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Obasanjo orders  
demolition of 50  
filling stations  
- says no  
compensation  
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For other places see  
details on  
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## Labour's walkout threatens Israeli coalition

By Musa Aliyu  
with Agency Reports

Following the declaration of war by Israel on the Palestinian authority and the vigorous offensive which began on Monday, hitting Mr. Yasser Arafat's office in Gaza, Foreign Minister Shimon Pares' Labour Party has staged a walkout, deepening the cleavages in Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's broad coalition government.

According to reports, the Labour Party is uncomfortable with the Israeli government's description of Arafat and the Palestinian Authority as

Contd. on Pg 2



A Palestinian woman holds her baby as she screams and runs alongside a schoolgirl during an Israeli army missile attack in Gaza City, yesterday.

## Ogbe suspends 9 PDP directors

By Sani Babadoko

The new national chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Chief Audu Ogbe, has sent all the nine directors at the national secretariat of the party on an indefinite leave preparatory to a major restructuring of the secretariat.

Sources at the party's national secretariat at Wadata House, Abuja, told *Daily Trust* that letters to the affected directors signed personally by Chief Ogbe, had been despatched on Monday.

The directors are for Finance, Mr. Philip Salawu; Administration, Mr. Aminu Yakudima; Publicity, Mr. Leo Kuyen; Mobilisation, Chief Fatona; Research and Planning, Mr. Emeka Duru and Legal, Intelligence and Security, Mrs. Christine Akpan.

Others are Director of Audit, Mr. Elder Bisong; Youth, Alhaji Bamali and the Women Affairs which has no director since the death of the



Audu Ogbe former occupant.

It was gathered that the restructuring would involve the merger and scrapping of some directorates while the functions of some would be transferred to the Peoples Democratic Institute (PDI), Abuja.

It was gathered that the directorates most likely to be affected in the restructuring are planning, audit, youth and women affairs as well as mobilization.

As at yesterday, staff at the secretariat were

Contd. on Pg 2

## BUDGET CONTROVERSY

# We can impeach Obasanjo - NASS

By Henry Omu and  
Reuben Yunana

appropriation bills.

They said they have not embarked on impeachment proceedings against him just to avoid rocking the boat of the nascent democracy.

The lawmakers were

reacting to President Obasanjo's boasts last week, that the National Assembly cannot impeach him on the basis of non-implementation of the 2001 budget.

"Nobody can impeach me for not spending what is not there in the 2001 budget," he said against accusations by members of the National Assembly that the 2001 budget terminating at the end of this month was poorly implemented.

Even with the resigned indignation of the lawmakers,

Contd. on Pg 2



Chief Pius Anyim, Senate President

## 2003: N/Assembly fixes election dates

The National Assembly has finally resolved that the 2003 general elections be conducted two weeks apart, beginning with the presidential polls, even as both chambers of the assembly have held on to their positions on the four-year tenure for local

Members of the National Assembly have maintained that they are capable of impeaching President Olusegun Obasanjo over his refusal to fully implement budgets passed into law.

Several lawmakers who spoke to *Daily Trust* in Abuja pointed out that their silence does not mean that they do not have the grounds to impeach the president over his "consistent lawlessness" in his selective implementation of the two previous

government chairmen.

In adopting the report of the harmonization on the electoral bill, both houses of the National Assembly at separate sessions agreed that all elections including council polls be held in 2003 allowing the council chairmen

## Pregnant woman, daughter hacked to death

From Abdullahi Bego,  
in Maiduguri

A pregnant housewife and her eight-year-old daughter were hacked to death yesterday in their compound in Maiduguri, the Borno State capital, by some unknown

four years in office.

They further agreed that the general election will be held in three phases. The phases are federal elections first, then state elections and lastly, council elections.

Before the harmonization  
Contd. on Pg 2

attackers. Hajiya Halima Abubakar and her daughter were sleeping in their house at Limanti area in Maiduguri metropolis when a gang of unidentified attackers stormed the house and hacked them to death. She died carrying an eight-month-old pregnancy.

*Daily Trust* gathered that the gang also attacked another housewife, Hajiya Aishatu Abba Gana, and her  
Contd. on Pg 2

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## NEWS

# No Mayor for Abuja now — Obasanjo

The hope of Federal Capital Territory (FCT) indigenes to have an elected Mayor in Abuja, was dashed yesterday, when President Olusegun Obasanjo declared at the end of his two-day tour of the Federal Capital that the territory is not yet ripe for an elected mayor.

President Obasanjo, who made the declaration during the commissioning of Malam Adamu Shuaibu Memorial Hall in Abaji Area Council of FCT, said the Federal Government would not release funds to someone it has no control over.

His words: "I will not give Federal Government money

By Emmanuel Ande

to somebody who is not appointed by me, because I cannot supervise his operations



President Obasanjo

## Obasanjo *Contd from Pg 1*

many of them are, however, rooting for his impeachment because of what they call his "continuous violations of previous budgets."

Another group has urged for caution in invoking the impeachment clause.

Alliance for Democracy (AD) leader in the House of Representatives, Rep. Oladipo Olaitan, said if he had the opportunity to impeach Obasanjo today, he will do so because he had made promises to the electorate which he has failed to fulfil.

According to Rep. Olaitan, for having failed to deliver on his promises, Obasanjo should resign honourably rather than wait for impeachment.

He said the non-implementation of the two previous budgets passed into law by the National Assembly by the Obasanjo administration could be traced to the desire to rule for a second term.

The PDP, he said, is stashing away funds to rig the 2003 elections, adding, and "Nigerians are being deliberately pauperized. They are preparing for 2003 when they will use the money to influence voters and voting."

But the moderates in the National Assembly, however, hold a different opinion. The deputy chairman, House Committee on Environment, Rep. Isa Bio Ibrahim, said even though Obasanjo cannot reasonably explain his non-implementation of past budgets, there was no enough justification for his impeachment.

He, however, said lawmakers were frustrated because Obasanjo has not delivered on the good intentions of the National Assembly as contained in all the budgets approved by it.

In reference to Obasanjo's boast last week, Rep. Ibrahim said "we don't want to precipitate any constitutional crisis."

period of our nascent democracy.

"But we have to swallow all these bitter pills just for the stability of the country. And for democracy to be well established, we have to bend the rules.

"Honestly, he shouldn't push people too far because he is over-stretching his goodwill. We are fed up with his excuses, but he shouldn't push his luck too far. Nobody, is trying to impeach him," the lawmakers added.

Similarly, the Chairman, House Committee on Appropriation, Rep. Jibrin Barau told *Daily Trust* that there was no likelihood that Obasanjo will be impeached for his non-implementation of past budgets.

In his reaction, the Vice-Chairman, Senate Committee on Education Senator Mas'ud El Jibril described the Obasanjo's "nobody can impeach me" statement as uncalled for, but a welcome development.

Senator El Jibril said Nigerians now know who to blame over government's non-performance.

"Nobody has talked about impeaching the president. However, with the recent happenings and the president's outburst, we have been vindicated.

"In the past, it was normal for the press and members of the public to blame us for delaying the budget for selfish reasons anytime we raised questions on executive non-performance and poor budget implementation," he added.

"Impeaching the president at this stage would mean the end of this democratic dispensation," he remarked, adding that the present period should be used to learn to avoid mistakes of the past.

Also contributing, Chairman, Senate Committee on Information, Senator Jonathan Zwingina, expressed surprise at the statements credited to

or how properly he uses the funds."

The president said at this stage of development in Abuja, his administration has to watch carefully before taking any decision in order to avoid the mistakes of the past administrations.

He advised FCT indigenes to re-direct their energies on issues that have

## Atiku leaves for lesser hajj

By Suleiman Mohammed

Vice-President Atiku Abubakar is expected to leave Abuja today for a one-week lesser hajj in Saudi Arabia.

The governors of Lagos and Katsina States, Ahmed Bola Tinubu and Musa Yar'Adua respectively, as well as the Minister of Special Duties, Mr. Yomi Edu and some of his principal staff, would accompany the vice-president.

A statement by the Special Assistant (Media) to the vice-president, Mr. Chris Mammah, said the number two citizen would return to the country on December 12, 2001.

## Ogbe *Contd from Pg 1*

discussing the development in groups while those affected were seen clearing their tables. Some however, expressed surprise at the development because at the handing over ceremony two weeks ago the new chairman had reassured that there would be no rationalization of staff at the secretariat.

Meanwhile, Chief Ogbe has said the resolve by the PDP to restore discipline and dignity of the party was not a ploy by the leadership to bully the executive and legislative arms of government.

He made the clarification

## Pregnant woman *Contd from Pg 1*

three children in the same compound.

The dead were buried while the wounded were taken to Alkome Clinic where they are now receiving treatment for the injuries sustained during the attack.

Speaking from her hospital bed, Hajiya Aishatu said the attackers broke into their house at around 4 a.m yesterday and attacked them with knives.

She said that the attackers did not steal anything from the compound.

The husbands of both women were reportedly out of town when the incident occurred, *Daily Trust* further learnt.

more positive impact on their lives instead of championing selfish causes under the cover of FCT indigenes.

President Obasanjo promised to look into the erosion problems and the poor electricity supply in Abaji Area Council advising on GSM operators in the country to do everything possible to connect all the area councils in FCT.

He praised the people-oriented programmes of the Abaji council Chairman, Mr. Hassan Usman Sokodobo

saying, "there is no doubt that your Area Council is one of the most performing local governments in FCT. With your people-oriented projects on ground, I believe that you are a true grassroots politician who has the needs of his people in mind."

Earlier in his welcome speech, Hon. Sokodobo, complained that lack of funds was hindering some of his developmental programmes and appealed to the Federal Government to

increase the monthly financial allocations to area councils in FCT since they are paying their staff the same salary structure with the federal government.

Sokodobo, also urged the Federal Government to dualise the Abuja - Lokoja road and extend the drainage of River Niger to Abaji in order to address the water crisis in the area.

Sokodobo, further pleaded with the president to look into the yearnings of FCT indigenes pointing out "if the issues are not properly resolved they could lead to social disharmony in future.

## Labour *Contd from Pg 1*

'supporters of terrorism' and the subsequent air attacks on Arafat.

The recent strikes, which have left two Palestinians dead, with several others wounded, were believed to be aimed at Arafat's life, even as reports say he was unhurt.

Frightened school children scampered for safety while weeping parents ran into the streets looking for their children as Israeli jets hovered overhead destroying settlements.

Mr. Arafat who made his first public comments since the offensive began, insisted on an interview with the CNN television that: "Ariel Sharon doesn't want peace to start."

Although Arafat's Palestinian authority has called for international intervention, the U.S, foremost in the attempt to broker peace, replied that Israel has the right to defend itself.

However, analysts are of the view that the fresh surge of violence is likely to threaten the Middle East peace drive and harm Washington's chances of winning Arab and Muslim support for the future stages of the anti-terror war on Afghanistan.

U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, cautioned Israel on its new strategy but stopped short of urging it to stop the attacks.

Mr. Powell told reporters at a security meeting in Romania that Israel was recovering from the "terrible blows" dealt it by the suicide bombing and responding in a way it consid-

ered fit.

"In our conversations with Mr. Sharon, we have also indicated that there will be a tomorrow and a day after tomorrow and we have to try to get back to a peace process that will lead to a ceasefire and to negotiations," he added.

The attacks yesterday, visibly the fiercest air strikes in the 14-month *intifada*, was in response to the service of suicide bombings that claimed 25 Israelis, reports say.

Meanwhile, the US President, George W. Bush has announced the freezing of the assets of Texas based Holiland Foundation for relief and development, over its suspected financial support for Hamas, a militant organization in Palestine.

## 2003 *Contd from Pg 1*

the Senate's position had been that the elections be staggered, while the House of Representatives favoured conducting all elections in one day.

But in adopting this position yesterday, the National Assembly said it was persuaded to earmark the polls two weeks apart because it believes that INEC would not be able to handle the burden of conducting all elections in a single day.

"Moreover, the electorate may not be ripe enough for the complexities of such an exercise at this point in time," the National Assembly explained.

In respect of local government elections it was agreed that they be held every four years to tally with the order of elections in other tiers of government.

Accepting the powers of state independent electoral commissions to conduct council elections, the National Assembly also stated that "where elections were held for a period of less than four years before the commencement of the Act, the holders of such office shall remain in office until the next general elections."

Furthermore, the Assembly incorporated new clauses, such as the dissolution of local government councils, vacation of seat of members and the removal of a chairman or vice-chairman in the bill.

On the registration of new political parties by INEC, the

decision reached was that associations seeking registration must have offices in two-thirds of the 36 states of the federation and that such an association will be deemed registered upon the payment of N100,000 and after the expiration of a 30-day period.

For parties to be eligible to contest in any general election, the bill states that such a party must be able to sponsor 15 percent of candidates for councillorship, council chairmanship and state houses of assembly, respectively in two-thirds of the states in the country.

"It is important to point out that whereas it is relatively easy to register a political party, this clause will ensure that only serious political parties can participate in general elections," the bill states.

Also, the National Assembly endorsed the provisions of the constitution, which banned the participation of any person, elected as president or governor in any two previous elections from contesting future elections.

However, to avoid the indiscriminate disqualification of candidates in future elections by INEC, the bill provides for the screening of candidates for any election by the party fielding the candidates.

NEWS

# AIDS destroys Agric in Africa – FAO

The HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa is ravaging rural communities, draining local skills and diminishing crop variety, the United Nations food body said yesterday.

“Innovation often dies with the farmers,” said Marcela Villarreal, a senior official with the Rome-based U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

“They have developed

ways to adapt their crops to the environment, and when they die, so does their knowledge,” added Villarreal, chief of FAO’s population programme service and an authority on AIDS.

Villarreal told *Reuters* that labour shortages caused by AIDS were forcing farmers to plant a narrower range of crops.

“Biodiversity is threatened because in times

of acute labour shortages, people plant fewer varieties of crops to save time and money,” she said, speaking before a FAO conference in Rome on combating AIDS in agriculture, which runs from December 3-7.

FAO, which monitors food supplies around the world, estimated that in Africa’s 25 worst affected countries, seven million agricultural workers have

died from AIDS since 1985 and 16 million more might die by 2020.

“As farm workers disappear, there are fewer people left to pass knowledge from one generation to another, such as types of seeds to be used

during drought,” Villarreal said.

Social safety nets were undermined, leaving the old in charge of households and millions of AIDS orphans.

Africa, with about 10 per cent of the world’s population, accounts for nine out of each 10 new cases of HIV infection, while some 83 per cent of all AIDS-related deaths have occurred in Africa, the U.N. said.

Of the 13.2 million AIDS orphans worldwide, more than 12 million are in Africa.

The loss of farming skills in Africa is particularly alarming because of the sheer number of HIV-infected people. In Kenya, for example, only seven per cent of orphan-headed households reported that they had enough agricultural knowledge to carry on farming.

## Gov Yar’Adua suspends LG chairman

From Hassan A. Karofi, in Katsina

Governor Umar Musa Yar’Adua of Katsina State yesterday suspended the chairman of Dan-Musa Local Government Area of the state, Alhaji Sani Abu Minista, on alleged violation of constitutional provisions and misappropriation of funds.

of his council illegally and refused to recall them despite pleas from the state Local Government Service Commission.

Instead, he said, the suspended chairman took the commission to court, an action the special assistant described as “unconstitutional.”

government’s determination to ensure proper investigation of the chairman’s alleged offences.

The government, he said, has already ordered the vice-chairman of the council, Alhaji Bello Yantumaki, to work as the acting chairman and the councillors to continue with their normal work.

Announcing the suspension in Katsina, the governor’s Special Assistant on Media Matters, Alhaji Ibrahim Abdullahi, said the suspension took immediate effect.

This, he said, was to allow a panel set up to investigate the allegations against the chairman carry its assignment without any hindrance.

He alleged that the suspended chairman had earlier suspended some staff

Similarly, the Special Assistant said the Nigeria Union of Local Government Employees (NULGE) had written several petitions to the state government, alleging anomalies in the running of the Dan-Musa Local Government Council.

However, there are allegations that the suspension was politically motivated as the suspended council chairman, who belongs to the rival All Peoples Party (APP), has not been on good terms with the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) controlled state government.

A political analyst, Malam Ibrahim Mohammed, told *Daily Trust* that the suspension may not be unconnected with the feelings that the PDP stalwarts see the chairman as a threat to their dominance due to his popularity in his area.

The Media Assistant to the governor, however, dismissed the allegations as false, saying the suspension was purely based on



Gov. Musa Yar’Adua.

## Govs can lose their jobs over electoral bill – Senator

From Ibrahim Dan-Halilu, in Kaduna

Governors who flout the Electoral Bill after it has been signed into law stand the risk of being impeached, Senator Abubakar Girei, representing Adamawa Central, has warned.

National Assembly would not allow anybody to stampede its functions under the guise of pursuing constitutional provisions.

According to him, the Senate is doing everything possible to carry the governors along in understanding the electoral bill because, as he said, most of them do not even understand the bill.

are just talking. They have not even understood the bill,” he asserted.

Girei stressed that it is the responsibility of the National Assembly to enact the electoral law for the nation and wondered why the governors have been trying to stop the legislative arm from carrying out its constitutional functions.

“The governors are free to make laws for their respective states, I wonder why they are interfering in our own work,” he said.

He told *Daily Trust* in Kaduna yesterday that “as soon as the electoral bill is passed to the president and he signs it into law, any governor who defies it could be impeached.”

The Senator said the

“Most of the governors

## Royal Tropicana, three others vie for Durbar Hotel

By Osborne Adi Jnr.

Four prospective investors, comprising Royal Tropicana Hotel; Tahir Guest Palace, Kano; Modotel Hotel Limited, Enugu and Matad Group Limited, Kaduna, have indicated interest in acquiring Durbar Hotel, Kaduna just as UAC Properties has also submitted to the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE), its Expression of Interest (EOI) to buy over Festac ’77 hotel, Lagos.

Announcing this yesterday in Abuja, the Deputy Director, Public Affairs of BPE, Mr. Joseph Anichebe, said the four firms which are bidding for Durbar Hotel. Monday commenced due diligence on the company.

According to him, with

the commencement of due diligence, the exercise was expected to be completed Friday this week in the first phase of the process for the out-right sale of the hotels.

“The four firms bidding for Durbar Hotel commenced due diligence on the company on December 3, 2001 and are expected to conclude by December 7, 2001,” he said.

He explained that unlike other enterprises sold by the BPE so far, the two hotels will be entirely sold to private investors.

“The sale of Durbar Hotel and Festac ’77 will be handled as an ‘assets sale’, meaning that the Federal Government intends to sell the entire assets of the hotel

to a prospective investor, while assuming its liabilities.”

The decision to alter the mode of transaction for Durbar and Festac ’77, Anichebe said, was taken in recognition of the fact that not all public enterprises can be subjected to the normal divestiture process.

The divestiture process entails the sale of a substantial equity stake to a core group/strategic investor followed by an initial public offer through capital markets.

This method has been adopted by the NCP to minimise deterioration of assets in order to return them to rapid economic use.

## Fuel queues return in Abuja

By Ahmed Shekarau

As the yuletide period draws closer, long queues of vehicles waiting for petrol have started appearing at filling stations in Abuja.

The queues surfaced at most filling stations in the capital city Monday, causing panic, as some commercial vehicle drivers began to hike transport fares within and outside the city.

But the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) in a swift reaction to the situation has advised consumers not to engage in panic buying of fuel.

The Corporation said, in a statement signed by its Group Public Affairs Manager, Mr. Ndu Ughamadu, that the appearance of the queues resulted from non-operation of Agip fuel filling stations across the country because of the strike by its workers.

It further stated that the breakdown of the power generating set of the National Oil filling station opposite the NNPC headquarters in Abuja also contributed to the scarcity in the city.

But the long queues persisted at many other filling stations within the city up to yesterday afternoon.

Our reporter who went round some parts of the city yesterday reported that there were long queues of vehicles at such filling stations as National Oil and Total filling stations opposite NNPC headquarters; AP filling station opposite NICON Hilton Hotel, Maitama; Total, Texaco and Mobil filling stations in Asokoro, among other places.

As at press time, however, the queues have disappeared in most of the filling stations within the city.

## Nurses begin strike

(NGO aids patients)

By Mustapha Isah Kwaru

As health workers in some parts of the country went on strike yesterday, a non-governmental organisation known as “Friends of Hospital Committee” has come to the aid of patients in Katsina State.

A report monitored in the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Hausa

service programme said members of the committee moved into hospitals and offered necessary medical assistance to patients.

The chairman of the committee, Alhaji Bilya Sanda, told *BBC* that the committee decided to take the measure to save the lives of the patients.

He maintained that the issue of health requires urgent attention saying all hands must be on deck to ensure that the sector is not allowed to collapse.

Alhaji Bilya said the members of the committee were paying more attention to the patients who have serious sicknesses. He called on the Federal Government to resolve its problems with all health workers in order to save the lives of Nigerian citizens.

The health workers went on strike after the expiration of an ultimatum they gave to the Federal Government to meet their demands or face an industrial action.

The ultimatum expired on Monday and the health workers in some parts of the country began the strike yesterday.



Malam Adamu Bello, Minister of Agriculture.

## NEWS

## Danjuma urges army to embrace modern technology

The Minister of Defence, Lt. Gen. T. Y. Danjuma (rtd), said in Abuja yesterday that the sophistication in modern armament due to advancement in technology 'has changed the nature and conduct of war.'

Speaking at a seminar on 'Force Management, General Danjuma urged the Nigerian Army to adapt to the changes in modern technology.

He noted that the

By Hammed M. Bello

seminar, which was held in conjunction with United States of America, was in appreciation of the leadership and peace keeping role of Nigeria in Africa and the need for the military to work in consonance with modern warfare to attain efficiency.

Said he: 'Modern military forces, aware of this change, are critically examining their doctrines,

their force structure, how they are equipped, how they train and how they fight. We must do no less to be ready and capable.'

Danjuma said advancement in technology is growing daily, adding that "if Nigeria must remain relevant in world affairs, it must be willing to adjust and share its experiences with those who are willing to do so."

He viewed the seminar as an avenue through which the nation could improve its polity.

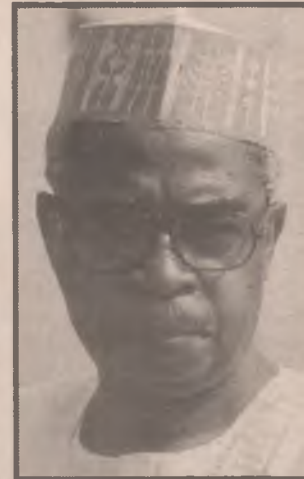
In his speech, the U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria, Mr. Howard Jetter, stated that desirous of being a partner to Nigeria, and assisting it to continue to play its role on the African continent, the U.S. held the seminar to strengthen the capability of Nigeria's military.

According to Jetter, the seminar was aimed at sharing U.S. experiences with Nigeria, and helping it develop its own resources and military capabilities.

One of the guest

lecturers, Col. Chris Shoemaker of the U.S. Army, identified discipline, efficiency, transparency and integrity as some of the advantages of force management which would be achieved through planning, programming and execution.

He noted that relationship between the military and the National Assembly has changed in the past few years.



Lt Gen T. Y. Danjuma, Defence Minister.

## Kebbi may reduce salary

From Kabir Dogon-Daji, in Birnin Kebbi

Governor Adamu Aliero of Kebbi State has warned that the state government may be compelled to reduce the salary of its workers, if the prices of oil continue to fall in the world market.

He dropped the warning while reacting to an ultimatum given to the state government by the health workers in the state who threatened to embark on an indefinite industrial action when he paid an official visit to the Federal Medical Centre, Birnin Kebbi.

The health workers vowed to go on industrial action if the state government failed to implement the new salary scale approved by the Federal Government for health workers.

Addressing the workers, the governor said: "I want you to be realistic in your

demands, as you may rightly know that the state realised only about N35 million monthly as locally-generated revenue, and, therefore, could not meet all the demands of its workforce."

According to him, the majority of the states will not implement the 25 per cent salary increase proposed by the Federal Government due to their financial position.

He declared that Kebbi State should not be expected to meet persistent demands of salary increment.

Responding, the Chief Medical Director, Dr. Bello Shehu, assured the governor that staff and medical personnel of the medical centre would not be part of any industrial action being contemplated by the health workers.

## Kano gets full electricity in 8 years

Residents of major parts of Kano metropolis have, for the first time in over eight years, received uninterrupted supply of electricity from the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) for five consecutive days.

Daily Trust

investigations in various parts of Kano revealed that about 90 per cent of Kano metropolis has had steady electricity supply since last Friday.

The problem of power outages in areas such as Fagge, Hotoro, Zaria Road and Sheka has now been overcome as a result of he improvement of power supply in Kano.

Confirming the improvement, NEPA's Assistant General Manager (Distribution) in Kano, Dr. Atiku, said the amount of electricity sent to Kano as of yesterday has risen to about 230 megawatts.

