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Northerners were wonderful people —Nzeogwu's mother

By Kevin Ebele Adinnu

Mrs. Elizabeth Mgbeke Nzeogwu, mother of Major Chukwuma Nzeogwu, the man who led the bloody coup of January 15 1966, has described the people of northern Nigeria as "very good to stay with. It is our people that spoil the northerners."

Speaking to *Daily Trust* at her home in Okpanam in Delta State, Mrs. Nzeogwu recalled her life among northerners in Kaduna with nostalgia adding, "when my children were small, northerners will come and carry them and be playing with them. At times I will not see my child until later in the evening, well-fed."

"We did not bother ourselves with where we came from ... I will diligently prepare sweet soup for my children, but they will choose to eat with the children of my neighbours. Even if it is melted butter with fish, they will be satisfied."

Mrs. Nzeogwu's son, Chukwuma is considered not only as the man who aborted democracy and ended the First Republic, but as the traitor who personally shot to death, the premier of the Northern Region, Sir Ahmadu Bello, whom reports say always treated him as a protégé.

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PDP crisis threatens Obasanjo's re-election

By Ibrahim Modibbo,
Political Editor

The feud between the national chairman of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), Chief Barnabas Gemade and the factions opposed to his leadership has deepened thereby threatening the re-election of President Olusegun Obasanjo for the year 2003

election.

The crisis rocking the ruling party took a turn for worse the yesterday with all three factions in the party shunning a reconciliatory meeting convened by the Presidency.

Specifically, the Gemade led faction has been accused of stalling the reconciliatory moves as it has shunned two of the

meetings within two weeks.

In addition, the group has consistently refused to advance reasons for its refusal to attend the meetings usually chaired by former Anambra state governor, Chief Jim Nwobodo, now a senator of the Federal Republic.

On the other hand, both the Chief Sunday Awoniyi group which comprises the

elderly members of the party, and the youthful faction led by Gbenga Olawepo, the party's Deputy Publicity Secretary, have always honoured invitations to the meetings.

The five-man reconciliatory committee, the Awoniyi and Olawepo factions are said to have expressed surprise at the behaviour of Chief Gemade, who is said to be close to President Obasanjo who only last week confirmed his intention to run for a second term.

They regard his action which is blocking the reconciliatory efforts as inimical to the mobilisation of supporters for Obasanjo's re-election campaign.

Our sources confirmed that President Obasanjo has been intimated of the matter but has continued to urge the reconciliation committee to put in more efforts in order to put the house in order.

Meanwhile, a source within the committee disclosed that its efforts had been slowed down by the quiet quitting from the committee by Alhaji Abubakar Rimi. The source

said although Rimi has not officially notified the chairman of his decision to quit, he has confided in his associates and hinged his departure on the

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First aid personnel transport an injured victim of the earthquake to hospital. Pix. AFP

Salvadoran Earthquake: President appeals for external aid

President of El Salvador, Francisco Flores has called for international assistance following last Saturday's earthquake which killed more than 500 as desperate friends and relatives worked against

the clock in hopes of finding more survivors.

Over 1000 persons are still missing in what experts described as "shockingly strong" earthquake for years. The president said foreign assistance would be required to restore public services such as electricity

and telephone.

"We need support from experts in rescue, re-opening communications, food and medicine," he said. "I have received calls from various heads of state who are activating their assistance teams to help us in these difficult moments."

The US Agency for International Development (USAID) said the United States would send helicopters to help assess the damage and target relief while Spain was preparing to send a team of 75 firefighters and 24 dogs to

Contd. on Pg.2

NEWS

Extradition Saga: AG not liable

By Uwan Umo

A Federal High Court sitting in Abuja yesterday ruled that the Attorney General of the Federation (AGF) Chie Bola Ige, (SAN) cannot be held accountable for the forceful abduction of a Nigerian, Mr. Lanre Shittu to the United States if America to face trial in allegations of fraud and money

Justice Okechukwu Okeke in his ruling said the court agreed with the submissions of counsel to the Attorney General that he did not participate in abducting him to the United States.

Mr. Lanre Shittu and two others Festus and Felix Wnagboje were allegedly abducted and deported to the United State on November 12, 2000 while a case for the extradition of the accused persons was still pending in court. Following the abduction, counted to Mr. Lanre Shittu, Chief Mike Okoye had gone to the Federal High Court, Abuja seeking an order to compel the Attorney general to be held responsible for abduction.

However, counsel to the Attorney General, Mr. Obi Akusiogu had in a preliminary objection argued that the AG was not party to the abduction and deportation of Lanre, Shittu to the United States and also that he cannot be held liable for the acts and omission of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency. (NDLEA).

Mr. Akubiogu had also argued that the NDLEA is a separate body who can sue and also be sued adding that if Lanre Shittu's rights have been infringed upon, he can sue the NDLEA.

However, Justice Okeke in his ruling expressed con-

cern and disappointment over the excesses of certain public officials who go to any extent to satisfy foreign governments.

He pointed out that "these men have failed to realise that the days of military dictatorship are over and over of ever.

While dismissing the suit, he however fixed February 2, 2001 for parties to argue the substantive motion relating to whether the offences for which Lanre Shittu is wanted in the US are extraditable or not irrespective of which ever method whether right or wrong was

used.

It will be recalled that Lanre Shittu, a Lagos socialite and popular auto dealer had been declared wanted in the States of New Jersey, USA since 17th July 1995 on a 12-court charge of wine, fraud, conspiracy, money laundering and on-slaught under false and fraudulent pretences.

Lanre Shittu was said to have obtained over \$168, 500 dollars from the one Charles Kanoho Junior under false pretence.

FG Spends N4bn to fight Aids

By Osborne Adi Jnr

The Federal Government has earmarked the sum of N4 billion for the a national campaign against the HIV/AIDS scourge.

The campaign scheduled to commence under the auspices of the Interim Action Plan (IAP) will encompass all the state if the federation and the local government councils in a massive move to contain further spread of the endemic in the country.

Already, President Olusegun Obasanjo has written all the state governor on the need for them to set up a state agency on HIV/AIDS through which the national campaign would be coordinated at the state and local government levels.

Chairman, National Action Committee on Aids (NACA), Professor Iboronke Akunsete, said in Abuja yesterday that the policy guidelines for the establishment of the state agency and the local government offices are being worked out and would be released as soon as they were completed.

According to the funding for the campaign will be derived from the federal govern-

ment, state and local governments as well as contributions from multilateral organisations and donor agencies.

He said Government earlier approach failed because they were inadequate just as the political climate was not conducive for a concerted approach by stakeholders in the campaign.

The current response being adopted in the said to take the war to the grassroots was multi-sectional involving all stakeholders especially those affected and lining with HIV/AIDS.

Auto Crash Claims 23

Twenty-three persons died in an early morning auto crash on Friday at Nasarawas Dandume, Katsina State. The News agency of Nigeria (NAN) report.

NAN correspondent, who visited the scene of the accident, reported that it involved an 18-seated bus in a head-on collision with a trailer.

The bus was said to be heading toward sheme market while the trailer was going to Birnin Gwari before the accident occurred.

Meanwhile, five persons



President Obasanjo laying the wreath at Abuja National Arcade for the 2001 Armed Forces Remembrance Day Celebration. Pix. Kennedy Egbonodje

Northerners

Contd. from Pg.1

According to Professor John Paden, author of Sir Ahmadu Bello's post-humous biography, Major Chukwuma Nzeogwu publicly admitted to having killed the late premier because of his northernisation policy, when he met with northern cabinet ministers and permanent secretaries on the morning of January 16, 1966.

This policy, which grew steadily unpopular among southerners living in the north, was the Sardana philosophy of getting the north to catch up with the other regions, through giving priority attention to northerners in the provision of educational opportunities and employment.

See Page 17 for detailed interview with Nzeogwu's mother.

Salvadoran Earthquake

Contd. from Pg.1

search for survivors. El-Salvador press reports said a hospital collapsed in the southern city of San Miguel, and the Red Cross said people were trapped when a church fell in the northern city of Santa Ana where at least four deaths were reported.

The highway between San Salvador and Santa Ana, 35 miles (56km) to the north, was blocked by a landslide, and a bridge was damaged, officials said.

Across the country people stayed outside their homes as aftershocks continued overnight, building bonfires amid power outages and listening to radios.

The US Geological Survey said the quake's

epicentre was about 65 miles (105km) southeast of El Salvador's capital, San Salvador, off the Pacific coast.

In Santa Tecla's middle-class neighbourhoods, where a hillside collapsed on up to 500 homes, hope gave way to resignation as more bodies were recovered.

"There was more hope yesterday than today. . . it's more difficult now," said Clarise Lopez, who lost an aunt in the landslide. "All we have left to do is look for them."

Hundreds of emergency workers and volunteers worked alongside huge cranes to shovel dirt from around collapsed homes in a sea of mud, tree limbs and rubble.

I will restore Military glory – Obasanjo.

By Suleiman Mohammed

President Olusegun Obasanjo has said only a credible armed forces which can play reconstitution look can ensure success of the current democratic experiment in the country.

Speaking at the laying of wreath to make the end of these years Armed Forces Remembrance Day celebration in Abuja, President Obasanjo declared, "let me say here and now that we have resolved to bring about the lost glory we have of the Nigeria Military, and whatever it takes, we will do it."

He described the involvement of the Military in Political as a mixed blessing, stressing that the Army must be honest to admit that something

have gone wrong, thus it must now resolve to put its house in order "so that the Nigeria Military can be the pride of the nation it used to be in terms of discipline, commitment, loyalty, training, probity, professionalism and integrity."

"Whether at home or abroad, whether in recent times or in the past, Nigeria Armed Forces have acquired themselves creditably", he said.

While commenting the Veterans for their role in keeping Nigeria as one indivisible nation, President Obasanjo said he would soon present to the National Assembly request for financial approval for the support of the Nigeria Army.

Obasanjo's re-election

Contd. from Pg.1

frustrations of the work of the committee by the Gemade faction.

The source also confirmed that Rimi did not show up at yesterday's sitting of the committee in Senator Nwobodo's office at the National Assembly complex, Abuja

Senator Nwobodo who did not address the press as planned on the matter due to dwindling progress on his committee's assignment however, told journalists that another round of meeting that would expect the Gemade faction in attendance was

scheduled for last night at NICON, Abuja.

The chairman told the press that his committee would not meet the January 18, deadline to submit its report to the national advisory committee of the party due to the problems faced by his committee and would consequently appeal for an extension of time to submit its report.

Members of the Nwobodo committee which attended the meeting include retired Major General Mamman Magoro, Dan Sulaiman, a retired air commodore and former NADECO chieftain and Mr. Elayo, among others.

NEWS

Briefly

Police, vigilante trade blames over clashes

Lagos State Police Commissioner, Mr. Mike Okiro has blamed the spate of ethnic crisis that rocked the state for the greater part of last year, on the activities of members of Neighbourhood Watch, a vigilante organisation funded and financed by the state government.

Speaking to *Daily Trust* in Lagos last week, Mr. Okiro said series of intelligence reports gathered by the State Police command clearly indicted some of the prominent members of the Neighbourhood Watch.

Repair Suleja hospital — Mrs. Kure

Wife of the Niger State governor and initiator of the Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), Hajia Zainab Kure has stressed the need for both the federal and the state governments to rehabilitate the Suleja General Hospital. Facilities at the hospital have been over stretched due to its close proximity to the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

Adamawa needs N500m for water distribution

The Adamawa government requires over 500 million Naira for the expansion of its water distribution network to cover new settlements in the metropolis, the state commissioner for water resources, Alhaji Abdulkadir Mai, has said.

Mai told NAN in Yola on Friday, that the expansion had become necessary for such new settlements like Bajabure and Mbamba, whose population had increased substantially over the years.

Kebbi to uplift 5 villages

Five (5) villagers are to benefit from the 60 million Naira set aside for the provision of facilities to uplift their standard to model villagers by the Kebbi State Government.

The villagers to benefit from the programme includes Dalijan, Moriki, Takalafiya, Kanya and Dutsen Mari located in various local governments across the state.

Japanese IT aid for Nigeria

The Nigerian Ambassador to Japan, Mr. Emmanuel Otio, said in Abuja at the weekend that Nigeria is one of the African countries slated to benefit from Japan's 15-billion-dollar information and technology co-operation plan aimed at the whole world.

In order to consider the kind of co-operation possible under the programme, Otio said that Japan would soon send a high-level study mission to Nigeria to confer with the federal government.

First lady to commission search and rescue boat in South Africa

The first lady, Chief (Mrs.) Stella Obasanjo will be leaving for South Africa on 16th January 2001 to commission a search and rescue boat in South Africa on behalf of the Federal Government, Thursday, January 18, 2001.

The search and rescue boat is an oil pollution and recovery vessel earlier approved for operation by the National Maritime Authority of Nigeria.

Apart from christening ceremony which will take place at Cape Town, the First Lady is expected to visit Robben Island and will hold talks with Cape town government officials.

Satellite campus operators take NUC to court

From Dare Oyewole, in Kaduna

Operators of the recently scrapped satellite campuses and study centres have vowed to challenge the decision in courts even as the National Universities Commission (NUC) seek to enforce compliance with the "close shop order."

The operators under the National Association of Nigerian Universities Centres for Distance learning (NANUCEDIL) said the federal government has no consti-

tutional powers whatsoever to make such a blanket ban because, "we have contractual agreement with the students and the individual universities concerned".

The federal executive council had on December 7, last year after verification report submitted by the NUC ordered the immediate closure of all the satellite campuses and study centres scattered across the country for what it called "their failure to meet the necessary criteria for their establishment".

Sources at the meeting of the operators held in Kaduna

at the weekend told DAILY TRUST the blanket ban would have negative effect on the country's educational development saying that the government was only trying to ostracise the future and career of the people.

According to him, the operators would under the auspices of National Association of Nigerian Universities Centres for Distance Learning (NANUCEDIL) engage constitutional Lawyers who would really interpret the constitution.

In a communiqué at the end of its meeting, the association

maintained that it was legally wrong to ban satellite campuses without publishing the outcome of their findings on some of the satellite campuses visited early last year.

According to the communiqué signed by its chairman, Chief T. A. Adeniyi, the association expressed surprise that even when the National Universities Commission (NUC) admitted that some of the centres actually met acceptable standard it (NUC) went ahead in collaboration with the ministry to ban all satellite campuses.

Agreeing that the quality of education cannot be compromised, or sacrificed it said; "we feel that a better thing to do will be to inject sanity in the sector as a blanket ban will not solve the problem but rather create more problems".

Meanwhile, the minister of state for education, Mallam Lawal Batagarawa had in a letter to the NUC directed strict compliance with the order.

The minister directed the NUC to ensure that all pro-chancellors of all universities complied with the order.

"You are also to ensure adequate monitoring of the closure and forward to any office a comprehensive report on the development," Mallam Batagarawa wrote in the letter to the executive secretary of NUC.

Pfizer scandal: Kano exco did not approve test - Dep. Gov

The Kano state executive council did not take the decision to grant Pfizer approval to test its controversial drug, Trovan, on patients at the Infectious Diseases Hospital in Kano in 1996, the deputy governor, Alhaji Abdullahi Umar Ganduje, has said.

"It was not true that the decision was taken by the state executive council," Ganduje said in Kano on Friday, adding that he was in a position to know if such a decision was taken by the cabinet, since he was part of the government at that time.

"I was a commissioner and member of the state exco, but that issue was never brought and the issue of vaccines was never brought to the exco."

In fact I even didn't know because it was an affair that started and finished in the (state) ministry of health," Ganduje, who was a commissioner of works at the time, said he further stated that "to show you that it was not a state exco approval, I first knew about the vaccines on the pages of newspapers, showing that I never knew about it.

"All I knew is that in 1996, there was a very, very serious outbreak of, is it cholera or CSM, which even affected the hajj operations at that time.

"I even think Saudi Arabia took some measures," Ganduje explained.

But, later on what we found out, because of the recent controversy is that there was a vaccine that was to be tried and it came through the Federal Ministry of Health and Pfizer.

"The vaccine was tried (in Kano) because of the high population of victims," the deputy governor said.

Ganduje who had been under media pressure to state what he knew of the trial since he was part of the state cabinet in 1996, said that because he was not a medical doctor he could not give the details of the scientific issues involved.

He wondered why the drug trial became an issue now, having been tested since 1996, noting that mortality rate from the drug was not beyond scientific acceptability.



Dr. Tim Menakaya, Health Minister

Stop blackmailing FG, minister tells Tinubu

The minister of state for power and steel, Alhaji Danjuma Goje, has advised Lagos state governor, Bola Tinubu to stop blackmailing the federal government and NEPA for the failure of its power project to take off.

"Tinubu and members of his administration should stop the blackmail and campaign of calumny. They are misinforming the people about the project," Goje told the news agency of Nigeria (NAN) at the weekend in Abuja.

He noted that "The Federal Government is committed to success of the project and NEPA is also committed, because they are going to get additional power to ensure regular power supply in Lagos and other parts of the country." Clarifying the government's position on the project, he said that "the federal government

has been co-operating in everyway possible way to actualise it.

"First we signed an agreement with Enrons the company to generate the electricity.

Secondly, we also went ahead to sign the power purchase agreement and thirdly provided them land at Egbin, Lagos, were they are to operate from.

We have fulfilled our own part of the deal, just last Wednesday, we took up the issue of tax exemption and other concessions to the company at the federal executive council meeting, which was approved by all council members at the meeting presided over by vice president Atiku Abubakar, he added.

The minister also said that the government had granted tax concessions to the project to

accelerate its completion, noting that the exemptions covered customs duties, VAT, education tax, income tax, withholding and other deductible taxes from companies operating in the country. Goje, therefore, urged the Lagos state government to refocus its attention on the immediate commencement of the project to enable Lagosians and other Nigerians to enjoy the fruits of the deal.

As far as I know, and even on the part of the government and NEPA, it is the Lagos state government and Enrons that should buckle up to deliver, NEPA is not by design sabotaging it, "the minister said, while absolving NEPA of blame for the delay.

From Ibrahim Al-Almashi, in Kaduna

President Olusegun Obasanjo is expected to open the 22nd Kaduna International Trade Fair scheduled to hold from 17th to 27th February 2001.

Addressing journalists in Kaduna yesterday, Deputy President Kaduna Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture, (KACCIMA), Alhaji Munir Ja'afar said all necessary steps have been taken to ensure that the Trade Fair is a

Obasanjo opens Kaduna trade fair Feb 17

success.

According to Alhaji Ja'afar who is also the chairman organising committee, Kaduna International Trade Fair, the 22nd Trade Fair with theme, "Harnessing Nigeria's Resources Endowment for Fostering Economic Development" would attract a lot of participants "contacts with prospective investors both within and outside the country have been made and some of these exhibitors have since

booked for stands" the chairman added.

Alhaji Ja'afar, who is also the Yariman Zazzau, said prominent exhibitors are expected from Argentina, Pakistan, Turkey, Arab Republic of Egypt, Islamic Republic of Iran and republic of S/Africa. "Also discussion are going on with companies from United States of America, United Kingdom, Republic of China and Italy on their bid to participate."

Answering reporters' questions, Alhaji Ja'afar assured that measures had been taken to ensure safety of life and properties at the venue, Kaduna International Trade and Investment Centre, K.M 4, Kaduna-Zaria Road, Rigachikun, Kaduna.

He said that the NBL was prevented from selling its drinks at the trade fair venue last year because in previous occasions some participants got drunk and misbehaved.

NEWS

Victims of OPC Violence Demand Compensation

From Samson Ojo, in Lagos

Hundreds of North Lagos whose properties were destroyed in Dodua Peoples Congress OPC inspired crisis in the state last year, trooped to the venue of the Justice Victor Famakinwa Panel of Inquiry on the crisis last week to demand justice. Led by the Sarki Hausawa of Agege, Alhaji Bala Akanbi who presented their petition to the panel, the Northerners demand among other things that they be compensated for their lost property estimated at over 20 million Naira, and that all the culprits in the dastardly act be brought to book.

He told the *Daily Trust* at the venue of the enquiry

later, that the panel was the last hope of the oppressed to receive justice. He declared his absolute trust in the panel, adding that it would do a thorough job on the matter.

While reading his petition before the panel earlier,

Alhaji Akanbi lamented that the advent of POC has made Agege ungovernable for the state government. He further revealed that most of his Northern colleagues are still living in fear as a result of the trauma they experienced during the crisis.

Privatisation'll not sacrifice excellence

From Dare Oyewole, in Kaduna

Secretary to the National Council on Privatisation, Malam Nasir-El-Rufai has said that the council will not jettison managerial and professional expertise for money in selling the public enterprises slated for privatisation.

Delivery a paper entitled "privatisation as a vehicle for economic transformation and survival," in Kaduna at the weekend, he disclosed that the council made a mistake by selling Durbar Hotel, Kaduna to a firm that did not have the required expertise to manage it.

"We are not going to sell to money bags," he maintained adding that a prospective buyer must have the credentials before

he can be considered.

"You must have the managerial and be relevant in that business before we sell to you," stated.

Malam Nasir said that the council had to retrace its step by acquiring back Durbar Hotel, Kaduna from Kano and that it would be resold again.

The council, according to him has sold eleven out of fourteen companies earlier marked down for privatisation and that about N11.2b was raised.

He said the council intended selling a total of 39 companies adding that the Nigeria Airways, NITEL

From Abdulfattah Yinka in Ogun

The secretary general of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (SCIA), Dr. Abdulateef Adegbite has described the on-going struggle for Yoruba leadership on the Afenifere leader, Chief Abraham Adesanya and Pa Emmanuel Alayande of the Council of elders (YCE) as a futile exercise. Apparently referring to the

No single leader in Yorubaland- Adegbite

Chief Obafemi Awolowo era Dr. Adegbite who spoke with the *Daily Trust* noted that there could not be a single leader in Yorubaland any more since the nation no longer operates a regional system of government.

He stated, "we have gone beyond that. You can't have a unified leadership anymore. Anybody who want to have a unified leadership will have to be selected by all concerned, and we no longer have a Yoruba region where whoever is elected the governor or premier of that region can claim to have been selected as an overall leader."

The NCIA scribe noted

that the question on leadership in Yorubaland has become so "complex" that not even any of the Yoruba Obas could claim to be the overall leader of his fellow Obas any longer.

He blamed the press for creating imaginary leaders in the south west tagging some people as Yoruba leaders. He said "the issue of leadership only exist on the pages of newspapers. It is you press people that are creating a mountain out of amolehill. When you call an AD man that Yoruba political leader, do you think the APP and PDP will accept the same man as leader. This is the problem."

Camel attacks Owner

From Abdullahi Bego, in Maiduguri

A 28-year-old camel breeder, Malam Muhammad Yusuf of Gugubbali village in Guzamal local government Area of Borno, is lying critically ill at the Maiduguri Specialist Hospital following serious injuries inflicted on him by one of the beasts, Yusuf told the News Agency of Nigeria in his Hospital bed in Maiduguri on Friday that on the fateful day, he was loading the Camel for a journey when the animal suddenly turned and attacked him.

He said that the animal had already bitten a large junk of flesh from his back before his relations came to his rescue and rushed him to the Hospital. He also said that for the past fifteen years he had been in the business, he had never witnessed such an incident. Yusuf who neither spoke Hausa nor English except his Shuwa native language, spoke to NAN through an interpreter on his sick bed.

He said he did not provoke the animal to warrant such an attack and promised to kill it on getting back home. Commenting on the incident the Medical Director of the hospital, Dr Ibrahim Kida, said Yusuf brought to the Hospital that Tuesday night as a result of the camel bite, was responding to treatment, he pointed out however that Yusuf must have provoked the camel.

Meanwhile, three victims of the clash between Fulani herdsmen and farmers in Damoa local government area are receiving treatment at the Maiduguri Specialist Hospital.

One of the victims was shot with an arrow in the right eye while another victim was shot in the neck and while the third was brought to the Hospital with six arrows in his body.

The Medical Director told Nan that all the arrows had been removed from the body of the victims and that they were responding to treatment.

Jigawa distribute Zakkat

The Jigawa state governor has started the distribution for the annual Zakkat to the less privilege which became mandatory with the introduction of Islamic legal system (sharia) in the state.

Distributing the Zakkat on behalf of the state government in Daudi district of Kauzaura local government the emir of Kazaure Alhaji Najib Hussaini adamu called on the wealthy in the society to give part of their wealth to the less privilege as demanded by Allah. He noted that the payment of zakkat would go a long way in ensuring a humorous society stressing that zakkat is an instrument in Islam for creating a just and peaceful society.

The emir urged the rich to inculcate the virtue giving out of the sustenance in the provision of social amenities

The chairman of the local Government Alhaji Hassaini Abubakar commended the state governor Alhaji Saminu Turaki and promised that his council will work relentlessly to provide basic amenities to the people of Kazaure local government.



Malam Nasir el-Rufai, BPE, DG



President Obasanjo receiving the president of Sao Tome & Principe, Mr. Miguel Anjos Trovoada yesterday. Pix Kennedy Egbonodje

Kano Starts daily ministerial briefings

Musa Umar Kazaure-Kano

Ministries and Parastatals in Kano state are now required to hold briefings each morning before commencing the day's work this was contained in a press statement by the state commissioner of information, Alhaji Nura Mohammed Dankadai after the statistic executive council's weekly meeting.

The directive maintained that from now on,

the record of all briefings to be held between 8:15 and 8:45am are to be documented. The executive officers in all the ministries and parastatals are to be briefing officers at their respective duty posts. The order he said became necessary in accordance with the present dispensation of transparency and accountability. It would also help the workers to be punctual to work, the release maintained.

Subscribing to privatisation and the operation of market forces he said privatisation and market forces should not be carried out to the detriment of the common man.

"It is necessary to enshrine a system of checks and balances to minimise the effect on the common man who we all know is the first in line in the chain of any deprivation arising from privatisation," Senator Dafinone added.

Tuesday Column

Opening Salvo or Getting things back on Course

Attahiru M. Jega, Ph.D

It may well be a good omen that so early in this new year, President Obasanjo has made an open admission that things are not going on as well as he had thought, or as he would have liked, or as he had been made to believe, or both. A sincere recognition of human infallibility and shortcomings is, I believe, the beginning of wisdom for this government. Many who very early on gave the President the benefit of doubt he needed to kick start our democratic experiment are beginning to get disillusioned. His admission may revive hope, especially if he moves swiftly to get things back on course, with real solutions to real problems.

In the past 18 months, President Obasanjo conducted the business of state with tremendous messianic zeal and a large dose of a hang-over from his past military career. On one hand, he created a public image of an all-knowing, infallible, incorruptible leader, accountable only to his God. On the other hand, his military hang-over was amply demonstrated by his brashness and lack of political astuteness in dealings with the National Assembly, and by such other crude acts as the public caning of a poor guy in Kogi state.

This combination of a messianic and military attitude may have created an illusion of success where there was little or none, and over-zealousness where caution, contemplation and tact were most desirable. It is a wise thing to do, to recognize that for him to move this country forward, in this second year of his tenure, he cannot allow the business-as-usual disposition, which has characterized our national affairs, to continue unabated.

