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ABUJA TRUST

FCT Minister calls for unity

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No war in God's name, Pope urges

By Musa Aliyu *with Agency Reports*

Pope John Paul, in his Christmas message to the world, yesterday, said God's name could never be used to condone violence and urged that children be saved from the cruel effects of adult conflicts.

In his "Urbi et Orbi" (to the city and the world) message, the Pope also said he was "bearing in heart" the tragedy of the Holy Land and of those who are dying of hunger.

Leading the 24th Christmas season of his history-making pontificate, he urged all people to "open your hearts to the message of peace."

Speaking to the world on a throne from the central balcony of St. Peter's Basilica, he made a ringing appeal for social and economic justice and wove his message around the image of the baby Jesus.

"In him we can recognise the face of every child who is born of whatever race or nation, the little Palestinian and the little Israeli; the little American and the little Afghan; the child of the Hutu and the child of the Tutsi...," he said.

"Today my thoughts go to all the children of the world; so many, too many are the children condemned from birth to suffer through no fault of their own the effects of cruel conflicts," he said in a trembling voice and sounding weaker than he did at midnight mass.

Aware that the world was still coming to grips with the effects of the September 11 attacks on the United States, the Pope again strongly rejected the concept of a holy war.

"May God's holy name never be used as a justification for hatred! Let it never be used as an excuse for intolerance and violence," he said. "May the gentle face of the child of Bethlehem remind everyone that we all have one Father."

Peace is a gift but also has to be earned, the Pope said.

Tight security measures were in place in the square aimed at security threats sparked by the terrorist attacks of September 11. Since the attacks on the United States that claimed more than 3,000 lives, Rome has often been mentioned as the possible target of further strikes by the terrorist

Contd. on Pg 2

Pope John Paul II smiles past children on the altar as he presides over the midnight mass as part of Christmas celebrations in St. Peter's Basilica... Monday.

FALL-OUT OF PRIVATISATION

19 Northern states sue Unipetrol

By Osborne Adi Jnr.

The attempt by Unipetrol Nigeria Plc, one of the nation's leading oil marketing companies, to raise N1.2 billion unsecured zero coupon irredeemable convertible loan stock from its existing shareholders allegedly without due processes is now a subject of litigation at the Federal High Court in Abuja.

In a motion on notice filed by the Katsina and Jigawa States Investment and Property Development Companies and Alhaji Mohammed Ja-Tanimu Yakubu, Katsina State Commissioner for Finance, on behalf of the 19 Northern states, the plantiffs are seeking a declaration of the court to stop Unipetrol and nine others from allotting, converting or taking any action with the conduct of the said offer as contained in the rights circular dated September 28, 2001.

Also, the plaintiffs are praying the court to restrain First City Monument Bank (FCMB) and its subsidiaries from registering, permitting, approving, clearing or in any other manner enabling Unipetrol and its servants or agents to carry out any action relating to the acceptance or allotment of the offer.

In an affidavit in support of the motion by Mahmood Haruna Yakubu, of Gidan Danmaryama Chambers, the plaintiffs claimed that they received their offers in respect of the loan stock during the second and third weeks of November 2001.

They said it was then almost too late for them to have gone through to make a decision and that they did not authorise the directors to make the offer contained in Unipetrol.

They averred that the right circular in respect of Unipetrol contains defective and incorrect information of material, which will result in the rights and interests being irreparably prejudiced.

Besides the irregularities contained in the Annual Reports as reflected in the resolutions of the shareholders, the applicants hinged their fears on the ground that the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has already suspended FCMB, the issuing house from the clearing house following

Contd. on Pg 2

Justice Muhammed Uwais, CJN

Is bin Laden dead?

While the United States continues to scour Afghanistan for Osama bin Laden, an unidentified Taliban leader said the world's most wanted man is dead and buried, a news report said yesterday.

"They (the U.S.-led anti-terrorism coalition) will never be able to fulfil their cherished goal of getting Osama dead or alive," the *Pakistan Observer* quoted the leader as saying. The Taliban officer claimed to have attended bin Laden's funeral.

Bin Laden died "a peaceful natural death" from

Contd. on Pg 2

Fish out Ige's killers, Obasanjo orders police

From Abdulfattah Olajide and Yinka Oladoyinbo, *in Ibadan* **and Reuben Yunana,** *in Abuja*

President Olusegun Obasanjo has ordered the Nigeria Police to fish out the killers of the Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Chief Bola Ige, even as he almost broke down in tears at the Bodija, Ibadan, residence of the minister.

President Obasanjo gave the directive when he paid a condolence visit to the family of the deceased minister at their residence yesterday.

He said the police had assured him that they would leave no stone unturned in arresting those who killed the

Contd. on Pg 2

President Obasanjo

Senate reconvenes on national security

By Reuben Yunana

The Senate will on Friday interrupt its one-month Christmas recess and reconvene to discuss urgent national issues.

The Upper House, which was expected to reconvene on January 22, next year, will at Friday's emergency session discuss the rising political tension in different parts of the country which culminated in the murder last Sunday of Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Chief Bola Ige (SAN).

Contd. on Pg 2

NEWS

bin Laden *Contd from Pg 1*

serious lung complications in mid-December in the vicinity of the Tora Bora mountains, according to the unidentified Taliban member.

"Like other places in Tora Bora, his grave must also have vanished," he said, referring to the effects of heavy bombing.

Bin Laden was laid to rest with military honours with about 30 close al-Qaeda associates and Taliban friends attending the funeral.

"Osama looked paled and feeble, but calm, relaxed and confident," said the Taliban member describing the last look at bin Laden before he was lowered into his grave.

Osama bin Laden

The Taliban officer said bin Laden felt that he had succeeded in making Moslems aware of "the hegemonistic designs and conspiracies of pagans against Islam."

However, there are strong speculations that Bin Laden believed by U.S. to have masterminded the September 11 attacks on Washington and New York is still alive.

In an interview with a Nigerian newspaper, the Pakistani High Commissioner to Nigeria, Mr. Ikram K. Fazli, maintained that "bin Laden is still alive."

According to the High Commissioner, although nothing has been heard from bin Laden since the conquest of Tora Bora, "he could be safe and hiding somewhere."

"I feel that this man, a clever shrewd operator, is still at large," said Mr. Fazli.

He further stated that after the flushing of the Tora Bora tunnels, captured al-Qaeda fighters confessed that bin Laden had been there ten days earlier.

Given the geographical nature of Afghanistan, bin Laden could find a safe hide-out and remain there for a long time without being found, the High Commissioner said..

"The fugitive must have escaped. If he was captured, there would be a lot of international news and comments about that. So I am sure he is still at large in spite of all the sophisticated equipments the Americans have," he submitted.

Meanwhile, the U.S. forces have intensified the hunt for the world's most wanted man inspite of the controversies about his death.

Defence officials in Washington said American and allied forces would soon make a fresh thrust into caves and tunnels in the Tora Bora area of eastern Afghanistan. "Operations are imminent," a defence official said.

Amid conflicting reports over Osama bin Laden's whereabouts, top American officials and Pakistani leader, Pervez Musharraf, have at various times made contradictory statements, suggesting obvious uncertainty.

About 500 marines have, however been stationed in Afghanistan to assist in the search for clues to the Saudi-born militant's whereabouts.

Senate *Contd from Pg 1*

Senators will also discuss the security situation in the country as well as measures to be taken by government to restore the country to normalcy.

The controversial Electoral Act, which has generated a lot of criticism may also come up for discussion.

Senate may also resolve on Friday to give President Olusegun Obasanjo sweeping powers to declare a state of emergency in any part of the country if he asks for it.

Senators who spoke to *Daily Trust* on Monday had expressed shock, disbelief and sorrow over the murder of Chief Bola Ige.

A statement signed by Kola Adeyemi, Chief Press Secretary to Senate President, indicated that the emergency meeting will take place at 11 a.m. on Friday and called on senators to endeavour to arrive Abuja on Thursday.

Senate President, Pius Anyim returned to the country from Beijing, China, where he had gone on the invitation of the National Peoples Congress of the Republic of China.

While in China, Anyim held discussions with Chinese investors in the field of agriculture, communications and water resources.

Unipetrol *Contd from Pg 1*

allegations of malpractices in its foreign exchange dealings.

Apart from the suspension of FCMB, which is also the financial adviser and receiving bank to the right issue, the affidavit also deposed that City Securities Limited and CSL stockbrokers, being the trustees and stockbrokers to the right issue, have had their licences revoked thus making them ineligiable to conduct the deal on behalf of Unipetrol.

To further aggravate the matter, according to the plaintiffs, the chairman of the transacting financial institutions has been banned from engaging or being engaged in banking and financial institutional transactions for the rest of their lives following alleged financial misconduct where he was ordered by the CBN to refund N860 million illegally gained from clients.

However, in a counter affidavit deposed by Joachim Okere for the defendants, it avered that the plaintiff has no *locus standi* or cause of action against the defendants.

The defendant also contended that the originating summons did not disclose a cause of action against Unipetrol, adding that the action was frivolous or vexatious and an abuse of court process.

Meanwhile, the matter has been adjourned to January 17, 2002, for hearing of the preliminary objection and possible hearing of the motion on notice.

No war *Contd from Pg 1*

-ganisation al-Qaeda.

Christmas gifts arriving at e Vatican were being ened and searched while ndercover police officers ixed with the crowd.

Metal detectors were installed inside nearby souvenir shops while the air space above the Vatican was being closely monitored.

The Pope, who has been suffering from Parkinson's disease, then delivered his traditional "Urbi et Orbi" blessing to "the city and the world" in 60 languages, including Maori, Maltese, Esperanto and Latin.

Earlier yesterday, he had looked in relatively good shape as he presided over Christmas midnight mass inside Saint Peter's Basilica.

Next January 24 he plans to attend a peace march with other religious leaders in the Italian town of Assisi, birthplace of St. Francis.

Fish out Ige's killers *Contd from Pg 1*

minister.

The president, who led a high-powered Federal Government delegation on a condolence visit to the family of Chief Ige, was extolling the virtues of the late minister when he could no longer control his emotion. He was subsequently guided out of the house by security operatives.

President Obasanjo also confirmed that the former minister had last Wednesday handed him a letter intimating him of his future plans for 2002. The president did not however, give further details of the contents of the letter.

Sources on the presidential entourage said that the president told family members of late Chief Ige that the deceased had confided in him about his plans to embark on certain things in the new year.

"But to my surprise, the sad news was broken to me late on Sunday night and I have ordered the police to fish out all the perpetrators," the president said.

The president who arrived Ibadan in a presidential jet marked N5AXK at about 2.35 p.m. got to the slain minister's SOLEMILIA Court residence at Bodija, Ibadan at exactly 3.05.

He was accompanied by his wife, Stella and some members of the Federal Executive Council.

President Obasanjo who looked pensive and bereaved throughout his 35 minutes stay at Chief Ige's house later had a private talk with the widow, Mrs. Ige and departed at exactly 3.40 p.m.

Those on the entourage of the president include the Foreign Affairs Minister, Alhaji Sule Lamido; Internal Affairs Minister, Chief S.M. Afolabi; Co-operation and Integration in Africa Minister, Chief Abimbola Ogunkelu; Minister of Industry, Chief Kola Jamodu, Senator Wahab Dosumu and the General Officer Commanding (GOC), 2nd Mechanised Division, Major-General Okon E. Okon.

Meanwhile, sympathisers from all walks of life have continued to throng the residence to pay their condolence to the family.

Among the early callers was the former Nigerian High Commissioner to Britain, Prince Bola Ajibola who expressed great shock at the sudden death of Chief Ige.

Prince Ajibola, also a Justice Minister in the administration of General Babangida, said Chief Ige was killed at a time he was still relevant and useful to the country.

"They killed him at the wrong time. They killed him too soon. He was doing a lot of things for this country. He was a busy man," Prince Ajibola said.

Ajibola also revealed that Ige was billed to appear at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at the Hague in February 2002 to defend Nigeria in the legal battle with Cameroon over the disputed Bakassi Pennisula. "I have come with six boxes of legal materials for him to study over the case," he added.

Also at Ige's residence to sympathise with the family was the chairman of Anti-Corruption Commission, Justice Mustapha Akanbi who said that Ige's death was a great loss to the nation and himself as a legal officer.

"It is a great loss to this nation. It is a great loss to me personally because since my assumption of office as the Chairman of Anti-Corruption Commission he has been most helpful and most supportive. He is an active man in every sense of it," Justice Akanbi said.

The former president of the Court of Appeal stressed that Ige would be remembered by the people as a true gentleman and decent person. "We shall miss him. It will be very difficult to find someone like him in this part of the world."

Justice Akanbi lamented that Ige, "A man whose life was spared by Abacha's hit squad had to be killed under a supposed democratic regime of which he was the chief legal officer. What an irony of life?" he queried.

He, therefore, urged the government to stop "shedding crocodile tears" and rise up to the provision of security for the people of Nigeria and stop the killings of precious people who have toiled for the development and unity of the country.