The total requirement of Kano, according to him, is between 230 and 240 megawatts.

He also confirmed that this is the first time in many years that Kano would receive the required amount of electricity supply, adding that NEPA is also carrying out repairs of its equipment in the entire state to ensure steady and uninterrupted power supply to all areas.



Governor Musa Kwankwaso of Kano State.

From Musa Umar Kazaura, in Kano

Dr. Atiku said areas which do not have power supply, despite this improvements may have problems with their source of supply which should be reported to NEPA engineers.

The Assistant General Manager said a 60 MVA transformer is presently being installed at Kofar Dan Agundi transmission station while over 200 transformers have been allocated to Kano to meet the increased power generation.

Reacting to the increased power supply to Kano, the chairman, Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), Sharada branch, Alhaji A. Bashir, said the improvement of power supply by NEPA is a welcome development, but noted that "the problem is; can they sustain it?"

He said apart from getting the required megawatts, the issue of low voltage needs to be addressed as most of the industries require full voltage to operate. Alhaji Bashir argued that there is to doubt that the improvement will lead to reduction in the use of generator which has led to the escalation sets of the cost of production by over 200 per cent in the last eight years.

Kano, a thriving industrial and commercial centre in Northern Nigeria, has been worst hit by insufficient power supply from NEPA, receiving as low as 30 megawatts at the peak of the crisis. This led to the collapse of many industries, leading to terrible unemployment situation in the state.

Many industries that could not afford the rising cost of maintaining stand-by generators closed shop, which brought serious decline in socio-economic activities, especially in the micro-economic sector of the state.

## Suicide cases jump up - WHO

Over 1,000 people commit suicide in the East Asia/Western Pacific Region every day and the number is rising because of economic insecurity, breakdowns of facilities and other factors, the World Health Organisation said yesterday.

The growing number of people who kill themselves as a result of mental stress has grown to such extent in recent years that suicide now ranks along with tuberculosis as a major health concern, WHO Regional Director, Shigeru Omi, told Manila-based foreign correspondents.

The majority of states in the WHO Western Pacific area comprising 37 nations from Mongolia and China to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Island nations have been affected by the suicide problem, he said.

"I am sure this is going up unless we do something," Omi said.

WHO officials, Linda Milan, said the suicide problem is also affecting young people, a number of whom have been driven to take their lives because of the stress of having to face very rigid school entrance examinations.

Among the main causes of suicide are rapid socio-economic changes, urbanisation and disintegration of family bonds, Omi said.

"The economic reality, unemployment, job security are contributing to the incidence of suicide," he said.

Omi said the magnitude

## We are vindicated over budget failure, says Senator

Senator Mas'ud Doguwa, PDP Kano, said in Abuja yesterday that the National Assembly has been vindicated over the failure of

the executive arm of government to implement previous budgets.

"We had faced serious criticisms and attacks from the public and the media over the delay in the passage of the 2000 appropriation bill. The 2001 budget was timely but the implementation was poor," he told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN).

Doguwa said the legislators were now happy because they were exonerated, adding: "people have started seeing the reality confirmed by the Minister of Finance and the President.

"This has shown that we are doing what we are supposed to be doing," he said, noting that "we gave the 2001 budget accelerated attention because of the criticism from the public and the executive but, very unfortunately, it was not implemented.

The lawmaker said things might not be the same this year "as we will ensure adequate scrutiny of the 2002 budgetary proposals

before endorsing them."

On the current threats by lecturers of the nation's tertiary institutions to down tools, Doguwa, who is the Vice-Chairman of the Senate Committee on Education, said President Olusegun Obasanjo had earlier been cautioned over the matter.

"When the Federal Government allocated N5 billion for the settlement of liabilities owed university teachers, our committee wrote the president over the consequences," he said.

He said the committee fears that the gesture to Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), without a similar appropriation to the polytechnics and colleges of education, portend more danger signals for the administration.

He suggested increased budgetary allocations to the education and agriculture sectors because "until we improve on the development of those two areas which are central to the growth of any society, we will remain where we are," he said.



A cross section of traditional rulers and elders of Mbaise during their courtesy visit to President Olusegun Obasanjo at the State House... recently. Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje.



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## Opinion

## National Security: Can Tamuno panel solve the problem?

By Suleiman Muhammed

Recently, President Olusegun Obasanjo inaugurated a thirteen-member presidential panel on national security headed by Professor Tekena Tamuno. This development came barely three weeks after the nation witnessed intense crises in some states, prominent of these crises was the Tiv/Jukun conflict which led to the killings of 19 soldiers in Benue State, allegedly by the Tivs, and the predictable reprisal of great magnitude by the soldiers, resulting in the alleged massacre of over 200 people in Zaki-Biam, Vaase, Gbeji and Anyim villages.

Crises upon crises have become the major catastrophes that beclouded the Obasanjo government since assumption of power in May 1999. Prior to the current episodes, there was the Lagos crisis, Kaduna religious cum political conflict, then the Ijaw youths in Rivers, Nasarawa, Jos and Kano among others. The question most Nigerians keep asking themselves is who are the brains behind all these crises?

Inaugurating the panel at the State House, Abuja, President Obasanjo said the crises couldn't be ascribed to the return to democracy, "for democracy fundamentally implies, and is built upon, a peaceful means to the resolution of problems". However, he noted with concern that in an attempt to exercise the freedom guaranteed by democracy, some Nigerians have overstepped their lawful limits and gone far too dangerously to infringe on the basic rights of other citizens including their rights to life. "These excesses have resulted in social disturbances, and have compounded unacceptably high levels of armed robbery and banditry, illegal arms trafficking, illegal militia, and other violent crimes", he said.

President Obasanjo, whose regime has received a lot of bashing for its insensitivity to the unfolding events, however assured that government would muster all resources at its disposal to protect the lives and property of all citizens. This affirmation is however not new to Nigerians as, after every crisis, government is known to issue such "stern" warnings, yet situations escalate rather than get sorted out.

The Tamuno panel is given the mandate to within three weeks, study and analyse the remote causes of breaches of the peace and security, whether historical, religious, civil, ethnic, economic, social or political that have contributed to the recurring conflicts. Similarly, the six-point terms of reference require the panel to identify potential and current flashpoints of conflicts in the country, including trends or sequences of events preceding specific forms of security threats and criminal activities. Also, it is expected to identify reasons for the eruptions of crises all over the country; examine the role and effectiveness of government and its institutions at all levels in combating crisis, and recommend measures necessary for government to finally address the phenomenon.

"Beyond these terms, we extend to you complete autonomy to work out a *modus operandi* that will best ensure that you afford every Nigerian the chance to make input into improving individual and collective security of this nation", the president told the panel members.

Expectedly the panel chairman, Professor Tekena, assured of their determination to handle the assignment as diligently. However, he broke the jinx when in a response, he spoke of the need for those in leadership to combine appropriate political will with consummate political skill in ensuring that peace returns to the nation. Professor Tamuno spoke in the wake of the known fact that political interests formed the basis of all the crises since this government came to power. "When, in this tough assignment, tough issues confront us, we shall tackle them with tough shoulders courageously", he declared.

It is indeed no longer news that the Nigerian nation is today faced with the problem of political instability occasioned by pending issues such as marginalisation and unemployment amongst the youths, high level of illiteracy and corruption at high places. Until these, among other things are properly addressed notwithstanding whatever recommendation Professor Tamuno's panel will make in February 2002, things will not change as expected. As rightly pointed out by Mallam Mohammed Haruna in his Wednesday column, "Wild, wild Middle-Belt" (*Daily Trust*, October 31, 2001), "It is the unwillingness of the Middle Belt elites, just like their counterparts elsewhere, to address the fundamentals of crass poverty, disease and illiteracy, instead of playing politics with religion and ethnicity which has been the source of the communal and sectarian conflicts in this country".

The nation has in its 41 years of independence witnessed several crises and, at the end of each, one panel or the other is set up. So far, one cannot easily point at a single panel report that the authority fully implemented, as they always end in the archives for posterity. Therefore, we hope that the situation will this time, be different, or else we should expect the worst of crises beginning from next year (2002). And by 2003, only God can save the nation. The task before Professor Tekena Tamuno is indeed enormous, but much of it rests with President Olusegun Obasanjo and his lieutenants who have the sole responsibility of implementing whatever recommendation will be forwarded in February next year.

Suleiman is the State House Correspondent of the Daily Trust.

## What the president should do

By Jibo Ibrahim

On Saturday, May 29, Olusegun Obasanjo became the country's second elected president.

General Obasanjo was the military head of state who handed over power to the first elected executive president, Shehu Shagari, about 22 years ago. On the same day, all governors were simultaneously sworn in, marking the end of an era of military political brigandage, despotism, unprecedented corruption and diminution of the nation. The National Assembly and state legislatures followed suit immediately: ditto for the local government councillors.

The expectations of Nigerians and the rest of the world are high, and the newly elected civilians cannot afford to fail the country again, that was the expectation of Nigerians as at that time.

Nigeria is a country with vast natural and human resources and at the same time comprises of many different tribes each dominating a political geographical region, but due to lack of good leadership our resources can

not be simply utilised

Nigeria is in the stage of series of problems ranging from insecurity, poverty, corruption and bribery, indiscipline and unemployment. Abuse of human rights is no longer considered as a crime but our leaders take it as a device in fighting their personal enemies.

This administration, especially General Obasanjo who became the second civilian president is supposed to see the whole nation as his constituency. He should not spare any effort in carrying all sections of the country along.

The electioneering is already over and now he should settle down for serious work, I am very much sure that he cannot do much if he performs his duties looking over his shoulders. He should know that the time has passed, as nobody's interest is above that of the entire Nigerians. He should be firm and fair to all.

Let us bury the past under a thick concrete. We want this government to work for the progress of this country rather

than to waste time on revisiting the past. We need to move forward.

The problem we always have in this country is lack of unity and sincerity of purpose. I hope that this administration would put policies in place that will unite this country. It should try and take care of all the yearnings of ethnic cleavages in this country so that the seeming tension now pervading the whole nation will be eliminated. Again, the administration should pursue true federalism.

Considering the fact that the security of this country is near wrecking right now, I would like to call for a total and urgent security reconstruction, in fact the situation is so bad, as are rule of law and other indices of participatory democracy. Thereafter we can look at higher needs like who has what, why and how.

With the experience of General Obasanjo I am now expecting a vibrant administration. And I pray that he will be able to break away from the clique who feel that they are from the same tribe and therefore should decide what

he does or not. Also the country's economy is in a bad shape and he needs to do a lot of work to revive the value of the naira.

This administration should avoid trampling on fundamental human rights of some Nigerians. Take for example the issue of Al-Mustapha, Mohammed Abacha, General Bamaiyi, Danbaba and others. It must adhere strictly to the rule of law and observe rulings by courts of law, no matter who is at the receiving end. Fundamental human rights should be the hallmark of the administration and he should always concentrate on corruption because it is the root of all kind of evils.

With this write up, I hope this administration would look at the problems of millions of Nigerian masses who are always struggling to survive. Lastly I hope and I call on the federal government to bring a social solution to all the above problems, so that the air of freedom would be circulated in our beloved country.

Jibo (Baba) Ibrahim wrote in from Chief Magistrate's Court, Gyadi-Gyadi, Kano.

## Combating prostitution and child trafficking

By Salisu Na'inna Dambatta

The problems of prostitution and the selling of children into slavery, both within and outside the country, blamed on poverty, immorality or the abandonment of religion, are causes of serious social dislocations in the society. The two problems are currently on the table receiving the attention of Nigerian leaders.

Prostitution, the business of engaging in commercial sexual intercourse, is an old business banned in the Holy Scriptures. It is immoral and against the instructions of our Creator. It is devilish and all devilish activities are bereft of benefit.

President Obasanjo described prostitution and child trafficking as "unholy and unwholesome", in a speech at the foundation-laying ceremony of the Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF), Rehabilitation Centre, Gwagwalada, Abuja.

"For me who has seen this disgraceful way that our children are sold into slavery and women into prostitution, anything that can be done, will be done to restore the dignity of the Nigerian womanhood", the president pledged with a ring of sincerity, concern and regret at the ceremony.

Some Nigerian newspapers recently quoted a report by "BBC Radio 4" which said that hundreds of West African children have been taken to Britain and other European countries illegally in a modern day slavery.

The children are lured abroad after their parents have been promised that they would be educated and enjoy the good life there. The reality is the opposite for "some are beaten and abused, others end up as the sexual playthings of paedophiles", according to the BBC.

Prostitution is certainly self-degrading as practitioners eventually discover. It exposes women to diseases, unwanted pregnancies, deaths in abortions, loss of dignity and the proliferation of motherless children or abandoned babies. It is a business without profit; it brings frustration and deep sense of exclusion to retired or aged practitioners.

It is sad that despite its worthlessness, and in spite of dangers and risks involved, prostitution is openly but subtly practiced on our campuses, at motor parks, in hotels, markets, restaurants and even hospitals.

Wife of the Vice President, Hajija Titi Atiku Abubakar, who initiated a programme to check prostitution and child trafficking through her WOTCLEF, has presented a bill to the National Assembly spelling penalties against the syndicates and individuals who engage in organising and profiting from both

women and child trafficking for prostitution and slavery respectively.

Hundreds of young Nigerian girls have been deported from several foreign countries where they engaged in prostitution. Just recently, about 300 of them died in the Sahara desert while trying to cross it on their way to European cities to practice their "unholy and unwholesome" trade.

President Obasanjo mentioned Libya, Morocco, Algeria, Spain, Italy and India as the foremost countries where Nigerian girls are abused.

Although it is on record that previous efforts to check the menace of prostitution and child slavery by religious leaders, the government and committed individuals in the society could not eradicate it, it is hoped that the collaboration between WOTCLEF and other world leaders would lead to a concerted action at the global level to minimise the problem.

Within Nigeria a number of states such as Edo, Kano, Zamfara, Sokoto, Kebbi, Borno and Kaduna, have strengthened legislations against prostitution, while deeper consciousness on the immorality and the dangers associated with it is gradually spreading in the society. Rehabilitation of former prostitutes as planned for at the WOTCLEF Gwagwalada Centre, should now, as a matter of priority, be incorporated into the essential responsibilities of all tiers of government in the country. The Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development could play a leading role in this.

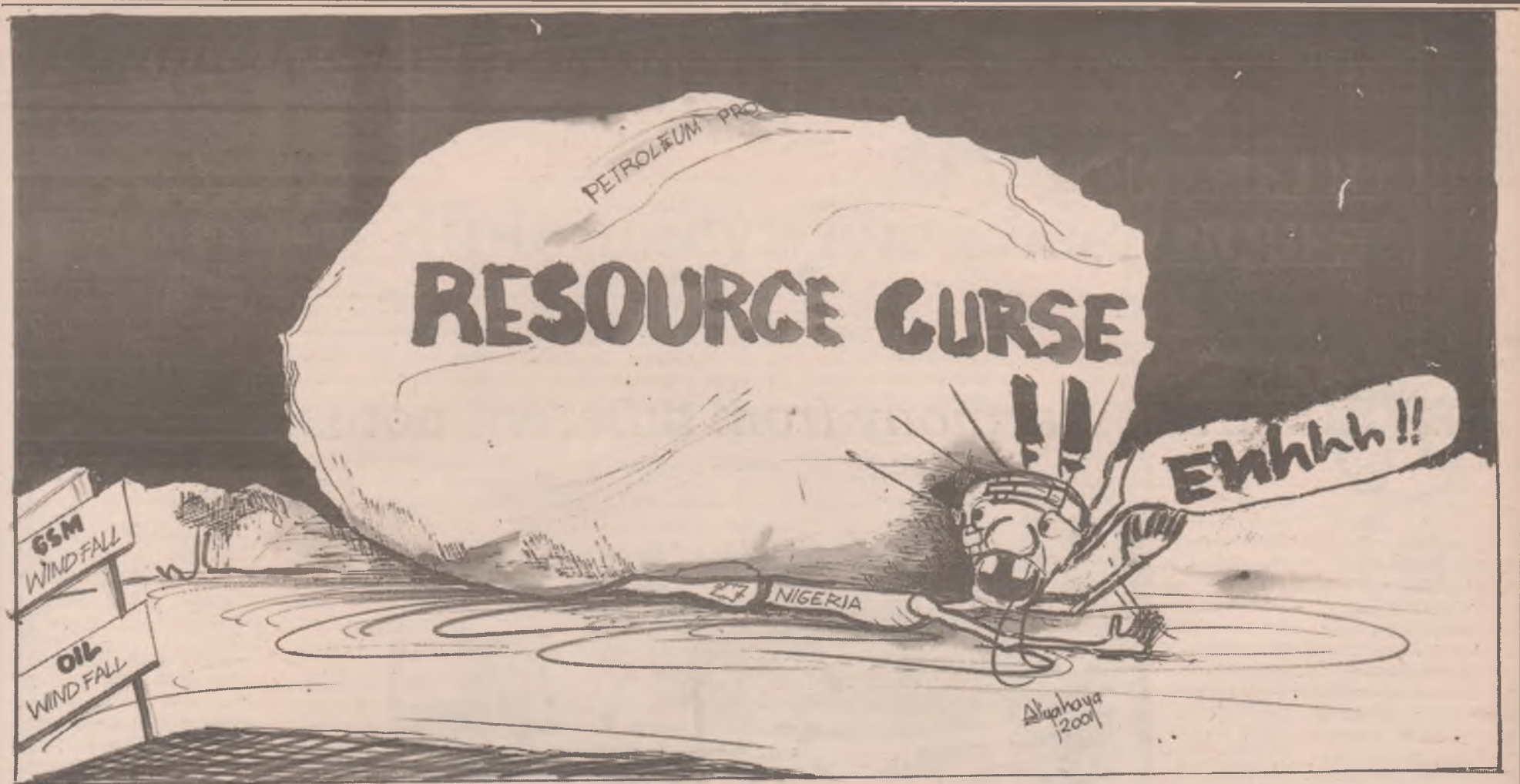
The clergy and the *Ulama*, traditional rulers and opinion leaders should intensify their efforts of educating the society on the evil of prostitution and child trafficking. Morality which has been relegated to the background in favour of wealth by many, decency, which has been sacrificed for glitter, and false fame that replaced hard work, are values that should be embraced by all.

Known proprietors of brothels in Nigeria, leaders of syndicates involved in women and child trafficking within Nigeria and across our borders, should be brought to book by the authorities.

On the whole, the fact that President Obasanjo's government has joined the war against women and child trafficking is a good omen for concerned parents and the society at large.

The initiator of the WOTCLEF, Mrs. Titi Atiku Abubakar should bear in mind with satisfaction that the society is appreciative of her efforts and that she should sustain the tempo until the desired result of minimised trafficking in women and children is achieved.

Salisu Na'inna Dambatta is a Chief Information officer in the Presidency.



## YOUR LETTERS

### Sharia: Open letter to Kano State government

It is disappointing if government is only keen on mere urban planning, physical infrastructure and other social amenities, abandoning the other side of the coin. Focusing the society and man on a spectacle through a purely western secular spectrum is of course detrimental to the spiritual well being of the Muslim *umma*.

The Islamic worldview is diametrically opposed to this western worldview. In Islamic worldview man's life has a divine and transcendental purpose, because he shall be resurrected in a divine world. Man, in the Islamic view is a creature made up of two components - matter and spirit. He should henceforth strive for the betterment of both, in almost

equal and balanced ways and manners.

According to Imam Alghazali "the body may be compared to a steed and the soul to its rider, the body was created for the soul, the soul for the body... he who neglects it and suffers its capacities to rust or to degenerate must necessarily be the loser in this world and in the next". Good life in Islam means the satisfaction of both needs of the body (food, shelter, etc.) and that of the soul i.e. conducive atmosphere for serving Allah (Shariah).

How do Sharia courts operate? How do our Qadis administer *hadd* (punishment)? Excluding lashes/caning *hadd*. No *hadd* punishment has been witnessed since the implementation, as

if our citizens metamorphosed to angels. What measures do governments take to deter citizens from committing crimes? How many vehicles do patrol in the suspected areas? How can he who sees an action as a right (non-Muslim police) foil him who has done it? What recognition does government give to *Hisbah* personnel? Apart from their uniforms and decongesting traffic junctions? How do police officers relate with *Hisbah* personnel? What are the reports of Shariah implementation committee i.e. complaints and line of actions? What set Kano and Zamfara at variance in this quest? What differentiate this Sharia with penal code?

To cut it short, surely if these questions are

thoroughly studied and addressed, Sharia in Kano would achieve progress.

Finally I do hope that the authorities concerned would take heed from the past. No condition is permanent. Allah (SWT) will hold you responsible for all these. Do it now or never. To us, the beauty of the soul is much more needed than good roads and electricity.

*Sanusi Iguda, Kano.*

### Plateau: Quest for peace

The last Jos disturbances rocked the famous city to its very foundations. Many innocent lives were lost and properties worth millions of naira were lost as a result of the mayhem.

Going by the trend of events and the aftermaths of the riots, one will notice that the disturbances that occurred were not just sparked off overnight. Rather there were ominous signs that things were not all right in the city. People who had previous knowledge of the plan to 'cleanse' the city did not do anything to arrest the

situation neither did those who are privy to the plan see the coming consequences of their evil plans. The result is now history.

While no one would pray for a repeat of the last wanton destruction of lives and property, it is expected that the state government should be fair in the arbitration of the matter by weighing the implications of some of its decisions. One wonders what is the wisdom behind drawing lines or demarcating open places where Muslims conduct their Friday prayers.

It is pertinent to note that no Friday mosque can contain its Friday congregation, so the issue of issuing statements capable of disrupting the peace is uncalled for and therefore should be avoided.

All the measures taken by government were taken without due consideration of the facts on the ground, that is the practicability or otherwise of such orders.

It is also appalling to note that the statement credited to the state deputy governor calling on Jos indigenes to live in peace with their Yoruba and Igbo 'counterparts' and cleverly avoiding to mention the Hausas, smacks of sheer hypocrisy and an attempt to recreate another avenue for disunity and anarchy. Those in authority should serve as leaders of all peoples and not just sections of the community.

While I strongly appeal for calm and tolerance for peace to reign once again on the plateau, I will not subscribe to infringements on the rights of our people. Government must therefore weigh its utterances before going public.  
*Bashir Kabir Nasir, 140 Sarkin Sharifai Qtrs., Sokoto.*

### Re: America's shameful act

Above appeared in your *Daily Trust* edition of November 13, 2001.

The writer stated that America should be ashamed of itself for bombing a small and poor country like Afghanistan in the name of bombing terrorist camps.

Certainly, America is committing genocide in Afghanistan in the name of eliminating terrorism and the so-called sponsors of it, while the world is watching helplessly.

The whole Muslims in the world believe that Jews, Americans and the British people are enemies of Arabs and Islam. Because for half a century, Muslims in Palestine have been slaughtered, assaulted and robbed of their honour and their properties. Their houses have been destroyed, yet America is supporting and sponsoring Israel on that genocide.

May the Almighty Allah give the people of Afghanistan the courage, strength,

power and victory over America.

May Allah destroy America and its alliance for committing genocide.

*Alhaji (Isah) A. Abubakar, Sabon Garin Yaya, Taura LGA Jigawa State.*

### Thanks for the Ramadan timing

*Assalamu Alaikum*

First of all I will like to thank the Editor in-Chief, Mallam Kabiru Yusuf for allowing and giving a page in *Daily Trust* newspaper to put Ramadan timing and also the provider of the table and the entire Media Trust staff. Really it is a good achievement and may Allah in His infinite mercy grant you eternal life with *Aljannatu Alfirdaus*.

*Abdulkadir Mohammed KD, No 1 Lagos Street, Abakwa, Kaduna*

### Gombe and soil erosion

It is on record that soil erosion is for long ravaging most parts of Gombe State. Gully erosion in particular, is predominantly active in the state capital and in more than half of the rural areas of the state which have continued to be the state's main source of sustenance.

The state has for long continued to serve as the food basket of the nation, assisting in foreign exchange earnings from exports of cotton, groundnut, hides and skins, among others. However, the future now looks very bleak indeed for the state's farming communities as their farmlands are under constant

threat of flooding, soil erosion and desert encroachment. Truly, ecological problem had affected the greater part of the state, causing a lot of human suffering.