Yes, God saved him from the jaws of death and placed him on the top-most political saddle to pilot our national affairs. In the circumstances, he is obligated to God to make good on his good fortune and to contribute positively to our quest for national salvation. How-

ever, he carried on as if God told him to go it alone, without wise counsel, as if he himself is all-knowing. Rightly or wrongly, he has acquired a reputation as a leader who seems indifferent to popular complaints, if he does not have ready-made answers for them. For example, his periodic media chats, although novel and politically correct, convey the impression of a hot temperament and intolerance of criticism.

Worse still, at both the Cabinet and presidential advisory levels, the President has been surrounded by what can at best be termed as the 'second eleven', to use a football cliché. Of course, there are a few good and decent people around him, and the Vice President, but most are nothing to talk about in several fundamental respects. Some are old, tired and spent, and perhaps better off in secluded retirement. Others are intellectually bereft of what it takes to run a decent local government department, not to mention a whole federal ministry. Yet others seem energetic, but that's about all—for, if they are not petty and parochial, they are too self-centered.

Clearly, therefore, the President's confession is in order, albeit long over-due. Undoubtedly, it would do the President a lot of good to climb down his messianic ladder, and face the grim, hard and real facts of an immense crisis of rising expectations in Nigeria today. In addressing this crisis, in this democratic dispensation, he is accountable not only to God but also to the Nigerian masses. Accountability to God is in the hereafter, but accountability to us (we the masses) is here and now. Thus, the President has to be seen to be addressing the most basic and fundamental needs of the people for his tenure to be considered a resounding success. Poverty has to be concretely

and dispassionately addressed; if not eradicated at least substantially reduced, not merely alleviated. Education and Healthcare provision have to be qualitative and accessible to all. Infrastructure and utilities have to be functional, efficient and affordable. Productivity in all spheres of economic activity has to be increased. There must be security of lives and property. The state and its functionaries must be seen to be responsible, and responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people. All these are not only desirable but also provide-able.

But, to be able to do all these, the President needs a better disposition and set of cabinet ministers and advisers than is presently the case. Indeed, he needs a lot of good advice. It is true, there are a lot of pretenders hanging around in the corridors of power, offering all sorts of unsolicited advice. Good leaders should rightly be wary of whatever 'advice' emanates from these. But, good leaders should also demonstrate a capacity to select and surround themselves with competent, honest and impartial lieutenants and advisers.

The Obasanjo administration slowly but surely veered off tangent insofar as meeting the basic needs of Nigerians was concerned. The further away it moved from the achievement of this strategic objective, the more it fanned the amber of disaffection and demoralization, as well as increased feelings of marginalization. Our reckless politicians and short-sighted elite have capitalized on these, and the dangerous phenomenon of increased activism of ethnic militias has thrived on these.

President Obasanjo has taken the first step to getting back on course with his open admission of lack of desired success by his government. But he needs to go further and take several more steps in rapid but as-

tutely calculated succession. First, he should as soon as possible dissolve, reorganize and revamp his cabinet. There are indications that he may be contemplating a cabinet 'reshuffle'; to what extent this will address substance rather than form is yet to be clear. Second, he should urgently revisit, reevaluate and re-conceptualize his economic recovery program to make it substantially people-oriented, a bit less market-driven, and a lot more nationalistic. There are no indications that this is being contemplated. Third, President Obasanjo should carefully initiate, pursue and consolidate reform measures in education, healthcare and infrastructure development. There is already much talk, and much less concerted action, in this regard. Fourth, he should pursue more vigorously and seriously the process of constitutional reform to address the backlog of matters arising from the systematic complication and compounding of the national question under prolonged military rule. There is evident lack of seriousness and focus in the way this matter has so far been addressed.

Getting back on course is desirable, possible and achievable. Indeed, it is a task that must be done in order not to create the pre-conditions for the derailment of our nascent democratic experiment. But it requires a tremendous amount of political will, well-focused and inspiring leadership from the President and his lieutenants. And, once back on course, to you the language President Obasanjo would best understand, there should be no retreat, no surrender.

Attahiru M. Jega, Ph.D./ Professor, Department of Political Science, and Director, Centre for Democratic Research and Training, Mambayya House, Bayero University, Kano, is a member of the Editorial Board.

EDITORIAL

Reduce Hajj Fares

In the ultimate week, the federal government announced N187,322.36 as the fares for this year's hajj to the holy land. The amount is about N60,000 above last year's fare of N122,292.00. Expectedly, the announcement has elicited spontaneous reaction and condemnation from Muslims across the country. The Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammadu Maccido who is also the chairman of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, the Council of Ulama, other clerics and emirs across the country have kicked against the fares and pleaded with the federal government to reduce it. Not a few people have discountenanced the explanation that the hike was informed by the Saudi authorities' insistence on the provision of standard accommodation to all pilgrims to forestall any outbreak of diseases due to congestion.

Rather, they have contended that the hike would render the pilgrimage to Mecca out of the reach of most devout Muslims.

Islam makes hajj mandatory on those who can afford it at least once in a lifetime. It also does not require Muslims to borrow and incur debt in order to perform the hajj. This does not however, mean that hajj fares should progressively be hiked until only millionaires will be able to perform the rite.

We are worried by the fact that Hajj for Muslims in Nigeria has become a national crisis every year with pilgrims narrating tales of woes and lamentations and accusing hajj officials of exploitation, distortion and misrepresentation. The problem associated with hajj operations in Nigeria are therefore, not those of fare rate, but also of lack of honesty, commitment and dedication to the welfare of pilgrims by hajj officials. For instance, although hajj fare was drastically reduced last year it was also the year when Nigeria witnessed her worst hajj operations. Nigerians will welcome a situation where the hajj is affordable to a large number of Muslims to enable them satisfactorily carry out their religious obligations. In addition, the primary desire is the effective management of the operation that will see to their welfare.

Pilgrims should be properly catered for, a wise selection of capable airlines that will airlift them to the holy land and return them promptly at the end of the pilgrimage, should be considered top priority.

It is our candid opinion that it is not so much the fare hike that fundamentally worries the ordinary Nigerian pilgrims, it is rather the inability of those charged with the responsibility to ensure that the hajj exercise for Nigerian pilgrimage hitch-free.

It is indeed the duty of all Muslims in Nigeria, particularly the Council of Ulama, emirs and other organisations to, from now on, challenge any proven case of exploitative incompetence on the part of the airlines or racketeers as widely reported in the operation of Hajj 2000. Enlightenment and training of the "ordinary pilgrims" should be organised and monitored to wean them from the penchant for disorderliness and un-Islamic practices in the Holy land that contribute to the problems encountered every year.

LETTER OF THE DAY

Up hold truth always, never compromise

I wish to congratulate you on the debut of this much awaited "Daily Trust" newspaper to complement the excellent work/role your sister publication "Weekly Trust" has been playing for the past three years. You have indeed been a big sigh of relief to us who have been waiting for something like this.

It is therefore, a double pleasure for us, even

though you have entered a crowded field where both the old and new players with few exceptions have consistently thrown professional ethics and principle completely overboard. I therefore, regard your paper's entry timely and secondly as a kind of transformational phenomenon, that is translating Sardauna's

words into action when way back in the 60s he had said: "Nobody will blow your trumpet because he is busy blowing his." So your advent justified this statement as it will not have become more needed than now when the above popular saying have become a manifest reality for the Northern side of the country. I for one

has seen your paper in this light.

You have surely come at a time when majority of your compatriots are flashing fiction as facts in their front pages and in most instances editing factual contents and turning them to fiction in their unholy quest to maximize profits or sensationalise an issue just

to satisfy their interest or that of the sponsors. We expect you to reverse the trend, because you have come to this task better equipped since most of the staff on your board have proved their worth. I have every confidence that with the excellent and intellectual stuff your sister publication "Weekly Trust" has been

serving us every week your sail to success is guaranteed if you sustain and improve the tempo. If you take us along on this ride I promise you, we (readers) shall not fail you in our of absolute loyalty (mine in particular).

Mohammed Nasiru Chamo, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Opinion

Keep the *Weekly Trust* you have gained on a daily basis

Awwal H. Yadudu

It was very heartening to hear of the decision of the management of the *Weekly Trust* to commence the publication of the *Daily Trust*. While congratulating you and joining millions of other well wishers and admirers of the weekly stable, I warmly welcome the debut of the *Daily Trust* and Expect it to maintain, if not surpass the high and commendable standards set by the weekly trust.

How you came about the decision to be on the newsstand on January 15 this year is a matter you know best. January 15 is a date in Nigeria history of monumental significance but which is hardly noticed as it passes by and, except for the Armed forces of Nigeria, not celebrated or commemorated at all. Now that you have teased our minds to ponder over that date, I have the following reasons for according to January 15 of every year not a passing glance but a hard look as it inexorable comes and goes.

January 15, 1966 witnessed the debut of the military in governance. It is a matter of common knowledge that the military misadventure has not only stunned our political life as a nation it has wrecked havoc to the entire fabric of our national life. The lesson in this is however lost if all we do, as we are wont to these days, is to make the point gleefully in celebration of our newfound love for democracy forgetting that the party in opposition then not only applauded as its successors have subsequently done, the truncation of the political process but the entry of the military in governance was by the brutal and sectional murder of highly revered political leaders and comrades in arms. Perhaps we should henceforth resolve to herald the arrival of each January 15th with a pledge never to solve seemingly difficult problems by abandoning the formal political and constitutional process and ceremonial declaration of Never again.

January 15th, 1966 was also the day that Mallam Aminu Kano taught his followers an unforgettable political lesson. The news was widely circulated that when NEPU members, who had suffered all manner of indignities in the hands of law enforcement agencies and NPC stalwarts, heard of the brutal murder of the Sardauna, some zealots rushed to Mambaiyya House to celebrate the death, they met the stern and rebuking disapproval of Mallam. Mallam, the story as narrated to us by our parents, told them in unmistakable terms that the NBPU leadership only differed with NIPC and its leadership simply and purely based on divergent political ideas and programmes. They did not only disapprove of murder or political oppression and vendetta if committed against its members.

He personally disapproved of it against any other human being, cried with the crowd that had gathered at his house on that sad day and offered prayers for the repose of the departed political adversaries. The lesson of January 15th as exemplified by Mallam, here lies in the imperative of the cultivation and promotion of political tolerance, respect for due process and the dignity of human being.

In the opening paragraph to the fact that apart from the Armed Forces no other segment of the political class in Nigeria celebrates January 15th. In the wake of more than three decades of its misadventure into politics, the military institution does not come up for any commendation. The entire military institution is rightly, in the view of some—more often wrongly in mine-subjected to unwarranted bashing in unprintable language on account of the misadventure of its leadership. Sober minds ought to reflect on the role the military has plagued in keeping us united and the mere fact that members of the armed forces are the only Nigerian who have voluntarily put their lives on the line to protect our territorial integrity and ours. As we constantly enjoin them to submit to civil authority and control and protect the democratic dispensation in vogue, we ought not forget this fact. Similarly, however despicable we wish to view their role in being the cause of our stunted political, economic and social growth, we must not forget that, in the first palace, many at times we invited cajoled and encourage them in their misadventure and secondly, we should look forward to a future in which they will only discharge their constitutional role. The lesson of January 15th, derivable from the sober commemoration of the Armed Forces Remembrance day lies in the supreme price in the defence of our territorial integrity, internal security, well-being and our way of life—however fluid and tentative many may consider it to be now. That is the least the members of the armed forces can expect from a grateful nation.

There may well have been a professional reason why you choose to debut January 15th. Lest we forget, the *New Nigerian* newspaper was first published on January 15th. The NNN of those days, and I do not mean to devalue the current efforts at breathing life back into it, was, by all accounts, a newspaper dedicated to the pursuit of truth and renowned for fearless and its balanced reporting and editorial. It is no contradiction to state that the NNN combined the pursuit of the forgoing ideas with unabashed defence and promotion of the unwholesome ideas that the North held and continue to hold dearly and projected. For it did so without compromising these sacred journalistic principles. If it is wish of the management of the *Weekly Trust* to borrow the metaphor of January 15th, as embodied in the philosophy of and exemplified by the *New Nigerian*. I wish to commend them for that. Indeed the *Weekly Trust* has shown that it is made of the pedigree of the *New Nigerian*. We look forward to assessing the *Daily Trust* as an improved breed.

Professor Yadudu is of the Faculty of Law, Bayero University, Kano.

Breeding a Technological Culture for Development

Goni Mohammed Mala

The meaning of engineering is synonymous with technology and the economic application, designing, implanting, and controlling the artifacts, systems and processes that represent the way humans use Technology. Engineering therefore, existing as a way of developing products reflects and often modifies the values and goals of society.

Engineering arose because humans wanted experts in technology. With this Expertise in the hands of people who also possessed the needed application and judgement capabilities humans could obtain the desired artifacts, systems, solutions, and products to achieve society's goals, increases the effectiveness of societal activities, improve the quality of life, enhance human dignity, and develop human capabilities.

Nigeria qualified to be ranked as a developing Nation. The thrust of national policies since independence can be summarized in one phase: to develop the country. The objectives of development are eventually material. Food, housing education health, creation for wealth through industrialization and efficient exploitation of natural resources, provision of the infrastructures of modern industry and modern living, energy, transportation and communication.

The developed world is

not static; it is also developing, witnessing the continuing growth in their standard of living provided by an innovative industrial culture. An important aim of development is the acquisition of a measure of the technological self-reliance, which is seen as an avenue for the achievement of self-sustaining growth in the nation's socio-economic affairs.

Technology is nothing if not innovative, yet bureaucracy would hardly seem to provide the right atmosphere for original innovative thinking. Interactive originates in specialist enthusiasm and the exchange of technical information—the so-called technology transfer.

The speed with which a country develops is of much importance. Most important of all is how to plan policies to achieve lasting development by a blend of production and imports of technology (a case study of Japan and Malaysia is relevant).

The clash of western and local styles in technology practice often serves to accentuate the divergence between professionals and lay people; experts and users; very often, the technical experts working on a project will have a western style training and will be separated from the local communities not only by professional knowledge and status but broader cultural values also. In addition, the disparity in education between

professionals and villagers will tempt into believing their knowledge as experts is a basis for planning for the future, innovation by interaction is not likely to occur.

An even worse situation is where engineers have no contact with the village, design equipment in distant research institute or even in America or Europe Universities hoping thereby to create appropriate technology. Arnold PaCey quoted Michael McGarry in: "The culture of technology" saying "the innovation of the west all too often develops a technology in answer to an imagined problems first, and then proceeds to search overseas for a situation to apply it in, such experts, necessary, work in ignorance of the people they seek to help". They concentrate on hand work at the expense of social, cultural and organizational aspect. A successful solar cooker cannot be based only on research concerning solar energy without some study of how people might use it.

Modification to equipment can be built upon one another in a systematic, logical way conforming to the linear view of technological development. And with a large resources committed to research and development of centre for technology integration in universities and Polytechnics so as to carryout pre-research works on native technological self-sufficiency is in

the evaluation of natural resources should take place before national development planning.

General technological abilities are determined by the structure of technology of production, and natural and human resources, the ability to reconstruct imported technology and the ability to expand and develop native technologies. Evaluation abilities help a realistic discernment of the technological needs and determination of attainable goals is made easier.

There is a quest for improvement in the roles played by engineers if technological self-sufficiency is to be attained. Engineers should function in the broader perspective: that is design manufacturing, construction, installation, operation, maintenance, management, sales and engineering research and development. Government should create a conducive atmosphere for utilization of our engineering and reduce much dependence on developed countries. Engineers should be allowed to practice where they are supposed to if not, the industrialization this country so much craves for will continue to elude us. Our research for indigenous technology must therefore continue in earnest. Some sense of sanity, sense of belonging and ownership are seriously lacking in us as a people; this trend has to be reversed.

Mala writes from Abuja.

The ever-encroaching Desert in Nigeria

Usman Haruna

Desertification or desert encroachment refers to the expansion of desert features like dry ecology, domes, dust and decreasing green cover of lands bordering a specific desert. Desertification and its problems (or spread) is a global phenomenon.

It is however worthy of note that there are other environmental problems that are existing either side by side or in isolation of desertification. In Nigeria for example, the present administration having identified the various problems of environmental degradation established a full-fledged Ministry of Environment to address these environmental problems. Apart from desertification and its attending consequences on the environment and population, other environmental problems include soil degradation and soil erosion, population growth, urban marine and air pollution, drought, sanitation, waste management, loss of bio diversity, deforestation and many others.

But for the purpose of this write-up, we are only concern with the desert encroachment. What are the causes of desertification? There are certainly numerous factors responsible for the development and spread of desert in the world. But one of the most important

factors causing desert expansion is human activity in relation with natural resources, which can be described as very unhealthy. Indiscriminate and exploitative. Right now about 110 countries largely arid, semi arid and dry sub-humid are faced with the problem of desertification.

These factors does not stop at causing desertification only, but they also entail some implementations either to the peoples well being or even that of the environment. Nigeria is reported to have lost an estimated 285,000 hectares of forest cover to desert encroachment annually. The implication of this is the fact that the earth land is made to be productive in terms of human population.

Apart from impending food production, desertification has displayed people in some desert frontline states of Nigeria. For example, 14 of the 27 Local Government Areas in Borno State of Nigeria have had over 100,000 of their people displaced due to desert encroachment. About 1.2 billion people are affected globally by desertification due to their basic needs.

Desertification also affect the quantity and quality of drugs produced since about 40% of prescribed drugs originated from wide plant species that are unfortunately being gradually destroyed or facing the possibility of destruction

or of extinction by desertification.

One disturbing phenomenon of desertification in Nigeria is the fact that less than 10% of Nigeria's land mass is under forest cover as against the universally accepted 25% largely due to indiscriminate exploitation.

Considering Nigeria's population growth rate, which is said to be over 2.5% annual growth rate, the loss of biodiversity, which is the disappearance of plant species with potentials such as food as very grievous implication of desert encroachment.

Having weighed the implication of desertification to Nigeria's socio-economic well being, it becomes imperative to adopt certain strategies to curtail the spread and effect of desert encroachment. Desertification can be checked through rural development via effective communication and infrastructure, enhancing the development and application of appropriate technologies, changing our socio-cultural practices and attitudes all in an integrated approach to the protection and sustainable management of the environment.

This could be achieved through creating an alternative sources of fuel energy, aggressive/practical afforestation and tree planting programme, establishing forest belt in desert prone states, effective legisla-

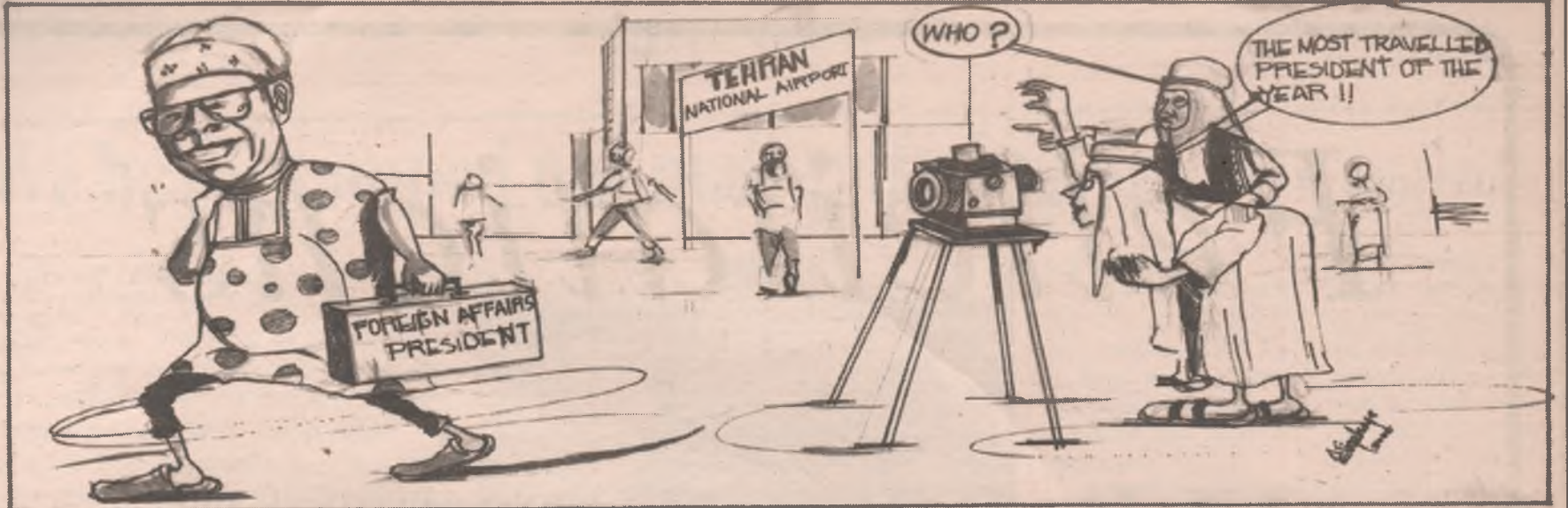
tion like the proposed National Land development bill to check over exploitation and ensure environmental preservation.

An aggressive enlightenment on the need to check the ever increasing desert encroachment is most required in Nigeria: just like Chief Newton Jibonoh's recent one man-crusade recently where he traversed the Sahara deserts for five weeks just to draw the attention of governments, individuals and private bodies to the threats posed by desert encroachment. It is interesting to note that June 17 every year has been declared by the United States General Assembly as the world's day to combat desertification and drought with about 165 countries, as parties to the convention.

According to the former Minister of Environment, Ambassador (Dr.) Hassan Adamu, Nigeria requires about 302 billion Naira to effectively fight and combat the menace of desertification. This is surely more than the capacity of government alone to cope with considering other competing demands and scarcity of resources. It has therefore become imperative for all hand to be on deck so as to forestall this life-threatening phenomenon called desertification in Nigeria and the world over.

Haruna writes from ABUZaria.

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YOUR LETTERS

Short 'n' Sharp

Adieu little Damilola

The sad tale of how little Damilola was murdered in cold blood at high noon in London while passers-bys (spectators) looked on uncaring, calls to mind the typical British cold-blooded, brutal attitude to Africans reminiscent, of their drunken, buccaneering, slave raiding, pirating progenitors. I sincerely commiserate with the parents of the child. I wish to assure them all sensible black people the world over feel as terrible as they do.

Peter Shande, Surulere, Lagos.

Kudos to Giwa Local Government Chairman!

It is over a year since the local government council promised to install an additional transformer for the village but the promise is yet to be fulfilled.

I do hope the honourable chairman will endeavour to fulfil his promise with immediate effect.

Ahmed Ibrahim, Shika, Giwa LG Kaduna State.

Halilu, clarify the issue

It was naive for Halilu to have accepted the post of director-general of Radio Nigeria Kaduna again after being booted out by the Abacha administration as a reward for his campaign for Obasanjo through Mazada.

His exit from Radio Nigeria Kaduna this time around includes many northerners including his admirers.

Yunus Ahmad Kobo, P.O. Box 5015, Kano.

Arise, Nigerian youths

A few weeks back, I read from your newspaper a publication titled: "Let Nigeria Be" a publication pioneered by His Excellency Donald Duke and a host of other concerned Nigerian youths.

While commending the initiative of the youthful and much admired governor and his colleagues who cut across the entire nation.

I would say much still needs to be done along this line.

Hashim Bamidele Isiaq, P.O. Box 811, Kaduna.

Nigeria: One nation bound in freedom and unity

OPC is nothing but a group of disgruntled elements, mischief makers and ethnic bigots. Their only aim is to kill and destroy anybody who is not a Yoruba man. The only politics of Yoruba is violence.

Their objective is the harassment and sabotaging other ethnic Nigerians. We the Northerners deeply regret living together as a nation with savages and barbarians in the name of Yorubas.

Muhammed Izuddin Abdullahi, Fagge P.O. Box 828, Kano.

I Salute Yerima Giade

Alhaji Yerima Giade has left no stone unturned while he was commissioner of commerce and tourism development in the state. In the sector, the Yerima Giade has ensured economic development through cordial relationship between governmental and non-governmental industries.

He deserves the highest praise.

Alhassan Yusuf, Zaki LG, Bauchi State.

Gombe Local Government Chairman: A rare gem

I wish to use our widely read and dependable newspaper, the Daily Trust to comment on the good efforts of Gombe local Government Chairman in the

person of Alhaji Ibrahim Sagir Abubakar popularly called Mallam.

It is disheartening to note that while some state Governments are doing ev-

erything possible to execute projects which have direct bearing on their peoples, the case in Gombe State is completely regrettable. The only symbol of democracy we are

witnessing here in the state capital is the Gombe local government Chairman. He is a man of the people. He demonstrated this by embarking on many developmental projects within the Gombe town. His dealings with people cut across party lines. His deeds are there for everybody to see. But the question is: What is happening at the state level? Certainly if not for PTF, the township roads in Gombe town would not have been motorable not to talk of villages and other towns. The problem of Gombe town is not even the agenda of the state government. Instead some couple of days ago a contract was awarded for the digging of ordinary wells in Gombe, the state capital. What an irony? This is a total disgrace to the entire people of Gombe state. At this age a state government awarding contract for the digging of wells at the state capital? It is a shame.

The people are certainly paying for their misdeeds. (Inda Kwadayi ai da wala kanci)

Senator Idris Abubakar is the only source of our inspiration at the federal level. While Mallam should keep it up as the saying that kafi Gwamma aiki is certainly true.

Musa Inuwa Arab, P.O. Box 853, Gombe, Gombe State.

Open letter to Kankia Local Government Chairman

We wish to use your widely read newspaper to express our views about the Chairman of Kankia Local Government Council in Katsina State.

We have been following with keen interest the development trend in Kankia Local government. Whereas, we have seen people in other local government councils of this country celebrating the gains of the new democratic setting, and expressing happiness over changes in terms of physical development, the people of Kankia Local Government, and particularly Kafin-Dangi are yet to feel the positive change brought by the new dispensation.

After watching the trend for more than a year, our conclusion has shown that

people do not seem to be better off now than before the Federal Government's unprecedented funding of local government.

The Kafin-Dangi Development Association, has noted with regret, the cacophonous denial of what Alhaji Muhammad Attah Kafin-Dangi described as the council's total neglect of the area by Honourable Ibrahim Adamu, after knowing fully that Kafin-Dangi people are yet to receive their democracy dividend in any form. For instance, our road is unmotorable. We have only one drinking water. We have large numbers of unemployed youths and in recent appointments of supervisory councillors, Kafin-Dangi was completely forgotten.

In view of the forgoing,

we challenge your council to take the courage of publishing your achievements and the balance sheet for possible criticism, denials or acceptance by the beneficiaries, just like what other courageous, able and transparent chairman did. We strongly believe that it is not too late for your council to refocus its priorities.

Those of us are following the activities of the local government with keen interest and concern, feel that it is time for sober reflections on the gains of democracy and also a period for political office holders to fulfil their promises and match their words with deeds. They should wake up and imbibe the spirit of true development, probity, equity and transparency in order to write their names in gold and not to be among the happy-go-lucky leaders.

Lastly, the association wishes to remind you of the covenant between you and the electorate as well as Allah (S.W.T.). Death is also inevitable and we shall account for our deeds one day.

Umar Kafin-Dangi & Ado M. Kafin-Dangi, Kafin-Dangi Development Association, Katsina State.