Among the sympathisers that called to express their condolence over Ige's death were, Major-General Adetunji Olurin (rtd) and Brigadier-General Raji Rasaki (rtd), former governors of Oyo State and Chief Olu Onagoruwa, former Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Others are Chief Yemi Farohunbi, Olajire Aikulola, Mojisoluwa Akinfenwa, Alhaji Lateed Jakande, Elder Wole Oyelese, Justice M.O. Adio, Chief Adebayo Faleti, Hon. Muyiwa Oladipo, Speaker of Ogun State House of Assembly. Chief Richard Akinjide former justice minister.

Earlier in Abuja, President Obasanjo had cautioned Osun State Governor, Bisi Akande, and his deputy, Iyiola Omisore, to sink their differences and work together for peace to reign in the state.

The president gave the advice in separate meetings with the duo said to be at the centre of the crisis in Osun State which culminated in the murder of Chief Bola Ige last Sunday.

In the wake of the murder, the president dispatched two presidential jets separately to bring the Osun State governor and his deputy to the presidential village for an urgent briefing.

While Governor Akande arrived the villa at 4.40 p.m. when the meeting took off, Omisore arrived at exactly 6.45 p.m. after the meeting between his boss and President Obasanjo had ended.

Although details were not made known, presidential spokesman, Tunji Oseni, said the meeting centred on the need to maintain peace, prevent reprisals and reassure the people of the state.

The President is expected to spend today and tomorrow in Ota while he would depart for Yola on Friday for the wedding of Vice-President Abubakar Atiku's daughter and return to Ota same day.

On Saturday, he is expected to host the FRCN live network programme, "The President Explains" from Ota. He is expected back in Abuja on Monday.

Late Bola Ige

NEWS

Bandits attack commissioner in Kebbi

Two commissioners in Kebbi State were attacked on Monday by people suspected to be armed bandits.

The commissioners are that of Health, Alhaji Ibrahim Mai'ahu and a Permanent Secretary in the Department of Local Government Services,

From Kabir Dogon-Daji, *in Birinin-Kebbi*

Alhaji Umaru Dan'illelah.

The two APP chieftains were attacked at their residences along Makerar-Gandu road in the Birnin Kebbi metropolis at the early hours of Monday by the hoodlums who were said to be carrying dangerous weapons.

Their first victim was the commissioner for health, whose house they were reported to have gained access, beat him up severely and later shot him on the right leg.

The bandits carted away an unspecified amount of money and property at the health commissioner's house.

After leaving Alhaji Ibrahim Mai'ahu's house, they entered the adjacent home of Alhaji Umaru Dan'illelah where they meted on him the same treatment. Although he was not shot he was seriously manhandled, leading to the dislocation of various joints in his body.

As at the time *Daily Trust* visited the houses of the two victims, people were seen trooping in to sympathise with the relations and families of the victims while the duo were taken to the Federal Medical Centre, Birnin-Kebbi and later to the Aliero traditional orthopaedic hospital.

Gov. Aliero of Kebbi State

Bola Ige: PDP moves to check thuggery

The ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has said an all-party code of conduct barring politicians who

Chief Audu Ogbeh

By Sani Babadoko

engaged in thuggery and other forms of violence from belonging to any of the registered political parties would be put in place.

In a statement in Abuja yesterday on the assassination of the Minister of Justice and Attorney-General of the Federation, Chief Bola Ige last Sunday, the PDP National Chairman, Chief Audu Ogbeh said politicians have a responsibility to protect and defend democratic values.

He said since becoming PDP chairman he has been consulting with the leadership of the other registered political parties of ways to rid the system of this malaise and that Chief Ige's murder has strengthened the resolve in that direction.

His words, "it is indeed regrettable that at this time that we have done so much to reposition our great country from the near anarchy and mindless killings that characterised certain regimes of our recent past, there are still some who are bent on taking us back to the dark ages."

Ogbeh said the murder of Chief Bola Ige, is reprehensible and the PDP condemns it in the strongest terms adding that as a party, "it has always maintained that competition for power should never degenerate to the level of violence, thuggery and murder."

Ogbeh said Ige was never a man of violence. "He was a man of ideas and ideals, a brilliant lawyer and an eloquent speaker who never shied away from speaking forthrightly," the statement added.

The PDP National Chairman called on the Federal Government to move swiftly to arrest and bring to justice the murderers especially against the growing concerns that the killing might be linked to the power tussle between the Osun State Governor and his deputy.

Reps may declare 'state of emergency' on erring states

A member of the House of Representatives and a chieftain of the All Peoples Party in Kogi State, Alh. Muazu Abimaje, representing Ankpa, Olamoboro and Omala, has said the National Assembly will declare a state of emergency on any state that goes ahead to dissolve its local government councils in 2002.

He made this disclosure while chatting with newsmen in Lokoja.

The lawmaker called on politicians to avoid any action that would create problems for the survival of the nascent democracy.

Alh. Abimaje added that all the provisions made in the Electoral Law by the National Assembly were done with the national interest taking precedent over individual and group interests.

The lawmaker said as people's representatives from various parts of the country, they have taken into cognisance the provisions in the Electoral Law and are genuinely convinced that their action was in the interest of the country and urged aggrieved politicians to go to court. On the threat by governors to conduct council elections in 2002, the lawmaker warned that politicians at whatever level should not do anything that would contravene the provisions of the constitution.

The federal legislator posited that all the provisions made in the Electoral Law by the National Assembly were carried out in the interest of the country and urged the political class to learn to make sacrifices on issues of national interest.

Address internal security problem, FG urged

Vice-Chairman of the United Nigeria Democratic Party (UNDP), North-Central zone, Alhaji Nura Mohammed, has asked President Olusegun Obasanjo to urgently address the insecurity problem now confronting the country.

Reacting to the assassination of Justice Minister, Chief Bola Ige, in an interview with *Daily Trust* in Ilorin, Alhaji Nura said the murderous act was a manifestation of the unpardonable break down of law and order, and the pitiable state of insecurity in Nigeria.

The zonal vice-chairman noted that the death of Chief Ige in the hands of hired assassins is like killing the inspector-general of police and the justice minister together. According to Alhaji Nura, "we should also regard all the money spent on President Obasanjo's trip abroad to win foreign investors as a big economic waste as no investor would risk his life and resources to come here."

He called on the Federal Government to act decisively and promptly and bring the killers of Chief Ige to justice, adding that never in the history of the world has a justice minister been killed anywhere in that gruesome manner. Alhaji Mohammed expressed the hope that the police could track down the killers within weeks if prompt action was taken.

Police nab Chadian bandits

A gang of four Chadian and Nigerian bandits operating within Maiduguri and other parts of Borno State has been arrested by the Borno State Police Command in Ngamboru-Ngala.

Commissioner of Police Uba Bala Ringim told journalists in Maiduguri that the gang confessed to a series of armed robbery operations in several wards in Maiduguri where the four carted away a quarter of a million naira and 27 bundles of wrappers, among other things.

Ringim said the police recovered guns, bullets, a sword and other weapons from the bandits.

From Abdullahi Bego, *in Maiduguri*

The commissioner of police, however, said that two of the four bandits were gunned down by the police when they tried to escape after the police took them to Auno village for investigation purpose.

Alhaji Uba Ringim added that his command is in custody of six other men arrested following a robbery of First Bank Plc and People's Bank in Damboa town in which the robbers killed a police corporal, Mr. Jonathan Akpabi and carted away nearly half a million naira.

Ringim promised to do even more to rid Borno of robbery menace.

Nigerian drug suspect set free in U.K. –*High Commission*

A Nigerian drug suspect, David Ogundipe, was last week discharged and acquitted by a Basioldon Crown court, Essex, United Kingdom, on charges of dealing in cocaine.

A statement by the Nigeria High Commission in London, made available to NAN on Monday, said that Ogundipe, a flight manager with Koda Airlines, was detained and charged to court with three others for allegedly ferrying about half a tonne of cocaine through the Southend Airport in Essex on October 16.

The statement, signed by Head of Information at the Commission, Mr. Peter Ogbonnaya, said the court was told that on October 11, a crew of four took off from Belgrade airport for Essex on a chartered Nigerian-owned Koda Air, which Ogundipe accompanied as flight manager.

According to a prosecution witness, Mr. Nikola Lusiac, who was on the flight, the crew had told Ogundipe that the aircraft was going for repairs, adding that the crew had intended to drug Ogundipe with sleeping tablets.

The statement said although Ogundipe was not drugged by the crew as planned, the witness's evidence helped in exonerating him.

The witness further told the court that when they got to the Southend Airport, the crew dropped bundles of cocaine off the run-way, but "eagle-eyed security officers foiled the move and arrested the crew."

Members of the crew included the captain, Barret-Jolley; a co-pilot, Peter Carine; a flight engineer, Martin Lahe and Nikola Lusiac.

At the court's sitting last week, Ogundipe was discharged and acquitted, while the three defendants were remanded in prison custody pending the determination of the case, said the statement.

The statement added that the High Commission was represented throughout the court hearing.

Let's make Xmas a healing period, says Gov Dariye

Governor Joshua Dariye of Plateau State has called on the people of the state "to use this year's Christmas to serve as a healing period."

In his Christmas message broadcast yesterday, the governor enjoined both Christians and Muslims to imbibe virtues that would lead to building a peaceful, united and prosperous Plateau State.

Dariye also enumerated the gains of his administration in the past 30 months, attributing his success to the co-operation and understanding of the people.

He called on all citizens to re-double their efforts towards championing the cause of peace, stressing that the state must retain its cherished glory of being the "home of peace and tourism."

Gov Joshua Dariye

NEWS

Hajj screening begins

From Bamgboye Adelanwa, *in Lagos*

The Lagos State Pilgrims Welfare Board has commenced screening for the year 2002 Hajj even as the fare has been fixed for N178,000 while the Basic travelling allowance is $100.

According to the executive secretary, Lagos State Muslim Pilgrims Welfare Board, Alhaji F.A.O Aridu, the screening and innoculation exercise of the intending pilgrims will start Monday Dec. 24 to Dec. 28 at the old secretariat Mosque G.R.A. Ikeja.

On some Nigerian Pilgrims who were reportedly stranded at Jiddah. Alhaji Jimoh Oluwatosin, the Public Relations Officer (PRO) explained that all the 177 Pilgrims from Lagos who left for the Umrah (lesser Hajj) have all returned to Lagos last Tuesday, He said that the last batch with the officials of the board returned on Wednesday. He said that it was not impossible that pilgrims from other northern states were stranded at Jiddah because of some arrangement with Kabo Airline.

He, however, disclosed that no pilgrim from Lagos is stranded.

He further said that the inaugural flight for the 2002 Hajj operations has been fixed for January 21, 2002,

Governor Bola Tinubu of Lagos State.

Akume tasks journalists over democracy

Mike Elaigwu, *in Makurdi*

The Benue State Governor, Mr. George Akume, has enjoined journalists to pull their resources together to ensure the sustenance of democracy which they helped to enthrone some two years ago.

Mr. Akume gave the charge while donating a set of computers to the state council of NUJ in Makurdi.

According to the Chief Press Secretary to the governor, Mr. Terhav Agerzua, who made the donation on behalf of the governor said the items donated was meant to boost the morale of journalists serving in the state.

While commending the journalists in the state for their cordial relationship with the government, particularly during the period of Benue/Taraba crisis, Mr. Akume said the donation was a fulfilment of his earlier promise to assist the council in educating its members with the available resources of the state government.

He reiterated his commitment to complete the Government House Press Centre which is expected to cost the state government over N20 million.

In her response, the state chairman of NUJ, Mrs. Joyce Bur, called for unity among serving journalists in the state to ensure the success of the democracy they fought hard to enthrone.

She assured the governor of the judicious use of the computers donated to the state council.

Council of Igala muslims establishes hospital

By Yakubu Ozohu-Suleiman

The council of Igala Muslim Community of Nigeria has established a muslim hospital in Ayangba, Kogi State, to expand its humanitarian activities.

Disclosing this to ***Daily Trust***, the Imam of Karu site Jumata mosque, Malam Musa Imam Muhammad, who heads the Abuja chapter of the council said "in most parts of Igala land, it is common to find missionary hospitals and schools, and these have been very formidable tools with which some of our people are being converted into Christianity.

"So we Muslims decided among ourselves in the council to pull resources together and establish similar things to help our brothers and sisters and other members of the community.

"In fact, the construction of the hospital is nearing completion, hopefully early next year, it will be ready for commissioning."

Malam Musa, who further disclosed that the council had earlier established three Islamic nursery and primary schools in Igala land said that apart from embarking on tangible humanitarian projects, the council is poised to spread the course of Islam to the people of Igala both at home and elsewhere.

Sultan Muhammadu Maccido

Said he: "In Abuja for instance, our people have been complaining that only Hausa language is used in majority of the mosques in Abuja for preaching and that most of them do not understand the language. In this respect the council of Igala muslims in Abuja and other places outside home has arranged an annual *tafsir* programme using Igala language. This programme takes place every Ramadan month.

"It should be made clear that we do not, by our council and activities, intend to segregate ourselves from others but to make our people embrace Islam as we believe that teachings are better understood and assimilated when conducted in language primary to the subjects or learners."

Malam Musa, who said the council began its annual tafsir programme in 1995, stated that the recent *tafsir* focused intensively on Suratul Baqara and stopped at Suratul Hajj, implying that over 20 chapters of the Holy Qur'an have been covered during the programme.

