

DAILY TRUST

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VOL. 1 NO. 52

MONDAY, APRIL 16, 2001

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Monday Column

Richard Umaru on:

Adam and his ribs

Pg. 5

We do not give lectures under trees

-Gambo Abdullahi

Pg. 16

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IBB, Ojukwu, others for national confab

Former Military President Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, former Biafran leader, Dim Emeka Ojukwu, Second Republic Vice President, Chief Alex Ekwueme, former Nigerian Ambassador to the United Nations, Alhaji Yusuf Maitama Sule, and Afenifere leader, Chief Abraham Adesanya may have topped the list of 126 delegates expected at the national constitutional conference in May, in Abuja.

Sources in the presidency told *Daily Trust* that as part of the full implementation of the recommendations of the presidential review committee of the 1999 constitution, President Olusegun

By Jibril Daudu and Ibrahim Modibbo.

Obasanjo has concluded arrangements to assemble a 126-member confab, where each of the six geo-political zones is expected to produce 21 delegates.

The mode of selection of the members is not yet clear but the Presidency source hinted *Daily Trust* that it may either be by election or presidential selection and that when assembled, the conference would discuss devolution of powers, autonomy of the 36 states of the federation, federalism, ethnic militia and resource control, among other contending issues.

Observers of the

Buhari urges North to reject ID card

Former Head of State, General Muhammadu Buhari, has called on northern politicians and electorate to resist the use of the national ID card for the 2003 election.

General Buhari said the ID card is a deliberate plot by the Obasanjo administration to disenfranchise a majority of northern voters who do not have western education

From Musa Umar Kazaure, Sokoto

2003

and who may find it difficult to vote with it.

Besides, he said the use of the ID card for election is unconstitutional "because the law establishing the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) does not stipulate the use of national

Obasanjo administration are convinced that the convocation of a national conference which is likely to bring up a parallel body to the National Assembly may resuscitate the hostilities between the National Assembly and the executive arm of government.

The source told *Daily Trust* that already, tension is gradually building up in the National Assembly as members of the Senate and House of Representatives who feel that the president is by such act passing a vote of no confidence on them, have resolved to resist the convocation of a national conference.

The *Daily Trust* had ex-

contd. on pg 2

ID card as a pre-requisite for voting."

General Buhari gave the advice while answering questions in a Radio Rima *Guest of the Week* programme in Sokoto at the weekend.

He said the scrapping of the Petroleum Special Trust Fund (PTF) by President Obasanjo was a grave mistake, adding that the fuel

contd. on pg 2



Eight lynched for 'missing' organ

Eight members of the evangelical sect of the Brotherhood of the Cross were last week burnt to death in Ilesa, Osun State, for an alleged theft of a man's penis.

The members, who were in hundreds and on their annual convention in the town, went on a house-to-house preaching mission when someone raised an alarm that

his penis had disappeared.

The alarm attracted spontaneous reaction from an angry mob which, armed with sticks, clubs and machetes descended on the visiting evangelists and burnt eight of them to death. Two buses and a car were also burnt.

Osun State police commissioner, Mr. Ganiu Dawodu who dismissed claims of missing organs however,

said that the command had arrested two persons including the man who raised the false alarm over his missing penis.

Dawodu said, "we are terribly worried about the mass hysteria leading to such mob action."

The police in the state also confirmed that about 12 people have so far been

contd. on pg 2

African Union becomes reality

The African Union may have become a reality as a total of 36 countries have now ratified the treaty establishing the union. Two-thirds of OAU's 53 members are required to ratify the treaty before it comes into force.

Speaking at the commemoration of the 79th birthday of the former President of Tanzania, late Julius Nyerere, the OAU Secretary-General, Salim Ahmed Salim, confirmed that the required two-thirds of the OAU members had been acquired.

"As I speak to you, already the required two-thirds of OAU member states, including Tanzania, have ratified the constitutive act thereby ensuring that the dream of establishing an African union will soon be a re-

By Kevin Ebele Adinnu with agency reports

ality," said Salim, who is a Tanzanian.

He did not list the countries that had signed the treaty.

Sharia is constitutional -Yadudu

Prof. Awwalu Yadudu, a former Special Adviser to the Head of State on legal matters and Professor in the Faculty of Law, Bayero University, Kano, has asserted that the 1999 constitution had provided for *Sharia* under section 38, which he said, guarantees the freedom of religion.

He made the assertion in London on Saturday in a paper he delivered at a one-day international conference on

"Thirty days after I have received all the required instruments of ratification, the constitutive act will enter into force and the foundation for our union will have been

contd. on pg 2

the *Sharia* in Nigeria.

Yadudu further pointed out that states had the legislative competence under sections 4,6 and 277; as well as the second schedule to the 1999 constitution, among others, "to establish *Sharia* courts in addition to existing ones, expand their jurisdiction, and enact laws drawing inspiration from religious and non-religious norms."

No fewer than seven states, mostly in the north

contd. on pg 2



From left, Chief (Mrs) Stella Obasanjo, her mother, Mrs Theresa Abebe and Mrs. Jibril Martins-Kuye, wife of the Minister of State for Finance on Easter service in Our Lady Queen of Nigeria Catholic Church, Garki, Abuja... yesterday.
Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje.

NEWS

London Seminar: Kano Emir, don task Nigerians on knowledge

No society can conquer poverty unless it conquers ignorance, Dr. Ibrahim Sulaiman, head of Islamic Legal Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, said at the weekend in London.

Speaking at a one-day international conference on *Sharia* in Nigeria, Dr. Sulaiman stated that the worst form of poverty was the poverty of knowledge, stressing that no society could move forward "as long as it denies itself the benefits of knowledge."

To achieve the objective of having a literate and educated society, he said, education must be made compulsory for every child, while access to knowledge must be available and affordable to all, irrespective of age.

He lamented that Nigeria today suffered from serious constraints of economic nature to the extent that its economic sovereignty was often shared with such organisations as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

"Where economic sovereignty is compromised, the well-being of the people is invariably devalued," he said, adding, "this may perhaps explain the terrible distortions in the life of the Nigerian people in the midst of extreme affluence, poverty remains pervasive and consolidated."

Dr. Sulaiman said the

Sharia was being restored in some states in Nigeria in circumstances which were both challenging and foreboding, explaining that one of the challenges was whether the governments had the capacity to meet the expectations of the people.

He stressed that the "thrust of the *Sharia* is to facilitate life and not to create hardship, to forgive and not to punish, to pull people and not to scare by coercion and force and to appreciate and accommodate man's moral weakness and not to ignore it."

He listed accountability and transparency in government, efficiency and order in human management, care and compassion for the weak, enforcement of human rights, sanctity of the judiciary and the electoral process at some of the essential components of the *Sharia*.

The Emir of Kano, Alhaji Ado Bayero said in a keynote address that the state governments that had adopted *Sharia* were carrying out the wishes of their people "in a manner that is peaceful, legal and consistent with the provisions of our constitution."

The Emir stated that the clamour for the restoration of *Sharia* reflected a genuine desire to reclaim a heritage and to exercise constitutional rights to freedom of religion and conscience.

He stressed that Muslims

do not seek to impose their religion on others or to involve themselves in inter-religious conflicts, because "Islam is a religion of peace."

Bayero however, expressed concern that Muslims in the Southern part of the country were denied access to Islamic law even in

personal and civil matters despite repeated demands by their leaders and hoped that the problem would be resolved through peaceful means.

He said the conference was also aimed at presenting the true picture of events in Nigeria, which were often

subjected to biased media reports.

The conference was attended by the governors of Zamfara, Niger, Kwara and Sokoto States, renowned academics and intellectuals in Nigeria and abroad, including Prof. Ali Mazrui of Kenya, diplomats and a cross-section

of Nigerians in the UK.

Amongst personalities who delivered papers at the conference were Prof. Ali Mazrui, Prof. Awwalu Yadudu, Dr. Mohammed Tabiu and Alhaji Lateefat Okunnu, a former deputy governor of Lagos State.

Buhari contd. from pg. 1

essarily castigated as monopolising the oil sector through family friends and associates. "They scrapped PTF but what is happening in the oil industry today? Who are those importing the fuel and why are the refineries not fully functional?" he asked.

The former Head of State said Nigeria is not yet ripe for deregulation because the social pre-requisites for deregulation have not been put in place.

"I think the government is not serious about solving the fuel scarcity in the country. If it is then let it start with fighting indiscipline and corruption. Two years is enough to have an impact on any sector of the Nigerian life. We have done it before," he said.

price increase by the late General Abacha's regime was justified by the enormous work done by the PTF in the provision of good roads, renovation of schools, and hospitals, among others.

He pointed out that Nigerians felt the impact of PTF in various sectors but argued that "in the last two years, the bench mark price of crude oil rose to about 35 dollars per barrel, but if you look at the Abdulsami regime, oil was selling for between 12 and 15 dollars a barrel. Yet, he was able to accomplish a lot in solving the problem of fuel scarcity which the present regime displayed as its achievement in its first few months in office."

General Buhari said the Abacha regime was unne-

Sharia contd. from pg. 1

ern parts of the country, had so far implemented the *Sharia* legal system and at least three others had signified their intention of doing so before the end of the year.

Yadudu explained that adopting or expanding the scope of the *Sharia* was not

the same thing as the adoption of an official religion by the states, because none of the initiatives of the *Sharia* implementing states could be said to have violated section 10 of the constitution which prohibits the adoption of a state religion.

He identified some of the benefits of the implementation of the *Sharia* as the enthronement of a legal and judicial system which is "accessible and affordable, devoid of benumbing technicalities, incomprehensible forms of endless delays," and which the community happily identifies with.

Implementation of the *Sharia* was, however, replete with numerous challenges, including political, constitutional, economic, judicial, psychological and external intervention, which he said, required good leadership, sincerity, consistency and strong will to overcome.

In his own contribution, the former secretary of the national human rights commission, Dr. Muhammed Tabiu also argued that the adoption or expansion of the scope of *Sharia* by some state governments was an attempt to rehabilitate the society from its present state of corruption, widespread crime and social neglect.

The leadership in the states wanted guidance in the *Sharia* to transform a degenerating society in modern times as was done in the past, he said.

The former Head of State said the present administration was very unfair to military, police and security officers of northern extraction who were retired on the basis of their serving in the Abacha regime.

"To become a General in the military you have to put in between 25 and 30 years. To become a police commissioner, you must have served between 20 to 25 years, so also to become a director in SSS. These officers were removed overnight without committing any offence, which means it will take the

North about 20 and 30 years before they reach that height again," Buhari stated.

General Buhari who is also the National President of Pastoralists said he became the leader of the organisation by virtue of being a Fulani and cattle rearer. He said that the organisation had succeeded in reducing the annual clash between cattle rearers and farmers and that it is also working with various state governments to re-establish grazing reserves to reduce the tension between cattle rearers and farmers.

African contd. from pg. 1

laid," he said.

The pace of continental unity has now gathered speed, according to Salim.

"The decision to establish the African Union challenges us to come to grips with some of the complex issues that Mwalimu (Swahili word for 'teacher') Nyerere, and other founding fathers were grappling with in pursuing the Pan-African dream," the OAU Secretary-General said.

He paid tribute to the former Tanzanian President, who died in 1999, as a great son of Africa, a staunch Pan-Africanist and a distinguished statesman.

Salim said Nyerere had insisted that regional economic groupings in Africa should be the building blocks of the envisaged Af-

frican Union.

In March, African leaders announced the establishment of the African Union at the end of the OAU summit in the Libyan town of Sirte, but they said not enough nations had ratified the proposal, first floated by Libyan President Moammar Gaddafi in 1999 and adopted as an OAU goal a year later.

African leaders have since overwhelmingly supported the idea of a continental union, hoping that their countries could act with greater cohesion and avoid being ignored by richer countries.

The union hopes to set up an African Central Bank, a Court of Justice, a single currency and a parliament. The plan is scheduled to be considered again at the OAU summit in July in Zambia.

Eight contd. from pg. 1

lynched through mob action in the last two weeks in six main towns in the state, including the university town of Ife and the state capital, Osogbo.

Meanwhile, police in the state have been placed on red alert as scores of them are on constant patrol of the nooks and crannies of the state. The police told newsmen that the patrol has yielded good dividend as six people were last week rescued from the hands of angry mobs over allegations of missing organs.

According to the police, the lucky ones, including a woman were rescued after a mob had put a tyre around her neck and was about to

set her ablaze when the police timely intervened.

As a remedial measure, the state governor and the police had gone on the state television and radio appealing to the public not to take the law into their hands. They also appealed to religious leaders and traditional rulers to ask their followers not to take part in such mob actions.

To check the menace of the organ alarmists, the state police command has also deployed plain-clothes detectives to dark spot areas with a view to keeping an eye on those they accuse of raising false alarm.

IBB contd. from pg. 1

forfeiting the protection of the constitution that legitimises both the national assembly and himself as president".

"The contemplation of the constitution is for the president to operate with an elected national assembly, so for him to create any parallel body to the national assembly would amount to a clear violation of the provisions of the constitution," he said.

Professor Jerry Gana, Minister of Information and National Orientation said last Thursday that Obasanjo had

approved the constitution of the conference following extensive pressure from interest groups in the country.

He said that zonal conferences would be held, starting from the South-East, North-East and North-West early next month so as to enable Nigerians make appropriate input into the new constitution that would be fashioned out.

The conference would be rounded up in Abuja, May 29 to coincide with the second anniversary of the Obasanjo administration.

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Any objection to the registration should be forwarded to the Registrar General, Corporate Affairs Commission, Area 11, Garki Abuja within 28 days of this publication.

Signed:

AHMED ALHAJI MUSTAPHA ESQ.

NEWS

NYSC members paid N7,500 allowance

After nine months of waiting and failed promises and with only three months to the end of their service year, corps members serving in Abuja, during the week received their allowance of N7,500 with mixed feelings.

Malam Mohammed Karim, a youth corps member serving with Ilube Oil said that the allowance "would have been more appreciated if it had come earlier".

"We got to the orientation camp nine months ago and they officially told us our allowance was N11,822, we waited in vain for it, not wanting to revolt because we were serving the government. Later, it was changed to N7,500 and it took them three months to start paying," he said.

Another corps member, Aishat Usman, said it was a big relief and would go a long way in reducing the effect of rising prices of goods and services in Abuja.

There was, however, an indication that most of the corps members have started



Aisha Ismail

looking beyond the service year, with Inah Emma from Cross River State saying that he had been working very hard to be retained in his place of primary assignment, "though there is no offer yet I believe it would eventually come through".

The struggle to get the funds at the banks almost took the shine off the much-awaited allowance. An investigation by NAN revealed that the banks were crowded with corps members, who desperately struggled, in spite of the heat, to collect their allowances in

preparation for the Easter break.

In one of the banks at Wuse, Horizon Bank, a source disclosed that the distribution of corps members' allowances was compounded by the "unavailability of computers to access ledgers so we have to work manually".

"Workers had to rely on the routine of carrying files, cross checking figures and counting money to pay corps members," he said.

Apart from the long hours of waiting, the manual service also had the problem of inaccuracy, some of the corps members complained of being "short-changed" in the payment of their allowances and calculation of figures in their passbooks.

A furious corps member serving with NITEL said her money was reduced by N1,600 and when she complained, the cashier asked her to wait until she had finished with all the other corps members before she would attend to her complaints.

Lagos Assembly at war with Obasanjo

Lagos lawmakers have demanded an unreserved apology from President Oluségun Obasanjo for describing Lagos as "an urban jungle and a place not habitable for the sane".

Obasanjo, quoting the UN at the launch of the global campaign for good urban governance in Abuja, said that Lagos was classified as the sixth most populous urban dwelling worldwide with a population of more than 13 million, but that it was "a place not habitable for the sane".

The House, in a motion it adopted on Thursday, said, "the entire people of Lagos State do demand that the president withdraw such a

statement and apologise".

The motion, moved by Mr. Abayomi Kako-Are (Mushin), chairman of the House's tourism committee, urged the federal government to look into the state's infrastructural problems and assist the government to develop them.

Another lawmaker, Mr. Hassan Adefarasin, urged the House not to consider the president's statement as something serious. The Speaker, Dr. Olorunnimbe Mamora, stressed that "Lagos State is still the centre of



President Obasanjo

excellence and the commercial nerve centre of the nation".

Benue govt. to spend N600 million on new boreholes

The Benue State government has approved the construction of 100 additional solar-powered boreholes at the cost of N600 million in different parts of the state.

The state commissioner for Information and Culture, Mr. Terhemba Shija, announced this in Makurdi on Thursday while speaking to journalists.

The commissioner explained that 80 of the boreholes would cost the government N4.5 million each while the



Gov. George Akume

other 20 boreholes would consume N240 million on

completion..

Shija also disclosed that the government had earmarked N110 million to procure fertilizer for distribution to farmers this cropping season in the state.

He said that a bag of the product would be sold by the state government at the cost of N1,000.

The commissioner restated the commitment of the government to boosting agricultural production in the state.

Anti-Nyame riots claim 3 lives

No fewer than three persons were killed, three houses burnt with several other persons seriously injured during renewed violence by youths in Zing, the home town of Governor Jolly Nyame of Taraba State who were protesting the campaign for Nyame to continue in office.

A News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) correspondent who visited the town, which has turned into a "Ghost Town" reports that the irate youths were protesting the arrest, detention and prosecution, last week, of nine of their members by the police.

According to NAN, the youths were protesting against the self-succession campaign being organized by some supporters of the governor.

The youths, who forcefully paralysed socio-economic activities in the area for about one week, were seen carrying bows and arrows, swords, spears, daggers and other traditional weapons of war.

They blocked the two major roads leading into the town from Jalingo through Mayo-Belwa road and smashed some vehicles, including the police anti-crime patrol jeep donated recently by ALGON.

While engaging the police in a fierce battle, the youths

were shouting war slogans saying, "We need water and other basic social amenities that can qualify any person for re-election".

The police confirmed to NAN that "the atmosphere was tense and the situation uncontrollable," and that they had requested for reinforcement from the command headquarters in Jalingo.

The council chairman, Rev. Adiel Zehrenu, and his councillors, who narrowly escaped the wrath of the mob,

were later seen in the company of a team of mobile policemen, led by their commander, trying to restore normalcy in the area. The paramount chief of the area and Kpanti Zing, Alhaji Ibrahim Sambo, and his council made frantic efforts to pacify the youths, who are mostly unemployed, through various consultations.

Nyame later paid an unscheduled visit to the town to assess the extent of damage to lives and property as well as assuage ill feelings amongst his kinsmen.

Kaduna denies involvement in district heads' selection

The Kaduna State government has said it did not interfere in the selection and recommendation of district heads in any of the newly-created chiefdoms in various parts of the state.

The denial was prompted by the increasing wave of communal disturbances over the appointments of chiefs and creation of district headquarters which has claimed many lives and left some property destroyed in the southern part of the state.

In a statement in Kaduna, the state Commissioner for Information, Alhaji Rabiu Bako, stated that appointments in all the chiefdoms and emirates were

based on recommendations of all traditional institutions in the areas.

"Government does not add or subtract from the names issued to it by the various emirates and chiefdoms," Bako said.

He therefore, condemned the "wrong impression created by cynics", that government teleguided some of the appointments, adding that the idea was an "idle fancy".

The latest of such disturbances occurred at the weekend in Zangon Kataf Local Government area where three people died in a communal clash by the Bajju and Ikulu people over the creation of a chiefdom.

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NEWS

Briefs

Councillor calls for new school law

Alhaji Abubakar Nasarawa, supervisory councillor for education in Funtua local government council of Katsina state, has called for a law that will force all public officers in the country to enrol their children in public education institutions.

Nasarawa said that the call become necessary as most public officers in the country enrolled their children only in private schools.

Niger Supply company makes profit

The Niger State Supply Company recorded a turnover of N27.6 million from its operations last year, the chairman of the company, Alhaji Muhammad Agaie, has said.

At the company's Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Minna, Agaie said that the figure represented an increase of 45 per cent about N19 million recorded over as turnover in 1999.

He said that in spite of harsh operating environment, the company's profit after tax rose from N1.2 million in 1999 to N1.7 million last year, while its gross earnings increased from N6.3 million to N7.8 million.

Kano state rounds up 63 beggars

The Kano State Government has rounded up 63 beggars since the introduction of the Shari'a Legal System in the state, the executive secretary in charge of the State's Relief and Rehabilitation Agency, Alhaji Kawu Inuwa-Gurjiya, has said.

Inuwa-Gurjiya said, that 53 of the beggars had been deported to their states of origin as well as Niger Republic, while nine others, being camped at the Federal Government Rehabilitation Centre, Mariri, would soon be repatriated.

He said that following the ban on street-begging imposed by the state government, thousands of beggars, who had earlier flooded the streets of Kano, fled to their states of origin, while those from Niger Republic were handed over to their consulate in Nigeria for deportation.

House of Reps. condemns violence in Zango Kataf

Members of the House of Representatives have condemned the recent wave of communal violence that engulfed Kamuru district in Zango Kataf local government area of Kaduna state.

A resolution unanimously passed by the House appealed to the warring factions to stop further violence and maintain peace and tranquillity.

The resolution directed the House Committee on Peace and National Reconciliation to visit the affected areas with a view to identifying the remote and

NBC denies Safir Communication

National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) says it has not given any licence to Safir Communication Ltd for the operation of a radio station in Kaduna.

A statement from the Commission, signed by its Head of Public Affairs, Mark Ojiah referred to last Thursday's Daily Trust report captioned "North gets first private FM station,"

By Reuben Yunana

saying the claims of Safir Communication Ltd were untrue.

In the report, Safir Communications had claimed through veteran broadcaster Ambassador Yusuf Maman that it had been granted a licence to operate a radio station, Jakada Radio by the Abdulsalami Abubakar administration.

However, in the release

the NBC said: "The Commission wishes to state categorically that it has not granted any such licence for the purported Jakada Radio.

The statement went on, "the Commission re-iterates that it is its statutory duty to recommend applications for the grant of licence to all electronic broadcast mediums for the consent of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

"From all records available, this has been the process for the establishment of the nine privately owned radio stations in the country.

Jakada Radio reportedly owned by Safir Communication Limited is not included in this list."

The Commission Explained that there are currently about 40 applications under consideration for the grant of broadcast licence, and that Jakada Radio allegedly planning its debut transmission early next month in Kaduna is illegal because it is doing so without the Commission's authorisation.

"The essence of deregulation is to provide variety in broadcast services within legal authorisation and the fulcrum of democracy is the rule of law; the statement concluded.



Danladi Baki, D-G, National Broadcasting Commission.

Nigeria High Commission in U.K. embarks on intensive staff training

The Nigerian High Commission in the U.K. is to embark on intensive training of its staff to ensure that they lived up to their responsibilities.

The High Commissioner, Prince Bola Ajibola, disclosed this in London while receiving a report of the inquiry into allegations of corruption against officials and staff of the consulate section of the commission.

Ajibola, who frowned at the attitude of some staff said that the High Commission had received several complaints from the public accusing them of being "rude, impertinent, inhuman and aggressive."

He reminded the staff that they were there to serve the

public including passport applicants, stressing that they had "no right to abuse or insult our customers."

He expressed the hope that the training would bring improvement in their attitude towards members of the public, thereby improving the image of the Commission and Nigeria as a whole.

He stated that the Commission had finalised arrangements with a consulting company, which he said, was ready for the training. He urged the beneficiaries to make the best use of the opportunity.

Ajibola also disclosed that the High Commission had taken delivery of an additional machine for the production of passports,

adding that passport applications would now be processed more quickly.

He said that with acquisition of the new machine, processing of passports would now be smooth and never halted as it was in the past whenever the only machine broke down.

He said that a passport office would soon be opened in Manchester to cater for applicants in the mainland, stressing that the measure would lessen the hardships currently being faced by such applicants.

He announced that more than 1,500 completed passports were awaiting collection, and called on the applicants to come forward and collect them.



President of the Democratic Republic of Congo, General Joseph Kabila (left) being welcomed to Nigeria by President Olusegun Obasanjo at the Presidential Lounge of Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport during his visit to Nigeria... Thursday. Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje.

The Minister of Agriculture, Alhaji Adamu Bello, has said that the Federal Government would do everything possible to stabilise prices of essential food stuff in the country through mass release of buffer stock grains for sale to members of the public at subsidised prices.

The Minister spoke in Minna during the week when he kicked-off the 2001 grains distribution. According to

FG to stabilise prices of food stuff

seriously touched by the skyrocketing prices of food stuff in the country and would intervene without further delay to bring down such prices to affordable level.

He said, the Federal Government had directed the immediate release of 30,000

tonnes of assorted grains worth N1 billion from its eight grains reserve silos across

local governments for sale to the public.

He said further that the Federal Government would from the 2001 harvest season engage in active purchase of excess produce directly from farmers at reasonable prices so as to save them from the activities of middlemen.

Since the government has the capacity to intervene in this ugly situation,

in ensuring that henceforth farmers will not suffer again in this country because they produce in excess," he said.

He also assured that the Federal Government in its efforts to encourage farmers would continue to subsidise agricultural inputs and make them available at the right time.

In a speech at the occasion, the governor of

Kano line increases functional fleet

Kano State owned transport corporation, the Kano Line, has within the last two years increased its functional vehicles from six to 26, the corporation's General Manager, Alhaji Aminu Dawakintofa, has said.

Alhaji Aminu said in Kano that the rehabilitation of those vehicles which was done through direct labour by the organisation's employees, was informed by the need to provide affordable transport for intra and inter state services for the people.

He stated that the 10 buses purchased last year for the use of female commuters within the metropolis had proved useful because the experiment showed that female commuters within the city prefer patronising all-female vehicles.

Alhaji Aminu said that the 10 buses bought early this year had been yielding fruitful results, pointing out that they collectively generate revenue more than the cost of one unit of such buses at the end of every

month. He said that other services introduced by the organisation included students' service which involves the buses plying routes to convey students to and from their schools at the cost of N 5.00 per drop.

The General Manager, however, regretted that the number of vehicles in the organisation's fleet was inadequate to cater for the people of the state given its size and population and assured that the services of the organisation would be improved once it got over its problems of owning rickety buses to carry passengers.



Alh. Rabiu Kwankwaso, Kano State Governor.

Abdulkadir Kure, accused the Federal Government of paying lip service to agriculture.

He noted that Nigeria as a country, was blessed with vast fertile land and conducive environment for agricultural development but for the neglect and mismanagement of the sector which he said, must be given priority if the government's food security programme

DAILY TRUST

EDITORIAL

Justice for kill-and-steal cops

On February 17 this year, three off-duty mobile policemen; Benjamin Oyakhire, Michael Jimoh and Garshon Sabo, conspired to bring the already battered image of the police force into greater disrepute. That fateful day, the trio belonging to the Mobile 37 posted to Okene to quell the recent communal riots on the Obeira-Okene road mounted an illegal road block and stopped a north-bound bus carrying traders. The three traders were on their way to Katsina to buy rams to resell in Lagos as part of preparations for the last Eid-el-Kabir.

On seeing the large amount of money the traders were carrying (a total of N1.4 million), the trio lured the driver and passengers to a nearby primary school. They set the bus and its passengers ablaze after carting away the money. To erase evidence of their crime, they set the vehicle and traders ablaze leaving them for dead. However, as fate would have it, two of the traders defied death and reported to the Kogi State Police Commissioner, Mr. Wilfred Ehikamefalor, who promptly investigated and arrested the suspects.

The killer-cops were first dismissed from the Police Force and arraigned before the Lokoja High Court. About two weeks ago, the Chief Judge of Kogi State, Justice Umaru Eri, found the trio guilty and condemned them to death by hanging. His lordship said while delivering judgement that, "I see the three accused persons, clearly as people who have no regard whatsoever for the sanctity of human life; from my careful observation of them throughout the trial, the apparent sign of remorse is to me deceitful; undoubtedly, the accused persons are unfit for a decent society which we most cherish."

The prompt and exemplary conduct of the Kogi State Police Commissioner, Mr. Ehikamefalor, is a reminder that in spite of the rottenness of the police force, there are still decent and professionally competent people among them. The heinous crime committed by the three policemen is by no means the first. Many of such incidents, where they get reported at all, are most often hastily covered up. By these criminal acts, the perpetrators believe they are protecting the image of the police. The revelations about the numerous human rights abuses at the Human Rights Violations Investigation (Oputa) Panel are mind boggling and in many of these cases, which often involve murder, the police officers involved were either hastily transferred in connivance with superiors to cover up or, at best, they discourage thorough investigations.

Also worthy of commendation is the immediate attention the Chief Judge of Kogi State, Justice Umaru Eri, gave the case. Nothing less should be expected of such a case especially where the accused confessed to their murderous greed. The case has brought out the best in the dispensation of justice. This contrasts sharply with the tradition where repeated adjournments are the order of the day until public interest wanes, providing a convenient excuse for the miscarriage of justice. Justice delayed, it is said is justice denied, but in this case, the Chief Judge of Kogi has meted out justice in time and in proportion to the crime.