Governor Mu'azu

has proved his mettle

I am inviting the world to come and see the magnificent touch of a good Administrator in the person of Mu'azu. The incumbent Governor is in the train of successful men. So if you can't beat him join him for the common good of the development of Bauchi State. On my own part I am more persuaded by the injunction that Allah has time for everything and everybody and He has for Mu'azu as he did for other successful elected governors and the rest of the political winners. Beyond this interpretation, the rest are conjectures. In this regard I wish to implore the opponents, as Muslims who believe as I do, in the primacy of destiny. Allah destined Mu'azu as Executive Governor Bauchi State for a fixed

term best known to him. Who knows, a Tazarruce really might be on the way soon. He is proud to tell who cares to listen that there is nothing else he has done for past one year except it be to touch on lives. If you describe Mu'azu as a super manager of men and resources, you will be on target. If you call him an intellectual in the Government House you will be right. Mu'azu is an embodiment of good virtues. Mu'azu epitomises the fine art of living, the fine art of giving, the art of being unique. It is a record that Governor Mu'azu can render assistance to everybody provided you see him.

Salisu Zakari Ningi, No7 Old Jos Road, G.R.A. Bauchi

Dilemma of northern print media

I am always full of sympathy for the northern based media organization especially the newspaper industry. My sympathy for these organisations stems from the difficult environment within which they are operating largely due to northerners' action or in-action.

Information dissemination has been identified in the context of the new world information order as a veritable instrument of enlightenment, emancipation, gauging and molding public opinion as well as ideological inculcation. But the near failure of northern based print media is negatively affecting the noble objectives of the media industry in this part of the country.

Usman Haruna, Department of Mass Communication, A.B.U. Zaria.

Felicitations

When the *WEEKLY TRUST* hit the newsstands 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 Zamfara State therefore wish to pledge their support for the success of the *DAILY TRUST*.



Alh. Ahmad Sani (Yariman Bakura)
Executive Governor, Zamfara State

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 Zamfara State,
Long live Federal Republic of Nigeria.

TRUST INTERNATIONAL

Foreign & Diplomatic

Palestine still imprisoned by Israel

By Abdullahi Doki

Daily Trust interviewed the Palestinian Ambassador in Nigeria, Mr Samir Baker, about Palestinian-Israeli conflict and United States' mediation efforts, questions on the status of Jerusalem, the Palestinian refugees and issues in the Middle East about the Palestinian state addressed by United Nations Resolutions aimed at achieving lasting peace. Excerpts:

DT: The battered Middle East peace process seems to have been sort of revived by the Clinton Proposal. Have there been genuine gains to the Palestinians or has the proposal failed completely?

Baker: We appreciate the effort being done by President Clinton and we accepted the proposal in principle. But we also have some reservations and want clarifications on certain parts of the proposal because the proposals are general ideas. There are no details on the maps (of the territories in disputes), how the proposal would be reflected. The proposal talks about certain percentage of land but does not specify. So it needs more time to resolve with the Israelis the question of the map and to deal with other issues in more details. But there are also issues not clear regarding East Jerusalem. On this many details have to be settled on the negotiation table. One important aspect, which is the issue of Palestinian refugees, was not dealt with: the Clinton Proposal ignored the right of the refugees to return. For us, this is the essence of the Palestinian Cause: you can't leave more than half of the Palestinian people without solving their problem.

The issue for us is commitment to our people to achieve their right of return according to the United Nations resolutions. According to the Resolution also, it is a matter of individual right of the Palestinian refugees if some of them decide not to return to their land occupied by Israel and accept compensation. That would be their individual decision. In principle, the right of return is an individual right. It has to be respected and it has to be part of any agreement.

On the question of East Jerusalem, the Israelis are saying they have legitimate claims on what they called the Temple Mount and their claim is

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---Palestinian Ambassador



Baker

that East Jerusalem has to be shared between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Is that acceptable to you?

Baker: Of course not. It is not acceptable because East Jerusalem, the whole of East Jerusalem, was occupied in 1967 and it is covered by resolution 242. That is why we want the implementation of resolution 242. The second thing which is very important and a touchy issue is when they talk about the Temple Mount, they mean the Al-Aqsa Mosque. They mean the same holy site for Muslims and claim it as their Temple Mount which complicates the issue.

For us, we would not accept anything less than whole sovereignty on East Jerusalem and particularly on the Mosque. Then the worship would be free for all people—Muslims, Christians and Jews. The Israelis cannot claim that Mosque as the Temple Mount. They are talking about something that was there about 2000 years ago. But there are no signs, in spite of all the excavations they made that the Temple Mount was in that place. Their claim is just to complicate the issue and give it religious inclinations. This would add more complications to the conflict because the Mosque has been there for 4,400 years and it will remain there. There is the Wailing Wall beside the Mosque. It is the place where they worship. We respect that as their worship place, but not inside the Mosque. Inside the Mosque is a Muslim site, a holy site for the Muslim world, not only the Palestinians. That is why when they offered proposals for sovereignty over

the ground and sovereignty below the ground, we refused. There is no precedent in the world to have two sovereignties, one under the ground and one over the ground.

But this is their offer, to have sovereignty under the Mosque, and we to have sovereignty above the ground, on the Mosque. This shows that they are planning to continue digging under the Mosque. That is why these proposals are not acceptable to us. What we want is full implementations of United Nations Resolution 242 This is the basis of the whole peace

process which they agreed to when they attended the Madrid conference. When Resolution 242 is fully implemented, Jerusalem can remain open for all worshippers in the world.

The Clinton Proposal is mainly about compromises from both the Israelis and the Palestinians. The Israelis have been saying that they have made enough concessions, enough compromises., What compromises have the Palestinians made?

Baker: You know, you have to look at the conflict from its beginning, how it started, to know how much Palestinians gave concessions. First of all, the whole historical Palestine before 1948 was inhabited by Palestinians and it was called Old Palestine. Then the United Nations divided Palestine in two in 1947 and allotted 54 per cent of Palestine to the Israelis and 47 per cent of Palestine to the Palestinians. That was in Resolution 181. Then the Israelis in 1948 occupied 78 percent of Palestine, and we were left with 22 percent, the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In 1967 they again occupied the whole remaining Palestinian territory, West Bank and Gaza Strip. When we started the peace process, we agreed that at the end of the process, we would regain West Bank and Gaza Strip, which means the 22 percent of the territory. So when we accepted that (UN) Resolution 242, we made the big concession. From 46 percent we were given by the United Nations, we accepted to take only 22 percent of historical Palestine. Now the Israelis are negotiating us on the

22 percent. All the proposals they are making, they want to keep the settlements which they have built in this 22 percent, they want to keep Jerusalem, all these territories they are talking about are inside the territories occupied in 1967. What then is left to the Palestinians if they (the Israelis) take all the settlements and if they say they are making concessions on what are they making the concessions? When they entered the peace process, they accepted to implement Resolution 242. The implementation of the Resolution does not mean that we have to negotiate on what part of the Resolution should be implemented. Israel is an occupying power, and as an occupying power, it cannot keep occupying Palestinian territory, claiming it as their own, then try to negotiate and say it has made concessions and compromises.

Is the removal of certain road blocks in the occupied territories by Israel a welcome development to the Palestinians? The Israelis are saying that is another concession to show their goodwill to the Clinton's proposal. Is that correct?

Baker: Are such road blocks and other Israeli acts to besiege the Palestinian people in the occupied territories legal? All such acts are illegal. I don't consider what they try to do to remove these illegal acts as concession. Living without such illegal acts and constraints is our right covered by the Geneva convention. But the Israelis don't respect any of the international agreements. It is the right of our people even under occupation to move freely and have free access to their work. But in the past three months since September 28, they have been locked in their cities, they cannot move to work, they cannot even move goods, etc. This has caused starvation in many areas, diseases and lots of economic problems for the people there. All these are illegal acts, especially if we are talking about the future and about peace. The fact that there is confrontation does not mean Israel should punish the whole Palestinian people, bomb civilians in their homes and keep killing them randomly. But as you noticed they closed the airport anytime they decided to close it, they closed the entrance from Gaza to Egypt, and from West Bank to Jordan, making the whole Palestinian people still in prison.

Xiaoping (China's former leader, now deceased). They are now in the process of modernizing their military. They've been able to carry that out in an atmosphere that is relatively stable....Our presence has had a very positive and productive result for all of the countries in the region.

Bush will also have to decide whether or not to develop a National Missile Defence (NMD) System. Cohen was asked specifically about Russia's objections to NMD and whether President Vladimir Putin is seeking genuinely to deal cooperatively with a missile proliferation problem or if the Russian leader's main objective is to sow dissension in NATO and prevent further movement in that direction.

United States were to leave tomorrow who would fill the vacuum?

"Would it be China, Japan, India, Pakistan? Nature abhors a vacuum, so does the geopolitical system. So there would be some contest for dominance in the region, and by virtue of the Americans being there, not seeking land, not trying to conquer territory, but by having a presence, it has been very stabilizing," the secretary said.

He added that China itself has been "a major beneficiary" of that stability. They have been allowed to pursue the four modernizations of Deng

Experts lobby Bush for strong US military abroad

keeping field."

"We have 100,000 of our troops throughout the Asia-Pacific region. We have rightly 100,000 throughout the European theatre. We have approximately 23,000 any time in the Gulf. And so we are forward deployed, and that forward deployment helps us to shape the environment in ways that promote peace and stability," he said.

According to him, it would be "a big mistake," for the United States to pull out of Asia. "By virtue of the United States' presence throughout the Asia-Pacific region, we have created a stable environment. And if the

BRIEFLY

KFAR SHOUBA, Lebanon
Israeli planes staged mock raids over south Lebanon, flying over villages. Witnesses said they saw Israeli jets flew low over Kfar Shouba village, close to the disputed Shebaa Farms. Later, Israeli planes broke the sound barrier over the capital Beirut.

TEHRAN

Iran's parliament gave overwhelming backing to five new ministers in a move seen as strengthening the hand of conservatives in the cabinet of moderate President Mohammad Khatami. Meanwhile, Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei pledged to support the rebuilding of Lebanon during a visit to the Islamic republic by Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, the official IRNA news agency said.

BAGHDAD

Iraq said a US pilot shot down during the 1991 Gulf War was dead and accused the United States of trying to provoke a new crisis with Baghdad.

The US Navy changed the status of Lt. Cmdr. Michael Scott Speicher, who was shot down over Iraq early in the Gulf War, from "killed in action to missing in action" because of what it says was evidence he may have survived the crash.

BERLIN

German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer summoned Iran's ambassador after the conviction of a number of reform activists in Tehran for their part in a Berlin conference on Iran last year.

DUBAI

Saudi Arabia again executed a Saudi man for shooting dead a fellow national, bringing to seven the number of people put to death in the conservative Muslim kingdom so far this year.

JERUSALEM

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Israeli spokesman Shimon Peres ended a fresh round of talks late Saturday night, pressing ahead with the search for a lasting Middle East peace. The meeting produced no breakthrough, but the two sides agreed to continue negotiations.

ROME

An Italian soldier Saturday rejected reassurances from NATO over the alleged health risks of depleted uranium munitions, blaming the weapons for the cancer which afflicted him after serving in the Balkans. Valery Melis which afflicted him after serving in the Balkans. Valery Melis said he had been perfectly fit before leaving for a mission in said he had been perfectly fit before leaving for a mission in Macedonia in 1999 but that he had fallen ill on his return with Hodgkin's disease, a cancerous illness affecting lymph glands.

TRUST



INTERNATIONAL

AFRICA & THE MIDDLE EAST

Briefly

More die in Central America's earthquake

More dead bodies are being recovered after the devastating earthquake on Sunday in El Salvador and Guatemala that killed over 234 people. Hundreds more are still missing while houses shaken down to their foundations collapsed. The earthquake, of 7.6 magnitude rocked Central America and southern Mexico, officials said.

"It was a shockingly strong earthquake that seemed to last for ages. Pictures and mirrors were bouncing off the walls," a spokesman for the US embassy in El Salvador said. "It appears that the worst is not here in the capital but in the countryside."

Out in the countryside, where hillside collapses on over 500 homes, the middle-class San Salvador suburb of Santa Telca and the Pacific coast province of La Libertad were hard hit. Electrical power remained cut-off throughout the weekend across the country and the international airport was closed, hampering efforts to bring relief supplies.

"Every thing was buried and my entire family is dead," one young woman said.

Hundreds of emergency workers and volunteers worked along side huge cranes to shovel dirt from around collapsed homes in a sea of mud as countries sent relief supplies.

JOHANNESBURG

A 65-year-old woman resident in Lenasia, South Africa, Zubeida Adam Hassan, recently discovered that one of the eggs in her refrigerator was inscribed with the word "Allah" in Arabic, reported 'The Star' newspaper.

Hassan found a similar inscription of the word "Allah" in Arabic on one of the two-and-half dozen eggs recently bought for her by her daughter-in-law, Fawzia.

"I was looking for the milk in the refrigerator when my eyes fell on the eggs. There were only three left, as the others were used for baking," Hassan said, adding that she believes that the egg was meant for her to find and that it is a miracle and a blessing from God.

Commenting on the miracle egg, Sheikh Moosa Titus of the United Ulama Council of South Africa said that it was not the first time this phenomenon had occurred.

"This phenomenon is not only reported to have occurred on eggs along. In fact, the name of Allah has also been spotted inscribed by bees in honeycombs," said Titus, adding that other reported incidents include new born babies with the name of Allah present on their person.

"It has also been reliably reported and supported with photographs of a natural formation by trees depicting the declaration of faith," Titus further said, pointing out that it was a good sign of a message from God which happens from time to time.

A group of Africans have voted in support of the continued stay in power of long-reigning leaders including Arab Moi of Kenya, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Yoweri Museveni of Uganda and Sam Nujoma of Namibia.

In a BBC programme, *Talking Point*, contributors argued that these leaders have guaranteed political stability of their countries and needed more time to consolidate on their achievements in their countries.

This thinking is gaining popularity following the political crisis that engulfed Cote d'Ivoire since the death of its 30-year long president, Felix Houphouet-Boigny.

The military led by Gen. Robert Guei sacked his successor, Henry Konan Beche, in a coup d'etat in December 1999.

Robert Guei had cashed in on the tension generated by the banning of the opposition leader, Allasane Ouatarra from contesting in a presidential election with Bedie.

In a dramatic twist, Guei upheld the ban of Ouatarra and president himself for election to continue in power. His attempt to rig the election which another candidate Laurent Gbagbo

AIDS spotlight soar with more deaths

President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa will not be able to have a private word with the dying 11-year-old AIDS activist, Nkosi Johnson, who has lost his ability to speak since he suffered brain damage last week.

Nkosi Johnson had earlier expressed wish to speak with President Mbeki whose questioning of the causal link between HIV and AIDS has sparked controversy in scientific circles.

Mbeki could not stay to listen to the speech the young Nkosi delivered at the opening of the 13th international AIDS conference in South Africa last July as he left for other engagements.

In that speech, Nkosi Johnson had urged the South African government to provide HIV positive pregnant mothers with anti-retroviral drugs to prevent transmission of HIV from mother to child. Nkosi was infected at birth by his HIV-positive mother.

The boy becomes a potent symbol in the fight against AIDS after being labelled the longest living AIDS child and being accepted by a Johannesburg primary school despite opposition from parents.

His calls for safe sex and for more use of drugs to stop HIV transmission from mother to child have become a rallying cry in the battle against the virus with which some 4.2 million South African, or one in 10 of the population, are infected.

His message contrasted sharply with the views of President Thabo Mbeki who has declined to make AZT, and anti-retroviral drug, more widely available on cost and safety grounds.

He had earlier questioned the causal link between HIV and AIDS.

Last Wednesday, former President Nelson Mandela praised Nkosi as an "icon of the struggle for life" and said that all South Africans were proud of the bravery he had shown.

Among sympathisers who visited Nkosi last Thursday was popular singer, Yvonne Chaka-Chaka and South African Minister of Health, Manto Tshabalala-Msimang.

BBC forum wants African despots to stay

Stories by Kevin Ebele Adinnu

was passed to forced Gen. Guei to flee the country.

However, the new president, Laurent Gbagbo has not been able to return the country to peace since a constitutional court further banned the opposition leader, Allasane

Quatara from contesting in the parliamentary election earlier scheduled to take place last December.

Supporters of Quatara, who is from the northern part of the country demonstrated against this, leading to death of some of shot by loyal government gendarmes.

Situation in the country worsened

last week when Gbagbo accused some unnamed foreign countries of attempting to overthrow his government.

Throughout last week, his supporters were demonstrating, attacking foreigners and looting their property forcing some of the victims to leave Cote d'Ivoire.

However, some contributors to the programme voted in support of only democratically elected presidents.

Polls decide Opposition's fate in Zimbabwe

Zimbabweans are responding to a call for a parliamentary bi-election seen as a key test of whether the opposition MDC can hold onto gains made in last June's

ZAINA reported a fairly high turnout on the first Election Day in Bikita West, located 330km (204 miles) south east of Harare, with about 1,000

the deputy died.

"This election is quite significant in that if the MDC wins the seat again it would mean it maintains its inroads into the countryside," said political scientist Masipula Sithole.

"That would not sit well with the ruling party ahead of the 2002 presidential elections," Sithole, a lecturer at the University of Zimbabwe, told *Reuters*.

Bikita businessman Bonnie Pakai is seeking to retain the seat for the MDC, while ZANU-PF is fielding retired army colonel Claudius Makova, who lost the first contest in June.

ZANU-PF, which has ruled Zimbabwe since the former Rhodesia won independence from Britain in 1980, narrowly defeated the MDC, which won an unprecedented 57 of 120 elected seats at the June polls, mostly in urban centres.

At least 31 people, mostly MDC supporters, were killed in the run-up to the June poll. Self-styled war veterans backed by Mugabe linked the violence to the invasion of white-owned farms.



Mugabe

polls.

The country's state news agency

prospective voters queuing up at one station when polling started.

Some 40,000 people have been registered to vote.

The agency quoted constituency register Ignatius Mushayi as saying the election was proceeding smoothly with no evidence of the recent pre-polling clashes between Mugabe's ZANU-PF party and the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), which left one man dead, and several others injured.

The seat, in one of the ruling party's traditional rural

strongholds, was won by the MDC in parliamentary elections last June, but fell vacant two months ago when

Palestinian Authority cracks down on Israeli collaborators

The ruling party in Palestine, Yassar Arafat's Fatah faction, is fighting hard to stop increasing incidents of spying for Israel and collaboration among

Palestinians with death sentence by firing squad.

Fatah officials restated the party's decision following the execution of two Palestinian collaborators at the West Bank city of Nablus at the weekend.

The two men, Allan Bani Odeh and Masdi Mikkawa were shot by firing squad; one in public, after Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat ratified their death sentences.

Palestinian police in blue uniforms and black facemasks fired at a red target drawn on Odeh's chest as thousands of onlookers chanted, "God is Greatest".

"This should be the fate of every collaborator who helps Israel assassinate our cadres," Fatah activist Youssef Salah said outside the police station.

The mother of Awni Dheir, one of four Fatah members killed in the incident in which Mikkawa was implicated, expressed joy over the Gaza execution.

"These are tears of joy," she said,

"I felt...comforted to hear the bullets and to see the execution has really taken place. I thank President Yasser Arafat."

Four more suspected collaborators were due to go on trial



Arafat

in the West Bank town of Bethlehem last Saturday.

Mikkawa was found guilty of giving Israel information that led to the killing of four Fatah members on November 22. One was Jamal Abdel-Razak, the defendant's uncle.

Bani Odeh was sentenced to death after Palestinian security officials said he had confessed to playing a part in the November 23 explosion that killed his relative, braham Bani Odeh, in the West Bank

town of Nablus.

Palestinians accused Israel of assassinating the activist from the militant Hamas movement with a missile. Israeli security forces suggested he could have died from the premature explosion of a car bomb he was preparing.

"The sentences were just and fair. They were executed by a firing squad in accordance with the sentences," the Palestinian Authority's prosecutor-general, Khaled al-Qidra, told reporters.

The public execution sent message to the Palestinians and the Israelis that betrayals of the Palestinian Cause will no longer be tolerated since they came hours before Israeli and Palestinian negotiators were due to meet last Saturday night for the second time in 48 hours but neither side was hopeful about a rapid agreement to revive the peace process.

Clinton has himself conceded that the odds are stacked against a peace deal by the time he leaves office on January 20.

Saturday's executions brought to five the number of Palestinians put to death by their own side since 1994, when the Palestinian Authority took control of most of the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank.

TRUST INTERNATIONAL World Report

Arab prospects brighten in America

The socio-political prospects of Arabs, Lebanese and other notable individuals of Middle Eastern and Asian origin in the United States are brightening with their increasing featuring in key appointments in the United States. The nomination by President-elect George W. Bush's of Senator Spencer Abraham, a Lebanese-American, as US secretary of energy drew praise from major Arab-American organisations. Abraham, who lost his re-election bid in his home state of Michigan last year, is expected to gain Senate confirmation without difficulty for his new job. After moving into his Energy Department office, he will face immediate challenges caused by the doubling of prices of natural gas and sharp increases in electricity and heating oil costs.

The 48-year-old Harvard-educated lawyer won praise for his work as a member of Senate Judiciary Committee, where he championed legal immigration and immigrant rights, the Arab American Institute (AAI) said.

Secretary-designate Abraham spoke of his Arab heritage when President-elect Bush announced his nomination at a press conference in Austin, Texas. "I think it is a testament to the special place that American is that a grandson so poor Lebanese immigrants can have the opportunity to serve in the Cabinet of the president of the United States," he said.

"President-elect Bush's selection of Spencer Abraham for energy secretary speaks volumes about the contributions Arabs American are making to public service," said

Nigeria, UK grapple with passport scam

The consular section of the Nigeria High Commission in London receives between five and 10 cases of lost passports per day from Nigerians in the UK, according to reports over the weekend. Such cases were commonplace that the commission was forced to introduce some measures to stem the alarming rate.

One of such measures, was the payment of 250 pounds deposit, in addition to mandatory 84 pounds by anyone who claims loss of his or her passport before their cases could be entertained.

Because of the frequency of the loss of passport, it was becoming difficult for Nigerians to obtain police statements to support their claims.

"The police have disclosed that Nigerians have the highest cases of loss of passport in the UK," the London police report said, adding that they were now weary to issue passports to Nigerians to back up their applications.

It was gathered that most of the cases were not genuine, that some of the complainants deliberately lose their passports and apply for new ones to enhance their chances of staying in the UK.

"When they get the new passport, they will now apply to the home office claiming to have had longer visa or residency permits in their lost passports," the source said.

With the introduction of the deposited fee, which is refundable when the claimant recovers his or her "lost" passport, the cases had been declining, the sources said.

The consular and immigration section at the Nigeria High Commission has not commented on the issue.

AAI President James J. Zogby.

George R. Salem, AAI Chairman, echoed Zogby's sentiment when he said: "For the first time, an Arab American will have responsibility for an agency of great relevance of many Arab



states. Our community has worked for more than 20 years to ensure that Arab Americans are fully engaged in all levels of civic and political life."

The American Muslim Council praised the Abraham announcement and called him "a very good friend of the Muslim community."

"The choice of Senator Abraham to run the Energy Department demonstrates the President-elect's commitment to have a sound energy strategy as well as to include minorities in a diverse Cabinet that represents America," the Council said in a statement.

In the Senate, Abraham played a critical role in securing aid for Lebanon. He also assisted in obtaining permits to supply food and medicine to Iraq civilians.

Senator Abraham was not the first. Right after the beginning of the New Year, President Clinton appointed Islam A. Siddique under secretary of agriculture for marketing and regulatory programs. In that job, Siddique will oversee the animal and plant health inspection service, the agricultural marketing service and the grain inspection and stockers and packing yards administration in the waning days of the Clinton presidency and possibly into the early period of the Bush administration.

Siddiqui's official purview makes him responsible for protecting US agriculture from invasion of foreign plant and animal diseases, promoting US agricultural exports and making sure that US agricultural exports meet the standards and requirements of purchasing countries.

The American Muslim Council welcomed Siddiqui's appointment, calling him one of its "pioneers." Siddiqui, in turn, praised President Clinton for doing "an outstanding job of reaching out to minorities of all faiths and colors, including American Muslims."

Siddiqui, the highest-ranking Muslim in the US government, attributes his success to a passion for personal excellence, the core values of Islam and Clinton administration's outreach to minorities. "Going to school, getting a good education and excelling. Excelling, that's what I've practiced all my life," Siddiqui said. "Hard work and desire to excel are the keys to success."

Siddiqui came to the United States in 1964 after graduating from Uttar Pradesh Agricultural University in Pantnagar, India. He says he was prepared for life in the United States through extensive contact with Americans working in India during the 1960s.



NIGERIAN EXPORT PROMOTION

INCREASE IN EXPORT EXPANSION GRANT FOR EXPORTERS

The Federal Government in its determination to improve earnings from non-oil exports increased the Export Expansion Grant (EEG) paid to exporters of manufactured, processed and semi-processed products from 2% to 4% in 1997. With non-oil export promotion and development as the pillar of the democratic governments economic policy, the Export Expansion Grant payable to exporters was jerked up to 10% in 2000 and to 20% with effect from January 1, 2001. This is one of the efforts of President Olusegun Obasanjo's Administration in revamping the Nigerian economy and compensating exporters for the deficiencies in infrastructure in order to boost foreign exchange earnings of the exporters. All exporters of processed and semi-processed goods are therefore advised to take advantage of the scheme in expanding their products for export as all exported processed and semi-processed products qualify for the incentive.

Qualified exporters should therefore collect forms from any of the NEPC offices located at:

Headquarters: NEPC, Export House, Block 312 Kumba Street, Zone 2, Wuse, P. M.B 133, Garki, Abuja. Tel: (09) 5230983, 5233388 Fax: 09-5230931 or 5230983. E-Mail: nepc@nigol.net.ng

Zonal Offices:

Enugu
2nd Floor, S/14, Cathedral Drive
Independent Layout
P.M.B. 1611, Enugu
Tel: 042-453344

Jos
14, Langtang Street
P.M.B. 2729
Jos
Tel: 073-457093

Kano Zonal Office
1, Zaria Road
P.M.B. 3498, Kano
Tel: 064-664711

Port Harcourt Zonal Office
8th Floor, Federal Secretariat
P.M.B. 5163
Port Harcourt
Tel: 084-330620

Lagos

13/15 Ladipo Oluwole Road
Apapa, P.M.B. 2775
Lagos
Tel: 01-5872335

Payments are now effected with Negotiable Duty Credit Certificate (NDCC) which could be discounted, endorsed or utilized for immediate payment of import duties.

The hitherto delay witnessed in the payment of the Grant is now a thing of the past as payments are now effected as soon as repatriation of export proceeds is confirmed by the Central Bank of Nigeria.