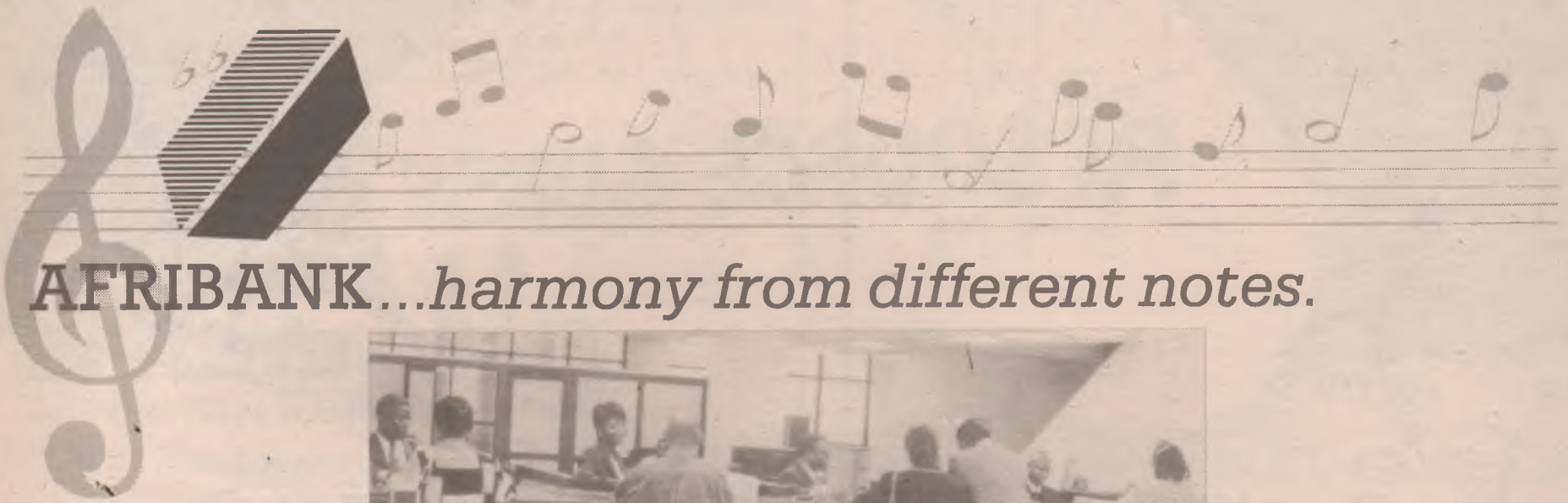
This problem, according to recent newspaper reports, has continued to exacerbate with deep gullies continuously emerging in most part of the state with negative consequences to human life and property.

According to Governor Abubakar Hashidu, about N2.5 billion would be required by the state government to combat ecological problems bordering on soil erosion and desertification.

The state government alone cannot finance this gigantic project.

Consequently, the Federal Ministry of Water resources and Environment must take more erosion and flood control measures very seriously. In fact, now is the time for the state government and entire people of the state to send an SOS to the federal government, international organisations and other donor agencies. A stitch in time, they say, saves nine.

*Buba G. Abdullahi, Bogo (BCGA) Village, Akko Local Government Area, Gombe State.*



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Foreign & Diplomatic

Lamido's diplomacy: *The cheers and jeers*

Good books, it is said, are those that dwell on the elementary but basic and essential issues which are seemingly ordinary and familiar. *Plying the Foreign Pitch: Media Portrait of Sule Lamido, Minister, Foreign Affairs* is one such book. It is a book in which Sule Lamido is called names. It is also where he is praised and his inner rhythms are espoused and put into proper perspective in the exciting market of ideas and media coverage. The fact that the book is a media encyclopaedia of Lamido's ministership makes it such a simple account that ordinarily could be adjudged pedestrian. But beyond this simplistic verdict is the perceptive presumption of the book being a creative intellectual contestation on the essential diplomatic points demanded by a nation battling and competing for attention among unequal sovereigns.

*Plying the Foreign Pitch* has three broad sections of ten chapters. Section One, 'Plying the Foreign Pitch' contains two chapters, Section Two, 'Media Portrait' has seven chapters while Section Three, 'In Their Own Words' is a lone chapter featuring selected and excerpted speeches of Nigeria's major foreign policy actors.

The intellectual tone of the book is set right from chapter one where the editor, Adagbo Onoja, the Personal Assistant on media affairs to the minister contested that there has been a profound attempt by President Obasanjo and the minister of foreign affairs to make a dramatic shift from past foreign policy underpinnings which were infected with what chief Awolowo called 'mental malaise.' Onoja argues that Obasanjo and Lamido's foreign policy mission for the past two years has been a strategy of 'CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT/MORAL WARFARE with the development partners towards a major re-direction of capital to Nigeria and, by implication, Africa.'

It is this foreign policy mind-set, Onoja asserts, that has seen Lamido as a questioner of orthodox or established international concepts as a means of liberating the nation from the claws of such imposing economic institutions as the IMF, Bretton Woods institutions, the G-8, etc. through such policies as globalisation. This confrontation, Onoja says, is necessary in the face of what he calls the "politics of peripherisation and concrete control whereby the agents of globalisation, both in their old and new garbs, insist on 'reading' the world in the image of the market conveniently forgetting that the casava and millet economies of Africa cannot make it to prosperity via market economy with the economies being first industrialised in a PLANNED manner."

The Obasanjo-Lamido administration has never been lacking in foreign policy pronouncement as a counter

By Onah L. Iduh

measure to the obverbearing economic designs imposed by the West. For instance, President Obasanjo stated while speaking through the minister in Geneva at the high level segment of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) substantive session of the UN that "A close look at the development models that have been applied in Africa would also be necessary as we chart the new course forward. Africa has, in the past, been subjected to numerous externally designed models as a panacea to its economic problems over the last three decades. The Bretton Woods institutions with the support of international community have designed some of these models. However, in spite of the good intentions of their authors, these experiments have not achieved the desired results. In some cases, the results have caused so much pains and social upheavals that their local advocates - politicians, administrators, and even the academia - have had to be branded foreign lackeys."

But beyond this combativeness and moral warfare exist some element of rust and flatulence in the regime's policy pronouncements although not out of any obvious lack of desire or the paucity of rhetoric. In fact, there is too much of that. Students of sociology or psychology would agree that sermonising and moralising or the whole essence of rhetoric, as powerful instrument of renaissance would become constipated if it is not backed by nationalist zeal, passionate and decisive action. That is what this regime badly lacks and which informs the egregious slide in the economy with the naira crumbling by the day.

While section one is the conceptualisation of the foreign policy envisioned by the Obasanjo administration manned by Sule Lamido, section two contains the media coverage, perception and interpretation of how the minister navigates through the foreign pitch. It is a varied, some how weird section containing seven chapters: **Minister at Work, Africa, Bilateral/Clinton, Consular/Diaspora, Controversy, Personal and Politics and Scoring the Minister.** If anything, this section outlines the divergence of expressed media arguments, opinions, agreements and disagreements, on-the-spot reports of the minister's diplomatic engagements and

above all the criticisms on the perceived shortcomings of Lamido both as a chief diplomat and a politician.

The opening chapter of this section, 'Minister at Work' begins with the calendar of the minister's diplomatic engagements entitled "All in a Year's Work." This provides an inventory of the trips made by the minister and the foreign dignitaries who visited the country from May 2000 to August 2001. This is followed by an article in *Newswatch* magazine, 'The world according to Lamido.' This article reveals in an elaborate manner some unique sensibilities of the minister that may have informed a certain level of his

accuse the minister of violating "established international standard."

If achievement in diplomacy is measured in the efficacy of rhetoric and presumptive articulation or projection of nationalistic interests, then the question of whether Lamido is a successful Foreign Affairs minister is settled. Authoritative voices of professional diplomats have spoken and these seem to not only give Lamido pass marks but unequivocally testify of his deep understanding of the diplomatic pitch. One of such voices is that of Professor Ade Adefuye, a director at the Commonwealth Secretariat in London. In an article, "The Commonwealth,

This nationalistic instinct was manifested in an interview with *Cable News Network (CNN)* last year as reported by several national dailies: *Daily Times* captures this in the story captioned: "Lamido chastises West for Africa's problems," while *The Guardian* captures it thus: "Lamido blames the West for Africa's woes." In this interview, the minister accused the West of being the force behind the decapitating economic and social conditions in Africa because, apart from the long history of colonialism, they are seen to endorse and encourage the perpetuation of poverty and the culture of corruption. He asserted that "our culture, history and civilisation were all distorted. We were all reconstructed and we had to begin anew after independence and therefore our economies are appendages of the West."

In a similar characteristic blunt tone, Lamido in his address in New York at the Millennium Assembly of the U.N. on September 19, 2000 derided globalisation as a concept that arose from the ashes of the cold war. He therefore, in an interrogative manner dismissed the fate of Africa in such a system...

Lamido's tendency of saying his mind does not just stop at international conferences but is also exhibited in consular politics particularly on issues that border on nationalistic sensibilities. For instance, the naughty issue of visa denials to Nigerians continue to demean and question the usefulness of our bilateral relations with the West particularly Britain and the U.S.A. Piqued by the snobbish and condescending treatment of Nigerians by visa officials in British and American consulates, Lamido warned that Nigeria would no longer tolerate the denigration of her citizens.

Although Lamido, like several other past foreign affairs ministers, warned these embassies, they seem to view these threats as farce since the situation remain more or less the same. It could also be interpreted that the pronouncements of the ministers (Lamido's inclusive) seem to be the mere obligatory bureaucratic response to media queries. What is clear from the content of ministerial responses is the emptiness of such threats. It has never been categorically stated that the countries of the West need us more than we do but ironically our governments continue to literally beg them to obtain our visas while our nationals go through all sorts of dehumanising conditions even to obtain transit visas.

There exists such laxity or indifference in instances where Nigerians are attacked outside the country. Official government responses to attacks on Nigerians in Libya and reports of deaths of Nigerians outside the country seem to be treated with levity. One would therefore be tempted to conclude that Lamido's attacks on the West are mere sanguinary façade to hide and prevent questions being asked on the necessity for the re-definition of our relations with these countries. For how would one fathom a government that claims to be committed to bringing economic boom to be so infatuated by handing over our

collective destiny into the hands of the western world symbolised mainly in our relations with a counter-revolutionary state like the United States?

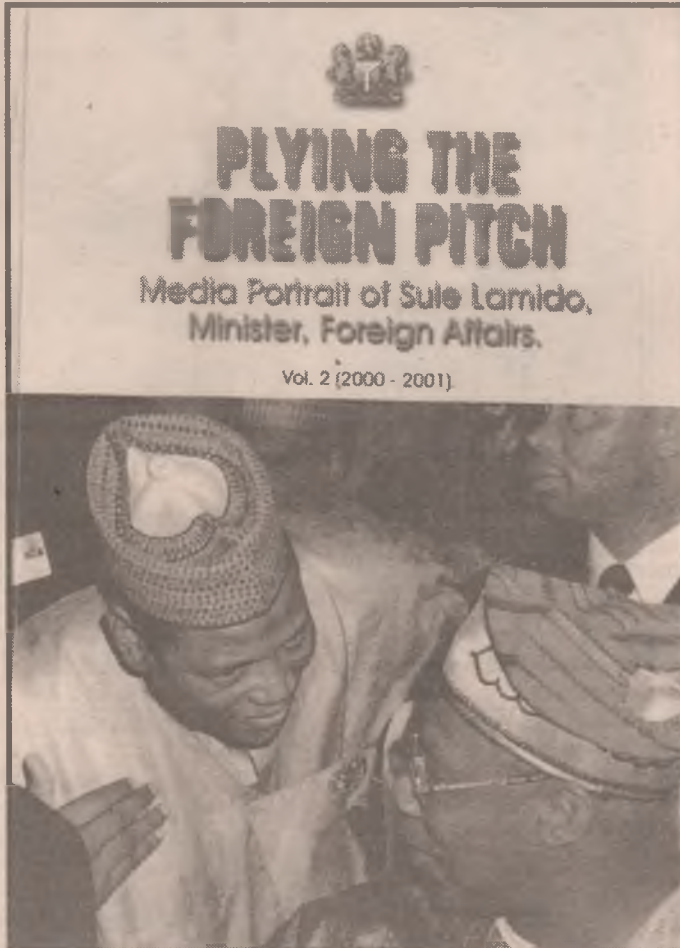
If put in a proper perspective our relations with the world's oracle of capitalism *ipso facto* defy all the defining principles of bilateral relations. It is believed that in bilateral relations the *modus vivendi* must be on the basis of mutual interests. However, Nigeria's bilateral relations with the US, which climaxed in the state visit of President Clinton paints a picture of a king visiting one of his vassals.

Perusing through the content of the media clippings in *Plying the Foreign Pitch* in the chapter, "Bilateral/Clinton" one, no doubt, sees the excitement of both the citizens and the leaders and the inherent contradictions in their expectations from the visit. Either rightly or wrongly, the whole content of this chapter, which is the largest in the whole book, right from the preparations for the visit to the reports and the editorials of the visit, give an eerie and uncomfortable feeling that Nigeria has been packaged for willing re-colonisation.

*Plying the Foreign Pitch* although mainly a book on Lamido's diplomatic encounters takes a cursory look on political comments of Sule Lamido. The chapter, "Controversy" spotlights on the Lagos media outrage on Lamido's utterances they perceived as anachronistic for a man occupying a national position. This chapter draws the line between those who call him names because of his opinions and those who support him as a nationalist against the dispassionate pool who see all these as 'racist's racism.'

If any verdict is to be passed on Lamido in the context of his utterances as contained in *Plying...* it might not be too demanding to say that such judgement might not be holistically correct if it is not contextualised from the precincts of "Our Testimony," a six-year-old interview by a group of journalists and a lecturer excerpted from the book, *The Populist Factor in Nigerian Politics: Truncation or Transformation of NEPU-PRP Radicalism.* Lamido's ideas and beliefs in this interview have an alliterative symmetry with what he expresses today. One would therefore be tempted to then conclude that Lamido seems to be unaffected by the nuances of statecraft and power. If anything it could be observed that he may perhaps have been hampered by the limitations of power within his disposal.

Essentially, *Plying the Foreign Pitch* may not be as relevant now as it might be in the future. It is a sure source for research information for diplomats, students of diplomacy and international relations and above all a ready consultant for future foreign affairs ministers. It is hoped that there would be a presentation that would pool together foreign policy gurus for further and proper articulation of our national vision.



combativeness or arrogant belief in the equality of man. The kernel of this is expressed in his dogma of 'Roadside diplomacy' which he sought to practicalise by abolishing a discriminatory categorisation among the staff of the ministry.

In the ministry, there exist two categories of staff: Branch 'A' (Foreign Service Officers) and Branch 'B' (Administrative, Secretarial, Accounting and other technical officers). The differentials in children educational allowances between these branches seem to be so wide against Branch 'B' and the minister found this unacceptable and cancelled it saying: "Children are children whether their parents are Branch 'A' or Branch 'B' staff" to the distaste of Branch 'A' who

The Gambia and Nigeria's Lamido" published in *Tell* magazine, Professor Adefuye gave a glowing testimony of Lamido's diplomacy in Commonwealth politics. He concluded that "the Nigerian foreign minister displayed a great mastery of his brief, a perfect understanding of the objectives of Harare Commonwealth Principles and an ability to combine oratory and analytical skill with a subtle exercise of Nigeria's *politica gravitas* in the West African sub-region to achieve stated objectives... Lamido displayed as much savvy as was needed to make a point, no matter how unpalatable, without necessarily incurring the anger of the recipient."

Lamido never wastes any opportunity in the defence of his

*This article reveals in an elaborate manner some unique sensibilities of the minister that may have informed a certain level of his combativeness or arrogant belief in the equality of man. The kernel of this is expressed in his dogma of 'Roadside diplomacy' which he sought to practicalise by abolishing a discriminatory categorisation among the staff of the ministry.*

# TRUST INTERNATIONAL

AFRICA &amp; THE MIDDLE EAST

## CAR clashes threaten peace efforts

Rebels from the Central African Republic have tightened their grip on the northern border town of Kabo after repulsing an assault by government troops.

Twenty-one soldiers were killed in the fighting on Sunday evening, a senior government official told the BBC correspondent in the capital, Bangui.

The renewed fighting comes as President Ange-Felix Patasse is in the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, to take part in a mini-summit on the CAR with neighbouring heads of state.

A gathering of Central African leaders in Gabon,

also expected to focus on the CAR crisis, has been postponed until Tuesday.

Renegade General Francois Bozize has not been invited to either meeting.

Correspondent said that those government soldiers who were not killed in the attempt to recapture Kabo from forces loyal to General Bozize have run away.

Hundreds of people gathered at Bangui's Community Hospital on Monday, seeking information about their military relatives who had been sent to Kabo.

In November, fierce fighting hit Bangui after a warrant of arrest was issued for General Bozize - the army's chief of staff until he was sacked in October.

It was alleged that he was involved in a failed coup attempt in May.

He denies the charge.

General Bozize and hundreds of his soldiers under his command fled north into Chad after extra Libyan troops flew in to prop up Mr. Patasse.

Libya had first intervened to quell the May uprising.

But the rebel troops then struck back, capturing the northern towns of Kabo and Batangafo without a fight.



An injured Palestinian is treated in a hospital after a blast in the West Bank city of Bethlehem. Israeli military sources said the army was not responsible for an explosion in the West Bank city of Bethlehem on Monday that killed a member of the Palestinian security forces and wounded two other people.

## Guinea Bissau foils coup attempt

An attempted coup has been foiled and several senior military officials arrested, the Guinea Bissau Government has said.

The deputy head of the army, Almami Camara, and the former navy chief of staff, Lamine Mane, are in detention while other officers are on the run, according to Internal Affairs Minister, Alamar Nhasse.

However the capital remains calm and there have been no signs of shooting or fighting, according to western diplomats.

Guinea Bissau is going through a constitutional crisis, after President Kumba Yala sacked three senior judges.

They were subsequently arrested, along with several journalists.

Mr. Nhasse said that the two military men arrested on Sunday evening had spent six months preparing the coup.

Some of those on the run are alleged to have links to former President Nino Vieira, who was overthrown in 1998.

On Monday afternoon, security forces were searching districts close to the airport for people allegedly implicated in the plot, witnesses told the French news agency, AFP.

But the European Union delegate in Bissau, Antonio Amoreira Martins, told the AP news agency that life in the capital was carrying on as usual.

"It's very calm. Life's completely normal here in the city," he said.

A year ago, the man who toppled Mr. Vieira, Ansumane Mane, was shot dead after staging another coup - this time against Mr. Yala.

Mr. Yala, a long-time opposition leader, was democratically elected president in January 2001.

## Curfew in Ghana as ethnic clash claims four

Ghanaian authorities have imposed a curfew in the northern town of Bawku in an effort to halt a weekend of violence in which at least four people died.

Reports from the capital Accra said police and soldiers have been sent to the region - near the border with Burkina Faso - to enforce the curfew.

Members of the two main tribes in the area, the Kusasis and the Mamprusis, are said to have attacked each other with bows and arrows and homemade guns.

Police have confirmed that four died in two days of fighting, but some eyewitnesses say the death toll may be as high as 40.

Buildings and cars were set on fire during the clashes, which began on Sunday and continued into the day on Monday.

The dusk-to-dawn curfew imposed on Monday evening seems to have quelled the worst of the violence, though there were reports of sporadic gunfire into the night.

The clashes reportedly started after members of one ethnic group burned a cargo truck belonging to a member of the rival group.

The Associated Press reported that some Bawku

residents fled to the regional capital of Bolgatanga, 85 kilometres away, to escape the fighting.

There is a history of armed violence between the two tribes.

At least 30 people were

killed in clashes between them last year.

The Mamprusi tend to favour President John Kufuor and his New Patriotic Party.

The Kusasi generally support the National Democratic Congress, the party of former President Jerry Rawlings.

## Jordan passes death sentence on Abu Nidal

A Jordanian military court has sentenced the Palestinian militant, Abu Nidal, to death for masterminding the assassination of a Jordanian diplomat in 1994.

Four other defendants were convicted with Abu Nidal for the murder of Naeb Imran Maaytah, the first secretary at the Jordanian Embassy in Beirut.

Four of the five, including Abu Nidal, whose real name is Sabri al-Banna, were convicted in absentia.

The only defendant present during the trial, Yasser Abu Shunar, a Jordanian, has denied the charges against him.

"I am dissatisfied about the sentences and will appeal the court rulings," Hussein al-Masri, Abu Shunar's lawyer, told the Reuters news agency.

Under Jordanian law, the

five are allowed to appeal the conviction and the sentence.

Abu Nidal broke off from the Palestine Liberation Organisation, headed by Yasser Arafat, in the 1970s.

## Don't attack Iraq, Mandela warns US

Former South African President, Nelson Mandela, has warned the United States and Britain not to extend their military campaign against terrorism to Iraq.

The 83-year-old statesman said it would be a "disaster" if Iraq was bombed.

Mr. Mandela's lifelong stand against apartheid and racism has seen him become one of the world's most respected elder statesmen and a leading moral authority.

Both US President, George W. Bush and Secretary of State, Colin Powell have issued veiled

## Israel declares war on Palestinian Authority

Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, has won his cabinet's backing to declare the Palestinian Authority an "entity that supports terror".

BBC correspondents said the ruling opens the way for further military reprisals against Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, whom Israel blames for not stopping Palestinian suicide attacks that killed at least 25 people over the weekend.

The Tanzim militia, which is associated with Mr. Arafat's Fatah party, and the Force 17 presidential guard Israel have also been declared terror organisations by Israel.

The cabinet's decision, which followed a stormy debate, came as Israeli troops and bulldozers moved into Gaza airport on Monday night and began ripping up its runway as part of a wave of retaliation.

Israeli soldiers were also reported to have entered several Palestinian-ruled areas in the West Bank, including the town of Ramallah, where they were poised just 200 metres from Mr. Arafat's compound there.

In the West Bank town of Nablus, a member of Fatah was reportedly shot dead by Israeli gunfire.

The latest developments follow Monday's assault by Israeli helicopter gunships that destroyed two of Mr. Arafat's helicopters in Gaza City, injuring up to 10 people.

Israeli F-16 warplanes



Ariel Sharon, Israeli Prime Minister.

were also in action on Monday, attacking buildings in the West Bank town of Jenin.

Palestinian Information Minister, Yasser Abed Rabbo denied the charges of terrorism, saying that Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip was "the source of terrorism", and that Israel's actions were making the prospects of peace more remote.

## Dozens killed in Burundi clashes

At least two dozen Burundian army soldiers are reported to have died in a week-long army push against rebels north of the capital, Bujumbura, some returning soldiers have reported.

The army offensive coincides with a visit by President Pierre Buyoya to Europe, seeking aid for Burundi's new power-sharing administration.

Eight days ago the army announced a major drive to oust rebels from hills some 20km north of Bujumbura, from where they have launched a wave of attacks.

According to AP news agency, the rebels have admitted to eight casualties in the fighting, with local hospitals said to be overwhelmed by the numbers of wounded.

Hutu rebels continue to reject a ceasefire and have intensified their attacks since the new government was installed a month ago.

Former South African president, Nelson Mandela, with the support of the international community, brokered a deal which sees the minority Tutsi and majority Hutu community sharing power, as part of attempts to resolve a bitter civil war.

Under the deal, Hutu politicians have been returning from exile, with South African forces protecting them.

warnings against Iraq, fuelling speculation that the US might broaden its current campaign against Afghanistan to take in old enemies.

Mr. Bush upped the pressure last week when he challenged Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein to allow United Nations inspectors back into his country to monitor whether he is building weapons of mass destruction.

But at the end of last week, Mr. Powell appeared to calm speculation.

In an interview with the BBC, he said the US was aware of anxieties, and

insisted that no decision had yet been taken by the president about the next stage of the war.

An economic embargo against Iraq has been in place since the end of the Gulf War in 1991 but has come under mounting criticism for harming ordinary Iraqis, an allegation refuted by the US.

Mr. Mandela also warned against Britain and the United States bypassing the UN in conducting their campaign.

"That is extremely dangerous because they are introducing chaos into international affairs."

TRUST INTERNATIONAL

World Report

Bosnian general faces trial

The first Bosnian Serb officer accused over the bloody siege of Sarajevo has gone on trial in The Hague charged with crimes against humanity and war crimes.

General Stanislav Galic, who led the troops besieging the city, is held directly responsible by prosecutors for an attack on a Sarajevo market in 1994, which left 66 people dead and 140 wounded.

The Hague indictment also says General Galic's forces used a strategy of shelling and sniping designed to keep the inhabitants of Sarajevo in a constant state of terror.

The general, who was arrested in December 1999 by NATO troops in the Bosnian Serb town of Banja Luka, has pleaded not guilty.

"The siege of Sarajevo was an episode of such notoriety that one must go back to World War II to find a parallel in European history," lawyer Mark Ierace said, opening the case for the prosecution.

The indictment speaks of his forces directing "shelling and sniping at civilians who were tending vegetable plots, queuing for bread, collecting water, attending funerals, shopping in markets, riding on trams, gathering wood or simply walking with their children and friends".

The United Nations declared Sarajevo a safe area in 1993, but shelling by the Bosnian Serb Romanija Corps, led by General Galic, continued from the surrounding mountains.

More than 10,000 people were killed and 50,000 injured during the 43 months of the siege.