He, therefore, called on well meaning Muslim ulamas both of Igala and non–Igala origin to come to the aid of the council financially to enable it achieve its dreams of propagating the course of Islam.

Bola Ige: Osoba urges Ogun residents to be calm

From Olumide Bajulaiye, *in Abeokuta*

Ogun State Governor, Chief Olusegun Osoba, has asked residents of the state to remain calm following the death of Justice Minister and Attorney-General of the Federation, Chief Bola Ige, last Sunday.

Osoba, who in a statement endorsed by the Chief Press Secretary, Mr. Latola Elagbede, expressed shock at the minister's demise, urged the people of the state to go about their daily businesses without let or hindrance.

The governor said as a mark of respect for the departed legal luminary, statesman and deputy leader of *Afenifere*, all public engagements in the state for the rest of the year have been cancelled.

The governor prayed God to grant the late minister eternal rest.

Rep decries poor police funding

By Musa Badamasi

Poor funding has been identified as a major factor responsible for the various inadequacies of the Nigeria Police (NP).

Honourable Samaila Balarabe, (Sokoto North) Member, House Committee on Police Affairs, made this observation in an exclusive interview with ***Daily Trust*** over the weekend saying the Nigeria Police was seriously underfunded.

He said for the Nigeria Police to be combat ready in quelling ethnic, religious and other social-political unrest, it has to be well funded.

According to him, "there was no way the Nigeria Police could quell crimes in the country with outdated weaponry, malnourished personnel as a result of poor condition of service.

"To improve the combat readiness of the Police, he called on the Federal Government to budget sufficient funds in the 2002 fiscal year to enable it acquire sophisticated weapons, train its personnel and improve the general welfare of the men and officers of the force.

Honourable Balarabe, who has just returned from France with other members of House Committee on Police Affairs, said in all the countries visited particularly United States, Holland, England and Sudan, it was evident that there was the need for a lot of improvement in the Police in Nigeria.

On the rate of crime in the country, he said, "you do not accuse the Police which is seriously under-funded and, therefore, lacks the modern weapons and well trained personnel to confront a sophisticated gang of merciless people.

"I want to assure you that if we can give the police enough funds and the needed moral support, it can match armed robbers weapon to weapon and strength to strength," he stated.

He called on all stakeholders in the nation's economy to assist the government with ways on how to reduce the rate of unemployment which was the primary cause of crime

Hon. Samaila Balarabe

Killers of Briton in P/Harcourt arrested

From Wisdom Patrick, *in Port Harcourt*

The Police in Rivers State have confirmed the arrest of three persons suspected to be behind the recent killing of one David Girllan, a Briton, in Port Harcourt.

The state Commissioner of Police, Mr. Bamidele Thomas, who revealed this to journalists yesterday in a press briefing added that the suspects had made useful statements to the police.

The police chief once again dismissed as untrue allegation by the British High Commission that the killing of David Girllan was in sympathy to the current war against terrorism led by United States of America and its allies including Britain.

Narrating how the attack was carried out, Bamidele stated that the spot in which the deceased was driving has splashed water by a yet to be identified man who opened fire on the car.

The Rivers State number one cop said because of the nature of the car, the bullet was able to pass through from the rear light and hit the late expatriate on the head and he died before medical help could reach him.

nta 2

NTA 2 CHANNEL 5
Victoria Island, Lagos
Your reachout station
PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

TIME	WEDNESDAY
6.00-6.30	Aerobics
6.30-7.00	Peri. The Globe/Cartoon
7.00-7.05	News
7.05-7.30	Reports
7.30-8.00	Traffic Watch
8.00-8.30	Humour on Ice
8.30-9.00	Crime Watch
9.00-9.30	Golden Cage(B)
9.30-10.00	Motor Magazine
10.00-10.10	SNOOPS
10.10-10.30	SNOOPS
10.30-10.45	
10.45-11.00	
11.00-12.00	One on One
12.00-12.30	Family Matters
12.30-1.00	Airborne(sp)
1.00-1.30	Super Story
1.30-2.00	(sp)
2.00-2.15	News of the Hour(N)
2.15-2.30	Expose®
2.30-3.00	SuperHighway®
3.00-3.30	SuperHighway®
3.30-4.00	Sledge Hammer
4.00-4.30	News Update
4.30-5.00	Talking Finger (N) Live
5.00-5.30	Talk French(N)
5.30-6.00	On Wheels(sp)
6.00-6.30	Business&National Events(sp)
6.30-7.00	IT Impact(sp)
7.00-7.30	News at Seven
7.30-8.00	Todays Woman(sp)
8.00-8.30	Maggi Family Menu(N)
8.30-9.00	Strides(N)
9.00-10.00	NetworkNews
10.00-10.30	Sport Stars(N)
10.30-11.00	Household of God® sp
11.00-11.30	Jazz House II
11.30-12.00	Energy Summit(N)
12.00-12.30	Newscap
12.30-1.00	Super Movies
1.00-1.30	Hour
1.30-2.00	NBA Action
1.00-2.00	Ramadan
2.00-2.30	Diet
2.30-3.30	Live
3.30-4.30	
4.30-5.00	
5.00-6.00	

News Focus

Bola Ige (1930-2001)

"We must not dread the cloud which darkens our skiff. True for a while they hide the sun., but the sun is not quenched. Before long the sun will out again."

--Bola Ige on 1983 Oyo governorship election.

By Sani Babadoko,
Political Editor

It was Dr. Stanley Machebuh at *The Guardian* who first called late Minister of Justice and Attorney-General of the Federation, Chief James Ajibola Idowu Ige (SAN), the *Cixero of Esa-Oke*. The name after the Greek philosopher, Cicero, was in respect of the intellectual prowess, power of speech and the political height attained by Ige who was arguably one of the icons of modern Nigeria's political history.

A polyglot who could speak the three major Nigerians languages (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba) fluently as well as English and Latin, Uncle Bola as he is fondly called was born in Esa-Oke, Ilesha, Osun State on September 13, 1930 and grew up in Kaduna the post-colonial capital of Northern Nigeria.

He attended St Joseph's Catholic School, Kaduna for his primary education, which he completed at St John's School, Ilaro-Ilesha, Osun State in 1942. From there Ige went to the famous Ibadan Grammar School, Ibadan between 1943 and 1948. It was in this school that his oratorical, lyrical and poetic prowess began to manifest.

He went on to the University College, Ibadan 1949-55, where he took a degree in classics – a course most students dread and avoided like a plague. After graduation he taught in his *alma mater*, Ibadan Grammar School between 1955 and 1956 before proceeding to the University College, London in 1956.

In February 1961, he was called to the bar at the Inner Temple, London after which he went into private legal practice. On returning home after his law studies, Ige an avowed Awoist plunged into the stormy politics of the Western region in the heady days of the wild wild west.

Prior to this time, Ige had joined the nationalist struggle for the country's independence in the 1940s and 1950s as a member of the students and youth wings of the Action Group (AG) which, metamorphosed from Chief Obafemi Awolowo's *Egbe Omo Oduduwa*. He later became the AG's publicity secretary.

In this pursuit, he had several brushes with the law especially during the Action Group crisis of late 1962 climaxing in his arrest along with no fewer than 28 other AG stalwarts in January 1966 on the orders of the then Premier of the Western Region, Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola. He was subsequently charged with treason and jailed but later released.

Between 1967 and 1969, Ige served as the Commissioner for Agriculture and Natural Resources in the Western State and also as Commissioner for Lands and Housing between January and May 1970.

Nine years later in 1979, the *Cicero of Esa-Oke* a staunch stalwart of the defunct Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) was elected governor of the old Oyo State, thus becoming the first Executive Governor of the state until 1983. His sharp tongue, blunt remarks and sometimes scathing criticisms of his political opponents were legendary. That, however, did not stop his losing his re-election bid allegedly under controversial circumstances to his rival, Chief Omololu Olunloyo, of the NPN.

But as fate would have it, three months afterwards, the military came calling. Ige was later convicted by a military tribunal of corruptly enriching his party, the UPN, to the tune of N781,750. Subsequently, the military under General Muhammadu Buhari sentenced Ige to a 21-year jail term which was later reduced to ten. His appeal against the sentence was unsuccessful and he spent the next 18 months in prison. He was released in July 1986 at the instance of Justice Mohammed Bello's panel. After his release from prison he went back to his flourishing law firm in Ibadan.

Throughout the eight-year transition programme prosecuted by the General Ibrahim Babangida regime, the renowned orater and polyglot adopted a *siddon look* attitude. He faulted the transition programme on the ground that it was faulty in conception as well as implementation and predicted, quite rightly as it turned out, that it was not likely to work.

This attitude continue and was strengthened after the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election presumably won by Chief M.K.O. Abiola. This continued through the Ernest Shonekan-led Interim National Government (ING) until it was removed by late General Sani Abacha who took power for himself in November 1993.

Because of his opposition to the Abacha regime, Ige along with like-minded people formed the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO). He was the one who described the five political parties under Abacha as the five fingers of a leprous hand and continued his active opposition through NADECO and went through hard times in the hands of security agents. He was harraassed and haunted at will in Ibadan, where he built his political career. Ige suddenly became an outcast as the military almost ran him out of town.

In 1998 during the May Day rally which turned into a bloody riot in Ibadan following the storming of a newspaper house in the ancient city, Ige the present Oyo State Governor, Alhaji Lam Adesina, and the late Comrade Ola Oni, among others were arrested for their alleged roles in the disturbances. All of them were clamped into detention in different parts of the country. Ige was sent to Makurdi prison in Benue State, while the then Oyo State administrator, Colonel Ahmed Usman (rtd), described them as prisoners of war.

Ige, however, joined the Alliance for Democracy (AD) during the General Abdulsalami Abubakar transition programme in 1998 and was its presidential aspirant against Chief Olu Falae who was later adopted on APP ticket along with Alhaji Umaru Shinkafi who was Ige's bossom friend.

His assassination at his Bodija, Ibadan residence last Sunday must have come as a rude shock to many Nigerians but to followers of the politics of Osun State which last Wednesday snowballed into the murder of a state legislator, Hon. Odunayo Olagboju. It is a horrific twist to the latest political tussle in Oyo and Osun States and by extension the whole of South-West.

The event is a fallout of the frosty relations between the governor of Osun State, Chief Bisi Akande, and his deputy, Chief Iyiola Omisore. Observers, however, believe they are tools in the political chess game being played by Chief Bola Ige and the Internal Affairs Minister, Chief Sunday Afolabi, who was deputy to Ige when he was governor of Oyo State. The two fell out by the end of their tenure and have ever since remained arch-rivals in their bid to control the soul of Osun State politics.

The crisis boiled over only last week when Ige narrowly escaped being mobbed at Ile-Ife by an irate crowd that removed his cap and smashed his pair of medicated glasses. The incident happened within the premises of the palace of the Ooni of Ife, Oba Okunade Sijuwade, shortly after the conferment of the chieftaincy title of *Yeye Oranmiyan* of Ile-Ife on the wife of President Olusegun Obasanjo, Stella. This attack may not be unconnected with his unflinching support for the Osun State Governor, Chief Akande. The Osun lawmaker murdered last Wednesday reportedly moved the inpeachment motion, which failed, against the governor. He reportedly belonged to the deputy governor's camp, which Chief Adebayo is believed to have given active encouragement.

Apparently, worried by the recent spate of bloody clashes in the state the pan-Yoruba cultural organisation, the *Afenifere* leader, Chief Abraham Adesanya, convened an extraordinary reconciliation meeting or next Thursday.

Chief Ige was the deputy leader of the *Afenifere* and his assassination may now put renewed urgency to and change the tone of that meeting.

Chief Bola Ige

"Those who swore to uphold the constitution when they become governors and legislators cannot turn round to ask for Sovereign National Conference." *-on the SNC*

"I do not belong to any faction. Between Falae and myself, there is no disagreement whatsoever and people always think because of what happened in January 1998 that there is some misunderstanding. I am sure if you ask Chief Falae he will tell you that I have never said one wrong word about him and he has never complained about me." *-on AD crisis*

Opinion

Eight groups of death

By Yakubu Ibn Mohammed

The draw for the 2002 World Cup has come and gone leaving in its trail a cacophony of views expressed by soccer pundits and enthusiasts from around the globe on the expected fortunes and misfortunes of the 32 finalists based on their groupings. From coast to coast, the media has been replete with accounts of such views as expressed by the likes of Edson Arantes Dos Nascimento (Pele), Daniel Pasarella, Goran Eriksson, Franz Backenbauer, Lars Lagerback of Sweden and Argentina's Marcelo Bielsa among a litany of other soccer buffs. Coming closer home the deluge continued with the views and comments from the likes of Kojo Williams, Kashimawo Laloko, Bisi Lawrence, Patrick Ekeji, Prince Abidoye, etc.