The Police, in a reaction to the verdict by the Force Public Relations Officer, Mr. Haz Iwendi, said the Police authorities were "very pleased with the judgment". But this cannot immediately end the trauma the Nigeria police force (NPF) is in today. Founded as a colonial outfit, the Police, even in the past 40 years of independence, has not been able to shed off its toga of an occupation force - to oppress and instil fear in the 'natives' for efficient administration and economical exploitation by the occupying power. For all this period, the police force has been an all-comers affair with mainly quasi-literate criminals and rascals. This leaves a sprinkling of decent men of honour like Mr. Ehikamefalor who are incapacitated by the corrupt and rotten system.

The military in its dubious messianic adventurism did not want to improve the image of the Police Force. At best, they armed them to be more efficient in oppressing the weak and the meek, while they busied themselves with the looting of treasuries. It is this type of force that bred the likes of the three condemned killer-cops.

Daily Trust believes there is certainly an urgent need to re-orientate the Police. The provision of fast cars alone cannot make an efficient and people-friendly police force. Steps must be taken to weed out those with dubious records. A conscious effort must now begin to give our policemen the type of training that is fit for a modern police outfit.

The barbarity and bestiality of the crime committed by these heartless policemen, no doubt, shows the enormity of the cleansing task ahead for the police force. Daily Trust, therefore, believes the Police should be encouraged to do a thorough house-cleaning to give the country a police force that will enhance the gains of democracy. That should be a crucial aspect of delivering democratic dividends too.

MONDAY COLUMN

Adam and his ribs

By Richard Umaru

Hauwa (or Hauwa'u) is the Hausa rendition of the name Eve. And as all believers of the monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam know only too well, Hauwa is supposed to be the first woman on earth. Created from the rib of Adamu (Adam, that is), Hauwa was supposed to be firmly under Adamu's control and protection. It was Adamu's God-ordained role to be the head of the house. He was also the undisputable leader. Hauwa's place in this divine scheme was to serve as a loyal supporter and a respectful assistant. God's arrangement was that simple!

Unfortunately, the world has, since the blissful days of the Garden of forbidden fruits, become a lot more complex. Times have changed, and with them the divine definition of roles between men and women. Our Hauwas of today are no longer content with the role of a second fiddle. They want a part of the action and a place in the front rows as well. And, by God, aren't they raising a hell lot of dust about it?

Just the other day (Saturday, April 7th, to be precise) such dust was raised very high indeed at a dinner meeting hosted by the Minister for Women Affairs and Youth Development, Hajiya A'isha Ismail, at Abuja. The meeting was ostensibly called to provide a forum for women to politically 'strategize' on how they may effectively participate in the on-going political process.

It was, by all counts, a big occasion. All the four female ministers in government were in attendance. So were scores of female members in the national and state legislative houses. This was besides the leadership of the country's foremost women's umbrella organization - the National Council for Women Societies (NCWS). With a strong outing such as this, Mrs. A'isha Ismail could not have wished for a more august assemblage. But in Nigeria political assemblies of such luminaries are often attended by controversies. This one was to be no exception.

Trouble was soon to break out, and it came when our own Hauwa - I mean Mrs. Hauwa Bagudu, the Vice-President of the NCWS - decided to, as the Hausa would say, break the egg. Mrs. Bagudu is reported to have charged during the occasion, that female elected female politicians have failed Nigerian women, particularly those residing in the rural areas, by turning their backs on those who elected them. Mrs. Bagudu added ominously that these rural women "have threatened that on no account would they make the mistake again of either commissioning or voting for the re-election of any woman in 2003". The NCWS Vice-President, who claimed that her conclusions were the result of a research her organization conducted on the views of women about female public office holders, however, exempted women political appointees from blame. She told the gathering: "Rural women are saying that they are pleasantly surprised that the females whom they did not cast their votes to put in power are the only ones whose doors are open to them."

Naturally, Hauwa Bagudu's scathing remarks did not go down well with most of the women legislators at the weekend dinner. Indeed, it is reported that heated altercations ensued between her and some of these furious female politicians. It was a truly bad night for the women big wigs gathered for the occasion. But the implications of the controversies that attended A'isha Ismail's "political strategisation dinner" actually go beyond these verbal fireworks between Hauwa and her adversaries. For, after all, fireworks are the stuff of politics, whether played by men or by women.

To begin with - and this is with all due apologies to Mrs. Bagudu - the veracity and reliability of the findings of the research conducted by the NCWS, on the basis of which Mrs. Bagudu apparently drew her conclusions, are very suspect. It is pretty difficult to fathom out how the NCWS research instruments or research respondents could have determined that elected female politicians in the present dispensation were elected by women (and not by both women and men). After all, in the transitional elections that midwifed the present civilian order, neither candidates nor electors went to the polls exclusively on gender platforms. Nigerian female electors, whether rural or urban-based, did not go to the polls as women but as Nigerians. The claim, which the NCWS Vice-President is making for rural women, that they were the ones that put our present crop of female legislators in office, can at best, therefore, only be partially true.

The other - and, perhaps, more important - point which the controversy raises is the essentially limited efficacy of gender-based politics in the struggle for the fundamental liberation of women from the shackles of oppression, exploitation and domination. Yes, I know that in this age and times this is not the kind of politically-correct remark one should be seen or heard to be making. But then, as Mrs. Hauwa Bagudu told her female adversaries during their week-end "strategizing" dinner meeting, home truths must always be told each other. It is, of course, true that the closing decades of the 20th

century have witnessed an exponential growth in gender rights advocacy and consciousness. In Nigeria, in particular, the last twenty years have witnessed the bringing forward of women's rights issues from the kitchen where they had been closeted to the front-burners of national discourse. The Beijing and Nairobi women conferences, as well as the high profile roles which Mrs. Maryam Babangida and Mrs. Maryam Abacha assumed as First Ladies during their husbands' tenures, no doubt played a significant catalytic role in this development.

Yet, can we really say that the status of Nigerian women has been fundamentally improved and positively transformed as a consequence of this tremendous leap-frogging in gender rights activism in Nigeria? Is it not true that as more and more Nigerians - male and female alike - sink deeper and deeper into the abyss of absolute poverty, more and more women are correspondingly falling under the category of the poor of the poor?

By abstracting and removing gender issues from their social, political or economic contexts and trying to deal with them in isolation, we unwittingly compound gender problems rather than solve them. Assuming even that it is true that elected women legislators have not been responsive to their constituents, what good does it do to the women's cause to single them out as women and tongue-lash them in public for this observed lapse? At any rate, in behaving unresponsively to their constituents, are women legislators behaving any worse than their male counterparts, who incidentally were also voted into their respective houses by both men and women? Why then has the NCWS - if it is really the women's advocate it claims to be - left out the male legislators from its criticism?

Beyond this example of Mrs. Ismail's "political strategisation dinner", experience has shown that very often positive reforms and changes in behaviour and attitudes on matters concerning women's rights have been blocked simply because change agents came barging in with the feminist flag waving high. You can come into a community with an adult literacy programme in which women might very well be the major beneficiaries without unnecessarily chanting the feminist war-song. Chances are that if you do so, your programme is going to be more well-received than if you had charged in wearing the gender rights insignia. What matters is not how you get the results, but that you get the results you want.

It is perhaps, worth repeating for the umpteenth time that men and women play complementary and not antagonistic roles in society. These roles encompass the production and reproduction of life and human society. The one cannot be separated from the other, without damaging nature's delicate balance.

Enmeshed as they are in every facet of life, the path to true women's liberation can only lie in the liberation and social advancement of society itself as a whole. Those who argue that the liberation of women qua women is the key to the liberation of society are merely putting the cart before the horse. It may be the new orthodoxy of a globalising world (so-called), but it is nonetheless tactically and strategically wrong. Gender politics qua gender politics will take no one anywhere - least of all our womenfolk. Salvation lies, as it has always been, in the joint struggle of men and women against oppressive, exploitative and unaccountable systems.

Can Adam after all be separated from his ribs?

LETTER OF THE DAY

Daily Trust should carry weather forecasts

I want to say that Daily Trust has not only provided succor to our thirst for printed media in the North, but it has also thrusted deep into our minds so much so that we no longer patronize other papers especially the Lagos-Ibadan press.

No doubt the quality content of Daily Trust have been at the root of endearing the paper to us, albeit coupled with our sheer patriotism and identification

with the publishers. But this our attitude of deserting such papers causes us to lose all exclusive features of these papers, one of which is the weather forecast.

I think in appreciation of our solidarity, Daily Trust should also start featuring weather forecasts on its pages daily. This will prevent us from retracing our steps or considering a rethink.

Habeeb Idris Pindiga, is of A18, Bajoga Quarters, Gombe.

Opinion

Does Adamawa need a university?

Recently, the Governor of Adamawa State, Boni Haruna inaugurated a steering committee on Adamawa State University. The setting up of a steering committee and its terms of reference and the pamphlet on the Adamawa State University show that the Adamawa State Government has made up its mind on the establishment of a University, there shall be Adamawa State University. Since then, many informed indigenes have asked or were asked the question. Does Adamawa State really need a University? I proffer an answer here.

Governor Boni Haruna might have passed by the Jimeta shopping complex and saw the signboard of Delta State University Satellite campus and wondered, "If Delta State can do it why not Adamawa State?" I must caution here that Adamawa State does not need a University simply because Delta State has a satellite campus in Yola or other states have Universities. Moreover such satellite campuses are set up for commercial purposes, because they don't have quality control mechanisms they have problems with the National Universities Commission. This aside, if the idea of a state University appealed to the governor, he should know that there is over a hundred year gap in education between Adamawa and Delta State. For example, the number of candidates that Delta State registers for JAMB's UME and Direct Entry is greater than what the whole North Eastern States put together register. Adamawa State, therefore, has no business in establishing a University just because other states have Universities. Its educational circumstance is different.

At the moment, Adamawa's high manpower requirements are met by the Federal University of Technology Yola (FUTY), University of Maiduguri, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, University of Jos, its own higher education institutions etc. Be-

By Abubakar Hamman-Tukur

hold! How many graduates of Adamawa State origin did the Federal Government employ or were effectively used by the private sector of the economy? The number is negligible. Consequently, there is a glut of employable but unemployed graduates. The spending of hundreds of millions of Naira, which the establishment of a new university requires only to perpetuate the glut of unemployed youths, is wasteful and unreasonable.

The Adamawa State Government has been brandishing its fencing of some Secondary schools, refurbishing of classrooms and car loans to some principals and teachers as responsible for the unprecedented high pass rate in NECON SSCE. This is a fallacy; as schools that were not rehabilitated and their principals and teachers also did not get car loans equally recorded high pass rate and the pass rate is a nationwide phenomenon. It is not peculiar to Adamawa state alone. Next time around I don't think NECON will be very generous with its grades, not with the type of criticism it has been subjected to. Then the true picture of the secondary school students' performance will emerge. With the type of poor teaching-learning facilities and poor teacher quality that characterizes the secondary school system in spite of the current intervention by the state government, we should not reasonably expect 20,000 candidates per year to qualify for University education. How many secondary schools in the state can boast of laboratories and libraries not to talk of standard ones? Negligible. As it is now (and in the near future) the secondary school system in Adamawa is capable of producing qualified students who will not be absorbed by the present universities responsible to the state. Why does the state need a university? The 20,000 qualified candidates per year is not my figure. It is a figure the state government says it is expecting to

be qualified for university. I am saying here that there is no empirical basis for expecting that in the next few years the state can produce this figure. I am for a university if the state can produce 20,000 students qualified for university education.

The other reason advanced by the state government that it needs its own university so that it can help in harnessing the River Benue, determine the nutrients of 'miyar kuka' and find ways of utilizing its sunshine is spurious, pedantic and comical.

The state government does not need its university for these purposes. Reasonable grants to relevant academics in FUTY, University of Maiduguri, ABU etc can tackle these issues at a reasonably lower cost. This aside, polytechnics in other parts of the world have done greater and much more worthwhile things for their communities than these. Why not the state polytechnic Yola?

From the data available Adamawa state government does not have a good record of effective funding and administering of education in general and higher education in particular. For example, of all the secondary schools earmarked for construction in 1979, only Uba science secondary school was (not long ago) completed according to plan (this is not to say that it was similarly equipped per plan). Secondary schools like Fufore's look at best like glorified primary schools. Even the ongoing intervention in the secondary schools appears superficial. What about textbooks? Libraries? Laboratories? Qualified teachers? Principals and teachers who could not get car loans? Sustaining the intervention?

With respect to the state's college of education agriculture and polytechnic they can only boast of dilapidated structures and poorly equipped laboratories, libraries and workshops. They are also poorly staffed. It is not, therefore surprising that these institutions have not only been

unable to grow, expand, and develop, but also suffer from accreditation problems. Underlying the problems of these institutions is their poor funding. These institutions are as important as any university yet they suffered from neglect. If the state government could not effectively fund them I wonder if it could effectively fund a university. If these institutions have been effectively funded by now, there is nothing stopping them from awarding degrees if need be. Many of the people interviewed are of the opinion that, the idea of a state university is a clear manifestation of the government's insensitivity to the priorities of the people of Adamawa state; for example lack of drinking water in the state capital (if the people of Liporo ward get water twice in a week they celebrate and in Toungo ward only the 'Mai Moyas' are allowed to fetch water from the water board's office the local residents are not), poor health facilities (the state government does not have a specialist hospital worth its name), poverty, unemployed youth etc.

The inevitable conclusion from this discussion is that the state does not really need a university. In fact it cannot even afford if it is sensitive to the peoples' problems and the problems of primary, secondary and higher education in the state as of now.

The good people of Adamawa state are appreciative people. They can also see through the Korean style leadership cult system that is being built around the governor; It can be recalled that one of the Korean leaders was hosted as the greatest leader while his people were dying of malnutrition and starvation. If the PDP government wants to continue in the state's government house beyond 2003, it has to do more than building an international airport and a university. It has to address the real priorities of Adamawa state and rightly so.

Abubakar Hamman-Tukur, Department of Education, University of Maiduguri.

Obasanjo as the big chief

By Idang Alibi

About a year ago, *The Economist* magazine did what I consider a very perceptive story on the woes of the African continent. The story which was entitled "The hopeless continent", highlighted several factors which have kept "African countries at the bottom places in the world league tables."

I am aware that some Africans, who consider themselves super patriots, felt miffed by the story in question because of what they consider the condescending manner the magazine treated our dear continent which is the cradle of mankind.

Whatever may be our feeling, I am compelled to agree with one of the diagnoses of the continent's problem provided by *The Economist*. According to the magazine, because of the way many African countries came into being both citizens and government officials find it hard to distinguish between the state, the government or the individuals running state institutions.

"The state and the President are often viewed as the same thing", the magazine asserts.

This "African attitude" is very true of our country Nigeria. Perhaps because a lot of us are the products of feudal backgrounds, we still see ourselves as ignorant, helpless and loyal subjects of an all-knowing, all powerful and benevolent feudal lord (big chief) who has the magic wand to provide solutions to every of our problems.

In our psychological make-up, we do not appear to realize that as citizens of a modern state, we have responsibility to make of our country what we want it to be and not wait for the big chief who should use carrot to reward those who are good, and stick to whip into line, those who are stepping out of line.

This piece is inspired by the way a lot of our countrymen perceive President Obasanjo. Since he came to power nearly two years ago, many Nigerians, including, surprisingly, those who ought to, know better, expect him to be the messiah who must heal NEPA overnight and provide light for all; who must single-handedly abolish corruption; who must provide fuel and do all the things that are necessary to make Nigeria become paradise on earth.

It is certainly right for citizens to expect their leader to do something good for them. What worries me however is the fact that many of our compatriots do not seem to think that they have a responsibility to play their own part while Obasanjo is expected to play his.

When refuse piles high in our neighbourhood, we blame Obasanjo. When water ceases to flow in our taps, we blame the retired General. Nobody seems to also blame the way we waste water or refuse to pay our water bills.

When NEPA strikes and there is no electricity, we conveniently blame it on the President. No one remembers that many do not pay their bills that many over-load the transformers through illegal connection and that some of us are never frugal in the use of electricity.

The other day, I visited a lecturer in one of the universities who wondered whether Obasanjo has given up on his anti-corruption crusade. I asked why he thought so and he said corruption was still flourishing in the country including the university where he is teaching and that the President is no longer talking about corruption these days.

The thinking of that lecturer and many other Nigerians is that the responsibility for fighting corruption, an ill that is severely undermining the growth and development of our country, rests with only one man -the President. How very sad that not many think they have a responsibility to take citizens action, namely to organise and oppose wrongs which are happening under their very noses rather than wait for one man who is thousands of kilometers away and who is, in addition, over burdened by other equally weighty concerns.

We must realize that ours is a modern nation and there is division of labour. We cannot continue to wait for the Big Chief who is also the only medicine man in town. This kind of expectation from the citizens has led to the personalisation of power by many African leaders which has brought disastrous consequences on the continent.

If the ignorant or the barely educated expect their leader to be the only solution-provider, one can try to understand. But when even the supposedly well informed join the bandwagon in such thinking, one truly fears for the fate of our country.

And that is why I am truly amazed by *The Tribune* editorial of Tuesday, March 13, in which the paper argued that Obasanjo ought not have under-taken his recent State visit to Russia because of the then crippling fuel crisis at home.

I personally find it hard to understand how Obasanjo's stay at home could have solved the fuel problem when it is realized that we ordinary citizens because of our legendary indiscipline, greed and sabotage, cause a large chunk of the trouble. The President is not a tanker driver, a fuel depot manager, a petroleum product marketer, a policeman, a DPR man or the Managing Director of the NNPC.

These are the line officers who are to see to efficient fuel distribution in our country. Must the President dangle a cane over their heads before they can do their job?

I am afraid that the way we are carrying on, very soon if a man is incapable of impregnating his wife, he will blame it on Obasanjo!

The job demand of a modern day leader is to conceive broad policy objectives aimed at advancing the cause of his nation. The man ought not to be expected to do what subordinates are designated to do. The citizens must not wait for the Big Chief to utter a word on every conceivable thing before they play their part.

But how sincere are we even in the claim that we will follow the leader's step or dictation?

Obasanjo has demonstrated amply that he is not corrupt. How many Nigerians have tried to follow his example? Some still give and accept bribe yet turn around to blame Obasanjo for not fighting hard enough against corruption.

Obasanjo has also shown that he is hard working. How many are following his good example?

Unless we realize that we are equal stakeholders in Nigeria PLC and not wait forever for the Big Chief, our country will remain under-developed.

Mr. Alibi, a former member of the Daily Times Editorial Board, lives in Abuja.

That inglorious ban on generators

One of the rituals of government is the rolling out of its time plan at the turn of every year. Indeed, this has become an acceptable phenomenon worldwide. Most times, the policies churned out by government are directed to serve as guide in realising its economic, social and political programmes. Expectedly, most people at the start of every year wait anxiously for government to unfold its plan by way of budget. The reasons for this anxiety may not be unconnected with the fact that policies contained in yearly budget presentations are usually constants and variables that determine the direction of business for the year in focus. Budgets have the potentials to make or mar business activities or a peoples' aspiration for the period in question. All the same, every year's budget is awaited with some sort of great expectations.

So it was that the Nigerian budget of 2001, came loaded with many policy statements that should make business activities beneficial or discouraging for partici-

Umeh Akazue,

pants in certain sectors of the economy. Notable amongst the hardest hit were the importers of generators, a growing market sector that provides a desirable alternative power generation to industries and individuals to carry out their legitimate business transactions and everyday existence in the face of unreliable power supply by the government owned agency, NEPA.

Granted that any government has the powers to exercise its discretion in placing ban on the importation of foreign goods, but the feeling on the ban on importation of generators is that common knowledge ought to have informed a sound judgment. The government has to realise that the essence of banning foreign products is usually to protect the home industry and when necessary, check illicit acts of dumping. Sadly, the reverse seems to be the case here.

Another instance which may warrant the banning of importation of foreign goods is when there is adequacy in

the domestic supply, particularly in some sectors of the economy where there exist comparative advantage. In any case, other reasons for banning importation of a product may exist as political or parochial excuses. But the ban on importation of generators by the Obasanjo administration calls to question the state of mind of those running the government. For one, it is an open secret that Nigeria's source of electricity supply is a monopoly with epileptic traits, thus in the face of no competition, the alternative is for consumers of electricity to turn to generators.

The obvious implication of an outright ban on the importation of generators is that the prices of available generators in the market will sky rocket to astronomical level, therefore, having multiplier effects on the cost of goods and services. This for sure runs contrary to the purported desire of the Obasanjo administration to alleviate the suffering of Nigerians.

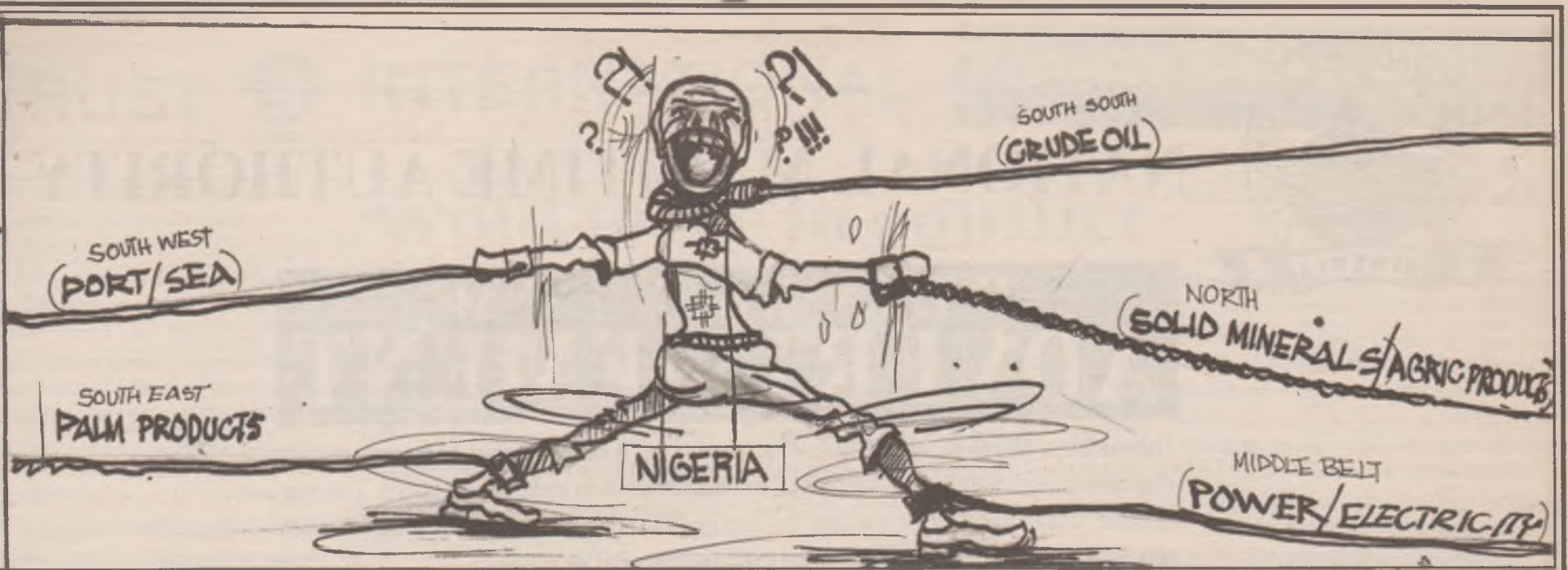
The bitter truth is since the inception of Nigeria's democratic governance under

President Obasanjo, government has been double-speaking on most issues of national importance. This attitude is difficult to appreciate especially when the matter involved is very sensitive. In retrospect, in early days of Obasanjo's administration, the President promised Nigerians that the issue of fuel scarcity which he attributed to the late Gen. Abacha and his associates will be a thing of the past. About midway into his tenure, fuel scarcity has assumed monumental level and this is coming at a time when all the nation's refineries are working.

Now government is at it again promising steady electricity supply by the year-end. Although, this pronouncement is a welcome development but quite sincerely, banning the importation of generators now that the nation is yet to achieve anything near steady electricity supply is to my mind, the greatest blunder the Obasanjo government has made.

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YOUR LETTERS

Apart from Late General Sani Abacha, no Nigerian, living or dead that has featured and occupied strategic positions on the pages of Newspapers since the late 1980's like the first and only former Military President, General Ibrahim Babangida a.k.a IBB. The Media agents across the country used him for different purposes to serve certain interests. Some use the media to test his underbelly in order to locate the locus of political happenings in the country. Others want him to be ridiculed by quantifying the magnitude of his capacity for mischief and evil deeds, while the rest prefer to

IBB must not apologize

ascribe to him a super power of a superstar in any political movie in Nigeria. Evidently, the issue of the annulment of June 12, 1993 presidential election catapulted him to the apex of those under happenings. I am never an IBB apologist because I don't cherish his way of leadership, which is uncharming to me. This is due to the fact that I am an advocate of an idealistic approach towards leadership, which tends to confront, neutralize and disallow indiscipline and corruption being the twin evils bedeviling our dear country. Notwithstanding, IBB as a person is good and accommodating to a fault, but

I am discussing official business here. The non-idealistic approach which is more realistic in conforming with the system in Nigeria finds a great exemplar in the likes of IBB. Amongst our past leaders, the exemplar of the former league are General Muhammadu Buhari, General Sani Abacha and to some extent General Murtala Ramat Muhammed. Whereas in the latter category are General Yakubu Gowon, Alhaji Shehu Shagari, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida and General Abdulsalami Abubakar. For General Olusegun Obasanjo, Obasanjo (1) falls in the

league of General Gowon et al but Obasanjo (II) is neither here nor there because he has a weak will to be realistic and lacks the capacity to be idealistic. Obviously, amongst all of them, IBB has no rival in understanding the mood of the nation and quest to move in a direction along with the majority which is normally corruption inclined. He holds the thermometer and barometer that depicts all conditions favourable to accommodate the temperament of the nation, which, if not for the June 12 Saga, IBB would have been ruling Nigeria to date. He understands politics more than the politicians

even in military uniform and hence most suitable for the stagnant status quo. For anyone to assume that he is not relevant in the scheme of politics in Nigeria, therefore, is to assume that reality does not exist and this trend will continue until probably the status quo is changed for the better. In the interim, personally, I find it defeating to muster my superlative energy and courage to encourage any member of the latter league to pilot the affairs of the Nation, but I can mobilize my energy, courage, conviction and meager resources to encourage General Buhari who remains the only survivor in the league I cherished most. On the appeal by eminent

personalities such as the Executive Governor of Yobe State, Alhaji Bukar Abba Ibrahim calling on IBB to apologize for the annulment of June, 12 election, I am of the view that the appeals are unwarranted and uncalled for, considering the forces that enforced the annulment vis-a-vis the politicians of that time and the official decisions that motivated it. For IBB alone to be isolated to apologize for the annulment is just like asking President Olusegun Obasanjo to apologize for the Chief Arthur Nzeribe's MONACO movement. Nzeribe in both cases being central to two shuttlement processes. That is why IBB must not apologize. Paul Mamza, ABU, Zaria.

In whose benefit is debt buy back?

As events continue to unfold in Nigeria, people are gradually beginning to understand the workings and intricacies involved in government. Prior to this time, a lot of the activities of government were shrouded in secrecy but thanks to the new democratic experiment. Right now, most Nigerians for diverse reasons are calling for the heads of Mohammed Abacha and Atiku Bagudu, the two men who are currently facing litigation in far away Britain for allegedly defrauding the Federal Government of Nigeria in what is popularly

know as Ajaokuta debt buy back scam, to many people, anything relating to debt buy back is fraud and that is the very Kite the Obasanjo government has flown. I was flabbergasted as I read a story on the buy-back in *The Guardian* edition of February 12, 2001, entitled: "Government favours buy-back option to ease debt burden". The story which was attributed to no less a person than the Chairman of the National Economic Intelligence Committee, Prof. Ibrahim Ayagi is very revealing. Prof. Ayagi was quoted as saying that the debt buy-back strategy which was used in

1992 resulted in the reduction of the nation's indebtedness to the London club, is likened to debt forgiveness. If Prof. Ayagi is serious and truthful, then one is confused on why the executive government of Obasanjo is bent on crucifying Mohammed Abacha and company over transactions undertaken to alleviate the nation's external debt burden, which of course, had been a tradition of government ever before the late Gen. Abacha assumed power. Now, a line must be drawn between government benefits from such transactions and monies that accrued

to those who conducted the transaction as businessmen. If it is a crime to make money from such a business transaction then it must be enshrined in statutory books and not for government to just wake up and invent such laws arbitrarily because an Abacha is involved. If the truth were to be told, the Abacha regime only borrowed a leaf from the Babangida administration, yet no eyebrows are being raised over the numerous alleged fraudulent deals that were initiated and concluded by the Babangida regime. Hadjia Ndausa Suleiman, Consight Ventures, plot 59, Ahmadu Bello way, Kaduna.