General Galic's superiors, General Ratko Mladic and the Bosnian Serb political leader, Radovan Karadzic, have also been indicted over the siege but are still on the run, much to the anger and frustration of the tribunal's chief prosecutor.

The siege also stands on the charge sheet of former Yugoslav President, Slobodan Milosevic, who is awaiting trial at the tribunal.



United States' Attorney General, John Ashcroft, talks to Canadian Solicitor General, Lawrence MacAulay (r) as they sign agreements on border security in Ottawa. Ashcroft said on Monday that the United States and Canada had agreed to tighten security along their 4,000-mile border in the wake of the September 11 attacks.

Afghan factions reach agreement

The four Afghan factions holding talks in Bonn have reached agreement on a United Nations blueprint for rebuilding the country's political system.

The breakthrough came early yesterday morning after the Northern Alliance, the largest delegation, submitted a list of its candidates for a 29-member interim administration to rule Afghanistan.

Diplomats said the alliance had been delaying putting forward the list because of internal rivalries among its various groupings.

The four factions have put forward many more names than there are jobs available on the interim administration, which is set to rule until a broader-based government can be set up.

The next step, expected to begin immediately, will be to choose which factions get which jobs - a delicate balancing act given Afghanistan's complicated ethnic and tribal mix.

The UN-brokered text has not been released, but earlier drafts included proposals to set up a commission to convene a Loya Jirga, or traditional grand assembly.

The former king, Zahir Shah, is expected to participate in the assembly,

though it is not clear if he will open it, as some of his supporters have called for.

The interim administration will rule for six months until this assembly is convened.

The assembly would then elect a transitional government to rule for about two years until a constitution was drawn up and elections were held.

Another measure foreseen under the UN blueprint is the creation of a supreme court, which correspondents said may be aimed at creating a role for Northern Alliance leader, Burhanuddin Rabbani, whose opposition to some key decisions has delayed a final agreement.

The UN text also proposes a multinational peacekeeping force for Kabul, but does not stipulate the force's size, mandate or duration.

Cyprus leaders revive deadlocked talks

The leaders of Cyprus are preparing to meet face-to-face for the first time in four years, in an attempt to revive the deadlocked talks over the status of the divided island.

Greek Cypriot President,

The text says peacekeepers would be deployed at the Afghan administration's request.

The Northern Alliance, which controls the capital, Kabul, has softened its initial opposition to such a force.

But the BBC correspondent at the Bonn-based talks, said one potential problem with the peacekeeping force lies in the fact that it will not be in place until some time after the creation of the new government.

That may concern members of Afghanistan's majority Pashtun community, who are not well represented within the Northern Alliance, and who may be reluctant to return home to Kabul without guarantees about security, he said.

The agreement came after big donor countries kept up pressure on the Afghan factions, warning them that billions of dollars in reconstruction aid depended on a deal being reached.

Glafcos Clerides, accepted an invitation by the leader of the breakaway Turkish part of the island, Rauf Denktaş, to hold "heart to heart" talks, on condition that the UN special adviser on Cyprus was also present.

There has been increased pressure to resolve the dispute over the island's sovereignty as the deadline for Cyprus to join the European Union draws near.

Turkey has threatened to invade the island if it becomes an EU member, while Greece has warned that it would thwart the EU's enlargement ambitions if Cyprus was not accepted in the first wave of expansion, due in 2004.

The island has been divided since Turkey's invasion in 1974.

Odd World

Murder convict wins parliamentary seat

A politician convicted of corruption, attempted murder and illegal possession of firearms won a seat in Taiwan's parliamentary elections on Saturday after spending the entire campaign behind bars.

An official tally showed Yen Ching-piao, former speaker of the county council in central Taichung, was victorious with 34,003 votes despite being imprisoned with a 20-year sentence in August. He is appealing the conviction.

Yen, nicknamed "Piao the gourd" for his pudgy figure, is also known for declaring he is acting on instructions from Matsu, the patron goddess of fishermen, as he is the chairman of a prominent Buddhist temple.

On the eve of the election, four generations of Yen's family, which have been campaigning on his behalf with a life-size photograph, went down on their knees in tears before supporters, begging them to support the independent candidate.

Yen can serve his term in office if he is allowed out on bail while his case is being appealed. He will have to give up his seat, however, and return to prison if Taiwan's highest court upholds the conviction.

Teacher banned for denying 'Father Xmas'

An Australian primary school banned a teacher after she told a class of six year olds that Santa Claus does not exist.

Angry parents from the Corowa public school demanded action when some children arrived home in tears after a reserve teacher, on her first day on the job, told them their parents brought their presents.

"Santa Claus has always visited our house at Christmas," mother Vanessa Lohse told the Daily Telegraph newspaper. "My three kids (aged five, six, and eight) don't believe Santa is real now - it's really put a damper on Christmas."

The school's headmaster Ian Paynter referred complain about the incident to the New South Wales education department.

"She was a casual teacher but she won't be a department spokesman told Reuters.

"She was not disciplined but did receive counselling about the age appropriateness of responses to questions."

The teacher, who usually takes high school students, was not reached for comment.

Woman, 80, dies after taking 'Bleach'

One elderly woman has died and two are in a serious condition in a Slough hospital after an incident at a nursing home.

Six women, all in their 80s, were taken to Wexham Park Hospital from Sunday afternoon onwards.

It is understood that they all drank a fluid believed to be a chemical substance similar to bleach, thinking it was a soft drink.

One woman died on Monday morning and two are said to be in a serious condition.

A Thames Valley Police spokesman told BBC News Online: "The Health and Safety Executive and the police are carrying out a joint investigation into the circumstances of the incident."

He said police were called to the nursing home in Slough on Sunday afternoon.

Paul Grant, the hospital's Director of Nursing, said: "Two women are seriously ill and three are stable."

Man electrocutes self during protest

An Iranian man committed suicide by electrocuting himself during a protest by nearly 2,000 workers over unpaid wages, the Kayhan newspaper said on Monday.

The man climbed an electricity pylon and connected himself to the cables to protest the eight months of unpaid wages, the conservative evening paper said.

The suicide happened as some 1,800 workers from the Faryab Mine Company blocked a major road between the southern port of Bandar-Abbas and the city of Kerman on Sunday, according to the paper.

It said riot police had been sent to the area where the protest continued on Monday, with more than 200 people

US issues fresh terror warning

The US has issued a fresh warning about possible attacks on American targets during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

Homeland Security Director, Tom Ridge, said the warning was based on an increase in the volume of perceived threats over the last few days.

"The source is more

is higher," he said.

He stressed that the threats were against no specific target, but added: "This is to remind America we're still at war and there is still a risk."

He added: "Now is not the time to back off. Obviously, the further we're removed from September 11, the natural tendency is to let down our guard. We cannot do that. We are a nation at

The new alert followed an earlier warning on October 29 of possible attacks during Ramadan, which is set to end in about two weeks.

It came on the heels of suicide bombings in Israel over the weekend and the launch of retaliatory strikes by Israel on Monday.

But Mr. Ridge said that the intelligence did not directly link the new threats to the increased level of

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# BUSINESS DAY

## Oni woos investors to Access Bank's share offer

Access Bank Plc Chairman, Chief Ayo Oni has said that the 1.2 million ordinary share offer of the bank is to the best interest of the bank's shareholders and other willing investors.

Oni said in a statement on the public offer being co-ordinated by NAL Merchant Bank Plc and Deriham Management Limited that the bank ensured that shareholders who wish to increase their shareholding could do so.

He added, however, that the offer is a public one which will allow other investors wishing to invest in the shares of the bank to partake in the proposed offer.

He predicted that the offer of 1.2 million ordinary shares of Access Bank of 50 kobo per share at N1 will succeed, urging interested investors to avail themselves of the opportunities provided by the offer.

The Access Bank's public offer kicked off on November 23 and is expected to end on December 17, 2001.

## Capacity building workshop kicks-off next week

The Nigerian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA) and the Centre for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), an affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Washington D. C. are organising a 4-day workshop on capacity building.

According to a press release by NACCIMA, the workshop which will address the executives of business, professional associations and chambers of commerce and industry in Nigeria, will hold between December 9 and 12, 2001.

The release said the workshop was borne out of necessity for business and professional associations in the country to acquire necessary skills in packaging improved services for effective delivery to their members.

It will also afford them a better position to relate more effectively with members of such associations and as well help in relating pro-actively with both the executive and legislative arms to influence legislation, policies and programmes that affect business and economy, according to NACCIMA.

The workshop is scheduled to hold at the Chris Ogunbanjo Foundation in Erunwon, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, and will be declared open by the speaker of Ogun State House of Assembly, Hon. Basharun Oladapo.



The African regional body of standards organisations called African Regional Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO) recent held its 28th council meeting in Abuja. Pictures shows from left Hon. Minister of State for Industry, Chief Lawrence Nwuruku, ARSO President, Mr. Austeem Khulumula, Secretary General, Dr. A. O. Oyejola and Dr. Yunusa Aliyu Dikko, Chairman, Governing Council (SON).

## Insurers urge FG to waive N20m premium

Private insurance companies in Nigeria have reiterated their appeal to the Federal Government to abolish the reinsurance law on cession.

In its 2002 pre-budget memorandum to the Federal Government, the Organised Private Sector (OPS) complained that the law on the compulsory reinsurance cession inhibits the growth and development of the ceding companies and should therefore be abolished.

The recommendations in the memo, if approved by the government, would waive the compulsory payment of N20 million to Nigeria Re-insurance by insurance companies that make about N100 million premium incomes on their direct

From Bose Musari, in Lagos

businesses. The memo was signed by the President of the Manufacturers' Association of Nigeria, Engineer Charles Ugwu, Alhaji Umaru Ndanusa, National President of NACCIMA and Mr. Bob Clarke, the Vice President of NECA.

It maintained that the compulsory cession retards the growth of well managed insurance companies since it (cession) applies to all insurance companies irrespective of the quality of their management and under-writing standards.

"Besides, Nigeria Reinsurance has been increasingly receding its businesses overseas, which indicates that the corporation

itself no longer has the capital to regain all that are compulsorily ceded to it negating the spirit of cession," the OPS said.

The insurers demanded that Nigeria-based assets be placed with a Nigerian insurance company which may reinsure such risks overseas in accordance with Nigerian law.

It particularly decried that the multinational companies still insure their Nigeria-based assets and properties in their countries of origin without due consideration to the insurance capacity and expertise available in Nigeria.

The organised private sector also recommended that the section 16 (1)(b) of the National Insurance Commission (NAICOM) Decree 1997, which directs all insurance institutions to pay one percent of their gross premium to NAICOM for the supervision of the industry be reviewed down natural to half per cent of net premium.

"Government should as well abolish the payment of VAT on brokers' commission," the OPS added.



Adamu Ciroma, Finance Minister.

## Stakeholders meet on democratisation of airwaves

Stakeholders will today, December 5, 2001 meet at a national conference in Lagos to discuss emerging issues towards democratisation of airwaves, and in particular popular access to radio in Nigeria.

The conference titled "Democratising Radio: Who Owns the Airwaves," is being put together by the African Radio Drama Association (ARDA).

Project Director, ARDA, Mrs. Alison Data Phido said at a press briefing in Lagos that the conference will "not only raise the question of ownership and control, but proffer solutions that will lead to true democratisation of the airwaves."

She noted that despite current efforts at democratising them, the electronic media particularly radio is still perceived as a powerful tool for public information and mobilisation only by those in power.

"Plural voices and certainly the opposition if there is ever such a group is regrettably totally exempted from or blacked-out of several radio and television stations in Nigeria today," Mrs. Phido observed.

She said this has created serious credibility problems for the media.

The project director

From Rakiya A. Muhammad, in Lagos

stated that the prevailing situation has been a source of concern to ARDA "because the resultant lack of trust extends even to developmental programs that should otherwise benefit from radio's accessibility to wide audiences.

Other issues that will be brought to fore at the conference include a framework for funding and sustaining radio, the responsibility of the audience; access by the public through community established and managed radio transmission.

The conference which would attract all heads of radio stations, key government functionaries, legislature, the media and the general public, will be declared open by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Alhaji Ghali Umar Na'Abba.

Guest Speakers include Dr. Vincent Maduka, former Director General, Nigeria Television Authority (NTA), Mrs. Ayo Obe, Director of the Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO), Mr. Lekan Ogunbanwo, General Manager Eko FM and Dr. Tom Adaba, former Director General, Nigeria Broadcast Commission.

## Econet extends GSM to Abeokuta

All arrangements have been concluded by one of the leading Global Systems for Mobile Communications (GSM) providers, Econet Wireless Limited, to extend its services to Ogun State, starting with Abeokuta, the state capital, come December 15, 2001.

A source close to the company informed our correspondent in Abeokuta that "Econet will extend its services to Abeokuta, Ogun State due to the increasing demand for its services by residents of the state.

Our source further revealed that efforts are being made by the company to ensure a hitch-free take off of the mobile telecommunications services in the state.

Before the expansion of its network to other big cities like Ijebu-Ode, Sagamu and Idiroko, Abeokuta will be the first point of call.

Already, residents of Abeokuta have started warming up to partake in the GSM revolution, as they visit some distribution outlets in the ancient city to inquire about costs of the line and

From Olumide Bajulaiye, in Abeokuta

handsets. A cross section of residents who spoke with our correspondent expressed joy at the proposed launch, viewing the development as timely.

"It will afford us the opportunity of keeping in contact with our dear ones in several parts of the country. I never imagined that it will take this long after its official launch before the GSM operators extend their services to Abeokuta," a staff of Moshood Abiola Polytechnic, said.



Bello Mohammed, Communications Minister.

## Securities investment tribunal underway

The Federal Ministry of Finance is making efforts to set up a Securities and Investment Tribunal which will be responsible for the adjudication of cases in the Nigerian capital market.

Securities and Exchange Commission's (SEC) Deputy Director/Head of Research and Market Development, Sylvester O. Akele disclosed this while fielding questions from newsmen at a press briefing to intimate Nigerians on SEC's seminar for members of the Bar and Bench etc.

Akele said that the increasing criticisms of SEC for the delay in setting up the tribunal is a misnomer since that responsibility is not its, saying that the government is already making effort to bring the body into being.

According to him, the major focus of the

From Bright Ewulu, in Lagos

forthcoming seminar, which commences tomorrow, 5th to 6th December 2001, at the NICON Hilton Hotel, Abuja, will be to examine the Investment and Securities Act (ISA) 1999.

Also, he stated that the seminar will "acquaint participants with the developments in the securities market, including laws, rules and regulations to enable them appreciate the market better."

It will make the Bar and Bench conversant with the Investments and Securities Act 1999 which expanded the scope of the capital market, he added.

He said essentially the effort is to prepare the minds of lawyers and judges for the expected upsurge in more cases involving the capital market due to the implementation of the ISA.

# Privatisation UPDATE

## Global Energy fined N9.8m over Nigerdock

Global Energy/J. Ray McDermott is to pay a fine of N9.8 million for failure to pay for the 51 per cent equity stake it acquired in Nigerdock Plc within the stipulated three-day deadline.

According to the memorandum of sale, whoever emerges as the core group/strategic investor in the privatised ship building



Ahmad el-Rufai, BPE, DG.

Stories by Osborne Adi Jnr.

company, was expected to pay up the winning sum within three days after winning the bid.

However, Global Energy/J. Ray McDermott after beating Navimor International/Stolt Offshore S. A. to clinch the 51 per cent equity stake held by the federal government could not pay up within the stipulated time until three days later.

BPE's spokesman Joseph Anichebe told reporters that the firm would be required to pay the fine amounting to 35 per cent of the principal amount for the failure to meet the deadline.

He said BPE resorted to the time option since there was no any reserve bidder as was the case with NITEL where Telnet emerged reserve bidder behind Investors International (London) Limited (IILL).

The privatisation of Nigerdock was dogged with delay as the company which

was earlier slated for sale October, 30 2001, had to be suspended following the withdrawal of its year 2000 audited account by the management in a move to forestall the opening of its financial bids.

However, the BPE in a swift move, decided to announce November 9, 2001 as new date where the bids were opened and Global Energy/J. Ray McDermott was declared winner.

## Expert tasks Benue investors

“Wake up to the challenges of privatisation now or face future marginalisation,”

Dr. J. E. Ode, Acting Managing Director/Chief Executive,

Benue Investment and Property Company Limited told the people of Benue State at the one-day sensitisation workshop in Makurdi, on “benefits of Privatisation,” organised by Media Trust Limited, Zonal Communication Consultant for Bureau of Public Enterprise (BPE) for North Central Zone.

Mr. Ode expressed displeasure with Benue's poor performance in the first phase of privatisation, warning that Benue people should not sit on the fence any more because “what is going on now amounts to sharing the proverbial national cake.” The people of Benue to actively participate in the exercise or should not cry of marginalisation.

He called on the Benue State Government and the Benue Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (BECCIMA) to collectively mount a massive media campaign to sensitise the people on the benefits of privatisation.

Also, Mr. Ambrose Feese, Chairman, Cornerstone Insurance Plc., said in the first phase of privatisation, Benue ranked 30th position out of the 36 states having acquired only 18,173,183 million shares out of the 30,278,417 million shares allotted to it. He implored the people to regard the assets or enterprises being sold to them as family silver and embrace its participation in order to acquire wealth.

He enjoined the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) to step up wider publicity and expand the channels for distribution of document to the investing public and use local government council post offices, chambers of

The National Council on Privatisation (NCP) said it provided for the sum of N253.9 million that was used to clear the five-year salary arrears of workers of Nigeria Paper Mill, Jebba.

The council said through BPE spokesman, Joseph Anichebe, that the amount was arrived at by McDaniels Consultants Limited, which undertook the verification of the company's unpaid staff salaries and outstanding remittances to various tax bodies.

The remittances, he said were owed to the Federal Inland Revenue Service for PAYE, Nigerian Social Insurance Trust Fund (NSITF) Contributions, State Development Levies,

## NCP releases N253m for Jebba Mill workers' salary arrears

Pension Funds and Cooperative Thrift.

According to Anichebe the amount does not in any case cover liabilities that may have been incurred by the company such as loans, either local or multilateral and outstanding payments to contractors, creditors and public utilities.

The disbursement of outstanding salaries to workers who last collected their pay in September, 1996, has since been flagged off by industry minister, Chief Kola Jamodu, who is also a member of NCP.



Vice-President Atiku Abubakar.

## NITEL's privatisation will improve telecommunications —Experts

As the federal government successfully executed its privatisation of NITEL, the head of Mass Communication Department, University of Maiduguri, Dr. Umar Pate has expressed optimism that telephone services will soon become easily accessible and more effective in the country.

In an interview with *Business Day* in his office, Dr. Pate attributed the failure of NITEL pre-privatisation to make telephone services available to majority of Nigerians to the problem of management which “has remained inefficient, uncoordinated and lacked continuity.”

The university don said the former NITEL over-employed staff and expended huge resources in activities not central to its core operations, thus making it a bureaucracy rather than an efficient service provider.

Dr. Pate also added that successive military governments in the country have neglected NITEL because “they saw telephone as a super-luxury which should not be available to everyone.”

With the successful take-over of NITEL by Investors International of London (IIL), Dr. Umar Pate believed that the new owners of the nation's carrier “will expand the services of

NITEL, improve the quality of those services to capture the available market so that in the long-run we will have what is referred to as the ‘economy of scale’ which will bring prices down.”

With a population of over 120 million people, Nigeria, said Dr. Umar Pate, has enormous market potentials in the telecommunications sector, believing that NITEL's new owners will come out with “innovative means of managing the place and will not sit down and watch their money being wasted away.”

Also blaming bureaucracy for NITEL's past failure, Engineer Kabir Wanori, Managing Director of Sky Network Communications in Maiduguri said with the massive infusion of capital by profit-oriented organisations, the cost of telephone will come down because these organisations will strive to recover their investments by making telephone more efficient and accessible to everyone and thus make profit.

Engineer Wanori also believes that NITEL's new owners possess the necessary technical expertise to turnaround the organisation.

From Terna Doki, in Makurdi

commerce, ministry of commerce and state investment companies.

Mr. Feese stated that banks should also be made to accept lodgement of dividend warrants into savings account and the extension of unit trust schemes being concentrated in urban centres to state capital and local government

headquarters to enhance easy acquisition for small investors as ways of improving the privatisation exercise.

Contributing, professor Idowu, of the Department of Economics, Benue State University, Makurdi said echo that it is absolutely meaningless for people to expect government to run everything for them from hotels to industries. He

stressed the need to develop a solid private sector and encourage people to fully participate. He lamented the absence of federal presence in Benue, saying there is a correspondence between federal government and income distribution in a place. He called on the federal government to make public the detailed performance of already privatised companies.



## TENDER NOTICE CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA NIGERIAN TREASURY BILLS

Notice is hereby given by the Central Bank of Nigeria that 91-day Federal Government of Nigeria Treasury Bills amounting to N21,000 million will be issued by an auction-based system on Thursday, 01/11/2001.

Interested Authorized Dealers (Commercial/Merchant Banks, Designated Discount Houses and Brokers) are invited to submit tenders to reach the Public Debt Office, Central Bank of Nigeria, Lagos, not later than 1.30 p.m on Tuesday, 30/10/2001.

Each tender must be in multiple of N1,000, subject to a minimum of N10,000 per tender. Authorized Dealers are allowed to submit multiple bids and quote multiple rates. A tender may be for own account of Authorised Dealers or made on behalf of interested members of the public, who are advised to apply to their banks or Brokers for the Bills.

Tenders for the Bills should be submitted on the prescribed printed forms in duplicate and in sealed envelopes clearly marked “TENDER FOR BILLS”. The result of the tender will be announced before the close of business on Tuesday, 30/10/2001. The Bank reserves the right to reject any tender in part or in full.

Allotment letters will be issued to successful tenderers on Wednesday, 31/10/2001. Payment in full for the amounts of the accepted tenders must be made to the Central Bank of Nigeria not later than 1.30p. m on the issue date 25/10/2001. This will normally be effected by direct debit to the accounts of the affected Authorized Dealers which should ensure that their accounts with the Bank are adequately funded for this purpose.

PUBLIC DEBT OFFICE  
CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA  
TINUBU SQUARE  
LAGOS.

# BUSINESS DAY

## Tinubu assures Lagosians IPP will survive

Governor Bola Ahmed Tinubu of Lagos State on Monday assured Lagosians that the "purported" liquidation of ENRON, sponsors of the state independent power project (IPP), would not derail the scheme.

In a reaction to the reported liquidation of the international energy company's equity, Tinubu



Governor Bola Tinubu of Lagos State.

allayed the fears of the people of Lagos, saying "the project is sound, safe and going on."

The governor, who spoke at the 10th Obafemi Awolowo Foundation lecture held at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), Lagos, emphasised

that there was nothing to fear.

"To those getting jittery over the September 11 crisis and the news of ENRON's liquidation for its equity in the international financial market, let me assure you that you have nothing to fear," Tinubu said.

"First of all, we diversified the base of that programme (IPP) barely a year ago. Our own portion has since been taken over by AES. It's just the acronym of ENRON that people are used to. AES is the owner of our own portion of the emergency power project, the company that is responsible for the foreign investment and asset

management of ENRON is not going into liquidation."

Earlier, Tinubu observed that the vision and philosophy for which Awolowo lived and died had continued to be relevant more than 40 years after they were enumerated.

He urged the country's political leaders to toe the line of Awo in policy formulation and

implementation in the interest of all Nigerian citizens, especially the poor majority.

Speaking on the occasion, Senate President Anyim Pius Anyim commended those behind the Awolowo Foundation annual lecture, which he said would go a long way to sustain and propagate the values and ideals for which the late statesman lived.

## FG not doing enough to market tourism - Resort owner

The Federal Government has been blamed for not doing enough to market tourism in the country in spite of its revenue yielding potentials.

Making this view known in an interview with tourism correspondents at Ajilete, the Managing Director of SAAM Resort, Mr. Muyiwa Phillips, urged journalists to highlight the importance of marketing and promoting tourism.

Phillips said there was an

urgent need to formulate a strong tourism policy, establish a tourism bank and marketing outfit for the country, which would accommodate all practitioners, public and private, adding that a lot still needed to be done in marketing local tourist destinations.

He urged the government to provide enabling environment to promote tourism and make it a revenue yielding venture like some developed countries which attract more tourists yearly than their countries population.

The managing director cited the case of Ghana where, he said, that once a tourism practitioner had an outfit of more than ten rooms, the government gave a tax waiver of about four years in addition to free import of goods and materials.

Phillips said that SAAM Resort, Ajilete, was a unique place and retreat for local and foreign tourists who wanted to be close to nature and relax after the hectic and stressful life in the cities.