While the views of commentators in the first bracket (like Pele) took global perspectives, those in the second concentrated their treatises almost entirely on Group F. At the risk of sounding boring, let me remind readers (as if the fact is easily forgettable) that Group F is where Nigeria is placed alongside Argentina, England and Sweden. It is also the group most sports commentators and analysts all over the world choose to call the group of death", and which I insist on calling plain Group F. This is because at the end of the first round or group matches each of the eight groups must register two fatalities as only the first and second teams advance to the round of sixteen. This, therefore, makes all the groups death zones. Of course death will be well deserved to some teams, while to others it will be though to be unfortunate, but in the end of the effect is the same – an early flight back home.

In Group A, holders France, in spite of some match rustiness on account of automatic qualification are clear favourites to win the group. Their stars who displayed such extravagant brilliance in France '98 and Euro 2000 are still making waves with the possible exception of Fabian Berthez whose recent form has been embarrassingly dismal. Uruguay, in spite of qualifying via a playoff is my pick for the second spot. Watch out for Spain in Group B. South Africa is capable of picking up the second spot if only they can sort out their internal wranglings and get the likes of Radebe, McCarthy, Bartlett to renew their commitment to the cause of the Bafana Bafana. Anything short of this will see Paraguay taking the advantage gladly.

Brazil, after a nightmarish qualification saga which saw heads rolling, should take Group C without any consternation after which their face in the proceedings becomes much more dicey. Turkey should be able to ward off the challenges of Costa Rica and grab the second spot given their antecedents in European football and the increasing profile of their local league. With Portugal and Louis Figo staking an unassailable pretension to the leadership of Group D, the battle for the second spot will be "bloody" as Poland and the USA try to out-manoeuvre one another with Poland having a slight edge and finally squeezing through.

In Group G the Azzuris (Italy) are capable of warding off very strong challenges from Croatia and Mexico to place first while the latter can dispense with Croatia when the chips are down, especially now that Suker and Boban are not exactly capable of causing any wrinkles.

In spite of what my instincts tell me I still see Belgium and Tunisia just making it from Group H. For sure Russia is capable of staking a claim but in the end it will remain just that – a claim. And Japan should be happy crating early scares. For Group F, I am content to dwell on the near intrinsic rivalry between Argentina and England which should produce a cracking game of football. For me a clearer picture will emerge after all the teams have had a game each. Talk to you then!

Ibn Mohammed writes from P. M. B. 0146, Bauchi.

Re-Thinking security in Nigeria

By Mohammed Zubairu Ladan

In spite of the positive steps so far taken in respect of transformatory politics as well as institutional re-build by the present administration, the civil society has failed to recognise any competence to effect concrete change through non-violent means. Even the policy makers are steadily deviating from making the best decision for the people to national and distributional grievances, making it more difficult for real change to thrive. For instance the Nigerian Police Force had received so much fund to ensure security all over the country, but the outbreaks of violence here and there have embedded the competence of NPF in illusion. In the eastern part of the country like Aba and Onitsha, their services are no longer required to put in place security of life and properties, as militia groups (Bakassi Boys) are said to be more effective. Just like in the South-west, where OPC have taken over protection of life and properties, in the Northern part of the country vigilant groups (*Yanbanga*) are also on the rise. Moreover, actions and reactions which sparked the communal clash between the Tiv and the Jukun and other crises that took place in Jos, Kaduna, Kano, etc are good examples of a polarised society that risks the future.

However, the people have begun to ponder questions on the nature of security and the fundamental causes of these conflicts that have set back our unity on the path of destruction. The common misperceptions regarding security in its common interpretation or primordial meaning is a contentious issue which must be argued. While the conservative might think of security in its common meaning, i.e. protection of life and property, nationalists believe it should extend beyond its common meaning to encompass the primordial notion such as provision of basic needs to the people, like adequate employment, adequate infrastructure, equitable distribution and not control of natural resources and so on.

Another contentious point of argument is the general belief that the remote causes of these crises are traceable to the exigencies of the "powers that be" and the "kings that knows no wrong". This factor can be relegated to religious hatred from where it is then exploited by ambitious leaders. More worrisome is how the youths are exploited by some of these opinion leaders and in turn considering joining civil forces or militia group as viable employment opportunity, especially those living in poverty.

The consequences can even be more terrible in a democratic setting where the government has failed to address national grievances. Such grievances against the interest of the people can fabricate serious conflict and war. More so the impact on economic development as well as technological advancement will take queue from Liberia, Sierra-Leon, Rwandan cases whose people ~ engulfed in a flood of refugees. A lot has been learnt from the lesson of the recent America-Afghanistan miseries.

All of these experiences pose a great challenge to our decision makers (elected or appointed) to make the best decision for the people and not for themselves. The electorate too must help in conscienstising the general public to realize peace as the only prerequisite for development.

It is also important that we tackle the task of nation revival with a sense of urgency, courage and justice to retrieve our country from a dangerous precipice.

Ladan is the executive director, Imperial Media Associates, Suite 3A1 Goodness Plaza, Wuse Zone 5, Abuja.
Imperialmag@yahoo.com

Ilorin within Yoruba context

By AbdulMumuni Yinka Ajia

Like many of the larger African societies such as the Swazi, the Yoruba of the guinea coast are not really a single "tribe". Rather, they are a series of diverse peoples bound together by common language, dress, symbolism in chieftaincy and ritual, as well as in mythology and history. Although there is the realisation that a given society may vary internally in content and form from place to place even though they speak the same language.

The term "Yoruba" now used to describe all those who speak a common language, originally applied only to the peoples of the old Oyo kingdom. There seems to have been no term used in the past by the Yoruba to designate themselves. Yoruba in Dahomey are sometimes called "anago" and it is used in Ondo to describe the Yoruba language. It seems likely that people were formerly designated as they still are, by the name of their kingdoms i.e. Oyo, Ijebu, Ife, Ijesha, Egba and so on.

The Ilorin are a Yoruba speaking group of people living in the north central region of Nigeria, characterised by a highly developed monarchy, hereditary aristocracy and joined by a common religious belief.

The Ilorin Yoruba "fa" dialect is a click language combining the dual heritage of its peoples (Yoruba & Hausa). For historical purpose and without been presumptuous I affirm that Ilorin have never at any given time directly been under any southwest kingdom. It was too far away to the north of the old Oyo Empire and virtually an uninhabited vast strip of land. Its latter day prominence came as a result of its admixture of peoples from diverse culture, language and tradition who later settled therein.

Kingship is hereditary in the Yoruba/Fulani Alfa Alimi clan and Ilorin historians recall the names of 10 emirs before the present one beginning with Sarki Abdulsalami in 1831, the year the emirate was born.

People from different parts of the Yoruba southwest mostly Muslims and northern Muslims which include but not limited to Fulani, Nupe, Gwari, Baruba, Kanuri and Hausa came to this land that has become synonymous with a high standard of Islamic scholarship for different reasons. The Muslim Yoruba came for religious emancipation and to be able to practice their religion according to the teachings of the Qur'an, which wouldn't have been possible under the prevailing conditions of the environment where they came from. On the other hand the northerners came as a result of the jihad of 1804 Flagged off by the late Sheikh Othman Danfodio. Both parties found in one another a perfect relationship and a common fate, which has endured to this day.

As the settlement expands both in learning and commerce, the council of *ulamas* (scholars) which have all the tribes as members decided to have an Amir (leader of the faithful). As it is with Muslim societies and in accordance with the *sunnah*, the council don't have to consider tribal, language, or any other petty factors in their choice of the would be leader. The Qur'an enjoined them to chose a pious Muslim from amongst themselves and that's exactly what they did. They find in Alfa Alimi, a good leader, a compatriot and a trustworthy Muslim. Hence they chose him as the Amir.

Alfa Alimi probably due to old age or some other exigencies of that time decided to give the position to his first son, AbdulSalami.

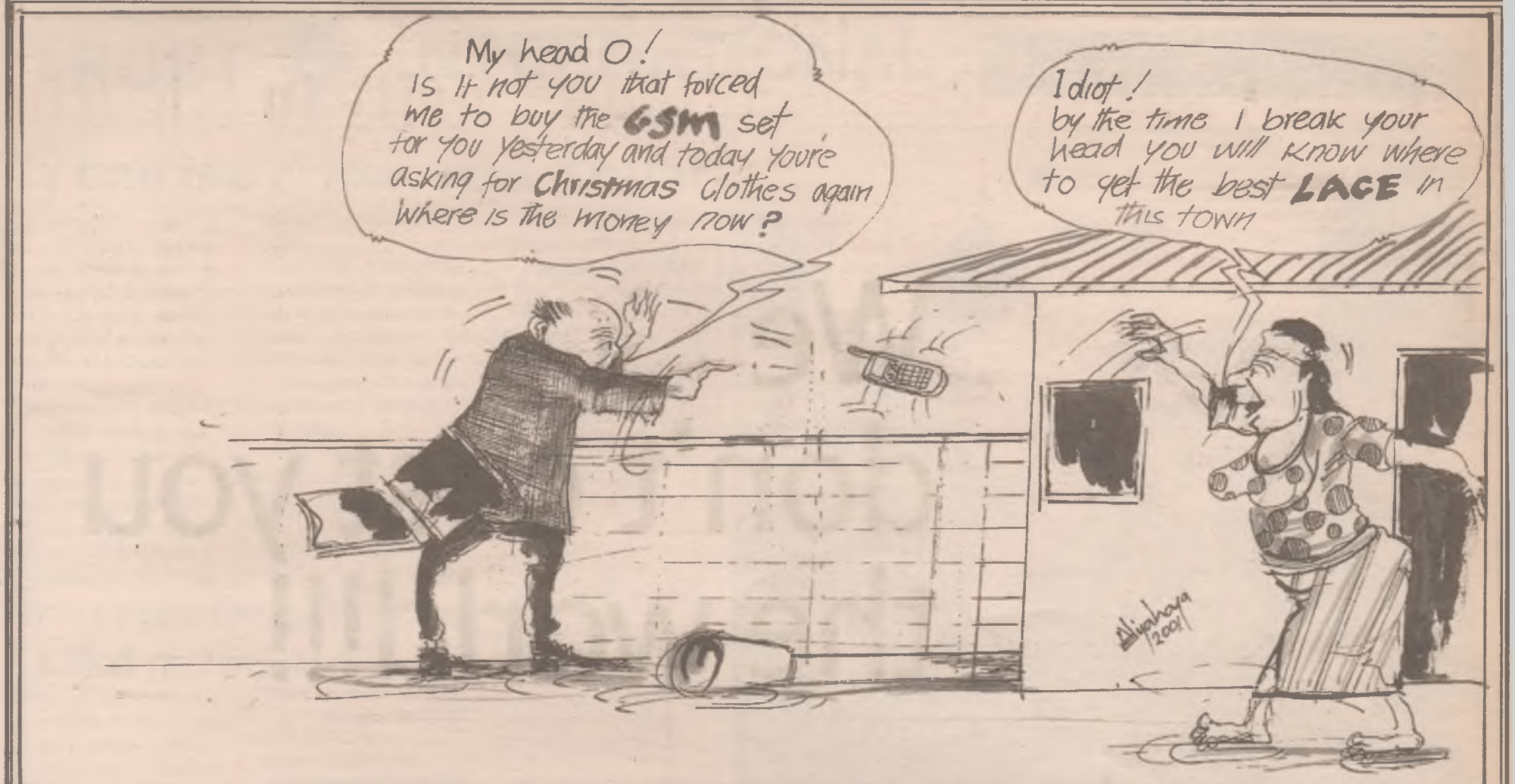
Under AbdulSalami, the emirate extended its rule over several villages welding them into a single state. The early Fulani emirs did not attempt to enforce their culture, they in fact dropped their language and took on the prevalent Yoruba language as their own. This is a characteristic of the Fulani everywhere they settle in as can be seen in the Hausa states. Today in Ilorin, the architectural style, food, dress, utensils, culture and tradition of their two heritages (Yoruba & Hausa) are perfectly blended and there is no conflict between the two. Considerable cohabitation and uniformity resulted from the method of absorption and the participation in state affairs granted to all regardless of their tribal or lingual background. This is evident in the composition of the emirate chiefs such as Balogun Gambari, Fulani, Alanamu, Ajikobi and the many *magajis* representing different tribal and lingual origins. The emirate is an absorptive state, which has successfully welded into a single structure, peoples of diverse languages and custom.

At this point I like to say that there was no Laderin in any Ilorin leadership historical archives. Not even in any ancient document both in Ilorin or Oyo. The oral confirmation by surviving elders of these two cities was not possible either. Because the truth is they are old men with integrity and they wouldn't confirm what they knew to never have occurred. Those of us that are interested in the history of our people and the emergence of the Ilorin Emirate have not been able to lay our hands on any credible document to proof the existence of the "Laderin issue". We believe it only existed in the imaginations of a paid few people grossly ignorant of their history. However it should be noted that while Laderin may have lived in Ilorin at a particular point in time, he lived only as one of the many peasants struggling for survival in the old Ilorin settlement.

The success with which other people would understand the Ilorin depends on the clarity with which they understand their position. They are a strong, resilient people joined by destiny and shared values they love to remain so.

This treatise is aimed to stimulate the general public to make inquiries on their own and for them to be dispassionate in rejecting falsehoods that are been peddled about. After all if individuals are to retain any capacity to form their own judgements and opinions they must read for themselves.