Re: indecent dressing: NASS may reject female corps members

Please avail me of the use of this medium to express my view on the above news article published in the *Daily Trust* newspaper of April 9, 2001. For every progress recorded in the fight for women emancipation, the drawbacks seem to be in double. The National Assembly that we have been looking up to, to enact laws that will further protect the rights of women in Nigeria, to crown our efforts with success, is the same one trying to infringe on our rights. For a whole National Assembly to say that it will stop accepting or employing females (Corp members or not) because of some flimsy excuses, goes to show that we still have a long way to go in this fight. The suggestion of it shows that in

the usual chauvinistic thinking of men, they actually believe that the National Assembly belongs only to them and will continue to belong only to them. So the girls dress indecently, (and it would be appreciated if indecent dressing was defined to prevent unnecessary harassment), is there no other way of solving the problem? Couldn't those it concerns in the national assembly, as they have already done, call these girls to order. It is not uncommon for a company, bank or gov-

President Obasanjo's request for approval of funds running into millions of dollars to replace jets in the presidential fleet from the National Assembly shows his apparent insensitivity to the economic security of the generality of Nigerians. It is sorrowful that the electorate whose votes have brought about Obasanjo's ascendancy to

Must the President cruise at the expense of the electorate?

power are yet to reap the fruits of democracy. The President's request for new aircraft is ridiculous coming at time when poverty is boldly written on the faces of over sixty per cent of the electorate and standard of living of most Nigerians is nothing to write home about. For the avoidance of

doubt, aircrafts are machines which could last at least fifty years if well maintained by way of servicing and periodic replacement of parts. It's therefore, ridiculous to ask why the President and his aides should use old jets when new and modern ones can be bought. Any government that

prefers the purchase of jets to taking care of it's citizens welfare, can at best be describe as insensitive and irresponsible. In fact, should President Obasanjo go ahead with the purchase of these aircrafts, posterity will not forgive him. Engr. Abdullahi Musa, Fed. Secretariat-Kaduna.

Women working anywhere in the country are not there for show. They are there because of the contributions that they can make to the progress of that company, bank or government parastatal. If you have employed them for any other reason but for their expertise then you are to be blame. So please men, especially those in decision making positions, should stop trivializing the relevance of women in nation building. Stella Ananga Iyimoga, Image-Kraft and associates, Kaduna.



NATIONAL MARITIME AUTHORITY

INTERNAL & EXTERNAL ADVERTISEMENT

The National Maritime Authority has embarked on a repositioning and restructuring exercise to improve its effectiveness in the discharge of its statutory functions. This has created challenging opportunities for highly skilled and dedicated personnel with requisite qualifications and experience to fill the following vacancies:-

A: PLANNING, RESEARCH & STATISTICS DEPARTMENT

A1: Information Technology Unit:

- i) **Assistant Director, Information Technology: EMSS 4**
Requirements: Minimum of B.Sc degree in computer Science with 15 years Post qualification experience in the relevant field, 5 years of which must have been spent in Senior management position in a reputable organization. Possession of a higher degree in a relevant field will be an added advantage.
- ii) **Assistant chief Information Technology Officer: EMSS 6**
Requirements: Same as in (i) above but with minimum of 12 years Post Qualification experience in the relevant field
- iii) **Principal Information Technology Officer: EMSS 7**
Requirements: Minimum of Bachelor of Science degree in Computer/Electronic Engineering with 10 years Post qualification experience in the relevant field.
- iv) **Senior Information Technology Officers: EMSS 8**
Requirements: A degree in computer Science (System Analyst, Programmer or Engineer) with a minimum of 5 years Post qualification experience in relevant field.
- v) **Information Technology Officers I: EMSS 9**
Requirements: Same as in (iv) with a minimum of 3 years experience.
- vi) **Information Technology Officers II: EMSS 10**
Requirements: Minimum of a B.Sc degree in Computer Science, Mathematics, Statistics or Physics with post NYSC experience.

B. TECHNICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

B1: Nautical Unit:

- i) **Boat Masters**
Requirements: Minimum of Masters Home Trade certificate and 8 years continuous sea experience.
- ii) **First Mates**
Requirements: Same as (i) above but with 5 years sea experience.
- iii) **Quarter Masters**
Requirements: Minimum of River Master Certificates with 5 Years continuous sea experience on a tugboat.
- iv) **Bosuns.**
Requirements: Same as (iii) above
- v) **Able seamen**
Requirements: Minimum of Efficient Deckhand (EDH) certificate with 3 years continuous sea experience.

B2. Marine Engineering & Pollution Control Unit:

- i) **Chief Engineers**
Requirements: Minimum of third class Home certificate in Marine Engineering and 5 years continuous sea experience. possession of higher qualifications in Marine Engineering will be an added advantage.
- ii) **Second Engineers**
Requirements: Minimum of third class Home certificate in Marine Engineering and 5 years continuous sea experience. possession of higher qualifications in Marine Engineering will be an added advantage.
- iii) **Third Engineers**
Requirements: Minimum of Marine Engineers Assistant Certificate of competence with 3 years -continuous sea experience.
- iv) **Technicians/Electricians**
Requirements: Minimum of Trade Test certificate of competence (Electrical/Technical) with 3-5 years sea Experience.
- v) **Pollution Control Technicians**
Requirements: Minimum of Trade Test certificate of competence (Electrical/Technical) with 3-5 years sea Experience.
- vi) **Pollution Control Assistants**
Requirements: Minimum of 3 years Post qualification Experience in? Pollution control outfit or Sea-going vessel.
- vii) **Greasers.**
Requirements: Minimum of 3 years Post qualification experience in Pollution control outfit or Sea-going vessel.
- B3. Utility Staff**
- I) **Radio operators**
Requirements: Minimum of National Diploma in Radio communication with 3 years Practical experience In the relevant fields.
- II) **Computer operators**
Requirements: Minimum of National Diploma in Computer Operations with 3 years Practical experience In the relevant fields.
- III) **Drivers**
Requirements: Minimum of First School Leaving Certificate and Trade Test III with 10 years continuous experience.
- IV) **Cleaners**
Requirements: Minimum of First School leaving certificate with good character.

TRUST



INTERNATIONAL

FOREIGN & DIPLOMATIC

Conflict at the border between Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone

The Authority expressed great concern at the continuing tension along the common boundaries of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, and the presence of several irregular armed groups in the region. The Heads of State and Government once again expressed their resolve to build a peaceful, progressive and stable West Africa, in line with the provisions of the ECOWAS Treaty and the OAU and UN Charters. The Authority therefore called on the Mano River Union countries to establish good neighbourliness relations, to avoid the use of force to resolve disputes, and to bear in mind the interests of their countries and the historical links that bind their peoples. The Authority also appealed to the Governments of the Mano River Union States to take individual and collective measures to curb the activities of armed rebel groups operating on their respective territories. The Governments of the countries concerned should disarm any such irregular army on their territories, and should refrain from making any statements that the other parties may consider as a hostile act.

The Authority reaffirmed its desire to deploy ECOMOG troops along the borders. It called on the three governments to work together to implement the decisions taken by the December 2000 ECOWAS Summit in Bamako. The Authority called on the authorities in Liberia and Guinea especially to sign the agreement on the status of ECOMOG forces.

Heads of State and Government also appealed to the United Nations Security Council to authorise and assist the deployment of ECOMOG forces along the borders in line with the mandate given to the ECOWAS Authority.

The Authority approved the recommendations of the 6th meeting of the Mediation and Security Council and decided to set up a mediation committee comprising the Presidents of the Republic of Mali, the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and the Togolese Republic to encourage a process of open dialogue as a means of rebuilding trust between the Heads of State of the Mano River Union and bring about a speedy return of peace between their countries. The Authority, in this regard, called on the Mano River Union countries to hold more frequent meetings at ministerial level.

The Authority called on the three governments to take necessary measures to stop armed attacks being launched from their territories against their neighbours, and to open their borders without delay.

Heads of State and Government issued an appeal to the Liberian government to rescind its decision to expel the ambassadors of Guinea and Sierra Leone accredited to Liberia. President Charles Taylor acceded to this request.

The Authority called for the Foreign Affairs Ministers to carry out a reappraisal of the ECOWAS Agreement on Non-Aggression of 22 April 1978 with a view to ensuring its effective application.

Humanitarian Situation

The Authority noted that the presence of hundreds of thousands of refugees in

Avoid force in conflict resolution -ECOWAS

Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS met in the extraordinary session in Abuja on 11 April, 2001, under the chairmanship of His Excellency Alpha Oumar Konare, current Chairman of the Authority and President of the Republic of Mali, to discuss the security situation in West Africa. Below is the full text of the communique.

economic, ecological and security burden for that country. The Heads of State and Government expressed gratitude to the Republic of Guinea for the warm and generous hospitality which it continues to extend to these refugees. They called on African countries and the international community to lend every necessary assistance to Guinea to enable it to adequately meet the humanitarian needs of refugees and displaced persons.

The Authority noted the need to estab-

lish safe corridors to ensure better protection for refugees against rebel attacks, and to enable them to be repatriated without danger. The three governments were urged to initiate appropriate action to protect the refugees in camps and called on the High Commissioner for refugees to help bring about an improvement in the humanitarian situation in the Mano River Union area.

Sierra Leone

The Authority reaffirmed its support for the 10th November 2000 Cease-fire Agreement brokered between the Government of Sierra Leone and RUF, and urged all parties to the Agreement to comply with its provisions.

The Authority took note of the deployment of UNAMSIL in certain areas of the Sierra Leonean territory and urged it to accelerate deployment throughout the entire country, including areas currently controlled by the RUF and thus help restore the authority

of the government of Sierra Leone over the entire Sierra Leonean territory.

The Authority took note of the decision of the Sierra Leonean Government to work with the newly-formed Political and Peace Council as a means of advancing the peace process and securing a quick implementation of the Abuja Agreement.

Liberia

The Authority, mindful of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1343(2001) of 7th



Malian President, Alpha Konare, (r), watches as Lansana Kouyate, Executive Secretary (ECOWAS) reads the communique of the one-day extra-ordinary summit of Heads of State and Government of West Africa on Abuja on April 11.

March 2001 relating to application of sanctions against Liberia, decided to establish a monitoring mechanism to monitor implementation of these measures. In this regard, it decided to deploy an ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council mission comprising Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, Togo and the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat to Liberia on the 18th of April 2001. The mission will work in close collaboration with the United Nations team.

Cote d'Ivoire

The Authority praised the spirit of concord displayed during the recent municipal elections in Cote d'Ivoire and called on the Ivorian authorities to continue to promote national reconciliation among the country's sons and daughters. The Authority congratulated General Gnassingbe Eyadema, current OAU Chairman on having arranged a meeting between President Laurent Gbagbo and

Mr. Alassane Ouattara, chairman of the RDR.

Guinea Bissau

Analysing the situation in Guinea Bissau, the Authority called on the authorities to take necessary measures to strengthen social cohesion and stability.

The Authority made an urgent appeal to the international community to provide assistance to Guinea Bissau in this regard to enable the country undertake measures that will improve its economic situation.

Protocol on the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security

Reviewing the implementation of the mechanism, the Authority called on Member States to complete the process of adherence to the relevant Protocol by ratifying same in accordance with the Article 57 of the Protocol.

The Authority also urged Member States which have not accredited their ambassadors to the Executive Secretariat to do so without delay.

The Authority called on the Executive Secretariat to take necessary steps to hasten establishment of the Council of Elders, the Standby units, and the Observation and Monitoring System.

Implementation of the moratorium on light weapons

Council noted the delay in implementing the Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Weapons, and again urged Member States which have not done so to establish and commission, without delay, their National Commissions against the proliferation of light weapons.

Measures for lasting peace in the sub-region

The Authority called on Member States to consolidate peace and regional security in West Africa by taking measures that would help to strengthen democracy and stability, combat irregular armed groups, control proliferation of light weapons and the use of children in armed conflicts, resolve the problem of refugees and strengthen the mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation

The Authority called on Member States to consolidate peace and regional security in West Africa by taking measures that would help to strengthen democracy and stability, combat irregular armed groups, control proliferation of light weapons and the use of children in armed conflicts, resolve the problem of refugees and strengthen the mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation

Financing the ECOWAS institutions

The Heads of State and Government expressed grave concern over the staggering amount of arrears of financial contributions to the budgets of the Community institutions. They noted that most Member States are remiss in the payment of financial contributions and do not apply the relevant provisions of the Protocol relating to the Community levy which has been set up to generate funds which ECOWAS can use to fund its own activities.

The Authority underscored the compelling need to find a lasting solution to the problem associated with the financing of the Community budgets, failing which the institutions, particularly the Court of Justice and the Parliament, which have just been set up, would be unable to operate properly.

Council therefore made an urgent appeal to all member States to take speedy measures to improve the financial situation of the Secretariat by paying the community levy which is the most effective solution to the chronic problem of contribution arrears.

Done at Abuja on 11 April, 2001.

“Heads of State and Government issued an appeal to the Liberian government to rescind its decision to expel the Ambassadors of Guinea and Sierra Leone accredited to Liberia. President Charles Taylor acceded to this request.”

TRUST INTERNATIONAL

AFRICA & THE MIDDLE EAST

US planes bomb southern Iraq

United States war planes have over the weekend bombed targets in southern Iraq.

US officials said the action was in response to anti-aircraft fire directed at Western planes patrolling the air exclusion zone over Iraq.

There are no reports of

casualties.

An Iraqi military spokesman said the planes had attacked civilian installations before being chased away by the country's air defences.

He said the aircraft carried out 24 sorties from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, and flew over the provinces of Basra, Dhiqar, Muthanna,

Qadassiya and Wassit.

The two no-fly zones, one to the north of the 36th parallel and one to the south of the 32nd parallel, were unilaterally created by the US, Britain and France soon after the Gulf War.

The northern zone was established after Baghdad mobilised helicopter gunships to quell a Kurdish uprising.

The southern zone was imposed to protect Shi'a Muslims who also rebelled against Baghdad.

Iraq was banned from using all aircraft, including helicopters, in the air exclusion zones.

The justification was that an acute humanitarian crisis made it necessary to infringe the sovereignty of Iraq in this way.

However, unlike the military campaign to expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait, the no-fly zones were not authorised by the UN and they are not specifically sanctioned by any Security Council resolution.

The last major strike was on 16 February, when the United States and Britain sent two dozen jets to attack air defence sites around Baghdad, saying Iraq had been improving its ability to target - and potentially shoot down - their pilots.

The US and Britain have kept up attacks whenever Iraqi air defences have locked onto their aircraft.

Baghdad said that more than 300 civilians had died in these attacks, but the US and British air forces disputed some of these figures.

Nigerian mission in UK trains staff

The Nigeria High Commission in the UK is to embark on intensive training of its staff to ensure that they lived up to their responsibilities.

The High Commissioner, Prince Bola Ajibola, disclosed this in London last week while receiving a report of inquiry into allegation of corruption against officials and staff of the consulate section of the commission.

Ajibola, who frowned at the attitude of some staff, said that the high commission had received several letters of complaints from the public accusing them of being "rude, impertinent, inhuman and aggressive".

He reminded the staff that they were there to serve the public including passport applicants, stressing that they had "no right to abuse or insult our customers."

He expressed the hope that the training would bring improvement in their attitude towards members of the public, thereby improving the image of the commission and Nigeria as a whole.

He stated that the com-

mission had finalised arrangements with a consulting company, which he said, was ready for the training, and urged the beneficiaries to make the best use of the opportunity.

Ajibola, also disclosed that the high commission has taken delivery of an additional machine for the production of passports, adding that passport applications would now be processed more quickly.

He said that with acquisition of the new machine, processing of passports would now be smooth and never halted as it was in the past whenever the only machine broke down.

He said that a passport office would soon be opened in Manchester to cater for applicants in the mainland, stressing that the measure would lessen the hardships currently being faced by such applicants.

He announced that more than 1,500 completed passports were awaiting collection, and called on the applicants to come forward and collect them.

Slave ship missing

There is growing concern over the whereabouts of a ship said to be carrying children destined for slave labour in west Africa.

The vessel, which was turned away from several ports, has not been seen since Thursday when it was believed to have set sail for Benin.

A BBC correspondent in the region said conditions on the ship were likely to be very uncomfortable, especially since its passengers had been on board for more than two weeks.

Any children among them were likely to be confused and upset about what is happening to them.

Aid officials in Benin said they are worried that the ship's captain might have tried to off-load the children.

First reports said more than 250 children were on board, but officials in Cameroon and Gabon - the last places where the ship tried to dock - now said the number was far fewer.

Maritime experts said that, given its last reported position, the vessel might not reach the capital, Cotonou, until yesterday.

Port police in Cotonou said they were ready to receive the ship.

The Benin Communications Minister, Gaston Zossu, said it was the role of his government to protect children.

Mr Zossu told the BBC that action would be taken both against the crew of the ship and the parents who had sold their children. But he added that the problem of child slavery was one that affected the whole of West Africa.

The United Nations Children's Fund UNICEF has set up a centre in Cotonou to accommodate the children on their return.

A spokeswoman said that, where possible, the children would be reunited with their families.

The ship has been on a round trip of more than 2,000km (1,250 miles) since setting sail from Benin.

Human rights activists say the selling of children into slavery is still quite common in impoverished Benin, although it is officially banned.

UN to evacuate refugees

The United Nations refugee agency has said it is preparing to evacuate about 80,000 refugees from an area of southern Guinea where they have been trapped for several months by fighting between Guinean government forces and rebels.

The UN said the refugees - who are mostly from Sierra Leone - would be moved from the remote Parrot's Beak area on the border with Sierra Leone to camps further north.

A spokeswoman for the refugee agency was quoted as saying it would take between six and eight weeks to move the refugees by truck.

There are more than 400,000 refugees in Guinea



Women and children released by the Mayi-Mayi rebels in the DR Congo last week.

(AFP)

Former Ugandan president returns from exile

The former President of Uganda, Godfrey Binaisa, has returned home after many years in exile, and said that he was not planning to become involved in politics.

In an interview with the BBC, Mr Binaisa said he had decided to go back to Uganda now, because after the recent presidential election he felt the country was stable.

Mr Binaisa was overthrown in a military coup in 1980, and fled the country early in 1981 after Milton Obote came to power.

Has since lived mostly in New York, although he did return to Uganda briefly in

1985.

Under new government legislation, former presidents are entitled to a pension, of about eleven hundred dollars or two million Uganda shil-

lings a month, a house, a chauffeur-driven car and other benefits.

Mr Binaisa denied that this had influenced his decision to return.

Kabila names cabinet

President Joseph Kabila of the Democratic Republic of Congo has announced a new cabinet to replace the one he sacked last week.

The new twenty-five member government excludes several close allies of his father, Laurent, who was assassinated in January.

Among those left out were the Interior Minister Gaetan Kakudji, the Minister

of State without Portfolio Victor Mpyo and the Education Minister Abdoulaye Yerodia.

However, the Foreign Minister, Leonard She Okitundu, keeps his post.

Mwenze Kongolo moves from the justice ministry to the newly created national security ministry, while the interior ministry post goes to the former deputy minister of public order, Mira Ndjoku.

DRC forces break ceasefire

United Nations military observers in the Democratic Republic of Congo have said they have found evidence of ceasefire violations by government soldiers and are following up allegations of the rape and murder of a number

of civilians.

They were acting on threats by the rebels in Congo that the deployment of 120 UN troops to the key town of Kisangani on Sunday would be blocked because of these violations.

The Kinshasa government and Rwandan and Ugandan-backed rebels pulled their troops back from frontline positions in March and allowed the UN in as part of a wider peace process.

General Mountaga Diallo, force commander of the UN peacekeeping force in Congo, said that observers had verified claims by the Rwandan-backed RCD rebel group that government troops had violated a ceasefire by advancing on villages and carrying out reprisals. The troops had burned one and looted another.

The UN force is also looking into claims that women have been raped and that four people have been killed.

The RCD says these and other as-yet-unverified violations are evidence that the

peace process is faltering and that the planned deployment of UN peacekeepers to Congo's first city, Kisangani, on Sunday, should not go ahead.

General Diallo said the verification process agreed by all sides to the conflict would continue as normal.

Speaking after meeting the RCD leadership in Goma, he said he did not understand why the two issues were being connected in this way, and said the deployment to Kisangani, the most important town held by the rebels, would go ahead.

Chad mourns accident victims

The government of Chad has declared a day of mourning after a heavily laden trailer truck carrying scores of passengers plunged off a bridge into the Chari River.

Throughout Friday, fishermen worked to recover bodies from the river.

The truck was reported to be carrying a consignment of sodium carbonate, with more than 100 people riding on top of the load.

TRUST INTERNATIONAL

WORLD REPORT



Chinese President Jiang Zemin (l) and Cuban President Fidel Castro during the former's visit to Cuba last week. (AFP)

China to lend Cuba \$400m

Chinese President Jiang Zemin has pledged nearly \$400m in loans to Cuba - and serenaded President Fidel Castro with Chinese opera and a Spanish ballad.

China would lend Havana money to modernise telecommunications, build a hotel and buy Chinese-made television sets, it was announced during President Jiang's state visit to Cuba.

Cuban leader Fidel Castro, for his part, promised Havana's support for Beijing's bid to host the 2008 Olympics.

And representatives of both countries sniped at the United States, with references to the stand-off over a US spy plane that was forced to land in China on 1 April.

The two countries have strong commercial ties, as

well as a common interest in heading off expected condemnation of their human rights records at the United Nations.

The UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva is due to vote on the human-rights records of China, Cuba and other countries within days.

The campaign group, Human Rights Watch, used the visit to criticise both countries' records.

"The leaders of both countries have something in common that goes beyond trade and economic interests. Their human-rights policies are bankrupt in the eyes of the rest of the world", the group said in a statement earlier this week.

The Cuban leader hosted a dinner for President Jiang on Thursday night, at which the Chinese leader sang Chinese, Italian and Spanish songs, according to a Chinese delegation source.

"The president enjoys singing", the source told the Reuters news agency.

Mr Jiang is travelling with a high-level delegation which signed a number of economic and friendship accords.

But another significant aspect of the visit will be discussions on their respective relations with the United States.

Havana unreservedly supported Beijing during the standoff over the fate of the US spy plane crew.

US completes sub collision inquiry

The United States Navy has completed its inquiry into the sinking of a Japanese fishing ship by an American nuclear submarine two months ago.

Nine Japanese students and teachers on board the boat died in the collision, which happened when a civilian passenger was at the controls of the submarine.

The navy has 30 days to act on the results of the inquiry, which has been handed over to the navy high command, but a decision is expected well in advance of the deadline.

It is understood the inquiry has made recommendations on what charges should be brought and against whom.

But officials said that the report would not be made public.

The three admirals who conducted the inquiry presented their findings to Pacific Fleet Commander Admiral Thomas Fargo at the Pearl Harbor naval base in Hawaii. The three senior officers

of the submarine, the USS Greenville, could face courts-martial, disciplinary or other action.

The submarine's captain, Commander Scott Waddle, has been re-assigned to Pearl Harbor submarine staff pending the outcome of the inquiry.

Brazilian prisoners take 120 hostages

Inmates have taken over a prison in western Brazil, taking 120 hostages, including some 50 children, according to the Brazilian police.

The inmates are demanding dismissal of the warden, whom they accuse of ill-treatment and corruption, as well as a judicial review of their cases.

The rebellion started the day after a report by the United Nations concluded that ill-treatment and torture by the Brazilian police were widespread and systematic.

Police said the inmates of the Carumbe prison, in the province of Mato Grosso, took visiting family members as well as some of the guards hostage during visiting

hours on Thursday. Local television reported that many of the family members stayed of their own free will to prevent the police from violently storming the prison.

The police are negotiating. They said the rebellion was organised by the First Commando of the Capital, the same group which organised simultaneous uprisings in 29 Sao Paulo jails in February.

Part of the chronic overcrowding in Brazil's jails is because many prisoners remain locked up even after serving their sentences because they have no lawyer to file for their release.

In Carumbe prison, 368 inmates are crammed into cells designed to hold 200.

Spy plane crew return

The 24 crew of the American spy plane who were held in China have returned to a heroes' welcome at their home base in Washington state.

Thousands of people had gathered at Whidbey Island Naval Air Station, north of Seattle.

Accompanied by roars from the crowd and a military band, the 21 men and three women stepped off the plane that had carried them from Hawaii to be greeted by their loved ones.

The wife of one serviceman ran out onto the tarmac, baby in hand, to embrace her husband to ecstatic cheers.

The servicemen and women were given some private time with their loved ones before moving on to a ceremony in a hangar festooned with red, white and blue.

They marched along a red

carpet waving US flags to thunderous applause, before being feted with speeches by local dignitaries.

Northwest regional navy commander Rear Admiral Vinson Smith described them as "brave young Americans".

And Rear Admiral Michael Holmes said: "Your actions made us all proud to be Americans."

And he praised the pilot of the plane, Shane Osborn, who he said had saved the lives of the crew.

Lieutenant Osborn himself was deeply affected by the welcome.

Bomb blasts London post office

A suspected terrorist bomb packed with high explosives has blown out windows at a post office delivery depot in north London.

The blast, on Saturday, is thought to have been the work of dissident Irish republican terror group the Real IRA.

Police said no one was injured in the explosion, which caused "minor" damage to the building at The Hyde, in Hendon.

The blast comes just six weeks after a bomb, believed to have been planted by the same group, exploded outside BBC Television Centre in west London.

But unlike previous attacks thought to be linked to the Real IRA, police said that no coded warning was received before the Hendon device exploded.

Speaking at the scene, Deputy Assistant Commissioner Alan Fry, head of Scotland Yard's anti-terrorist branch, said: "No three were made. We suspect it was

the work of the Real IRA.

"A high explosive device was placed outside the sorting office in a bricked-up former doorway.

"We believe it contained between half and one pound of high explosives, which was a similar size to the device at Hammersmith Bridge in June last year.

"Minor damage was caused to the building."

Although no one was in the delivery depot at the time, Mr Fry said the building was near a pub and the busy Edgware Road.

"Whoever planted this device had no thought to the damage or injuries he may have caused," he added.

Mr Fry said the area would be searched in daylight, but added that Edgware Road would probably be closed for the rest of Sunday.

A spokesman for Consignia, formerly the Post Office, said the building was a small delivery office dealing with mail for the NW9 area, and one of 100 similar-sized buildings in

Battle over Russian TV escalates

The battle for control of Russia's only nationwide independent television network has intensified, with the new owners taking control of the building and installing their own security guards in an overnight operation.

Journalists arriving for work on Saturday were barred from entering the building unless they signed a statement agreeing to recognise the new management.

Amid scenes of anger and mutual recrimination, dissident journalists signed a letter of resigna-

tion on a rival cable channel, TNT. The dissident journalists claimed the Kremlin was behind the NTV take over.

The station has broadcast rare critical coverage of the war in Chechnya, as well as corruption scandals and news about the deterioration in living standards.

The newly-installed director of NTV, Boris Jordan - an American investment banker - said 25 journalists, half of the editorial staff, had resigned to "pursue their own interests."

He insisted that it was not an issue of freedom of the press.

"There are no limitations

of any kind on editorial staff," Mr Jordan said, adding that NTV had resumed full operations at 0830 local time (0530 GMT).

But many journalists are refusing to recognise the new management team, imposed after NTV was taken over by the state-owned energy company, Gazprom.

The affair has generated public support for NTV's journalists, with thousands taking to the streets in Moscow and St Petersburg.

With the new managers in place, leading NTV journalists took down pictures of themselves that had hung in the halls and left the building in protest.

Supplement

GOMBE STATE: The Journey so far,

Gombe State was among the six new generation States created on 1st October, 1996. It was excised out of the former Bauchi State. The State shares boarders with 5 other North Eastern States of Bauchi, Borno, Taraba, Adamawa and Yobe.

It has eleven Local Government areas namely, Akko, Balanga, Billiri, Dukku, Funakaye, Gombe, Kaltungo, Kwami, Nafada, Shongom and Yamaltu Deba, with a projected population of 2,045,250. The State has abundant arable land in the plains of the North East and the valleys of the hilly south-east.

Dialects spoken in the area include Fulfude, Hausa Tera, Kanuri, Tangale, Bolewa, Jukun, Tula, Waja, Lunguda, Dadiya and Cham. These diverse language groups give the State a cosmopolitan nature with a rich cultural background. The main occupation of the people is agriculture. Traders and other craftsmen complement other societal needs.

The State has been under Military Administration from inception to mid 1999. The December 1998 elections and the swearing-in to Office of Alh. Abubakar Habu Hashidu as the First Executive Governor of the State. On 29th May 1999, opened a new Chapter in the History of the young State.