The National Executive Council (NEC) of the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG) held its triennial delegate conference last week in Abuja. Picturing shows: (L-R), Senator Bello H. Gwarzo, Chairman, Senate Committee on Labour and Productivity; Mr. Georges Buresi, Managing Director of Elf Petroleum Nigeria Limited; Comrade Bisisibe Awe, NUPENG's out-going chairman, and Amb. G. B. Preware, Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Labour and Productivity, during the conference. Pix: Felix Onigbinde.

## GSM tariff will tumble - NCC boss

Hopes of cheaper GSM services has again been rekindled with the regulatory body assuring Nigerians that prices will fall as soon as interconnections were completed and NITEL rolled out its network.

"As soon as the interconnection issues are overcome and NITEL rolls out its network, I have every confidence that the tariff will come down to a level that will be comparable to other parts of Africa," Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) chief executive officer, Ernest Ndukwe said.

"The interconnections are not complete, the operators can not even handle the number of subscribers coming at the moment," said the NCC chief, adding that the network would be further congested and compound the problem if they rolled out too fast than the network could accommodate.

Ndukwe explained in an interview with the Southern Africa correspondent of the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Midland, north of Johannesburg, that the NCC had not been "very bullish" about the current high GSM tariff regime because it was aware of the limitations of operators.

Ndukwe, who was in Africa for the recently concluded ITU Telecoms Conference, said that the country was negotiating tariff reduction by ensuring

increased competition in the market and having dialogue with the operators to consider some reductions so that the customer would not be grossly disadvantaged.

The NCC chief described as "untenable" suggestions that the \$285 million licence fees paid by the operators was responsible for the high GSM tariff.

"That is untenable as far as the NCC is concerned. People don't recover investments on licences overnight, it takes time to do that," said Ndukwe.

He added that such high tariffs "could only be sustained if the market can bear it," he, stressing that there had been "consistent reduction" in the various charges indicated since the networks were rolled out in August.

The NCC is "actually expecting more (reductions) in the near future," he further said.

Up till now, the GSM operators have not received the kind of facility and capacity they required for a complete and seamless connection between them and the incumbent operator because of the limitations of the NITEL network.

The NCC boss expressed hope that NITEL would honour its commitment to completely remove the interconnection bottlenecks this month as promised so that networks can talk between each other without the usual blockages and call congestions.

## Overpaid customer returns N10,000 to bank

A customer with Union Bank, Lokoja branch, Mrs. Janet Oluyemi, at the weekend returned N10,000 cash to the cashier on duty although she had already left the bank premises before realising that she had been overpaid.

Oluyemi, who wanted to withdraw N15,000 from her account was, however, paid N25,000 by the cashier who gave her N10,000 in N20 denomination and N15,000 in N50 denomination.

Other customers who were impressed by the "demonstration of honesty" with the Yuletide just round the corner, showered blessings on Oluyemi, while the cashier thanked her "for saving my job."

Oluyemi told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) that she had to return the money because, "as a child of God, if I spend anything out of it, my conscience would continue to haunt me."

"Besides, if the bank traces the mistake to my

## NACFA boss seeks support for cabotage law

The Federal Government and maritime stakeholders have been urged to support the passage of a cabotage law in the

country to create employment opportunities and alleviate the plight of seafarers.

The Managing Director of National Clearing and Forwarding Agency (NACFA), Mr. Andy Isichei, gave the advice in Lagos in a paper titled "Professionalising Shipping in Nigeria" at the investiture and award ceremony of the Certified Institute of Shipping (CIS).

In the paper, Isichei averred that "cabotage is the only policy that can empower Nigerians to participate in trading in their country, give them employment opportunities and guarantee foreign exchange and local earnings."



Ojo Madueke, Transport Minister.

He cautioned policy makers not to bow to any pressure and destruction from passing the cabotage bill.

According to him, the cabotage law entails domestication of the business of maritime as being done in U.S., Norway and other parts of the world where maritime business is exclusively preserved for the citizens.

The NACFA chief executive emphasised the need for the establishment of a maritime bank that would give indigenous maritime practitioners the financial muscle, noting that thousands of Nigerian seafarers were jobless, because of their inability to own shipping lines.

He described the re-admission of Nigeria into the council of International Maritime Organisation (IMO) as a good development because it would position Nigeria well enough to influence decisions in the body, while the nation's seafarers would get certified thus qualified to work in any part of the world.

Isichei, however, described the level of patronage of NACFA as still very low requiring aggressive marketing.

# Attacking Iraq would be America

**Y**our Excellency, Iraq is known to have been embattled for years over the invasion of Kuwait. What is the situation in the country today with regards to its effect on the human condition?

Well, as you know, since 1990 there has been a UN resolution which was adopted and imposed on Iraq, and Iraq intends to maintain its stand against that resolution and its sanctions, which have resulted in the death of over one and a half million Iraqis because of lack of medicine, in one instance. The sanctions committee has practised a silent genocide against the Iraqi people. Iraq has fulfilled its obligations. Therefore UN should fulfil its obligation too, by lifting the sanctions immediately. Most countries have agreed to this except the U.S. and Britain, which use the UN as a tool to punish about 25 million Iraqis.

You are talking of a genocide in which million of lives were lost including about 500,000 Iraqi children. But Madeleine Albright former U.S. Secretary of State, said it was "acceptable". How do you react to this statement?

If she said that, then she is justifying terrorism. Is that how to fight terrorism? Remember no Arab Muslim or any other country is doing that, but only U.S. and Britain are doing this

without the support of the resolution on the so-called no fly Zone which was imposed by them. With this, almost on a daily basis they are bombing Iraq, and killing innocent civilians. So one may describe that as an act of state terrorism.

To what extent have the UN sanctions affected the economy of Iraq?

It has affected it very badly. That is why we are saying that America's action could be equated to an act of state terrorism. The representatives of the US and Britain at the UN have veto powers. Suppose I had contract with a Nigerian Company to produce medicines, these representatives can say no to this contract. That is, they have some kind of veto powers. Through this they have made things worse for Iraq in terms of acquiring valuable items.

The allied forces attacked and destroyed Baghdad during the Gulf-war, but the amazing report about Baghdad is that it is more beautiful after its reconstruction. What is the secret behind this?

It is the outcome of a very strong determination, and the very strong leadership of his Excellency, President Saddam Hussein. He believes very strongly in the principle that we have all the potentials to unite, build, and defend our country, even though the super

powers are against us. This is a very unique leadership.

You did say that America is involved in an act of state terrorism. To what extent can it be justified, seeing that it has declared war against terrorism?

America is the first terrorist state, because it practices terrorism all over the world, especially against Muslim countries. For instance, it bombed a medicine factory in Sudan just because it suspected Sudan without evidence, and therefore went ahead to kill innocent people. All over the world, virtually everywhere is being bombed by the U.S. America supports the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land which continuously leads to violence, and the death of many people. Is it not an act of terrorism when you are killing innocent Palestinians or Iraqi people? In fact America practices terrorism everyday. When they attacked them inside the U.S. they described it as terrorism, but they do not judge themselves. His Excellency, President Saddam Hussein, has written two letters to the Americans urging them to use their wisdom, and use peaceful methods and not force, in the settlement of disputes. But after about sixty years of America's coming into prominence, they know nothing but force, and we are

H.E. Sabah J. Omran is the Iraqi Ambassador to Nigeria. In this interview with Musa Aliyu and Jibrin Abubakar of our Foreign Desk, he makes the point that it would be a grave mistake for the U.S. to attack Iraq in the course of its current war on Terrorism. He also comments on developments on the international political scene.



H.E. Sabah J. Omran Iraqi Ambassador to Nigeria

asking them to change their mentality. That is why they are recognizing for the first time, that the Palestinians have the right to exist, and have their own state.

Now given the question of Palestinians having their own state, one may be sceptical about this, because of the rather slow pace of its implementation. What is your view on this?

I agree 100 per cent that the issue of the Palestinian state is not

genuine, since they established the Zionist entity. Up till now everybody knows that they are supplying Israel with tanks and weapons, aeroplanes and money, and they are using the veto powers of the UN.

There have been continuing allegations by the U.S. that Iraq is developing weapons of mass destruction, and that this is largely the reason why an intensive monitoring system is being exerted on Iraq. How true is this allegation?

It is an American fabrication. But it is very simple. After ten years of destroying weapons by the UN team, they know very well that Iraq has nothing. Despite this they used the issue of weapons of mass destruction to justify their acts of terrorism against Iraq. In summary, they are not satisfied with the government of his Ex-

cellency, President Saddam Hussein.

What is the nature of the relationship between the people and the government of Iraq in the context of human rights?

We have invited so many objective countries, including Nigeria to visit Iraq to see the nature of the human rights situation. In Iraq we have good political institutions, including the existence of a party system even from the Kurdish minority, as can be found in any democratic system functioning in other countries. But the fact is that we are against American policies, and we cannot allow some powers to dictate to us.

How true is it that the Iraqi government disallowed international observers from carrying out their duties in Iraq?

It is not true. Iraq provided all services to the UN Team. The inspection, and many other visiting teams had come into Iraq for more than ten years now. They destroyed virtually every weapon they saw at our own expense. Again, I say this is an American fabrication. It is a political tool. What is the UN? It is a tool in America's hands.

*Well, it is similar. I am sure you've seen many pictures on the television, in which hundreds of civilians have been killed, and also the bombed hospitals too. They have done it too in Iraq and we have evidence of that. If you have the chance to visit Iraq, you will see the remains of these hospitals, and schools, and the famous one is the Shelter built by the Swedish company. It is recognised by the International Red Cross. You can see it by satellite or airplane, but America attacked the building and killed more than 400 children sheltering there. When you go to Iraq now, it has become a Museum. That is to show you that they even hit the shelter, which is internationally recognised.*

## Interview

# Saddam's gravest error

## — Iraqi Ambassador

Concerning the issue of human rights, the U.S. often cites the killing of those that are op-



posed to the Iraqi government like the case of Kamal Hussein who defected, and was later found dead with his brother. Does this sound right?

His Excellency President Saddam Hussein is the grand father of Kamal Hussein's children. So how could a grand father be that cruel to his grand children. The issue is that Kamal Hussein has done a lot of damage to Iraqi sovereignty, and therefore if the law said he deserved death, what could we do? Kamal Hussein and his brother both married the daughters of Saddam Hussein.

Soon after the September 11 attacks on the U.S. so many countries sent condolences, Iraq did not do so immediately, but suddenly did so after President Saddam Hussein had a change of mind. What was responsible for this?

First of all, I want to state that Iraq didn't change its mind. Secondly, Iraq didn't send condolences to the government of the U.S., because they killed about one and a half million Iraqi children and women. When a country participates on a daily basis in the genocide of our people, do

you expect condolences from us? That would have been hypocritical! His Excellency, President Saddam Hussein sent condolences to those Americans who sympathised with our cause. So Iraq did not change its mind. We are against the policy of killing innocent people anywhere in the world.

**What is the nature of relations between your country and other Arab countries, especially Saudi Arabia, as Saudi ground was used to raid your country during the Gulf war?**

We have excellent relations with so many Arab countries. These include Egypt, Syria, Jordan and others. In fact I can tell you that with Egypt we have business relations of more than \$3 billion yearly. With Syria, we have more than \$1.5 billion. We have excellent relations economically and culturally with many countries. By the way we have so many commercial relations with Saudi Arabia, and with Iraq companies, and it is a matter of Politics. Since some Arab countries are going with the American policies blindly, we have some reservations on that, and these are very clear.

**Can you comment on the situation in Afghanistan? Is it similar to the experience in 1991?**

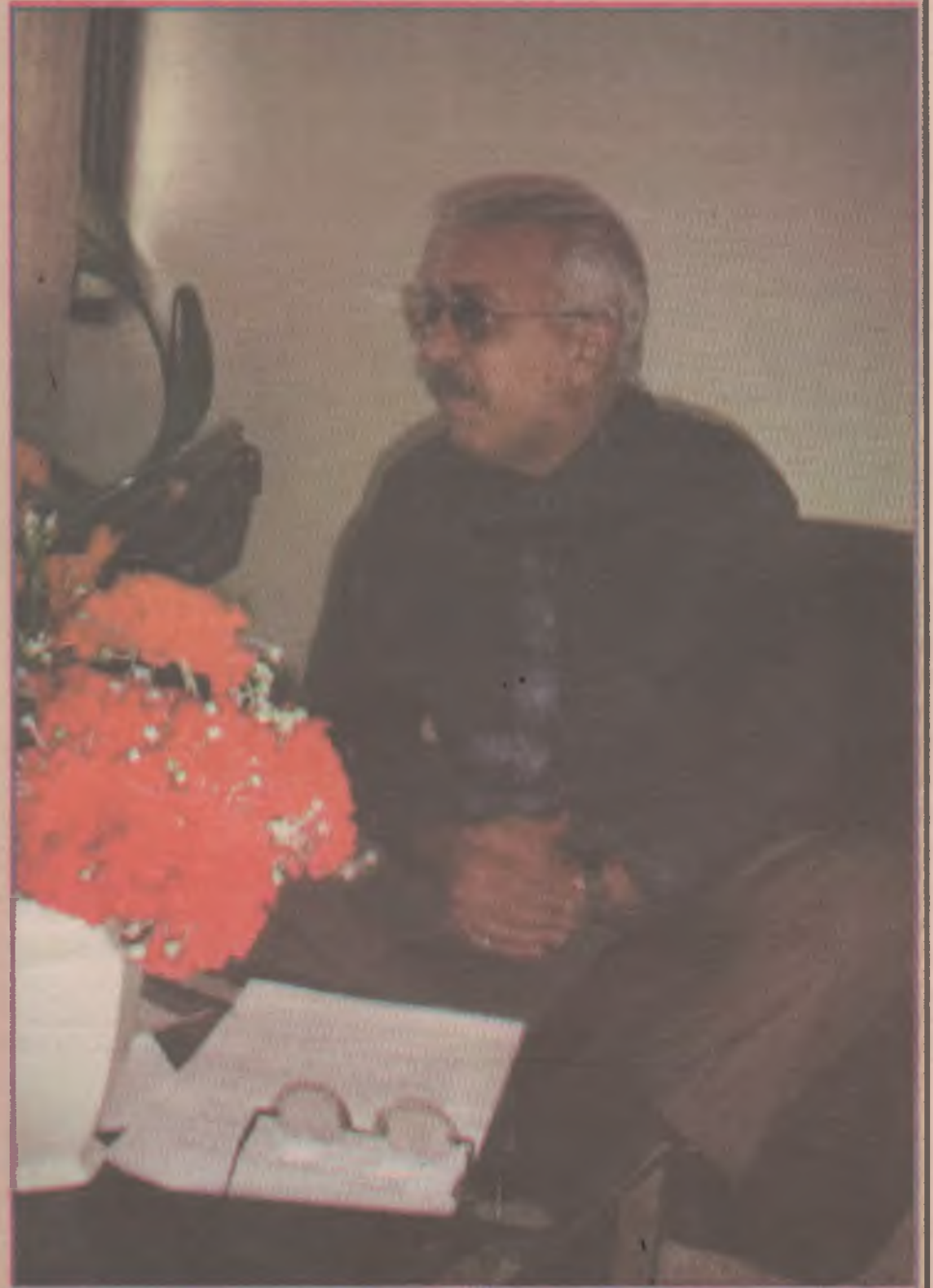
Well, it is similar. I am sure you have seen many pictures on the television, in which hundreds of civilians have been killed, and also the bombed hospitals too. They have done it too in Iraq, and we have evidence of that. If you have the chance to visit Iraq, you will see the remains of these hospitals,

and schools, and the famous one is the Shelter built by the Swedish company. It is recognised by the International Red Cross. You can see it by satellite or airplane, but America attacked the building and killed more than 400 children sheltering there. When you go to Iraq now, it has become a Museum. That is to show you that they even hit the shelter, which is internationally recognised.

They are using cluster bombs, and other prohibited bombs also. Even the CNN and Al-Jazeera network have shown some of them. With regards to Al-Qaeedah, Iraq has nothing to do with Al-Qaeedah or Osama bin Laden. You can go ahead to kill Osama bin Laden and his group, but do not kill innocent people.

**In continuation of the war against terrorism, the U.S government has said that it would go ahead to deal with other countries sponsoring terrorism like Iraq, Iran, Sudan and others, because they described these countries as the countries developing weapons of mass destruction. How would you react to this?**

My reaction as usual



H.E. Sabah J. Omran during the interview

is that Iraq has nothing to do with Osama bin Laden. Iraq has nothing to do with Al-Qaeeda, everybody knows this. The U.S. knows this too. Since we are not connected with that, why are they coming to attack us? If they are coming to Iraq to expand their terrorist acts, then we are ready and prepared for them. But they are going to make a big mistake. Not only are we saying this as Iraqis, but Amr Musa, the General-Secretary of the Arab league said that, the Egyptian foreign

Minister also spoke in the same vein

**So, what would be your reaction supposing they go ahead, because they are prepared too?**

If this terrorist country (U.S.), wants to commit another outrage what do you want me to say? If they say they are coming we are ready for them both mentally and physically. I can't say more than this.

**What is your assessment of Nigeria-Iraq relations?**

I can tell you that our relations have always

been excellent, since this Nigeria's independence more than forty years ago. We have so many common points both culturally and politically, and we are looking forward to promoting these. But since we have difficulties caused by the sanctions in Iraq, this makes it difficult to promote our common points of interest, but our two leaders are willing to promote the excellent relations between both countries.

**My reaction as usual is that Iraq has nothing to do with Osama bin Laden. Iraq has nothing to do with Al-Qaeeda, everybody knows this. The U.S. knows this too. Since we are not connected with that, why are they coming to attack us? If they are coming to Iraq to expand their terrorist acts, then we are ready and prepared for them. But they are going to make a big mistake. Not only are we saying this as Iraqis, but Amr Musa, the General-Secretary of the Arab league said that, the Egyptian foreign Minister also spoke in the same vein**

NEWS

# Missing guns: IGP appeals against ruling

The Inspector General of Police (IGP), Alhaji Musiliu Smith, has filed an application seeking to stop a Lagos-based arms dealer from executing an



Mr. Musiliu Smith

From Bamgboye Adelanwa, in Lagos

N87.5 million judgement over the disappearance of 749 double-barrelled shot-guns kept at the Police Armoury, Apapa, Lagos.

In the motion on notice filed on behalf of the IG by Chief Afe Babalola (SAN), it was stated that J.O. Eze, the plaintiff, deliberately and fraudulently concealed some facts from the court before obtaining an order to execute and recover N87.5 million from the Federal Government account with the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).

The plaintiff, J.O. Eze, a registered dealer in firearms and ammunitions, had 14 years ago dragged the

Attorney General of the Federation before a Lagos High Court claiming N5.3 million being damages for negligence in the keeping of his 2,081 double-barrelled shotguns which were in the custody of the Nigeria Police Armoury, Apapa.

The 2,081 guns were seized from the plaintiff during the course of investigation into alleged unlawful importation of firearms against him in 1979.

The plaintiff was eventually charged to the Federal High Court in charge No FHC/L/58C/81 and the shotguns were tendered in evidence. But judgement was later in 1987 reversed when the Supreme Court struck out the case and ordered that the plaintiff be discharged.

Following a demand by the plaintiff, the NPF on June

29, 1987 released the guns to the plaintiff.

Daily Trust gathered from the statement of claims filed by the plaintiff in court that upon the physical check and count, it was discovered that 749 shotguns were missing from their cases and 520 guns were found damaged.

According to the plaintiff, it was the duty of the defendant to keep the said guns under tight security, adding that in breach of such duty, the defendant kept the guns in a manner that large proportions were removed by an unknown person and damage caused for want of proper care.

Daily Trust also gathered that a Lagos High Court on January 10, last year, delivered judgement in the suit against the Attorney General of the Federation.

Mr. Justice Ade Alabi also ordered the CBN to pay N80.2 million with interest until the amount was paid.

Armed with this judgement, the plaintiff got another order of court requesting the CBN to pay the judgement debt.

Not satisfied with this decision, the IG who was purported to have been joined is now appealing against the decision of the Lagos High Court.

Meanwhile, further hearing has been fixed for December 12, this year.

## Sankera community replies army spokesman

The Sankera community in Ukum local government area of Benue State has disagreed with Army spokesman, Col. Felix Chukuma, who exonerated the army from blame in the destruction of police stations and abduction of police personnel during the military invasion of Zaki-Biam and adjoining communities.

A spokesman of the community, Mr. Simon Tor Melabu, in a press statement issued to media houses yesterday, said an assessment conducted by the community, the local and international media as well as Human Rights Organisations has indicted the Nigerian Army as being responsible for the destruction of four Police Stations including the Divisional Police Station at Sankera, as well as the killing of Inspector Thomas Mougá, Police Station Officer in Gbeji.

According to Mr. Tor Melabu, a former Manager of Radio Benue and the State



Lt. General Ogomudia COAS

publishing company, the assessment was further confirmed during the visit of Vice President, Alhaji Abubakar to the State on October 31, 2001.

He maintained that during the visit the Benue State Police Commissioner, Mr. Cyprian Oneprojire, in the presence of journalists conducted the Vice President and his entourage, which included the Inspector General of Police, Alhaji Musiliu Smith, the Minister of State, Defence, Alhaji Lawal Batarawa, Benue State Governor, Mr. George Akume, round the scene of destruction which he stated was done during the invasion.

"The dignitaries were also briefed on how the army overran a Catholic Parish in Anyiin, burnt a church in Tse Adoor and murdered Rev. A.A. Alu of the NKST Church in Zaki-Biam who was in Cassock," Mr. Tor Melabu stressed.

The former General Manager maintained that eyewitnesses had earlier confirmed to journalists that before setting the Zaki-Biam Police Station and Police vehicles parked there ablaze, the soldiers had mercilessly flogged the DPO and other officers on duty.

Mr. Melabu expressed regret that at this moment of human history and under a civilian dispensation, the military "is conduction itself above the rule of law by being the complainant, a plaintiff, prosecutor, judge and enforcer in their own matter."

As the Kaduna State government has concluded the first stage in the process of local government creation, the state branch of the Nigeria Union of Local Government Employees (NULGE) has advised that only economically viable council areas be created.

NULGE's advice was contained in an address delivered by the newly-elected president of the state branch, Comrade Christopher B. Zomo, at the Quadrennial State Delegates Conference held at Hamdala Hotel, Kaduna.

Comrade Zomo stated that though the union appreciated the efforts of the state government to create new local government areas, "the means should try and justify the end."

He cautioned that failure to observe this fact might result in creating local government areas that may not stand the test of time, "especially given the fact that the Federal Government has no intention of funding them."

The new president, who served in acting capacity for almost six months, also commended the Kaduna State House of Assembly for passing the bill on presidential system of government at the local government level, adding "that this will greatly reduce the dictatorial tendencies of some council chairmen."

Zomo, however, warned the legislative arm of the council areas not to see the new found independence as an opportunity to cause confusion and retard the

## Kaduna NULGE cautions govt on new LGs

From Ibrahim Dan Halilu, in Kaduna

development programmes initiated by the various council chairmen.

"While NULGE is on strike for poor funding of our councils, we will not of course fold our hands and watch the siphoning of resources by political office-holders for their personal use," the president emphasised.

Other elected officials include Abdullahi Aliyu, (Vice President); Shehu Abubakar, (Treasurer); Alex James, (Auditor); Jabiru Danlami, (Auditor II); Daniya Lale and Umaru Sale Kajuru as Trustees and Julius Garkuwa as Public Relations Officer (PRO).



Gov Makarfi

### Ramadan 20 1422H (Wed 5 Dec, 2001)

P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	A.M.	A.M.
Ishai	Magrib	Asar	Zuhur	Fatar-rana	Alfijr
7.01,	6.07,	3.30	12.25,	6.34,	5.19

The above represents the earliest times of the daily obligatory prayer for Kaduna. Below are the times variations in respect of named towns. Zuhur variations can serve for Asar prayer while those in respect of Magrib could do well for Ishai.