AbdulMumuni Yinka Ajia, a graduate of Economics from the Bayero University, Kano, writes from the USA.



YOUR LETTERS

The ordeal of Nyanya residents

Nyanya stands about 15 Kilometres away from the heart of Abuja, it predominantly boasts of government workers, civil servants, traders, company workers and lumpen proletariats, and has its fair share of pimps, ladies of easy virtue and criminals. Nyanya acquired this status of housing both low and middle-income earners because by Abuja standards with regards to accommodation it is relatively affordable.

But living in Nyanya is a hell of an experience what with the spate of untimely and preventable deaths on the ever-busy Nyanya-Keffi road, NEPA's light rationing, water board's commercial approach to the provision of water to the residents, Abuja Environmental Protection Board's inability to do their work leaving the entire environment filthy and sickness prone.

Over the years, Nyanya-Keffi road has acquired a repulsive attraction to itself by the number of accidents recorded on daily basis. The roasting alive of about 40 people last November on this road by a petrol tanker is still fresh in our memories the carcasses of the accident vehicles even still litter the spot of the mishap as a reminder to those who lost dear ones. A space of three days after this one, another accident happened very close to that spot claiming four persons, these are human beings not mere statistics.

This spate of killings on the Nyanya road continues till date as on the 20th of March 2001 another accident involving a kerosene tanker and three small cars in which people also lost their lives, also on the 17th of June this same year, 15 people were sent to their early graves in an accident involving a Peugeot J5 Boxer bus and a Honda car, the boxer, which fell into a ditch as a result of the accident, went into flames. These instances are the ones I can recall due to space constraint. People tend to dread Nyanya road because of these unfortunate incidents.

The hues and crises of the masses living in this place attracted government attention and the contract for the dualisation of the road was awarded to a lowly rated construction company SETRACO Nigeria Limited who have shown little or no interest in the enormous job in their hands. This company's lousy approach to the road construction has kept people in doubt of their capability of handling the road dualisation, one's sensibility would always on daily basis be assaulted by the company's one or two rusty, weather-beaten, construction-tired machines making noise on a particular spot while other staff go about gathering firewood from the trees that were so unfortunate to be felled by the machines. People would have thought considering the urgent need of the job, the award of which would have been devoid of political consideration and patronage. But our country has been so turned into a vast estate for obsessive things that so long as people eat from the benefit of confusion and crises, anything goes. Ours is nothing but a hallucinatory exposition of transparency, accountability and probity, we chorus virtues but practise vices. While the company grapples with the enormity of this challenge, more deaths continue to be recorded on a daily basis, persistent and heart shattering traffic hold-ups and frustration.

The rulers and the people concerned should at least give Nyanya residents something to cheer about in this cheerless country where people's lives have been so badly deregulated to a state of stupor by an insensitive and care-free administration though popularly elected.

Ekeocha Raymond,
Anglo-Africa Ltd.,
Box 3765, Garki,
Abuja.

Create Madagali Local Government (North)

Kindly permit me a space in your widely read newspaper to call on the Adamawa State House of Assembly, and the Chief Executive of the state, His Excellency Governor Boni Haruna to create Madagali North Local Government with headquarter at Madagali town, out of the present Madagali Local Government.

The present Madagali Local Government with headquarters at Gulak comprises of 10 wards, with about 40 autonomous communities and other areas. This has made it impossible and impracticable to offer meaningful development to its size and teeming population who are predominantly peasants and petty businessmen.

Madagali town (the proposed headquarters) being a border town with Borno State and at the international boundary with Cameroon, has served as a commercial centre for the area. Needless to mention that people of Madagali are blessed with human and natural resources, and the second largest sugarcane producers in the state next to Savannah Sugar company in Numan, it has the highest revenue generation in the area, and has the highest beef, hides and skin producers in the area. In short, Madagali is the food basket, home of tourism and gateway to the economy of Adamawa Sate. In regards to the above mentioned resources Madagali is blessed with, Madagali North Local Government can stand on its feet if created, moreover the people of the new local government have pledged to provide a secretariat and other infrastructure for the new local government. I hope the authorities concerned would yield to yearning and aspiration of people of Madagali.

Abubakar Kolone Madagali (Esq.)
P. O. Box 200, Madagali,
Adamawa State.

Let us embrace peace

How can a leader in Oshogbo be so biased to believe in hear say and conclude that one group was at fault? His answer to the question who burnt the churches? showed how one-sided he was. If the community leaders don't stop being biased when it comes to sensitive issues the situation will get worse.

It is as terrible as hell when I see brother against brother fighting because of religion. I think its time we resort to our own cultures and do away with this foreign influence that is trying to devastate us. Christianity has helped bring civilization to us and so with Islam, but what I am seeing now is that some self-centred individuals are trying to have it their own way. We the future leaders of Nigeria should forget religious sentiments and ignore the selfish and satanic minded individuals who use their fanatism to disrupt peace between us and our brothers.

Where is our common sense when we kill our tribesman because of religion? Arise Nigerian youths embrace peace, enlighten all Nigerian's on the need for peace and tolerance. Engage in things that will bring poverty alleviation and education for all. Don't support laws that will lead us backwards. Oppose any individual who is encouraging you to hate, Love others as you love yourself and the blessings of the Almighty God will shine on our great Nation Nigeria. One love, one unity for Nigeria.

Benjamin Nwaizu
<BNwaizu@msn.com>

Re: Local 'governors' and strikes

More emphasis mesmerised my attention on the BarkByte column in the absence of Dr. Tilde.

I read the Barkbyte column of the 30th November, 2001 with dismay, as I had expected to see your reaction on that jargon written by NULGE's general secretary (lawyer to the Nigerian rats) but in vain.

Alhaji Abdulkadir was so furious to assert that your article lacked objectivity, facts and figures. For the objectivity, I believed that had already met the desired objective as we the local dwellers have read it, but for the 'fact' about the inflated 'figures' of

Nigerian teachers, only SUBTRACTION of the latter will give the unbiased local champions federal allocation they called zero,

BB please fire back. Papa Akanbi may not have time for these local jargons.

Nasiru M. Gumel,
kmgumel@yahoo.com

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AFRICA & THE MIDDLE EAST

My ban is a crime, says Arafat

Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, has denounced as a "crime" Israel's decision to ban him from a highly symbolic Christmas Eve Mass in the West Bank town of Bethlehem.

It is the first time in seven years that Israel has prevented Mr. Arafat from attending.

Israel said the Palestinian authorities must first arrest the killers of the right-wing tourism minister, Rehavam Zeevi, who was shot dead in October.

Mr. Arafat is effectively hemmed inside Ramallah by Israeli security forces. In his address, broadcast on television and radio, he said the ban was "a crime depriving me of my right to participate in the commemoration of the messenger of peace".

The address was relayed via loudspeakers to Palestinians who had been waiting all day for their leader to arrive in Bethlehem's Manger Square.

The Mass is an annual event which has come to symbolise Mr. Arafat's role as the leader of both Palestinian Muslims and Christians.

"The unjust Israeli tanks, cement barriers and guns prevent me from participating with you at our annual celebrations," Mr. Arafat told a disappointed crowd.

A seat at the church was draped with the Palestinian leader's head-dress to mark his absence from the service, which started at midnight.

Israel's decision to prevent Mr. Arafat from travelling to the Mass drew criticism both at home and abroad.

The Vatican weighed into the row on Monday, denouncing what it described as an "arbitrarily imposed" ban.

BBC correspondent said that many residents of Bethlehem, which was handed over to the Palestinian authority in 1995, see the restrictions on their leader as a reminder that Palestinian self-rule has frequently turned out to be a sham.

Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat (centre), shakes hands with Latin Patriarch, Michele Sabbah, the top Roman Catholic clergyman in the Holy Land as a Christian churches delegation leaves after a meeting at Arafat's office in the West Bank town of Ramallah ... Monday.

Three opposition politicians killed in Zimbabwe

Three members of the main opposition party in Zimbabwe have been killed over the last four days in politically motivated attacks, according to the leader of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).

Morgan Tsvangirai said he believed the deaths marked the beginning of a new campaign of violence and intimidation against the MDC in the run up to the presidential election in March.

He said that on the direct orders of President Robert Mugabe, a militia had been trained and dispatched around the country to intimidate voters ahead of the vote. The government denied this.

Among the dead was Trymore Midzi, one of the party's youth leaders.

An MDC spokesman said he had been abducted, beaten, unconscious and then cut with broken bottles more than 70 times.

He died in hospital.

Another of the dead was Milton Chambati, an MDC candidate in last year's parliamentary elections.

A police spokesman said he was stabbed in the neck, after a fight between a supporter of Mr. Mugabe's Zanu PF party and three MDC members.

The third man to have died was Titus Nleya, who is also thought to have been stabbed.

Mr. Tsvangirai said President Mugabe was determined to set the country on a path to civil war.

Candidates rally for support in Zambia

The 11 candidates in Zambia's presidential elections are rallying their supporters ahead of the vote on Thursday.

Correspondents said the poll will be the closest in Zambia's history, with the ruling Movement for Multiparty Democracy facing a strong challenge from the United Party for National Development, led by Anderson Masoka.

In the only opinion poll of the campaign, conducted by a University of Zambia research group, Mr. Masoka was leading Levy Mwallawasa of the ruling party.

BBC correspondent in Lusaka says that despite a hard-fought campaign, it has been largely peaceful and Zambia's vibrant democracy has ensured that nobody has been afraid to speak their mind.

Angolan peace process resumes

Angola's peace process took a tentative step forward last Friday when UN Under-Secretary-General, Ibrahim Gambari, revealed that the government was ready to allow the United Nations to resume its role of mediator, and to get UNITA rebel leader, Jonas Savimbi, back to the negotiating table.

Briefing the Security Council, Gambari, who is also the UN Secretary-General's Special Advisor for Special Assignments in Africa, said that a "convergence of opinion was emerging for the first time that the United Nations should play a more proactive role in the Angolan peace process".

Gambari's Council briefing followed his week-long visit to Angola earlier in December. During the trip he held talks with the Angolan government, UNITA MPs who have abandoned the armed campaign, civil society and with the church, which has played a major role this year in coordinating peace efforts in the country.

According to a Council statement issued after the briefing, Gambari told members that the United Nation's two-pronged strategy for the Angolan conflict, "improving relations between the parties while maintaining sanctions on UNITA" was bearing fruit, although it remained to be seen whether Savimbi was serious about dialogue.

As for moving the peace process off the streets, he (Gambari) said the challenge was how to establish credible regular contacts between the Angolan government and UNITA and to make them productive. "The role of the churches in such a dialogue should be one of facilitation, rather than mediation," the council statement said. It added that the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, had directed Gambari to build support and "to promote the possibility of talks, even if they were only talks about talks".

Somali govt, opposition sign peace pact

Somalia's transitional administration has signed a peace deal in Kenya with several opposition factions aimed at paving the way for a national unity government.

Two of the country's key warlords, Hussein Aideed and Hassan Mohamed Nur "Shatigudud" rejected the pact almost instantly, having boycotted the Kenya talks.

The agreement was signed in the town of Nakuru in the presence of Kenyan President, Daniel Arap Moi, who has been mediating the negotiations.

It calls for the formation of "an all-inclusive government ensuring equitable power-sharing amongst all Somali clans" and the disarmament of all factions, under the auspices of the United Nations.

The new administration is to be established in the Somali capital, Mogadishu, in one month's time.

The accord was signed by Prime Minister, Hassan Abshir Farah, of the Transitional National Government (TNG) and some members of the Somali Reconciliation and Restoration Council (SRRC), including warlord Osman Ali "Atto" and the group's Secretary-General, Mowlid Maan.

'Moi not ready for retirement'

Six assistant ministers from Rift Valley Province said KANU will not allow President Moi to retire at the end of his constitutional second term in 2002.

And at the same time, the ministers asked the Opposition Big Three to stop wasting their time holding breakfast meetings to decide who among them will vie for the presidency. They said President Moi will stay in power beyond the coming general election.

"Democratic Party (DP) Chairman, Mwai Kibaki, National Party of Kenya (NPK) leader, Mrs. Charity Ngilu and Ford-Kenya leader, Kijama Wamalwa, should not waste time in breakfast meetings as they will not achieve anything meaningful in 2002," said Samuel Pogishio an Assistant Minister for Education.

Gunmen kill Israeli soldier

Gunmen killed one Israeli soldier and wounded three yesterday after infiltrating from Jordan in one of the bloodiest cross-border attacks in years, Israeli security sources said.

The security sources first reported that Israeli forces had entered Jordan in pursuit of the gunmen but later said troops crossed a frontier fence - short of the actual border - without leaving Israeli territory.

The rare attack on the normally quiet Israeli-Jordanian border cast a shadow over already-subdued Christmas celebrations in the holy land, which has been rocked by 15 months of Israeli-Palestinian violence.

The Israeli army declined to provide details on its hunt for gunmen except to say the Jordanian military was cooperating fully.

Jordanian Minister of State, Saleh Qallab, said no Israeli forces had crossed the border. "There is no hot pursuit and we do not know where the inflitrators came from but there is no proof they crossed from Jordanian territory." he told *Reuters*.