The success of Alhaji Abubakar Habu Hashidu at the polls was no doubt a testimony to the vision packaged in his election manifesto. The electorate saw the promises made to improve the lot of the citizens quite convincing.

The economy of the young state is largely agrarian with over 90% of the people involved in agricultural production. With a vast fertile land, 3 huge dams in Dadin kowa, Balanga and Cham, Gombe State is set to become the veritable food basket of the nation. The new state is also slated to provide raw materials such as cotton, maize, tomatoes, sorghum, wheat and sugarcane among others in Nigeria and beyond. As an Agriculturist himself the Chief Executive declared in his inaugural speech thus, "it is our bond that Agriculture will take pride of place in our tenure".

There would be similar efforts to exploit the abundant mineral resources of the State. The raw materials Research and Development Council has recognised the following minerals as listed in the USA monthly digest of Business and Economics of July 1993.

- (a) Baryte
- (b) Coal
- (c) Uranium
- (d) Salt

Also identified are limestone, Gypsum, Bentonite Kaolin, Silica sand, Granite, Talk Galena, Opal Agata etc. With all these minerals available in the state there is no doubt many will be investors would find ready areas for investments.

Government has already started exploring means, through bilateral policies, to attract investors from foreign countries. The executive Governor and a team of experts have visited USA in the early days of the Administration. The result has been a proposal to establish sugar factory in the state. Similar trips were undertaken to

many. These visits have resulted in signing memoranda of understanding and cooperation in the areas of Agriculture, Commerce, Industrial development, culture and mining. The State Government is definitely going to yield handsomely from such relations. In order to achieve the desired goal, Alh. Abubakar Hashidu's Government categorised the needs of the people and matched them with the available resources.

Having spent almost 2 years rendering these services, it is worthwhile to reflect on the performance and assess the progress made. This would afford us to know where we are since we know where we were before. The following passages will attempt to bring to light the effort made so far and highlight the achievements.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION AND POLICIES

The House of Assembly was inaugurated on 2nd June, 1999, through a proclamation from His Excellency Alh. Abubakar Habu Hashidu, the Executive Governor. Perhaps, the single factor that contributed to the success and achievement of the Government is the cordial relationship that exists between the Executive and the Legislature. This relationship has seen the administration through thick and thin, and it has gone a long way in paving the way for meaningful development.

The Judiciary as the third arm of Government has played important role from the inception of the Administration. To this end Government has been supportive of its activities by way of providing Vehicles to all the judges and Khadis in the State. Vehicle Loans were also granted to State Counsels and magistrates to enable them discharge their duties efficiently. Similarly, Government has con-

Government. In this regard, Government has made several policies towards the betterment of its citizens. Some of these policies include institutional reforms. For example, Govern-



Governor Abubakar Hashidu, Launching the National Immunisation Campaign at Nafada, Gombe State

ment has appointed/upgraded fifteen (15) Emirs and Chiefs. It has similarly created (9) nine additional Emirates and Chiefdoms to create awareness and sense of belonging. The newly appointed Emirs and Chiefs were each allocated an official vehicle to facilitate their new assignments. New districts would also be demarcated and District Heads appointed.

Government has also pre-

paring laws for the establishment of structures, composition, functions and Finances of Local Governments. It has also made a draft bill to establish the Gombe State Urban Development Board. The Board would regulate the implementation of town planning laws. Other laws enacted include those for Civil

drawing Girls from school for marriage, a law for Free and compulsory Primary Education, a law for setting of minimum qualification for Area Court Judges and the establishment of

Customary Court etc.

On the maintenance of law and order, the Administration of Alh. Abubakar Habu Hashidu has brought an innovation that remains the envy of other States. The Secretary to the Government coordinates the security arrangement under the supervision of the Executive Governor. A comprehensive security arrangement was organised to flush out armed bandits. The op-

eration has proved so successful that farmers and cattle rearers tagged the Chief Executive as "Hashidu maganin Udawa".

The Secretary to the Government has also supervised the rehabilitation contract of the presidential Guest House Complex. The Complex was refurbished at the cost of

The Deputy governors Office became operational at the inception of the civilian administration in line with the 1999 constitutional provision. The Permanent site of Deputy Governors Office is being constructed at the cost of N43.8m.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In his inaugural Speech His Excellency the Executive Governor has indicated that, conscious efforts would be made to provide infrastructure to open the rural areas of the State. In fulfilment of this pledge Government has signed a contract for constructing a surface dressed road to link Kaltungo -Boh-and Lalaipido. This vital road is intended to open up the rich agricultural land in Shongom, Billiri and Kaltungo Local Government Areas. This project which cost the State N140 million is at advanced stage of completion. A similar project links Gombe Abba junction and Hashidu. The project which cost the State Government N88.5m is intended to open up the areas along the Gongola river from Gombe Abba bridge. There are 21 other road projects spread over the state all meant to open up areas for development. Many more urban roads are constructed in Gombe metropolis to enhance business activities.

The sum of N121,794,210.00 has similarly been committed by the Government in housing development. This is mostly in the refurbishment of houses for staff and other institutions. Houses were also constructed for the Deputy Governor and the Secretary to the State at well over N40m.

A Legislative quarters was exclusively developed to accommodate Honourable members of the State Assembly at the cost of N140m. The project is completed and provided with

vehicles and the refurbishing of one other.

Having realised the hazards posed by gully erosion in Gombe State, Government has been making efforts to check the menace and it has recorded achievements. A project to control erosion on the gully behind the Commissioner of Police residence running eastwards through Pantami and terminating at Bogo, has been completed at the cost of N35m. A contract has also been signed for the control of Bogo gully erosion. The project which will cost the State Government the sum of N107m is intended to control the biggest gully in the metropolis. Several other projects involving the construction of storm water drainages and road side drainages were similarly constructed in the metropolis. Gully erosion threats was not Limited to Gombe town, other areas of the State share similar fate. Government has signed contract for a project to control the fast growing erosion menace at Birin Fulani. The project is to be executed at the cost of N24m. In Dogon Ruwa, Government has commissioned a company to execute flood control project. The perennial flooding of the Dogon Ruwa river has been a source of concern to the inhabitants of the town. The timely intervention of the Government to execute the flood control project has saved the town from a possible disaster. The project which is nearing completion would cost the Government N37m. This Administration has also paid the sum of N35m to check erosion in Billiri town.

Closely linked to the gully erosion control is the effort to conserve soil. The Forestry Directorate of the Ministry of Water Resources and Environment is doing a good job here. Beside the successful hosting of the 1999 National Tree Planting Campaign launched by the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Department has established plantations at Lembi and Jamari in addition to President Obasanjo Plantation. The Department has also established wind breakers and raised seedlings in various locations in the state.

On the areas of Water resources management, Government's efforts to put the abundant water resources into use is gradually yielding results. The long abandoned Balanga Irrigation Scheme has been put back into use. A trial wheat farming was conducted there last year. Government has already started work to desilt the canals

besides the irrigation farming, it is hoped the Balanga Dam would be used in fish farming. Government has already started a pilot scheme at the Dadin kowa ponds with a stock of 20,000 fingerlings.

To complement the aforementioned infrastructure is the efforts of the Government to provide electricity to the urban and rural areas of the State. The state government has done pretty well in this area. The Hashidu -Lafiya Kwagol -Malala-Zaune rural Electrification project was successfully executed and commissioned at the total sum of N62.5m. Tabra, Zambuk, Ki



President Olusegun Obasanjo Commissioning the new legislators Housing Complex in Gombe

structed a befitting residence for the Chief Judge. Other Judges were in like manner accommodated. Government has also expended the sum of N10million in the rehabilitation of the Office of Chief Registrar and Chief Judges' Chamber.

The responsibility for coordinating Government activities

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ence, access roads, drainages and electricity at the total cost of N40m. The Engineering services Department of the Ministry of Works has also undertaken repairs of plants for road maintenance. The sum of N44.7m has so far been committed towards rehabilitation of plants and equipment. The sum of N27m was also spent in the

Continued from page 12

Lawanti and Wuro Dolle were all connected to the national grid at the cost of N58.8m. These projects together with the rural water supply projects would provide the needed basic infrastructure to develop cottage industries. Already Government has granted loan of over N23m. in all the wards of the State, to assist in establishing cottage industries. These packages signify gradual steps towards the Economic take off of the young state.

In the area of water supply the administration of Alhaji Abubakar Hashidu has shown remarkable commitments to the provision of potable water to the teeming populace of Gombe State. It was based on this desire that the water corporation law of February 2000, came into force. The law invested the Corporation with the sole responsibility of providing potable water to urban and semi-urban towns of the State. The new structure of the corporation has been put in place and this is helping in making the organisation more effective in carrying out its responsibilities.

Efforts were made to employ professional hands in the fields of Engineering, Accounting, Administration and Commerce. This has no doubt strengthened the workforce for effective management of the Corporations programmes.

The Water Corporation since inception of this administration has rehabilitated water Schemes in General Hospitals at Gombe, Dukku, Zambuk, Kaltungo, Billiri and Bajoga. This was aimed at solving the problem of water supply faced by both patients and staff of the hospitals. The projects were carried out at the cost of N7,110,997.00. The rehabilitation of Kumo, Hashidu and Gelengu water supply schemes were done at the cost of N10,940,425.00.

The Corporation has also undertaken drilling of new bore-holes and pipeline network at the House of Assembly and High court complex. Expansion of pipeline network at GRA, Gombe Mallam Inna, Kagarawal, Army Barrack, Government House, were undertaken. Pipes, fittings and working tools for water maintenance were also purchased at the cost of N13,726,661.50.

In order to boost water Supply in the semi-urban towns of the state, Solar PEDALFLO water delivery systems for Local Government headquarters were purchased at the cost of N52,125,954.38. Submersible pumps for day-to-day running of the water works were purchased at the cost of N5,407,960.00. In order to connect the Booster station of Kumo water Scheme to the existing Scheme a Generator located at the bore-hole site was rehabilitated at the cost of N1,172,317.00.

Consultancy services and the contract for the Expansion of Gombe Water project cost the sum of N634,964,111:60. When completed the project is expected to cover 50% of the Population of Gombe town.

For the proper and smooth running of the Corporation's field activities, service vehicles were purchased. Crane lorry service rig were also rehabilitated. To enhance performance, radio communication system was reactivated and new radio hand sets were acquired. In order to solve the problem of office accommodation, the corporation has embarked on construction of new office block, renovation of old offices including a caravan, fencing of the frontage of the Corporation's

yard, and purchase of office furniture and equipment. All these were carried out at the cost of N5,255,107.50.

To improve the revenue generation of the corporation, Customer enumeration/census was carried out. This was necessary in order to identify and categorise the customers for effective billing and revenue collection.

The whole Gombe town was covered, the exercise was carried out at the cost of N877,840.00.

ECONOMIC SECTOR.

Agriculture

Agriculture is the bedrock of the state's Economy. In fulfilment of this promise such giant the Agro Allied Companies like the 40m/hr Gombe Fertilizer Plant, the Integrated Poultry Production Unit (PPU) and Manto Processing Company were successfully executed and commissioned during the year.

In order to boost Agricultural Production farm machinery like Tractors and equipment were purchased for our large-

Habu Hashidu has in the last 23 months lived up to the adage "Health is Wealth", as the government has therefore ensured that its personnel are adequately trained and went further to recruit additional hands to man certain departments hitherto suffering from lack of man power.

During the period under review government spent the sum of N118,768,386.46 in the renovation of all hospitals, and completion of Dukku General Hospital which was abandoned by previous administrations, Drug Revolving Scheme, (DRF) was introduced too, thus making drugs affordable to the people across the State. Aside these, drugs are given free to TB, Leprosy and other patients with serious/urgent ailments like snake bites etc.

The State government is now establishing a school of Nursing to complement the existing school of Health Technology at Kaltungo. Similarly, workshops and Seminars are organized to train and retain the

feeding at boarding Secondary Schools was reviewed upward by 100%. Similarly Primary School teachers who reached retirement age are being paid pension under the newly introduced State Primary School Teacher's Pension Scheme.

The government went a step further by establishing a special education Centre to cater for the handicapped children in addition to the Adult Education and social Development Institute in Kumo which was resuscitated and upgraded to cater for the whole Northern states.

Arrangements have also been completed for the establishment of two tertiary institutions in the state. These are College of Education at Dadin-Kowa and College of Legal and Islamic Studies at Nafada. Vocational Workshops were constructed and equipped in each of the 11 Local Governments of the state and installed for the achievements of technical education to our teeming youth at the cost of N26,770,050.00.

Mass enlightenment

Hashidu administration approved the construction of a New Office Complex for the Ministry of Women Affairs while the Women Development Centre was transformed to Women Empowerment Centre. Over N21m was expended and equipment procured for training in various trades/skills.

A girl Child Education Centre was established by the Ministry at Awak, while government has encouraged the participation of women in the formation of Women Cooperative Societies in the State.

The ministry, donated the sum of N1.3m as soft loans to different women groups to enhance their activities.

MINISTRY OF JUSTICE/JUDICIARY

The decay which characterized the State Ministry of Justice and the Judiciary in particular during the previous administrations, witnessed a resuscitation by the administration. Government at this point started sanitizing the system by approving the recruitment of 15 State

Motorcycle operators (*Kabu-Kabu*) as revolving loan.

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

The efforts of Governor Hashidu administration in the reinvigoration of the information sector resulted into the construction of a new ministry of information complex which will also house the headquarters and transmission stations of the state radio and television.

The construction and the purchase of the transmitters for both the radio and television cost the state government the sum of N57,703,492.03. Besides, the government since May 1999 embarked on the gradual rehabilitation of its existing radio and television stations with the view to keeping the citizenry informed of the day-to-day activities of government. To this end, the government spent N 8,975,504.60 including assistance to NTA, Gombe sub-station. In the field of sports, the government made spirited effort to ensure that the state darling team, Gombe United remained the premier Pro-league division while other clubs were encouraged to perform well in the various league competition.

In this regard, the government spent over N 1million on the purchase of sporting equipment while the construction of Handball and squash courts cost N 5.5 million. Similarly, the government spent N 4,177,000.00 when the state played host to the Nigeria Football Association Annual General meeting. During the last Olympic games in Sydney, Australia, the government spent N 1.8 million on the state delegation to the festival. On social development, government spent N 2,118, 170.00 on the purchase of wheel chairs, rehabilitation of children's house and resettlement of mentally sick patients.

MINISTRY FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND CHIEFTANCY AFFAIRS.

This ministry which is responsible for monitoring developments at the grassroots, is enjoying the support of government, as for the first time ever, the state witnessed the creation of new emirates and chiefdoms while the old ones were upgraded to give impetus to the yearning of the people at the grassroots.

The government spent N23 million on the purchase of vehicles for the Emirs and chiefs and also spent N11,706, 709.00 on the execution of community development self-help projects. These projects included rural roads, 77 open wells, and 13 boreholes among others. Also, the Primary Health Care unit of the ministry execute certain activities and programmes for which the sum of N4,210.00.00. was expended.

CONCLUSION

The preceding passages represent the modest achievements of Governor Abubakar Habu Hashidu's Administration in the last 23 months. These achievements which are by no means the total picture of the performance of this government, is intended to serve as an evaluation in consideration to the campaign promises and inaugural pronouncements. Though the Administration is just mid way in its life span of 4 years, it has attained tremendous progress. If the tempo is maintained we are sure the government would surpass its target.

Focus on Gombe State continues Tomorrow with pictorial details of achievements recorded by Governor Hashidu on page 16 & 17



Governor Abubakar Hashidu inspecting Motorcycles procured for distribution to unemployed youth under the Gombe State Poverty Alleviation Programme.

scale farmers. The Government also purchased 240 units of ox-drawn ridgers together with a pair of bulls each for distribution to small scale farmers. Excess grains produced by farmers were purchased for our strategic grains reserve and sold at subsidized price rate during the times of scarcity.

In the livestock sub sector the government purchase drugs worth N15 million Naira from PTF for sale to farmers at subsidized prices.

The annual vaccination campaign against major diseases of livestock was also reintroduced after years of silence.

COMMERCE AND INDUSTRIES

Gombe State is known as the commercial nerve centre of the North East sub-region. To this end the seemingly intractable Manto Processing Company was completed and commissioned at the cost of N 139m.

To cater for the influx of business Men and women into the state, hotels like the Jewel Hotel Gombe, Kaltungo, and Bajoga Hotel were completed and some chalets were renovated, similarly a Sister Hotel in Kaduna was renovated. A contract for 1000 room Gombe International hotel has been signed and work will commence soon.

HEALTH

In pursuance of good health to its citizens, the Gombe State Government under the dynamic leadership of Alhaji Abubakar

medical personnel.

The State Government has not relented in participation in National and International Programmes such as National Immunization Programme. Already the state has received a merit award from the Federal Ministry of Health for achieving 90% in the over all exercise, while its counterpart contribution stood at N7,615,800.00 to International Agencies.

EDUCATION

At the inauguration of this administration, Governor Hashidu listed Education as one of the key sectors that would be developed to the latter and this is owing to the fact that only an educated society will be relevant, competent and able to sustain democracy.

Consequently, the administration waved school fees at the Primary and Junior Secondary Schools levels in the spirit of the UBE. Students Scholarships were reviewed upward by 120% and overseas Scholarship scheme was introduced as special incentives. Examination fees both for the SSCE/ WAEC and NECO to the tune N 38m was paid by the government to alleviate the suffering of parents.

A total of 58 staff quarters were renovated while 45 others are currently under construction across the State. This would cost the state N 75m. Renovation of classrooms and supply of furniture were executed at a total sum of N200 m. Students

campaign was mounted by the government with a view to improve the enrolment figure. The figure has increased by 48 percent in primary School and 24 percent in Secondary Schools. The government also established Educational Resource Centre along with Computer Education Programme in Primary and Secondary Schools. Science Teachers were also recruited to teach Science related subjects such as Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics and Biology in all Secondary Schools in the state. To crown this effort, government also purchased teaching and learning materials including computers worth N126,498,042.00.

The Primary Education Sector which is the bedrock of Education was also not left out as over 248 classrooms in 61 schools across the state were renovated at the cost of N80m including furniture, other instructional materials worth more than N50m were acquired during the same period.

Similarly 331 teachers were recruited and posted to various Primary Schools.

As a result of all these efforts government has recorded handsome dividends in the WAEC / NECO examination results with a score of 68% from the woeful performance of 0.99% in the year 1999.

MINISTRY OF WOMEN AFFAIRS

In recognition of the role of women in nation building, the

Counsels. Law books, furniture and other overhead costs amounting to over N7m were procured. Under the prerogative of mercy, 11 prisoners were pardoned. 11 bills and/legal notices were drafted.

In keeping with the promise of Governor Hashidu at his inaugural speech in May 1999, the State Judiciary has continued to enjoy an unfettered independence as enshrined in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The State Judicial Service Commission was set-up and given all the logistic support for full operation. The Chief judge's House was constructed, furnished and vehicles for all judges and Grand Khadis as well as other Principal officers of the judiciary were procured at the cost over N30m.

POVERTY ALLEVIATION

In its effort to provide Social Services to its citizens and reduce the high rate of unemployment and poverty amongst the teeming populace, the Governor Hashidu's administration was introduced a more realistic system of poverty alleviation programme.

In this regard, about N28m was spent on the purchase of small pumps for irrigated farming, sewing machines, wheel barrows, work oxen plough and grinding mill among others. Soft loans amounting to N23,028,000.00 were granted to various cooperative groups and youths in each ward of the State. N10 million Naira was also disbursed as loans to Commercial

BUSINESS DAY

CBN Governor tasks SMEs over development finance

The governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Chief Joseph Sanusi, has charged operators of small and medium-scale enterprises in the country to offer suggestions on the rehabilitation of ail-

From Bose Musari, in Lagos

development finance institutions and establish a credit guarantee scheme for the sector.

This move, according to him, would offer solutions to

the problems of fund generation in the sector.

Sanusi who was speaking at the annual conference of the small and machine enterprises in Lagos, at the weekend, advised SMEs to examine the strategy for

motivating states and local governments towards creating industrial estates with adequate infrastructure to facilitate establishment of SSI, in order to reduce SMEs' financial burden and enhance their viability.

He urged the conference to look into the strategy for ensuring guaranteed market



Joseph Sanusi, CBN Governor.

CBN's support for the Policy Focus because of its conviction that the promotion of a viable SMEs sector holds the key to industrial rebirth in particular and sustainable growth in general".

He also stated the present administration's commitment to make the development of the sector the cornerstone of its poverty alleviation strategy.

He highlighted the benefit of a viable SMEs sector to include high employment per unit of capital invested, development of indigenous entrepreneurship and technology among others as a means of achieving government growth and development objective.

Sanusi also stated that the take-off and efficient performance of any enterprise whether small or large, require adequate funding saying, "for production to take place, funds are required to bring together the other factors of production".

for their products and borrow from other countries' experiences in order to ensure the development of the small and machine scale enterprises.

Speaking on "Gaining Access to Finance Issues in funding Small and Machine Enterprises," he commended the sector for the choice of the theme and announced

NUBIFIE, ASSBIFIE lambast First Bank management over staff unionism

The Association of Bank Workers and Financial Institutions have condemned the First Bank management for allegedly coercing its staff to renounce the membership of their trade union.

In a press statement made available to *Business Day* and jointly signed by Comrade Abdullahi Shehu, the acting General Secretary, National Union Bank, Insurance and Finance Institutions, Employees and Comrade Abiodun Ogunsegha, Secretary-General, Association of Senior Staff of Banks, Insurance and Finance Institutions Employees.

The statement stated that the trade unions (NUBIFIE and ASSBIFIE) assert that the right to freely belong to any association of a trade union is fundamental and so should not be denied on the whims and caprices of a misguided and unformed management.

Debunking the call by the management of First Bank to

From Samson Ojo and Bose Musari, in Lagos

its employees to relinquish their membership of their trade unions as a condition for them to receive "jumbo salary, the statement declared that the "ploy is a mere sham and a graduation offers, loaded with deceit to the unwary or a maroon whose mental capacity to balance the advantages and disadvantages of two competing choices is defective."

The statement said further, "we have had instances of the empty promises which on the long run resulted into a death-trap, for the workers and their families.

The text of the press statement read, "the management of First Bank Plc cannot pretend not to recognise the provisions of convention No. 87 of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) ratified by Nigerian Government on "Freedom of Association and pro-

tection of the right to organise, (1948) and the various constitutional provisions of the Federal Republic of Nigeria guaranteeing trade unions the right to freely organise their members without undue restrictions."

"The present management of First Bank is anti-labour in all its ramifications. The fact that management now prefers to reduce Nigerian workers to the status of slaves, that is worse than the harrowing experiences of the pre-colonial era, speaks of extreme sadism in corporate management by a proven agent of the practitioners of crude capitalism, currently First Bank management is driving away permanent employees only to re-engage them as casuals thereby brutalising the psyche of the employees."

While calling on the members of NUBIFIE and ASSBIFIE in the employment of First Bank, the statement urge them not to sign

any letter from management on their withdrawal from union membership nor any letter containing their employment terms and conditions to that of "contract for service".

The statement enjoined both members of NUBIFIE and ASSBIFIE nationwide and the employees of First Bank Plc in particular that the epic battle for their situation of economic liberty, Industrial democracy and the rule of Law in the work environment is to remain steadfast and committed to a just glorious cause.

Dunlop boss decries importation of 'Tokunbo' goods

The Chairman of Dunlop tyres, Mr. Gamaliel O. Onosode has reiterated the threat posed to local tyre manufacturers by the unabated influx of used tyres and under-invoiced products in the Nigerian market.

In his address at the com-

From Bose Musari, in Lagos

over 150 different brands of imported tyres selling at ridiculously low prices.

According to the Chairman, "the problem of illegal importation of huge quantities of used tyres persists at the great cost of scores of the lives of fellow Nigerians as a result of blowouts on the highways.

The relevant authorities he therefore urged to take decisive steps to halt the slaughter of Nigerian citizens at the hands of rapacious businessmen and their alien collaborators."

The Chairman added that the Crown tyre was introduced as a deliberate strategy to satisfy customers who desire quality tyres at moderated prices. The tyre he said, is sold at a price that makes it uneconomical to patronise used tyres.

Earlier in his own speech, the Group Managing Director, Mr. Dayo Lawuyi has announced the compa-

ny's quest for excellence by constant nurturing of team spirit, teamwork, responsibility, integrity and delivery of quality service.

"All these naturally demand from us a sharpening of our focus, an improvement of our skittles and a continuous discovery of ourselves. They are Herculean, but not impossible to attain," he said.

He added that the satisfaction of customers' needs would remain the cardinal principle driving their operations. He implored the workers to pursue this with unparalleled single-mindedness.

He pointed another ray of hope in the expectation that democracy will ultimately yield its dividends, which amongst others will enhance the earning power of the populace, whose patronage is the wheel on which the company's success revolves would help to check sub-standard vessels sailing into our territorial water as well as assisting whenever mishap occur.

NSE, Egypt Stock Exchange sign MOU on cross-border investments

The Nigeria Stock Exchange (NSE) has signed memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Egyptian Stock Exchange (ESE), on cross-border investments and development.

The Director-General of NSE, Dr. Ndi Okereke-Onyuike who disclosed this to financial correspondents at the Exchange in Lagos said NSE would also sign such an understanding with the London Stock Exchange by June.

She said the MOU was signed after the G-15 capital

From Bright Ewulu, in Lagos

market workshop held in Cairo late last month, saying links forth benefit of the nation's economy.

According to her the wave globally is that in various parts of the world efforts are now geared towards merging Exchanges in order to boost trade and enhance investment.

This, she said informed the consensus at the G-15 workshop that member countries should encouraged cross-border listing in order to foster trade and development among member-countries.

However, to attain this she hinted that it was agreed that there was need for G-15 countries to develop harmonised rules and regulations and practice in order to enhance investment.

Also, it was canvassed that tax incentives and micro-economic fundamentals should be in place if the capital markets are to become attractive to private sector investors and others.

For all these reasons and the merits involved in develop-

ing links with bigger markets, the Director-General revealed plans by the exchange to develop link with West African Stock Exchange which would afford it cross border listing opportunities.

According to her, it was established that to achieve the major objective of G-15 cross-border listing as the clear-cut avenue to achieve it.

"If we have similar trading system, regulating system it means, we operating at par with the developed economies, since we have similar practices, rules and regulations.

Mrs. Okereke-Onyuike called the Federal Government to involve the private sector in its policies and meeting internationally, saying that the private sector would help government appreciate the global economic situation better.

Harping the agreement at the G-15 workshop she maintained the need for the nation to sponsor qualifier citizens into International economic organisations in order to have adequate representation in the international as scheme of things.



Kolawole Jamodu, Industry Minister.

pany's 38th Annual General Meeting, Mr. Onosode expressed shock at the available of poor quality and criminally under invoiced tyre imports from Asia and Eastern Europe adding that the market presently has

Labour, Shipping companies' alliance is illegal - Tin-Can Port Chief

The Port Manager, Tin-Can Port, Mr. Adebisi Adeoko has described the work through alliance system between labour and shipping companies as illegal and called for its immediate repudiation.

Speaking against the background of the fracas between the labour and shipping companies where the operation manager of Koda Shipping was hit in the face owing to the inability of the shipping company to pay the outstanding work-through entitlement as at when due.

From Tokunbo Oloke, in Lagos

Work-through system usually is an agreement between the labour and shipping where the labour will work through-out in offloading the vessel so that the vessel can leave on time without observing their normal break time.

"This system is not allowed any longer in the port because they can only use it to foment trouble and one cannot open his eyes to allow some people to start causing trouble thereby

disrupting port operation simply because of their selfish interests, he said.

It was gathered already that out of the three labour that caused the fracas the port police had arrested only one, while the operation manager who was the victim had been hospitalised.

It was gathered also that the labour were aggrieved when the same shipping company that failed to settle their work-through allowance earlier now brought another vessel and now calling on the same labour to work on the vessel.



Ndi Okereke, NSE D-G.

BUSINESS DAY

Virgin Atlantic Airways to fly Nigeria

Virgin Atlantic Airways owned by a British Business tycoon, Mr. Richard Branson, is to operate flights on the London-Nigeria route.

This development followed an understanding reached between Nigeria and the United Kingdom at the end of talks in London by delegations of the two countries.

According to the terms of the understanding made available to newsmen in London, Virgin Atlantic airways will operate the agreed services in addition to the British Airways, while Nigeria may designate another airline to operate flights to London in addition to the Nigeria Airways.

It stated that the designated airlines of the United Kingdom and Nigeria might operate up to 14 weekly services in each direction, using aircraft of any type, adding that the arrangements would

be applied administratively "with immediate effect pending the amendment of the Air Services Agreement (ASA).

The aeronautical authority of Nigeria agreed that it would allow the British Airways service to Abuja to con-



Kema Chikwe, Aviation Minister.

tinue on the basis of the current agreement until the next round of talks, stressing that the 1999 agreement was a temporary one.

