Hameed in Kaduna

A teenage mother in Zamfara, Malama Bariya Ibrahim Mugazu sentenced to 180 lashes for engaging in pre-marital affairs has kicked against the unnecessary meddling by Canadian Government into her private affairs.

The woman who also turned down a free legal counsel to enforce her fundamental rights, said that being a devout Muslim, she is interested in the full application of Sharia on her.

In a press statement in Kaduna, the group which

NANS set up task force on fuel

From Buhari Bello, in Jos

As the persistent fuel scarcity in Jos metropolis and environs continued unabated, the National Association of Nigeria Students (NANS) has taken direct action end the crises

To this end, the students have set up a task force which visited some filling stations where fuel is being sold above the officially approved price and forced the station managers to reverse the trends.

According to NANS, "since our leaders and political parites can not stop the problem we have decided as stakeholders and future leaders to try and liberate our people."

The students in a press statement signed by Kaiser Paul Akumba and Oludahusi Tofeeq, the zonal PRO and chairman respectively which copy was made available to *Daily Trust*, threatened to burn down "any filling station caught in black-marketing."

"We want to use this medium for the last time to give strong warning to all filling stations where they operate "black-marketing" that this task force will ensure the burning of any filling station caught in this act." NANS warn.

While calling on the public to report any black marketer to the police or NANS secretaria at university of Jos. The task force equally enjoyed people in

sought to help her enforce her rights, the Movement for Protection of People's Rights, said that their action was borne out of their desire to ensure that nobody's right is unduly abused in the country. Adding however, that, they were left with no choice but to respect her views when she not only pleaded guilty to the charges but wanted the law to take its course.

The statement which was signed by the programme officer of the MPPR, Malam Rabi'u Umaru further revealed that an objective assessment carried out on the entire

state of Zamfara showed that adequate measures has been put in place to protect the lives of non Muslims in the area.

Describing the undue interference by Canada on the issue as 'an expected campaign of mischief and a discriminatory posture to every matter that is not in tune with the whiteman's interest, the organization emphasized the need for cross-checking issues before reporting them.

It said that western powers are funding a lot of activities that are detrimental to peace and stability in North, an action which it pointed out, can provoke the extremists to take over the implementation of the Sharia system.

"Both the Nigerian contitution, international laws and United Nations declaration on Human Rights acknowledged the rights to freedom of worship. It is not something new for someone to be tried in line with the dictates of his religious belief. It has been happening in so many places on the surface of the earth. In fact in India, the dead ones are handled according to the rules of Hindu faith yet non of this so-called western powers raised an eyebrow." The statement concluded.

the state to cooperate with the students in ensuring the end to the artificial fuel scarcity.

NANS explained that "since the emergence of democracy, the citizenry and people of Plateau state had suffered morally and physically as a result of black-marketer's activities.

They therefore commended the police in the state for their support which according to NANS "made things easier where a DPO have been accused of complicity.

Attah commends Kwankwaso

From Aliyu M. Sulaiman, in Kano

The governor of Akwa Ibom state Arc. Obong Victor Attah has commended the administration of his Kano State counterpart, Dr. Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso over developmental projects in the state.

Governor Attah who was on a two-day visit to Kano sate said that he was so impressed with what he saw in terms of development in the state including the completion of Murtala Mohammed Library which was not completed over 25 years.

Other projects he inspected include roads, Kano State University of Technology, Wudil and the bridges constructed across the state which he said were of immense importance to the people of the state.

Victor Attah said that, he learnt a lot from this visit and that was why he came with a lot of people, so that they will share the same experi-



Gov. Kwankwaso

ence for the development of their area.

On his part, the Kano state governor Dr. Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso expressed appreciation for the visit and said that all what he was able to achieve was because of the support and cooperation of the people of the state.

A gala night was organized in honour of the visiting governor where three cultural troops performed. These cultural dances include Koroso international,



Chief Tony Anenih, minister of works and housing, Chief Barnabas Gemade, National Chairman, PDP, Justice Mustapha Akanbi, Chairman, Anti-Corrupt Commission and President Obasanjo at a symposium on corruption and National Rebirth at NICON Hilton, Abuja yesterday.

Pix Kennedy Egbonodje.

Perm. sec laments poverty in the north

From Abdu Labaran in Katsina

The permanent secretary of the Katsina state Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Alhaji Abdulrahman Abdullah has observed that the level of poverty was on the increase in the North Western part of the country.

The permanent secretary, who is also the state chairman of the Food and Nutrition Committee, lamented the daily increase of poverty in the north west stressing the need for private sector teaming up with government to redress the

situation.

Speaking when officials of the UNICEF programme on Food and Nutrition paid him a courtesy call Alh. Abdullahi urged non-governmental organizations and wealthy individuals to initiate programmes and schemes aimed at implementing government efforts at arresting poverty in the country.

He particularly called for the initiation of rapid intervention programmes by NGOs and the reorientation of the populace towards the importance of nutrition, disclosing that the Katsina state committee has undertaken a number of activities in the rural areas aimed at alleviating poverty.

Responding, the leader of the team, Dr. Sani Hassan of the department of Medicine, ABU Zaria, disclosed that out of the 178 local gov-

ernments. The team visited in eight states in the north west, only 10 (local governments) where found to attain the minimum level of WHO nutrition requirement.

Lamenting the level of poverty particularly in Katsina, Zamfara and Kebbi states, Dr. Hassan said that the only way to arrest the situation was for the affected state governments to make monthly grants that would be judiciously used in projects that are genuinely aimed at improving the lots of the people.

Although Katsina and Sokoto state are among the most affected states in terms of poverty, the UNICEF team leader however expressed satisfaction that of the 10 local governments found to have attained the minimum requirement, six are from Zamfara while theremaining four are from Katsina.