TOWNS	المغرب Magrib Minutes	الظهر Zuhur Minutes	الافجر Alfijr Minutes
Aba	+9	0	-9
Abakaliki	+10	+3	-4
Abeokuta	+23	+17	+11
Abuja	+4	+1	-1
Akure	+14	+9	+4
Argungu	+7	+11	+15
Ankpa	+4	-1	-6
Auchi	+11	+5	-1
Azare	-13	-11	-9
Bama	-27	-25	-23
Bauchi	+9	-9	-9
Benin	+15	+8	+1
Bichi	-6	-3	0
Bida	+5	+6	+4
Birnin Kebbi	+10	+13	+16
Biu	-19	19	-19
Calabar	+6	-3	-12
Damaturu	-21	18	-16
Daura	-8	-4	0
Dutse	-10	-7	-5
Enugu	+7	0	-7
Funtua	-1	+1	+2
Gombe	-15	-15	-15
Gumi	+6	+9	+11
Gusau	-1	+2	+4
Gwedabawa	+4	+9	+13
Hadejia	-13	-10	-7
Ibadan	+19	+14	+9
Ife	+17	+12	+7
Ilorin	+15	+12	+9
Jalingo	-13	-16	-18
Jere	+1	-1	-2
Jos	-5	-6	-7
Kafanchan	-1	-3	-5
Kaiama	+15	+13	+12
Kafin Maiyaki	-6	-3	-1
Kano	-7	-4	-2
Katsina	-4	0	+4
Kontogora	+8	+8	+8
Lafia	-2	-5	-8
Lagos	+23	+16	+9
Lokoja	+7	+3	-1
Maiduguri	-26	-23	-21
Mekurdi	+1	-4	-9
Minna	+6	+4	+2
Misau	-15	-13	-12
Mubi	-24	-24	-24
Nguru	-16	-12	-8
Okene	+10	+5	0
Ogbomoso	+17	+13	+9
Onitsha	+11	+3	-5
Oyo	+18	+14	+10
Port Harcourt	+11	+2	-7
Potiskum	-17	-16	-13
Segamu	+21	+15	+9
Saki	+19	+16	+13
Sokoto	+8	+8	+13
Umuahia	+8	0	-9
Wukari	-5	-9	-13
Wurno	+3	+8	+12
Warri	+18	+7	-2
Yola	-18	-20	-22
Zaria	-2	-1	0
Cotonou - Benin	+27	+20	+13
Ndjamena - Chad	-33	-30	-28
Niamey - Niger	+16	+21	+25
Zinder - Niger	-12	-8	-1
Yaounde - Cameroun	-5	-16	-26

NEWS

**Briefs**  
**Gusau**

Senator Yusha'u Mohammed Anka, representing Zamfara West Senatorial District has described the Obasanjo administration as "completely blind and lacking direction." Senator Anka, who spoke to newsmen at the weekend in Gusau, said since Obasanjo's administration came into being in May 1999 "no single viable project has been initiated that has direct bearing on the common man despite the huge amount of money being expended by his administration."

He stated that currently, over 20 per cent of the population is living below the poverty line.

**Benin City**

Islamic clerics in Benin have condemned the arrest, deportation and victimisation of foreign Islamic scholars especially Pakistani nationals who are in the country on voluntary propagation of Islamic religion.

This call was made by some Islamic clerics led by Mallam Abubakar Yashe at the Aduwawa Central Mosque in Benin City, during a special Ramadan fast, break organised by some indigenous Muslims in the State.

**Lokoja**

Tragedy struck recently in Ankpa Ikogi State when a tanker conveying diesel oil summer saulted and exploded, burning to death no fewer than seven persons.

Daily Trust gathered that the accident occurred when the driver of the tanker lost control and the vehicle ran into a ditch and somersaulted in the process.

**Lagos**

Lagos socialite, Mrs. Adebisi Dan Musa, alias Bisket, and two others will know their fate today when judgement in an 18 count criminal charge of child stealing, slavery and trafficking will be delivered by Chief Magistrate Sybil Nwaka, sitting at the Botanical Gardens Ebute Metta (Lagos) Chief Magistrate Court.

**Makurdi**

The Managing Director of Rantito Dairies, producers of Tito Yoghurt and other fast foods, Mr. Isaac Akeem, has joined the distinguished league of Rotract Club of Nigeria award winners. The Rotract Club District 9102 Makurdi conferred on Rotarians Mr. And Mrs. Isaac Akeem its Vocational Excellence Award for service to humanity in the areas of commerce and industry as well as their philanthropy to the poor in society

**Nigerian names child after Osama Bin Laden**

There was a mild drama at the naming ceremony of the fifth child of the Zonal Coordinator of the Muslim Students' Society of Nigeria (MSSN) B Zone, Malam Abideen Olaiya, when he named the



Osama Bin Laden

baby after the most wanted man on earth, Osama Bin Laden.

The ceremony, which took place in Ibadan, Oyo, at the weekend, was witnessed by muslims brothers and sisters, who expressed surprise when the name of the child was mentioned.

Olaiya, an Islamic activist, announced to the gathering that henceforth, in line with the Islamic tradition "the name of my baby is Abdulqudus Ramadan Osama Bin Laden."

Those in attendance, who were taken aback by the name, initially thought he was joking, but to their surprise, he brought out souvenirs and stickers with the name already printed on them. Afraid of being la-

belled "terrorists" most of the guests who were offered the gifts, politely refused to collect them.

Explaining the rationale behind the name, Olaiya said

he vowed to name the child, if he were a boy, after Allah's name, adding: "Coincidentally, he was born during the month of Ramadan."

He said Bin Laden stood

for justice and fairness to the Muslim world, explaining that to demonstrate his love for him, "I and my wife decided to name our fifth child after him."

**Former pro-chancellor advises on private varsities**

Prof. Bashir Ikara, a former Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council of Igbinedion University, Okada, in Edo, has advised the Federal Government against the establishment of more private universities, besides the three existing ones.

Speaking to the News



Prof. Borisade

Agency of Nigeria (NAN) Monday, in Kaduna, Ikara advised those wishing to establish private universities to wait for a while and "allow the present ones to mature, to enable Nigerians learn from their experience."

He expressed regret that the pattern of establishing private universities somewhat showed some geo-political imbalance and blamed the rich people from the North for not paying due attention to the issue of float-

ing universities.

Ikara, who said he resigned as the Chairman of the Igbinedion University council because of his recent appointment as a National Population Commissioner, described the the Okada University as "a university of the future with enormous prospects."

The former pro-chancellor recalled that his two-year tenure at the university was "very exciting and challenging."

**Akume boycotts Gemade's reception**

The political rivalry between Governor George Akume of Benue State and Chief Barnabas Gemade, former National Chairman of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), played itself out at the weekend at Gboko, Benue State, when the governor and all the state's commissioners stayed away from a reception organised for Gemade.

A News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) correspondent, who covered the reception, organised to formally welcome Gemade after his tenure as PDP Chairman, reports that neither the governor, his deputy nor any key official of the state government attended the reception.

Sources told NAN at the police playground in Gboko where the ceremony was held, that an attempt by the organisers to use the J.S. Tarka stadium in Gboko, which was more suitable for the event, was frustrated by officials of Gboko local council.

The sources, said there

exist two camps in Benue PDP and that each is bitterly opposed to the other.

According to the sources, one of the camps is being led by Gemade while former Industry Minister, Dr. Iyorchia Ayu and Akume are leading the other group.

NAN reports that the programme prepared for Gemade's home-coming ceremony had no provision for a courtesy visit on the governor as is usually the practice with events. It could not be ascertained whether the Organisers had made moves to get the governor's approval for a courtesy visit and it was turned down.

Sources, however, said with the rivalry assuming a more bitter dimension, the 2003 governorship election in the state promises to be fierce as Gemade has vowed to unseat Akume.

NAN reports that the Head of State's Civil Service, Mr. Theophilus Adzaagee, who is Gemade's relation, was booed several times by the crowd when he mounted the rostrum to speak at the reception.

"The governorship election in 2003 and its preceding intra-party selection process may be marred by crisis if the two camps fail to moderate the activities of their supporters," said a politician who spoke on condition of anonymity.



Gov. Akume

**Islamic cleric urges end to Eyo festival**

The Lagos State Missioner of Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria, (ADSN) Alhaji Abu Baqqi Abdul-Quadri, has urged the state government to stop the yearly, "Adamu Orisa" masquerade festival, popularly called "Eyo," calling it "idolatry."

Delivering a special Ramadan lecture in Ikeja on Sunday, Abdul-Quadri, said the country was facing all sorts of problems because of people's disobedience to the commands of Allah.

He said signs of the end-time manifesting in the society-include idolatry, adultery, ritual killings, gambling, alcoholism, nudity, abortion and corruption.

Abdul-Quadiri explained that there were provisions against such aberrations in the Sharia, noting that people were sceptical about the Islamic legal code because of severe punishment it prescribes for sins and social vices.

"In any society where

there is idolatry, disrespect to parents, illicit dressing by women and the likes, the wrath of Allah is not far from such a society. No one can escape the consequences of these acts," the Islamic cleric said.

**Sokoto wins NNPC zonal quiz competition**

Sokoto State has emerged as the winner of zone "C" of the NNPC national quiz competition, the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports.

Sokoto State got 32 points against Kebbi's 14, while Zamfara was absent from the competition which held in Sokoto.

The competition, organised for senior secondary school students, covered topics in English language, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

Sokoto State will, therefore, represent the zone

at the national edition of the competition, which will hold in Maiduguri, Borno State, on December 8.

Declaring the event open, the General Manager, Mr. Oghamadu NNPC said the competition was organised primarily to broaden the knowledge of the participants in those subjects.

Ughamadu, who was represented by Mrs. Agnes Shodiya, said the country was divided into four zones for the competition, adding: "It is also designed to instill a spirit of sportsmanship in the students."

**NDLEA parades five over cannabis importation**

The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Abeokuta zone recently paraded five men for allegedly importing 3.7



IGP, Musiliu Smith

tonnes of cannabis sativa, also known as Marijuana into the country from the neighbouring Republic of Benin.

The Zonal Commander of the Agency, Mr. Abiodun Adesola, said the men were arrested two weeks ago through joint patrol efforts of men of the command at the country's border.

Addressing newsmen, Mr. Adesola, said "towards the end of last month, reports' reached us about plans to move large consignments of the dangerous weed into the country and immediately all necessary arrangements

were set in motion which led to this monumental seizure.

"On that fateful day of this seizure, the truck marked Lagos XN 710 KJA, conveying the exhibit into Nigeria was sighted at Atta junction, which is very close to Igan-Alade in Aiyetoro. The team ordered the vehicle to stop for a search to be conducted on the content of the load it was carrying."

According to the commander, the five suspects, Lateef Faleye, (5); Rasaki Adebayo, (45); Omidele Adeyanju (40); Sunday Oni (24) and Usman Rabi (40), will soon be charged to court.

Adesola explained that NDLEA was now refocused and repositioned for maximum efficiency, saying "we are fully prepared to neutralise all the antics of those who are bent on damaging the fabric of this great country through drug peddling which inevitably promotes drug abuse."

"The salvation of the youths of this country is too important to this Agency that we cannot compromise it at all. This is why NDLEA operations across the country have been fully energised to actualise the dream of a drug free society," he added.

# INSIDE POLITICS

## Briefs

### Osogbo

Osun State Governor, Adebisi Akande, on Monday presented the state's year 2002 budget of N18.8 billion to the House of Assembly.

The budget, christened: "Probity and frugality as culture of poverty eradication in Osun State," is N4 billion lower than of this year's.

"The budget proposal includes N8.1 billion meant for recurrent expenditure, while N10.7 billion is allocated to capital expenditure," the governor said.

He stressed that his government desired to achieve a balance between income and expenditure in the coming year.

### Uyo

Akwa Ibom government is to spend about N500 million on the purchase of broadcast equipment for the state broadcasting corporation.

The State's Information Commissioner Mr. Charis Abasi-Eyo, told News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Uyo at the weekend that the package would include four transmitters and studio facilities.

The state television which had been off the air for some months, "will hit the airwaves again by March 2002," the commissioner said.

### Abuja

Senator Mas'ud Doguwa, PDP-Kano, said in Abuja, Monday, that the National Assembly had been vindicated over the failure of the executive arm of government to implement previous budgets.

"We had faced serious criticism and attacks from the public and the media over the delay in the passage of the 2000 Appropriation Bill. The 2001 budget was timely but the implementation was poor," he told the News Agency of Nigeria.

The Chairman, Senate Committee on Local and Foreign Debts, Senator Yusha'u Anka, has said that only dialogue between the National Assembly and state governors can resolve the electoral bill crisis.

Anka told newsmen in Gusau at the weekend that dialogue between the two arms of government was necessary to avoid any threat to the present democratic dispensation.

The 1999 constitution, he

## Call Oshimhole to order — lawmakers

Osun State House of Assembly has urged the Federal Government to call the President of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Mr. Adams Oshiomhole to order over his threats to make the country ungovernable if the 25 per cent pay rise for workers is not implemented next year.

Moving the motion in the floor of the house was Hon. Abimbola Anofeso representing Sagamu I state constituency who said Oshiomhole must be called to order before he plunged the country into another chaos, saying his (Oshiomhole) pronouncement was an attempt to incite trouble.

The NLC president had last week made a pronouncement that he is ready to mobilise workers across the country to boycott the 2002 elections, if the 25 per cent pay rise is not implemented by the federal government.

Arguing his motion, Hon. Amofeso said "rather than keep striving to improve workers welfare via incentives he was pursuing an irrational demand for pay rise."

In his own contribution, Hon. Isma'ila Abagun Sansa posited that Oshiomhole's visit to the senate patents bribery, urging him to explore

## Senator sues for dialogue over electoral bill crisis

said, gave each arm of government some jurisdiction over local government elections and tenure of office of council chairmen.

"While governors can determine the chairmen's tenure, the National Assembly, has the power to determine when the council

elections should take place," the lawmaker added.

He said unless something was done urgently to resolve

the crisis amicably, it could degenerate into a more serious crisis that could threaten the polity.

Anka also advised President Obasanjo to "sit up" and ensure that more employment opportunities

were provided to the teeming unemployed youths in the country.

"The interest of Nigerians should be the first priority of the government because 75 per cent of them are still living in abject poverty," he said.



President Obasanjo

## Ethnic militia threat to democracy — Okadigbo

Former Senate President, Chuba Okadigbo has said that a situation in which ethnic militias have more fire-power and men than the nation's security agencies poses a great threat to the survival of democracy.

Okadigbo, who led members of the Senate Committee

on riots, conflicts and crisis on a courtesy visit to the Bauchi State Governor, Alhaji Adamu Mu'azu, at the weekend, said the development also posed a greater threat to national security.

The committee chairman said the communal crises in Taraba, Nasarawa, Benue and Bauchi States were a manifestation of personal vendetta, carried out by disgruntled



Chief Okadigbo

members of the society, and added that the committee would accord priority to fact-finding rather than fault-finding during its visits to the affected communities.

Okadigbo decried the spate of communal crises, which he said were master-minded by people with criminal motives, and promised that the committee would work towards reversing the trend.

Responding, Governor Mu'azu appealed to the committee to mediate in the crises in Tafawa Balewa and Bogoro local government areas, which he said had tribal and religious undertones.

## Ex-Secretary wants reconciliation of Jos ethnic groups

Former Sectery of Jos North Local Council, Alhaji Ibrahim Salihu, has suggested the inclusion of "reconciliation" in the terms of reference of the judicial commission of inquiry investigating the Jos civil disturbances.

Testifying before the commission on Monday, in Jos, Salihu said that averting a future occurrence of the incident might be difficult without the commission being given a mandate to reconcile all groups involved in the conflict.

He described the disturbances as unfortunate, saying that in the past, there used to be "good rapport, understanding and cultural interaction" among the Hausa/Fulani and other ethnic groups in the state.

Salihu, a former deputy general manager with NITEL, accused a section of the media of aggravating the situation through biased coverage,

thereby causing disaffection among the people.

The former council secretary advocated a "conference" that would involve all conflicting groups, to discuss all issues as a way of finding a permanent solution to communal strife.

He also stressed the need for the Plateau government to have a second look at "some of the policies regarding the treatment of some groups in the state."

The commission, headed by Justice Niki Tobi, was set up by the Plateau government after the September 7 Jos civil strife.

It is mandated to investigate the remote and immediate causes of the conflict, identify persons or groups responsible, determine the extent of damage to properties and loss of lives, and suggest ways of forestalling a future occurrence of the incident. (NAN).

## 2,000 staff for referendum in Kebbi

Kebbi State Independent Electoral Commission (KESIEC) will use 2,000 ad hoc staff for the December 8 referendum on the creation of new local government areas.

KESIEC chairman, Alhaji Ja'afaru Zagga, said on Monday in Birnin Kebbi that the commission needed 4,515 ad hoc staff for the referendum but decided to reduce the number to minimise expenditure.

"Moreso, we are going to use highly skilled workers for the job," said Zagga, who was briefing newsmen on preparations for the referendum.

He explained that the referendum would only be conducted in areas where the

new councils would be created, and that all persons of voting age (18 years and above) were expected to vote.



Abel Gobadia, INEC boss

According to him, 650 polling units have been

marked for referendum. Registration of voters will commence at 11:30 a.m.

"We are going to observe the open ballot system of simply queuing up and counting," the chairman said.

He said that the commission had set up four committees that would go round all the affected areas to educate the people on the procedure to ensure a hitch-free exercise.

Zagga urged the people concerned to come out en masse to express their wish.

About 12 new council areas are being proposed for the state. They are Gabas/Yeldu, Guma/Lailaba Ambursa/Kardi, Suru, Illo, Ka'oje, Zagga, Koko, Kwanji, Birnin Yauri, Bena and Danko



Former External Affairs Minister, Tom Ikimi (left) with Governors Peter Odili of Rivers State, Donald Duke of Cross River and Lucky Igbinedion of Edo State at the zonal congress of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Asaba, Delta State recently

This space is for sale

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Edited by Kevin Ebele Adinnu

## Tour of FCT

# Obasanjo orders demolition of 50 filling stations

By Suleiman Mohammed

President Olusegun Obasanjo yesterday ordered the demolition of all illegal structures including about 50 filling stations along the Abuja ring road and Nyanya-Keffi road and vowed not to compensate affected individuals or groups, saying "the battle line is drawn."

"We will do what is good for this country. You go and politicise it - they know it was immoral, and it is corruption. I am not going to pay for corruption," the president declared in response to complaints by Julius Berger Plc, that the dualisation of the Abuja ring road was being hampered by illegal structures along the area.

President Obasanjo who was at the construction site as part of his tour of the Federal Capital Territory, gave a presidential directive to the firm to demolish any structure that obstructed their work, stressing that no compensation would be made in that regard.

"I am not going to pay compensation for it. You can go on and do whatever you like. I am not going to pay for corruption. The officials that gave (the space) away should be held responsible," he declared.

However, President

Obasanjo had a shouting bout with Senator Khairat Gwadabe, representing the Federal Capital Territory, when she pleaded for compensation for victims of demolition as a result of the 10-lane ring road project, saying, "If anyone will play politics about it, let the Senator go and do her politicking, but there is no need politicising it since the place was awarded illegally," he stressed.

The president said it would be wrong to continue with past mistakes, saying, it was time to tell those concerned that it was all over, adding that, "we'll tell them no, no otherwise people will destroy the city."

Turning to the ministry top shots, President Obasanjo directed them to carry out the demolition exercise. "People have illegally allocated land even in green belts," he noted.

Despite appeals by the Permanent Secretary Dr. Aliyu Babangida, that

*- says no compensation*

compensation should be considered for those who were legally allocated plots of land at the wrong site, President Obasanjo insisted that there would be no compensation.

About 50 filling stations, some residential and commercial buildings are expected to be affected by the presidential matching order for demolition.

President Obasanjo had also given similar directive during a farewell ceremony

organised in his honour at the Abuja Gardens, when he said all structures built illegally around the area be demolished.

Yesterday's tour covered the foundation stone laying for of about 5,000 housing units by the Ministry of Federal Capital Territory, as well as inspection of the Gwagwalada Specialist Hospital, and the dualisation work of Abuja-Keffi road among others.



Queues have been building up and disappearing in filling stations in Abuja. Our cameraman, Felix Onigbinde ran into these queues yesterday evening in the Central Business District.

## ... goes tough with FCT traditional rulers

By Emmanuel Ande

Disturbed by the persistent problem of double allocation of plots of land and erection of illegal structures in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), President Olusegun Obasanjo, has threatened to deal with any traditional ruler in the territory caught allocating lands to people.

The president gave the warning yesterday in Abaji Area Council during his interactive forum with traditional rulers in the FCT

and other stakeholders to discuss the problems affecting the indigenes of the FCT.

"I will deal with any traditional ruler that sells land in FCT to anybody. Nobody except the minister of FCT who is appointed by the Federal Government that has the right to allocate lands in FCT which is in line with the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria," he said.

He pointed out that some traditional rulers were in the habit of unlawfully allocating lands to people, which he said contributed to the abuse of the master plan.

Obasanjo warned further that no royal father in the FCT would go unpunished if caught in the illegal act of allocating lands to people and that they should stop interfering in government affairs since they were not government officials.

"I cannot fold my arms

and watch some people destroy the beauty of the federal capital for their selfish interests at the detriment of Nigeria's corporate image."

"I am ready to deal with any traditional ruler or anybody that sees FCT land as his personal or his father's property, by constitution, nobody has authority over any land but the Federal Government alone, so if anybody feels that he owned FCT land, he is digging for trouble," he warned.

The president decried the unconstitutional manner some groups of people in FCT are handling the issue of lands in the federal capital.

He said that his government would not accommodate the unlawful attitude of the traditional rulers, which he said, was capable of creating disunity in the federal capital in future.

Mr. A.B. Mamman, an indigene of Abaji, who was a participant in the interactive forum, complained to the

president that FCT indigenes had no quota in Nigeria and that the development posed a lot of questions on whether they were Nigerians or not.

He urged the president to do every thing possible to address the situation, which he described as a time bomb in the federal capital.

The participants at the interactive forum also

protested against the poor supply of electricity by the National Electricity Power Authority (NEPA) in the area and urged the Federal Government to quickly address the problem.

Mamman argued that indigenes of the FCT had no second tier government noting that the system had denied the indigenes the democratic right of electing their leaders.

## Obasanjo's aide collapses in Abaji

A security aide attached to President Obasanjo, yesterday collapsed in front of the president during an interactive forum with traditional rulers and stakeholders in the Abaji Area Council in Abuja.

The incident almost disrupted the address of the president as everybody was thrown into confusion and fear.

Obasanjo quickly

directed some of his other aides to rush the security officer to the mobile clinic for medical attention.

"Take him to the mobile clinic for medical attention, maybe he is sick," the president directed.

President Obasanjo was answering questions from members of the interactive forum, when the dark complexioned security officer, who was standing directly in front of him, collapsed.



President Obasanjo.

# Abuja Trust

News

## 2 lawyers in fake N4.5m land deal

Court adjourns to January 24

By Uwem Umo

An Abuja chief magistrate court has adjourned till January 24, 2002 for further hearing into a case of criminal conspiracy, forgery, using as genuine, forged documents and cheating preferred against two Abuja based lawyers and three others.

Chief Magistrate Mohammed Kolo made the adjournment following the non-appearance of the fourth accused person in court during Monday's hearing into the case.

Counsel representing the fourth accused, Mr. J/F. Eson, had pleaded with the court that his client was absent from court because he was ill.

The prosecuting police officer, Mr. Danjuma Etubi, had applied to the court for a bench warrant to compel the appearance in court of the fourth accused person.

The presiding magistrate however rejected the application because he wanted to give to the accused person and the counsel the benefit of doubt.

It would be recalled that one Barrister Alabi Anthony and Barrister Eric Egwurube allegedly conspired with three others and forged a Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) number MZTP/MISC/2349 in the name of Bestmark Nigeria Limited purporting it for a piece of land along the Kubwa Expressway.

The prosecuting police officer who had charged he five accused persons for criminal conspiracy, forgery,

using as genuine forged documents and cheating contrary to sections 97, 364, 366 and 322 of the penal code said the accused persons used the forged C of O to dupe one Alhaji Yisa Braimoh, an Abuja based businessman and hotelier of the sum of N4.5m.

Others standing trial along with the two lawyers include Bassey Inyang, Spanye Agwanyi (the fourth

accused person) and one Markus Iliya Balewa.

The five accused persons had earlier been granted bail having pleaded not guilty to the charge while the sixth accused person, a lady with the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) also implicated in the deal was however not included in the last First Information Report (FIR) before the court after the prosecution had withdrawn the first FIR.



Mr. O.C.J. Okocha (SAN), NBA Chairman.

## Police constable docked over theft of rifle

By Zakari Suleiman

A dismissed police constable, Hadi Mohammed, was yesterday arraigned before an Abuja magistrate Court over stealing a rifle from Karshi police station.

According to the Police First Information Report (FIR), Mbhammed with F/No. 211003 was arrested at Zuba Motor Park while boarding a vehicle to Lagos with an FNI rifle No. 98-52213 containing ten rounds of 7.56mm ammunition.

The accused formerly attached to Karshi Divisional Headquarters, Abuja, the FIR said, confessed that he stole the rifle from the counter in Karshi police station.

Mohammed was charged with theft contrary to section 289 of the penal code. The accused pleaded not guilty to the charge.

The presiding magistrate, Alhaji Mohammed Kolo refused the accused bail and adjourned the matter to January 16, 2002 for hearing.

## Graduates struggle for police cadet forms

Hundreds of university graduates have been scrambling in vain to obtain cadet police recruitment forms in Abuja, an investigation conducted by the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) has shown.

The graduates, who claimed to be indigenes of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), alleged that the police in Abuja had been distributing the recruitment forms to non-indigenes contrary to laid-down procedure.