But the United Kingdom repeated its view that the basis of operations to Abuja had been agreed between the two sides in 1999.

The two delegations agreed to hold further talks in Abuja on May 10 to discuss the outstanding issues

on which they failed to reach an understanding, including the basis on which services were operated to Abuja, the possibility of increasing capacity and tariff provisions.

The Nigerian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Prince Bola

Ajibola led the 15-member Nigerian delegation, which included the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Aviation, Mr. R.U. Audu, while Mr. Tony Baker, Director of International Aviation negotiations, led the 10-member U.K. delegations.

Fly the London-Nigerian route will delight many air travellers to and from Nigeria as it will not only break the British Airways monopoly, but may bring down the cost of air tickets on the route.

BPE scrutinises financial proposals of privatisation advisers

The Technical Committee on Privatisation has begun the scrutiny of proposals submitted by three prospective privatisation advisers on NITEL, BPE's Director of Operations, Alhaji Tijjani Abdullahi, has said.

Abdullahi told newsmen in Abuja that the short-listed consortia of firms Price Waterhousecoopers, NOMURA and Bank Bolognaise/African Merchant Bank, had submitted

financial and technical competence "Bids" to advise the Bureau on mechanisms on the privatisation of NITEL.

The Technical Committee will evaluate the bids as opened on April 4, select the lead adviser and send to the national council on privatisation (NCP) for approval," he said.

Abdullahi said the result of the critical examination of details of those submissions would soon be ready, when the committee should have made its recommendation to the NCP for communication to the Federal Executive Council (FEC).

On whether the Bureau would not compromise itself on the selection process, more so that the firm of Pricewatercoopers is currently working for it as a privatisation advisor, the official said that the consulting firm was one of the "top-

most" firms in the world engaged in privatisation issues.

"That one firm is engaged in one assignment does not preclude it from other assignments if it is



El-Rufai, BPE D-G.

competent and qualified," he said, adding, however, that "Pricewatercoopers is presently assisting the BPE in the power sector."

"For each assignment, we talk about consortia of firms. There is usually a leader in the group. Some firms could be good in a number of interest areas," he added.

He described the recent national workshop on regulatory and legal framework for the privatisation of NITEL as a "success", saying that it provided a platform for stakeholders and industry operators to discuss current trends in telecoms and proffer the way forward.

The Director said the Bureau was working on the details of the Washington Round Table discussions with international investors on privatisation issues in the power and telecommunications sectors held in the U.S., with the BPE's Director-General, Mallam Nasir Ahmad el-Rufai and other Nigerians in attendance.



Mr. Isaac O. Shongotola, former Chief Inspector UBA Plc displaying the award plaque and certificate presented to him at the 89th Quarterly Meeting of the Committee of Chief Inspectors of Banks in Nigeria recently at the Lagos Sheraton Hotel.

Minister explains why govt. regulates importation of generators

Minister of State for Power and Steel, Danjuma Goje said that government's decision to regulate the importation of power generating



Segun Agagu, Power & Steel Minister.

plants was part of efforts to check sabotage against NEPA installations.

Goje told newsmen in Abuja that government was not stopping any one from importing the plants but was merely interested in "knowing the importers involved in case of any trouble.

The Minister, who said it was only in Nigeria that people stole electric cables, decried the current situation where NEPA staff were usually blamed for such vandalism.

"States have their rural electrification boards with qualified personnel, and so do the operators of the generating plants, but only NEPA staff are fingered in

every cable theft and we want to know what part owners of these sets also play in these crimes," he declared.

Goje expressed dismay that NEPA's efforts at a stable power supply had suffered in the hands of vandals and vowed that government would deal with any one found to be involved.

The Federal Government last month began the regulation of the importation of generating sets, a development that attracted a barrage of flaks from Nigerians with some claiming that the powerhouse was scared of losing its monopoly having allegedly lost public confidence.

FG assures Nigerians of gains in deregulation

The Federal Government has assured the people at the grassroots that the gains from the proposed deregulation of the downstream sector of the oil industry will be used to provide services that will be of benefit to them.

The Senior Special Assistant to the President on Petroleum and Energy, Mr. Funsho Kupolokun, told community and opinion leaders in Port Harcourt that "investment in the people is the in-thing al over the world and Nigeria should not be an exception."

Explaining the position of the federal government on the proposed deregulation of the downstream sector of the oil industry, Kupolokun said that the

policy would assist in alleviating poverty in the rural areas.

He said that additional revenue realised from the exercise would be used to provide subsidy on agriculture, health and solve the problems of the country's power sector.

According to him, liberalisation is a prerequisite for privatisation, which allows for competition.

He explained that the oil sector was presently battling with the problems of non recovery of operating cost, poor maintenance of refineries and pipelines and that these problems had compelled government to consider the option of deregulating the oil sector.

Liberalising the sector, he said, would allow the country to meet the re-

gional needs of crude oil export, which according to him, was presently below the market demand.

He assured that the federal government would rehabilitate the nation's refineries and maintain pipelines and depots before liberalising the downstream sector of the oil industry.



Rilwanu Lukman, Presidential Adviser on Petroleum & Energy.



recommended me, but I suspect she had played a role in my becoming minister. So, as I said, my relationship is even more special with the wife than the husband.

She has gone back to the Court, do you still communicate?

We do, we do. We communicate on a regular basis. We do.

On your assumption you inherited a very highly polarised institution. What is the situation now?

As a matter of fact, the situation is much better now but I have to add that, the institution was not polarised as such. We had a problem, which arose from the crisis we had in 1994 that saw some of the staff of the institution and even students out of the campus. That is, they were thrown out either by dismissal or by termination of appointment, wrongly or rightly, and some students were also expelled. So, we had a situation where a faction of the university community was outside. It was not a polarised institution, it was an institution under tension. The tension from those outside and because we had a lot of court cases. And you see, because some people had been dismissed, fear was created in those within. And those that were outside were demanding for their rights, whether they were wrongly dismissed or

not. All we did was to try as much as possible to look at the issue, because you see, they were sent away not because of any misconduct as per the procedures laid down by the university - disciplinary process. But, you know, as a result of a crisis, you have a crisis and some of them decided to be on the other side, while the administration was on another side. On my assumption that we did was to bring them back through the process of reconciliation and to sensitise those within who may probably have sympathy for them to accept and live together and forget the past. So, that's what we did to bring them back and smoothen the reconciliation process.

What is the position of the court cases now?

Most of the cases have been thrown out or withdrawn. The few cases we have are those that, in a normal situation, where the university is liable to be sued. There are some court cases. Of course, court cases always come and go. So, we have them but they are just a few and I assume it is not something peculiar to this university. Most of the cases that arose from that particular crisis are no longer there.

Still on your assumption, there were allegations that you redeployed some staff who were said to be loyal to the former Vice-Chancellor.

(Cuts in). You mean redeployed them and put them in other positions?

No. I mean you removed them from your office and deployed them to other departments.

No! No! No. As a matter of fact, it was the Acting Vice-Chancellor who deployed them. Yes. Because when an Acting Vice-Chancellor was appointed most staff were not happy with it and did not accept the change. They were very loyal to the former Vice-Chancellor because he resisted going because he believed that his removal was not properly done. Appointing an Acting Vice-Chancellor when the process of appointing a substantive Vice-Chancellor was in place. But government saw it differently in its own wisdom and thought that things were not going the way they should and decided to appoint an acting Vice-Chancellor. So, those who were very close and loyal to the out-going Vice-Chancellor did not welcome the new one and because of that when the acting Vice-Chancellor came, he had to deploy them away from the office of the Vice-Chancellor in order to have a team that would cooperate and work with him. When I took over I accepted the position as it was. But, watched to see how ready they were to work with the new administration.

Some of the allegations at that period were that you promoted some of the staffers who are your mates and those that were too senior, you shoved aside.

You see, there is one problem. I think if you understand the psychology of the academics in their community, there is this problem of when people are not put into a position they become anti-administration and when they are in a position and whether the administration is going on well or not, they will become pro, or loyal. Some of them are not really objective when assessing the situation and providing the right picture. What happened was that, there were some of them who hold positions, and then we did some reshuffling and it was that reshuffling that some of them didn't want. It was those who were not happy that made those noises. So, it

We do under t

Dr. (Mrs.) Laraba Gambo Abdullahi is the Jibril Daudu and reporter, Tashikalmah F issues she encountered when she was appo forthcoming convocation of the University of University of Abuja did not join in national st

appears as if they were removed from their posts because they were no longer wanted and they were senior academics, while, in fact, we have senior academics also occupying some positions. So, what we did was just to reshuffle. You see, in academic posts, at the end of two years, there are changes and some of the positions like the Deans, and so on, are by elections. But there are those that are by appointments. So, what we do is in order to have a balanced institution, when you have a position filled by election, you assess on the profile of those occupying those positions. In order to be fair and have a balanced appointment according to our mission of federal belonging, we have to look at the other areas and see how we can fit in to ensure that the highest bodies, the committees that decide for the university are not just composed of interest groups. We do those kind of things whenever there is an election, and the senior ones come in, we look at the other ones for deployment, so that there will be balance and that's exactly what we did. As a matter of fact, the issue of seniority is not there. At that time we had about three Igbos who emerged as Deans. We also had them as Directors and what we did was to make some changes to bring in some people so that at least we shall have a true reflection of the federation in the decision making body of the university.

In the Professor Dauda Bagari's Senior Staff Audit Report, about 41 staffers were found to be wrongly placed and promoted. The report recommended that such persons be re-graded and made to refund the salary differential. Have you implemented those aspects of the report?

We did implement. We have implemented the aspect of grading, upgrading and downgrading. but, we waived the issue of refund. You know it is not easy for a staff to refund money that has accumulated over a period of many years. So, we set out the act for the approval by our governing council to waive the issue of refund. But we have implemented the upgrading and the downgrading. You see, the Staff Audit Report arose from the visitation that was carried out in the universities, all over. The panel received memos regarding promotions in the university that were not done according to the rules and regulations of the university. So, there was a recommendation by the committee, which was accepted by government. A white paper was issued that there shall be a manpower and staff audit. So, as soon as the council was put in place in the university, in a matter of the implementation of the recommendation of the white paper and the issue of staff auditing, the university set up that staff auditing and recommended those aspects you talked about.

Essentially, what the committee did was nothing more than looking at the university law and the rules and regulations that were in place and looked at how things were done, and recommended whether they were done properly or not.

And as far as I am concerned, and everybody else in the university management and the council, we have guidelines in place. We have procedures and rules governing the operations of the institution. So, everything should conform to those rules and guidelines and anything that is contrary, must be considered as wrongly done. That was the only yardstick that the Staff Auditing Committee used in identifying who was properly placed and who was improperly placed. Based on that recommendation, we went ahead to implement.

Then there is the issue of discontentment on the part of the affected staff. Didn't they feel discontented, like, say when they woke up one morning and found that they had been down graded?

Absolutely. But you see, what we did, we held onto the guidelines. They were not promoted as per the guidelines, or as per the procedure, which are still in place. You see, that was it. But at the same time, we put up a committee that considered appeals and petitions because we didn't

How did you feel when you were appointed Vice-Chancellor of the university?

Well, I felt I had a great task. And a very big burden, a very big task to carry through and ensure success. So, as soon as the appointment came, I saw it as something given to me to do and in the end, to ensure, that I succeed. That was how I saw it. I didn't see it as something of joy or achievement but of a very big responsibility given to me. And I look forward to a successful tenure. So, it has been a line of action, I have been planning to be successful and accomplish the task ahead of me. But, as a woman, well, probably we are few but I always expected that. It was not the first time that such an appointment came to me. I was commissioner once. I was a minister, and when this came, I just saw it as part of the responsibilities. And the responsibility to carry on with my duties, as per what the nation did to me, i.e. the opportunities given to me, and also to develop myself academically. I now have a great task ahead, a great responsibility, but by God's grace, I will put in my best in rendering my service to the nation.

From what you have said, can we say that you're the type of person who likes challenges? I am asking this because, coming from a ministerial position which is not, an academic one, you may find it difficult to adapt or even to reject the offer having tasted the luxury of power.

As a matter of fact, I feel much more at home in the academic world. When I became a vice-chancellor, I felt more at home than as a minister or a commissioner. Besides, I have always belonged to the academic. I was only taking leave, to serve in various capacities I always came back to the academic, all the time, before getting another appointment. I didn't just jump from one appointment to another. That is the reason why I believe in academic work and remained an academic. I feel more at home in the academic world.

Your appointment sparked some opposition. Some said, you were not qualified, that you were not a professor, and that there is a relationship between you and the Head of State at that time. How did you weigh such criticisms?

You see, all these rancour, all the wrangling, always come whenever a new Vice-Chancellor is appointed any where in the country. It is only that mine attracted more attention of the people and generated a lot of interest because I am a lady and at the same time being a minister. So, that was the only difference. Otherwise, if you check the records, the appointment of Vice-Chancellors, has never been a smooth thing. There is always wrangling and rancour, criticisms, and academics are always known for that. Academics are known for shooting criticisms at each other and always critical and analytical in whatever they do. So, when it comes to such appointments they still practice what they do in the classrooms.

But was there any special relationship between you and the former Head of State. General Abdulsalami Abubakar?

Well, there was no special relationship rather than being his minister. Probably, it may interest you, that I am closer to his wife. The wife was my colleague in the secondary school. The wife was together with me at the Constituent Assembly, she realised each other and so, I think, she might have influenced my appointment. However, I am not sure, who



Interview

Do not give lectures under trees - Gambo Abdullahi

Vice-Chancellor of the University of Abuja. In this interview with our Editor, Gambo Abdullahi, she expands on the concept of responsibility, and gives details of the current situation of the Vice-Chancellor. She highlights the problem of space, cultism, and the encroachment upon university land. Before her appointment, the University of Abuja was in a state of chaos. Today, the story has changed and the VC gives reasons.

to do it as a form of punishment. We were only implementing something that was recommended to us that was not done properly.

We have driven round the campus, and discovered that staying here for over 10 years, the place has now become over-crowded. What are you doing about the permanent site?

Developing a permanent site is not something that you just start any day. First of all, you need to plan. After planning, you have to apply for funds. After applying for the money, it has to be provided for in the budgetary allocation. So far, I know that about ten years ago, the university had a master plan for the development of the permanent site but which didn't see the light of the day. So, on assumption of duty we looked at it again and realised that the master plan was not informed by a very good academic brief. So, we had to get the academic brief in place. The academic brief, will inform the physical brief, which will determine the scale of spaces that we need for the university in respect of academic purposes. With that, we are now reviewing the master plan, because, we have to take many factors into consideration, such as funding.

When the first plan was conceived there was hope for more money in the system. There was hope for money coming into the university to develop grandiose plan. But now, in as much as we want the best for the university, we also have to consider the situation on ground in terms of funding, whether funds will come for such grandiose plans that we have in mind. We had to be realistic in the plan of the institution that we want to build in future. Now we have a master plan review, which has already been carried out, and it is being formalised and by the end of this week we are going to have the final brief. When we have that kind of master plan then we shall go into development. We have made a case to government, and have got some provision in the budget, which we could use in developing the permanent site. The problem now is the fund. We hope that the money would come. We are hopeful that if things change for the better this year, definitely the bulldozers will move in there. We hope to start with the access roads and the other infrastructure before going into details.

According to our plan of action we hope that in the next three years, we will start moving to the permanent site. Because as you can see, this place is really choking and the university cannot develop on this present location and there is a limit to how much you can bring in, because you see the human movement, the traffic and the population, you cannot increase the number up to a certain limit when you have a limited space. This space will no longer allow for any expansion no matter how wise you want to go about it. And no matter how technical you are, and with all the information technology, the people cannot possibly be in the air. They will have to move around the campus and you have to allow a little space for that kind of thing which we lack now. We cannot add any structure here because it is already choked with buildings with very little space for students and staff to move around. So, the only alternative is to develop the permanent site and we are on it. I hope in the next three years, if everything goes well with respect to funding because that is what is deterring us. We have

done the nitty-gritty and it is funding now that we are waiting for.

The man on the street is likely to ask what is 'academic brief'?

(Laughs). 'Academic brief' is the academic development plan of the university, what the university wishes to achieve in terms of new colleges, in terms of enrolment and in terms of other services, the objective the university wants to achieve.

Do you mean that a university as old as this established over 10 years ago is just having its academic brief?

Yes. What we had was not an academic brief. It was something that was just managed in order to have a physical brief master plan. But it was not a properly planned academic brief according to the NUC which has already designed a lot for us on how an academic brief should be.

Then what is a physical brief?

A physical brief is what the physical planners do, provide the information, the background information that they need in order to have the master plan of the whole campus of the university. It is based on the academic brief.

The academic brief will determine and assess how many people or buildings are coming to such a place, what sort of space will be needed, when you have this college, that college, there is the need for you to have this much now, that much next year and the master plan will take these two into consideration, in terms of what the university should look like.

Talking about the choked nature of the present site, is it the reason why students are taking lectures under shades of trees?

(Laughs). No. Students don't take lectures under trees. People based their conclusion on only what they see and in most cases, they don't analyse and compare the other factors affecting the institution viz a viz another university like, say, the ABU. In all the universities students read outside. They look for corners here and there to isolate themselves to do their studies.

It may be under trees, it may be in somebody's garage, it may be at the back of a certain building where there are cool shades. Students do that. But, here, because it is so crowded, it is very easy to see the concentration of students doing all sorts of things in odd places. But this happens in all universities. It is untrue that lectures are held under shades. When we heard the story, we set up a committee to investigate and instructed our lecturers not to engage in such an illegality.

In the past, the local branch of ASUU never joined strikes called by the national body. But this time around we see the University of Abuja ASUU joining its colleagues in strikes. Why this change?

Initially, we didn't have ASUU. If you have ASUU, as per what ASUU is, they are guided by a constitution, isn't it? They have their guidelines, how they operate and so on. And they are derived from the national body. So, if anybody is operating in a University as ASUU and does not carry out the National body's directives, then it is just a staff association in that particular University for a particular purpose. What the University of Abuja had in place was just to stabilise the system. Support the administration.

The national body did not recognise them so there was no ASUU as far as I am concerned in the University of Abuja then. At the same time, there was also a lot of fear in them. You know, if they take part in any of those activities, the administration would deal with them. So, the staff were afraid. We have to realise that in our constitution there is this freedom to associate and people should be allowed to associate, not only at the local level, but at the national level. So, you know if you are to operate in a system that is really sincere, honest and good and not an oppressive system, then you have to allow them as they volunteer to operate and not as you want them to operate.

What we had was a staff association that was dancing according to the tunes of the administration.

But now, we have an association that feels is as their right to associate, then they are associating in a form of union. They have a national body and they are operating, and it is only when they go outside the rules governing behaviours of associations, we shall intervene or not. The national body has taken a decision, they have the freedom to go along with the national. As far as University of Abuja is concerned, we have recognised that they have their freedom to associate. They

can associate locally and nationally.

You see, ASUU is made up of professionals. They associate and they have the freedom to do so. In the past, it was not something that could have been sustained by the institutions because if you use oppression, you have to use force there is a limit to how far you can go. And that was probably why we had crisis that time.

But one is surprised to see how you were able to convince the lecturers not to go on strike until after the student's exams

It was a mature agreement. You see, ASUU is not supposed to destroy the system and if they see something is happening that is not in the interest of the system, they can help and are ready to help. We called them, we discussed with them, we negotiated and they agreed and they went and told their members and the members agreed that we have to conclude our examination because it will not be proper to stop the examination half way we have already started we should conclude. If we have not started probably they would have gone.

The issue of cultism in our campuses. If you look at it, we have rampant cases, but here in Abuja the issue is minimal?

Really, the issue is minimal in this institution. Number one, we are new. And obviously we are very thorough in the screening of our students. Mind you, one has to be vigilant. The problem is a matter of monitoring and checking on the potential cultists or the potential problem areas and to do something about it so that we can prevent the situation before they gain some strengths and start causing problems in the institution.

We have those with the tendencies and it is quite likely we have some cult members from other places but what we are trying to do is to make sure that they are not operating in the University of Abuja. So, if we see any sign anywhere, we take prompt action. We also have put machinery in place: the security system, plus our students who also cooperate with us in the form of vigilante groups, so that is the way we tried to nip it in the bud.

The preparations against the forthcoming convocation in ten years.

(Laughs... cuts). Well we are preparing and it is going to be a very modest one. A very modest convocation because we believe that a convocation is purely an academic ceremony. So, as much as possible, especially considering the financial implications, we shall do only the aspects that are necessary. And as a matter of fact, it is high time we learnt to cut down the unnecessary aspects of these events. Convocation is academic and is it only those that are involved or the academia that normally participate. So, it is not anything grandiose that we will bring people from all over the place we shall not engage in all those activities that are outside convocation activities. Like the parties, and the luncheon we are eliminating them. You see, I don't know really how the tradition of elaborate convocation came to Nigeria because we seem to have copied and learnt from our colonial masters. But at last, even with them, it is purely academic and nothing more than that. And that is what I want to make for the University of Abuja's convocation this time around.

You mean we are not going to be treated to lectures?

No, there will be lectures; it is part of the ceremony.

Can we have an insight?

The guest lecturer is going to be Professor Jubril Aminu and the topic is "The Impact of Globalisation in the Nigerian Educational System."

Who and who are going to be honoured with the Honorary Causa?

But we have not yet got the approval. We have submitted a name to government awaiting the approval.

Only one?

Only one for now.

Who is the lucky woman?

(Cuts). It's a man not a woman. (Laughs)

We expect a female VC to nominate a female to be honoured.

No. It doesn't have to and you know the selection is not a Vice-Chancellor selection. It is a selection made by the Senate and Council jointly. It's a group selection.

Foreigner?

No. He is a Nigerian.

The Name?

No. I will not give you the name. But he is a Nigerian. A very renowned Nigerian and we are going to give him alone because he is a special person. That's all. (Laughs).

Abdulsalami Abubakar?

No. (laughs) He has been given at Bauchi. -I won't tell you. (Laughs).



Feature

The lessons of Shagari's visit to Abia State

By Sam Eze

The 3-day visit of former President Shehu Shagari to Abia State January 17-19, 2001, apart from catching people unawares, must have raised many eyebrows throughout the country. First, there was no hint prior to the visit and second, coming at the height of apparent discordant voices between Governor Orji Uzor Kalu's administration, on the one hand, and the Presidency on the other, the visit by the President of the Second Republic must have set thousands of tongues wagging.

Governor Kalu has been leading the battle against the painful marginalisation of Abia State in particular and the South-East states in general, against the seeming nonchalance of the federal government. Thirdly, given the ever growing and strident demand for an Igbo President come 2003 by South-East Governors and Ohanaeze Ndigbo, Shagari's visit to Abia State appears to give credence to the notion of realignment of forces with the North with a view to kicking President Obasanjo out of office at the end of his first tenure.

Meanwhile, as speculations on the true reasons for the visit rage on, Shagari's visit which also took him briefly to Imo and Anambra States, ended successfully with healthy memories. But what lessons could we learn from that visit?

It is universally known that as a person, Alhaji Shehu Shagari is quiet, humble and humane in his character. He was in government service during the military from the civil war days till 1979 when he took over from General Olusegun Obasanjo as President in the 2nd republic civilian government, through his ouster in 1983 by the same military, Shagari has been unscathed as a powerful leader of men. Choosing an Igboman (Ekwueme) as his vice-president in the 2nd Republic and working amicably with him all through his tenure

truly depicted Shagari as an Hausa/ Fulani man who has always had a soft spot for the Igbo. Even all through the military rule under Buhari, Babangida to Abacha and Abubakar, Shagari still commanded much respect both from the leaders and all Northerners.



Alhaji Shehu Shagari

He has always been held in high esteem and awe as the Northerner who silently stepped into the big shoes of the late Sir Ahmadu Bello, the powerful Sardauna of Sokoto, who bestrode the whole North in his time like the colossus he was.

In his entourage were two of his sons - Abdulrahman and Ibrahim, Second Republic Transport Minister, Alhaji Umaru Dikko and a few others - those you could regard as his closest family aides. What could have made a man as exalted as the past civilian President of

Nigeria and one of the acclaimed leaders of the entire North to visit a comparatively little state like Abia?

Alhaji Shagari explained his visit as reciprocal to Dr. Orji Uzor Kalu's visit to Sokoto in the heat of the crisis over Sharia killings and reprisal killings, especially in Abia State. Shagari observed that he was much impressed

by the boldness and courage of Governor Kalu who moved without fear to douse the raging passion for destruction, thus helping to quell as well as to normalize the situation faster than would have been the case. Dr. Kalu had stopped the killing in his state, Abia and gone to the North swiftly to halt the destruction of humans too.

The lesson here is that Dr.

Kalu, whose own people were being slaughtered in the North, could fearlessly go there to quell the killings himself at the risk of his own life. By this act, he touched a kind heart, the heart of the top northern leader himself, Shehu Shagari, who now wholeheartedly responded in kind. An unforgettable good turn deserving another.

Shagari's brief visit to his friend, Chief Sam Mbakwe (Ph.D) in his home Avutu (Imo State) called to mind civilian President Shagari's visit to Aba (Imo State then) when Mbakwe was governor. The horrendous flood

and land slides in Ndiegoro Aba and the s of Enyimba city then was such that gobe Mbakwe wept copiously, attracting the n "Weeping Governor", a situation that for the Shagari government to assist the city N3 million, which was some money then. is a lesson in friendship -remembering friends.

Speaking on Nigeria's nascent democr Shagari was unhappy that the ruling party the PDP, does not seem to have any opposition party. This observation is buttressed the sharing of chairmanship and vice chairmanship of its 63 House Committees by National Assembly recently. According to Punch of February 16, 2000, the Alliance Democracy (AD) collected 7 chairmanships in the Committees for Industries, Establishment, Air Force, etc. while 12 vice-chairmanships were allocated to it. The APP was left out, collecting 15 vice chairmanships: the committees for Aviation, Judiciary, P



Gov. Uzor Kalu

erty Alleviation, et cetera. Shagari warned that the trend would lead to a one-party state and a unitary government, which could not aug well for democracy.

Said he, "We should have a responsible opposition even though the party in power should enjoy greater acceptability by the majority of the populace." Here the august visitor acted his true role as a statesman of mean order, speaking from hindsight on the NPN ruling party days. It also agreed with the newfound role of a non-partisan sage, as so after, he announced at Mbakwe's house his retirement from politics.

Thus, Shagari joined the ranks of Idris Nyerere of Tanzania and Mandela of South Africa.

Alhaji Shagari also did give timely advice to leaders in Nigeria. Leaders at all levels, he said, should realize that governance is about service, about giving the people those things that will make their lives better. The as if silently referring to his host's tremendous achievements in that area, Shehu Shagari added,

"Our leaders must be guided by a sense of equity, justice and fair play. They must have the interest of the people at heart at all times."

He also preached the virtue of patience to the people, urging them to be patient with their rulers, seeing that governance is an intricate thing. It takes time for policies to translate into observable things, he said.

Governor Kalu appears to have imbibed the lessons in governance as his unrivalled application of the tenets he now brings daily into people-oriented programmes.

Finally, judging from the great throngs of thousands of jubilant Abians who lined the roads and streets of Aba and Umuahia to give Shehu Shagari a most heart warming, tumultuous welcome, there could be no doubt that the Abians, nay all Igbos, not only love him but also welcomed all Northerners and indeed well meaning people of ethnic groups as their brothers and sisters in one united country Nigeria.

The UBE in poverty alleviation

By Idagu Daniel

The Daily Trust, characteristically, beat other newspapers in reporting on Monday, March 12, 2001, that the Universal Basic Education, a major policy programme of the Obasanjo administration is finally taking off with the award of contract for the construction of 4,466 classrooms blocks throughout the country. This is the first batch of such classrooms.

In itself, the building of the classrooms which is to cost N7 billion will generate jobs for bricklayers, transporters, carpenters, masons, construction labourers, plumbers, and make the manufacturers of paints, corrugated iron sheets, nails, particles board (ceiling) and electrical cables to raise their output, thereby improving the capacity utilisation of the country's industrial sector. The higher the productivity, the more wealth and less poverty. President Olusegun Obasanjo said recently that "Education is the key to poverty alleviation. When a child is educated, the poverty level will be reduced".

As the President implied in his remarks, education is the bedrock of the development of any society. It was for this reason that, as a Military Head of State over 25 years ago, Obasanjo introduced the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme. But due to one problem or the other, the programme could not be sustained.

In his second coming, this time as a civilian President, Chief Obasanjo has expressed his commitment to the education of Nigerian citizens by renaming his old pet project the Universal Basic Education (UBE). The programme which is going to be jointly financed by the federal and state governments is aimed at providing the citizenry with basic education from primary one to the third year of junior secondary school, tuition-free. An adage says that, it is easier to build a child than to repair a man. This implies that it is only when a child is in its infancy that he can learn fast and not as an adult. This is why the initiative by the government to introduce the

Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme is commendable.