NIPOST celebrates African Postal Day

By Osborne Adi Jnr.

The Nigeria Postal Service (NIPOST), will soon launch new postage stamps.

NIPOST has also embarked on some internal reforms in its attempt to attain universal standards in service provision.

In pursuance of this objective, it is developing a broad range of products and services that would be competitive, and are designed not only to satisfy customer needs, but also as means of making the organization financially viable and self-reliant.

This dreams, according to the statement issued by NIPOST would be actualized through extensive market research, which many

postal administrations have already incorporated as essential part of their customers satisfaction strategy.

Besides, it is also poised to provide universal qualitative postal service that is efficient, effective, reliable and affordable and is capable of reaching their destinations across the globe.

Part of the strategies aimed at achieving this goal, according to the statement, was the evolution of attainable standard of service which would be properly monitored.

NIPOST will also strengthen the quality of postal services it is currently providing by ensuring that customers got the most reliable, secured and efficient services at all levels of its operations.

"This will involve the setting of standards for quality that are in line with the expectations of customers as well as making improvements in the various measures adopted so that the standards can be met while measuring the extent to which the desired quality is provided," the statement added.

PAPU Day is a day set aside for postal authorities in the African continent to sensitize the public and governments of member countries on the role of the post as not only a primary means of communication between people but also as a catalyst for promoting economic and social development of any country where it exists.



Crime & Punishment



Customs Officers kill smugglers in shoot-out

A suspected smuggler was last Wednesday killed at the Idiroko border town of Ogun State, in a gun duel with Customs Officials, during which six other suspects were arrested and two smuggled second hand cars seized.

Customs area controller for Idiroko Command, Alhaji Hassan Kila told newsmen that a fierce battle that lasted about 10 minutes during which guns, axes, cutlasses, and broken bottles were used by the suspects.

He said that a convoy of about 30 vehicles being smuggled into Nigeria from neighboring Benin Republic, through Ita-Egbe bush path, behind Ihunbo village, near Idiroko, was intercepted by a patrol team

of the customs.

"Instead of stopping for inspection, the smugglers opened fire with automatic weapons, and my officers replied in self-defence, adding that some of the vehicles in the smugglers' convoy retreated to Benin Republic while others managed to escaped into Nigeria.

Kila disclosed that by the time the shooting subsided, six of the suspects had been arrested, with another suspect, carrying gun shot wounds found in one of the cars.

The customs chief said that the body of the dead suspect had been deposited at the Ilaro General Hospital mortuary, while two of the six arrested suspects and a customs officer, who

sustained injuries during the clash were being treated.

He said the suspects would be arraigned in court as soon as the police concluded preliminary investigations into the bloody clash.

The two vehicles seized from the smugglers, a Black "Nissan Primera" Saloon, and a Grey "Toyota Celica" were seen parked at the Customs office with an axe, two cutlasses, and broken bottles in them. The bodies of two custom officers killed by hoodlums at Ajegunle, near Idiroko, on Dec. 14, last year, would be buried at the weekend in their respective hometowns in Akwa Ibom and Enugu States, according to an announcement by the Customs Authorities.

Advance fee fraud deal: Moroccan National Appears in court for escaping from lawful Arrest

By Uwem Umo

A Moroccan National, Mustapha Ahzar has appeared before an Abuja Chief Magistrate court charged for escaping from lawful custody.

The offence, according



Chief Bola Ige, Attorney-General & Justice Minister.

to the prosecution is contrary to section 172 of the penal code law.

Prosecuting police officer, Mr. John Udeh, told the court in the First Information Report (FIR) that the accused person escaped from police custody on December 12, 2000 at the Force Criminal Investigations and Intelligence bureau (FIIB), Force Headquarters, Area 10, Garki, Abuja.

The prosecution further told the court that Mustapha was being detained for investigation on charges of criminal conspiracy and stealing of 65,000 pounds sterling (about N12m.), property of a member of the House of Representatives, Chief Ned M. Nwoko before he

allegedly escaped from the police.

The accused person, aged 44 years is said to be a senior chef (cook) by profession and resided at No. B4 flat 2 Apo village, National Assembly Quarters, Abuja.

The accused person pleaded not guilty, while his lawyer, Mr. Nnanna Ewa pleaded for bail, which the prosecution objected to strongly.

Presiding Chief Magistrate Mr. Bala Haruna objected to immediate bail of the accused person and advised counsel to apply for same by way of a motion and a sworn affidavit.

He adjourned the matter for ruling till January 23, 2001.

It will be recalled that trial of the accused was stalled for over three days because the accused person claimed he could not understand English language and opted to be tried in Arabic language.

Woman gets 100 lashes in Zamfara for fornication

A Zamfara Sharia High Court has effected the punishment of 100 cane/lashes to one Bariya Ibrahim Magazu who was earlier convicted for fornication.

A release by the Director of Press Affairs Government. House, Gusau, Malam Bashir Sanda Gusau indicates that the punishment was carried out in the early hours of last Friday amidst a crowd of curious spectators.

Speaking shortly after the punishment; the

Judge, Alhaji. Idris Usman Gusau quoted Suratul Nur verse 2 as well as section 147 of the Sharia Panel Code to justify the conviction.

Responding shortly after the punishment, the convict Bariya Ibrahim thanked the Almighty Allah. According to her, she has now been purified and prayed to god to forgive her sin.

Meanwhile, one Muhammed Sani has proposed to marry the convicted girl.



Alhaji Ahmed Sani, Zamfara State governor.

Human Rights Lawyer, brother in court for Stealing

From Adelanwa Bamigboye, Lagos

The police authorities in Lagos have dragged a Lagos based lawyer and Human Rights activist, Mr. Festus Keyamo to court over an alleged theft of a police case file.