PRODUCE FOR EXPORT. CREATE PERSONAL SOURCE FOR YOUR FOREIGN EXCHANGE REQUIREMENTS TO EXPAND YOUR BUSINESS. IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES, ONLY THOSE WHO SELL ABROAD WILL ALWAYS SMILE AT HOME.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON EXPORT, CONTACT NEPC TODAY AT ANY OF ITS OFFICES NATIONWIDE

J. J. OLUMEKUN

DIRECTOR, TRADE INFORMATION AND INCENTIVES
FOR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
NIGERIAN EXPORT PROMOTION COUNCIL

Congratulations

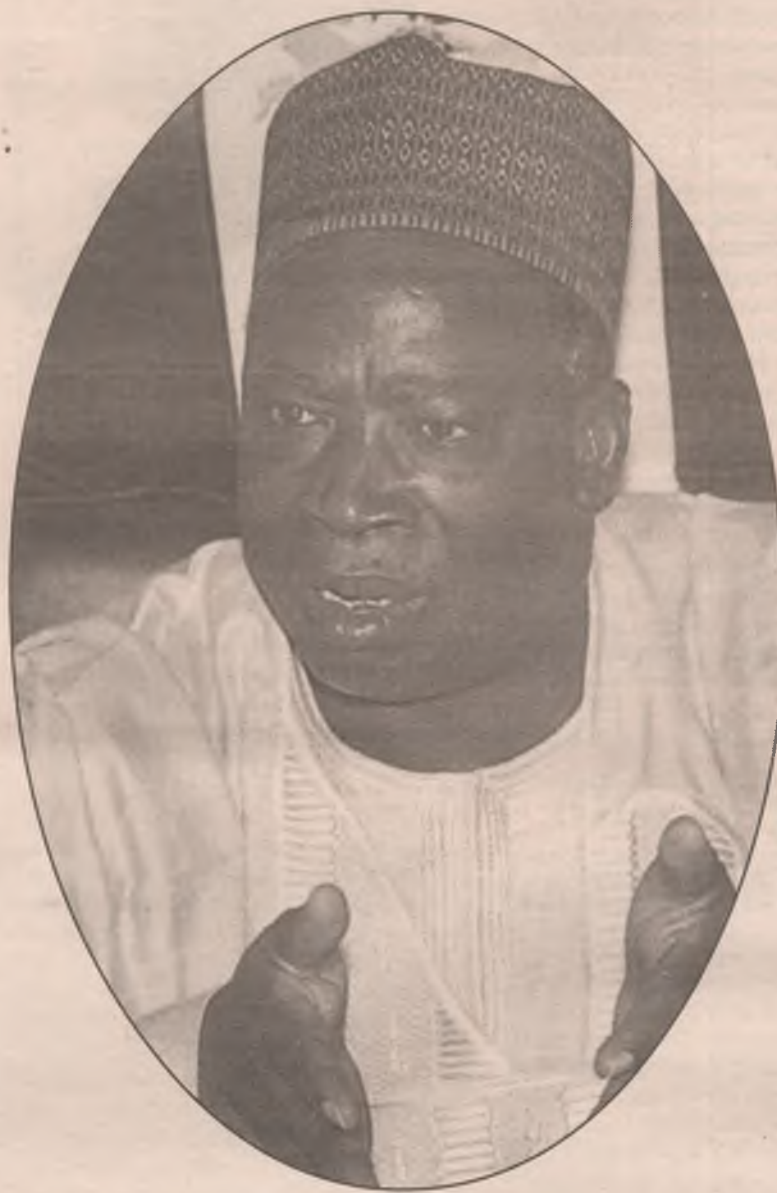
The government and people of Nasarawa State wish to congratulate Media Trust Nigeria Limited on the occasion of the debut of its new edition, **DAILY TRUST**.

We are happy to be associated with your steady growth and achievements since your first publication, **WEEKLY TRUST** hit the streets three years ago.

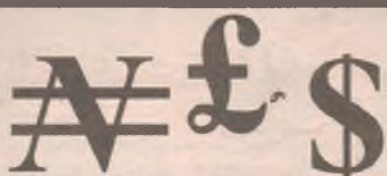
With the publication of the **DAILY TRUST** we are confident that you are aiming for the highest in the field of journalism in this country.

We wish you God's guidance and blessing in the years ahead.
Amen.

Long live Nasarawa State,
Long live the Federal Republic
of Nigeria,
Long live **DAILY TRUST**.



Alhaji Abdullahi Adamu,
Executive Governor, Nasarawa State



BUSINESS DAY



FINANCE

NIPC Launches Internet Website, to open Overseas Offices

By Aliyu Ma'aji
Business Editor

The Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC) has opened a website on the global information super highway (the Internet). The commissions, Press Secretary, Mr Joel A. Attah told *Business Day* that a computer network is being put in place to facilitate accurate storage and retrieval of information both locally and globally. "Specifically, Internet connectivity for dial up access and E-mailing has been installed to establish NIPC presence in the Internet. The Commission's website address is: <http://www.nipc-nigeria.org>. This means that The Nigerian Investors Guide is on the website for the whole world to access."



Chief Kola Daisy, Chariman NIPC

Mr Attah also hinted that NIPC has concluded plans to open offices in Europe, Asia and America to woo Foreign Investors into Nigeria.

"The issue of expanding our horizon in terms of international representation is not in doubt. The plan to open new offices abroad is in the pipeline. After putting finishing touches to the plan, we will then seek presidential approval," He however admitted that the issue of whether such offices will be attached to Nigeria's foreign Missions

or not is still inclusive. "I am not sure if the management intend to attach the offices to Nigerian embassies in order to cut expenses; but it is better to wait and see." This revelation is coming on the heels of plans by a Taiwanese trade delegation to visit the country in February. According to the Taiwan Trade Mission in

Africa's largest Market." It is an record that a 19-Member Taiwanese trade delegation was in Nigeria in October 1996, while another team comprising 35 businessmen visited the country between Jan 12 and Jan.16, 2000.

Reform measures on investment began with the abrogation of the Nigerian Enterprises promotion Decree of 1992 as amended in 1989. That decree had imposed restriction on foreign sector participation with regard to ownership of certain Enterprises. Similarly, the exchange control act of 1962 and the Industrial Development coordinating Committee Decree No. 36 of 1988 were also repealed. The Nigeria Investment

Nigeria, the 14- member delegation under the auspices of the Association of Machinery Industry is expected between February 21 and February 25. Its aim is to promote joint venture businesses with Nigerian entrepreneurs in the areas of Medium and small scale Manufacturing of plastics, bolts and screws as well as leather and hydraulics.

The purpose of the visit *Business Day* learnt, is to "find co-operation partners and establish Co-operation Relationship with Nigeria,

Promotion Commission Act, currently awaiting ratification, intend to create a fresh, conducive environment for investors to operate with a view to attracting, within the shortest possible time, increased level of Foreign Direct Investment (FID) into Nigeria.

Financial Observers, however, feel that government should also give issues that boarder on security and power supply more attention if investor interest in the nation is to be sustained.

Nigerdock divests to offshore construction

The new managing director of Nigerdock Nigeria Ltd., Mr. Nkpubre Okon Nkpubre, said his priority is to break into offshore construction.

Exchanging views with maritime correspondents on Snake Island in Lagos, Nkpubre said the government had directed Nigerdock to undertake offshore ship repairs and ship building so as to earn valuable foreign exchange. Mr. Nkpubre, who replaced Dr. Victor Ozobia last November noted that the dockyard had moved gradually from ship repairs to ship building and offshore construction.

Nkpubre, who was an assistant director in charge of ship repairs until his present appointment, said the fortunes of any dockyard depended on offshore construction.

He said that with his experience in the public and private sectors, he would move the company to a position comparable with other international organisations involved in ship repairs, ship building and offshore construction.

Nkpubre, explained that Nigerdock had adequate infrastructure that could turn it in to a centre of marine engineering excellence and pledged to manage the dockyard with sincerity, fairness and purposefulness.

Nkpubre, joined Nigerdock in 1990 to oversee the engineering and management aspects of the dockyard's first offshore mooring project.

At the press briefing, the Nigerdock boss equally affirmed that contrary to rumours that the removal of Dr. Ozobia, his predecessor, has not cost the company any of its local and international contracts.

He stressed that the speculations that Ozobia's removal would affect local and foreign contracts won by the dockyard are unfounded. It is on record that widespread rumours that a mooring project contract awarded by Same Monaco to the dockyard had been lost because the foreign company was not happy with the replacement of the former managing director.

Nkpubre said he travelled to Monaco in Spain where the mooring contract was even repackaged to favour Nigerdock more.

"All the offshore contracts entered into by the former managing director are on course and have even been repackaged," he said.

The managing director said it was "stupid for some foreign clients or citizens to think that anybody is indispensable".

He explained that the major issue raised against the dockyard by foreign clients was transparency.

The new MD also refuted widespread claims that the dockyard was broke and said: "Nigerdock cannot collapse."

He said the welfare of the dockyard's staff in the last one month had improved tremendously, while their morale had soared high since the doubling of their salaries.

Osun secures six foreign loans

The Osun state Government secured six external loans of 223.4 million dollars and 90.1 million pounds sterling in the past 10 ten years, the Commissioner for Fi-

nance, Mr. Lere Adebayo, said in Osogbo.

A statement he made available to Newsmen on said that "the amount drawn from the loan as at January this year, was 156.1 million Dollars and 87.1 million pounds respectively".

He indicated that the remaining part of the money would be used to execute essential projects in the state this fiscal year.

Adebayo-said that the loans obtained in the past ten years were in respect of multi-state road projects, health system fund projects and the National Water Rehabilitation Project, among million was paid as counterpart funding in respect of multi-state road and health system fund projects in the past 18 months.

Level of Distress in Nigeria's banking system as at Dec 1999

Parameters	December 1998			December 1999		
	Distressed Banks N'000	Potentially Distressed N'000	Industry N'000	Distressed Banks N'000	Potentially Distressed N'000	Industry N'000
Total Assets*	29,941,010	7,502,452,	760,613,279	16,847,261	26,500,857,	1,108,090,362
Total Risk-Weighted Assets	23,621,800	4,456,183	487,198,629	4,831,754	12,273,035	527,094,665
Total Deposits	13,329,324	3,311,212	375,839,697	9,227,161	11,749,270	569,798,520
Total Loans Advances And Leases	21,165,323	3,070,768	327,201,794	18,161,419	10,989,172	370,172,241
Inside Loans Advances And Leases	731,051	47,202	7,894,035	518,029	79,256	9,811,024
Non-Performing Loans Advances And Leases	16,815,604	1,849,345	63,327,037	15,715,910	5,282,928	94,787,463
Minimum Capital Requirement	1,889,744	356,495	38,975,890	386,540	981,843	42,167,573
Recapitalisation Requirement	15,467,827	719,087	16,186,914**	15,261,803	0	0
Ratios:	%	%	%	%	%	%
Capital To Risk						
Weighted Assets	(57.480)	(8.14)	12.65	(307.86)	11.12	18.96
Non-Performing Loans And Leases/Total Loans And Leases	79.45	690.22	19.35	86.53	48.07	25.61
Average Liquidity Ratio	(421.32)	107.35	(7.71)	(491.60)	51.28	(1.31)
Gross Loans And Leases/Deposits Ratio	158.79	92.74	87.06	196.83	93.53	64.97
Percentage of Insured Deposits	3.61	17.44	2.35	63.72	57.43	32.90

Source: NDIC (Excluding off balance sheet items)

₦ £ \$

BUSINESS DAY

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Italian firm to acquire CALCEMCO

By Ahmed Shekarau

An Italian investment company, Socomi Group, has expressed interest in acquiring the assets of the Calabar Cement Company (CALCEMCO), as core investor.

The Minister of Industry, Mr. Steven Akiga disclosed this at a ministerial briefing on the activities of the ministry and its parastatals recently in Abuja.

Mr. Akiga noted that CALCEMCO and the Niger Cement Company (Niger Cem) at Nkalgu, are the two cement companies whose privatisation has been delayed due to their ailing conditions which require some before they could be offered for sale.

The Industry Minister disclosed further that the proposed merger of the Nigeria Industrial Development Bank (NIDB) with the Nigerian Bank for Commerce and Industry (NBCI) and the National

Economic Reconstruction Fund (NERFUND), to form a New Nigeria Development Bank announced by the Federal Government towards the end of last year, has been cancelled. The cancellation followed a recent decision by government to expand the

INDUSTRY

Memorandum and Articles of Association of the NIDB to absorb the NBCI and NERFUND.

Mr. Akiga said this decision is part of efforts to restructure the NIDB to enhance its performance towards promoting the development of the industrial sector.



Nasir Ahmad el-Rufai, DG, BPE

Nigeria to benefit from Japan's Information and Technology Aid

The Nigerian Ambassador to Japan, Mr. Emmanuel Otiotio, said in Abuja at the weekend that Nigeria is one of the African countries slated to benefit from Japan's 15-billion-dollar global Information and Technology Co-operation plan in order to consider the kind of co-operation possible under the programme. Otiotio said that Japan would soon send a high-level study mission to Nigeria to confer with the Federal Government.

He said that Japan planned to disburse the money within a period of five years, adding that Nigeria would also benefit from the three billion dollars, which Japan plans to spend within the same period in the fight against infectious diseases such as Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

The Japanese Prime Minister announced in South Africa shortly before his visit to Nigeria that research base for Aids would be set up in Kenya, Ghana and Zambia.

Otiotio appealed to Japan to help improve the security

situation in Nigeria by investing more in the country, saying that if the people were gainfully employed they would not engage in anti-social activities.

"I have always told my Japanese friends that they are part of the insecurity problem in Nigeria, and that if they invest more in the country they will be reducing the problem of insecurity," he said.

Answering a question, the Ambassador said that one of the ways to reduce the

balance of trade between the two countries, which is in favour of Japan, was for Nigeria to produce and export standard agricultural products for export to Japan, whose only resource is its people.

Otiotio said that he is also trying to see how Nigeria could benefit from Japan's educational system, which has produced very resourceful manpower that has propelled the country to become one of the world's greatest economic powers.

NEPC urges Nigerians to partake in Khartoum Fair

The Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC) has pledged to assist any Nigerian company that wants to participate in the 18th International Trade Fair taking place in Khartoum, Sudan as from the 1st to the 11th of February, 2000.

A statement from the council revealed that any company or organisation selected to participate will enjoy incentives like provision of pavilion free, air-

freighting of exhibits to a maximum of 100kg per Company, and provision of transportation for participants from the hotel to the exhibition ground.

The selection and briefing exercise by NEPC officials is scheduled for Thursday (January 18, 2001), at the Lagos Zonal Office of the Council. All interested companies and organisations have been advised to obtain application forms from the NEPC offices nearest to them.

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6 - 7	Basic Management Skills for IT Specialists	N 36, 750	IT specialists who seek to enhance their business management skills	2 days
8 - 9	Quality Customer Service	N 36, 750	Customer Service personnel with responsibility for managing both the internal and external customer.	2 days
15	Time Management & Prioritisation	N 19, 950	Professionals at all levels in the organisation	1 day
21 - 23	The Management Development Programme	N 48, 300	Middle level managers, Trainee Managers who have responsibility for managing others	3 days
21 - 23	IT Management Skills for Business Executives	N 48, 300	Business managers to whom the IT function reports or who manage the IT function.	3 days

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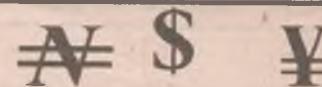
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BUSINESS DAY



ENERGY

Minister chides Lagos Governor on IPP

The Minister of State for Power and Steel, Alhaji Danjuma Goje, has advised Lagos State Governor, Bola Tinubu to stop blackmailing the Federal Government and NEPA for the failure of its Independent Power Project (IPP) to take off on schedule.

"Tinubu and members of his administration should stop the blackmail and campaign of calumny. They are misinforming the people about the project," Goje told Journalists at the weekend in Abuja.

He noted that "the Federal Government is committed to the success of the project and NEPA is also committed, because they are going to get additional power to ensure regular power supply in Lagos and other parts of the country."

Clarifying the Government's position on the project, he said "the Federal Government has been co-operating in every way possible to actualise it."

"First we signed an agreement with Enron, the company to generate the electricity."

"Secondly, we also went ahead to sign the power purchase agreement and thirdly provided them land at Egbin, Lagos, where they are to operate from."

"We have fulfilled our own part of the deal. Just last Wednesday. We took up the issue of Tax exemption and other concessions to the company at the Federal Executive Council meeting, which was approved by all Council members at the meeting presided over by vice-president Atiku Abubakar," he Added.

The Minister also said that the Government had granted tax concessions to the project

to accelerate its completion, noting that the exemptions covered customers duties, vat, education tax, income tax, withholding and other deductible taxes from companies operating in the country.

Goje, therefore, urged the Lagos state Government to refocus its attention on the immediate commencement of the project to enable Lagos residents enjoy the fruits of the deal.

"As far as I know, and even on the part of the government and NEPA, it is the Lagos state government and Enron that should buckle up to deliver. NEPA is not by design sabotaging it," he stressed.

Senator Liyel Imoke, Head of NEPA's Technical Board, had late last week reiterated the authority's support for the early actualisation of the project.

"We are looking forward to the commencement of the first phase, so that we can proceed to the second phase, which is currently being renegotiated by mutual consent of all parties," Imoke was quoted as telling Gov. Tinubu, who paid a surprise visit to the Authority's headquarters in Abuja.

Tinubu had on the occasion told them that the project was delayed partly by "some bureaucratic hiccups, such as the Tax exemption letter from the Federal Ministry of Finance and the conversion of the barges to Nigerian standards".

Speaking in a similar vein, NEPA's Managing Director, Joseph Makoju, said "there has been the mistaken impression that NEPA and Enron are not co-operating. That is wrong. As far as NEPA is concerned, we wish we'd had that power since

Christmas. We are very anxious to get it"

"For us, the March/April period is very critical for power supply. During that period the hydro stations will be low and that is when we need all the thermal energy we can get and that of Enron will be a big contribution... every extra megawatt we can get now makes all the difference."

Majoku, also said that NEPA had invited Enron officials to a meeting to find out the areas in which the firm might require NEPA's assistance."

According to him, problems associated with the project so far are only natural since it is the first of its kind in the energy sector.

Investigations reveal that the inability of Enron, the contractor for the Lagos power project to convert its power generating technology from American to local standards may be responsible for the late take off of the project.

Sources at the Federal Ministry of Power and Steel said that Enron was yet to adjust four of its barges to the national standard, to be able to produce power for NEPA facilities to transmit to the end-users.

The amended Enron power pact was signed in Abuja in June, 2000 between representatives of the Ministry of Power and Steel, NEPA, Lagos State Government and Enron.

The Lagos power project, since its conception in 1999, had been shrouded in controversy over contract agreements with the Federal Government.

Lawmaker blames neglect of plants on inadequate power supply

Rep. Abdullahi Idris, Chairman of the House committee on Power and Steel, has attributed the failure of the nation's power plants to generate the needed electricity to total neglect, saying that "their machines have not been rehabilitated for the past 20 years."

Speaking with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) at the weekend, Idris said that although the stations could generate 6,000 MW of electricity, far more than the nation's demand of 4,000 MW, past neglect had restricted them to generating only 3,500 MW.

The Chairman, who also attributed the insufficient supply of electricity in the country to transmission and distribution prob-

lems, said "the major problem bedeviling transmission lines is the vandalism of NEPA's property."

He however submitted that there was hope for the improvement of electricity supply this year, as power supply was given priority in this year's budget, noting "over N51 billion was allocated for electricity alone."

"It is hoped that from what we budgeted for this year, the plants could be able to produce not less than 4,000 MW, "new transmission lines will be built to double the existing ones."

The lawmaker said that the committee had concluded plans to monitor the implementation of the budgetary allocation of the Ministry of Power and Steel, "with particular emphasis

on power generation.

"We will ensure that money meant for the project is released and channeled to what it is meant for," he said, stressing, "we received assurances from President Olusegun Obasanjo that money meant for the project would be released quarterly to the Ministry."

On the recent public hearing conducted by the Committee on the Ajaokuta Steel Complex, the Chairman said that the report would be ready for submission to the House in February or latest by first week of March.

He said that the Committee was not satisfied with the response of those involved in the debt-buy-back scam, even before it concluded the analysis of its findings.

Gainers

COMPANY	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE
TOTAL	65.00	68.00	3.00
NB	27.81	29.20	1.39
AGIP	22.00	23.00	1.00
CADBURY	21.94	22.9	0.96
LEVIBROS	18.73	19.66	0.93
GUINNESS	31.99	32.90	0.91
UBA	14.70	15.45	0.73
PZ	11.54	12.11	0.57
OKOMUOIL	11.45	12.00	0.55
FLOURMILL	11.00	11.54	0.54
NBC	12.80	13.30	0.50
7UP	4.90	5.14	0.24
VITAFAM	4.50	4.70	0.20
DUNLOP	4.09	4.29	0.20
UNTL	3.87	4.06	0.19
GUARANTY	4.40	4.57	0.17
BERGER	3.21	3.37	0.16
SKBEECHAM	3.35	3.50	0.15
UTB	3.07	3.20	0.13
WEMABANK	2.03	2.13	0.10
PRESTIGE	3.03	3.12	0.09
MANNYBANK	1.62	1.70	0.08
INLANDBANK	1.75	1.83	0.08
SAVANNA	1.53	1.60	0.07
AFRINTS	0.33	0.34	0.01

Losers

COMPANY	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE
NIGERINS	7.00	6.65	0.35
AFRIBANK	9.50	9.20	0.30
GOLDBPEW	2.20	2.10	0.10
NIWICABLE	1.83	1.74	0.09
CRUSADER	1.92	1.85	0.07
JOHNHOLT	1.57	1.50	0.07
AFPRINT	1.50	1.43	0.07
LIBERTY	2.06	2.00	0.06
LASACO	0.93	0.19	0.02
NIG-GERMAN	7.99	7.98	0.01
IGL	8.50	8.49	0.01
CHARTERED	3.98	3.97	0.01

Summary of NSE Transactions

	OPENING	CLOSING	%AGE CHANGE
MKT. CAP	492,648,640,631.75	503,705,069,429.38	2.24
INDEX	8,573.76	8,766.19	2.24

DEALS	VOLUME	VALUE	No. OF COMPANIES
1,458	40,778,783	290,185,603.46	91

Star Interview

Sardauna was God's appointee

The Sarkin Fadan Zazzau, Alhaji Ahmadu Fatika (83) is one of the six surviving ministers of the late Premier of the defunct northern region. In his interview with our Zaria correspondent WAZIRI ISA GWANTU, he spoke on the man Sardauna, the North and its leaderless state.

Excerpts:

How and when did you come in contact with the late Premier --- ?

I came in contact with the Premier in 1956 after I became a member of the parliament. In fact, I was very vocal and active in the parliament. These two qualities of mine were what drew the premier's attention to me. He then called me one day and told me that he would appoint me parliamentary secretary (junior minister) or what is today called minister of state for finance. After about a year of service in this capacity, I was again appointed parliamentary secretary for Agriculture.

Sardauna, after having assessed and was satisfied with the job I was doing as minister of state at different times in two different ministries he promoted or upgraded me to the position of a minister at three different times.

He first of all appointed me substantive minister of social welfare and cooperatives, and later minister of information. From minister of information I became minister of Health.

How many of you who served as ministers under Sardauna administration are still alive today.

We are six. Myself, Ahmadu Fatika, Ibrahim Biu, Galadiman Kano Tijjani Hashim, Magatakardan Sokoto Alhaji Mu'azu Lamido, Sule Gaya Sarkin Fadan Kano and the Emir of Katagum Alhaji Muhammad Kabir.

Is there anything the present administration is doing to assist people like you who worked as ministers in the first republic?

I am not aware of any effort by the Obasanjo administration to assist us - ministers of the first republic who were victims of the first violent coup that was staged by Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu. But I have heard that the Obasanjo administration has restored the ranks of those Biafran Army members that killed Sardauna and has promised to compensate the Igbos or Biafran army who terminated our mandate.

Today marks the day the premier was assassinated by Major Chukwuma Nzeogwu, an Igbo man who was said to have been with the Sardauna for long. What do you think prompted the young army officer to betray the Premier?

The reason for this betrayal might not be unconnected with his ambitious and greedy nature. Even though others opine that he was encouraged to kill the Premier by his kinsmen in the army who were not happy with the Sardauna style of leadership. Some of them complained to the likes of Chukwuma Kaduna that the Sardauna was all out to build the Northern Region to be stronger and better in all respects than the others.

What precisely, do you remember 15 January, 1966 for?

The 15 January of every

year is a day of mourning to me. This is a day I don't want to remember. Aside from that I don't want to even hear the name of Sardauna mentioned because each time the name is mentioned blood crawls up my spine, I become uneasy and begin to I remember him seriously. This is a man I worked closely with for ten years and with whom I never had any misunderstanding.

What was it like, working with him?

He was a wonderful and detribalized leader who never allowed religious differences to cloud his sense of judgment and fairness. He was a dedicated and down to earth servant of the people who worked assiduously to unite the north. Working with him was very inspiring and challenging.

What important qualities of Sardauna, in your opinion, made him the undisputed leader of the north.

In terms of administration, he was a genius who possessed qualities that were not found in any other leader in the north. He had western education, he was a courageous and persevering

-Ahmadu Fatika,

leader. Added to these qualities, the premier inherited a fair sense of leadership from his great grand father, Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio.

Sardauna unlike our present day leaders, never differentiated between a Sokoto man and a Plateau man, he never preferred a Kano man to a Benue man. He gave equal opportunity and consideration to every northerner irrespective of his religion or tribe.

This brings us to the issue of middle belt and their claim of marginalisation by what the southern press today calls "core north." Some of the self appointed leaders of the middle belt argue that they were marginalized even during the days of the Sardauna. How authentic is this claim?

To the best of my knowledge this claim is untrue because the Sardauna was not a selfish leader, he was not tribalist as some of these people of the middle belt, as far as I know, they benefited tremendously from the Sardauna especially in terms of appointments in the Civil Ser-

vice. Sunday Awonyi, Ishaya Audu and others can bear wit-

ness for this.

What, in your opinion, are some of the effects of the termi-

nation of the first republic in our polity today.

It has so many effects which inspite of the efforts to address them by all stakeholders in the north had proved difficult. One of such effects is the destruction of the leadership and unity of the north. This singular effect which is the most serious calamity that befell the north since assassination of Sardauna is what had plunged the north into its present state of humiliation and backwardness educationally and economically.

How then do you think the north can get a replacement for the Sardauna.

Getting a leader with Sardauna's qualities in the present day north will be a very difficult thing to come by. People like him are not made by an individual or group of people. They are raised by Allah and bestowed with the qualities of leadership that are not easily found in ordinary humans. But with prayers, I am sure one day God will bless us with such a leader Insha Allah.



Alh. Ahmadu Fatika, Sarkin Fadan Zazzau

I delivered IBB's motorcycle from Sardauna

By Musa Umar Kazaure

Alh. Ladan Gwandu was Sardauna's driver in Kaduna from 1958 - 1966. He spoke to Daily Trust in Sokoto.

I was only about 18 years old when I joined the Premier's drivers team and I was attached to his family, but sometimes I drove him around and even outside Kaduna when he was going on personal trips.

How did the late Sardauna relate to you while on such personal trips?

He respected us in our jobs and loved to see us progress. I remember one time I was driving him to Jos, because he used to go there to relax. On that day, I wore a new gown he gave me and also matched it with a turban. When Sardauna came into the car he looked at me and smiled. He said, who is the Sardauna between me and you because you dressed like the Sardauna today. I said to him "you are the Sardauna, ranka shi dade" and he laughed, then we continued on our journey. He always liked to see us looking well.

Did he often discuss issues with you while on a journey, or he keeps the "boss/servant" attitude?