The border raid in the northern Jordan valley was carried out amid simmering Palestinian anger over Israel's ban on Yasser Arafat's annual Christmas eve pilgrimage to Bethlehem.

Security sources said the gunmen opened fire on an Israeli patrol from across the border, wounding one soldier. Three other soldiers were hurt, two of them seriously, in an ensuing gun battle in an area 16 km north of the West Bank.

While ambulance rushed in to pick up the wounded, an Israeli helicopter gunship fired into a grove of trees where the gunmen were believed to have fled.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the border raid, which was one of the most serious attacks of its kind since Jordan and Israel signed a peace treaty in 1996.

A Jewish settler was critically wounded in a roadside shooting in the West Bank last Monday. A group linked to Arafat's Fatah faction said the attack was a retaliation for Israel's refusal to allow the Palestinian leader to go to Bethlehem.

The shooting took place just a little over a week after Arafat - under intense international pressure to rein in militants behind suicide bombings in Israel - called for a halt for attacks on Israelis.

In a separate incident, Israeli troops, tanks and helicopters raided the Palestinian-controlled village of Tammon in the West Bank and arrested seven Palestinians, Israeli and Palestinian sources said.

TRUST INTERNATIONAL World Report

Indonesian police and volunteers search for more victims of a train accident in Indonesia's Central Java Province ... yesterday.

27 killed in Java train collision

Two passenger trains packed with holiday makers have collided in Indonesia's Central Java province, killing at least 27 people and injuring dozens, authorities said.

The crash occurred at about 0500 (2200 GMT) some 20 kilometres south of the town of Brebes.

"Up until now, we have 27 registered deaths, but the figure is certain to increase as victims are still being brought in," said a nurse at the general hospital in Brebes.

Several passengers were trapped in the wreckage and smashed windows trying to get out, officials said.

"We are bringing steel cutting equipment as many people are trapped inside," said Setiyo Raharjo, director of the national search and rescue service.

One train was travelling eastwards towards the city of Yogjakarta and the other was headed west to the capital Jakarta when they rammed head-on into each other.

Sergeant Sugeng of the Brebes district police said policemen were on the site helping evacuate victims and to investigate the cause of the accident.

Railway spokesman Abdul Madjid said one train went past a red stop signal and officials were checking reports that one of the drivers had fallen asleep at the controls.

An official at the Brebes station said the Jakarta-bound train had nine passenger wagons, one restaurant car and one locomotive which also carried passengers.

India, Pakistan mass troops near border

India and Pakistan are massing troops and military hardware near their border amid escalating tension following the December 13 attack on the Delhi parliament.

India has cancelled all military leave and moved thousands of soldiers and tanks into the border state of Rajasthan, according to reports from the region.

Pakistan has deployed anti-aircraft guns and transported troops from an eastern garrison town to its border with India, local sources told the Reuters news agency.

Both sides have reported fresh mortar fire and machine-gun clashes in the disputed territory of Kashmir, in a situation described by one senior Pakistani army officer as "highly explosive".

The build-up came as Pakistan on Monday froze the assets of two Pakistan-based militant groups - one of which is accused of the attack on the Indian parliament which left 14 people dead.

And in another development, police in Indian-administered Kashmir announced they had broken up a suspected al-Qaeda cell they said was planning further attacks in Delhi.

The police chief in Jammu, PL Gupta, said officers had arrested five people "linked" to al-Qaeda and had uncovered a stash of munitions thought to be for use against US and Israeli targets in Delhi.

The suspects included the Kashmir head of a Pakistani-based separatist group and a key politician from the Kashmiri opposition, he said.

"Their main objective was to kill Americans and Israelis, besides hitting some more installations in the country," Mr. Gupta said of the suspects.

BBC correspondent said the main threat to the Indian army is what it describes as "terrorist cross-border infiltration".

He said Kashmir continues to provide a fertile recruiting ground for militants, and what was originally a political separatist struggle is now attracting Pakistani and Afghan fighters motivated by religious convictions.

"It is God's will and the jihad will continue to doomsday," one militant fighter operating on the Indian side of the so-called Line of Control told the *BBC*.

... expels Pakistani diplomat

With tensions building along the border, India ordered an employee of the Pakistani embassy expelled Monday for allegedly trying to obtain classified documents on India's defense.

The order came as both countries beefed up forces along the border amid strained ties stemming from the Dec. 13 suicide attack on India's Parliament.

The Foreign Ministry said the employee of the Pakistani embassy, Mohammad Sharif Khan, had been caught Sunday by police as he received a bag of documents containing sensitive information from an Indian official.

Khan was given a week to leave India, said a ministry spokeswoman, Nirupama Rao. Khan was "engaged in activities inconsistent with his legitimate sphere of activities," she said.

Elderly home fire claims six in Germany

Six people have died in a fire at a home for the elderly in Germany.

Twenty-seven others were treated for smoke inhalation, shock and exposure to cold suffered when they fled the flames into the freezing conditions outside.

The fire broke out in the thatched building in Itzehoe, about 60 kilometres north of Hamburg, in the state of Schleswig-Holstein, early on Monday.

Police said the dead were five men aged 52 to 71, and a woman aged 75. It is thought they died of smoke inhalation.

Many of the survivors fled into the home's snow-covered grounds wearing only pyjamas.

Nearby residents and a restaurant helped care for the survivors until they could be taken to hospital.

Heavy snow continued to fall as fire fighters tackled the blaze for an hour.

Staff reported hearing a muffled explosion before the fire, said police.

An inquiry has began into the cause of the blaze.

ODD WORLD

Beer thirst compels man to abandon bunker

A British man who went underground behind blast-proof doors and thick concrete to avoid family Christmas has emerged early because he was "dying for a pint" of beer.

Colin Wood, a 30-year-old financial services worker, entered the decommissioned nuclear bunker in Essex, east of London, on Thursday and planned to stay for another week.

"It was great but I was dying for a pint and the idea of spending another week was too much," he told *Reuters*.

Wood paid $430 (about N55,900) at an Internet auction for a two-week stay in the bunker.

He said he took such extreme action because he abhorred Christmas and all its trimmings.

"It's OK in theory but the running around, the buying of presents for people you don't like, the family bickering, the endless turkey and terrible films on TV are just too much," he said.

Bear hunts, eats hunter

A hungry bear ate a hunter in Russia's Jewish autonomous region in the country's far east, Interfax reported on Monday.

The half-eaten remains of the local man, who had gone hunting the previous day, were discovered near the village of Landakoz, set in the region's bleak taiga.

It was not clear if the bear had killed the hunter or whether the man had died of cold before the scavenging animal found him, Interfax quoted local officials as saying.

Bears have been known to attack humans in the region before, but usually during the late summer or early autumn while searching for wild mushrooms and berries.

No more cane strokes for male prisoners

Egypt's parliament has voted to ban the practice of flogging male prisoners as a form of punishment, parliamentary sources said.

Parliament's legislative People's Assembly agreed Saturday to rescind the law, which was suspended nearly one year ago by Interior Minister Habib el Adli.

The law had given prison wardens the right to decide when male prisoners would be flogged for misdemeanors such as fighting among inmates, possession of narcotics or weapons and attacking prison guards, sources said.

Flogging, which had been in practice since the inception of prisons in Egypt, did not apply to female prisoners.

A report by London-based Amnesty International in February said it had welcomed Egypt's moves to halt flogging in prisons but that torture still remained widespread and indiscriminate in police stations and detention centers.

There are around 43 prisons in Egypt with an estimated 70,000 prisoners, sources said.

Fire mars Australian Christmas

Australia has mobilised thousands of firefighters to tackle widespread bush fires which have contributed to the deaths of five people.

Temperatures have climbed well above 40 degrees Celsius in many parts of Queensland, and ambulance officials say at least five people died in Brisbane from heart attacks induced by the heat.

Further south, at least 70 bush fires are raging down the coast of New South Wales and inland around the national capital, Canberra.

Thousands of motorists travelling for the Christmas holiday were were left stranded as major roads were closed.

At one stage, many homes around Canberra were threatened by fire, including the official residence of the Governor-General, Peter Hollingworth. Hundreds of families were evacuated from the area.

In the Blue Mountains, near Sydney, authorities say strong hot winds are making conditions atrocious for thousands of volunteer firefighters.

A total ban has been imposed on lighting fires throughout New South Wales - wrecking traditional Christmas celebrations around a barbecue or open fire.

Most of the fires are believed to have been deliberately lit by arsonists.

The flames have been fuelled by strong winds and tinder-dry bush.

NEWS

Hospitals turn back patients

Paralysed by industrial action, the three federal health institutions in Lagos have halted the admission of patients, the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports.

The strike itself may have taken its toll on lives of many patients and revenues accruing to these institutions as the strike, embarked upon by the Medical and Health Workers Union of Nigeria, enters its third week.

A correspondent of NAN who went round Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH), National Orthopaedic Hospital, Igbobi, and Psychiatric Hospital, Yaba, at the weekend reported that the institutions were only rendering skeletal services.

Security officials at the Orthopaedic Hospital told NAN that they were under instructions to turn back incoming patients not minding the seriousness of the ailment, adding, however, that in-patients were receiving attention.

Although doctors, nurses and laboratory scientists are not included in the strike, for instance, there were no accounts staff on hand to charge and collect fees.

Many patients were said to have left LUTH because all drug dispensing units were under lock and key, making the entire complex to look like a grave yard.

The workers, comprising mainly administration, accounts, engineering, and public relations, among others, embarked on the indefinite strike following government's failure to meet their demand for a 22 percent pay rise.

Prof. ABC Nwosu, Health Minister

Meanwhile, relatives are hurriedly "discharging" patients at Bauchi Specialist Hospital, following the strike.

A NAN correspondent who was at the hospital at the weekend reports of deserted wards while very few remained.

"Everybody has gone. We are the only one left because we don't have the money to go to a private hospital but God is aware of our predicament and would surely save the life of my daughter," said Halima Isiyaku, the only patient left behind at the female ward E with her daughter.

KWTV reporter victimised over news report

From Abdul Laro, *in Ilorin*

For adhering to the ethics of the journalism profession, a female reporter with the Kwara State Television Service, Mrs. Amidat Yusuf, has been redeployed from the State House of Assembly to the Ministry of Information.

Daily Trust reliably learnt authoritatively that her deployment was sequel to a news report she filed from the House of Assembly where the suspended Commissioner for Education, Alhaji Kayode Eleshinnla appeared along with the Commissioner for Special Duties, Alhaji Razaq Lawal

The two commissioner were summoned to clear some areas on the Educational Trust Fund (ETF) and PTF educational materials, and their submissions were carried "side by side" by Mrs. Amidat Yusuf on Kwara State television service in accordance with the principle of objectively and fair hearing.

However, the report did not go down well with some personal aides of the governor who preferred that the news report ought to have given the government a greater performance of the positive image which went to the suspended commissioners during proceedings in the House.

Daily Trust learnt that the Special Assistant on Media Affairs to the Governor, Alhaji Razaq Gidado, call the television station and directed that Malam Abdulrahman Malik, the editor on duty, and the female reporter, Mrs. Yusuf be "disengaged" from duty without the consent of the General Manager, Alhaji Isiaq Modibbo Kawu.

Alhaji Kawu, who felt insulted by Gidado's action issued a counter-directive and perviewed the said "offensive" report several times.

Daily Trust gathered that a hot exchange of word ensued on phone between the General Manager and the special assistant.

The Commissioner for Information, Mr. Wale Oladepo, later summoned the affected staff of the television station to his office and read out the "riot acts" to them. What followed next was the deployment of Mrs. Yusuf to the ministry.

Contacted in his office, the commissioner said it was normal to move staff around, since it is the prerogative of government to exercise control over areas which fall within our jurisdiction," he said.

Mr. Oladipo, who confirmed the re-deployment of Mrs. Yusuf said officers in the ministry are move around when necessary, hence it was not a strange development.

Mrs. Yusuf is married to Alhaji Kayode Yusuf, who until recently was the Commissioner for Works under Governor Mohammed Lawal's administration but dropped in the last cabinet shake-up shortly after the Saraki-Lawal face-off started.

Gov. Lawal of Kwara State

ECOWAS moves to Nigeria

From Shakirat Abdulmajeed, *in Lagos*

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has moved its parliament and Court of Justice to Nigeria.

President Obasanjo, who disclosed this to newsmen at the presidential wing of the Murtala Mohammed Airport, Lagos, at the weekend on his arrival from Dakar, Senegal, for the just-concluded summit of Heads of States of ECOWAS member nations, stated that the ECOWAS summit was working hard on the possibility of a single currency for the sub-region.

Asked if there would be a Nigeria after 2003 given the controversy over the Electoral Act, President Obasanjo said: "If you wish Nigeria not to be, well you will still be alive and see Nigeria waxing strong."

Victim of Jos crisis demands compensation

From Buhari Bello, *in Jos*

One of the victims of the last September ethno-religious crisis in Jos, Alhaji Mohammed Umaru Gombe, has asked for compensation to be paid to him for his storey building burnt down during the crises at Fundawa area valued at N10 million.

Alhaji Umaru Gombe, who submitted a memorandum to the Justice Niki Tobi Judicial Commission told the panel last week that the "warriors" wanted to burn the house on the first day of the crisis but was stopped by a Christian neighbour whose mechanical workshop, he said, would be affected if the house was burnt.