Mr. Keyamo and his younger brother, Mr. Lucky Keyamo, 22 years, were dragged before a Lagos Chief Magistrate Court on a two-count charge of stealing and conspiracy to steal.

The Keyamos who are locked in a legal battle with Senator Tokunbo Afikuyomi of Lagos Central Senatorial District was said to have conspired to steal a police case file at the Satellite Town Police Station, Lagos on September 30, 1999.

The case file, with file No. R/320/89, valued at N200.00 property of the Nigeria Police Force, was allegedly stolen by Festus Keyamo and his younger brother Lucky from the custody of the Satellite Town Police Station last year.

Keyamo was said to have stolen the said police case file in his bid to establish a case of obtaining money under false pretences against Senator Tokunbo

Afikuyomi.

The duo however, pleaded not guilty to the charges and were subsequently granted N30,000 bail with two sureties each.

At the resumed hearing of the case, the accused persons sought for time to enable them prepare for their defence but advised the court to charge the Senator from Lagos Central Constituency to court also. In his ruling, Chief Magistrate Bankole Williams held that the issue of Senator Tokunbo Afikuyomi be left for another day while definite hearing on the case was fixed for 9 March, 2001.

Earlier, Festus Keyamo had applied to a Lagos High Court seeking leave to compel the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) Lagos, to prosecute Senator Tokunbo Afikuyomi.

According to Keyamo, the Senator allegedly collected N6,716.00 in three instalments from one Sam Mogbo after falsely presenting himself to be capable of procuring a United States of America Visa and flight ticket for the said Sam Mogbo.

Afikuyomi was arrested and charged before an Apapa Magistrate Court on June 12, 1989 and was granted bail in the sum of N6,000 but

he allegedly jumped bail on all subsequent adjournments.

On the strength of this, a bench warrant was issued for the arrest of Senator Afikuyomi on 29 November, 1989, which was yet to be executed.

Keyamo claimed that through pain staking investigation, "I dug out this file from a police station after more than eleven (11) years and I promptly informed the Inspector-General of Police that indeed, I had seen a wanted person".

"Surprisingly, I was instead

arrested and detained, but I was released due to public outrage over the development" Keyamo said. It would be recalled that the police authority at the zone II police Command Onikan, Lagos had given Senator Tokunbo Afikuyomi a clean bill on the Keyamo's allegation of advance fee fraud.

However, a Police source told Daily Trust that Afikuyomi's case was far from over". It is just a matter of time and we shall know if he (Afikuyomi) is a thief or not", said a source.



IGP. Musliu Smith

FOR THE RECORD

Inaugural address of George W. Bush

Following is the text of George W. Bush's inaugural address, delivered shortly after he was sworn in as 43rd president of the United States on Saturday:

This peaceful transfer of authority is rare in history, yet common in our country. With a simple oath, we affirm old traditions, and make new beginnings. As I begin, I thank President Clinton for his service to our nation. And I thank Vice President Gore for a contest conducted with spirit, and ended with grace.

I am honoured and humbled to stand here, where so many of America's leaders have come before me, and so many will follow.

We have a place, all of us, in a long story; a story we continue, but whose end we will not see. It is the story of a new world that became a friend and liberator of the world of the old. The story of a slave-holding society that became a servant to freedom. The story of a power that went into the world to protect but not possess, to defend but not to conquer. It is the American story; a story of flawed and fallible people, united across the generations by grand and enduring ideals.

The grandest of these ideals is an unfolding American promise: that everyone belongs, that everyone deserves a chance, that no insignificant person was ever born. Americans are called to enact this promise in our lives and in our laws. And though our nation has sometimes halted, and sometimes delayed, we must follow not other course.

Through much of the last century, America's faith in freedom and democracy was a rock in a raging sea. Now it is a seed upon the wind, taking root in many nations. Our democratic faith is more than the creed of our country, it is the inborn hope of our humanity; an ideal we carry but do not own, a trust we bear and pass along. And even after nearly 225 years, we have a long way yet to travel.