This noble educational programme comes at a time when facilities in our public schools have decayed and are in need of total rehabilitation as successive governments only paid lip-service to education without doing much to change the situation.

The payment of teachers' salaries which had always come late and in most cases two to three months behind, should be properly



President Olusegun Obasanjo

addressed. In fact, there was total lack of motivation of teachers by past governments which had made people to say that the teachers' reward is in Heaven. Qualified and trained teachers were frustrated to the point of considering teaching as the last option due to lack of motivation.

This is one area that should be looked into critically, if the federal government's Universal Basic Education Programme is to be effectively

implemented. But the present administration has an opportunity to prove that the teachers' reward is right here and now.

Of course, it is no longer news that some states of the federation are educationally disadvantaged. One of their problems is lack of adequate teachers. So, their decision to employ qualified teachers from other states of the federation to ensure that education is brought to the doorstep of every Nigerian irrespective of their geographical location, is a development that should be applauded. This indicates the level of seriousness with which the UBE programme is seen by both the Federal and State governments.

The problem with Nigeria's major programmes such as the UBE has always been that of implementation. We are planners of beautiful and worthy programmes on paper but when it comes to the implementation, we fail. This time around, it will not be the same as the federal government under the leadership of President Olusegun Obasanjo is highly committed to the education of its citizens. With the kind of substantial budgetary allocation to the educational sector in this year's budget, there is strong indication that the Federal government is serious over the implementation of its UBE programme to the letter.

Having known the importance of education in the lives of the people, private individuals, the public, corporate bodies and even the non-governmental organisations should join the effort to make the programme a huge success. When the UBE is fully and successfully implemented, the menace of child abuse, street trading and other social vices will be reduced to the barest minimum.

Moreover, the excuses of some children that they don't have sponsors for any reasons, will be a thing of the past. It is equally pertinent to state here that, government should as a matter of urgency, strengthen the law to make it compulsory for all children of school age to go to school in all the states of the federation.

Idagu Daniel is a youth corps member in Abuja

NEWS

LG boss criticizes Assembly over tenure

The chairman of Michika Local Government Area in Adamawa State, Mr. Ayuba Tari, has criticised the State House of Assembly for opposing the four-year tenure for local government chairmen as recommended by a Senate committee.

The committee had recommended that the local government chairmen should, like other elected officials of the other two tiers of government, spend four years in office; a recommendation opposed by the state House of Assembly.

But in an interview with journalists in Yola on Sunday,

From Abdullahi Tasiu Abubakar, Yola

Mr. Tari said "the state Assembly is not sincere" in its opposition to the committee's recommendation.

He alleged that many members of the state Assembly have credibility problems to the extent that they refused to even go back to their constituencies to give accounts of their activities in the assembly.

"We are aware that some of them refused to go to their constituencies to attend accountability fora (organized last year by the National

Orientation Agency) because they had nothing to tell the electorate", he alleged.

He said the National Assembly is in the best position to recommend a tenure for local government chairmen since the 1999 constitution is silent about it.

The chairman said he supported the four-year tenure recommended by the Senate Committee because the leaders of the two other tiers of government, "who were elected at the same time with the chairmen, also have been on a four-year term of office."

On the issue of resource

control, the chairman warned that any attempt to enforce such idea in the country would lead to a break up of Nigeria.

"You are talking about dividing the country. I am totally against it. I am appealing to Nigerians to reject such a call," he said.

Mr. Tari argued that the emphasis being given to oil now is misplaced since the country has other important mineral resources in other regions, stressing that "every part of this country is very important."

Recounting his achievements in the council, the chairman said he had improved on the health sector, the transport, the agriculture and the physical infrastructure of the local government.

Maitama Sule canvases support for Sharia

Nigeria's former permanent secretary to the United Nations, Alhaji Yusuf Maitama Sule, has called on all Muslims in Nigeria to support the Islamic legal system introduced in Zamfara state and work strenuously for its acceptance in all Muslim-dominated states of Nigeria.

He was speaking over the weekend at the Ali Akilu Square in Gusau, Zamfara state, at the formal opening of FOMWAN national conference on the theme: "Priorities in the establishment of Sharia system". Alhaji Maitama Sule described full implementation of Sharia in Zamfara as the greatest blessing to Nigerian Muslims in recent times, adding that Allah deliberately chose Governor Ahmed Sani for the task of repositioning Islam in Nigeria. He called on all Muslims from all over the country to support Sharia for the betterment of the society.

Turning to the Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (SCIA), Dr. Lateef Adegbite, who was the chairman of the occasion, he singled him out as "a strong supporter of Sharia" in the southern part of Nigeria and urged him not to relent on his efforts.

Also speaking at the occasion, a former Nigerian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Prof. Shehu Galadanci who was the guest of honour at the ceremony, described the actions and activities of the Zamfara state governor as a reflection of the Hadith of the Holy Prophet which says "everybody is a shepherd and would be held responsible for how he or she reared his sheep".

He said as the governor of Zamfara state, Ahmed Sani believed that he should rule according to the Sharia, bearing in mind that a Muslim needs to follow Allah's law to succeed. He called for prayers for him and all those who have emulated him. He also enjoined others in similar positions to follow suit.



Sultan Maccido adding that "Allah's will must come to pass".

In his short remark, Governor Ahmed Sani restated his commitment to the cause of Sharia in his state.

At the occasion, two persons embraced Islam. They were immediately put on oath of acceptance by declaring "Lailaha-illallah - Muhammadu - Rasulallah".

Present at the ceremony were the secretary-general of the JNI and pioneer grand kadi of Kwara state, Justice Abdulkadir Orire, the grand kadi of Kogi state, Justice Ustaz Yoonus Abdullahi, wives of state governors, FOMWAN national president, Hajiya Airat Saddique, Dr. Ibrahim Naiya Sada of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and other dignitaries.

Offa polytechnic re-opens soon

From Abdul Laro, in Ilorin

All hands are now on deck to ensure a smooth resumption of academic activities at the Federal Polytechnic, Offa, Kwara state.

Addressing newsmen, the Rector of the institution, Dr. Razaq Bello said the authority had been working to ensure a hitch-free resumption.

He said malfunctioning boreholes and electricity generating sets had been re-activated, while transit buses had been earmarked to convey students to and from school in readiness for the resumption, billed for April 17, 2001 after one year closure.

In addition, Dr. Bello said many hostels have been repaired excluding Moremi Hall, to enable the students settle down on time.

The Rector while assuring that the ugly incident that led to the closure of the institution had been put behind, explained that 17 meetings were held by all the parties concerned in the crisis and grievances were ironed out and settled satisfactorily.



Prof. Aborisade



From left wife of the Vice President, Chief (Mrs) Titi Abubakar, Special Adviser to the President on Women Affairs, Mrs Titi Ajanaku and Chairman for Women Development, Alhajiya Laila Dogonyaro at the orientation/counselling for victims of women trafficking in Abuja... Thursday. Pix: Felix Onigbinde.

Tinubu justifies workers' retrenchment

Governor Bola Tinubu has opened up on the on-going retrenchment exercise in the Lagos state civil service, saying that the move was justified.

Governor Tinubu was speaking while swearing-in eight newly appointed permanent secretaries in the state's civil service.

Although he didn't state the specific number of workers affected by the retrenchment so far, he described as untrue, the 6,000 figure being claimed by the workers' union.

The governor charged the newly appointed permanent secretaries to ensure the successful implementation of the state's policies, adding that they were appointed because of their competence and dedication to duty.

Those appointed include Mr. Adesegun Ogunlewe, post primary teaching service commission; Mr. Adewale Olatunji, head of service office; Mr. Kamal Jumaid, Ministry of Transportation; Mr. Tola Animashaun,

From Abdulfattah Olajide, in Lagos

physical planning; Mrs. Idowu Sonubi, home affairs; Mrs. Modupe Labinjo, pension office; and Mrs. Josephine William, treasury.

Responding on behalf of all the new permanent secretaries, Mr. Ogunlewe thanked the governor for the confidence reposed in them and pledged their continued loyalty to him.

The leadership of the Alliance for Democracy (AD) is to apologise to the people of Osun state over the alleged woeful performance of the state governor, Adebisi Akande.

Disclosing this in Lagos, Alhaji Adamu Abdulkadir, national chairman of AD, told

AD apologises for gov's non-performance

From Adelanwa Bamgboye, in Lagos

reporters at the Federal High Court, Lagos that Adebisi Akande is the only AD governor that was performing woefully.

"He (Governor Akande)

is a disgrace to the AD and we will find time to go and apologise to Osun people for giving them that bad governor," the party chairman stated.

Earlier, Lagos lawyer, Chief Gani Fawehinmi, had dragged the governor before a High

Court in Osogbo sequel to his refusal to hand over to his deputy when he travelled to Saudi Arabia for this year's pilgrimage.

Akande was alleged to have handed the reins of power to the secretary to the state government (SSG), Mr. Sola Akinwumi, leaving his deputy in limbo.

Daily Trust investigation revealed that this was in spite of the frantic efforts by the leadership of the AD and Afenifere, to end the bitter feud between Governor Adebisi Akande and his deputy, Iyiola Omisore.

During a debate over the matter in the House of Assembly recently, the minority leader, Mr. Bello Adejare, argued why the governor should shut down the state government.

Akiga urges Benue govt. to assist FG in security

The Minister for Police Affairs, Chief Steven Akiga, has called on the Benue state government to assist in building security networks because the Federal Government alone cannot meet the security demands of the people.

Chief Akiga made the call at the government house in Makurdi during his two-day official tour of police formations in the state.

He said the major problem

From Mike Elaigwu, in Makurdi



Gov. Akume

facing the ministry the low finance of about N4 billion approved for it out of the N84 billion budgeted by the ministry in this financial year.

The minister said that Benue is the only state in the nation that has no official accommodation for police officers serving in the state.

In his remarks, the state governor, Mr. George Akume, ordered the immediate release of N5 million for the community relation to serve as insurance scheme for the police in Benue.

NEWS

NUC reviews 'varsity curriculum'

The National Universities Commission has started the process of reviewing the curriculum for university education in Nigeria.

To this end, it has arranged a five-day national conference on the review. The conference, which will run in two tiers, will start from Monday April 23rd, 2001.

A release from the commission said the conference would examine the training of undergraduates in the Nigerian universities, identify areas of

deficiency and weakness as well as solutions.

The ideas generated from the first-tier conference will inform the review of the existing curricula during the second-tier conference scheduled for Wednesday 25th to Friday 27th April, 2001.

According to the commission's head, Information and Public Relations Unit, Ibrahim Usman Yakassai, a comprehensive representation of stakeholders in education,

including academics, university administrators, captains of industry and commerce, legislators, policy makers, professional bodies and employers of labour would be brought together to participate in the university curriculum review.

The existing policy provides that university curricula be reviewed every five years. The

current minimum academic standards documents were drawn up in 1989 and were to be reviewed five years later (1994).

Instability in the university system from 1992 to 1999 however, impeded the realization of this goal. The present exercise will therefore provide an opportunity for the review of these documents taking into

consideration the global trend in innovative approaches to pedagogy in higher education and the Federal Government policy on autonomy of the universities. The resultant curricula are expected to be more flexible and also more responsive to the current knowledge and skills needs of the Nigerian economy.

The commission called on all sectors of the Nigerian economy to be supportive of this exercise by contributing ideas to the curriculum review process.

Plateau denies creation of chiefdoms, districts

The Plateau state government has denied media reports that it had adopted the report of the committee on the upgrading and creation of chiefdoms and districts.

The Secretary to the State Government, Mr. Ezekiel Gomos, explained in a release made available to *Daily Trust* in Abuja, weekend, that the report was a mere recommendation of, the

rushed by any publication, no matter how provocative.

"Government fully understands the yearnings and aspirations of the people in the numerous demands for chiefdoms, districts and village areas and will take every necessary step to ensure that the exercise when finally carried out, will be just and fair to all concerned," he asserted.

Mr. Gomos said the state government would not concede to blackmail and coercion in taking decisions and assured the people of the state that government was alive to its responsibilities and would soon announce its decision on the matter after carefully taking into consideration, the interests of the people.

His reaction was predicated on a newspaper story (not *Daily Trust*) purported to be the report of the committee on upgrading and creation of chiefdoms, districts, villages and amendments, adjustment of district/village areas in the state.



Gov. Dariye committee and not the decision of the state government on the exercise.

"Government is extremely shocked and views with utter disappointment that people who have been privileged to be vested with responsibilities in the past will go round peddling distorted reports in order to cause confusion and incite the public for whichever short term and mischievous gain," the SSG said.

He maintained that as a responsive and responsible government, decisions of such importance and magnitude would not be

Bizman cautions on resource control

Nigerians have been advised not to allow the agitation for resource control to be beclouded by greed and avarice.

They have also been advised to avoid tribalism and selfishness in the distribution of the nation's resources in order to facilitate rapid and even development of the country.

Giving the pieces of advice in a telephone interview with *Daily Trust* at the weekend, a Daura-based businessman, Alhaji Suraj Mohammed Bumbum, said Nigerians should learn from past mistakes to discourage in-fighting and settle down to properly utilise the enormous natural resources bestowed on the country by God.

"When they cry for resource control, they should not lose their reason. Time

was when this nation depended on farm produce like groundnuts and cocoa



President Obasanjo as foreign exchange earners. Nobody cried for resource control then. The money went across the country. It is not wrong to agitate for it, but we should apply reason and go about it peacefully," he advised.

Alhaji Suraj Bunu who called for equality in the distribution of the nation's

wealth, however, conceded to the application of the derivation formula.

He expressed satisfaction with the Obasanjo administration but observed that the president was being ill-advised on some issues by certain aides who he said, are preventing the gains of democracy from reaching down to the masses, who need it most.

Said he: "the Federal Government is trying, it sends money for projects, but some officials and politicians do not execute these projects, they are hijacking the dividends of democracy from the masses."

Alhaji Bumbum called on old breed politicians to quit government, since according to him, their ideas had become obsolete, and give way for new breed administrators who he said, were full of bright and dynamic ideas to move Nigeria forward.



One of the vehicles stolen from Europe recently intercepted by the Nigeria Customs Service.

FRSC records reduced accident rate

Statistics from the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) have indicated a reduction in reported cases of road accidents for the month of January last year, in comparison with the year's record for the same period along various routes across the country.

According to the deputy director of the public education

department of the FRSC, Mr. Jonas Agwu, while 580 deaths and 1,700 injuries were recorded in the 972, reported accidents for January 2001, 579 people were killed in the 1,131 accidents which also resulted in 2,072 injuries in January 2000.

He said further breakdown of the report reveals that Lagos zonal

command ranked highest in the reported number of accidents in January for the past two years, while it recorded 435 cases last year, 409 accidents also occurred in Lagos this year.

The FRSC deputy director, public enlightenment department also said the Kaduna zonal command occupies the second slot for January

this year with 409 reported cases of road accidents carnage. Sokoto maintained the least record of reported cases in the same month for the past two years.

Lagos zonal command placed first on death toll with 184 deaths in January 2000, followed by Benin with 106 deaths, while Kaduna followed with 142 deaths, he added.

Commissioner canvasses support for poverty alleviation

From Salisu Maradun, in Gusau

The Zamfara state Commissioner for Youths and Sports, Alhaji Chika Bunu Bungudu, has advised wealthy individuals in the state to assist the less-privileged as a way of helping government in the effort to improve the standard of living of the citizens.

He gave the advice while speaking at the launching of the NYSC Charity Services in Gusau last week. Alhaji Bungudu pointed out that the gesture could help many less-privileged people into successful ventures which could be of immense benefit to the society in general. The commissioner noted that many of the children who were abandoned or lacked access to formal education were naturally talented, but lacked the necessary atmosphere to develop their talents.

He traced most of the problems in the society to illiteracy which he observed, was prevalent among the masses.

"As a result of this attitude by wealthy individuals and organizations, many people, especially children, have continued to wallow in abject poverty," Alhaji Bungudu lamented.

Earlier in his speech, the Director-General, NYSC, Brig-Gen. Ogunkoya, who was represented by the Zamfara state director of the Corps, acknowledged the right of every child to education, equal opportunity and decent living.

He appealed to religious groups, philanthropic organizations and wealthy individuals to support the NYSC Charity Services programme.



Gov. Ahmed Sani

INSIDE POLITICS

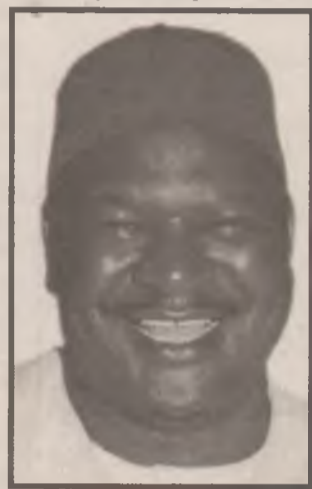
Lawmaker lauds passage of secret cult bill

The Deputy Chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Housing and Urban Development, Dr. Jerry Ugokwe, has explained that the imposition of N250,000 fine for any person who establishes or belongs to any secret cult or society was to deter offenders.

The House had last week passed the bill for an act to prohibit the establishment (formation), membership or activities of cult and secret society and related matters, 2001.

In a statement made available to newsmen in Abuja, Ugokwe, who is the sponsor of the bill, said that

an offender would be liable, on conviction, to a maximum of five years imprisonment



Anyim Pius Anyim or a fine of N250,000.

"The passage of the bill by the House is a vindication of my belief that there is an

urgent need to eradicate secret societies and their attendant problems from our society," he added.

He urged the Senate to pass the bill so that it could

be signed into law by President Olusegun Obasanjo.

The lawmaker thanked his colleagues for their support and passage of the bill "not minding the personal attack and campaign of calumny mounted against the bill and my person by certain societies suspected to be secret societies."

Plateau Assembly passes a resolution on re-election campaign

The Plateau State House of Assembly has passed a resolution, asking representatives of the people in the state to direct their attention towards executing projects that had direct bearing on the electorates.

Minority leader of the House, Rufus Bature, who sponsored the resolution, said that rather than campaign for re-election at this crucial stage of Nigeria's democratic experience, elected office

holders should concentrate on their primary responsibilities of executing developmental programmes for their people.

The Legislator, who represents Barkin Ladi Constituency, called on the House to prevail on all elected representatives in the state to concentrate on their primary responsibilities.

The resolution, supported by most of the members, also advised public office holders not to allow themselves to be used by hungry sycophants to recontest elections to the detriment of serving the people who elected them.

However, four members, Messrs Sunday Abdu, Jonah Adams, Aliyu Tanko Musa and Dennis Dogora, opposed the resolution, saying it was not proper to discuss the matter on the floor of the House.

The four lawmakers said that elected office holders should be allowed to express themselves on any matter they wish, including the issue of re-election, pointing out that it was part of democracy to seek re-election.

Saraki advocates overhaul of APP

All People's Party (APP) stalwart, Dr. Olusola Saraki, has declared that the party must be overhauled in order to meet the challenges of 2003 elections.

He described the state of the party as very pathetic, saying, "I feel sorry for those who believe in APP," adding that "the party is shopping for a physician to treat and revive it."

Briefing newsmen on the outcome of the reconciliation efforts by traditional rulers, league of Imams and leaders of thought on the lingering crisis between him and governor Muhammed Lawal of Kwara State, Dr. Saraki said the rift had been resolved, "we are meeting next week to put a final end to the cri-

From Abdul Laro, in Ilorin

sis," he said. He said there was no need for the hide and seek game between him and the governor, explaining that "the governor is not avoiding me and I am not avoiding the governor, he phoned me twice and still expresses his regret."

Dr. Saraki said "the governor called from Lagos to beg for forgiveness, I have forgiven him, but we will go to congress."

The APP chieftain who alleged that APP governors were trying to hijack the party for their renomination, denied any political romance with former military president, General Ibrahim Babangida, saying "I have not seen IBB for a long time."

Benue legislators shun sitting to press for better welfare

Some members of the Benue State House of Assembly on April 2, 2001, regrouped under the auspices of G23 to push for what they termed "better welfare conditions." The group whose composition cut across party lines has an overwhelming majority of 23 out of 29 members of the State Assembly, excluding House leaders.

From Terna Doki, in Makurdi

ity leader that they should take their seats at the House chambers for business to begin.

Daily Trust reliably gathered that the G23 group, led by Hon. Bem Dzoho (Kwande West constituency), among other things demanded for the procurement of a water tanker that would ensure uninterrupted water supply at their legislative quarters.

Part of their anger, Daily Trust learnt was that some members of the (G23) were yet to be appointed committee chairmen in the House. Records show that committee chairmen receive an imperest of N350,000.00 (three hundred and fifty thousand naira) monthly. The intention of the G23, it was revealed, was to compel the House leadership into forming more committees to allow other members secure chairmanship positions. "The huge imperest to committee chairmen sparked off the present clamour for additional committees to enable more members benefit from the juicy imperest," lamented a staff of the House.

It was based on the resolutions of this group that Assembly sitting of April 5 was boycotted and the G23 members were determined not to attend Assembly sessions until their grudges were satisfactorily addressed.

Addressing journalists, Timothy Iorchor, majority leader, refuted any knowledge of the demands of the G23 by the House leadership. Meanwhile, as Assembly business crumbles in pursuit

of selfish interests, staff of the Assembly have expressed dismay over the lack lustre attitude of legislators; adding that "in the last three weeks, Benue Assembly has had more recess or hiccups than deliberations." Some members of the public also condemned strongly the attitude of the legislators, emphasising that they have trivialised legislative functions for personal comfort. Meanwhile, the honourable members have already proceeded on another break - Easter recess.

INEC announces by-election dates in Kebbi

dates in Kebbi

The Independent National Electoral Commission in Kebbi, has set aside May 5, 2001, as the date for the by-election to fill one National Assembly and one State Assembly vacant seats, following the death of the occupants, the Resident Electoral Commissioner, Alhaji Namedina Abdul-rahman, has disclosed.

Briefing newsmen in Birnin Kebbi, Namedina gave the names of the constituencies as Kebbi North Senatorial District, occupied by Late Adamu Augie and Danko/Wasagu West, occupied by Late Hassan Danko.

Both legislators passed away last month, the commissioner

He said that INEC was conducting the election to fulfil the constitutional provision that orders immediate by-election for any vacancy, either due to death or voluntary withdrawal for other national service, appointment or recall by the electorate.

He explained that the Commission had given the political parties notice and guidelines on the preparation for the said by-election and that they were expected to submit the names of

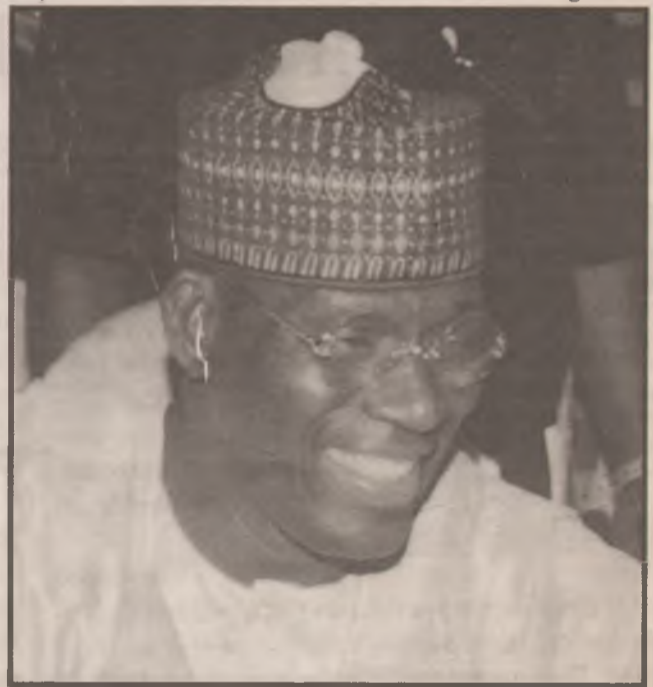
had used in the previous elections to conduct the by-election," he said.

He gave the assurance that the Commission is prepared to ensure a hitch-free election.

Meanwhile, the All People's Party (APP) had already nominated a retired career diplomat, Alhaji Samaila Adamu, for the Kebbi North Senatorial district, but is yet to nominate its candi-

date for the Danko/Wasagu West constituency while the PDP and AD, are still keeping their nominees close to their chest.

The late Sen. Adamu Baba Augie (APP) died in a motor accident along Funtua-Gusau road while late Hassan Danko (PDP), representing Danko/Wasagu West Constituency, died after a brief illness.



Gov. Lawal



Gov. George Akume

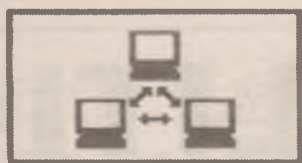
After a closed-door meeting which lasted for over two hours, members of the G23 decided to shun the April 3, 2001 sitting of the House.

Inside sources said that Margaret Icheen, Speaker of the State House of Assembly, angrily adjourned sitting because the House could not form a quorum of 11 members to commence business of the day.

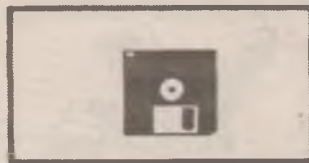
Our source in the House also disclosed that only five members took their seats as at sitting time, even though most legislators were within the Assembly complex. The disgruntled honourables also ignored pleas from the major-



(L-R) Sen. Muhammed Iorchor, Aiu. Idris Abubakar and Alh. Isa Muhammed at the public hearing on the review of the 1999 constitution at National Assembly, Abuja... recently.



I.T. WORLD



NNPC acquires photo image processors

The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) has acquired sophisticated identity card and digital photo image processing equipment to renew staff I.D. cards with additional quality prints, using their computer database systems.

A reliable source in the NNPC said that, initially, the I.D. card for Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association (PENGASSAN) members was designed to have yellow colour and that of the National Union of Petro-

Stories by Hassan Idris

leum and Gas Workers (NUPENG) was in navy blue colour, while the senior management staff I.D. card was in red. These brought a lot of controversy and both the PENGASAN and NUPENG members thought they were segregated, according to our source.

Science and Tech. inaugurates boards of four parastatals

The Minister of Science and Technology, Professor Turner Isoun, last week, inaugurated the board of four parastatals under his ministry.

The parastatals are the National Research Institutes for Chemical Technology (NARICT), Zaria; Projects

Development Institute (PRODA), Enugu; Regional Programme Management (REPTEM), Lagos and the Technology Business Incubation (TBICS) in 15 major towns across the country.

REPTEM and TBICS have never had any boards since inception while

Currently, the management of NNPC has regularised the issuance of red-coloured I.D. cards for all staff, a decision that was accepted by all the staff.

The digital photo capturing and signature processing device is the most secure way of producing I.D. cards using their computer database systems, the source said.

NARICT and PRODA have had no boards for about seven years now.

Members of the boards inaugurated by the minister are as follows; PRODA: Prof. M.O. Chijioko, A. Fajemila, Alhaji Alkasim, John J. Shainaan and Alhaji Bello Njida.

REPTEM: Alhaji

CBN creates web site

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has created a site on the world wide web. (www).

A reliable source in the CBN informed *Daily Trust* that web site address is on demonstration at: <http://web-demo>.

Information available on the CBN web site includes financial, administrative, foreign exchange and library information systems among others.

According to the source, all the branches of the apex bank and the departments in the corporate headquarters have been computerised and networked for broad based banking services using appropriate high technology systems.

Daily Trust gathered that the CBN was granted an instrument autonomy as a result of which IT policies became more independently designed, determined and market-driven to meet the challenges of globalisation through the internet.

Protection of intellectual property brings foreign investment—expert

The Attorney of United States Patent and Trademark Office, Mr. Justin Hughes, has said that stronger intellectual property protection would encourage industry to move from the developed economies to developing economies.

Mr. Justin Hughes made the call in a paper entitled "The economics of intellectual property in the digital age" which he presented at a conference held in Abuja recently.

"One of the key ways in which intellectual property protection is critical to economic growth is as a precondition for financial

and technical investment," he said.

He urged Third World countries to exploit ideas that already exist in their countries as every country has intelligent and well-educated people capable of creating valuable intellectual property.

Mr. Hughes explained that the World Bank advocates stronger respect for patents and intellectual property needed to permit diffusion of knowledge while protecting the knowledge producer's rights.

He cited Brazil as a country where intellectual property protection promoted local innovation and farm machinery.

Another example, he said, was the India's software industry in which over 750,000 software programmers were employed, more than in Germany (550,000) or Italy (375,000).

He projected that Indian software exports will increase by 25-50-100 percent annually for the next few years because of its very sophisticated, robust copyright law and the internet.

According to him, the internet has permitted Indian programmers to do contract work for North American and European software companies

International intellectual

property system, he said, could help developing countries gain technical know-how in the digital era.