Sardauna will keep you talking throughout the journey. Mostly we travelled in company of three, Sardauna, myself and the orderly in one vehicle. We will discuss the developments in his household, about politics and Islam in particular. He used to advise us not to be dogmatic

about political ideology especially when it involves our fellow Muslim brothers because our lives were governed by Allah.

Which of his qualities did you cherish most?

His generosity, Sardauna was magnanimous in his generosity. No member of his staff would ever complain of want not in Sardauna's time. During Ramadan, he would give each staff two bags of rice, millet, groundnut oil, palm oil, sugar and milk. All our family members, wives, children and dependants were given clothes for Sallah by the Sardauna. When your wife gives birth, the Premier will send all the requirements from Kola nut to Ram, and two rams are given per child. All my most senior children were named by Sardauna himself. Kai! Sardauna was too much (paused to fight back tears) we will never forget him.

Can you recall the event of January 15th, 1966 in Kaduna? Where were you?

I and the other house staff were at our quarters behind the ministers quarters, when we heard the sound of siren, then all the electricity was out, then we heard noises, some people were shouting UPGA, UPGA, UPGA. We did not know what was happening, so we all trooped out to have a look. By the time we reached the wire fence in Sardauna's house, we saw soldiers with guns surrounding the place. One of them shouted at us "Go back, go back or we shoot."

There was one Zarumi among us his name was Zarumi

-Premier's driver

of Sardauna meaning "Sardauna's warrior." He swore to us that even if he will be killed he must enter Sardauna's house. In his attempt, he wounded one of the soldiers with his spear, and they shoot him dead before us. Another person tried to rescue Zarumi, and they shot him on the leg. The we all retreated back to our quarters and stood by Sultan Bello Mosque. That was where Commissioner M.D., Yusuf met us, and asked what was happening, we told him of the development and he entered his Landrover and drove off.

From where you were standing at the Sultan Bello Mosque, were you watching the developments at Sardauna's house?

Yes, we heard lots of gunfire inside Sardauna's house, then the soldiers withdrew to the hills of Anguwar Kanawa and shelled Sardauna's house, that was when fire broke out and part of the house was destroyed. When they left we came into the house and met some of his senior house Aides and the late Abubakar Gumi. He performed the jana'izza prayer for Sardauna and his wife. All his ministers and secretaries were in hiding, but some of them were courageous to be present at his burial.

Can you recollect those who are around?

Gashash was around, Turaki Aliyu Zazzau, Isa Kaita the Waziri of Katsina and a few others. Abubakar Gumi requested that the corpse be brought to

Sokoto for burial but the soldiers refused the request so he performed the burial there in Sardauna's house. Gumi was crying as he performed the burial rites.

After about two days, late General Hassan Usman Katsina (the Major) came together with General Babangida and Garba Duba (then Lt.) and met us at Sardauna's house. They said that we should show them the homes of those who came and vandalized the Premier's house around Unguwar Kanawa and U/Shanu area. We took them there house-by-house, they retrieved all Sardauna's property that were looted.

Was there looting after his death?

Yes, those NEPU people in Unguwar Kanawa were jubilating and celebrating Sardauna's death, and they entered his house immediately the soldiers left and looted the place.

So Babangida and Garba

Duba retrieved the properties?

Yes, they brought them back and tortured those who did the looting. I remember, there was a time when the Premier was alive, he asked me to go to Leventis and pick up a motorcycle. I was asked to take it to Babangida. He was then a Lieutenant and was residing at 5 battalion Barracks, that upstairs building. I met Babangida washing his clothes, so I told him he was wanted by the Premier. He was in shorts, so he went up and put on his Jallabiya (long gown) and we rode together on the motorcycle to Sardauna. When he saw us Sardauna said, but I asked you to give him the motorcycle not to bring him to me. I said yes, I decided to bring him before you so that you will be my witness that I delivered the motorcycle, and more importantly, I will get my "tukwichi" (gift) because I know this young officer doesn't have much to give. Sardauna burst into laughter and gave me ten pounds, then Babangida rode his motorcycle back to the barracks.



Alh. Ladan Gwandu, Sardauna's Driver

When he saw us Sardauna said, but I asked you to give him the motorcycle not to bring him to me. I said yes, I decided to bring him before you so that you will be my witness that I delivered the motorcycle, and more importantly, I will get my "tukwichi" (gift) because I know this young officer doesn't have much to give. Sardauna burst into laughter and gave me ten pounds, then Babangida rode his motorcycle back to the barracks.

Star Interview

Our people corrupted northerners -Mama Nzeogwu

By Keving Ebele Adinnu in Akpanam

I first visited the Nzeogwu family house at Okpanam on December 26th, 2000. Though I was warmly received by the surviving family members, the discovery that I was a journalist put them on their guard and even prompted Mrs. Elizabeth Nzeogwu's return to her room muttering "So you only come here to remind me of what people have since forgotten." I hung around after informal chat with the younger members of the family.

Not satisfied with my first visit, however, I returned on 29th December.

This time, I met only Chukwuma's mother and one deaf and dumb sister, Josephine.

Nzeogwu's mother was on her way to have her bath. I waited till she had her bath, dressed and then introduced myself reminding her that I was the one who visited three days earlier.

She was happy to see me and she sent for Kola nut which she gave me and the following conversation ensued.

DT: What is your assessment of your sojourn in the Northern part of Nigeria.

Mrs. Nzeogwu: You know that we lived in Kaduna before the war. In those days northerners were very good to stay with. It is our people that spoilt northerners. When my children were small, mothers from the North would come and carry them. At times I would not see my child until later in the evening, well fed. We never bothered ourselves with where we came from. That was how my son, Chukwuma got the name Kaduna. At times my children would not eat the food I prepared for them and it would diligently prepare good soup, sweet soup for my children but they would choose to eat with the children of my neighbours.

Even if it was melted butter with fish, they would be satisfied, but my own food that I took special care in preparing would be abandoned.

Northerners were a wonderful people; our people corrupted them. That is what I can say.

DT: Tai Solarin was very close to your son. How did his death affect you?

Mrs. Nzeogwu: Eweeh! Tai my son. He was very good to my children. After the war, he came and took two of my children, Philomena and Peter, and put them in his school. He trained the two of them. When he was alive, he opened an account for me in Asaba I was withdrawing money regularly from the account until he died.

DT: Did Obasanjo open this kind of account for you?

Mrs. Nzeogwu: No, but he sent Barrister Nwokolo to come and visit me. You know Chukwuma bought a plot of land in Lagos. It was Obasanjo that helped up to secure the plot of land. It would have been good if my son had finished building that house before he died. In those days, Chukwuma was very fond of Obasanjo's wife, his first wife, not his present one. My son was always sending money to her when she was studying in London. Chukwuma tried for the lady. He was so fond of her that Obasanjo used to make jokes about it. At times, he would warn Chukwuma not come to his house and risk being shot. Oh! Chukwuma my son. He tried for that lady. She was the one that gave birth to Olu who is now working. Chukwuma tried.

DT: You also tried. We read of how you always took palm oil from the south to the North to sell.

Mrs. Nzeogwu: Na wa o oh, it happened oh! I remember my customers. Oh, my customers. They wept for me when I was leaving Kaduna. They bought all sorts of things for me. They took me after the coup, they took me to an army barracks. I was asking myself, where is Chukwuma my son. In the night dogs will be barking who! Who!! Who!!!, I would wake up but the soldiers would beg me to sleep; that I was safe; that nothing would happen to me; that nothing would happen to me; that it was their job to protect me.

One day, they told me I was going home, I was sur-

prised. I told them I was going to collect my things from my house. They said there was no need because they had taken those things home. They put me in a vehicle. They really drove like soldiers. The vehicle was moving up and down. Then I called out to them saying *I wan die o oh! Haba hankali mana*. And they would reply:

"O oh mama, sannu." I would advise them "don't you know I am getting old. Is it in this vehicle that you want to kill me? They would burst out laughing interspersed with "Sannu, sannu."

Soldiers (laughs loudly), all of a sudden, the vehicle came to a stop. I felt some dizziness. My head was turning round and round. I sat down and asked them where I was, they said Okpanam. I told myself, so this is Okpanam.

DT: A weakling cannot be soldier. It is for the tough minded like Chukwuma.

Mrs. Nzeogwu: When he was alive, he would call me; my dear mother, if anything happens to me, I know you will bear it and continue with your life but I am afraid for Papa. He doesn't have a heart. (Chukwuma's father died in 1973). His father loved him. After Chukwuma's death each time he came into the house and saw Chukwuma's photograph, he would shake his head. He could not bear the loss.

I weighed him down so much so that whenever Peter came home on holidays he would occasionally make a slip and call him Chukwuma. My son, tragedy be fell us like being reminded of all those things, tragedy befell us.

DT: Obasanjo is now the President of the country. He is very busy man. Does he have time to see you now?

Mrs. Nzeogwu: The first time he ruled, he always found time to come and we would take photographs. My son Chukwuma did not take photographs. In those days he would come home

and be playing one particular cassette for soldiers that seems to me to be saying "soldiers, go and be firing *kakpu! Kakpu!!* (laughs).

been injected before.

DT: Obasanjo told you all these?

Mrs. Nzeogwu: Yes, he

child he should name it "Onochie" (meaning a replacement) so that he would replace Chukwuma. When I told him, he started laugh-



Mrs. Elizabeth Mgbeke Nzeogwu

That cassette made me laugh a lot.

DT: The last time Obasanjo came, you took photographs. It will be good if I can take my own photographs too.

Mrs. Nzeogwu: (Thinks for some time). Are you with photograph (Camera)?

DT: Yes.

Mrs. Nzeogwu: But I am not well dressed

DT: But Mama, you are Okay.

Mrs. Nzeogwu: If you say it is okay then come and take the photograph (I snapped her).

DT: Mama, you know that they detained Obasanjo for more than two years before he became President?

Mrs. Nzeogwu: I know Obasanjo is very lucky. Why I said he is very lucky is that he is generous. Generosity is good. That doctor that killed some of them went to inject Obasanjo. Obasanjo refused and told the doctor that he had never

did when he came out.

DT: He came here to tell you?

Mrs. Nzeogwu: He came out of detention and survived the person (Abacha) that jailed him.

DT: When Obasanjo was released, he came to Okpanam?

Mrs. Nzeogwu: Yes, he came to Okpanam. He told me that those other people that the doctor injected had all died! He is very lucky. I am happy that you came back again. If my children were around, I would ask them to give you *chin chin*.

DT: Mama, thank you. You have already given me Kola nut. You now have grandchildren.

Mrs. Nzeogwu: My grandchildren are many. They all come to visit me with their mothers.

DT: Peter is in America. Does he have any children?

Mrs. Nzeogwu: Yes, he is in America. He has a child I named the child, Ifeoma. I told him that if he gets a male

ing. (pauses). My son, Peter, he doesn't like answering Peter.

He calls himself Okeleke Nzeogwu. He said that Peter is white man's name. I keep telling him that it was angels, not me, that named him Peter. Chukwuma wanted me to call him Paul but I told him that angels visited me in a dream when I was seven months pregnant and said his name would be Peter. Seven days after he was born, we took him to Church for baptism. The priest opened his book containing names and declared that the boy's name was Peter. That was how I won over Chukwuma.

DT: Do you still go to Church now?

Mrs. Nzeogwu: No, no, no (and laughs) I stopped attending morning mass since I became old.

(When I was about to go, she sent for holy water. She sprinkled it on me blessed and wished me a safe journey).

'In those days northerners were very good to stay with. It is our people that spoilt northerners. When my children were small, mothers from the North would come and carry them. At times I would not see my child until later in the evening, well fed. ... Northerners were a wonderful people; our people corrupted them. That is what I can say.'

Star Interview

By Kevin Ebele Adinnu, in Okpanam

Just leave Obasanjo out of this

-Nzeogwu's sister

Getting the members of the Nzeogwu family to talk is like squeezing water out of stone. I visited the Nzeogwu family in their village, Okpanam in Delta state on 26th December, 2000.

I arrived the compound in the company of an acquaintance whose friendship I struck in the bus on my way to Okpanam.

It was an encounter with poverty. The house is a pink bungalow, the same house Nzeogwu's father, Mr James Nzeogwu built, but has been renovated to accommodate more rooms.

Through a walkway behind the house, we passed through a corridor into the sitting room. The main entrance is rarely opened. The rectangular-shaped sitting room is sparsely furnished. The floor is bare. Lined up on the floor on one end of the room are enlarged photographs of members of the family with that of Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu occupying a prominent position. Opposite on the other end is a wooden bench.

While pink, and greenish plastic chairs line up the remaining two sides.

There was no television or radio set in the sitting room. However, two SMT ceiling fans dangle from the ceiling.

We met a lady in the sitting room, introduced ourselves and told her our mission. Specifically, I told her that I had come to spend some time with Mama, Chukwuma's mother, in the spirit of Christmas.

The lady simply introduced herself as Chukwuma's sister, and invited mama out from her room. Nzeogwu's mother, Mrs. Elizabeth Mgbeke Nzeogwu, is very old. Born in 1915, she is 85 years old.

She walked into the room with the aid of a walking stick, sporting a pair of glasses which gave one of her eyes a bulging appearance. She lowered herself on the bench beside me and greeted us, when I broached the issue of Chukwuma Nzeogwu, her mood changed. I could feel the anger coursing through her veins.

The lady who said she was Chukwuma's sister, to my surprise, and with a tone of finality, declared that the family no longer entertained questions or enquiries from pressmen concerning her brother; moreover their mum was very old and that they did not want people

to bother her with tales about her son.

"So, you only came here to remind me of what people have since forgotten?" Nzeogwu's mother added with a tinge of anger in her voice. Having said that, she raised herself with great effort and returned to her room.

Not knowing what to do to keep the conversation going, I now resorted to guessing the name of the sister who received us relying on the little I had read about the family.

DT: Are you Philomena?

Nzeogwu's sister: No

DT: Josephine?

Nzeogwu's sister: No. I'm the eldest. I checked my notebook, where I put down the names of all the members of the family.

DT: You are Theresa!

Nzeogwu's sister: Yes.

This simple exercise watered the ground for discussion. Meanwhile, the deaf and dumb sister of Chukwuma entered. I was able to identify her as Josephine. Later on, another called Susanah came in. One thing led to the other and we started talking. However, they insisted that I must not take photographs of them but I could snap their house.

Below are excerpts from the informal discussion.

DT: You have a brother called Peter. Where is he presently?

Theresa: He is in the United States. He is our last born. He is a Professor at the University of Missouri.

DT: He attended Tai Solarin's school with his sister Philomena. Am I right?

Theresa: (excitedly) You are right. Tai Solarin was a friend of Chukwuma. They became friends after the 1966 coup. So, after the war, he came to Okpanam and took Philo and Peter and trained them in his school, Mayflowers at Ikenne. When he died, we attended his funeral.

(At this point, Susanah who had joined the discussion took me to the row of photographs at the end of the room and showed me the photograph they took at Tai's grave and added.....).

Susanah: When Tai Solarin was alive, he used to visit us regularly. He opened a bank account for mama in Asaba. He was paying money into the account until he died.

He did not believe in God but we have not seen a believer in God that one can compare

'When Tai Solarin was alive, he used to visit us regularly. He opened a bank account for mama in Asaba. He was paying money into the account until he died. He did not believe in God but we have not seen a believer in God that one can compare with him.'



The Nzeogwu family house in Okpanam



Family pictures are displayed on his table in the sitting room. Second from left is that of Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu

with him.

DT: president Olusegun Obasanjo was Nzeogwu's friend. What is his relationship with the family now?

Theresa: He is our family friend. He visits us occasionally. You can see him with us in that group photograph. He visited the family when he was released from detention.

DT: Does he assist the family financially?

Theresa: All I can tell you is that he is our family friend. We are satisfied with what our brother in US sends to us.

(At this point, Theresa's husband who came with his wife to visit Mama-they live in Lagos-now interjected)

Actually, Obasanjo invited Peter to come and work for his government but Peter turned the offer down and preferred to remain in the United States.

Theresa: Barrister Nwokolo is also our family friend. He visits us regularly too.

He lives in Enugu He was Chukwuma's friend in Kaduna. He could not come this December but he sent his wife. She was here yesterday (December 25).

DT: You said I should not take mama's photograph but can I do Christmas for her?

Theresa: Of course! (She now led me to mama's room where I gave her some gifts for Christmas, she was elated and thanked me profusely. We returned to the sitting room but after some time, Nzeogwu's mother came back to the sitting room., and listened to the conversation)

DT: Is Peter married?

Theresa: That one is just like his brother. He married very late. He now has a daughter. (Theresa's husband fetched an invitation to the Christening ceremony of Peter's daughter which took place at Salisbury in U.S and gave me).

Chukwuma refused to marry even when his mates like Obasanjo all got married.

Susanah: Ah! Chukwuma did not feel comfortable in the midst of ladies. In the those days, if he came home and met girls in the sitting room he would greet them. He could even provide entertainment, but he would not stay with them. He would go into his room and be playing military music (Nzeogwu was fond of classical music, according to his biography by Obasanjo)

Nzeogwu's mother interjected with a smile dancing on her lips)

Mrs. Elizabeth Nzeogwu:

My son never bothered about girls. He did nothing with girls.

DT: What of the boy that once came and claimed he was Nzeogwu's son?

Theresa: That boy was impersonating. May be he thought we were rich and that by so-claiming he would partake of our wealth. But he came and saw poverty. In the end we were convinced he was not Chukwuma's son

Susanah: The boy came and claimed that his mother met Chukwuma when he was travelling from Lagos to the North and took in within that period. Mama even received him very well

Mrs Elizabeth Nzeogwu: I was giving him the best food, eggs, everything.

Susanah: So, we alerted Obasanjo. The boy even said that his mother took a photo-

graph with Chukwuma. At this point, Obasanjo asked him to go and get the photograph in which he claimed his mother posed with Chukwuma. The boy left and did not come back again.

DT: What was his name?

Susanah: Amaechi. My brother Chukwuma did not take photographs. Apart from the old family photograph we took in Kaduna and this one journalist took while interviewing him after the coup in 1966, there was no other known photograph of Chukwuma. We know the boy would not come back again the moment he played the photograph card. The only person that nearly succeeded in getting his photograph was Tai Solarin's daughter. She visited with her Dad. When they wanted to go, she asked Chukwuma to pose with her but Chukwuma refused. However, Tai Solarin persuaded Chukwuma by reminding him of the distance they came from and how fond the daughter was of him. In the end, they took the photograph. But when they got home and wanted to remove the film from the Camera it got exposed to sunlight and was spoilt

DT: Chukwuma had a plot in Surulere, Lagos. What happened to it?

Theresa: Initially we did not know about it. He left the land in the care of one Hausa man. When we were alerted, we informed Obasanjo. But for that Hausa man who was taking care of the plot, we would have lost it.

DT: Did he build on it?

Theresa: He started a building but stopped at linter level. I supervised the fencing of the plot. I demolished the building and let the plot to same mechanics. They are still there up till now.

We are yet to build it because we don't have the money.

DT: I find that difficult to believe with the family friends like Obasanjo

Theresa: My brother just, leave Obasanjo out of this thing....

DT: You should have access to him, even now that he is the president.

Theresa: I don't have to go there....

Susanah later took me to Peter's bookshelf in one of the rooms. In the bedroom there is a big bed (Vono Product), the type popular in the early 70's Nzeogwu's mother's room had two beds: one big modern bed and a four-spring bed which she prefers to me on.

'Initially we did not know about it. He left the land in the care of one Hausa man. When we were alerted, we informed Obasanjo. But for that Hausa man who was taking care of the plot, we would have lost it.'



INSIDE POLITICS

Steer clear of Alliance for Democracy (AD)

—Abdulkadir warns Afenifere

The Alliance for Democracy (AD) late last year, finally held its national convention after many postponements because of the internal crisis and wranglings that engulfed the party.

At the end of the day however, Alhaji Ahmed Abdulkadir emerged as national chairman to replace embattled Ambassador Yusuf Mamman. But since his election however, the AD, national chairman has been battling with one problem after the other.

In this interview with our political reporter, Henry Omu, the AD helmsman spoke on his efforts to make the party acceptable in the North; the AD's attachment to the Afenifere, his views about the Obasanjo administration and other burning issues affecting the party.

DT: Sir, briefly tell us how you've been settling down since your election as AD national chairman?

Abdulkadir: Well, I've been doing my best trying to settle down, but of course, as I envisaged during the first six months, it's not been easy because there's so much that I've to put in place. In fact, it took me almost six weeks to even find an office for myself. And this is going to be the time to perhaps, enable us put the structures virtually in every state, and that's what I understand by settling down. Until every state chairman has an office to call a party secretariat, I don't think I'll be settled.

DT: Now and then we still hear dissenting voices within your party over your election, tell us how you're handling the issue?

Abdulkadir: I've been doing my very best because my first watchword is reconciliation. And that reconciliation is something that must continue. I think shouldn't lose my patience, and I shouldn't lose my focus. Reconciliation is very, very important if I want to achieve all that I've set out to achieve and it's only from there that I can build on all that I've done so far, by trying to get the aggrieved parties back in line.

DT: What level of reconciliation have you achieved between the period after your election and now?

Abdulkadir: The reconciliation that I've achieved so far is quite great, because in most cases, we only talk of this at the national level. But from the ward, local governments and states, most of the aggrieved parties are back into the main-stream. And that's a great achievement. Of course, there're a few people who've been identified as national officers before, who're still aggrieved. I cannot still lose my patience by not calling them back. I am still working on this to make sure that, this is achieved between the first quarter of this

year.

DT: How do you intend to instil discipline in the AD. For example we learnt that northern chairmen of the party have asked you to resign?

Abdulkadir: I can assure you that no northern chairman of AD, asked me to resign. All the northern chairmen are till intact, and anybody who wants to remain faceless. But that's not the issue today. Each and every genuine member of AD is still interested in the party, not to even talk of the chairmen. They are still very much intact and there's no cause for alarm.

DT: But, what if your opponents are known, what action do you intend to take against them?

Abdulkadir: Well, this people can only be identified if they identify themselves. But they've refused to identify themselves. I think they're just been mischievous, but to me, the important thing is having the party intact. And the party is intact, and all the northern chairmen are still very much loyal to the party.

DT: What structures are you putting on ground in the northern states to achieve reasonable success in the next elections, considering your party's stronghold to be only the south-west?

Abdulkadir: Before, the last elections and perhaps after the last three to four months, the party had no offices in most northern states. And this is the basic structure you need before we can even start any mobilisation drive. Now the party has done a lot, by making sure that we've offices in most states. From that point, we can start mobilising people. You can only do this (mobilisation) when you can discuss and plan strategies on how to make the party progress. And that is already in place. So now, we've started vigorously on how we can achieve our goals come the next local government



Alhaji Ahmed Abdulkadir

election, before the 2003 gubernatorial and presidential elections.

DT: Specifically, how many offices has the AD opened in the North?

Abdulkadir: We've opened offices in nothing less than eight, out of the 19 northern states including Abuja. This is just of recent and we hope that before the end of the first quarters of 2001, we should be able to have offices in all the 19 northern states, including Abuja.

DT: Based on your achievements so far, what are your party's future prospects in the North?

Abdulkadir: This party has only been neglect before, it was not because the north didn't prefer this party. But now that the party has been put in place in virtually all the northern states, the AD is now the party where all aggrieved politicians from the PDP and APP are coming to. And we're happy about this development, as we're having people coming in thousands each and every day.

DT: Sir, can you mention the states where AD is gaining such acceptance?

Abdulkadir: In many states, people are coming into the AD, much more than we

thought. Clear cases are what we've in places like Kano, Jigawa, Taraba and Yobe. People are coming in...in thousands each and every day.

DT: What's your vision of any ideal AD, as a party?

Abdulkadir: My vision of an ideal AD, is a hi-tech party where transparency and accountability should be the watch-word. For it to be the voice of the commonman, the down-trodden and peasants; where they can make their voices heard easily, without having to go through a lot of hassles. Our vision is to make sure that, before the end of 2003, the commonman on the streets will certainly have a voice. And nobody needs to tell him where he's going to have that voice, other than the AD. We're working hard on this. People should realise the difference between the AD and the other two political parties.

DT: Tell us the level of cooperation the party is getting from AD governors in attaining this objective?

Abdulkadir: AD governors are cooperating very well with the party. That's not to say however, that we'll rely on our governors for everything....they are very much proud of the party, in

as much as we're proud of them.

DT: Most people believe AD is Afenifere and Afenifere is AD. Is this a misconception or what?

Abdulkadir: Yes, this misconception must be part of perhaps what led a lot of people to feel that the AD belongs to the south-west. But I can assure you that nobody from the Afenifere now talks for the AD. If you're Afenifere leader, you talk purely about the Afenifere, whereas we here in the party, talk about the policies of the AD as a national party. AD has now been fully centralised as a political party. It has got nothing to do with Afenifere affairs, despite the fact that Afenifere are stakeholders in the party.

DT: How did the party last year, view the performance of its lawmakers in the National Assembly, and what do you expect from them this year?

Abdulkadir: Our members in the National Assembly have done quite fairly. If you look at the entire members of the Assembly, the only members who're not found guilty of any misdemeanour are AD members. AD is the only party with this record, so we must praise them (Lawmakers) for this. They've achieved this through their convictions in certain beliefs. I must give them credit for that.

DT: Why the praises, considering that your lawmakers rather than play the role of the opposition, have routed more for the Obasanjo administration. Can you explain this?

Abdulkadir: Well, they're not supporting the PDP as such, but they're supporting whatever comes out to be the truth. They're on the path of truth. Whatever they believe is the truth, that every reasonable individual should believe and understand, that's what they believe in and that's what they do. If by tomorrow, the president goes wrong, by initiating policies which will not favour this country, I can assure you that AD members are going to go against him, straight away.

DT: Rumours of an imminent cabinet reshuffle abound. Has AD been contacted by the presidency for nominees?

Abdulkadir: Certainly, AD is one of the three political parties, but we've no information whatsoever to this effect.

DT: But will the AD nominate new people as cabinet members?

Abdulkadir: Yes, that'll be a very good development because I believe in coalition. I always believe in alliances; that's our name. I always believe in team work because I believe this democracy needs all the help it can get from the three political parties. I think it's a welcome development if such an action is based on genuine interests and intentions, but not for any other reasons.

DT: Speaking about Obasanjo's cabinet, how'll you rate them collectively.

Abdulkadir: Within the cabinet, some are doing their very best, while some are just there to make what they can make for themselves. So, to say that the entire cabinet not doing a good job may be a wrong judgement, but definitely I believe the Presidency knows those who're just there to enrich themselves. And I think, those are the kind of ministers that should be shown the way out and be replaced with people with transparent minds. People with the intention and integrity to work for the interest of this country.

DT: On a general level, how'll you assess the Obasanjo administration?

Abdulkadir: The Obasanjo administration honestly, has just performed slightly above average, but there's so much room for improvement. In the first year, one will have to give them, the benefit of the doubt. But, within the second year, they're doing well below what's expected.

They're just slightly above average. If by the middle of this year, they don't improve on what they've been doing, then definitely it's a total failure.

DT: Lastly sir, will your party support its lawmakers in the lower house, if they renew their agitation for a probe of the house finances?

Abdulkadir: You see, the probe of the house leadership, has never been a problem that any party should come in. It's a problem of the house....just like what happened in the senate, AD senators are not the ones that really pushed for the senate to probe itself. The senators collectively did that, and I was expecting that the house should do the same.