He disclosed that the house was eventually burnt by the "warriors" made up of Christian youths the following morning after his Christian neighbour had evacuated all the vehicles that were undergoing repairs at the workshop.

The complainant also told the Commission that he and his entire family would have been killed by the attackers but that they all escaped

Alhaji Mohammed Umaru Gombe, who claimed that both himself and his father were born in Jos North Local Government of Plateau State, wondered why he should be regarded by the Berom speaking tribe as non-indigene.

Meanwhile, the chairman of the commission, Justice Niki Tobi, has directed witnesses appearing before it to ensure that their submissions are either written or translated into English. He stated that this becomes necessary so that any portion of the memoranda submitted to the commission or its annexure is well-understood by the commission.

2 rival cult groups clash in Ogun

From Olumide Bajulaiye, *in Abeokuta*

Onokolobo community in Abeokuta, the Ogun State capital, was at the weekend thrown into pandemonium as two rival cult groups engaged each other in a gun battle.

The deadly clash according to *Daily Trust* investigations, was said to have started between the rival groups believed to be students of Mashood Abiola Polytechnic (MAPOLY), Abeokuta, following a hot argument.

Our correspondent revealed that three suspected cult members were shot while several number of innocent passers-by were seriously matchetted.

Gov Osoba

Following the free for all fight, majority of the residents hurriedly closed their shops and shut their homes, while passersby were found running helter-skelter for safety.

As at the time of this report, the shot cult members were said to have been rushed to an undisclosed hospital, just as the wounded residents were seen nursing their injuries.

All efforts to get the state police command for comment proved abortive as repeated telephone calls to the police commissioner proved abortive.

Electoral Act: LG boss blames PDP

From Abdullahi Bego, *in Potiskum*

As the Electoral Bill, recently passed into law by President Olusegun Obasanjo, continues to divide political opinion in the country, the chairman of the PDP-controlled Nangere Local Government in Yobe State, Dr. Adamu Garba Talba, has blamed the controversy on indiscipline within the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), saying enough groundwork should have been done by the party as "one house" before the bill could have been enacted, given its majority in the National Assembly.

Dr. Talba, who spoke to *Daily Trust* in Potiskum, said however, that it was unfair to blame President Obasanjo as having hijacked the bill for his political advantage since the bill was passed by both Houses of the National Assembly.

"Those who accuse Obasanjo are ignorant of the procedure at the National Assembly. Obasanjo could not have bought all the people at the National Assembly," Dr. Talba said.

He emphasised that the controversy generated by the electoral law is not healthy for the growth of the nation's nascent democracy and therefore called for unity among the political class to nurture the democratic experiment despite the obvious lapses of the law.

"Every politician and citizen of this country must obey the laws of the land," he added.

Dr. Adamu Talba also called on the leadership of the PDP to impose what he called "strict disciplinary measures" against 19 erring members of the party.

The Nagere Local Government chairman, who is also eyeing the Yobe State Government House, said "there is no going back" from his decision to contest for governor of Yobe State come 2003.

The Yobe House must be put back in order. Our people need a new spirit of public service that would address their yearnings and concerns," promising to work with all people of the state to push Yobe's fortunes to greater heights.

President Obasanjo

Star

Waves of desertif

*Many have wondered about the explana-tions for **desertification in Nigeria** today **Yakubu Ozohu-Suleiman** researched into this growing phenomenon, and wrote this increasingly fertile account.*

"Powered by the sun's warmth, an endless cycle of air, water and minerals, promises an annual rebirth of the living world. But after 350 million years of constant renewal, vegetation and animal life are being smothered by desertification... Some 850 million people have already been caught in the swath of desertification"— UNEP

It was in 1949 that scientists first used the term desertification. However, as a topic of special significance, desertification did not receive international attention until the Sahelian drought of 1968-1973. The Stockholm conference on human environment of 1972 which was the first of its kind that led to the birth of the United Nation's Environment programme (UNEP) the following year, equally did not feature desertification as a separate topic.

Nigeria is located between latitude 4-14° North of the equator, and longitude 2-15° East of the meridian. With a landmass of 923,768 square kilometres, and a population of over 100 million people, Nigeria lies within the tropical zone.

The North is composed of Savanna vegetation, and the South made up of flourishing rain forest.

Essentially, the northern part of the country experiences lesser periods of rainfall and protracted drought, while the reverse is the case in the South. The situation in the Northern part of the country has led to its being classified among the arid and semi-arid ecological zones, with an annual rainfall of less than 250mm.

Writing on this natural formation, J.A. Adejokun of the Federal department of meteorological services, observed that the growing seasons in the Northern part of the country are short-lived and most favourable to the growth of drought resistant, drought-tolerant, and early maturing crops, such as millet and sorghum. Pasture for livestock, he added, are adversely affected, and shortage of water for domestic use, also poses such social problems as death and human migration Southward for greener pasture. Adejokun views the droughts of 1973 and 1983 in Nigeria, as having encouraged tree planting activities by the government, and afforestation and erection of shelter belts, to halt the Southward March of desertification in the country.

The Human Factor

In all parts of Nigeria, people are engaged in various forms of activities that pave way for desert encroachment. It was recognition of this, that led to the establishment of the Federal Environment Protection Agency (F.E.P.A.) which has spread into state and local government levels, and indeed resulted in the birth of a full-fledged ministry of environment.

Apart from the World Environment Day, Nigeria also marks the annual World Desertification Day.

Some of the human factors that promote desertification, include Bush burning, over grazing and deforestation. Other factors include land clearing and the establishment of settlements.

The forest is known to be a major source of income. According to Nwoboshi L.C. of the department of forest resources management, University of Ibadan, apart from food supply for human beings and wildlife, the forest provides pharmaceutical products, and builds and protects soils, filters and steadily releases clear and clean water all the year round, and helps to prevent floods. It also purifies, cools, and humidifies the air, as well as offering protection and shelter to other renewable life species.

Nwobosi added that forests constitute the major organic component of the global ecosystem or the biosphere.

Lumbering activities are carried out on a major scale in the Southern part of the country to obtain timber and other relevant economic trees. When obtained, logs are exported o milled in local industries for th production of furniture. Wh is however worrisome, is t fact that these trees are felle and lumbered without adequa provisions for replacemen The effect of this is the exp sure of the soil surface with a tendant loss of the various be efits offered to animal life. also has negative effects on a ricultural production, and i deed, promotes the rate desertification. According

Obvious signs of desert encroachment

A giant tree lumbered for purposes of domestic energy *Pix by Yakubu Ozohu-Suleiman*

Over grazing and bus desertification in Nigeri prevalent all over the co season is over, hunters w set the bush on fire to c burning has become su that it is popularly accep for it, whereas it has bee the major causes of the r which combine to induc

Feature

ication in Nigeria

statistics, deforestation and land clearing alone, account for an injection of one billion tonnes of atmospheric carbon (CO_2) per year which results in global warming. The little trees that grow in the northern part of the country are being subjected to severe evacuation, mainly as sources of domestic energy.

Individual, and organisations go into the bush and fell the trees, and split and sell these, as firewood. The fire-

wood business has become a very lucrative one, such that within the cities, and along some major highways, an assemblage of firewood is a common feature.

Despite being a major cause of desertification, people have argued that the larger part of the Nigerian population, as a developing country, cannot afford sophisticated energy sources such as gas and electricity for domestic use. Besides, kerosene as a domestic energy source has been on the highside in terms of its price. This situation seems to have left the larger population with no option than to seek domestic energy sources from trees of our numerous forests.

Over grazing and bush burning are related to desertification in Nigeria, and bush burning is very prevalent all over the country. As soon as the rainy season is over, hunters would gather their tools, and set the bush on fire to catch animals. In fact, bush burning has become such a popular phenomenon that it is popularly accepted, and a season is set aside for it, whereas it has been demonstrated to be one of the ma-

h burning are related to a, and bush burning is very untry. As soon as the rainy ould gather their tools, and atch animals. In fact, bush ch a popular phenomenon ed, and a season is set aside n demonstrated to be one of elease of green house gases e global warming.

This was once a thick forest

jor causes of the release of green house gases which combine to induce global warming.

Effects

J.A. Adejokun of the Federal department of Meteorological services, observed that the impact of global climatic change could spell disaster for Nigeria's ailing economy, and worsen the debt burden. The worsening drought situation disrupts the socio-economic stability of government in providing relief materials to victims, and this over-stretches the economy. The migration aspect of it, he added, also poses further political problems.

Other notable effects of desertfication include low agricultural production, diseases and infection, hunger and starvation

Over-grazing is one of the causes of desertfication

physical land degradation, wind erosion, chemical deterioration, loss of soil fertility, increased salination and alkalisation, which impairs purity of water, and prevents both plant and biological activities of micro-organisms etc.

Egunjobi T.O. of the Centre for Urban, and Regional Planning of the University of Ibadan, equally traced the possible impact o desert encroachmen to the coastal zone which experience in creased population o cities, which in tur may be submerged b sea water; deteriora tion in residential commercial, industria and public buildings, i terms of quality and cost; progressive paralysis of the urban economy and decline in food production.

NATIONAL ELECTRIC POWER AUTHORITY

PRESS RELEASE

NEPA Weekly Situation Report (38)

OUR BULLETIN FOR WEEK NO.:38

(09/12/2001 TO 15/12/2001)

1. PEAK DAILY GENERATIONS FOR THE PREVIOUS AND CURRENT WEEK

PREVIOUS WEEK (02/12/2001 TO 08/12/2001)			CURRENT WEEK (09/12/2001 TO 15/12/2001)	
DAY	DATE	GEN(MW)	DATE	GEN(MW)
Sunday	02/12/2001	2539.8	09/12/2001	2557.83
Monday	03/12/2001	2615.6	10/12/2001	2662.48
Tuesday	04/12/2001	2713.1	11/12/2001	2693.19
Wednesday	05/12/2001	2738.04	12/12/2001	2680.4
Thursday	06/12/2001	2743.44	13/12/2001	2703.61
Friday	07/12/2001	2662.12	14/12/2001	2578.7
Saturday	08/12/2001	2579.9	15/12/2001	2668.9

2. PROJECTED AVERAGE PEAK GENERATIONS FOR THE PREVIOUS AND CURRENT WEEKS

PREVIOUS WEEK (ACTUAL) (09/12/2001 TO 15/12/2001)	PREVIOUS WEEK (FORECAST) (16/12/2001 TO 22/12/2001)
2649.31MW	**3000MW**

3. PEAK WEEKLY GENERATION FROM EACH POWER STATION IN THE PREVIOUS AND CURRENT WEEK

STATION	PREVIOUS WEEK (ACTUAL) (09/12/2001 TO 15/12/2001)	CURRENT WEEK (FORECAST) (16/12/2001 TO 22/12/2001)
KAINJI	270MW	300MW
JEBBA	288MW	290MW
SHIRORO	438MW	450MW
EGBIN	1158MW	1200MW
SAPELE ST	154MW	160MW
SAPELE GT	43MW	50MW
AFAM	93MW	75MW
AFAM (V)	0	100MW
DELTA	388MW	400MW
IJORA	0	17MW
CALABAR	2MW	2MW
A.E.S.	263MW	266MW
EPPI (AGGREKO)	14.62MW	15.0MW
EPP2 (GEOMETRIC)	13.55MW	15.0MW
TOTAL	**3125.17MW**	**3340MW**

4. PROJECTED AVERAGE DAILY GENERATION FROM EACH POWER STATION IN THE PREVIOUS AND CURRENT WEEK

STATION	PREVIOUS WEEK (ACTUAL) (09/12/2001 TO 15/12/2001)	CURRENT WEEK (FORECAST) (16/12/2001 TO 22/12/2001)
KAINJI	208MW	300MW
JEBBA	188MW	290MW
SHIRORO	435MW	450MW
EGBIN	1158MW	1200MW
SAPELE ST	84MW	160MW
SAPELE GT	0	50MW
AFAM	0	75MW
AFAM (V)	0	100MW
DELTA	376MW	400MW
IJORA	0	17MW
CALABAR	1MW	2MW
A.E.S.	227.2MW	266MW
EPPI (AGGREKO)	14.25MW	15.0MW
EPP2 (GEOMETRIC)	12.16MW	15.0MW
TOTAL	**2703.61MW**	**3340MW**

5. AVERAGE ESTIMATED DAILY NATIONAL DEMAND FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER, 2001 = **3600MW**

REMARKS

The newly commissioned machines were out on post commissioned checks and maintenance during the week reviewed. The machines are however expected to be in full service before 24th December, 2001.