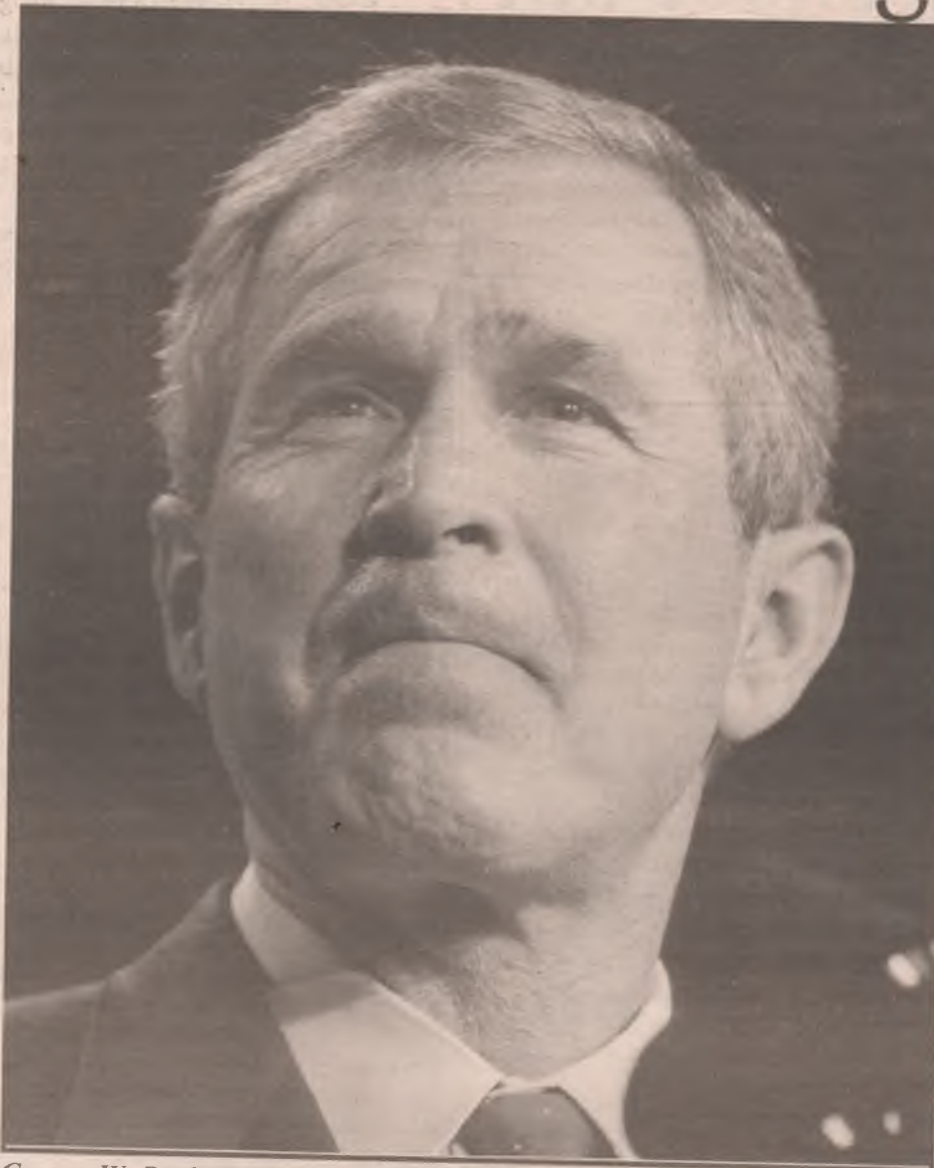
While many of our citizens prosper, others doubt the promise – even the justice – of our own country. The ambitions of some Americans are limited by failing schools, and hidden prejudice, and of circumstances of their birth. And sometimes our differences run so deep, it seems we share a continent, but not a country.

We do not accept this, and we will not allow it. Our unity, our nation, is the serious work of leaders and citizens in every generation. And this is my solemn pledge; I will work to build power larger than ourselves, Who creates us equal in His image.

And we are confident in principles that unite and lead us onward.

America has never been united by blood or birth or soil. We are bound by ideals that move us beyond our backgrounds, lift us above our interests, and teach us what it means to be citizens. Every child must be taught these principles. Every citizen must uphold them. And every immigrant, by embracing these ideals, makes our country more, not less, American.

Today we affirm a new commitment to live out our nation's promise through civility, courage, compassion and character.



George W. Bush, President of the United States of America

America, at its best, matches a commitment to principle with a concern for civility. A civil society demands from each of us good will respect, fair dealing and forgiveness.

Some seem to believe that our politics can afford to be petty because, in a time of peace, the stakes of our debates appear small. But the stakes, for America, are never small. If our country does not lead the cause of freedom, it will not be led. If we do not turn the hearts of children toward knowledge and character, we will lose their gifts and undermine their idealism. If we permit our economy to drift and decline, the vulnerable will suffer most.

We must live up to the calling we share. Civility is not a tactic or sentiment. It is the determined choice of trust over cynicism, of community over chaos. And this commitment, if we keep it, is a way to shared accomplishment.

America, at its best, is also courageous. Our national courage has been clear in times of depression and war, when defeating common dangers defined our common good. Now we must choose if the example of our fathers and mothers will inspire us or condemn us. We must show courage in a time of blessing, by confronting problems instead of passing them on to future generations.

Together we will reclaim America's schools, before ignorance and apathy claim more young lives. We will reform Social Security and Medicare, sparing our children from struggles we have the power to prevent. And we will reduce taxes, to recover the momentum of our economy and reward

the effort and enterprise of working Americans. We will build our defences beyond challenge, lest weakness invite challenge. We will confront weapons of mass destruction, so that a new century is spared new horrors.

The enemies of liberty and our country should make no mistake. America remains engaged in the world, by history and by choice, shaping a balance of power that favours freedom. We will defend our allies and our interests. We will show purpose without arrogance. We will meet aggression and bad faith with resolve and strength. And to all nations, we will speak for the values that gave our nation birth.

America, at its best, is compassionate.

In the quiet of American conscience, we know that deep, persistent poverty is unworthy of our nation's promise. And whatever our views of its cause, we can agree that children at risk are not at fault. Abandonment and abuse are not acts of God, they are failures of love. And the proliferation of prisons, however necessary, is no substitute for hope and order in our souls.

Where there is suffering, there is duty. Americans in need are not strangers, they are citizens; not problems, but priorities; and all of us are diminished when any are hopeless.

Government has great responsibilities, for public safety and public health, for civil rights and common schools. Yet compassion is the work of a nation, not just a government. And some needs and hurts are so deep they will only respond to a mentor's touch or a pastor's prayer. Church and charity, synagogue and mosque, lend our com-

munities their humanity, and they will have a honoured place in our plans and laws.

Many in our country do not know the pain of poverty. But we can listen to those who do. And I can pledge our nation to a goal: When we see that wounded traveller on the road to Jericho, we will not pass to the other side.

America, at its best, is a place where personal responsibility is valued and expected.

Encouraging responsibility is not a search for scapegoats; it is a call to conscience. And though it requires sacrifice, it brings a deeper fulfilment. We find the fullness of life, not only in options, but in commitments. And we find that children and community are the commitments that set us free.

Our public interest depends on private character; on civic duty and family bonds and basic fairness; on uncounted, unhonoured acts of decency which give direction to our freedom.