He regretted that some countries were making millions of dollars in music, film and software pirating, adding that Asia and Africa had the greatest pirated copies of foreign intellectual properties.

Ibrahim Magaji Gusau, Hai Tukwa Azaki, Prof. Chidi Ugwu and Mrs. Ezibato Igwiani,

NARICT: Senator Abba Ali, John Ola Mafo, Nze Ozichukwu Chukwu, Ebi Tekerebo, Alhaji Ali Abere, Prof. A. Danbatta and Isah Dara.

TBIC: Chief Emeka Abara, Miss Sarata Animashaun, Thomas Commander and Abbaka Mohammed Yugu.

Earlier in February, the minister inaugurated boards of FIRO, NBRRI and NSPRI.

The Minister charged members of the new boards to appraise their parastatals and make recommendations on how to make them perform more efficiently and effectively.

He urged the members of the boards to judiciously allocate, set priorities and sensitise expenditures, and generate most of the funds they would require for their operations.



Prof. Isoun

Arzika promises investor friendly environment

The Minister of Communication, Alhaji Mohammed Arzika, has said that government was committed to ensuring that the telecommuni-

cations facilities and services were expanded by creating and promoting the establishment of an investor friendly environment.

The minister who made the statement in a keynote address at the Networking Summit, in London, last week said that the recently concluded digital mobile licence auction was a testimony to this commitment.

The mobile and fixed wireless telecommunications market, which has remained under-developed for a long time, he said, was one of the sub-sectors that was fast growing.

He added that Nigeria has an estimated 110 million people and has what it takes to attract attention of potential investors to this largely untapped market.

Alhaji Arzika told his audience that with Nigeria's new telecommunications policy released in September 2000 the Nigerian

being more receptive to competition.

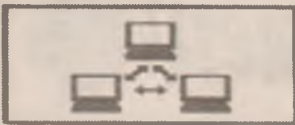
Speaking on telecommunications investment environment, he said, a second national carrier will be licensed to start operations in July this year, as NITEL's installed capacity of 800,000 lines were grossly inadequate.

The government, he said, was working towards establishing 1,500,000 lines in 2001, 3,000,000 lines by the year 2003, and 8,000,000 lines by the year 2005.

The minister observed that, there was urgent need for private sector investment for Nigeria to get additional 500,000 lines to meet international telecommunications union prescribed minimum of one telephone line for 100 persons.

He restated Nigeria's commitment to the provision of over five million fixed and six million mo-





I.T. WORLD



Microsoft founder, Bill Gates.

Microsoft battles viruses

Responding to the rash of e-mail viruses that started with Melissa and I Love You, Microsoft is clamping down on the types of file attachments that will work with the newest version of its Outlook e-mail software.

Outlook 2002, a new e-mail application included with Microsoft's forthcoming Office XP business software suite due later this spring, will by default reject more than 30 types of files sent as e-mail attachments, according to company executives.

The files, deemed by Microsoft as most likely to be used by hackers to transfer viruses, include some of the most common types, such as program execution files, batch files, Windows help files, and Java and Visual Basic scripting files. Also blocked are photo CD images, screensavers and HTML application files, according to a list supplied by Microsoft.

Opponents to the plan, say Microsoft, will make it much more difficult to share routine—and harmless—information via

e-mail attachments.

Outlook 2002 doesn't block e-mail messages with appended restricted files, but it will refuse to open or download restricted file types. In a test conducted by CNET News.com, Outlook 2002 rejected an exe. file, Palm.exe, sent as an attachment to an e-mail message. An e-mail message displayed on the e-mail recipient's PC read: "Outlook blocked access to the following potentially unsafe attachments: palm.exe."

Outlook 2002 users can send the restricted files as attachments, but the program will display the message: "Recipients using Microsoft Outlook may not be able to open these attachments."

Microsoft's crackdown on e-mail attachments is not new. After the I Love You virus outbreak, the company posted an Outlook 97 and Outlook 2000 security update that restricted access to some e-mail attachments. Late last year, Microsoft also added the security update to the second Office 2000 service pack, which included a collection of bug fixes.

But in both cases, individuals and companies could choose whether to apply the restrictive update. With Outlook 2002, Microsoft will compel everyone to adopt the new security measure. The company also makes it nearly impossible for individuals and very difficult for corporations to disable the feature, which the company says is necessitated by the threat the attachments pose.

Microsoft releases 'Talisker' beta and pushes XP

Microsoft has introduced the first beta version of Talisker, the code name for the successor to Windows CE 3.0. The company also announced a program to speed acceptance of Windows XP Embedded.

The Windows CE software, designed to run portable networked devices, has been sent to 300 testers for feedback and early prototyping, according to Microsoft in a news release at the Embedded Systems Conference 2001 in San Francisco.

Talisker's key features, Microsoft says, are better network support, enhanced multimedia capabilities, and improved security. The system supports Bluetooth, Universal Plug and Play, Universal Serial Bus, D VD and the Kerberos security protocol as well as the Secure Sockets Layer protocol.

Microsoft says Talisker's easy customization allows manufacturers to bring their products to market faster. For example, the software offers installable Interrupt Service Routines and a customizable user interface. Microsoft hopes to release Talisker in late 2001.

At the Embedded Systems Conference, Microsoft also announced the Windows XP Embedded Rapid Development Program, through which the software giant hopes to gather "in-depth technical feedback" from developers of products and ser-

A.B.C. of e-Commerce

By Y. Z. Ya'u

Globalisation is moving towards the integration of the world into a single market without borders. At the heart of this process, is information technology. IT is changing the ways in which business is being conducted. One such change it has brought is Electronic Commerce (e-commerce). e-commerce is using Internet technology to carry out trade and business without having to travel. Such trade as commodity procurement, retailing, banking, auctions, advertising, news business, etc. are already being conducted using existing technology.

e-commerce has immense benefits for business and is set to grow into a major business sector in the coming years. While billions of dollars are being spent on the Net in advanced countries, e-commerce is just starting in Africa. Yet in order not to be left behind, with all the negative consequences, African businessmen and women have to embrace this new tool of business.

Some of the benefits of e-commerce include the speed with which transactions are conducted, expanded market visibility, closer contact between seller and buyer and the fact that a buyer does not have to travel to a particular place only to discover that the items he/she wishes to purchase are not available nor the seller to take his/her product to a market only to discover there are no buyers. Such mismatch between sellers and buyers are eliminated in e-commerce because all market information is available to both seller and buyer via the Internet.

Although millions have been traded in e-commerce transactions in the world, Nigeria is only awakening to the realities of this new business paradigm. There is very low level awareness about e-commerce as well as the absence of critical information needed by business entrepreneurs to plan for effective participation in the business world of the cyberspace.

In order to understand how e-commerce is conducted, it is necessary to look at the actors in an e-commerce transaction. The two primary participants in the market are the seller and the buyer. The market place is the Internet. The product/service seller takes his/her product/service to the Internet while the buyer goes to the net to look at the product along with those of other competitors. In ordinary, physical market, direct transaction takes place between the seller and the buyers. Money is exchanged for the product.

In e-commerce, the market and nature of transactions are different. First, although there is no ownership of the market itself, the hosting sites need not necessarily belong to the seller. In most cases, there are organisations, which offer to maintain sites for producers and services providers to keep their products and services on the net. These hosting organisations, therefore, become another sub-actors in the e-commerce transactions. Examples of some market spaces are amazon for books, Ventro (for chemicals and laboratory supplies), eSteel (for steel), MedSite (a reseller of medical supplies and equipment) and PlasticsNet (for materials and equipment for the plastic industry). These all conduct business transactions online.

Second, monetary transactions are done electronically. These means that the buyer does not physically hand over the money to the seller. The organisations that provide the mechanism for electronic money exchange are thus another actor. Another sub-actor in the e-commerce is the regulator. This is the authority that provides domestic regulatory framework. In a number of African countries such as Namibia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, etc. there have been stakeholder processes aimed at providing the basic regulatory framework. Nigeria is yet to wake up to this reality.

One of the problems militating against the rapid use of e-commerce in Nigeria is the lack of a robust electronic cash credit system in the country. At the moment the major credit issuance organisations are outside the country, mostly based in the USA and Western Europe. It is very difficult for Nigerian businessmen and women to obtain these credit cards.

In the country, a few organisations have started credit card systems. These include valuecard, smartcard, paycard, etc. A number of banks are also into electronic transactions. These include Diamond Bank, AfriBank and most of the third generation banks. We do not have the equivalent of the Ghana's BestBuyghana.com, an electronic trade discount service for Ghanaians with access to the Internet to make purchases without the use of credit cards.

Internationally, VeriSign, Visa and MasterCard run the major electronic card systems. Recently, both Visa and MasterCard have teamed up together with other IT firms such as Microsoft, IBM to develop a new secure payment system called Secure Electronic Transactions (SET).

Credit rating and certification authorities usually back electronic transactions. The International Telecommunications Union (ITU) has entered into partnership with WISEKey to provide certification services for its e-commerce programme. World Trade Center also does the same. Certification authorities issue out digital Ids or public keys to corporations and individuals, which entitled them to conduct online transactions. Companies setting up their e-commerce servers can also incorporate certificate issuance to business partners.

Apart from the lack of a robust credit system in the country, the limited penetration of ICTs in the country makes difficult for e-commerce to be practiced. Very few people have access to basic telephone, not even to talk of the Internet, which is necessary for e-commerce.

We must finally dismiss one common myth about e-commerce. There is the tendency to think that because transactions are done electronically, purchased items would also be delivered electronically. While this is possible for some products and services such as books, magazines, music, consultancy, etc. it is not possible for the majority of products, which cannot be converted into electronic form. For instance, buying grains or clothes would require the grains to be physically moved from the seller to the buyer. This means that while movement of people for the purposes of commerce would be reduced, the movement of goods

Ex-cybercop: hackers not the only problem

Malicious intruders, corporate espionage and uneducated employees all contribute to make "network security" almost an oxymoron in today's wired world, four security experts agreed at the RSA Data Security Conference.

But the lack of security on corporate networks and the Internet is more the fault of the victims—and the security industry—and not the attackers, Michael Vatis, the United States' former top cybercop, said during the Wednesday panel discussion.

"It's not just the hackers who are the threats but all of us who are part of the problem as well," said Vatis, former executive director of the federal government's National Infrastructure Protection Center.

Vatis joined three other security experts in a 45-minute panel to discuss today's threats to network security.

While not condoning the defacement of Web sites or penetration of networks, Vatis, now the director of the Institute for Security Technology Studies at Dartmouth College, said vandals have done some good.

"Hackers have done a

the awareness of the threat than anyone in the government," he said.

That threat has only increased over the past few years, according to the latest study from the San Francisco-based Computer Security Institute.

In the study, released in March, more than 40 percent of companies surveyed said intruders had broken into their systems from the Internet, up from 25 percent the year before. Another 38 percent of the

Satellite net provider in orbital limbo

A satellite company bent on delivering the Internet to areas not served by wired alternatives is running into regulatory roadblocks as it attempts to expand its presence.

Error! Bookmark not defined, has been offering DirecTV video service to rural America for years and boasts 1.5 million subscribers. Just this week it signed its first customer to Pegasus Express, a two-way high-speed Internet service it is launching using leased satellite capacity. Its goal, however, is to launch two satellites that would cover the United States so that it could provide its own video and Internet service to the markets not reached by cable modem service or DSL.

But to do that, Pegasus needs the Federal Communications Commission to give it orbital slots currently assigned to other companies.

"If we don't get full cover-

companies detected denial-of-service attacks, up from 27 percent, and 94 percent had a computer virus incident in 2000, up from 85 percent the year before.

"Everyone can understand the profits that you can make in cyberspace, but only a few people understand the losses that you can have," Richard Power, editorial director of the Computer Security Institute and author of the security book "Tangled Web," told the assembled security professionals.

plan," said Pegasus Vice-President, Cheryl Crate.

"We've had an application at the FCC for forty months," Crate said. "We need these licenses soon" so the company will have time to launch the satellites before 2004, when under an international agreement the licenses would be returned to the International Telecommunications Union if the slots aren't in use.

Though not yet a business issue, Pegasus' plight underscores the increased role FCC decisions play for emerging communications concerns. The FCC maintains that all issues related to the licenses will be resolved by this summer, but a source couldn't speculate as to what licenses would be available for applicants.

Working with Washington There are a number of orbital slots in what is known as the Ka-band that would suit Pegasus' needs, but they're in the hands of major satellite players such as PanAmSat, majority-owned by DirecTV owner, Hughes Electronics, itself a General Motors

Arts & Entertainment

Bobbie out with *Salama Leku*

For music buffs who have monitored the music career of the Actor and Afro-rock star Bobbie Ejike, there is no doubt that his upcoming album, "Does your mama know" is his best ever. Ejike who has since the 1980s in Port-Harcourt been trying to wade his way into the hearts of Nigerian music lovers is primed to acquire international recognition with one of his songs entitled "Salama Leku" which is apparently critical to elicit the interest of those in Northern Nigeria and beyond.

Well, the international dreams of Bobbie, musically speaking, is one that started far back in the 1980s when he painted the Italian music scene red with a reggae band "Iree" and the fabulous Lisa Hint-whose rhythm and Blues sounds are still making waves in Europe.

As Bobbie Ejike, who is loathed by fashion designer Kesse Jabari, told *Daily Trust*, "I was in the Italian best reggae band "Iree" and we hit the charts several times, later I played with Lisa Hunt and Zucchero- I was a back singer in the band."

"I made three singles with Iree. We were working at the time with a label called Zimba Music which was also in charge of Fela, Manu Debango and Rund Guillet. We released a super, "It's all upon you."

From Bright Ewedo, in Lagos

According to him, when he joined Zucchero, they released a super hit entitled "Something strong" which was a hit across Europe in 1988 and helped the band win one of the prize at the world Music award in MOT, Carlo.

The Sojourn to Italy, according

to Bobbie, clothed by Kesse Jabari, helped to bolster his music at proficiency. He recalled, however, that although his 1985 album with Rogers

Music

All Stars; Awake, No vacancy", was good but that his experience in Europe give him a new perspective on

things.

The new perspective was visible in the out put "Tip" which was a collection of songs in the two bands he served religiously. He was soon to leave to become a teacher at the Milan Polytechnic.

In 1992, Bobbie, however, emerged from his hiatus to release "Checking out" which he said was

not a gargantuan hit like the one he had while he was a band boy.

It was, however, another six years before he released another album. On why it took him time to come out with a record, he explained it away.

Said he. "It is here (Nigeria) that you need to release album yearly. But abroad that's not the case because you can release an album and live on the royalties, for instance what year did Michael Jackson release his last work?"

His 1999 release, which was entitled "Change the system" according to him, was "dedicated to General Abdul Salami Abubakar because of the wind of change that he was pioneering. "Change the system" was a call. It's like let my people go. A call to the military."

Bobbie, who is coming out in the current album under the wings of Felins Records, stated that the album contains a variety of hit songs on the Nigeria situation.

According to him "we are celebrating the gains of democracy. In a song called "Uncle sege" we are appealing to uncle sege, most importantly, not to forget the masses and to live up to his campaign promises and not to dance to the tune of IMF and World Bank."

"*Salama Leku* is a song that appreciates the post colonial gains. The gains of democracy in Africa. It's a cry for peace. Of course, as you know you can't achieve anything without peace."

He stressed that his songs are not about ordinary singing, saying "The problems are so much that you have to cry."

Other tracks in the package include "No vacancy" which he said is returning due, to demands by his fans and "Kiss of A witch", of course, in addition to the title track of the album.

For Bobbie, the album is, one of the best albums that have emerged on the scene since the day of Kri Okotie, saying that despite the competition on the scene he will certainly cruise to the top of the charts.

The video of the out-put has been completed and the multi-talented artistes and actor, who just completed work on the Chiko Ejiro film "Wanted Alive" is boastful that the chip will introduce one or two things that Nigerians are yet to be hold in the area.

Bobbie Ejike was emphatic that the influences were basically African, stressing that the compendium of influences were from Afro-musicians like Salif Keita, Mana Disengo, Mari Kanta, Wosson "Don and Fela Anikulapo Kuti.

He stressed that the offer was all geared towards contributing his quota to the overall need to resuscitate the Nigerian entertainment industry which according to him "is in a state of financial quagmire, resulting in creative logjam and artistic kwasioko."

Therefore, he called on the government to support the Industry just as they are apt to do for soccer, saying that music has the capacity to bring million of dollars to the nation's economy, if effectively encouraged.



The National Troupe of Nigeria in performance.

Fashion

Fashion show coming soon

Kesse Jabari, the African Fashion house which is based in Lagos, has concluded plans for an International African Fashion show which will be held in Lagos, Abuja, Paris and New York among others.

Mr. Akamune Ekuriese, who is also known as Kesse Jabari, is the Chief executive officer of the Fashion outfit. Mr. Jabari is also an accomplished actor in the Nigerian movie Industry. Speaking with *Daily Trust* in an interview, Jabari said the Fashion show is a celebration of contemporary African dress culture, traditional African fashion and African Music. It presents the Kesse Jabari, interpretation of the African Fashion Culture.

The multi-million naira Fashion show has been named: Rhythm Africana, the Spirit, the sign and the sound. Rhythm Africana is a celebration of the African sense. The show is divided into three phase the first phase is Rhythm Africana (NIGERIA) the Spirit, the Sign and the Sound. This will include two international shows. The first in the commercial city of Lagos, Nigeria.

The second in the capital city of Abuja, Nigeria. This will be held in the 2nd quarter of this year 2001.

The Second phase of the show is Rhythm Africana (The Sojourn); the Spirit, the Sign and the Sound. This is a tour of selected countries of the world, which are the fashion capitals in the world of Fashion

From Yemi Olakitan, in Lagos

The third phase is the Rhythm Africana International, the Spirit, the Sign and the Sound. It is a Four-day international Fashion fiesta with many international designers converging in Nigeria. It is a conference of creative minds, especially those of African origin, some of the designers that are expected for the show are: Aklphad, Xuly ibet, Oswald Baateng, Chris Seydou, Jimi King, Moshood, Jean Paul Gantier, Peter Reso and many others.

Mr. Jabari explained that the show is all about African cultural heritage and lifestyles. He believes that Africans should be proud of their cultural and we must all work

together in unity to uplift our cultural heritage.

He said that the fashion show is part of the concept of the 'power look', which is an idea of the Jabari Fashion House.

The power look, he said, is a combination of aesthetic excellence with the elements of style in the African cultural image.

Numerous young men and women are seen at the Lagos office of the Jabari Fashion House, getting prepared for the show, either as models or as artistes for the event.

On the music aspect, musicians have been contacted for the fashion event. These musicians include Lagbaja; the masked one, Femi Kuti, son of the legendery Afro beat mu-

sician, Fela Anikulapo Kuti, Dede, Daddy Showkey, Charlie Boy and many upcoming artistes in the country. Some of the upcoming artistes are Plantasion Boys, the Remedies, Tony Tетуila and Kesse Jabari's wife Sabina.

The Fashion show is to be presented by super-models from the Jabari, models Comm., who are specifically trained for the job, with guest appearances by international role -models star, ambassadors of Nigeria extraction.

The show has attracted the attention and involvement of such media stations as CNN, BBC, FTV, TFI, Mnet, TV Africa and NTA. It promises to be the first of its kind in Nigeria.



The National Troupe of Nigeria in performance.

Pix by Felix Onigbinde

Arts & Entertainment

The Story of the New Nigerian Part XIV

As good as it could be

In the last account Mallam Adamu Ciroma became editor of the New Nigerian. Today, the complexion of those turbulent times is captured in the quality and tone of the editorials which the New Nigerian produced in the 60s.

The lead story emerged from Colonel Yakubu Gowon's New Year speech in which the central theme was that his government was dedicated to building a new Nigeria. Here, it is almost certain that the pun in the last two words of the preceding sentence was entirely unintended by the Head of State.

The second lead story was more ironic. Its headline read: "There is no secession bid by the East" -Lt. Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu was to declare the break away just seven months later. The other front page story which cast a fair balance between Gowon's hope and Ojukwu's intransigence was the one in which Lt. Col. Hassan Katsina was quoted as calling on Nigerians on both sides of the divide to "admit our errors and move on."

To the chagrin of the *New Nigerian* neither this exhortation by Hassan Katsina, the then Military Governor of the North nor its own wise counsel prevailed. Each succeeding day brought in more and more disturbing news. True, the trend had been set in motion since the tragic assassinations of January 15, 1966. But now the rush towards confrontation was almost headlong. Try as the *New Nigerian* did to ignore the voice of those fanning the embers of disunity, very soon the news of mass action could not be overlooked. For example, in its January 2nd edition, the paper reported that Eastern doctors had quit the Ibadan University Teaching Hospital because "It was reliably learnt that an instruction from Eastern Nigeria had been passed to all Easterners in the hospital to quit en mass before the end of the month."

However, even with such clear indications of crisis escalation by the Eastern State Government under Ojukwu, the *New Nigerian* did not black out all his campaigns even when he called for a confederation or loose federation to which the *New Nigerian* was opposed. The reason was that no matter how hopeless the search for peace might be, the Aburi meeting of the country's military rulers near Accra, on January 6 and 7, 1967 had set the parameters for crisis resolution. It was a last minute desperate attempt to stop Ojukwu

from seceding. At the end of the talks on January 7, the paper triumphantly reported: "Federation can work



Sir Ahmadu Bello

is the decision". It followed this up with an editorial on January 16 entitled "Reforms Now!" in which it stated that "Our stand vis-a-vis preservation of the federation is clear. We firmly and unequivocally support the continued existence of the federation in the belief that it is in the best interest of Nigerians".

Meanwhile, other stories calculated to lessen inter-tribal tensions kept on surfacing. One such was a story headlined: "Abuse and tribalism in the Airways" and featured in January 4 edition. In it, a panel investigating corruption was reportedly told that K. O. Mbadiwe, the then Aviation Minister flew Atilogwu dancers from his state to the U.S. at government expense and was therefore guilty of tribalism. In the same edition of the paper it was reported that seven Igbo men were killed by Igbos from the neighbouring Onitsha.

At that time too the *New Nigerian* carried lively stories on the Eastern Governor's purchase of an aircraft at the cost of £360,000 (1997 money equivalent (N28,800,000). The *New Nigerian* called this extravagance.

The Eastern state Regional Government at this time also was meting out injustice and the persecution of the minority groups comprising the Cross River, Ogoja and Rivers peoples. They had started to come under severe pressure to help the Ibo leaders in their opposition to the Federal Government. This was a position which the Eastern minori-

Books

ties found uncomfortable. Their leaders decried the marginalisation of their people and expressed fears about possible enslavement by the Igbos. In support of the minorities the *New Nigerian* of January 17 featured an editorial entitled: "Reassure Eastern Minorities." The editorial said inter alia: "It serves no-one to ignore the point which Rivers people are trying to make, that is that as a minority group they harbour some fears... The first thing the Eastern Government should do is to renounce all the careless talk about confederation."

At this point, the Pro-federal government and therefore pro- "One Nigeria" stance of the newspaper became unacceptable to the Eastern state Government and the copies of the *New Nigerian* meant for circulation in the East were confiscated at the Onitsha bridge point between Benin and Onitsha. The same fate befell two other national papers of the time -The *Daily Times* and the *Nigerian Morning Post* both based in Lagos. So concerned was the *New Nigerian* about this development that it wrote an editorial in its January 19 edition entitled Press freedom must remain." In it, the paper condemned censorship and expressed support for the free-flow of information. For this reason, it did not relent in exposing some of the atrocities of the government in the East such as the arbitrary arrest and detention of supporters of the states' creation exercise promised by Gowon on November 30, the previous year.

In its edition of January 24, the *New Nigerian* followed up its earlier editorial on press freedom with a news analysis titled: "Are we banned in the East?" These pressures and a delegation of the Northern Nigeria Newspapers Company, the publishers of the *New Nigerian* finally led to a statement from the Eastern State Government Ministry of Information which said that there was no ban on the *New Nigerian* and any other papers in the East. The claim was mere propaganda to mislead the world. Thus, though the *New Nigerian* called off its quarrel with the East based on that statement, Eastern animosity with the rest of the country continued unabated. On January 25, the *New Nigerian* itself reported that the "West calls for a ban on food exports to the East."

Even at this point, however, the *New Nigerian* did not assume an open confrontational attitude to-

wards the Military Government of the East. It did not even subscribe to the wholesale condemnation of the Igbo people as many did at the time. For instance, the paper's edition on the burial of General Aguiyi-Ironsi, the Igbo former Head of the Federal Government was entitled "A Deserved Tribute." Published in its edition of January 21, the editorial laboured hard to read the best of intentions into the somewhat controversial policies of the deceased Head of State.

It concluded on the note that the best way of honouring Ironsi was to uphold the Federal structure of Nigeria.

The news of the month was probably the one reported in the *New Nigerian* of January 27. According to the report, four prominent leaders of the Eastern minorities including Chief I. I. Morphy (later to become Chairman of the NNN Ltd.) had divulged the information that Eastern secession was billed for last January 1, but was stopped by threats from the Eastern minorities. It was further revealed that "Eastern Nigerians had deliberately engaged in committing acts of sabotage and strangulation directed against Northern Nigeria and people of the Federation in general."

Then, in a typical level-headed reaction, the New Nigerian



General Yakubu Gowon

published an editorial captioned "More states the only answer" in its January 28 edition. The editorial argued among other things that "there can be no doubt that the creation of more states is the only lasting solution to the problems of this country." Out of its sheer force, this editorial forced Ojukwu to burst out in a reaction published in the January 31 edition: "If the North wants to carve itself into 50 states,

no Easterner will live in anyone of them."

The *New Nigerian's* serious concern with the issues of peace, unity and Federalism during the month of January, 1967 did not however prevent the paper from paying useful attention to other issues. The focus on the probe at the Nigeria Airways and the misuse of public funds by the Eastern Government has already been mentioned. Another related probe which facilitated serious revelations was the one taking place at the Nigerian Ports Authority in which the then Transport Minister, Raymond Njoku, was alleged to have over-paid a contractor to the tune of £30,421 over the contract amount.

There was also considerable attention on the need to prod the North towards catching up educationally and economically with the other part of the country. To this end, the launching of the Northern Self Development Fund and the proposal for the setting up of a bank to assist Northern leaders received tremendous publicity and support in the *New Nigerian*. Similarly, although the stand of the paper was categorically for the creation of more states, it still gave publicity to contrary views on the matter. Thus, the "Public Forum", as the letters page was then known, was almost equally shared between those for and against the creation of more states.

On the overseas front, the urgency of local issues did not hinder reporting of foreign news. The *New Nigerian* maintained a consistent and balanced reporting on happenings in other countries. Topics such as the succession of Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, the coup in Dahomey, the independence struggles in Congo and former Rhodesia as well as developments in Asia, Europe and America were adequately covered in the period under review. All said, the *New Nigerian* was as good a newspaper as it could be in the circumstances.

To be continued.

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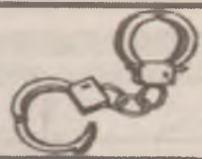
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Crime & Punishment



20-man robbery gang attacks travellers

A gang of about 20 armed robbers, suspected to be of Nigerian and Chadian nationalities, have attacked two luxury buses heading for Maiduguri from the Eastern part of the country, killing one vigilante escort and seriously injuring 10 other passengers with gun shots.



Mr. Musiliu Smith, Inspector General of Police

From Abdullahi Bego, in Damaturu

The robbers struck over the weekend along Postiskum-Damaturu road. According to the Yobe State Police Commissioner, Mr. Azubuka Udah, who confirmed the incident, the robbers operated within a time-span of 30 minutes and left the scene with about N2.5 million belonging to their victims before the arrival of a police patrol team.

The 10 injured robbery victims are currently receiving treatment at the Damaturu Specialist Hospital, with the condition of some them described as "critical".

Shortly after the incident, Commissioner of police, Udah met with the deputy governor of Yobe State, Alhaji Aliyu Saleh Bargare, where he appealed for government support in mobilising the public to assist the police with such information as would lead to the tracking and arrest of bandits.

Two suspected robbers were on Friday shot dead in Lakundum village of Shani local government area of Borno State.

The suspects were killed in a shoot-out with members of the State Anti-Robbery Squad, "Operation Wipe Out," drafted to the area to check the menace of robbers.

Briefing the Shani Local Government Council Chairman, Alhaji Sama'ila Garba, shortly after he inspected the corpses of the suspects deposited at the Shani General Hospital mortuary, a member of the anti-robbery squad, Mr. Peter Ahina, stated that the suspects were members of the gang, which had been notorious for robberies and cattle-theft in the area. Ahina solicited for more cooperation from communities in the area to enable the squad accomplish its mission.

Anti-robbery squad kills two robbery suspects

While commending members of the squad for their efforts, the chairman of Shani, Alhaji Sama'ila Garba, assured them of the council's continuous support to the team and urged the people to continue to cooperate and support security agents in the fight against violent crimes in the area.