"The forms have been sent to all the states of the federation and the FCT. Forms sent to the FCT were meant for us, not for non-indigenes," Mr. Adamu Madaki, a potential recruit, alleged.

The police sent 100 cadet inspector and ASP application forms to each state of the federation and the FCT, NAN investigation showed.

The Force Public Relations Officer, Mr. Haz Iwendi, said the forms were adequate for the number of positions vacant in the exercise.

"There is no way we can make everyone have the form. Every applicant wants the cadet form because it is free," Iwendi said.

He said unlike last year when the forms were

distributed to all interested applicants, there was a restriction in the mode of issuance this year, as only qualified candidates would

have access to the forms.

Iwendi said the Inspector-General of Police, Alhaji Musiliu Smith, had directed that credentials of

interested applicants be screened before the forms were issued to enhance the force's opportunity of recruiting only the best.

## Task Force destroy Giri foodstuff market

A combined team of armed mobile policemen and Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) task force has destroyed the popular roadside foodstuff market at Giri, near Gwagwalada on the Abuja-Lokoja highway.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the combined team set the market ablaze, destroying foodstuff worth thousands of naira.

The foodstuff sellers were seen weeping as they helplessly watched their wares being destroyed.

The task force members were said to be on a special assignment to clear the roadside apparently in connection with the visit of President Olusegun Obasanjo, who began a two-day tour of the territory on Monday.

A NAN correspondent, who arrived at the scene while the destruction was going on, saw bags of onions, heaps of yam tubers, Irish potatoes, tomatoes and pepper set ablaze, while some of the traders made abortive

efforts to retrieve their wares.

Asked whether they were given any deadline to vacate the roadside market, the traders said that a senior task force official visited the market at about 6pm. on Saturday and drew a line with a stick, directing the traders to shift their sheds backward.

"We spent the whole night erecting new sheds further into the bush, only to see another group of task force men, accompanied by policemen, invading the market at about 11 am. and destroying our only means of livelihood," one of the traders said.

A trader, Funke, told NAN amid tears: "the most painful thing is that as they were destroying our wares, members of the task force asked us to pay some money so we could pack our produce to safer places.

"We contributed N50 per shed, which amounted to about N4,000, yet they refused to allow us to take our wares."

Funke continued, "You see that man crying and being consoled, the task

force demanded N2,000 from him and he gave them the money; yet they went ahead to set his bags of onions ablaze. Do you know how much a bag of onion costs now?"

Efforts to interview some of the task force members almost resulted in an assault on the reporter but for the intervention of some traders and curious onlookers who pleaded on behalf of the reporter.

The chairman of Gwagwalada Area Council, Alhaji Isa Dobi, could not be reached for comment on the incident.

He was reported to have accompanied the FCT minister on a tour of parts of the FCT to assess the level of preparations for the president's visit.

While condemning the action of the task force, some of the onlookers said they believed that the roadside market would not have bothered Obasanjo.

They recalled that the president was in the area last month to lay the foundation stone of the National Women Rehabilitation Centre.

## Aftermath of PDP convention: Man faces murder charge

One Ali Buhari, 30, of Taurani Local Government Area, Kano State has appeared before a magistrate's court for allegedly slashing the throat of a fellow party faithful, Yusuf Isah, during the convention of Peoples Democratic Party at Eagle Square on November 9.

The accused person



Chief Audu Ogbeh, PDP Chairman.

whom the police described as a trader based in Kano was charged with culpable homicide contrary to section 221 of the penal code and punishable with death if found guilty.

The prosecuting police officer Mr. Sani Yakubu from the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Police Criminal Investigation Department (CID) told the court that the accused person committed the offence on November 9, 2001 at the Eagle Square, when he slashed the throat of his colleague in the course of a disagreement leading to the death of the deceased.

The deceased, according to the police also hailed from the same local government area with the accused person.

However, the murder suspect pleaded not guilty to the charge but the prosecutor argued against granting him bail.

He also informed the court that the case file had been duplicated and sent to

the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) for legal advice.

Presiding magistrate, Mr. Abubakar Babashani ordered that the accused person be remanded in prison custody and adjourned the case to January 31, 2002 for further mention.

It would be recalled that Ali Buhari was arrested on November 9 and detained at the homicide section of the FCT Police CID for the murder of the 18-year-old Yusuf Isah.

The incident was said to have taken place at about 9.00 pm on that day after which an employee of the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation alerted the police.

When the police arrived at the scene, Yusuf was seen lying in a pool of his own blood with his throat slashed.

Abuja Trust gathered that both were party supporters who accompanied party leaders to the convention.



Commercial motorcyclists at a seminar organised for them in Abuja... recently.

# Abuja Trust

Habitat (Property and Environment Column)

## FG to demolish structures on Abuja-Keffi road

In a bid to hasten work on the dualisation of the Abuja-Nyanya-Keffi road, the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing has issued a final notice for demolition of all marked structures within the construction width of the road for which compensation has been paid.

A statement by the Permanent Secretary, Alhaji Umaru Musa Abubakar stated that the demolition is absolutely to public interest.

He appealed to all property owners to whom compensation had been paid to salvage marked properties that could be useful to them.

Alhaji Abubakar explained that the payment of compensation to property owners was based on the evaluation carried out by government appointed estate surveyor/valuer and dismissed the alleged overpayment of compensation to some individuals saying "the payment of compensation on the above road project is not guided by the evaluation done by the speculative Estate Valuer who intentionally over-valued the compensation in order to enhance their fees."

Alhaji Umar Abubakar while appealing to the owners of properties along the road to give maximum support and cooperation to the government to ensure that work on the road proceeds at faster pace also explained that government had ensured transparency in payment of compensation.

Said the statement: "The evaluation has been done based on fairness and equity."

### ... Conducts study on waste disposal management

In order to put an end to the perennial problem of waste disposal in the country, the Federal Ministry of Environment, has started conducting feasibility studies and conceptual designs for integrated waste management facilities to be carried out in fifteen urban cities nationwide.

Minister of Environment, Alhaji Muhammad Kabir Sa'id revealed this while declaring open a national conference of "Heads of Environmental Health and Sanitation Offices."

According to the minister, each of the facilities, which would include a sanitary landfill, incinerator, composting plant and beachate treatment plant, would be private sector driven.

Said he: "Our inability to remove from our streets and out of the range of nuisance

Stories by Tashikalmah Hallah

The said evaluation was scrutinised by government officials and was found to be consistent with the norms of the profession and the action of government to pay compensation is not outright purchase of the properties so affected, but compensation in compliance with acquisition for public interest."

Meanwhile, there are strong indications that SETRACO, the company handling the dualisation of

the road may start demolition of the structures in Nyanya and Mararaba, both Abuja suburb.

Abuja Trust investigations revealed that some owners of properties earmarked for demolition have started removing some valuable items like the corrugated iron sheets and bricks.

Abuja Trust witnessed last Friday, how some carpenters removed the iron sheets on a popular plaza (Midland Plaza) in Mararaba, which also housed Aso Savings Nigeria Ltd.



Federal Ministry of Environment clearing weeds off Nypha Palm trees, considering their economic importance.

## AIT/Ray power resumes broadcast in Abuja

Barely one month after the studios of DAAR Communications, owners of Ray power I and II FM and African Independent Television (AIT) were lost to an inferno, the stations resumed broadcasting last Thursday.

However, the management of the broadcasting outfit has changed the location of the studio from its former Labour House located at the Central Business District, to its former broadcasting house, in Mpape an Abuja suburb.

As revealed by Mr. Adebayo Bodunrin, the Deputy Head of Bureau of DAAR Communications, the management took the decision of resuscitating its former facilities at Mpape to satisfy the demand of the residents of the Federal Capital Territory.

According to him, during their one month absence from the airwaves, the management of DAAR Communications received

several sympathetic messages from the residents of the FCT in which some of the people expressed desire to have the AIT/Ray power back on the airwaves.

The Deputy Bureau Chief explained that the management, in order to avert re-occurrence of another disaster, would start building its corporate headquarters in Abuja next week.

Mr. Bodunrin said that AIT/Ray power hoped to move to its corporate head office located at Asokoro by January next year, if things worked according to the plan.

"Against the background of what happened to us at Labour House, we feel that moving to our permanent site will give us the sense of security, that is what we are working towards."

"But for now, TV viewers and radio listeners and lovers of AIT/Ray power I and II, are going to be entertained at the Mpape

station.

"But since last Thursday, we have been transmitting, and any person with simple antenna can receive our signal, and it is going to last

for the next eight weeks."

Their current transmission he said, is aided by ABG Communication outfit specialising in the transmission of Television

signal via cable, adding however, that the measure is going to be temporary, as he explained that the installation of AIT/Ray power transmitters has commenced at Asokoro.

## Only high-rise buildings allowed in central Abuja – Obasanjo

President Olusegun Obasanjo has said that only high-rise buildings will be allowed in the Central Business District of Abuja because of the colossal investment on infrastructure in the area.

Speaking at a dinner organised in his honour by FCT minister, Alhaji Muhammed Abba-Gana, to mark his two-day official visit to the territory, Obasanjo said those allotted plots within the area must ensure that only high-rise buildings with four or five floors at least, were erected there.

"Any bungalow erected in the central area must give way to high-rise buildings," he said, stressing that allottees that had already constructed bungalows within the district would forfeit their plots and be given alternative plots in the satellite areas.

Obasanjo said that Abuja residents must strive to keep the city clean at all times.

He commended the FCT authorities for planting trees along the roads, saying, however, that the gesture should be extended to residential areas "because plants and animals co-exist naturally in a cycle."

He said it was gratifying that Abuja was living up to the aspirations of its founding fathers, noting that the city dwellers were co-existing peacefully irrespective of their states of origin or ethnic groups.

Alluding to the recurring ethnic and religious conflicts in many parts of the country, Obasanjo said Nigerians must imbibe the culture of good neighbourliness, tolerance and good conduct

in the interest of national development.

Earlier, Abba-Gana had commended the president for "the very mature manner" in which he handled the affairs of state in the last two

## Gurara water project to be completed 2003 – Shagari

As part of efforts to address the incessant acute water shortage in the Federal Capital Territory and its environs, the Federal Government intensifies effort to complete the River Gurara water transfer project by the year 2003.

Alhaji Mukhtar Shehu Shagari, Minister of Water Resources revealed this while giving the assessment of his ministry's activities in the last one year.

According to the minister, the 860 million cubic metre dam, which is currently under construction, would enhance the water supply to the FCT and its environs when completed.

The minister explained that the project is associated with works on River Gurara in Kaduna State and the laying of a three-metre diameter conveyance pipeline covering 75km long from the dam to Lower Usuma reservoir.

While enunciating the activities of his ministry, the minister said the contract for the project was awarded recently at the cost of N43 billion. He allayed the fears of the people of Sokoto State, particularly residents of Goronyo, over the inability of Goronyo dam saying that the government has started working on the rehabilitation

years. He noted that Obasanjo's leadership had restored a measure of confidence in Nigeria in the international community going by the influx of foreign investors into the country.

of the dam at the cost of N2.012 billion, the work for which has reached 45 per cent completion.

Alhaji Shagari also disclosed that the Ministry of Water Resources is currently handling 35 water projects across the country costing about N1,428,698,260.00.

Government, he said, is also targeting communities with population between 5,000 and 20,000 defined as small-towns, where an estimated 23 million Nigerians are living.

The strategy thrust is to harness and mobilise private sector/community potential for operation and maintenance of the water supply facility that is provided through corporative governance," he said.

"Currently, 1,145 motorised schemes are being provided all over the country to restore and provide all over the country to restore and provide water supply coverage to 4.13 million people at the cost of N17.175 billion," he added.

The minister reiterated that in 2002, it is envisaged that additional 2,500 schemes would be provided.

According to him, his ministry is working in partnership with the World Bank, French Agency for Development and the European Union (EU) on the



Alh. Mohammad Kabir Sa'id, Environment Minister.

# Abuja Trust

## Places

# Ushafa: Valley of creativity

*Despite its remoteness, creative ingenuity flows through the valley of Ushafa, a settlement in Bwari Area Council. Like many other villages in Nigeria that have various natural endowment, the Ushafa people, as related by Yakubu Ozohu-Suleiman of Abuja Trust, translate their creative talent into pot making, mat weaving and clothe dying. Excerpts.*

But for the few people you may see by the side of the road on your way to Ushafa, a stranger never could imagine human settlement anywhere around the hills of luxuriant species of vegetation that pervade the suburb. You would most probably conclude that it is one of those many beautiful countryside in Nigeria. If, however, you care to meander through the road that leads, you would meet a very small village enclosed by some interlocking hills.

"Anything planned cannot fail." That is the meaning of Ushafa, the village founded more than a century ago by the Gbagyi people, one of the first settlers of the Federal Capital Territory.

With a population estimate of 5,000, the people of Ushafa are known to be very resourceful. They are celebrated farmers and hunters. But besides these, they are prominent in the handcraft of mat weaving, cloth dying and pot making.

### The Pottery

Pot making as a handcraft is common among the women, and it pre-dates the founding of Ushafa village. It is a sort of Art craft generally associated with Gbagyi people in the northern part of the country.

In 1991, when the government discovered the resourcefulness of the people in the art, a formidable pottery centre was established in Ushafa. The centre, which was initially managed by Municipal Area Council, is currently under the care and supervision of the Federal Capital Development Authority, (FCDA).

Mr. Joseph Ijere of FCDA spoke with *Abuja Trust* on the processes of pot making in Ushafa. According to him, one chief raw material used, clay, is divided into primary clay (kaolin) and secondary clay.

Kaolin is whitish in nature. It is clay in the pure state. According to Joseph, kaolin cannot be obtained

in Ushafa village. So, the centre always has to import from Kogi State, Abaji within FCT and Kankara in Katsina State. The secondary clay is essentially kaolin, which has been coloured and diluted by act of erosion. It is also not available in sufficient quantity in Ushafa.

Kaolin is very strong but not elastic. In the case of the secondary clay, it is the direct opposite. The two are therefore blended in equal proportion to obtain the quality and strength of material enough to produce pots.

### Processing

At the point the secondary clay is obtained, it is contaminated with erosional debris. The first step taken is to sieve it to obtain the fine and genuine clay. It is therefore soaked (together with kaolin) for two-three days after which it is again sieved. The excess water is disposed while the sieved clay is kept on the bates to drain the water completely.

The next state is nodding (blending) of the clays. This is done properly to obtain desired elasticity after which the clay is conveyed to the moulding machine known as potters' wheel. There are manual and electric potters' wheel both of which could be used to achieve any shape and form of pot.

### Finishing

Once a pot is moulded, it is left for as long as the weather dictates to dry up. After then, it is taken to the firing chamber known as kiln and subjected to heat as much as 120°C for six hours. The essence of this is to fortify the material. Several hours are required for cooling. The pots are then removed and, if shiny effect is desired, a chemical known as glaze is rubbed on them and taken back to the kiln for another six hours of heating. Once the second stage of heating is completed, the pot could be ready for use. However, if any form of design is required on the back of a pot, the process would

continue with application of a chemical known as oxide which is available in many forms including Iron oxide and black stains. It is important to note that the application of oxide is only possible when pots are not yet dry. This is to make incision easy. Essentially, it is after these stages, if required, that the glazing takes place. After the glazing, any desired colour can be applied to give the pot appealing effect.

At Ushafa pottery centre, varieties of products are produced. These include plates, teapots, storage pots, candle stands, lampshade, bids etc.

### Clothe dying

Mr. Shikenna Kaura is one of the craftsmen in the cloth dying industry in Ushafa. Shikenna told *Abuja Trust* that he was 57 years old, yet he was not grown up enough to say exactly when the industry was established in Ushafa. "Long before I was born, the dying industry has been existing."

According to Shikenna, three major ingredients are used in the local dying. These include water, leaf and mud.

The leaves, which are locally sourced, are known as *Esin* and *Tarwunyi* in Gbagyi language. The ground is dug about 6 feet and filled with water while *Esin* or *Tarwunyi* is pounded and extracted into the water. Black mud is also gathered, burnt and dropped into the water to strengthen the dye. Essentially the colour obtained is black.

### The dying process

Only white fabric can be dyed into black, and the dying process occurs in two stages. The first stage involved dipping the cloth in the dye for about one hour. A 5 feet stick is used to push the cloth and facilitate proper absorption of the dye.

The cloth is removed after an hour and dried. The second stage of dying begins with the same cloth soaked in the dye for final absorption. This process also takes

one hour. Once dried after this stage, the dying process is completed.

The Ushafa dying pit is located very close to the interlocking hills that surround the village. This provides the required

seclusiveness under which such activities take place. It would be recalled that on August 28, 2000, former American President visited Ushafa, making it the only rural settlement ever visited by an American President in Nigeria.



Finished products at Ushafa Pottery.



A potter at work.



Mr. Shikenna dying cloth in Ushafa dying pit while a colleague watches. Pix: Yakubu Ozohu-Suleiman.

**With a population estimate of 5,000, the people of Ushafa are known to be very resourceful. They are celebrated farmers and hunters. But besides these, they are prominent in the handcraft of mat weaving, cloth dying and pot making.**

Arts & Entertainment

Tourism in Africa on the decline

Hundreds of African tourism officials meet in Cameroon

to discuss prospects for US tourism to the continent following the 11 September

attacks. Tourism is a major foreign income earner for

many African countries, despite under investment in the sector.

Following the US attacks "they did not get many - cancellations from groups and people who were travelling," Africa Travel Associations' executive director Mira Berman told the BBC's World Business Report.

"The bookings for next year and the year after are what is in question," she said.

The World Tourism Organisation (WTO) and ATA have been "pounding at the governments" to stress importance of investment in tourism, she said.

Many tourists have been deterred from visiting Africa by domestic security fears.

Recent troubles in Zimbabwe have seen the

number of visitors plunge from an estimated 1.4 million visitors in 1999 to a quarter of that last year.

Zimbabwe's tourism sector had contributed up to 6% of the country's GDP and employs some 200,000 people. It also generates \$400m yearly in foreign currency earnings.

ATA's Berman points out that it is possible for African countries that experience trouble to woo tourists again.

"Tanzania, although they had the embassy bombing, came right back and stayed as the number one destination for east Africa," ATA's Mira Berman.

The week-long conference has been organised by the Africa Travel Association, a body funded by the industry and African governments.

Tourism



Tanzania continues to attract tourists and is one of the continent's top destinations

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone has kept its firm grip on the UK box office charts, taking more than £8m during its second weekend on release.

The film has now earned more money at UK cinemas in just 10 days than other box office successes such as Shrek, Cats and Dogs and Hannibal did during their entire runs in the country.

Film

Its UK success reflects its popularity in the United States, where it has taken almost \$190m (£132.7m) in 10 days.

And it has broken more records in a number of countries where it was released at the weekend, including Germany, Holland, Denmark and Brazil, according to Screen

Harry Potter continues UK magic

International. Harry Potter has now taken almost £30m at UK cinemas, and earned more than eight times more ticket revenue than its nearest rival



Spy Game stars Rober Redford and Brad Pitt

and US box office records when it opened on 16 November -and it is currently in the race to be the film that reaches the \$200m (£142m) mark in the US in the quickest time.

There is also a chance

that it could take Titanic's title as the most successful world-wide film ever - but it is still yet to be released in some countries.

The film broke Germany's four-year record for the most successful

opening weekend, selling 2.5 million tickets between 22-25 November, reported Screen International.

It also broke the same record in each of the four Scandinavian countries plus Holland, Austria and Brazil.

The film opens next week in countries including Japan, Spain, Australia and Israel.



Fulani milk maiden

A crossword puzzle grid with some words filled in, including SUDAN, IRAN, LAOS, OMAN, PAPER, CHILE, TONGA, SAUDI ARABIA, ZAIRE, LIBYA, HAITI, MALI, NIUE, CUBA, EGYPT.

over the weekend.

Spy Game, a new release starring Brad Pitt and Robert Redford, was a distant second, taking just over £1m in its first three days.

Nicole Kidman's thriller The Others slipped to number three, while Legally Blonde, starring Reese Witherspoon, moved down to number four.

The only other new entry in the top ten was Heist, written and directed by David Mamet, at number nine.

Baby Boy, billed as a companion piece to Boyz n the Hood, entered at number 13 while former Brookside actress Anna Friel's latest big screen outing, Me Without You, could only enter at number 15, taking just £43,660.

Harry Potter broke UK

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Owners and Occupants of marked structures along the Abuja-Keffi Road are hereby reminded of the notice for the demolition of the said buildings. As earlier indicated, the demolition is absolutely necessary for public interest. The evaluation has been done based on the following criteria:

- (i) for fairness and equity the government commissioned an independent professional Estate Surveyor/Valuer to carry out the assessment of due compensation payable for the structures;
  - (ii) the payment of compensation is based on the evaluation carried out by the government appointed Estate Surveyor /Valuer;
  - (iii) the said evaluation was scrutinized by government officials and was found to be consistent with the norms of the profession;
  - (iv) the payment of compensation on the above road project is not guided by the evaluation done by the speculative Estate Valuer who intentionally over-valued the compensation in order to enhance their fees.
  - (v) all the structures for which such compensation has been paid shall be demolished for over-riding public interest;
  - (vi) the action of government to pay compensation is not outright purchase of the properties so affected, but compensation in compliance with acquisition for public interest.
2. Consequently, all property owners so affected have been granted the opportunity to salvage their properties as a means of further cushioning the effect of the displacement.
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PERMANENT SECRETARY  
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### LOSS OF DUCOMENT

This is to inform the general public that the original copy of Certificate of right of Occupancy Ref. No. GAC/ FCDA/LP&S in respect of Plot No. 227 of about 600m<sup>2</sup> in Kuje Road 1 Layout granted to Samaila Kargi is missing and if found, please return to Mr Hamisu Musa of C.P.O. Engineering Office C.B.N. Garki II Abuja or Phone 09-2340738.

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### CHANGE OF NAME

I, Formerly DANJIMOH ABDULGANIYU now wish to be call DANJIMOH OMUYA ABDULGANI, All former documents remain valid, General public to take note.

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## TWO YEARS REMEMBRANCE OF A FALLEN PATRIOT

The Executive Chairman, Mal. William L.J. Wadni, council members and entire people of Tafawa Balewa Local Government Area wish to remember the untimely demise of their illustrious son, **Dr. Musa Suleiman Gital, the former Executive Chairman** which occurred on the 2nd December, 1999, two years ago with heavy hearts and sense of great loss.



**LATE DR. MUSA SULEIMAN GITAL,**  
*Former Executive Chairman*  
*Tafawa Balewa Local Government Area Bauchi State*

Your inspired leadership and vision guided our actions yesterday and continues to motivate us today and influence the future. We mourn your departure with pledge to keep faith with your vision of a united great Local Government, Bauchi State and the Nigeria nation with justice and equity in development.

May your gentle soul rest in perfect peace, Amen.

Signed

**Mal. William L. J. Wadni**  
Executive Chairman

## NASARAWA STATE GOVERNMENT

### PANEL ON THE CREATION OF NEW CHIEFDOMS AND THE REVIEW OF THE STATUS OF EXISTING ONES IN NASARAWA STATE

#### REQUEST FOR MORANDA

A panel on the Creation of New Chiefdoms and the Review of the Status of Existing ones in Nasarawa State was inaugurated by His Excellency, the Executive Governor Alhaji Abdullahi Adamu (Sarkin Yakin Keffi) with the following terms of reference

- i. Re-examine the existing categories of Emirates/ Chiefs in the State bearing in mind the historical records, documents relating to the traditional names, of some of the Emirates/ Chiefdoms.
- ii. The composition of the Emirates/Chiefdoms.
- iii. Method of selection/College of Selectors/Quorum
- iv. Eligibility for contestants
- v. Headquarters of the Chiefdoms
- vi. Title of the Chieftaincies
- vii. The upgrading and reclassification of existing chieftaincy institutions in the State
- viii. The creation of new Chiefdoms

- ix. Ensure that the newly created Local Government and Chiefdoms are contiguous.
2. In line with the above, interested groups and indeed the general public are invited to submit ten (10) copies of clean double space memoranda addressed to the undersigned on or before 18<sup>th</sup> December, 2001. There will be public sitting at which all memoranda submitted will be defended on a day and at a venue to be announced in due course.
3. Your cooperation in ensuring the success of this assignment will be highly appreciated by the Panel, please.

*Signed*

**Alhaji Tanko Kasimu,**

Director Administration and Finance

Ministry for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Lafia

Secretary

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(YOUR GOD MOTHER)

SPORTS



Roma's Gabriel Batistuta of Argentina, left, and Venezia's Pablo Gabriel Garcia of Uruguay fight for the ball during the Italian Serie A soccer match at Rome's Olympic Stadium on Sunday.

# South America's tough challenge

The World Cup draw ensured one thing - that favourites Argentina and holders France will not meet in the final.

In fact, depending on results, the two most fancied teams could meet as early as the second round.