Sometimes in life we are called to do great things. But as a saint of our times has said, every day we are called to do small things with great love. The most important tasks of democracy are done by everyone.

I will live and lead by these principles: to advance my convictions with civility; to pursue the public interest with courage; to speak for greater justice and compassion; to call for responsibility, and try to live it as well. In all these ways, I will bring the values of our history to the care of our times.

What you do is as important as anything government does. I ask you to seek a common good beyond your comfort; to defend needed reforms against easy attacks; to serve your nation, beginning with your neighbour. I ask you to be citizens. Citizens, not spectators. Citizens, not subjects. Responsible citizens, building communities of service and a nation of character.

Americans are generous and strong and decent, not because we believe in ourselves, but because we hold beliefs beyond ourselves. When this spirit of citizenship is missing, no government programme can replace it. When this spirit of present, no wrong can stand against it.

After the Declaration of Independence was signed, Virginia statesman John Page wrote to Thomas Jefferson: "We know the Race is not to the swift nor the Battle to the Strong. Do you not an Angel rides in the Whirlwind and directs this Storm?" Much time has passed since Jefferson arrived for his inauguration. The years and changes accumulate. But the themes of this day he would know: our nation's grand story of courage, and its simple dream of dignity.

We are not this story's Author, Who fills time and eternity with His purpose. Yet His purpose is achieved in our duty; and our duty is fulfilled in service to one another.

Never tiring, never yielding, never finishing, we renew the purposed today: to make our country goes on. And an angel still rides in the whirlwind and directs this storm.

God bless you all, and God bless America.

Abuja News

Vehicle number plate racketeering booms in Abuja

Stories by
Musa Badamasi

The dirty deals going on at the Vehicle Inspectorate Office (VIO) in Abuja over the acquisition of number plate is making mess of the current Federal Government war against corruption in all its ramifications in the country.

Daily Trust reliably gathered that it is no longer possible for Nigerians to apply for a new vehicle number through normal procedure and get it easily without passing through touts.

The official price for obtaining a plate number of less than two thousand Naira (N2,000.00), is no longer a sure way of getting the services needed as one must pay through a tout to get required attention within a reasonable time.

Further investigation

revealed that touts who equally have their collaborators among the VIO officers, collect between seven and ten thousand Naira (N7,000 - N10,000.00) and as soon as the money is paid through the touts, one is sure of collecting the plate number the second day

It was gathered that plate numbers are allocated to people in large numbers who in turn hoard the item and re-sell it out to Nigerians through touts who will carry out the business as usual in connivance with some members of VIO officers.

Mr Michael Abebe, a

staff of one construction company in Abuja disclosed that the situation of what goes on when trying to obtain a vehicle number plate is appalling, saying "why must we be subjected to pay as much as nine thousand Naira (N9,000.00) to obtain a number plate which ordinarily should not cost

more than two thousand Naira (N2,000.00), there is urgent need for authority to do something".

Also, this reporter was equally accosted by one Mr. Steven Audu who claimed to be dealing in the business of number plate procurement at a flat rate of ten thousand Naira (N10,000.00) dur-

ing the course of investigation.

Meanwhile, all efforts to get official reaction to this dirty development and cheating innocent Nigerians by malpractices at the VIO headquarters, located near Federal Ministry of Works and Housing, Mabuchi proved abortive.



Engr. Abba Kyari Wakilbe, Deputy Corps Marshal, Federal Road Safety Corps.

.6m children immunized in FCT

Over six hundred thousand (600,000) children have been immunized against the six deadly child killer preventable diseases in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

The FCDA director of health services, Dr. Moses Ayo, disclosed this to Daily Trust in a chat after flag off of the third round of polio house-to-house immunization in Kwali Area Council.

He said the choice of Kwali for the flag off of this year's immunization exercise shows the commitment of the present administra-

tion to justice for the rural development.

"This therefore calls on everyone involved in immunization, to be committed, dedicated and to emulate the leadership roles being displayed", he emphasised.

According to Dr. Ayo, it is equally very important to give support to the development and protection of every child in FCT as healthy children are a source of pride and immense health to the nation, as they will also become the leaders of tomorrow.

He said immunization

centre and outreach stations in all the Area Councils, are therefore called upon to adequately mobilise mother and father to ensure they bring their children and wards out regularly for the routine immunization, which is a continuous exercise.

He noted that in the first round a total of 285,171 children were immunized with Oral Polio Vaccine while 268,227 received Vitamin A supplement in FCT and during the second round, a total of 343,886 received Oral Polio Vaccine.



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Keshi shuns Sango

By Owoidoho Otong

“Big Boss” Stephen Keshi, recently redeployed from the Super Eagles to the U-20 by Dutchman Jo Bonfrere may have thrown in the towel in protest of the development.

Keshi, the former assistant coach of the Super

Eagles who has been central to the wranglings in the Eagles technical crew only last Thursday shunned a truce meeting at the instance of sports minister, Damishi Sango.

The former influential skipper of the Super Eagles refused to honour the meeting allegedly to spite the authority whom he accused of unduly

favouring Jo Bonfrere to the detriment of indigenous coaches.

At the meeting at which the Dutch tactician declined to speak on any issues raised. Sango gave the technical adviser the authority to juggle national coaches in consonance with the contractual terms enabling Bonfrere to choose whosoever he desires to work with.

The decision further irked Keshi who considered his redeployment a slap contending that it was not based on merit and principle of career progression.

Impeccable sources revealed that the Big Boss who was roundly supported by passionate soccer devotees especially after leading home based to defeat Namibia and draw against Madagascar prefers to opt out of any arrangement that may continue to relegate indigenous coaches to the background.