Because, I believe ever before now, the house stands a better chance than the senate of being more transparent. If the senate can do that, I don't see why the house cannot emulate it, and do the same. And definitely, AD house members are not saying the house should probe itself, because they want anybody to go. But they want the place to remain as transparent as it could be, for the rest of their tenure.

“In many states, people are coming into the AD, much more than we thought. Clear cases are what we've in places like Kano, Jigawa, Taraba and Yobe”

PARLIAMENT

Gombe assembly clerk resigns

The clerk of the Gombe State Assembly, Mrs. Hajara Ibrahim Saleem, has resigned here position because of what she described as "Bitter Working relationship between her and some of the house leaders".

Addressing a press conference at which she also handed over the responsibilities of the office to her deputy, Alhaji Babayo Gidado, Saleem pointed out that she had for long been operating under pressure from members of the assembly.

Specifically, the clerk said that she was not pleased with the financial operations of the house, adding that the way funds were disbursed was not in consonance with established financial regulations.

She said that as a civil servant and the accounting officers of the state assembly, she had been very uncomfortable and had decided to resign so as

to retain her personal credibility and the integrity of her family.

The out-going clerk, however, said she had enjoyed her worth with the state since 1997, when she came on secondment from the National Assembly.

She said that she was proud to have brought up the state legislature from nothing to its present status.

Saleem appealed to the

staff of the assembly to continue to maintain a harmonious working relationship with the legislators in order to ensure the success of the state legislature.

Investigations in Gombe revealed that the clerk's resignation may not be unconnected with the manner in which the over N17 million monthly allocation to the assembly was being expended.

It was reliably gathered that

the former clerk had on several occasions blocked the desire of the members to go on an expenditure spree that did not conform with financial regulations.

The legislators had repeatedly been accused of demanding for the release of funds to them without respect for financial regulations. Most of which, were said to be put to personal use.

Gov. Kure's re-election campaign kicks off

Just 18 months into the present democratic dispensation, plans are now in top gear by some Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) stalwarts in Niger state to ensure a second term for the incumbent Governor Abdulkadir Kure.

The arrow head for their political game plan tagged "Kure for 2003", Alhaji Hashimu Aliyu Kuta, told Daily Trust in Minna that it was only fair to allow the Nupes have a second opportunity.

"What we are saying is that for the purpose of political stability, let the Nupes, as represented by Kure, come in again in 2003", Kuta the Kure campaign coordinator who is said from the Gbagyi, speaking area of the state observed that since the creation of Niger state in 1976, the Nupe were just presenting a candidate for the first time in person of Engineer Abdulkadir Kure.

"It is only fair to allow the Nupes fully enjoy the fruits of their patience", he said, warning that nobody should be in a hurry to step into Kure's shoes.

Hashimu, who is the chairman of Shiroro local government council recalled that it was the party's declaration in 1999, that any elected officer who performed creditably well should automatically be considered for a second term irrespective of any zoning arrangement. "For all ethnic groups in the state to have a sense of belonging, the incumbent governor should be allowed to continue in office especially when he had within a short period showed ability and capability ability to transform the state with his rural transformation

programme."

According to him, even if Kure declines to contest for a second term, "another credible person from Nupe should be brought on board".

The council chairman said he was aware of clandestine moves by a top member of the Kure administration to make the party shift the search for a gubernatorial to another gone

in 2003.

"I am prepared to campaign for Kure to ensure his re-election and nobody should deceive himself that he is better than Kure or he is the brain behind Kure's success," Hashimu Kuta said. He urged the people of the state to show appreciation for Kure's good performance by returning him in 2003.

Group condemns IBB's 2003 ambition

As the rumoured presidential ambition of former President Ibrahim Babangida heightens across the country, the Northern Democratic Forum (NDF) has condemned such intention.

In a joint release issued in Kaduna yesterday, the NDF, an amalgamation of the Amalgamated Northern Human Rights Group (ANHRG) and the Northern Socialist League (NSL) consider such plot, and machinations as an act of provocation against the country.

A release signed by two official NDF, Mallam Shehu Sani and Uba Sani, disclosed that General Babangida has no moral right neither has he the cogent political credentials to vie for such an office.

It observed that such political ambition on the part of the former military president was meant to divert the attention of the nation from his possible prosecution over his hu-

From Dare Oyewole Kaduna

man rights records while in office.

The Human Rights groups also believed that it was also meant to divert the attention of the nation from putting a search light on the regimes past misdeeds.

Asides it argued, the ambition is capable of threatening the Obasanjo administration to soft pedal and succumb to his (Babangida) whims and caprices and that the former military president was being misled by those it described as "opportunistic psychopaths and disgruntled political elite" in the north who are striving hard to regain relevance.

Anenih's wife tasks female politicians

Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) national woman leader, Mrs Josephine Anenih, says women must be prepared to erect political structures that will offer them the opportunity to occupy decision-making positions.

In a statement issued in Abuja at the weekend, Anenih expressed concern about what she described as the low level of women's participation in government, saying that she had made representations to the government on the need to include more women in government.

She said that the 30 per cent representation for women as contained in the Beijing (affirmative action) declaration would soon be a reality in Nigeria.

Anenih described the performance of women in the Obasanjo administration as very encouraging, saying that she was convinced that if more women put in positions of authority, the country would be the better for it.

"Government has the will, it promoting women and putting them in positions, but the president cannot act alone." She said.

She noted that women were faced with age-old conventions, customs and culture.

For now, she said that "positions should be reserved for women, and once they are inside they would be able to fight for themselves from within."

"Men have occupied all the position, we have woken up and we are asking that we should be given some of the seats already occupied by men because you cannot contest if you are outside," Anenih said.

She enjoyed women to use their positions as mothers "to defend our nascent democracy and contribute meaningfully to the upliftment of the ideals of probity, accountability and good governance".



President Obasanjo, his wife Stella and Defence Minister, Lt. Gen. T.Y. Danjuma at the inter-denominational church service to mark the 2001 Armed Forces Remembrance Day celebration. Pix Kennedy Egbonodje

LG boss advises political office holders

Akinade Adeniji/Minna

Chairman of Mariga Local Government Council in Niger State, Alhaji Ado Bodi has observed that no amount of campaigns, sloganeering and settlement can return a non-performing leader to office.

The council chairman

therefore enjoined political office holders to deliver on their campaign promises to the people, describing it as the only ticket for automatic return to office.

Speaking with Daily Trust in Bangi, Alhaji Bodi said the electorate had grown wiser and would not be deceived by lead-

ers whose stock in trade is to offer money to voters when elections draws nearer.

"Let me be frank with you, the people at the grassroot have shown preference for projects embarked upon in their communities as against settling individuals", Alhaji Ado Bodi asserted.

According to him "any leader who fails to deliver on his campaign promises should stop dreaming of coming back to office".

The chairman who was recently honoured by the National Council of Youth Societies (NCYS) had the central primary school in Mariga named after him by the community said the era of riding to office on deceit has done in Nigeria forever, warning that "the electorate now are no longer the docile electorate of yester-years".

He said he had on several occasions turned down request to have his achievements documented in publications because of his believe in identifying directly with the people at the grassroot level.

"Let me ask you, does somebody like Governor Kure need to bribe anybody or engage in any form of sloganeering to secure a return ticket?" Alhaji Ado Bodi asked and quickly adding that "with what he (Kure) has been able to put ground especially in the areas of rural electrification, rural roads, education, health and agriculture all over the state".

Reps to initiate laws on education

Representative Abubakar Matazu, chairman education committee of the House of Representative, said that his committee will focus more attention on initiating laws that could improve the standard and quality of education in the country.

Disclosing this in Abuja at the weekend, Abubakar Matazu said that the committee would visit some African countries to study their education laws and the condition of service of their academic staff with a view of

uplifting the education standard in the country.

He said that there would be no way the quality of education in the country could be improved without re-considering the condition of service of the academic staff in the nation's higher institutions.

Matazu said: "when we went to defend the year 2001 education budget before the appropriation committee of the house, we presented a strong paper in which we condemned the allocation made to the education sector."

He further said the sector was grossly under funded, noting that instead of getting more budgetary allocation, it had continued to go down every year.

"What was allocated to the sector in the 2000 appropriation act is more than what was given to it in this year's appropriation," he said.

He added, "The whole budget of the ministry of education for this year, both current and capital, will not be enough to fund the activities of the nation's universities for the year."

The chairman also said that the current budgetary allocation to the National Universities Commission (NUC) was inadequate to cover the year, adding that without supplementary appropriation for the commission, the fund allocated to it would be exhausted by May.

She said that the committee would visit president Olusegun Obasanjo to present a "practical advise and the true position" of the whole issue to enable him come out with a supplementary budget for the sector.

PARLIAMENT

N/Assembly has oversight powers, Rep. insists

By Henry Omonu

As reactions continue to trail the recommendations of the panel set up by PDP to reconcile the Presidency and the National Assembly, the chairman of the representatives committee on population, Rep. Sani Udu has faulted the panel's report by declaring that the legislature is constitutionally empowered to carry out oversight functions.

The lawmaker explained that the National Assembly can only check the excesses of the Presidency, through the discharge of its oversight functions.

But the reconciliatory panel, headed by former vice-president in the Second Republic, Dr. Alex Ekwueme in its report, opined that there was no constitutional basis for the much touted oversight powers by the National Assembly.

Similarly, the Dr. Ekwueme panel further rec-

ommended that the independence of the National Assembly, is only limited to the separation of powers, which provides for checks and balances among the different arms of government.

This position, the lawmaker argued is wrong. According to him, the principle of checks and balances does not amount to independence of the legislature as been canvassed by National Assembly members.

Rep. Udu stated that the National Assembly represents the sovereignty of the country, as it's made up of elected representatives from various parts of the country, and as such is the only organ empowered to make government responsible to the people.

Furthermore, he ex-

plained that because the powers of oversight that because the power of oversight was not exercised in the last three aborted Republics, "does nothing to change the absolute necessity and legality of over-

sight".

Moreover, the lawmakers added that sections 80-81 of the 1999 constitution confers on the National Assembly, the control of all federal funds.

Therefore, since the Na-

tional Assembly appropriates funds on the premise that certain things will be executed, "it follows that the Assembly must have a means of ensuring that the promises are implemented", Rep. Udu declared.

Pointing out that, such

a process by the National Assembly connotes power of oversight, he named sections 88 and 89 of the constitution as empowering the National Assembly to carry out investigation into any issue.

Councillors hold LG boss hostage

Work was brought to a halt in Kwaya-Kusar local government secretariat of Borno, as councillors held the chairman, Alhaji Ibrahim Shettima, hostage over the non-payment of their furniture allowance.

The National Agency of Nigeria (NAN) gathered that the councillors were demanding payment of the state-allocated N500,000 furniture allowances for each of them.

They were spurred into

action by the confirmation that their colleagues in neighbouring Bayo local government had been paid the money.

The councillors, who held the chairman hostage in his office, refused to listen to pleas or explanation from him on lack of funds to pay them, thereby forcing him to withdraw money from the council's stabilisation account for emergencies to pay them.

Reliable sources told

NAN that the Union Bank, Kwaya-Kusar branch, where the local government operated its account, had to rush to its Gombe branch, about 100km away, to source enough money to meet the councillor's demand and secure the release of the chairman.

Meanwhile, the councillor's action has become the talk of the town,

especially at the council secretariat where some of the councillors had started "showing-off" with their newly acquired second-hand cars, bought almost overnight with the furniture allowances.

Out of the 27 local governments in Borno, not more than 10 have so far paid the N500,000 furniture allowances to their councillors.

Rep blames NEPA's failure on obsolete equipment

Representative Abdullahi Idris, chairman of the House Committee on Power and Steel, has attributed the failure of the nation's power plants to generate the needed electricity to total neglect, saying that "their machines have not been rehabilitated for the past 20 years."

Idris said that although the stations could generate 6,000 megawatts of electricity, far more than the nation's demand of 4,000mw, past neglect had restricted them to generating only 2,500mw.

The chairman, who also attributed the insufficient supply of electricity in the country to transmission and

distribution problems, said: "the major problem bedeviling transmission lines is the vandalization of NEPA property."

He, however, said that there was hope supply was given priority in this year's budget, noting: "over N51 billion was allocated for electricity alone."

"It is hoped that from what we budgeted for this year, the plants could be able to produce not less than 4,000mw by December ending," he said, adding: "new transmission lines will be built to double the existing ones."

The lawmakers said that the committee had concluded plans to monitor the implementation of the budgetary allocation of the ministry of power and steel, "when particular emphasis on power generation."

"We will ensure that money meant for the project is released and channelled to what it's meant for," he said, stressing. "We received assurances from President Olosegun Obasanjo that money meant for the project would be released quarterly to the ministry."

On the recent public hearing conducted by the committee on the Ajaokuta Steel Complex, the chairman said that the report would be ready for submission to the house in February or latest by the first week of March.

He said that the committee was not satisfied with the response of those involved in the debt-buy-back scam. Even before it concluded the analysis of its findings.

Southern governors meeting to strengthen unity

The majority leaders of the Anambra State House of Assembly, Mr. Okenwa Odikp, said that the meeting of governors of the 17 southern states will strengthen the unity of the country.

Disclosing in Awka Okidpo observed that in the past, the

Southern States were in disarray, without a focus while the north remained intact.

"Politics in Nigeria has been that of divide and rule, where the Southern states were balkanised for a very long time while the north remained intact," he said.

He said that the meeting of the governors was step in the right direction and that a revolution aimed at changing the nation's political scene was in the making.

On the nine-point communique issued by the governors. The legislators said that

the governor took on the bull by the horn by addressing the fundamental problems facing their people.

Odikpo explained that the issue of security raised by the governors was crucial for the survival of the nation, stressing that the federal government should give it the attention it deserved.

He said that since security was in the concurrent list of the constitution, states should be allowed to legislate on it and fashion out a way of curbing crime in their areas. "A good example is Anambra state, since the introduction of the Anambra State Vigilante Services (AVS), there are no more threats to lives and property, Anambra is one of the most peaceful states in the country now" he said.

Senator pledges to de-worm 18,000 school children

Senator Davou Zang, representing Plateau North Senatorial District, has pledged to de-worm 18,000 school children in the six local government areas under his zone, as part of his contribution to the development of the area.

Zang, who disclosed this at the weekend in Jos North local government area, said from the figure, 4,000 children would be drawn from Jos North, 2,500 from Barkin Ladi, 2,000 in Riyom, 4,000 in Jos South, 3,000 in Bassa and 3,000 in Jos East local government. The Senator, who turned the six local government areas under the zone to brief the people

about the political developments at the national level, also promised to award scholarships to 16 students from the zone to study in any institution of higher learning in the country this year, he said that the federal government had allocated N1.5 billion to the University of Jos Teaching Hospital, out of the N2 billion health allocation to states in the north central geo-political zone of the country.

Zang stated that another N500 million was also allocated for development projects in his senatorial zone, pointing out that N154 million would be spent on the provision of potable water. On rural electrification, Zang said that N120 million was allocated, while another N222 million had also been earmarked for the construction of roads in the six local government areas comprising the zone.

Eight councillors suspended

People's Democratic Party ward chairman in Calabar South local government council of Cross River have passed a vote of no-confidence on eight councillors of the council.

The action of Thursday came barely 24 hours after the council's 12-members legislative council had hatched plans to impeach the council chairman, Mr. Essien Ayi.

Giving reasons for the no-confidence vote, the chairman of ward 10, Mr. Gershom Edem, alleged before newsmen that the councillors had diverted funds meant for project in the council area into private use.



President Obasanjo chatting with Chief Barnabas Gemade, National Chairman, PDP and Major General David Jemibewon, Minister of Police Affairs recently.

Features

When water is the issue

By Abdulganiyu Aminu

The serene atmosphere of the meeting reflects the seriousness with which participants view the issue at hand: the search for a viable solution to water supply problem.

And so it was when experts, sector professionals, technocrats, intellectuals, multilateral donors and NGOs, met recently in the beautiful but sleepy town of Makurdi, the capital of Benue State to discuss and proffer solutions to intractable problems facing water resources development in the Country. It was the 14th meeting of the National Council on water resources.

The meeting compared notes, reviewed past achievements, and recommended appropriate measures in such vital areas as Farmer participatory irrigations management concept, dam related flood incidents, Water Resources Decree (101) the National Water Resources master Plan, Community Based Irrigation Scheme etc.

The minister of water resources, Col. Muhammad Bello Kalliel (rtd), who was the Chairman, set the tone and direction of the meeting in an incisive and inspiring speech delivered to task the ingenuity of the participants on how to produce advocacy guidelines and wherewithal to implement effective water and irrigation schemes for the people.

The Minister could not have put it more succinctly when he said "with our knowledge of the availability of water resources in the country, we should be more positively aggressive in our water resources development efforts for the purpose of poverty eradication, improved health and increased food and fibre production."

The minister was not sounding out this warning for nothing. Of the 4.5 billion population of the developing world, more than a billion don't have access to safe drinking water and 2.5 billion lacked hygienic means of personal sanitation. Whereas the world water vision enunciated by the world water commission states "Every human being should have access to safe water for drinking, appropriate sanitation, and enough food and energy at reasonable cost".

The relationship between the water sector and natural phenomena as soil erosion, flood control, drought and desertification were brought to the fore and dispassionately deliberated at the meeting.

A strong case was therefore made that the river basin development Authorities should be adequately funded by National Ecological Committee to tackle several ecological problems requiring urgent attention. The RBDAS, which are parastatals of the ministry, have been able to identify several ecological problems and have the technical capacity to identify, design and construct small dams to check the cyclical occurrence of drought and desertification.

The need to boost irrigation development was a major priority at the meeting. Indeed, some experts have indicated that 80 percent of additional world food production will come from irrigated agriculture. In view of rapid increase in the population and consequent shortfall in food output, irrigated agriculture needs to be vigorously pursued, especially in

the sahelian areas. This is why the Minister of water resources announced at the meeting, the introduction by the Ministry of Community Based Irrigation Project to enable rural dwellers to be profitably employed all year round and boost the economy.

The Ministry has also commenced the physical rehabilitation of some old irrigation schemes that are not performing to expectation. Renewed efforts are also being made to complete such on-going irrigation schemes as Kampe irrigation Project, Middle Ogun Project and Middle Rima Valley Irrigation Project.

The need to further support the farmer's participatory irrigation management in the public irrigation projects was also strongly canvassed. The concept is aimed at enabling farming groups together with irrigation agencies to manage irrigation schemes. By this all farmers will become responsive to the needs of the schemes, collection of rate of water fees increases, water use efficiency is increased and the money saved could be used to maintain the schemes.

This is clear departure from the Top-down Development model, which has been the bane of development paradigm in the third world. The meeting therefore commended the Ministry's department of irrigation and drainage for this noble scheme and advised that it be spread to other irri-

gation schemes.

The meeting viewed with welcome relief the memo on the construction of small dams as an alternative to large dams, which are not only capital intensive, but prone to high hazards potentials. The council therefore urged the need for constructing small dams and appealed to the National Ecological Committee to fund the construction of small dams as a means of checking drought and desertification.

In order to improve water supply and sanitation situation worldwide, the federal government approved for implementation the improved National Access to water supply and sanitation programme of the ministry. This programme, which started this millennium, is aimed at

rehabilitating about 7,740 boreholes thus giving access to safe drinking water to about 2.5 million people. In addition, One small-town water supply and sanitation scheme is to be built in each of the 109 senatorial districts as well as construction of two hand pump boreholes in each Local government area in the country. This programme did not escape the searchlight of the August meeting as it endorsed the need for water and sanitation units in all LG's for sustainability as well as effective training of LGA staff on hand pump borehole and other system maintenance, repairs and data collection.

The council meeting also examined the state of Hydro-geological mapping of Nigeria. Since the com-

mencement of the project in 1992, only eleven sheets on scale 1:250,000 have been hopped out of a total of 100 such sheets that cover the country. Yet the success or otherwise of such programmes as "improved access to water supply" depends on a large extent on the information furnished by the Hydrogeological Mapping. The council therefore called for speedy execution of this very important project to ensure the success of the poverty alleviation programmes of the government.

These, among numerous others, are the salient issues in water resources discussed exhaustively at the highly successful crucial meeting. Since water is on the concurrent legislative list of the 1999 constituting, it behoves the three tiers of Government- Federal, state and Local governments may benefiting communities, the private sector and indeed all the stakeholders in the water sector to systematize and harmonize their strategies in order to achieve result-oriented objectives in the water resources sector. In the words of the Minister of Water Resources, Col. Mohammed Bello Kalliel: "Nations, the world over, are making concerted efforts to harness water, improve their environment and quality of human life. Nigeria can't afford not to be part of this movement. We therefore need to make greater commitment to the development of our common resources."

"With our knowledge of the availability of water resources in the country, we should be more positively aggressive in our water resources development efforts for the purpose of poverty eradication, improved health and increased food and fibre production."

Temple for two

The thought of Christians and Muslims worshipping together in West Africa is likely to strike many people as absurd, especially given the often-bloody clashes between the two. But that is exactly what is happening in a temple in the Ghanaian capital, Accra - where the Zetaheal sect is based.

Combining elements of both Islam and Christianity, the sect was established 25 years ago by Comfort Narh, then a dressmaker. She says that angels spoke directly to her and asked her to bring Christians and Muslims together, because the founders of the two religions, Jesus Christ and the Prophet Mohammed, have a common ancestry.

"Abraham had two sons - Isaac and Ishmael; Mohammed was descended from Ishmael and Jesus from Isaac, so the two are related," explained one of the sect's adherents, Lehem. "Islam and Christianity are from one family. We have to bring the two together before the world will have peace."

According to the faith's elders, Zetaheal is Hebrew for 'lean on me for your salvation'.

And more and more people are placing their faith in the movement. Membership has been growing quite rapidly recently and the sect now boasts at least 5,000 worshippers - men and women, artists and artisans, teachers and students. Originally, they were all either Muslim or Christian, but they have now managed to find common ground.

"I joined as a Muslim," said Muhammad Musah, a 25-year-old student. "But I have now learned and understood so much about Christianity that I don't consider

For centuries, Christians and Muslims have been battling for supremacy in West Africa. But in Ghana, one movement is now bringing them both under the same roof, as Kwaku Sakyi-Addo reports.



The Zetaheal temple in Accra where Muslims and Christians worship together

myself a Muslim anymore. I belong to both faiths; I belong to Zetaheal."

The sect's followers worship together in their magnificent, sparkling-white temple with its unmistakable twin towers in the Zongo-Junction suburb of the city, a neighbourhood that has long been both Christian and Muslim. The building was constructed with the proceeds from Zetaheal's own cooperative plantations. Architecturally, it combines elements of churches and mosques, blending the two together.

Inside the temple, the pews or white-robed worshippers all take off their footwear. Those from a Muslim background sit on mats on the floor whilst Christians sit on pews or chairs

each according to their original or preferred tradition. The congregation is then taught about both faiths. The adherents learn about the teachings of the Bible from a pastor, along with those of the Koran from an Imam.

"I never knew that the Muslim greeting, I 'Asalaam aleikum' meant 'Peace be unto you' I" admitted one recent convert to Zetaheal. "I thought it was something heathen until I joined Zetaheal. It is much better than 'hello'."

During the services, the Zetaheal choir sings in praise of Mohammed and Christ, revering them as two equally great prophets sent to earth by the same God - or Allah.

Reverend Dr. J.S.A. Stevens is a theologian, and was formerly the president of the Methodist Church

of Ghana. He worships with Zetaheal now and again.

Although he is not a member, he says he is comfortable with their principles. Many of these conflicts between Christians and Muslims are quite needless because both faiths are worshipping the same Creator; Dr Stevens explained. "So by combining both, Zetaheal is serving the glory of God."

Many people remain sceptical of the idea of members of the two faiths uniting under one roof. However, Zetaheal shows that, once their initial doubt and unease is overcome, Muslims and Christians can worship together.

Kwaku Sakyi-Addo reports for the BBC from Accra. Culled from BBC Focus on Africa

Arts & Entertainment

"I died from the beginning to the end"

--Artistic Director, National Troupe

By Tadaferua Ujorha

Recently, Dr. Ahmed Yerima, the Artistic Director of the National Troupe was in Abuja. In this interview he provides an enchanting glimpse of the activities that the National Troupe engages in.

Can you explain the duties of

the Artistic Director is central because what he does is to make sure that every cultural identity or aspect of the Nigerian essence is celebrated, whether he is Edo, or Igbo, or Yoruba. I find it difficult to tell someone where I hail from because once I say that, I am beginning to zero in and forget the essence of the work of the Artistic Director. He advises the

The Cathedral by Beckett.

How does the National Troupe employ other aspects of the Artistic tradition in the course of its work?

The thing about Art and Government is that it has been compartmentalised. When I go into the non-expressive art, then I am beginning to walk into the National Gallery for the Arts, or to walk into

where to draw the line, and we felt okay what we could do is move the painting to the front gate, so as you walk in, you see him, you know why you have come, and then the programme of invitation would also have his painting. We use paintings to highlight the aesthetics of the message of the production. What we basically rely on are those ones that are expressive. What we do in the National Troupe is to look for authentic costumes, but one particular costume that we haven't got right is the Aso-Oke. We look out for what works on stage. That is what we do. We use a lot of costumes and musical instruments

In Nigeria, your recent performance, the audience has to understand that at the sound of a drum, a statue can come to life, and tell a tale. Can you comment on this basic Symbol?

The idea for the carver and the drummer came into the performance when Arnold Udoka, the Assistant Director (*dance*) who eventually wrote the script, came into my office, and we were looking at how to handle the theme, and he was playing with ideas, and I now said, look Nigeria has been treated as a Pariah state for about five years, and their knowledge of Nigeria, culturally, economically, and politically, has been stratified. They have purposely blacked it out. So let us look for how to reintroduce Nigeria. That was the whole idea of bringing the Carver and the drummer. We also said, let us symbolically bring Nigeria into the story, and then the drummer beating that drum puts it back into the fluid form. That is the political meaning of that symbol. What we were looking for at a point was we also wanted to go through the different geo-political zones without talking too much. We wanted to add some magic, some spectacle. Also there was the mystery in the hand of the drummer; to be able to beat the drums to make them put life into the carvings.



The Troupe in Nigeria, a dance drama.

an Artistic Director?

First I must thank you for the honour of being interviewed. The Artistic Director of the National Troupe is a very big position in the celebration of the cultural heritage of this country. For me, the Artistic Director of the National Troupe is actually the Artistic Director of the nation, which makes him the number one artist. This means that he not only helps to discover talent. He helps to use the old ones properly. He has to be a jack-of-all-trades. We are speaking here of the genre of culture, performance, dance, music, and drama. He must attempt to be a master of all, in the sense that he cannot afford to specialise in one to the detriment of all. The kind of performance we have in this country is what people call total performance or total drama. Political

Honourable Minister of Culture and Tourism on Performance Schedules, for instance. The young artists look up to him, like the young artists in Lagos who just celebrated my appointment, by giving me an evening, and the issue we looked at was what was going to be the future of the Nigerian Artist. What is the Artistic Director of the National Troupe going to do to assist them, especially when the Artistic Director has a mandate that says do this and this, and so I think the Artistic Director becomes like a father to all the Artists.