First, though, Argentina will have to fight their way out of Group F, instantly labelled 'the group of death.'

Having already drawn Sweden, a gasp went round the gripped auditorium when England also went into their group.

The addition of Nigeria's Super Eagles confirmed that Marcelo Bielsa's men will have to win the World Cup the hard way.

But Argentina will relish that challenge.

The game against Nigeria is wonderfully evocative. Diego Maradona's last appearance for his country, and one of his most mature, came against the Africans in the 1994 World Cup.

Argentina have learned to live without him, their qualifying campaign suggests the 1998 team has grown up.

France 98 perhaps came too soon for their current generation. Now they are ready - especially to face England in their second match.

Regardless of Beckham's dismissal 'in 1998, Maradona's 'Hand of God' in 1986, or even the storm surrounding Antonio Rattin's sending-off in 1966, football in Argentina has long carried a love-hate relationship with England.

But if some of the clashes have been fiery, there is a bond of respect.

Football in Argentina has long carried a love-hate relationship with England. Although some of the clashes between the two teams have been fiery, there is a bond of respect.

The all-time World Cup score between the two nations is tied at 2-2.

Victory in Sapporo on 7

June could decide which team goes through to the second round.

Soon afterwards there could be a clash with Brazil, who have been drawn in the same half of the group.

The four times world champions did not get their wish to play their group games in Japan.

Their compensation was to be handed opponents which many Brazilians regard as a bye into the second round, or even to the quarter-finals as Group H, which will provide the second round opposition, has a far from powerful look about it.

But as Brazil's dismal performance in qualifying showed, the current team fall well below past standards.

A mixture of complacency and the team's own weakness could make their group phase more interesting than it might appear at first glance.

Uruguay kick off their Group A programme against Denmark, a match bringing back unpleasant memories of the 6-1 mauling the South Americans suffered at the hands of the Michael Laudrup inspired side of 1986.

They then face France, who they beat on their only previous World Cup meeting, before the winners of the first World Cup in 1930 face debutants of Senegal - an intriguing clash of the old versus the new.

With their final two matches kicking off at 3.30am local time, Uruguayans will have to get up early - or stay up late - to watch their team.

In the other half of the draw Paraguay are going

through a spell of turbulence after sacking coach Sergio Markarian.

But their aim of reaching at least the quarter-finals will be helped by a group comprising South Africa, Spain and Slovenia.

Spain will be looking for revenge after the goalless draw which meant their exit from France 98.

They will get few clues from the Paraguayans, though, who will speak Guarani, a language they have worked to



Rivaldo preserve, to confuse the Spanish.

Ecuador play in the first World Cup finals, with Colombian coach Hernan Dario Gomez insisting: "We're going there to learn."

They face a tough baptism in a group containing three-times world champions Italy, Croatia - who finished third in the last World Cup - and Mexico.

Ecuador frequently meet Mexico in friendlies so at least that match will offer a small piece of familiarity in an environment where everything else will be new and strange.

# Eriksson so sure of Argentina

England coach Sven-Goran Eriksson will not call on his vast network of spies to reveal the secrets of World Cup opponents Argentina - he will do it himself.

And that is because Eriksson is in the unique position of having signed six of the South American squad tipped for glory in Korea and Japan during his managerial career at Lazio.

Eriksson based much of his success at Lazio - where he claimed the Serie A crown - by signing the cream of Argentine quality.

The Swede spent about £90m on Argentines as he aimed to build a team worthy of the Italian giants, and will now lead England against them in the World Cup game in Japan next summer.

Eriksson may regard it as money well spent if the Italian investment enables him to plot Argentina's downfall next summer.

Eriksson made the £18m purchase of Juan Sebastian

Veron from Parma a top priority when he was at Lazio - and was instrumental in advising him to come to Manchester United in the summer.

He reportedly told Lazio president Sergio Cragnotti: "Give me the money to buy Veron and we will deliver the Scudetto."

And indeed he did. Eriksson also raided Parma to sign Matias Almeyda in a £5m deal and paid £2.5m for Nestor Sensini.

He brought in the notorious Diego Simeone - the midfield enforcer involved in David Beckham's sending off against Argentina in France 98 - as a £6m part of the deal that took striker Christian Vieri to Inter Milan.

And just months before he left Lazio, he paid a whopping £37.5m for striker Hernan Crespo from Parma to add to his Argentine connection.

He also splashed out £18.5m to sign frontman Claudio Lopez from Valencia to complete his collection.

Eriksson's admiration for

Argentina can be measured in the amount of Lazio's lira he was prepared to part with to land them.

And it was the midfield partnership of Veron and Simeone that was the fulcrum of his Lazio side.

It all provides England with a crucial insight into their biggest barrier next summer, and Eriksson's expertise now takes on an added dimension.

Eriksson said: "Of course Argentina will be favourites, but in all my time as manager I have never met a team that is unbeatable."

"The one good thing is I know most of this team like my own family. Crespo, Lopez, Simeone, Veron, Almeyda. I had them all at Lazio. Tremendous players every one."

"I took Crespo to Rome in the biggest deal in the history of Italian football, and one year later he was the top scorer in Serie A."

"He is a fantastic natural goalscorer and a wonderful

all-round player.

"The trouble with Lopez is he was injured during my last few months. Now he is coming back to the form he had at Valencia."

Eriksson is vocal about the strengths of the players he knows so well, but will undoubtedly keep their weaknesses to himself.

It is likely four of these players will figure against England - Veron, Simeone, Crespo and Lopez.

And if Argentina's stars have any weaknesses, England have the perfect man to make them known to his squad.

# Bayern coach warns players

Bayern Munich coach, Ottmar Hitzfeld, has urged his players to restore some pride in tier play in today's Champions League group A match at Nantes following a disappointing run.

"We absolutely need a good result," said Hitzfeld whose team lost 2-1 at Hertha Berlin at the weekend, leaving the Bavarians in third place in the Bundesliga, four points behind leaders Bayer Leverkusen.

The defending champions will be without goalkeeper, Oliver Kahn, and playmaker, Stefan Effenberg, for the clash in France.

Hitzfeld is annoyed that Bayern have lost two of their last three league matches and was clearly upset about their show in Berlin, where they wasted a 1-0 lead, squandered numerous opportunities and showed signs of nerves in defence.

"You have to be critical after such a performance," the coach said. "We made too many defensive mistakes."

Last season's Champions League winners started the second stage of the competition with a 1-1 home draw with Manchester United. Last week a 1-0 win after extra time

over Boca Juniors gave them their first World Club Cup title in 25 years.

But the defeat to Hertha followed a 1-0 defeat at Werder Bremen and a dismal goalless draw with lowly rated Nuremberg.

"The way we're playing in the Bundesliga is simply not good enough to become German champions," Hitzfeld said.

Club vice-president and former German captain, Karl-Heinz Rummenigge, said he wanted to see Bayern win all their matches until the winter break starts on December 19.

Just as Hitzfeld thought his injury worries were easing, Kahn hurt his knee and will now have to rest for 10 days. The German goalkeeper was replaced on Sunday by 22-year-old Stefan Wessels, who should deputise again against the French champions.

Effenberg, the Bayern captain, was still nursing a groin injury and should be left out as well, with Swiss international, Ciriaco Sforza, taking over his midfield duties.

With midfielder, Mehmet Scholl and Jens Jeremies not

fully fit yet after lengthy lay-offs, promising England midfielder, Owen Hargreaves, should be in the starting lineup again.

Hitzfeld, aware that Bayern need a victory to keep alive their chances of surviving the second stage, was expected to field three strikes in Brazilian Elber and German international, Carsten Jancker and Alexander Zickler.



Oliver Kahn UEFA Champions League

Today's matches  
 Man Utd Vs Boavista  
 Nantes Vs B/Munich  
 Barca Vs Galatasaray  
 AS Roma Vs Liverpool



Argentine Diego Simeone (right) was vital to Sven-Goran Eriksson's success at Lazio.



# SPORTS



## Kanu cautions colleagues

Arsenal FC striker and Super Eagles ace, Nwankwo Kanu, has cautioned his colleagues in the Eagles squad against complacency in the World Cup.

Kanu would rather that they become more dedicated than harbour any lackadaisical attitude to the matches in view of the tough games awaiting them against Argentina, England and Sweden.

Nigeria was last Saturday, in Pusan, South Korea drawn in the same group with the trio. Tagged the "group of death", Kanu described group F as the toughest in the Japan/Korea World Cup finals scheduled to begin on May 31 next year.

"Every one has to work hard and do his best to achieve the desired result," he said, noting that optimum success would depend on the level of commitment and dedication everyone puts in during the matches.

Nevertheless, the former U-23 skipper was optimistic that the Eagles would not be an easy nut to crack during the World Cup fiesta adding that the Eagles would make an impact at the mundial.

The Super Eagles he said

would prefer to concentrate their efforts in unified preparation instead of wasting precious time talking.

"Super Eagles players won't be talking too much, but would rather do the talking in the field of play," he said in on his website.

Kanu said the Eagles were eagerly looking forward to the matches adding that "we have to wait and see what happens in June 2, 7 and 12."

Kanu also said that the Eagles would win next year's Nations Cup in Bamako, Mali to boost their morale for the mundial. The Eagles "intend to do well and win the cup to gear us up for a great World Cup."

The Arsenal forward who has been reduced to a super sub by coach Arsene Wenger warned Eagles opponents against underrating them in the Nations Cup. "Beware Eagles are landing," he warned.

Kanu equally advised the NFA and the Sports Ministry to employ the Nations Cup "to compare notes and adequately prepare for the job (task) in Korea/Japan.



Jubilant Eagles celebrating a goal against Sudan during the World Cup qualifier. Kanu wants them to rededicate themselves for success.

## Woods, Goosen in last lap

Reigning US Open Champion, Retief Goosen, admits he is exhausted after a hectic golfing year but has decided to play in this week's Players' Championship at Royal Cape Golf Club before taking well-earned rests.

The 32-year-old Goosen will be the main attraction in the field, along with double US Open winner, Ernie Els, when the Sunshine Tour event starts on Thursday.

"All this travelling I've been doing has left me absolutely exhausted," Goosen told his official website bigfanof.com.

"I'm really tired and have had to withdraw from Tiger's Woods tournament (the Williams World Challenge in mid-December).

"I really need to take a two or three week holiday somewhere, away from cameras and autograph books. Maybe I'll go skiing or fishing."

"The big-hitting South African has been one of the best players in the game during 2002, clinching his first major title at Southern Hills in June before winning twice in Europe on his way to topping the season-ending money list.

He became the first non-European to head the European Tour Order of Merit since Australia's Greg Norman in 1982 and then partnered his good friend Els to victory in the World Cup of Golf in Japan last month.

Since then, the world number nine has finished third in the Grand Slam of Golf in Hawaii, five shots behind winner, Tiger Woods, and tied for eighth in the Sun

City Challenge on Sunday back on home soil.

He has found his hectic playing schedule and the resulting jet-lag a difficult problem to overcome.

"Jet-lag is something all players have to deal with, and it can really put you out of rhythm if you get affected by it," Goosen said.

"I think you have to give yourself enough time to get over it, along with carefully planning your body clock so that there is less chance of being affected."

Goosen and world number four, Els, are the star attractions for this week's Southern African Tour but three other players will also be out to make their mark.

Reigning Players' champion, Trevon Immelman of South Africa, who beat Els to second place to win last year's title, will want to mount an impressive defence in his home province.

Fellow South African, Rory Sabbatini, has played virtually all of his professional golf on the US Tour and, for most South African fans, this week will provide a first opportunity for them to watch his big hitting and aggressive approach to the game.



Woods

## Nigeria, Ireland clash in May

By Patrick Andrew with Agency Report

Nigeria and Ireland are to trade tackles in May as part of the build-up programme for the mundial.

The deal was struck on Saturday in Pusan, South Korea at the 2002 World Cup draws.

The Eagles were drawn against tough oppositions from Argentina, England and Sweden in group F almost universally acclaimed as the "group of death."

Ireland coach, Mick

McCarthy disclosed on Monday that the Nigeria FA has agreed to line out the Super Eagles sometime, in May next year against the Irish national squad.

McCarthy said he was eager to have the match because of the exposure and experience his squad would derive from playing a tough African side.

The Irish squad would face opposition from Cameroun the current African champions, Germany and Saudi Arabia.

Of the lot, McCarthy dreads Cameroun and would, therefore, cherish the privilege to trade tackles with Ni-

geria with a view to garnering enough facts that would facilitate his plot against Cameroun.

The Eagles though would need engage the Irish squad to psyche them up against England.

Though no definite date was fixed for the match against the Irish team, McCarthy was optimistic the deal would hold.

The Eagles are expected to file out against the Lions of Senegal, on December 20, the Pharaohs of Egypt on January 8 and Elephants of Ivory Coast on January 12 preparatory to the Nations Cup in Bamako, Mali.

## George Weah resigns

Former World and African Footballer of the Year, George Weah, has thrown in the towel as vice-president of the Liberia Football Association in protest over poor preparations of the Lone Stars for the Nations Cup.

FA officials confirmed yesterday that Weah, who is also the chief coach of the team, said the resignation was prompted by officials' lackadaisical attitude towards his suggested build-up programme ahead of the fiesta in Bamako, Mali.

The Lone Stars could not square up against the Pharaohs of Egypt last month because only eight foreign-based players arrived Cairo, Egypt for the match while the greater number mostly home-based failed to turn up for the match because of problems with the national FA.

Weah accused the FA of poor organisation and motivation for players a development that constantly pitted players against officials.

Weah who single-handedly bankrolled Liberia's World Cup 2002 campaign said the authorities by their poor attitude to his suggested programmes were not offering sufficient moral support to psyche up the team for performance in the Nations

Cup campaign, which begins on January 19 in Bamako.

The Lone Stars narrowly missed qualification for the Japan/Korea 2002 World Cup after the Super Eagles of Nigeria thrashed Ghana 3-0.



Jos Polo Clubhouse viewed from inside the polo field in its burnt state.

## Atiku to launch N75m clubhouse

The Vice-President, Atiku Abubakar, will be the chairman at the launching of the appeal fund to raise N75m for the reconstruction of the Jos Polo Clubhouse.

The launching, which

has been fixed for December 26 at the General Hassan Usman Katsina Polo Field in Jos, would be employed to raise the estimated amount for rebuilding parts of the facilities torched by unknown elements during the September inferno in Jos.

The launching would herald the annual Jos Polo Tournament with participants from all over the country expected to vie for honours in the one-week fiesta.

Tournament Manager, Haroun Audu, said the decision to organise the tournament was the Jos polo clubhouse's contribution to the peace initiatives being articulated for the continued harmonious co-existence between and amongst the citizens of Plateau State.

He further said that the club shares government commitment to quickly restore peace and harmony noting that such harmonious strings should remain the defining attributes of the people of Plateau State.

Besides, Audu said the polo fiesta was the only catalyst for the nascent tourism sub-sector of the state's economy by virtue of the multiplier effect the presence of entrepreneurs, diplomats and others who would flock into Jos for the period the Jos polo tournament would last.

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## WEDNESDAY COLUMN

# The dichotomy over party supremacy

By Mohammed Haruna

*What is the role of a party in a presidential system? Discuss.*

If this sounds to you like an examination question for first year political science undergraduates, then you probably have not followed the November 10 PDP convention in Abuja which has thrown up Mr. Audu Ogbe as its chairman. Goings-on before, at and after the convention show that this seemingly academic question has been central to the controversy that has surrounded not just the convention, but the very soul of the party itself. Indeed, the debate has not been about the soul of PDP alone. The remaining two, the AD and APP, have also been riven down the middle by this debate.

Leading one side of the debate in the PDP is President Olusegun Obasanjo himself. For this side, the party in a presidential system is necessarily the handmaiden of the presidential and other candidates - governors, legislators etc. - of the party. It exists basically to help the candidates get elected into governments and thereafter should merely stand by for the next elections.

"Party officials", said Obasanjo in his speech to the November 10 convention "need to be reminded that they are not government officials, appointed or otherwise. Party officials are remunerated from party headquarters and they must stay away from day to day executive decisions of the government, once the party manifesto remains the guide for the president".

Not so, retorted Chief Barnabas Gemade, who, not to put too fine a point on it, was virtually literally booted out as PDP chairman at the last convention. "A situation", he argued, "where other avenues rather than the party are the focus of actions is definitely not healthy and cannot generate the required allegiance, commitment and dedication to the party. Our candid observation is that we have only paid lip service to the concept of party supremacy."

As if in support of Gemade, Chief S. B. Awoniyi, the foundation chairman of the party and himself a very prominent victim of past frictions between the presidency and the party, told *Vanguard* on November 18, that the issue of party supremacy in the PDP is really not an issue. "The way PDP was formed", he said, "the question of party supremacy was not in contention. It was taken for granted".

Obasanjo is, of course, not alone in his belief that in a presidential system, parties cannot be supreme. However, his views on party/executive relationship seems very tame compared to the views of some of those in his support. One such supporter is Deputy Senate President, Alhaji Ibrahim Mantu. The *Punch* of November 17, has quoted him as suggesting Obasanjo has in fact all along bent over backwards too much to accommodate the party leadership. "The chairman of the party in any presidential system", said Mantu, "especially the American system which we are copying, is virtually hand-picked by the president. He has the right to do so if the president knows his right, what I expect him to do is to pick whoever he wants and present him to the convention for ratification".

Mantu's remarks were obviously meant to debunk the accusations of presidential meddling in the affairs of PDP, a meddlingness which was partly responsible for the near wholesale sacking of the elders of the party including Chief Awoniyi, in the middle of this year. Mantu's position enjoys the predictable support of the Minister of Information and National Orientation, Professor Jerry Gana. The minister was quoted by the *New Nigerian* (November 12) as saying there couldn't have been a freer expression of democracy than what took place at Eagle Square Abuja on November 10. "Democracy", he said, "does not merely mean elections. Election is just one form of expression. Consensus is the highest form of democratic agreement. If people now look at the issue, this particular option is the best for the party. We agree with it".

As I have pointed out, this dichotomy over party supremacy in a presidential system has caused crisis not only in the ruling PDP but also, in the other two parties, the AD and the APP. In both AD and the APP governors and local government chairmen have clashed openly with party executives over how much influence the parties should have in the affairs of government and vice-versa, i.e. how much influence the governors and local government chairmen should have in the affairs of the parties.

In this debate, both sides appear to have misread the role of parties in our type of presidential system. In the specific case of PDP, Obasanjo is far closer to the correct position of things than Gemade. He is also closer to the correct position than his supporters like Mantu and Gana, who have sounded more Catholic than the Pope.

Indeed, the remarks by Mantu and Gana are shocking apologetics of the November 10 PDP travesty of elections.

Gana's remarks are the more shocking of the two, coming as it were, from someone who professes Geography and who should therefore demonstrate a high level of intellectual integrity. Consensus, as he argues, may indeed be the highest form of democracy, in the sense of voluntary unanimity among all parties on an issue, but Gana knows all too well that that was not what happened on November 10. He knows that what happened was neither election nor consensus.

What happened, for the second time in the short life of the party, was the complete subjugation of the party to the whims of the presidency. The sad thing about the whole exercise was that it was probably absolutely gratuitous. I don't know about the other newly selected PDP officials, but the new chairman, Mr. Audu Ogbe, was (and is) someone that could have been sold to the party members with only a little bit of honest-to-God hard work at cultivating genuine grassroots support. Anyone familiar with Ogbe's antecedents knows that he is, in the words of Chief Awoniyi, "bright, articulate and gifted and he has his heart in the right place".

But then, the notion of hard work on the part of those who imposed Ogbe on the party, is not one of cultivating public opinion but simply a matter of squaring or squashing the slightest opposition to their way of thinking or of doing things.

Obasanjo, as I have said, is closer to the correct position of what should be the relationship between a ruling party and government when he said parties should not interfere in the day-to-day running of government. But he is correct only to the extent that both Gemade and Awoniyi are wrong in their claims that the party is supreme. A party is supreme only in the Communist model of the presidential system where only one party is allowed. It is also somewhat supreme in the multi-party parliamentary system where members must toe the party line whatever their individual preferences, as long as they wish to remain members of their respective parties.

In the American type presidential democracy after which we have modelled ours, members are free to vote and behave according to their conscience, not necessarily according to the general party line. That is why the voting pattern in the United States Congress often crosses the party lines. In other words, ideological puritanism has absolutely no place in American-type presidential democracy. Parties here are essentially electoral machines which become dormant in-between elections.

However, the fact that parties are not and cannot be supreme in an American-type presidential system - this is because the buck stops on the table of the elected chief executive - does not mean that parties should not seek to influence government decisions. The operative term is influence not imposition. Yes, parties should not seek to impose themselves on elected governments, but they have as much legitimate right to seek to influence the direction of public affairs as every one else in the system, whether these are individuals, groups or institutions.

Also the fact that parties are not and cannot be supreme in a presidential system does not justify the outrageous claim by Mantu that the parties must be totally subservient to the president. Coming from someone who has a knack for always being on what seems to be the winning side - Mantu is on record to have supported the suspected self-succession plans by both Generals Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha - it is not surprising that Mantu would claim that Obasanjo has every right to pick whoever he wants as party chairman and only present him to the party for ratification, because that is how they do it in America.

Contrary to Mantu's claim, that is not how they do it in America. The president has a right to seek to influence the composition of party leadership, but he is only one of many inputs in the process of choosing the leadership. As a much-travelled politician who must have visited America God-knows how many times, and as the Deputy Senate President who should have at least a nodding acquaintance with how the system works in America, it is truly amazing that he should indulge in such blatant falsehood.

The problem of the dichotomy over party supremacy in our fledgling democracy can be traced partly to the fact that the minds of our politicians are still cast in the parliamentary mould, long after the military, with the consent of the politicians, changed our system to the American presidential type in 1979. This mental inertia of politicians may, in turn, have been due to insufficient practice with democratic rule. The main source of the problem, however, is the fact that, leaders and followers alike, we seem to have become congenitally lazy and prefer to do things the quick and easy way. While we complain about the militarisation of our society due to too much military rule of the country, we still variously prefer to get what we want by government fiat rather than through the patient cultivation and mobilisation of public opinion to our sides.

Until we disabuse our minds of this attitude we will continue to waste precious time on the superfluous debate on whether or not parties should be supreme in our presidential democracy. They cannot be supreme in such a democracy, but neither should they be subservient to government.

# This Space is for Sale

## EDITORIAL

### Listen to Gado Nasko

The recent pronouncement of General Mohammed Gado Nasko (rtd.) on the payment of *zakkat*, or compulsory alms by Muslims, should be given more serious attention particularly by those states in the North that have adopted the Shariah legal system.

General Nasko, who is the chairman of the Niger State *Zakkat* and Endowment Board, declared recently that the board will henceforth compel wealthy individuals in the state to pay *Zakkat* to the board for subsequent appropriation among the needy.

Particularly cheering is the remark by General Nasko that "the board has been armed with the legal teeth to prosecute its programmes in accordance with Islamic principles". We believe this statement is an indication that the board has the blessing and the assurances of the Niger State government in the pursuit of this all-important mission. Therefore, the possibility that this will end up as just another passionate rhetoric that cannot, or will not, be enforced does not arise.

Beyond the tough talk however, lies the more difficult part: the nitty-gritty aspect of enforcement on the one hand and judicious distribution of the proceeds on the other. It is common knowledge that at the root of the excruciating level of poverty bedeviling a huge percentage of Nigerian families, particularly in the Northern parts of Nigeria, is the crude distribution of wealth and resources which tends to favour only a small fraction of people usually concentrated in the over-populated urban centres, leaving the vast population in abject need of capital and other wealth-creating structures.

Time and again, Muslim scholars and other concerned individuals have pointed out the advantages derivable from a well-planned and transparent *Zakkat* system. Indeed the underlying principle of this third pillar of Islam is to prevent widespread poverty by taking a little from the wealthy and giving, according to identifiable need, to those who have little or nothing. This, according to scholars, is the only panacea that can tackle the persistent begging problem that has been increasing at an embarrassing rate throughout the Northern states.

It is in the light of this that we wish to identify with the ideals espoused by General Gado Nasko and the board he chairs.

However, inasmuch as we respect the sincerity of purpose with which the board would approach its task, we cannot but draw the board's attention to the difficulty it is likely to face. In a country where official statistics is either unavailable or unreliable, it is by no means an easy task ascertaining the exact worth of an individual, to say nothing of getting him or her to part with any percentage of it. The board should be under no illusion therefore, that appealing to moral or even Islamic sentiments will produce automatic cooperation from Muslims.

But we believe General Nasko knows what he is about and we dare say is properly equipped for the task ahead. Thus while we wish him and his team success, we also wish to remind other states in the North particularly those practising the expanded Islamic legal code, otherwise known as Shariah, to see this as a challenge. If successfully implemented, the *Zakkat* system could be the key to the much-taunted "economic dividends of Shariah" which critics say the system is yet to deliver.