Penultimate Thursday, security operatives uncovered plans by some alleged irate fans to hold Bonfrere Jo hostage to protest his disdain for indigenous coaches. This

plans allegedly was to be hatched Saturday during the Zambia/Nigeria Nations Cup clash.

Though the NFA rallied to ensure that trouble was not manifestly formented, *Trustsports* however gathered that soccer fans attempted to effect the plans but were checkmated.

The situation though was not really helped by the dismal performance of the Eagles squad in the match they were expected to maul their fledging opponents.

Since then, Keshi who had remained less active on the bench throughout the



Keshi match refused any formal contact with the NFA chiefs, remained incommunicado and could not even be reach in both his Benin and USA addresses.

NFA invites five pros to Flying Eagles

Five foreign based stars have been invited to beef up the U-20 squad in preparation for Argentina 2001 World Youth Championship.

They are Bathlomew Ogbeche plying his trade in France, Samson Joseph and Abiodun Ogunbade both based in Portugal, Yakubu Adamu and Edorisi Ekhosuehi based in Germany and Tunisia respectively.

Others are Afeso Atta, Efosa Egueoku, Dele Aiyenugba, Chukwudi Nwogu, Shuaibu Mohammed, Ugochukwu Okoye, Uche Sheriff, Aniekan Enyema, Bello Mohammed, Jonah

Fregene, Rabiu Abdulmumini, Bayo Hassan, Justice Christopher and Ajibade Omolade.

The list also has Endurance Alabura, Monday Inidia, Lekan Ayinde, Oga Odey, Kayode Idowu, Sunday Eke and Chijioko Njoku.

The rest are Robert Akaruye, Obiako Sylvanus, Ofombe John, Mohammed Lawal, Christopher Ogbodo, Ben Udoh, Rafiu Salauddeen, Sunday Kalunga and Alfred Enujeraye.

According to the Nigeria Football Association (NFA) the list will be pruned down to 25 when the training tour begins early next month.

Ameobi thrills Bonfrere

Nigeria national team coach Jo Bonfrere said he would invite Newcastle United striker Shola Ameobi to play for the country of his birth.

“After our match against Sudan, I will go to England to watch Ameobi closely, if he’s interested, I’ll invite him to play for Nigeria,” Dutchman Bonfrere said on Sunday.

The 19-year-old Ameobi, who moved to England with his parents at the age of five, has made an impressive start for the premier league club since his debut as substitute against Chelsea on September 8.

He has scored twice in nine appearances—mostly standing in for the injured Alan Shearer—including the third goal in Newcastle’s 3-1 defeat of Leeds United on Saturday.

Bonfrere said it was

important to explore the possibility of using Nigeria’s legion of talent playing at overseas clubs in the national team.

Nigeria has a busy programme of World Cup and African Nations’ Cup qualifier this year.

They play Sudan in a World Cup qualifier on January 27 in Port Harcourt.

Nigeria, with three points, are third behind Ghana and Liberia in their qualifying group Sierra Leone are also in the group, from which only one team will go through to the 2002 World Cup finals in Japan and South Korea.

Bonfrere said that if Ameobi was interested, he could make his Nigeria debut in next month’s proposed friendly against Trinidad and Tobago.

The Nigeria Football Association said on Monday it was still working out the necessary details for the friendly.



Bonfrere

Chevron staff sponsor taekwondo

Five states have so far indicated interest to participate in the second Chevron Taekwondo competition scheduled to hold between Feb. 3 and Feb. 4 at the Chevron recreation center, Gbagada, Lagos.

According to Micheal Ugbodo, the Co-ordinator of the event told News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) Monday in Lagos that the states include Edo, Rivers, Plateau, Bauchi and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) adding that more entries were still being expected.

He said that several clubs within Lagos have also entered for the competition. He said that male and female fighters would compete in three

events - the open breaking, the poomse and the sparring - at members of Chevron staff Taekwondo Association (Chesta).

The Co-ordinator said that children and adults would compete in each event. He said that Chevron’s managing Director, Mr. Ray Wilcox, who has donated a trophy to be competed, is among dignitaries expected at the competition. Adding that retired Capt. Isaiah Gowon, Chairman of the Taekwondo Association of Nigeria (TAN) would attend as guest.

Ugbodo, TAN member, said that championship was part of chesta’s contribution towards developing Taekwondo at the grassroot level.

No date yet for basketball league

The Nigeria Basketball Federation (NBBF) has not yet fixed a date for the take-off of this year’s 7UP premier basketball league, the number one competition on the annual calendar of the NBBF.

The two conferences (Atlantic and Savannah) of the league has been expected to take off on Saturday at the indoor sports hall of the National Stadium, Lagos.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that neither NBBF officials nor representatives of the sponsors was at the stadium on Saturday.

NAN gathered that the Federation had not yet meet with the sponsors to work out the modalities for this

years’ competition.

The Federation’s other major activities of the year include the Africa under - 23 boys championships billed for June in Senegal and the Africa Nations Cup in July in Egypt, according to NBBF Secretary, Mrs. Chinedu Ezeala.

Ezeala said that among other programmes for the year are the International Referees and Coaches Clinics in May and June in Lagos and Mombasa, Kenya respectively, the African Amateur Basketball Association (AFAB) central Board Meeting and congress in July in Egypt. The first phase of the National Division one Male and Female Championship will be held in Benin in March.

United sees off Jigawa

From Ted Calvin, in Kaduna

Rejuvenated Katsina United FC Saturday at the Ahmadu Bello stadium, Kaduna improved their fortunes in the on-going professional league with a 2-1 victory over Jigawa Golden Stars of Dutse.

Wonderboy Effiong Ekpenyong opened scoring in the 40th minute with a stylish header off a Rabiu Baita well-knitted cross from the left flank where team Skipper Emmanuel Issah was a delight to watch.