Man commits suicide after stabbing ex-wife

A middle-aged man in Bupal-Wada ward in Biu local government of Borno State, last Friday, committed suicide after stabbing his ex-wife to death.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) learnt that the man, whose name was simply given as Hamidu, had on the fateful day, invited the ex-wife to his house for a dialogue and when they failed to reconcile their differences, he stabbed her to death after which he stabbed himself with the same knife.

Hamidu was said to have had three children with the deceased, who was a student at the State College of Education, Waka, in Biu local government.

NAN also learnt that Hamidu had once attempted to burn down the ex-wife's motorcycle after a misunderstanding, which led to their divorce about two months ago.

In another incident, a teenager simply called Gambo, now at large, last Saturday, also in Biu, stabbed his senior brother, Hussein, to death in a dispute over a N5 cake.

NAN learnt that the incident happened during a fight between the brothers after the suspect accused the deceased of eating a N5 cake in his kiosk at Dugja ward in Biu without paying for it.

Attempt to get the police in Biu to comment on the two incidents proved abortive as they said only the state commissioner of police could talk to the press.

When contacted, the Borno Commissioner of Police, Alhaji Uba Ringim, said since he was yet to be briefed on the incidents by the Biu Police Command, he would not make any comments.

Magistrate orders enquiry into suspect's release

An Ilorin Chief Magistrate, Mr. Issa Babatunde Garba, has ordered an enquiry into the circumstances leading to the release of a suspect, Mr. Alex Halabi, accused of swindling Mr. Jide Ajayi of the sum of N27 million.

Halabi was standing trial before the magistrate for allegedly selling a piece of land that did not belong to him at Oregon, Lagos, to Ajayi for N27 million.

The accused appeared before Magistrate Garba on March 29, 2001, who ordered that he be remanded in police custody until April 10, 2001, when the matter would be heard.

In a petition to the Chief Justice of Kwara State, Mr. Justice Timothy Oyejipo, Mr. Ajayi complained that contrary to the court ruling, the police released the suspect.

Police prosecutor, Mr. Muhammad Musa, who confirmed the development, said the case was being investigated by Force CID, Alagbon, Lagos and their involvement would, therefore, have amounted to a duplication of efforts.



Justice Mohammed Uwais, Chief Justice of the Federation.

From Abdul Laro, in Ilorin

Leading five other lawyers, Barrister Deji Gbadeyan lamented the fact that the police wanted to withdraw the case and suggested that the matter be referred to the ministry of justice for further advice.

Ruling, Magistrate Garba said that case of the suspect's release be subjected to an enquiry while he would consider the withdrawal of case by the police "because it has under it, a dangerous pill which if not carefully and properly handled has the effect of rendering the court ineffective and as an institution which can be used to pervert the course of justice".

Chairmanship tussle: Court lacks jurisdiction - Abdulkadir

The National Chairman of Alliance for Democracy (AD), Alhaji Adamu Abdulkadir, has challenged a suit filed by a faction of the party before a Federal High Court, Lagos, over AD's first national convention.

In challenging the suit filed by the Ambassador Yusuf Mamman-faction, the AD National Chairman claimed that the court lacked jurisdiction to entertain the case since the plaintiffs had no "locus standi" to institute the suit.

Ambassador Yusuf Mamman, Chief Ayo Adebajo, Comrade Adamu Song and twenty-six others had asked the court to determine whether the election of the (defendants) on November 1, 2000 at AD's first convention at Abuja could be set aside.

The court was also asked to determine whether in view of the AD's constitution the then Protem Chairman (Ambassador Yusuf Mamman) had power to summon or convene a convention of the AD.

In a 13-paragraph affidavit in support of the notice of preliminary objection to Ambassador Yusuf Mamman's suit deposed to

From Adelanwa Bamgboye, in Lagos

by one Ade Adegbite, he stated that a Federal High Court, Abuja had restrained Ambassador Yusuf Mamman, Chief Ayo Adebajo, Chief Okwu Maxi and Mr. Solomon Asemota (SAN) from conducting a congress for AD.

At the resumed hearing before the chief Judge of the Federal High Court, Lagos, Justice Babatunde Belgore, it was argued that if the Abuja

decisions of Justice Edet were final orders, then the plaintiffs were debarred and restrained from bringing the present suit as the defendants at the Abuja suit were now plaintiffs in the Lagos suit.

Addressing reporters immediately after the court session, AD National Chairman, Alhaji Adamu Abdulkadir, said that their coming to court did not foreclose an out of court settlement but added that so far there was lack of sincerity in whatever the other faction was doing.



Minister for Police Affairs, Mr. Steven Akiga, meditating on the crime situation in the country. Pix Felix Ougbide.

Declaration of assets by public office-holders is a must - Justice Sambo

The Chairman of the Code of Conduct Tribunal (CCT), retired Justice Bashir Sambo, has said that declaration of assets by public office-holders is a must.

Speaking in an interview with a correspondent of the

News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abuja, Justice Sambo said that under the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Public servants from grade level 07 and above, must declare their assets at the time of joining the service, after every promotion and on retirement.

He said the purpose of the exercise was to monitor the conduct of officers to ensure that they did not acquire wealth through corruption or abuse of office. He said that the CCT and the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) were established in 1989 in accordance with the provisions of the 1979 constitution.

Justice Sambo said that it was the duty of the Code of Conduct Bureau to ensure that officers filled assets declaration forms, adding that failure to declare their assets was tantamount to committing an offence.

He said that offenders could be tried by the CCT and if found guilty, they would lose their jobs.



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Madu Wakil

Secretary

Management Tender Committee

NEWS

OAU ASUU indicts Borishade over strike

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) Ile-Ife branch, has indicted the minister of education, Prof. Babalola Borishade, over the recent strike of the union.

In a statement signed by the branch chairman, Dr. Otas Ukponwan, a copy of which was made available to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Osogbo at the weekend, ASUU advised the minister "and his cohorts" to desist from wasting the much needed resources of Nigerians on what it



Prof. B. Borishade described as "propaganda and disinformation."

It stated that the minister should remember that he was serving a democratic government and that the only path of honour was for the government to sign and implement the December 18, 2000 agreement.

The ASUU branch chairman said that the union embarked on the latest strike not for selfish interest, but for the "total restoration of the university system, which the agreement is intended to address.

"It is high time that Nigerian people advised the minister to follow the path of honour," Ukponwan stressed.

LGs' tenure:

Chairman criticises legislators

The chairman of Chibok Local government Area of Borno State, Mr. Nuhu Clark, has criticized the state legislators' opposition to the National Assembly's recommendation that the tenure of local government councils in the country be extended to four years.

He told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Chibok, headquarters of Chibok local government council on Friday, that the present crop of state legislators were opposing the National Assembly's recommendation because they had scores to settle with most council chairmen in their respective states.

He said that most of the legislators initially contested for the chairmanship positions in their respective states, but lost to the present occupants of the seats and that the defeat had remained a source of annoyance to them.

The chairman said that even though most of the legislators were compensated with State Assembly seats, they were still interested in becoming council chairmen.

Clark said, "the real issue is that they want the tenure to be shortened to pave way for them to come back and contest the chairmanship elections."

The council boss wondered why the lawmakers were vehemently opposing the National Assembly's

proposals on local governments tenure, while remaining silent over their tenure, adding, "what is good for the goose should also be good for the gander."

He pointed out that the tenure of office was not as important as the services rendered to the electorate by political office-holders. "Whether it is one, two or four years, is not really the case, but what you can give to the people," the chairman pointed out.

Clark said further, "if we want to practise true democracy in this country, then the ideal thing to do is for both the states and the local governments to have equal tenures."

FG to revamp refineries before deregulation—Lawan

The Federal Government will revamp the nation's refineries before deregulating the downstream sector of the oil industry, the chairman of Warri refinery, Alhaji Gambo Lawan, said at the weekend.

He explained in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abuja that "if the government rejuvenates the refineries to their installed capacity before the reforms in the industry, there would be no more fuel crisis in the country."

He pointed out that government was ever ready to continue the maintenance of refineries, pipelines and depots even after the deregulation policy had been implemented.

The chairman blamed marketers of petroleum products for the shortage of petroleum products plaguing the nation.

He said that activities of



Gaius Obaseki

the marketers were "unpatriotic" and were responsible for the severe hardships facing the populace.

NAN quotes Lawan as saying "as long as there is economic advantage in diversion, hoarding and smuggling of petroleum products would continue."

Alhaji Lawan observed that fuel shortage was hitherto part and parcel of the northern part of the country, but presently, the problem had engulfed the nation, running for months without improvement.

He suggested that the monitoring of petroleum products should be strengthened from the depots to the retail outlets, so as to tame the monster of fuel shortage, in addition to the intended liberalization of the oil sector.

Oil producing Nigeria, with a population of 110 million people, has been experiencing fuel shortage, running into months without a respite in sight.

NAN recalls that the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) had threatened to sanction marketers of petroleum products involved in diversion and smuggling of petroleum products.

Abuja News

Lawmaker condemns clamour for second terms

A federal legislator, Prince Nicholas

Ukachukwu (PDP-FCT), has described the current agitation for continuation in office by some of the present political office-holders as "a bad omen to our growing democracy."

He told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abuja yesterday that the call for some politicians to stay in office was "selfish and greedy."

He said those clamouring for the continuation in office by some people were retrogressive elements which were, out not to promote democratic and progressive

values in the country, but to champion self-serving interests.

The lawmaker, who is the Chairman of the House Committee on Gas Resources, said people should allow the quality of work and services performed by those elected to show for themselves, rather than using selfish means to call on some politicians to continue in office without due regard to the nation's interests.

"My candid advice to political office-holders nationwide is that they should not clamour for a second term, but let their work and services to the people speak for themselves instead of using people to canvass for

them to the detriment of democratic values," he added.

He further advised politicians to eschew violence and rancour in their bids to lead Nigerians, noting that "what should be paramount to most of us in politics is to exhibit a high level of commitment and

Ogunkelu advises against formation of more political parties

As politicians scramble to float more political parties in the country, the Minister of Co-operation and Integration in Africa, Dr. Bimbola Ogunkelu, has said the move would bring more confusion into the political system than it could solve.

"The more political parties

dedication to serve the people and to prudently manage the country, irrespective of whether we are serving in local, state or national positions."

Ukachukwu said he would soon sponsor a bill to facilitate the completion of abandoned projects started by previous administrations at

we have, the more confusion we are going to get," Ogunkelu said in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abuja at the weekend.

"For a country like Nigeria where there are too many interests, the fewer the number of political parties,

both local, state and federal levels, to minimise the waste of human and financial resources.

The lawmaker further condemned those agitating for resource control, saying, it was unfair to some parts of the country in a federation like Nigeria.

Ukachukwu stated that resource control was not

workable in Nigeria, noting that if it was allowed to thrive, it might cause crises and misunderstandings among Nigerians.

He, however, urged the Federal Government to always give those areas where mineral resources are exploited, a sense of belonging, by providing them with socio-economic amenities.

happened, people who were political enemies but found themselves in the same party, were forced to work for its success.

Some Nigerians have criticized the existing three political parties for non-performance and the Senate at its recent retreat in Calabar, expressed its belief in the formation of more political parties saying, it was "necessary to promote greater participation and competition in the political system."

But Ogunkelu said it was a matter that must be thought about very seriously and worked out.

"Some people who have enough clout but who are not getting their way are using their influence in some newspapers to clamour of more political parties whereas all they need to do is to join the existing parties," he said.

IG tasks police on human rights

From Abdullahi Bego, in Maiduguri

The Inspector-General of Police, Mr. Musliu Smith, has tasked police officers to perform their duties within the framework of the law.

Speaking in Gwoza, Borno State, at the passing out ceremony of cadet assistant superintendents of Police (ASPs), the Inspector-General, represented by Assistant Inspector-General of Police (AIG) Amsa Ahmed, also tasked the cadet officers to remain disciplined and shun corrupt practices.

Also speaking at the occasion, the commissioner of police in charge of the mobile force said the aim of the Combat Operations Course, which the cadet officers underwent in Gwoza, was to "train them in riot control and crowd dispersal, weapon handling and combat craft."

The commissioner of police, therefore, charged the cadet officers to put their training to good use, as well as make professionalism their watchword. He also enjoined them to eschew corruption, as corrupt officers had no place in the new police force envisioned for Nigeria.

The commissioner further advised them to be good ambassadors of the force and

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SPORTS



Ferguson warns players over Champions League

Sir Alex Ferguson put a swift end to Manchester United's title celebrations - and warned players are fighting for their future in the Champions League showdown with Bayern Munich.

Ferguson declared he was proud of the consistency of his squad that brought a seventh title in nine years on Easter Saturday.

But he has claimed United's bid to overturn a 1-0 deficit in Munich may be a defining moment as he draws up plans for his final season at Old Trafford.

Roy Keane, Jaap Stam and Ryan Giggs have been signed on long-term contracts, but others have things to prove in Munich.

He said: "Wednesday will bring back whether we are capable of winning against the best teams in Europe. How we do will make our mind up on quite a few things.

"We are better when we are on the edge, there is no doubt about that. Just look back to the 1999 season when we were going for the Treble. There was no time for the players to think.

"Games came thick and fast. We just went from a big game to a bigger game to an even bigger game, and then a bigger game again."

Ferguson added: "The adrenalin and the cause and the team spirit just gets better and better and better.

"There's no edge to us at the moment - but we are working on that."

And Ferguson wants United's title winners to share his drive for success and answer the doubters who question whether his team is in need of reshaping.

He said: "I think there is a natural inclination for people wanting to do things the easy way. A percentage of people are driven. The motivation is all inside them and they get it all out of themselves.

"I certainly don't get

blase about winning championships, but I think players can come to the point where they get relaxed about the league when they are so far in front.

"I am a driven person and there's no way I could be any different."

And Ferguson hopes United will revive memories of their display against Juventus in Italy in their successful 1999 Champions League campaign in Munich.

He said: "When we went to Juventus everyone was saying we had no chance, no one had ever won at the Stadio delle Alpi - but it turned out to be our best ever performance.

"I went into that game believing we would have to score twice to win and that's exactly the way I'm looking at this one. We must score two."



Manchester United's manager, Alex Ferguson (right) with David Beckham. They will fight for their future against Bayern Munich... on Wednesday

Juve close in on Roma

Juventus closed the gap at the top of the table to four points after they won and Roma drew.

After losing last week to Fiorentina, Roma were moments away from suffering the same fate at the hands of Perugia.

But they were saved by a debatable last minute equaliser.

Perugia's Giovanni Tedesco turned the ball into his own net but in a scrambled build up Vincenzo Montella appeared to handle the ball.

Francesco Totti scored Roma's first and they twice had to come from behind.

Davide Baiocco gave the visitors the lead and Luca Saudati put Perugia ahead for a second time after a terrible blunder from Roma keeper Francesco Antonioli.

The chasing pack, who all made up ground on the leaders, are led by Juventus who beat Inter Milan 3-1.

The victory was secured on the back of a vintage second half performance in

which Alessio Tacchinardi, Filippo Inzaghi and Alessandro Del Piero quickly shot them into a three goal lead.

Christian Vieri scored a consolation goal from the penalty spot.

A brace of goals from Hernan Crespo gave third-placed Lazio a 2-0 win over Reggina but are still 10 points adrift of their capital city rivals.

Yugoslav striker Savo Milosevic led Parma to a 1-0 win against Atalanta to solidify their hold on fourth place.

AC Milan beat Udinese 3-0 with goals from a trio of foreigners - Georgia's Kakha Kaladze, Brazil's Serginho, and Ukraine's Andriy Shevchenko.

Enrico Chiesa scored twice for the second straight game as Fiorentina ran out 2-0 winners over Lecce.

Elsewhere, Vicenza beat Bologna 4-2, Brescia beat Verona 1-0 and last place Bari lost 1-0 to Napoli.

Diack wants broad support for IAAF leadership

Senegal's Lamine Diack, acting President of the International Amateur Athletics Federation (IAAF) does not want to be seen as solely a candidate of Africa at next July's election of the IAAF president in Edmonton, Canada.

"Other federations in Latin America and North America are backing my bid", Diack told a news conference in Dakar on Friday organised in the fringes of a meeting of the organising committee of the 17th congress of the African Amateur Athletics Confederation (AAAC), scheduled for 9-15 April in the Senegalese capital.

The Senegalese news agency reported that the

Athletics

main agenda of the congress would be to discuss measures to back the AAC's candidate for the IAAF top job.

Diack, so far the only declared candidate for the leadership of the IAAF, of which he has been acting president for the last 16 months, said his performance at the helm of the federation would be his major asset.

"The new contracts we negotiated for IAAF with sponsors and television broadcasters are a major step

in enhancing the credibility of my bid", he said, adding that all contracts had expired at 31 December 2000.

"However, I have toured the world to make myself known", Diack said jokingly. The AAAC president has held the position of IAAF 1st vice-president for the past eight years.

The Dakar congress will discuss the problem of African athletes changing nationalities, the holding of African championships and athletics meetings.

Tyson set for capital combat

• fights Izonritei on June 2

Mike Tyson's next fight now appears likely to take place on 2 June in Washington.

The former world champion's return fight, scheduled to be against David Izon, has caused numerous problems in terms of a location, with Australia and Africa proposed as venues.

But talks are currently under way that could result in a deal by the end of the week.

"It's a very good possibility," said Jay Larkin, the boxing boss of Showtime, the network which has a television contract with Tyson.

Tyson, whose record stands at 36 wins, 34 defeats and one no-contest, has not fought since winning in two rounds against

Poland's Andre Golota last November.

It is still believed and hoped that Tyson will fight world champion Lennox Lewis in the next 12 months.



Tyson

Lewis issues KO pledge

Lennox Lewis began the pre-fight polemics with Hasim Rahman on Wednesday - claiming his opponent will not last the distance in their world title fight in South Africa next week.

Speaking at a press conference in Johannesburg, the world heavyweight champion outlined his strategy against 'The Rock'.

"My goal is to knock him out whenever he presents his chin," the 35-year-old said.

"I don't want to predict in which round this is going to be, but definitely, this fight won't go the distance."

But his American opponent was in no mood to be used as punchbag by the WBO, IBF and IBO champion.

"Lennox is just a man, regardless of what he's achieved," retorted Rahman.

"Who is the greatest fighter in the world? At the end of the day he's just a man and that's the bottom line."

The two men are scheduled to enter the ring at 0400 BST to ensure maximum television coverage in the United States.



Super Pippo... Juve's Filippo Inzaghi was on target as the Bianconeri edge closer to AS



Eko Hotel rejects Eagles

• over NFA's indebtedness

Super Eagles camping in Lagos in preparation for this weekend's crucial World Cup qualifier against the Lone Stars of Sierra-Leone may be disrupted as the Eko Hotel, Lagos has rejected request to accommodate the Eagles.

The Eko Hotel, adduced the NFA indebtedness to it as the reason for turning down the request to harbour the Eagles for the three days they are expected to be in camp before proceeding to Freedom, Sierra Leone.

However, the Eko Hotel said it would reconsider her stance should the Glass House makes an initial deposit of between 2.5 to 3 million naira as part payment for the accommodation of about 15 players expected to camp there.

Already, the Hotel has made good its threat to compel the NFA to settle its previous debts by ejecting Johannes Bonfrere, the Eagles technical adviser out of the Eko Hotel. Bonfrere was said to have been ejected last Thursday to serve as warning to the NFA about the hotel management tough stance

Power supply returns to National Stadium

From Richard Abayomi, in Lagos

The National Stadium came alive again last week having been in utter darkness for almost one year, as the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) restored power to the complex.

The sport city that has been a beehive of activities for many years had witnessed a lull of activities.

Many a time, organisers of various events would have to hire generating sets to get their programmes going since NEPA had cut-off power supply from the complex due to non-payment of accumulated debt running to the tune of 7 million naira.

Trustsports, however, gathered that the new minister of sports, Ishaya Mark Aku has ordered recently that part of the accumulated debt be paid to enable NEPA restores power to the complex.

Inside source told Trustsports that N2m was paid out of the accumulated debt thus remaining the balance of 5 million naira, which the stadium authority promised to pay later

By Patrick Andrew

on seeing the debts settled.

Consequently, the almost insolvent NFA began desperate moves to source for funds to have the debts settled. It sought financial succour from the parents body, the sports ministry, but was yet to have favourable response.

Though an official of the Eko Hotel, Lagos declined to make public the exact figure the NFA is debted to, Trustsports learnt it is within the range of 3 to 5 million

naira, mostly incurred from the accommodation and lodgement of Bonfrere, including telephone calls, fax and internet services.

The NFA problem is further compounded by the paltry 3 million naira monthly subvention which is barely enough to pay Johannes Bonfrere's monthly salary. The Glass House would need about 27 million naira to prosecute this weekend qualifier which would make or break Nigeria's World Cup qualification chances.



Alfa Bala of Court of Appeal attempting to wriggle his way through NEPA defenders during the Abuja FA Cup final... recently.

Aliu, Hashimu push for promotion in Euro leagues

The influence of African players in Europe's top leagues is not confined to the first divisions, with many of them spearheading their club's push for promotion, as Trustsports reports

Germany

Leading scorer in the German second division is Cameroonian Olivier Djappa, a veteran of that league.

Djappa, 31, is having his best season since he came to Europe from Racing Bafoussam many years ago, and has scored 14 goals to keep Reutlingen in steady mid-table.

These are heady heights for Djappa and his side, who were promoted last year, but they still lie seven points off an automatic promotion spot, which may be too much.

Another veteran of German football, Nigerian Sambo Choji, is in fourth place in the scoring list with 11 goals for another newly-promoted club, Saarbrücken.

Choji spent five seasons with the club in the regional third division, although he is only just 24, and his goals are helping to keep them up this

time round.

Cameroonian Cyrille Florent Bella has scored nine goals for Ahlen to boost their outside chance of going up in his first season at the club after a spell in Uruguay at first division Cerro Porteno.

The Bundesliga 2 is headed by Nuremberg, who are seven points clear of second-placed Borussia Mönchengladbach.

Promotion is already almost certain, thanks to eight goals in only 17 games from Louis Gomis, the Senegalese forward who arrived at the beginning of the season from Lommel in Belgium after a spell in Tunisia.

Nuremberg have also given a chance this season to 20-year-old Nigerian midfielder Adebowale Ogungbure, who has featured in nine matches so far in his first professional season.

Ghanaian Lawrence Aidoo is also looking forward to promotion with Mönchengladbach in his first year.

Aidoo has scored twice in 12 games after arriving from King Faisal Babes in Kumasi.

Just outside the promotion

places are Greuther Furth, one of the most "African" teams in Europe, with seven African professionals registered.

The most regular is Moroccan veteran Rashid Azzouzi, who has spent almost ten years in Germany.

In and out of the team are ex-Ghanaian wonder boy Nii Odartey Lamptey, still officially only 27, Tunisian striker Faouzi Rouissi and Cameroonian Francis Kioyo Adissa.

Ivorian Bamba Siaka and Nigerians Henry Onwuzuruike and Anderson Bankole are playing very rarely.

Italy

Top of the table in Serie B are surprise packet Chievo, the second team of Verona.

Contrary to their Serie A neighbours, Chievo are a racism-free team, and whilst Verona do not dare to sign black players due to pressure from their fascist supporters, Chievo have never had any problems.

Sierra Leone's highly-rated defender Kewullay Conteh spent three seasons here, and now they field Brazilian Eriberto and midfielder Christian Manfredini.

The best three African players in Serie B are consistent Kewullay Conteh, in his first spell at Venezia, Senegalese defender Doudou Diaw, who is impressing after having been brought to Ancona after a spell at Igea Virtus in the Italian fifth division, and young Nigerian striker Mohammed Aliyu.

AC Milan sent him on loan to satellite club Monza, and the Nigerian is finally finding a

regular place on the pitch to show his fine qualities - he is the best player in the team according to the season ratings.

Venezia are second, with Conteh rated as their best player, but Monza and Diaw's club Ravenna are both struggling to stay in Serie B, with Ravenna almost looking relegated already.

France

Lorient are holding on to third place behind Sochaux and Montpellier, and they have two African youngsters to thank for much of their success.

The club are seven points clear of fourth-placed Nancy, in the last promotion spot, and will be grateful for having recalled Ivorian striker Elie Kroupi, who was on loan at lowly Valence last year.

Kroupi, still only 21, is second top scorer in the division with 15 goals

Many have been set up by Malian youngster Seydou Keita, who has been hugely impressive in midfield after being loaned out by Marseille to give him regular playing time.

Senegalese international defender Omar Daf has finally won a regular place at Sochaux and is helping to keep them top of the table.

Spain

As in the top flight, there is little African influence in the Segunda Division.

Emmanuel Amunike, an Olympic gold medal winner with Nigeria, was resurrecting his career at Albacete after finally settling his pay-off at Barcelona, where he had not played an official club game for

three years.

Amunike started 11 games for Albacete before his injury misery returned and he is out for the rest of the season now, unable to help his club in their promotion charge.

The only other African player who could be promoted is Nigerian Abass Lawal, but he rarely appears for Atletico Madrid.

After a poor start, the 1996 Spanish champions have moved up the table to fifth.

Switzerland

The Swiss league is a complicated set-up, with the second division having split up into promotion-relegation play-offs.

The top four sides after the first stage - Young Boys, Wil, Winterthur and Bellinzona - are now competing with the bottom four teams from the top flight to see which four either stay in or go up to the first division next season.

In the first phase of the championship Nigerian Christian Okpala scored 13 goals, but his team, Thun, failed to qualify for the play-offs.

Veteran Zimbabwean striker Agent Sawu was only one goal behind, and his strikes were enough to qualify Wil.

The third best African striker was Ivorian Ismail Koudou, who notched eight for Delemont.

To help boost their challenge, Winterthur have just acquired young Nigerian striker Hashimu Garba on loan from Italian club Pistoiese, and he has already scored twice in the play-offs.



Hashimu Garba in Flying Eagles colours is pushing his

Gov't withdrawal will kill sports - Kachim

Federal Government withdrawal from sports sponsorship will spell the death knell to sports in the country, the FCT director of sports, Col. Bomah Kachim (rtd) has asserted.

The sports director who had come under fire for alleged poor performance, said government alone can sufficiently fund sports in the country for now.

The director said the unfavourable economic terrain makes it almost impossible for the private sector which ideally should fund sports to shy away

ment disengagement at this time will be greatly detrimental.

According to the retired colonel, disengagement would without fail spell death knell on most of the sports if not all particularly such sports that are yet to gain popular appreciation and those that are capital intensive.

"Even now several sports council are finding it difficult meeting the common monthly obligations to their staff not to talk of when they would have to shoulder the responsibilities of savouring for funds and finding the many sports in their coun-

Though, he acknowledged the fact that necessity is the mother of invention, he would rather government be not in a hurry to shed off the burden of sports sponsorship chiefly because of the apathy towards sports sponsorship by the private sector.

Said he: "sports will die a natural death in Nigeria if government withdraws sponsorship. Yes, it's a brilliant idea, will executed elsewhere but Nigeria is not quite enough for that now and until then any contrary effort would be harmful and a defeat to the original intention of

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Martina Hingis attempts to make a shot during her third-round match against Henrieta Nagyova at the Bausch & Lomb Championships, Thursday, April 12, 2001, in Amelia Island, Florida, Hingis defeated Nagyova 6-1, 6-3. Pix AP



Orlando Magic guard Troy Hudson (L) drives past Philadelphia 76ers centre, Dikembe Mutombo during first half action, April 12, 2001 in Orlando. The Magic won 101-77. Pix Reuters

Nigeria/Sierra Leone World Cup cracker:

Arsenal frees Kanu

Arsenal FC's striker, Nwankwo Kanu has been permitted to fly in straight from England to Freetown barely 36 hours before the Nigeria/Sierra Leone World Cup qualifier.

Arsene Wenger, the Arsenal manager, finally shifted ground after an initial insistence that the lanky Super Eagles player be excused from the World Cup qualifier to allow him play in Champions League against Valencia.

Wenger whose stubborn stance on Kanu's release has always pitched Arsenal against Nigeria and often drawing flaks conceded to the NFA request that the player be allowed to fly in straight from London.

Thus means that, Nwankwo, whose inputs in the clash against the Black Stars was below average and thus roundly condemned, would miss most of the training sessions with his colleagues both in

By Patrick Andrew

Lagos and Freetown.

However, unlike Arsenal, Shaktar Donesk's management has arranged for Julius Aghahowa and Isaac Okoronkwo to fly straight from Kiev to Freetown on April 17 after their crucial championship league match.

The management of the

club, which wrote to the NFA acknowledging the imperative of Nigeria's qualification match against Sierra-Leone, said the players would be assisted to join other Eagles in camp soon after the match.

The management even volunteered to charter a jet to convey the players from Kiev to Freetown.

Professor Nomau's travails, written & illustrated by Bulama Mustapha