I read somewhere that once when you were in Britain you acted as a body, can you comment on that, especially its significance for young actors?

I was a Freelance actor looking for a job and the auditions came, and I was asked to play the dead man. I died from the beginning to the end. (Laughter) I had this funny game that I was playing with myself. I thought maybe I should be able to practise how to sleep without snoring (laughter). I am a very active person, being able to appreciate activity around me, and I had to remain still. I was looking for the star role in the play, and I was told you are just right for the body (laughter). What it taught me then was that it is not how big the role is because later on I came out playing Caliban in the Welsh National company performance. That for me was like the opening of blacks being allowed to play that role. Normally they allowed Whites, and painted them black, which was because it was supposed to be a hideous character, and I ended up playing that role. For that role the casting had been done. I came late. They had to fix me in a box, and then, of all the actors who came, I fitted perfectly into the box (laughter). That was it. I remember each time I dressed up to go for the performance they said, "oh, you are going to die again" (laughter). I think it was *Murder in*

the National Museum Commission. What we do is we use non-verbal Art to complement the aesthetics of our performance. You know like we say, we get the painting for the backdrop and scenery, and we use that to highlight some message, like the new play we are about to do in April on the late Shehu Yar'adua. It is called *Tafida*. I have just written a play on *Tafida's* life, and we were looking at the final draft. But what we were thinking of was where to put the painting of the late Shehu Yar'adua. We thought of leaving it as a backdrop at the same time we thought it would distract the audience, and especially since the play is already sad, and the play is looking at him in Heaven. People may not be able to realise

Sheraton Exhibition: Carvings, paintings and colours

An exhibition of paintings, carvings and beadworks held recently at the exhibition hall of the Abuja Sheraton Hotel and Towers. Various works of Art went on display from the 10th - 14th January 2001.

Mr. Daniel Akinlami, the artist, is a final year student of Fine Art at the Obafemi Awolowo university, Ile-Ife. In an interview with *Daily Trust* he explained that Art should be a way of worshipping the Almighty, and that he focuses on Nature in his paintings. He mentioned that he paints images drawn from each of the three major tribes in the country, which seems to indicate his desire for a level of harmony between these groups. There was a lovely painting detailing a group of Eyo Masquerades in performance, while another portrayed a village setting in the North. In another painting the artist presented some Yoruba traditional hunters and warriors. He also appears to be keen on self-portraits as there were several on display. Many fa-



One of the paintings on display

mous painters, such as Van Gogh have made a recourse to the self-portrait motif at various points in their careers.

The Exhibition Hall of Sheraton Hotel and Towers is a work of Art itself, and Mr. Daniel Akinlami could not have found a finer environment to exhibit his creative talent.

Solution To Yesterday's Puzzle

Across: Denton, inspector, crime, assistant, lead, arrest, follow, forensic, alibi, gun, bullet, ten, witness, suspect, cell, frost, proved, scene.
Down: search, warrant, station, prints, case, jack, murder, blood, evidence, clues, police, Mullett, lied, innocent, dead, notes, police

The channels this evening!

Movie Magic

16:00 A memory in my heart
17:45 Breaking up
19:30 Movie Television
20:00 Burn Hollywood Burn
22:00 Dead by midnight 00:00
Poodle Springs 02:00 Everyone said I love you 04:00 The Third Man

Childrens Viewing on TV from Cartoon Network (DSTV)

16:00 The Jetsons
16:30 Mike, Lu and Og
17:00 Scooby Doo
17:30 Dexter's Laboratory
18:00 The Powerpuff Girls
18:30 Ed, Edd & Eddy
19:00 The Real Adventure of Johnny Quest
20:00 Tom and Jerry
20:30 The Flintstones
21:00 Transmission Ends

Schedule Of Programmes Of Radio Nigeria Net work Service

1. Zuma Echoes-A satirical drama series. Day Of Broadcast - Sundays. Time-7-7.30pm
2. Commonwealth Short Stories-A broadcast of winning stories of the Commonwealth Short Story Competition. Day of broadcast-Tuesdays. Time-5.00-5.15pm

Of farmers and flutes!

Bomo is a humble farming community that lies very close to the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Just before twilight you would see columns of smoke rising from the various compounds and forming a little connection with the skies. Then there is a nearby pond, really a fairly large body of water, which swells when the rains come, and still retains a considerable volume of water when the rains cease. Some fishermen do go for a spot of fishing at the pond too. Bomo sits in a valley and numerous undulating fields roll towards the village in a manner that is almost musical.

Every year a post-harvest festival holds at Bomo. The central thoroughfare of the village is cordoned off, and a whole galaxy of actors and performers stride about the place. The entire village is involved in this festival which is over a century old. Sometimes a group of Fulani will perform. Then with their long sticks, simple flutes, agile movements and sweet songs, they would raise dust and charm our hearts with soft music and a rare performance! Malam Makama is always present with his large farming drums which let out a resonant echo that almost seem to be picked up by the tall towers in the distance. Women and children are present too. Come and listen to the boom of guns fired by hunters and guards on festival day!

By Tadaferua Ujorha

Stirring Lines!

May you live in interesting times.

Chinese saying

Art Watch!

An International Festival of African Dance is scheduled to take place between January 17-20 in Libreville, Gabon, official sources said.

In preparation for the cultural event, the Gabonese Minister of Culture, Daniel Ona Ondo, would on Tuesday, January 16, hold a press conference on the creation of a Festival of African Dances in the Central African sub-region (Pana/NAN).

The FCT Council For Arts and Culture would be celebrating its Tenth Anniversary in January 2001. This means that residents of Abuja are in for some rich cultural discourse and a splendid array of Nigerian songs and dance. Will keep you posted.

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Interview

We have stamped out mail-pilfering - Master-General

The Nigerian Postal Service as represented today by NIPOST has over the years, gone through various shades of experience. The onetime efficient and prompt service oriented industry that was the pride of the nation in the 60s went through turbulent waters. The economic recession of the early 1980s caught up with it, thus throwing it into over a decade of decay, mismanagement, internal bickering, irresponsibility and total lack of commitment on the part its staff.

However, like the proverbial saying, today there appears to be light at the end of NIPOST'S dark tunnel. In this interview with our correspondent OSBORNE ADI JNR., Alhaji Abubakar Musa Argungu, the Post-Master General and Chief Executive Officer of NIPOST shared his vision of a new postal organisation, that is fast recovering from its deep slumber. Excerpts*

DT: Sir, How has it been since you assume office as the post master-General

Argungu: Well, the job has been challenging as well as exciting. Challenging in the sense that when this management came in there were lots of problems on the ground, therefore we had to sit down and think over how to tackle them. Thank God that we have been able to resolve some of these problems and we have succeeded in bringing NIPOST back on track in terms of efficient and effective mail delivery and other allied services.

DT: Sometime last year NIPOST did launch the National Mail Routing System, why did you have to launch it and what is the performance levels of mail delivery resulting from the new system?

Argungu: I think the issue is not why we have to launch it, but why we have to introduce it. We had to introduce it because we reviewed our performance and it was nothing to write home about. Mails were not being delivered in time, mails that were supposed to reach their destinations within two or three days, take as much as two or three weeks. Some times the mails did not even reach their destinations at all. These were results of processing delay, transmission

delay and what not. And through that staff get tempted and temper with the letters and when they did not find any thing they threw them away.

When the new management was put into place, we reviewed the situation and among the several options we explored, the best approach was to go through the National Mail Routing System. So, we worked on the system, perfected it and we then presented to our ministry for approval. But then, the ministry said that it was a big project that required the approval of the Federal Executive Council (FEC). The FEC now gave its approval following which the president agreed to commission it.

Finally, on the first of June last year the president commissioned the vehicles that were to be used in the project.

On the question of the efficiency of the project, I would say it is a tremendous success. Courseratively, we have achieved about 80 per cent success level. This you know, could be attested to by both Nigerians and the International Community. They have written to commend us for the huge turnaround NIPOST has gone through and the speed with which mails are presently being delivered cross the country safely and intact.



Alhaji Abubakar Musa Argungu, the Post-Master General and C.E.O. NIPOST

Even the Universal Postal Union (UPU), the umbrella organisation for national postal administrations worldwide, has written a letter of commendation to us in acknowledgement of our improvement in services..

DT: So, what is the experience like on the international route?

Argungu: Just like the improvement we have recorded domestically, it is also the same on the international route. May be, I should take some little time to explain how the system works. What I mean is that every country postal administration is like a branch of the world post office which is regulated by the Universal Postal Union. What it means is that the Nigerian Postal administration is a branch of the USA postal administration. The USA prital administration is also like a branch of Nigeria Postal administration. That is to say if you post your letter in Nigeria to your brother or business partner in the US, then the responsibility of the Nigerian postal administration ends at the point the mails are loaded into the aircraft and by the time the aircraft lands at the US airport, the mails automatically becomes the responsibility of the US postal administration. The same thing applies when letters from outside Nigeria come into the Country, From this explanation you can understand that outgoing mails are not actually exposed to any danger, but those coming into the country.

Actually, it is our do-

mestic problems that affect the international mails. When letters arrive the country they were not deliver in good time so all the inefficiency on the domestic front affect international mails. Now that we are efficient domestically, the other countries of the world have always been efficient and if you match these two parts of efficiency, you can be sure that it is the best that would come out.

You may be surprised of know that now, letters arrive into the country from Russia, Germany, France, United Kingdom, etc within three to four days and they get to their destinations as such.

I was telling somebody the other day that someone wrote me from Port-Harcourt that he got a letter from the US two days after it was posted. The most surprising aspect of it all was that the letter emanated from Oklahoma city, not even New-York or Washington.

So, you can imagine our degree of improvement.

DT: Recently there were these reported case of mail pilfrage at the nation's international airport sorting centre what have you done to stem the tide?

Argungu: We have already stem the tide especially, in the last twelve months, we have not had any case of mail pilfering, mail tampering or any case of theft of mails. We have been able to contain the situation and we do hope that the ugly experience of our past would not repeat itself ever again in the fu-

ture of NIPOST.

DT: What of the mobile post office project. How far have you gone with it?

Argungu: Yes. You see this project is not exactly new. It has always been part and parcel of NIPOST.

But it was some how abandoned until the present management came on board and decided to revive it. Essentially, because we want to increase the post density, we want to reach out to the customers. Of course, you know that more districts are coming up, our cities are growing and the demand for postal service is on the increase. So, to service this increasing population properly, there is the need to re-introduced mobile postal system.

We have already introduced mobile post offices in two territories. That is Lagos and Abuja. So, the mobile post office move from one place to the other to provide postal service to members of the general public. Similarly, we intend to extend it to all major cities and towns in the country.

DT: How is NIOPST coping with the high cost of running the business?

Argungu: You are very correct, it is capital intensive. May be by the time one dissect the number of activities from the time you drop your letter into the postal box, to the time it reaches the addressee you will really be amazed.

Looking at it from this perspective, it is really an expensive business.

That is why we have been crying overtime to the government that charging five Naira for stamp is too small and that we should be allowed to charge a little bit higher, so that we would be able to sustain the quality of service we are providing to Nigerians. At the end of the day, the federal government has responded I am sure you now know that the cost of postage has risen from five Naira to twenty Naira. Even though we spend much more than that.

As at last year, before the national minimum wage was raised to N7,500 for the least paid civil servant, it used to cost us about 53.08 kobo to handle a letter from one place to another.

But now, of course, the

cost has gone up to following the doubling of salaries. In any case, however we shall maintain the current rate given to us. We shall also work hard to earn the confidence of majority Nigerians, so that they can patronise us.

This is because the more mails you handle, the less the handling cost.

Therefore, Nigerians would derive maximum benefit. But of course, if the volume is not high that means that the unit cost would be higher. And when that happens, we will have no option but to ask for some level of subsidy from the government. But of course, now with the improvement in service, we are rendering to the public and with their response and encouragement, we shall succeed.

DT: What is your revenue profile like?

Argungu: Well. Our revenue profile has gone up since the present management came in. The new products are introduced into the market have also jacked up our revenue base.

It is my hope that with continued patronage, it will further improve.

The accounts people are tidying up what we generated last Year because the year has just ended. When they are through, we shall be able to tell you.

DT: The new millennium no doubt, offer a lot of challenges, So, what id NIPOST doing to square up to these challenges, specifically, in terms of staff training, provision of facilities and other requirements that would provide an enabling environment for business to thrive?

Argungu: NIPOST is well prepared for the new millennium. Nigerians following of the revolution we have brought into our operations can attest to this.

We are the federal government organisation to collaborate with the private sector to provide enhanced postal services.

In terms of training we have a very large management information system department and well equipped. We have also now mapped out a staff training package on computer literacy. This training would be done in-house because we have the facilities.

“ NIPOST is well prepared for the new millennium. Nigerians following of the revolution we have brought into our operations can attest to this.”



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 1.00 pm; 3.00pm

Bellview Airlines

--N7, 000.00--
 Abj-Maid (1.30 pm)
 Abj-Maid (4.30 pm)
 Maid-Abj (7.30 Pm)
 Abj-Lag:8.35am;1.00pm;
 5.20 pm
 Lag-Abj: 6.50am; 11.15;
 3.25 pm
 Lag-PHC: 7.30am; 3.15
 pm
 PHC-Lag : 9.00 am; 5.05
 am

Chanchangi Airlines--

N6, 000.00--
 Abj-Lag 8.00 am; 11.45 am;
 1.40 pm; 3.00 pm; 5.30 pm
 Kad-Lag (8.30 am)
 Kad-Abj-Lag (12.40 pm)
 Lag-Abj : 7.15;10.00 am;
 1:10 pm: 3.30 pm; 4.45 pm
 Lag-Abj-Kad (10.00 am)
 Lag-Kad (5.00 pm)
 --N12,000--
 Lag-PHC: 9.90 am; 1.30 pm
 PHC-Lag: 11.30 am; 3.30
 pm

EAS Airlines

--N3,000.00--
 Abj-Jos 11.00 am;
 --N6,000.00--
 Abj-Jos-Lag: 11.00 am
 Abj-Lag: 10.30 am; 4.30 pm
 Abj: 7.15 am; 9.30 am;
 2.45 pm
 --N5, 500.00--
 Ow-PHC-Lag: 7.45 am
 Lag-PHC-Ow: 4.15 pm
 PHC-Lag: 8.30 am

Nigeria Airways

--N5,000--
 Abj-Lag: 8.30am;
 Abj-Lag: 2.00pm; 3.30pm;
 5.30pm
 Lag-Abj: 7.00am; 12.30pm
 Lag-PHC: 9.00am;
 Lag-Enu-PHC: 4.00pm
 PHC-Lag: 10.30; 6.20pm
 Abu-Yola: 3.30pm;
 Yola-Abj: 4.45pm

BUS SCHEDULE

ABC Transport at
 Banex Plaza
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 Departure: 7.00am, 8.00am
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 District. Abj-Lag, N1,810.
 Departure: 7:30am, 7.30pm
C.N.OKOLI at Berger
 Junction, Abj-Lag, N1, 710
 Departure: 8 pm only

Beware of FCDA car park

It has become necessary to warn the public of security lapses for vehicles at the FCDA public car park as no fewer than five cars have been stolen from there within the last two weeks.

Police sources disclosed this to *Daily Trust*

after members of the public, last week, foiled an attempt by an unidentified car thief to steal a Toyota Corolla car with registration number AN 297 ABC from the car park.

Eyewitnesses said that the thief aroused suspicion when he tried unsuccessfully to open the

door of the car with keys from a bunch believed to contain master keys.

Some staff of the FCDA and commercial vehicle drivers around accosted him and demanded that he prove his ownership of the vehicle but he fled into a mosque,

in stead. When angry worshippers at the mosque brought him out, he failed to prove that the car belonged to him. The crowd handed him over to the police but not before he was beaten him thoroughly.

Daily Trust reports

that a corps member lost his car in the same parking lot last August.

With the approach of Christmas and Sallah, the activities of car thieves have been on the increase. Last week, the police in Abuja paraded a lady who specialised in stealing expensive cars from unsuspecting men after seducing them

Where to stay in Abuja

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

Rate/ Standard room	Hotel/ GuestHouse	Address
N1,000.00-N3, 000.00/ night	1. Duhu Guest Inn Ltd	Plot 2119, Ladi Kwali Way, Zone 4, Wuse
	2. Amanda Guest Inn	Ibrahim Sani Abacha Estate Wuse, Zone 4
	3. Elyte Guest Inn	Zungeru Close, Of Jos Street, Area 3, Garki
	4. NUJ Motel	NUJ National Secretariat, Area 11, Garki
	5. A. Avison Hotel	Plot 456, Kontagora Close, Area 3, Garki
N3, 000.00-N5, 000.00/ night	1. Amana Suites	Off Michael Okpara Str, Zone 5, Wuse
	2. Arewa Suites	Central Business District. Tel: 5239252-3
	3. Dayspring Hotel	Juba Street, Zone 6 Wuse, 09-5238714-5
	4. Savannah Suites	Area 3, Garki, Abuja, 09- 2341090
N5, 000.00 and above	1. Sheraton Hotel & Towers	Maitama, Abuja, FCT. Tel 09-5230225
	2. Agura Hotel	Area 10, Garki. Tel: 09-2341753
	3. Boligo Hotel and Towers	Area 10, Garki. Tel: 09-2344701-10
	4. Chelsea Hotel	Central Area, Abuja, F.C.T.
	5. Nicon Hilton	Maitama, Abuja. Tel: 09-4131811

CURRENCY EXCHANGE

IFEM RATE

\$1.00 = N102.60
 £1.00 = N148.70

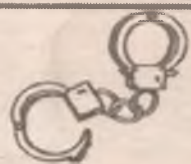
Parallel Market

\$1.00 = N118.00
 £1.00 = 167.50

The Naira depreciated by 10 kobo at the Inter-Bank Foreign Exchange Market (IFEM) to exchange for N102. 60 per dollar as against the previous week's N102.50.



Some recovered cables and items on display at police premises.



Crime & Punishment



Police says no objection to Bakassi, but...

Mr Sunday Aghedo, Assistant Inspector-General of Police (AIG) of the zone 9 police zonal command, has said that the police have no objection to any group complementing their role in crime prevention.

Exchanging views with newsmen in Umuahia at recently, Aghedo said that the police had no objection to the Bakassi vigilante Group if its real objective was to prevent crime. He said that the concern of the police is that the Bakassi groups should carry out its objective under the ambit of the law as well as play a complementary role to the police.

"Any group that is out to complement the efforts of the police must be encouraged but if it is a group that wants to work like a parallel body and has no legal backing to do certain things, then that is a problem", the AIG said.

Aghedo said that the law allowed anybody to make arrest and within a reasonable time hand over the arrested person to the police, which had been the principal security agent of the government.

"You do not have the right to arrest, prosecute and execute. The law is very clear except we want to spoil the games of democracy. In democracy, you expect the rules of law to prevail. We cannot have some kind of

official lawlessness", he said.

The AIG then, said that he would discuss with the various governments that brought in Bakassi in his zone to make them see the implications of some of the

actions of the group as well as the legal implications.

He expressed optimism that various Ministries of Justice in the areas that had Bakassi group would come out and "honestly advise as to how some of these things

should operate."

He maintained that the police should be in-charge of crime control and any group, wishing to complement their efforts, should be subordinate to the police.



Mr. Musliu Smith, IGP

Lagos high Chief Arrested for child theft

From Wisdom Patrick, Lagos.

The Police in Lagos have arrested a traditional ruler (name withheld) in Ejigbo, a Lagos suburb for allegedly stealing a five-year-old girl (name withheld) on January 9, 2001.

The *Daily Trust* gathered from a senior police officer at Okota Police Station where the traditional ruler was detained that the victim, until the unfortunate incidence, the victim, a former pupil of Ayo Adebola Primary School in Ejigbo was a playmate, in the same school with one of the Oba's children.

It was learnt that, the Oba who is also an Imam of the Ejigbo local mosque used one of his children to lure the innocent girl.

Sources said the imam prepared a charm and gave

it to his child to take to the school for use on the victim. It was gathered that the Oba's son was to rub the charm which was in powder form, on the victim's face and that, immediately she would have been seduced so that his son could lead her home.

The son having been tortured by his father carried out the assignment very well but luck ran out of him when at a point the girl stopped and started to cry and passers by stopped to question the boy on what was wrong with the little girl.

As he could not give a satisfactory answer, a good Samaritan among the passers-by offered to take the two children home, but the resistant put in by the

Imam's, son made people around them to be suspicious and questioned both of them. But when they discovered that it was only the imam's son that could speak while the victim was behaving abnormally a search was conducted in their school bags where victim's home address was found.

Sources said police at Ejigbo police station first contacted the imam's wife who then contacted the parents of the girl. The *Daily Trust* gathered that it was at the police cell that the imam's son opened up and told the police all he knew about the assignment the father sent him.

The police then arrested the Oba who has so far made a confessional statement to the police though he refused to say his motive. But sources said the boy had confessed to the police that he had been caring out similar assignments for the father and that after the job, he would never see such children again.

Report of Loss of Nigerian Passports rampant in U.K.

The consular Section of the Nigerian High Commission in London receives between five and ten cases of lost passports per day from Nigerians in the U.K.

A competent source told the News Agency of Nigeria in London that the cases were so commonplace that the Commission was forced to introduce some measures aimed at stemming the alarming rate.

One of such measures, the source said, was the payment of 250 pounds deposit, in addition to the mandatory 84 pounds by anyone who claims loss of his or her passport before their cases could be entertained.

According to the source, due to the frequency of the loss of passport cases, it was becoming difficult for Nigerians to obtain police statements to back their claims.

"The police have disclosed that Nigerians have the highest cases of loss of passports in the U.K., the source said, adding that they were now weary to issue reports to Nigerians to

back up their applications.

The source stated that most of the cases were not genuine, explaining that some of them deliberately lose their passports and apply for new ones to enhance their chances of staying in the U.K.

"When they get the new passports, they will now apply to the Home Office, claiming to have had longer visas or residency permits in their lost passports", the

source said.

With the introduction of the deposit fee, which is refundable when the claimant recovers his or her "lost" passport, the cases had been declining, the source disclosed.

Contacted, the Head of the Consular and Immigration section at the Commission, Mr. A. Ajoje declined comments, claiming official restrictions. (NAN)



Alhaji Sule Lamido, Foreign Affairs Minister.

LG Chairman held hostage by Councillors

Work was brought to a halt in Kwaya-Kusar Local Government secretariat of Borno, last Friday, as councillors held the Chairman, Alhaji Ibrahim Shettima, hostage over the non-payment of their furniture allowances.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) gathered that the Councillors were demanding the payment of the state-approved N500,000 furniture allowance for each of them.

They were spurred into action by the confirmation that their colleagues in

neighbouring Bayo Local Government had been paid the money.

The councillors, who held the Chairman hostage in his office, refused to listen to pleas or explanations from him on lack of funds to pay them, thereby forcing him to withdraw money from the council's stabilisation account for emergencies to pay them.

Reliable sources told NAN that the Union Bank, Kwaya-Kusar branch, where the local government operated its account, had to rush to its Gombe Branch, about 100 km away to

source enough money to meet the councillors' demand and secure the release of the Chairman.

Meanwhile, the councillors' action has become the talk of the town, especially at the Council Secretariat where some newly acquired second-hand cars, bought almost overnight with the furniture allowance.

Out of the 27 local governments in Borno, not more than 10 have so far paid the N500,000 furniture allowances to their councillors. (NAN)

Police recover N350,000 in sewage pit

The police in Abuja have recovered over N350,000 hidden in a bucket and buried in a sewage pit.

The incident happened in O.A.U. Quarters, Wuse II, Abuja when a houseboy identified as Vincent Ezenwa allegedly stole the money and hid same in a bucket and buried it in a soak away pit in the compound.

When put under severe interrogation along with

other suspected household members, Vincent was said to have broken down and confessed to the police that he stole the money at night when everybody had gone to bed.

He said he decided to open the soak-away pit to hide the money in his belief that no one can find the money there.

Police detectives from the Wuse Police station zone 3 however dug open

the pit and recovered the sinking bucket almost submerged in human waste.

According to the Divisional Police Officer DPO in charge of Wuse Police station, Mr. Wale Davies, a Superintendent of Police (SP) the recovered money has been thoroughly washed clean by the police while Vincent will be charged to court soon for stealing.

Abuja News

Pyakasa Health Centre in limbo

Stories by Musa Badamasi

The Pyakasa Health Clinic that was promptly constructed in the wake of the historical visit of the outgoing American President, Bill Clinton to Nigeria has remained in Limbo without drugs and medical personnel.

Daily Trust investigations revealed that the clinic was part of arrangement made by government, so that it could be commissioned by President Clinton who was scheduled to visit one typical Nigerian village of which Pyakasa was earmarked.

Unfortunately, Pyakasa became a victim of security diversionary ploy, when it happened that instead of visiting Pyakasa President Clinton ended up visiting Ushafa in Bwari Area Council.

This development led to the stop of work on the Pyakasa clinic and drugs with other medical equipment were no longer forthcoming.

The traditional leader of Pyakasa, Chief Amos Gashoko Tuzambo in a chat with Daily Trust lamented that "the situation has left

an indelible mark of disappointment on our minds." According to him, three

persons died recently for lack of quick medical attention, adding that "possibly they might have not died had it been that the health clinic is functioning."



Chief of Pyakasa, Amos Gshoko Tuzambo

He said "we are happy when they informed us that President Clinton will visit us and commission our

body was sad and the whole Pyakasa was not happy."

"Since President Clinton did not come to us, we are not blaming anybody, it is God that does not make it possible, I want government to please come and complete the clinic for us" he pleaded.

Councillor Samson Nyanda under whose jurisdiction Pyakasa falls dis-



FCT Minister, Arch. Ibrahim Bunu

closed to Daily Trust that the subject is beyond Abuja

that nobody offer any explanation on why the Pyakasa

Municipal Area Council (AMAC) authority, adding that it is probably being delayed by Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA).

Councillor Nyanda said

clinic project was suddenly abandoned immediately it happened that President Clinton no longer visited the village as scheduled.

Director of Health Services FCDA, Dr. Ayobami Ayo told Daily Trust that the Pyakasa Health Centre project was conceived and executed by the Presidency under the committee set up for President Clinton reception arrangement.

According to him "we are not in any way involved with the project because it is under a special arrangement therefore there is no way we can just take over the running of the clinic without following proper procedure."

However, Dr. Ayo disclosed to Daily Trust that his department would initiate a memo on the matter to Minister of Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Arch. Ibrahim Bunu to approve the taking over of the project.

He noted this would be done after consultation with appropriate authority in the Presidency that are directly connected with the Pyakasa Health Clinic project.

Abalaka to participate at consensus workshop on HIV

Dr. Jeremiah Abalaka is set to make a presentation at a three-day consensus workshop in Abuja on the development of a Nigerian National HIV vaccine strategy. Abalaka, who came into

limelight after his claim of a cure for HIV, responded to an invitation from the National Action Committee on AIDS (NACA) to serve as one of the resource persons during the consensus workshop.

The national chairman of NACA, Prof. Iboronke Akinsete, who disclosed this to newsmen in Abuja, said that the committee was proving its neutral stand on Abalaka's claim by inviting him to contribute his input to the actualization of its objectives.