The undaunted Jigawa lads were quick to recover from the set back with Yusuf Mohammed, Samuel Uzoukwu and Sani Suleiman making incursions into their opponents rear, but with nothing to show for it.

On resumption of the

second stanza, the Jigawa due of Abdulazeez Yusuf and Suleiman playing with a recharged nerves directed many telegraphic shots at Katsina’s goal-mouth which were either firmly gripped by keeper Guadi or went wide.

In the 50th minute, Mohammed Ali replaced S. Uzuokwu, and instantly changed the tide and pace of the game with his deft touches.

Katsina increased the tally through Yinka Salihu, an intelligent long-range drive which caught keeper Effiong napping.

In the tail-end of the game Mohammed justified his introduction as he unleashed a trickish jab to reduce the tally. Baba Saidu replaced tireless Rabiu Baita while Ejembi Daniel replaced Yusuf. The match became a ding-dong until the centre referee signalled the end.

Eaglets off to Bari

The Golden Eaglets are to depart for Bari, Italy today aboard Alitalia for the Meridien Cup fiesta. The Eaglets, who won the maiden edition of the tournament in 1997 are one of the five African flag-bearers in the competition meant to solidify relations between Europe and Africa.

The squad tutored by Musa Abdullahi formally of the Super Eagles and Hassan Abdullahi have been in camp in the last two months shaping up for the fiesta, which will roll off the ground on January 27 through February 13.

Other countries participating in the tournament are Mali, Ghana, Cameroon, Spain, Czech Republic, Poland and host Italy.



Jibade Onolade of Katsina United back-heels the ball stylishly as Jigawa’s Awwalu Gbade lurks in during a pro-league tie last season. Katsina defeated Jigawa, 2-1 at the weekend. Pix Joe Oroye



Sango backs Bonfrere

** Says he is still on course for World Cup qualification*

Stories from Richard Abayomi, in Lagos

Those who were clamouring for the sack of the Super Eagles technical adviser, Bonfrere Jo would better start having a re-think, as the honourable Minister of Sports and Social Development, Damishi Sango has thrown his weight behind the Dutchman.

Speaking with the *Trustsports* recently in Lagos, Mr. Sango said it would be absurd to terminate Bonfrere's appointment abruptly without any concrete reasons.

"We have not found Bonfrere Jo wanting so it will be difficult



Damishi Sango for anybody to sack him," Sango

declared.

The minister stressed that the Dutchman has a mandate to qualify Nigeria for the World Cup "and I think he is still on course."

The minister, who also doubles as the President of Supreme Council for Sports in Africa noted that the Nigeria Football Association (NFA) had entered into a contractual agreement with the foreign coach and the agreement is still binding

on both parties.

Giving insight into how the Dutchman's appointment can be terminated, said the NFA would have to report the coach to the Sports Ministry officials, anytime the former errs.

Meanwhile, the Dutchman has submitted the list of players to be invited for the World Cup qualifier coming up in Port Harcourt this weekend.

Briefs

Makinen captures Monte Carlo

Finland's Tommi Makinen clinched a hat-trick of Monte Carlo Rally wins Sunday after overnight leader Colin McRae was forced out after the 12th run.

Makinen, whose four-year reign as world champion was ended by compatriot Marcus Gronholm in November, led by more than a minute in his Mitsubishi with Ford's Carlos Sainz of Spain in second position after stage 13.

Gilchrist puts

Australia on top

Captain Adam Gilchrist smashed 39 off 29 balls to help put Australia in a wining position against Zimbabwe in their limited overs match on Sunday.

Chasing Zimbabwe's 223-9 off 50 overs, Australia were 142 for one after 25 overs with Darren Lehmann on 57 and Ricky Ponting also unbeaten on 38.

Agassi backs McEnroe

Andre Agassi lent his support on Sunday to John MacEnroe's anticipated return to competitive action in the Davis Cup.

McEnroe, the 31-years-old, seven-time grand slam singles champion who retired from the ATP Tour in 1992, has suggested he plans to play as a doubles specialist in the United States' Davis Cup team this season.

Maywether retains title

Flyd Maywether Jr. knocked down Diego Corrales five times and retained his World Boxing Council super featherweight title when the referee stopped their fight in the 10th round on Saturday.

Maywether (25-0) entered the bout as the classic boxer-puncher against the previously unbeaten Corrales.

Adams retires

Former England captain Tony Adams has announced his retirement from international football the *Observer* newspaper reported on Sunday.

The 34-year-old defender, who has been plagued by injury in recent years, wants to concentrate on his career with Arsenal.

World Cup qualifier: Sudan sends warning signal

Super Eagles opponents in the World Cup qualifier billed for Port Harcourt two weeks time have promised to give the Nigerian team a tough metal at home.

Trustsports gathered on a popular radio programme monitored yesterday in Lagos that the Sudanese national team are already in camp preparing seriously for the World Cup showdown slated for January 27. It was reported that the Sudanese players are in high spirit thus

promising to wreck the star-studded Nigerian team whom the two teams clash in Port Harcourt. The Sudanese were quoted as saying that they would give the Super Eagles a run for their money at home thus making the reverse fixture a formality. It will, however, be recalled that Nigeria is in precarious situation on the table for the World Cup qualifier having lost 1-2 to Liberia at Monrovia while she struggled to beat Sierra Leone at home 2-0.

John retains title

Tennis

By Abdulraouf El-Ashir

Defending champion, Segun John on Saturday retained the men's single title when he defeated Kelly in two straight games of 6-4 and 6-1 at the 2nd edition of the Ideal Flour Mill annual tennis tournament organised by the Kaduna Recreation Club.