According to her, "Abalaka's invitation as a resource person has nothing to do with his claim."

"We are only interested in his input on the way forward as far as HIV/AIDS is concerned, and not out to certify or debunks his claim."

She maintained, however, that any claim on the vaccine for necessary process, procedure and protocol, to guard against people being used innocently as Guinea-Pigs.

"As a national body, we are aware of different claims from many individuals as to the cure of HIV/AIDS and that is why researchers, so that in the long-run, the entire nation would be effectively mobilization."



Minister of Health, Dr. Tim Manakaya

NIPOST begins mobile post office in Abuja

Nigeria Postal Service (NIPOST) has commenced a mobile post office service operating in the federal capital city, Abuja to provide postal service at people convenience.

The postmaster General of the Federation, Alhaji Abubakar Musa Argungu disclosed recently that the Mobile Post Office will offer full postal services on wheels as obtained in the conventional post offices.

According to him the aim is to ensure that postal service is brought closer to the people, especially to cater for the growing postal needs of a developing city of Abuja.

He noted that the mobile post office service is now operating in Abuja and Lagos alone on a pilot scheme project saying that the service will be extended to other states next year.

Alhaji Argungu said that the introduction of National Mail Rout Network whose dedicated vehicles were commissioned in June this year by President Olusegun Obasanjo has revolutionized NIPOST's mail distribution and delivery service.

He said the Universal Postal Union (UPU) has

commended NIPOST on its report on the recent tour of Nigeria in August last year, noting that NIPOST is one of the postal administrations the world over which has implemented more than 80% of the strategies and recommendations towards improving the quality of services.

Apart from the mobile

post innovation, NIPOST has equally introduced new services such as special delivery service, post shop, bulkpost and postal insurance.

Efforts is underway by NIPOST management to raise postal density of Nigeria to the UPU required standard of 6000 post density from its present 4000 post density.

Water scarcity hits Gwagwa, Karmo, Dei-Dei

As dry season creeps in problem of water scarcity hits harder on the residents of some satellite villages in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

Among areas seriously affected are Gwagwa, Idu, Karmo and Dede resides.

There is no provision of pipe borne water in this locations as residents in the areas solely relies on water peddlers popularly called "Mai ruwa."

The water peddlers who treks several kilometres to get water for sale in the areas are now capitalising on the situation to increase the price of water.

Presently a fifty liters of jerry can for thirty naira while sells it as much as thirty five

naira per jerry can. Investigation at FCT Water Resources Agency reveals that these areas were yet to be provided with necessary infrastructure that would facilitate provision of portable water in the areas.

Meanwhile source closed to Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) disclosed that all the problems relating to water provision in some satellite villages would be addressed as development move into the areas.

According to the source adequate arrangement is on the ground to meet water requirement population in FCT.

Efforts to reach the Director of FCT Water Resources Agency Dr. M. Nosa proved abortive.

Abuja News

Sewage system leaks in Abuja

Stories by Musa Badamasi

The Sewer system network in Abuja, the Federal Capital City (FCT) has been experiencing leakages in some areas within the city.

These leakages is already creating an environmental problems which can lead to outbreak of an epidemic of waterborne and airborne diseases in the affected areas.

Daily Trust investigations revealed that areas affected includes Wuse Zones and Garki Areas, that are presently densely populated beyond the expectation in the master plan for the areas.

Some residents in the areas lamented that for weeks the leakages has continue despite all efforts made by them in reporting the incident to FCDA maintenance department.

According to Mallam Abdullahi Shehu a resident at Wuse "we have equally reported the case of sewer leakages to the Abuja Environmental Protection Board (AEPB) but nothing serious has been done in that regards.

Daily Trust reliably

gathered that the necessary equipment needed for routine maintenance of sewer network is not available at AEPB.

The AEPB Public Relation Officer (PRO), Mr. Samuel Musa said, the Board is aware of some leakages of sewer lines and

that arrangement is underway to tackle the problems.

He disclosed that the Board's sewer, sewage

and liquid waste department has been briefed on how to go about rectifying the problems.

Mr. Samuel, emphasize

that usually the problem of sewer leakage always arise from various construction works going on in the city where by sewer lines are blocked unknowingly which later affect easy flowing of liquid waste.

Abuja residents disappointed over super Eagles' performance

A cross section of Abuja residents have expressed disappointment over the dismal performance of the Super Eagles in their match against the Zambian National team on Saturday, describing it as "a bad omen in the new year."

Wining the match by a lone goal scored by Victor Agali in the 23rd minute, after Austin Okocha had lost a penalty kick, the residents said that the match did not live up to their expectations.

The opinion of the people sampled in the city, showed that most of them were not impressed, one of them, Miss Milligent Adiri, said she was totally disappointed with the score line, saying, "we should have beaten the Zambians by more goals if our players had played very well."

Adiri said that in spite of the home advantage of the Super Eagles, they just spoilt the weekend with that result. Another fan, Oche Egwa, advised the Nigeria Football Association (NFA) to always begin prepara-

tions for international matches early in order to record impressive outings.

"NFA should come up with a positive game plan for the progress of Football and the national teams in the country; we are not always ready; all we do is adopt fire brigade approach to sensi-

tive things; it is not good for the growth and development of the game," Egwa said.

Football fans were seen wearing long faces after the match with some saying that if they had known, they would not have wasted their "precious" time to watch the

match.

At the guilder viewing center set up by Nigerian Breweries Plc at the Abuja Cultural Centre in area 10 of the city, many of the residents who had gathered to watch the match and have post-match celebrations, were disappointed and left

soon after the last blast of the whistle. The match was one of the Group One qualifying matches for the African Nations' Cup holding in Mali next year.

The second leg of the match will come up in Lusaka, Zambia, at a later date.

Joint Action to privatize refuse collection in Abuja

Abuja, the Federal Capital City which has steadily been assuming the status of a dirty city may soon be cleaned up through a proposed joint effort between the Ministry of Federal Capital Territory (MFCT) and the Federal Ministry of Environment.

Daily Trust investigations reveal that the joint effort followed a directive from the Presidential Villa to the two ministries to clean up the federal capital.

The directive itself, according to Daily Trust findings was the result of series of complaints by foreign visitors and Nigerians on the deteriorating sanitary standards of the city, capital of Africa's most populous black nation.

Daily Trust reliably gathered that during and immediately after the visit of the out-going American President, Mr. Bill Clinton to Nigeria in August this year, the attention of President Olusegun Obasanjo was drawn to heaps of refuse that stinks in many parts of the federal capital city.

The heaps had mounted in the city following the collapse of the refuse collection system of the Abuja Environmental Protection Board (AEPB), which in turn, has complained of lack of funds to repair refuse collection vehicles, several of which have broken down. The board also claims that it does not have funds to fuel the few ones still on road.

Under the new arrangement, the MFCT and the Environment Ministry will put heads together to already, an inter-ministerial committee had been set up

to look into the issue of refuse management and disposal as it affects the master plan of Abuja.

According to him, the committee is to look at the feasibility of engaging the private sectors in the operation of refuse management in the developing federal capital city of Abuja.

Alhaji Mohammed noted that the objective of the exercise is to ensure that all satellite towns, Area Councils and other villages in the FCT are kept as clean as possible to meet the international standard.

It could be recalled that five out of the eight objectives outlined in the master plan can be strictly classified as environmental, which include, to create new opportunity within the FCT for the Nigerian people to enjoy their environment.

Others include to maintain, restore and enhance the natural and man-made environment in terms of its

health, variety, spaciousness productivity and other measures of quality.

Also to preserve important natural and cultural systems such as archeological species and their habitats and to selectively introduce new cultural elements which broaden the qualities and varieties of environment.

Meanwhile, AEPB Director, Alhaji Mohammed emphasized that the board will continue to be the regulatory body to monitor and ensure proper compliance, if the privatization project of refuse management finally sail through.

He strongly felt that, at the end of the exercise the government will take appropriate decision that will be in the interest of the public.

In a related development, Daily Trust gathered that the ministry of environment have made submission to the president on the appraisal of the FCT master

plan implementation with recommendations that will ensure that the environmental objectives of the master plan is attained.

In the submission it was stressed that the need for urgent action to be taken on the problem of squatter settlements while the problem of housing for low-income groups should be taken seriously.

Of recent, the metropolitan city of Abuja has witnessed an upsurge of illegal structural and dumping of refuse in its nooks and crannies, a situation which the Abuja Environmental Protection Board (ABPB) could not cope with.

FCT Minister, Arch. Ibrahim Bunu, in a recent interview advocates strong sanction for defaulters, stressing that the time has come for the authority to hands off the collection of refuse for the private sector to participate in the operation.

Bunu bags honorary award from FUT Owerri

The Minister of Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Alhaji Ibrahim Bunu has expressed his profound gratitude to the Vice-Chancellor of the Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO) and the governing council for honour done him in nominating him for the award of honorary doctorate degree at the institution's forth coming convocation ceremony holding on January 27, 2001.

This gratitude was expressed by the Minister while receiving a five man delegation of the governing council of the university in his office, on Thursday last week.

Alhaji Bunu said that he lacks words to appreciate the generosity of the university for offering him with its prestigious honorary doctorate degree award, adding that it shows that the people appreciate and cherish his humble contribution to the country.

The FCT Minister pointed out that the award has shown that the university has gone beyond general sentiment of ethnicity since he comes from Borno state and had his Education at ABU, Zaria.

He recalled that Owerri, the capital of Imo state was the only place outside his biological home he had spent uninterrupted six-months in his adult life, noting that it's also, where he started his first corporate investment in Nigeria.

Alhaji Bunu told the leader of the delegation to extend his heart-felt appreciation to the other members of the governing council of the university for the award.

Professor Njoku told the Minister that his nomination by the honorary committee was only one that received overwhelming approval by the university Senate, stressing that his performance at work as an outstanding architect in Nigeria had been brought to bear in their consideration.



A heap of refuse on an Abuja street,

Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje



A glimpse into the future

African athletes excelled at the World Junior Championship in Chile. But can they repeat their success at senior level?

Two years ago, Kenya's Reuben Kosgei and Ethiopia's Million Wolde won world junior gold medals in the men's 3,000 metres steeplechase and 5,000 metres respectively. Turn the clock forward to Sydney 2000 and both men added Olympic gold medals to their collection, continuing the tradition of top juniors making a successful transition to the senior ranks.

Few athletes, though, make the step up quite quickly as Kosgei but several of the winners at the last world junior championships in Chile have already set their sights firmly on the Olympics in Athens in 2004. None more so than Kenya's Raymond Yator.

Yator inherited the title of world junior steeplechase champion from his friend Kosgei, becoming the seventh consecutive Kenyan to win the discipline – and now believes that he can follow his training partner on the Olympic stage as well. "Reuben Kosgei gave me some advice about what to expect at the world junior championships so I was confident I would win," Yator said. "I know what Reuben has done at the Olympics so may be I can do it as well, God's willing."

Yator can afford to exude confidence. Having decided to leave school and run professionally, he set a world junior record in the run-up to the championships. In Chile he did not need to go quite so fast but his winning time of 8:16.34 still sliced more than seven seconds off Kosgei's championship mark and was arguably the best individual performance of the games.

However, Yator was far from being Africa's only champion. In fact, more than a quarter of the gold medals – 13 of the 43 on offer – went to the continent. The lion's share ended up around Kenyan necks with Yator's teammates winning every men's race from 800 metres upwards and two women's track events as well. In total, Kenya won seven gold medals, seven others of a different hue and finished top of the medal table ahead of the 150 other countries at the championships.

In the past, some of Kenya's junior champions have failed to live up to expectations. In particular, there have long been grumbles in the Nairobi media that no Kenyan has won the men's 800 metres at the Olympics or world championship since Paul Ruto took the 1993 world title. However, the manner of Nicholas Wachira's victory over two laps suggests that he could be the man to end that winless streak, whilst Cornelius Chirchir won the 1,500 metres in similarly convincing fashion.

Meanwhile, after a marathon four-year long trek around the globe, Jebet Langat finally found herself on top of the women's 800 metres podium. In 1996 as a 15-year-old she picked up the bronze medal in Australia, followed by the silver two years later in France. In Chile, she finally struck gold, destroying the field with an audacious burst of front running that bodes well for the future.

performances certainly brought a smile to the face of Isaiiah Kiplagat, the chairman of the Kenyan Athletics Federation. Still smarting from the senior team's poor performance in Sydney, when only two gold medals were won, Kiplagat reveled in the achievements of the juniors. "This team is capable of winning 10 gold medals in Athens if they continue to progress," he announced. "In fact, we are going to concentrate on them because we know that they will bring us medals."

However some of Kenya's neighbours may have something to say about the destination of Olympic medals in four years time. Ethiopia had a modest championships after marvelous successes in Sydney but the national anthem was still played once thanks to the triumph of Abebech Negussie in a close-fought women's 1,500 metres.

And for the first time ever, a sportswoman from Uganda won a gold medal on a global stage. In possibly the most surprising victory of the championships, Docras Inzikuru stormed to victory in the 5,000 metres after unleashing a remarkable burst of speed on the final lap. The 18-year-old schoolgirl now enticing offers from agents and American university coaches – offers which should not only improve her bank balance but more importantly her chances of senior success.

Meanwhile, South Africa's team struck a rich vein of gold, unearthing four champions in the process. On the penultimate day three African flag being paraded simultaneously on opposite sides of the National

Stadium, as first Paul Gorries and then Hannes Hopely won their events.

Gorries fulfilled his role as the favourite for the men's 200 metres by moving up another gear in the second half of the race to finish well clear of the pack. A matter of seconds later, Hopely was proclaimed the men's discus champion, having recorded the second further throw in the history of the championship. Hopely unleashed his winning effort in the fifth round of the competition, just as Gorries was finishing his warm up. "I could see what Hannes was doing when I walked out onto the track and it made me determined to do as well," Gorries said. "I wasn't going to let him or Sour Africa down."

The South Africans were motivated by the success of Jacques Freitag, who had won the men's high jump earlier in the week. Over two metres tall, Freitag, is already the second best high jumper on the continent despite being only 18. "I don't intend to wait for Athens to get amongst the medals as a senior," Freitag announced. "There is a World Championship in Canada next year and another one in 2003 and I am going to do well at them."

Without doubt Kenya and South Africa, which finished third on the medal table, were the continent's star performers but other statistics also make impressive reading. Six of the 35 African countries represented in Chile won medals (Ghana and Morocco both taking home a bronze) whilst another five had competitors finish in the top eight of their events. What is clear is that young talent is spread right across Africa and

that if it is properly nurtured it will bear golden fruit in the future.

However, there were plenty of problems to ponder from an African point of view. Most worrying is the continent's

must even a single field event finalist. The thought remains that not every schoolboy or girl in Nairobi or Addis Ababa – or for that matter Banjul or Blantyre – is born to run. Some can obviously jump and throw as well.

Africa. A few countries, mainly those from francophone West Africa such as Senegal and Ivory Coast, did at least send field athletes to Chile but in reality there has been little real improvement over the eight editions of the championships.

Some federations also continue to plumb example on this occasion being Nigeria. A failure to organize visas for their athletes cost them at least two clear gold medal chances. Effiok Udo-Obong anchored Nigeria to silver in the men's 4x400 metres relay in Sydney but had no opportunity to face his peers in the individual event in Chile due to the fiasco. Similar frustrations faced Rosemary Okafor. Second fastest among the women's 400 metres entrants, she never got further than Lagos airport.

The Nigerian Athletics Federation's official answer to their no-show was that they had expected to be able to organize visas at the point of arrival but the competition's technical manual clearly stated that visas should be arranged before departure. In a last-minute scramble to get to Chile, both the Dutch and South African immigration authorities refused to permit the Nigerian athletes to transit as they did not have visas for their final destination. However, despite all this, talk in Chile – thanks to the likes of Yator, Abebech, Inzikuru and Freitag – was of the burgeoning success of African athletics, not its shortcomings.

Culled from BBC Focus on Africa



Dorcas Inzikuru

continuing inability to produce high-quality field athletes. Whilst South Africa celebrated the achievements of Jacques Freitag and the javelin champion, Gerhardus Pienaar, the rest of Africa could not

Federations will inevitably claim that a lack of money has hindered progress in events that require technical expertise. But throughout the last decade the International Amateur Athletics Federation has poured millions of dollars into developing every aspect of the sport across

IAAF 2001 PROPOSED PROGRAMME

Month	Event	Venue
March		
9 th – 11 th	8 th IAAF Indoor Championship	Lisbon, Portugal
16 th – 17 th	UNIC Classic Competition	Bauchi
24 th – 25 th	29 th IAAF World Cross Country Championship	Dublin, Ireland
29 th – 31 th	15 th Yinka Folawiyo U-15 Championship	Makurdi
April		
13 th – 14 th	Nkoyo Ibori U-20 Women Competition	Asaba/Warri
27 th – 28 th	2 nd UNIC Classic Competition & Decathlon	Ibadan
May		
	TBC World Athletic Day	Lagos
11 th – 12 th	3 rd UNIC Classic Competition & Heptathlon	P/Harcourt
25 th – 26 th	2 nd Dan Ngerem U-18 Boys (Zonal) Competition	Owerri
24 th – 26 th	Four Nations Tournament	Accra
June		
1 th – 2 th	UNIC Classic Competition	Owerri
15 th – 16 th	Sunny Odogwu Cup for Sec. Sch. Girls	Lagos
29 th – 30 th	U-18 National Youth Championship	Ilorin
July		
7 th	UNIC Classic Final	Lagos
12 th – 15 th	IAAF World Youth Championship	Debrecen, Hungary
19 th – 21 th	Nigeria / Mobil Track & Field Championships	Lagos
August		
3 rd – 12 th	World Championships in Athletics	Edmonton, Canada
16 th – 19 th	African Junior Championships	Maurice, Mauritius
September		
9 th – 17 th	IAAF Grand Prix Final	Brisbane, Australia
October		
7 th	IAAF World Half Marathon Championships	Briston, Britain
November		
7 th – 11 th	Afro-Asian Games	New Delhi, India
December		
ETBC	Full Council Meeting	Lagos

TOP OF THE WEEK (EUROPE)

(3-5-2)



The team's stunning



Nigeria/Sudan World Cup cracker:

Eagles kick against Port Harcourt

By Ismaila Umaru Lere, Sports Editor

Members of the Super Eagles have rejected the choice of Port Harcourt as venue of the January 27 World Cup qualifier against Sudan.

The players, who met at the Sheraton Hotel after their lack-luster performance in last Saturday's Nations Cup qualifier against Zambia, contended that the venue is not a familiar ground and as such they will feel strange playing there.

The Nigeria Football Association (NFA) is keen in staging the Eagles' subsequent international engagements outside Lagos. The reason, *Trustsports* gathered, was to spread the matches to the nooks and crannies of the country to enable soccer fans have a feel of top class football and to utilize the TV friendly stadia that dot our states.

Meanwhile, the players who have been at loggerheads before the match over several issues includ-

ing non-payment of outstanding allowances and tickets refunds for previous games involving the team as well as the Jo Bonfrere and Steven Keshi saga, also resolved that attention should be directed at the prosecution of the World Cup and Nations Cup qualifying series.

Trustsports gathered that the spirit in the camp nearly degenerated into chaos after the game following accusations and counter accusations over the teams low performance before reason prevailed. The players, then, decided to convene a meeting to resolve their differences.

Meanwhile as part of preparations for the World Cup game against Sudan, the NFA is planning to monitor the Nations Cup qualifier between the East Africans and Cote d'Ivoire slated for Abidjan this weekend.

There are plans to contact the Nigerian embassy in Abidjan to commission somebody to record and send the videocassette of the match to Nigeria.



Line up... Super Eagles lined up before an international engagement at National Stadium, Lagos. The Eagles rejected Port Harcourt as the venue for January 27 clash with Sudan. Pix Omo Oba

The FA officials are also planning to send one of the national team coaches to monitor the game with the view of giving a more accurate report.

Four female teams for Ramat Cup final

In its bid to discover new talents for female football, the Youth Sports Federation of Nigeria (YSFON) plans to introduce female soccer tournament alongside all its scheduled boys soccer tournaments.

Mallam Isa Idris, the secretary of the federation told News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) Monday in Lagos that the new tournament would commence during the 24th edition of the annual Ramat Cup International Under-16 Boys soccer tournament billed for Benin between February 4 and 13.

Idris said that YSFON first organized female soccer tournament during the 1986 Ramat Cup final in Kano, adding that as the present crop of players in female team age, YSFON hopes to inject new players.

'The female event will be an Under-15 event with four teams from Delta, Lagos, Abuja and Plateau participating,' Idris said.

He said that the boys event would feature 16 teams comprising, host Edo,

defending champions Kwara, 10 zonal qualifiers and for foreign teams from Ghana, Benin Republic, Gambia and Togo. He said nine of the ten states which qualified from the zones include Oyo, Anambra, Bayelsa, Kogi, Niger, Bauchi, Kaduna, Kano, and Borno. He added however, that a winner is yet to emerge from zone three featuring teams from Enugu, Benue, Taraba and Ebonyi. He said both the winners and runners-up will represent the country this year in the Norway Cup in Oslo and Dana Cup in Denmark.

Meanwhile, Governor Lucky Igbinedion of Edo state, a national patron of the federation, has promised to bankroll the championship as well as sponsor his for the resulting international competition provided they win.

The competition is organized annually by YSFON in honour of a former Head of State, late Gen. Murtala Ramat Muhammed, who was killed in a failed coup on February 13, 1976.

Students threaten to disrupt NUGA

From Waziri Isa Gwantu, Zaria

As preparation by authorities of Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) Zaria, to host the long awaited Nigerian Universities Games (NUGA) reaches top gear, National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) has threatened to frustrate take-off of the games.

A statement signed by National President of the student body, Philip Sha'ibu, said NANS had since last year, written authorities of the university to press for a two-point demand, failure of which to oblige may prompt a show down between the Nigerian students and ABU authorities.

'We demanded immediate recall of all the students that were unjustifiably expelled last year by the Professor Abdullahi Mahadi-led administration and restoration of Student Union Government (SUG) in the university.

The statement added that, 'after Professor Mahadi promised to oblige to the demands, he later reneged once more.'

The student body therefore warned management of the university to, in the interest of peace and stability, oblige to the two-point demand of the Nigerian students.

NANS said it is not the wish of the student body to always resort to confrontational option of resolving problems between students and the relevant authorities for fear of not causing perpetual closure of the affected university.

It stressed that it is not in the character of NANS to always take any decision capable of obstructing hosting of important events such as NUGA that

is very dear to our fellow students and entire community of the hosting university.

But in a situation, NANS noted where the rights of the students are trampled upon like we are in a military society without due regard to the constitution of the country and the university or educational system, we don't just sit back and watch, we brace up to fight for the right of the students.

The two-point demand of the students, according to *Trustsports* findings, will be difficult to meet as authorities of the university have resolved not

to compromise any policy that would effect efforts to resolve the premier university to its past glory.

It would be recalled that about 500 students were expelled from the university last year due to various offenses ranging from examination malpractices to forgery of results.

On NANS demand to restore the Student Union Government (SUG) in ABU, *Trustsports* reliably gathered that it is the business of the students to work towards achieving that because the university authorities gave them all the support needed to do so last year but failed.

Nigeria show interest in Tour de France

Nigeria for the first time will participate in this years Tour de France in July.

Caleb Idris Giddado, the secretary of the Cycling Federation of Nigeria disclosed this while unfolding the federation's programme for 2001.

He said the federation has embarked on intensive sponsorship drive to make this dream a reality.

'Right now we are holding talks with individuals and corporate bodies to bankroll our programme and we are sure that this year we will join the rank of other countries who participate in the cycling prestigious event,' he said.

Gidado stressed further that the Tour de France would help raise the standard if Nigerian riders competed well in the race. This, he said will give the needed exposure to the riders and put them in top shape for the 2003 All African Games to be staged in Abuja, Nigeria.

Nigeria will also participate in this year's Tour of Japan holding between June 27 and July 3.

Other competitions billed for the year include, U-20 age-group races in July, national New Comers Cycling race in September and the U-18 male and female Cycling Championship.

Dokic booted after first-round exit

Jelena Dokic was booted off the centre court after being beaten 4-6 6-4 6-3 by defending champion Lindsay Davenport at the Australian Open on Monday.

The 17-year-old, who has complained about her treatment by media and officials in her adopted home in Australia, cut a lonely figure as she trudged off following her brave effort against the American world number two.

Vieri berates

Inter's fickle fans

Italy striker Christina Vieri has berated Inter Milan's fickle fans and says he will not celebrate his goals at the San Siro stadium until they get off his back.

Vieri scored Inter's 69th minute equalizer in a 1-1 home draw with Parma but turned his back on the crowd after burying the ball in the net and walked calmly back to the centre circle.

Stam happy t at Manchester United

Dutch international Jaap Stam wants to stay with English champions Manchester United for the rest of his career.

The 28-year-old central defender, who returned to the first four months sidelined with an Achilles injury, said he was thoroughly enjoying life with the runaway premier league leaders.

Becker divorced

Boris Becker and his estranged wife Barbara were divorced in a Munich court on Monday six weeks after announcing they were separating.

A family court in the couple's home town of Munich announce in a brief statement that it had divorced the Beckers, but said no further information would be made public.



Becker

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Pete Sampras edged out Karol Kucera in the first round of Australian Open yesterday.
 Photo: AFP

Sampras beats Kucera in four set thriller

Former world number one Pete Sampras overcome Karol Kucera 7-6 3-6 6-4 7-6 on Monday to reach the second round of the Australian Open.
 Sampras, Australian open champion in 1995 and 1997, was forced to fight all the way before finally securing victory and a second round meeting with Czech Bohdan Ulihrach.

Gilchrist earns extended run

Adam Gilchrist has been asked to continue as Australia's stand-in captain after Steve Waugh ruled himself against West Indies and Zimbabwe.
 Gilchrist was named one-day captain for the first time on Sunday after Waugh pulled out with a groin strain. The wicketkeeper/batsman scored 98 Australia beat West Indies in Brisbane by nine wickets.



Eagles attacker Tijjani Babangida attempts to dribble Zambia's Laughter Chilembi during their Nations Cup tie in Lagos on Saturday.
 Photo: AFP

FIFA, UEFA discuss transfer rift

European soccer's governing body UEFA meets officials from 13 of the continent's top league today to discuss a rift with FIFA over the future of player transfers.
 The meeting at UEFA headquarters starts at 1030 GMT and is expected to last several hours.
 UEFA is angry that FIFA, world soccer's governing body, handed over proposals for the future shape of the transfer system to the European commission last week without consulting UEFA.
 A meeting set for last Friday between UEFA, FIFA and the EC was postponed because FIFA wanted more time to finalise its proposals which it sent to the

...No new date yet for talks on transfer system wrangle

The European Commission said on Monday no new date has been set for talks with soccer's governing bodies on a union executives says are illegal. Meanwhile on Monday UEFA officials were locked in talks with the representatives of 13 domestic European leagues at their headquarters in Nyon, near Geneva, to discuss the issue.
 UEFA are angry with FIFA over drafting a new set of proposals for the EU without consulting them first and it is understood that an emergency meeting of UEFA's Executive Board has been arranged for Tuesday.



Utah's Karl Malone shattered Wilt Chamberlain's all-time record in the NBA

Professor Nomau's travails, written & illustrated by Bulama Mustapha