Before reaching the final, Segun John defeated captain of the lawn-tennis section of the

club Galadima in two straight games of 7-5 and 6-4 while Kelly defeated Ola Benson in a very keenly contested semi-final 6-2,3-6 and 6-4.

In the men's doubles category, the pair of Segun John and Alhaji Ibrahim Mohammed defeated the pair of Ola Benson and Amaechi 7-6 and 6-2 to lift the men's double title.

Alhaji Ibrahim made it two on the final day when he pocketed the veterans title after beating Amaechi in two straight games of 6-1 and 6-0.

22 female soccer teams for Maryam Babangida tourney

From Akinade Adeniyi, in Minna

No fewer than 22 female soccer teams are expected at the 3rd National Invitational Female Football competition which took off on a slow tempo on Saturday.

Hajiya Sa'adatu M. Kolo, the chairperson of the Niger State Female Football Development Committee had earlier during her visit to the former first lady, Hajiya Maryam Babangida at her uphill home in Minna said some 39 teams were originally scheduled to participate in the one week soccer fiesta.

She said the aim of the competition was to engage female youths in useful activities.

The preliminaries of the competition would take place at the 123 playing field, customs and Ahmadu Bahago secondary school pitches all in Minna while the finals work be played

at the Bako Kontagora Memorial Township Stadium also in Minna.

The chairperson expressed delight that philanthropic individuals and establishments contacted for assistance to make the tournament a success have been responding positively.

Responding, Hajiya Maryam Babangida praised the efforts of the Niger State female football development committee in the promotion of female football in the state.

Mrs. Babangida particularly lauded the persistence and untiring doggedness of the chairperson despite the numerous obstacles that stand in the way of female football in the north generally.

She promised to do her best in ensuring that all participants in the competition were comfortable and enjoined Niger to take the lead in female soccer in the north.



Super Eagles celebrate against Namibia in a Nations Cup qualifier last September. The Sudanese national team has sent a warning signal.

Pix Omo Oba



Adams

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Gboko Heats and Dodan Warriors slugging it out during the NBBF playoffs last season. No date yet for the basketball league kick-off. *Pix Omo Oba.*

Nigeria/Sudan World Cup cracker: Arsenal can't stop Kanu-NFA

By Owoidoho Oton

The Nigeria Football Association (NFA) will go to any length to secure the release of sleekly Nwankwo Kanu from Arsenal FC for Saturday's World Cup qualifier against Sudan.

Bolaji Ojo-Oba, the association head of international department made the assertion against the backdrop of an alleged threat by Arsenal not to release the soccer prodigy on the ground of none compliance with FIFA's regulation on such matters.

The former commissioner of sports in Oyo state said that the NFA had in order to meet the stipulated 14 days notice to clubs on the invitation of players for national assignment by FIFA, consigned the request on January 10.

Ojo-Oba said such moves was done in anticipation of a shift of ground by Sports Minister, Damishi Sango who had insisted on the exclusion of the lad for preferring club to country during the Olympic games.

Consequently, the HOD dismissed any contention

about late issuance of invitation letter to Arsenal for the release of Kanu, stressing that the argument was fraught with ill-logic.

"We forwarded the invitation letter to Arsenal and Chelsea for the release of Kanu and Celestine Babayaro on January 10, 2001, 17 days to the match," Ojo-Oba sounding confident on the release of all players for the world cup qualifier against Sudan in Port Harcourt.

The celebrated former Dream Team Skipper was excluded from the Super Eagles squad which played a lacklustre game against Zambia sequel to a ministerial fiat.

However, last Thursday, following passionate pleas by NFA chieftains and several concern citizens Damishi Sango finally budged to make way for Kanu's return to the squad.

Meanwhile, the Super Eagles under the tutelage of Dutchman Joe Bonfrère converged at the Liberation Stadium, Port Harcourt today to resume training for Saturday's crucial World Cup 2002 quali-



Recalled. . . Super Eagles forward Nwankwo Kanu en-route goal against the Leone Stars during a World Cup tie in Lagos. NFA is bent on having him against Sudan on Saturday. *Pix. Omo Oba.*



Sparkling. . . Russian tennis star Anna Kournikova enjoying a good run at the on-going Australian Open.

From Richard Abayomi, in Lagos

Barely four days to the World Cup qualifier between Super Eagles and the Sudanese national team, the Super Eagles camp in Port Harcourt is still empty.

Virtually all the 19 players invited to do battle against Sudan on Saturday are coming from Europe and the Trustsports gathered that none of the players has reported officially as at 3pm yesterday.

Speaking with the Trustsports, Nigeria Football

Eagles camp still empty

Association liaison office, Paul Hamilton said the NFA protocol officers are keeping vigil at the airport waiting for the arrival of the foreign-based players, who are yet to give details of their travelling schedules. "I am sure they will start coming in as from today (Monday) since the boys know how crucial the match against Sudan is to Nigeria," he said.

Hamilton stressed that as soon as the players arrived Lagos, they would be flown to

Port Harcourt and those who arrive Lagos late would be allowed to pass the night in Lagos before travelling the next morning to the venue of the match.

"The team will camp in the Presidential Hotel in Port Harcourt to ensure that the players have full concentration for the match," he disclosed.

Also, Coach Shuaibu Amodu returned yesterday from Cote D'Ivoire where he had gone to watch the Ivoriens

play Sudan in a Nations Cup qualifier at the weekend.

It is however believed that Amodu would provide enough technical details on Super Eagles' opponents this weekend having watched them fall 2-0 to the Elephants.

It will be recalled that Portugal-based Binu Ajunwa is the only surprise inclusion in the 19-men Super Eagles squad that will tackle Sudan this weekend.

Professor Nomau's travails, written & illustrated by Bulamu Mustapha