ENERGY SAVINGS

BELOW ARE SOME USEFUL TIPS ON HOW YOU CAN SAVE EVERY, BY:

- Ensuring, for example, that when they are in use, you refrigerator or freezer is not overfilled. They operate more efficiently and economically only when filled to capacity.
- Making sure that your refrigerator or freezer is not set to run colder than necessary. We recommend that you always follow the manufacturer's Instructions.
- Ensuring that when using the oven for meal cooking, try to use it for a full meal rather than using both even and surface units. If you have three dishes to be cooked at slightly different temperature, pick the mean temperature to cook all three. (For example, the mean of 325,350 and 375 degrees temperature is 350 degrees)
- Making sure you do not use oversized water heaters. The oversized water heater wastes energy heating unneeded water. It should in fact be avoided to reduce your initial cost.
- Switching off all appliances not in use. Especially, when you are not at home, remember to switch off your water heater, air-conditioners, television sets or indeed all lights you do not need before dark.
- Switching off security lights.
- Switching off street lights during the day
- Ensuring that when cooking with the electric cooker you use posts or pans that match the ring sizes.
- Using energy-saving bulbs
- Ensuring that you do not fill the electric kettle just to make a cup of tea. Use just enough water to cover the ring. Hot water kettles come in different sizes, you may choose the one to meet your needs.

Next, we serve you the power demand and energy consumption of some domestic appliances:

APPLIANCE	TYPE	RATING	POWER DEMAND IN KILOWATT (KW)	RATED CURRENT IN AMPERES (AMPS)	Number OF HRS. TO CONSUME ONE UNIT OF ELECTRICITY (i.e. 1 KWH)
Water - heater	50 litre	1200watt	1.2	5.2	0.8
	100litre	2500watt	2.5	11	0.4
Cooker (4-plate with oven) single-plate Cooker	Small	6000watt	6.0	26	0.2
	Regular	8000watt	8.0	34	1.2
	Large	10500watt	10.5	45	0.1
	Portable	1800watt	1.8	7.7	0.6
Fan	Table	0.08HP	0.06	0.25	1.7
	Standing	0.1HP	0.7	0.3	1.4
	Ceiling	0.3HP	0.2	0.9	4.5
Air - conditioner	Small	1.5HP	1.1	4.7	1
	Medium	2HP	1.5	6.5	0.7
Refrigerator	Small	0.2HP	0.15	0.6	7
	Medium	0.25HP	0.19	0.8	5
	Large	0.3HP	0.22	0.9	4.5
Television - (Black & White)		200watt	0.2	0.9	5
Television (Colour)		300watt	0.3	1.3	3

- 1000watt=1 Kilowatt(1KW)
- 1 HP=0.746 Kilowatt
- 1KWH=One unit of electricity=1KW x 1 HR. I.e. 1 Kilowatt used for 1 hours.

Finally, we appeal to all our esteemed customers and all good Nigerians to endeavour to report faults promptly wherever and whenever they occur. There are faults sections and complaints centres in all our 56 district offices spread across the country. Only such prompt reports can enable us attend to faults promptly to make life a lot easier for you.

We thank you for your understanding and patience.

LET US CONTINUE TO WORK TOGETHER FOR THE GREATER GOOD OF OUR COUNTRY.

Management

Privatisation UPDATE

NEPA Privatisation

Electricity workers threaten nationwide strike

From Samson Ojo, *in Lagos*

The National Union of Electricity Employees (NUEE) has threatened to embark on a nationwide industrial strike action, from January next year, should the Federal Government actualise its plan to privatise the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA)

Joseph Makoju, NEPA MD

The threat was contained in a press statement issued by NUEE and signed by its General Secretary, Comrade Precious Kiri–Kalio.

The statement stated that the NUEE was against the privatisation agenda "as it affect NEPA since the process would erode the job of staff, engender higher tariff, loss of control of key government institutions and also an abandonment of government's social responsibility to its citizenry."

The statement which was made available to ***Business Day*** further stated that the privatisation of NEPA would also mean a loss of national heritage to the rich and powerful people in the country to expatriates who would eventually grab the authority based on their superior technical competence.

The NUEE vowed to embark on a nationwide strike action to register its protest against NEPA Privatisation. It blamed government for the woes of NEPA because it (government) had been responsible for the appointment of past and present managements of the authority and not the workers who had to operate under their managers.

The NUEE scribe warned government to drop the idea of privatisation and rather toe the line of commercialisation to stave–off the pending darkness that would soon engulf the country as the policy of privatisation NEPA becomes operational.

Kiri–Kalio further berated the Senior Staff Association of NEPA for turning itself into a consultative body, having bought the idea of privatisation without due thoughts on what would happen to the country, NEPA's staff and others.

Na'Abba faults privatisation programme

By Ahmed Shekarau

The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Alhaji Ghali Umar Na'Abba has faulted the ongoing privatisation programme of the federal government, saying that it was skewed in favour of a small segment of the nation's populace.

Speaker Ghali Umar Na'Abba.

Speaking on an FRCN radio phone–in–programme, Radio Link at the weekend in Abuja, the Speaker said the current privatisation programme ought to involve all classes of Nigerians, including members of the National Assembly.

"I am not very conformable (with the ongoing privatisation programme), he said, stressing that "that is why the House of Representatives sponsored a bill for the amendment of the privatisation act.

Na'Abba said the House has already passed the bill on the 5th of this month and is awaiting the Senate's ractification to it before the bill is eventually taken to the President for approval.

He said when the bill is finally passed into law, it will enable the National Assembly to participate in determining the focus of the ongoing privatisation programme.

According to the speaker, the existing act which was prepared by the military "does not make any provision for the National Assembly to participate in the (privatisation) process."

Na'Abba assured further that the National Assembly will do everything possible to ensure that all sections of the Nigerian society participate in the privatisation process.

...Akinsalu too

From Bright Ewulu, *in Lagos*

The President of National Shareholders Solidarity Association (NSSA), Chief Akintunde Asalu has disparaged the entire privatisation programme as a magic concocted to deceive the Nigerian masses, saying that it lacks openness.

Asalu said in a chat with ***Business Day*** that from all intents and purposes, the programme is not as transparent as the President Olusegun Obasanjo administration would want Nigerians to believe, saying that the various sales of companies were carried out without the much touted openness by the power that be.

He, therefore, called for more openness, adding that the programme has also been politicised to the detriment of the people of Nigeria.

According to him, it was the visible lack of openness that has made many Nigerians question the rationale of the exercise in the first place since, it seems that the companies are being sold to the well connected in the society.

He reiterated his group's stand that the various agencies of government currently saddled with the burden of overseeing the privatisation should be dissolved and its principal officers sacked and replaced with more professional people.

Pointing that no one is accusing the government and its agencies of corruption, he however, said the modus operandi of the agencies makes people to suspect their actions and dispositions.

In his view, every Nigerian deserves the right to be involved in the privatisation, and so, the exercise should be run with that in mind.

FELICITATIONS

To a Woman of absolute substance

The National Merit Award of OFFICER OF THE ORDER OF THE NIGER (OON) conferred on you by the federal Government of

Dr. (Mrs) Ndi Okereke-Onyiuke (OON)

Nigeria is a clear recognition of your effort in the privatisation exercise.

KANO FOUNDATION

(MEMBER OF THE NIGERIAN STOCK EXCHANGE)

Head Office
3rd Floor, Kano Foundation Building
15 B.U.K. Road, P.O.Box 14427, Kano.
Tel: 064-667844, Fax: 667394
Mobile: 090-800956

Lagos Office
LEO Wing, Eleganza Plaza
1 Commercial Avenue, Apapa P.O. Box 4611,
Apapa, Lagos
Tel Fax:01-5878649, 01-4701015

CONGRATULATIONS

TO A

A deserving honouraree

The conferment on you the National honour of the **OFFICER OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC (OFR)** by Federal government of Nigeria is in recognition of the giant shift in the privatisation exercise.

More grease to your elbows.

Mallam Nasir El-Rufai (OFR)
BPE, DG

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BUSINESS DAY

Aviation ministry targets N50bn next year

From Shakirat Abdulmajeed, *in Lagos*

As part of efforts to boost revenue generation in the aviation industry, parastatals in the aviation industry are to generate at least N50 billion next year.

The Minister of Aviation, Dr. (Mrs.) Kema Chikwe who disclosed this in Owerri during the inaugural flight of Sosoliso Airlines stated that she has set up a committee to give the aviation sector a benchmark next year so that the "aviation sector can generate enough revenue for government."

She explained that the philosophy behind the introduction of navigational chairs for domestic operators is to ensure that all activities in the aviation industry are commercialised to generate more funds for government.

"All we are trying to achieve is to ensure that no parastatal within the industry becomes a parasite on the other," she added.

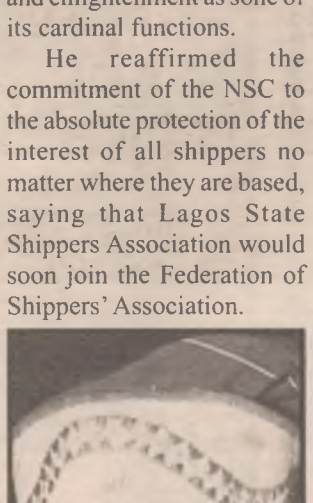
The minister expressed confidence that with the improved facilities that are capital intensive put in place, the aviation sector is poised to offer users the best services, which she emphasised must be paid for.

"The safety of our airspace and excellent navigational facilities must be revenue beneficial to government. This is what informed our policy on commercialisation," she said.

She however called on stakeholders in the industry especially the Airline Operators of Nigeria (AON) to cooperate with the respective agencies in the new policy of commercialised services in Air Traffic Control Services (ATS).

On the Sosoliso inaugural flight to Imo Airport, the minister said the operation would transform Owerri to the hub of business activities in the South–east.

This, she said, is conditioned by its strategic location and proximity to Aba, Umuahia, Enugu and Okigwe, stressing that it would also help to boost revenue generation through regular operations in the Owerri airport.



Kema Chikwe, Aviation Minister.

FG pays N130bn to pensioners

The Permanent Secretary, Establishments and Pension Office, Dr. Aboki Zhawa has disclosed that the Federal Government pays over N130 billion to pensioners annually stressing that of funds was responsible for the inability to meet with prompt payment to beneficiaries.

Dr. Zhawa dropped this hint while inaugurating the Pension and Welfare Board of Trustees of the Nigerian Airspace Management Agency (NAMA) in Lagos.

Dr. Zhawa who was represented by Director of Pensions, Mr. S. Idakwo expressed concern over the inability of government is

Yayale Ahmed, Head of Service.

thinking about pension reforms which will bring about fundamental changes as a solution to the problem.

He charged members of the newly inaugurated Pension Board of Trustees of NAMA to be committed to the affairs of the scheme and the welfare of the retirees of the agency.

He also advised the board to put in palace a sound pension plan that would guarantee prompt payment of retirement benefits stressing that such a goal can only be realised if the scheme has an adequate funding arrangement.

Dr. Zhawa warned members of the trustees to 'take the affairs of the scheme seriously and place the interest of the scheme above all other considerations.

He also warned that members should avoid the temptation of embezzlement or mis–application of funds saying that such an offence attracts serious consequences.

In his speech, the Managing Director of NAMA disclosed that the agency has provided a take–off grant of N30 million in a separate account with the Bank of the North for the scheme.

NSC canvasses support for Lagos shippers

From Tokunbo Oloke, *in Lagos*

The Lagos State Government has been urged to embrace the new Lagos State Shippers Association and to nurture it to maturity for the overall growth of the maritime industry.

The Chairman, Board of Directors, Nigerian Shippers Council (NSC), Dr. Hassan Lawal gave the charge at the inauguration ceremony/ INCOTERMS seminar for Lagos State Shippers Association in Lagos.

According to him, this will enhance the association's confidence in the government's policies and continuity in the business community within the state.

He stressed that the board has the mandate of the federal government to equally support the association, saying that "we must ensure that our goals of supporting shippers are not tampered with.

He urged members of the association to work as a team to bring to the fore programmes that will enhance the activities of shippers.

The Managing Director of Nigerian Shippers Council (NSC), Mr. Adebayo Sarumi, said that more seminars would be held in Enugu, Jos, Maiduguri, Kaduna and Aba on the appropriate INCOTERMS for exports and imports to ensure that business remain profitable to shippers.

Over the years, Sarumi disclosed, the NSC has laid much emphasis on information dissemination and enlightenment as sone of its cardinal functions.

He reaffirmed the commitment of the NSC to the absolute protection of the interest of all shippers no matter where they are based, saying that Lagos State Shippers Association would soon join the Federation of Shippers' Association.

Governor Bola Tinubu of Lagos State.

NACCA urges NCAA to review licence fees

The National Cabin Crew Association (NACCA) has pleaded with the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) to look into the issue of high examination and licence fees.

Leading a delegation of NACCA executives, to NCAA office, association's the president, Mr. Kunle Martins, observed that while NCAA charges N10,000 for examination and N5,000 for licence/renewal of licence, the official charge is grossly lower.

The current schedule of the civil aviation (Air Navigation) regulation, made available to Cabin Safety and Security Watch (CSSW) shows the break down of fees as it relates to cabin crew as follows: That upon making an application for flight operations officers licences and cabin crew certificates, the applicant shall pay N500 for assessment of the application, N1,000 for examination, N1,000 for inclusion or extension of rating in the licence. If the applicant is not required to pass examination, N1,500, if the applicant is required to pass an examination, N1,000 fore replacement of licence and N1,000 for renewal of certificate of validity or authorisation.

Mr. Martins however expressed the confidence of NACCA executives in NCAA, particularly the administrative ingenuity of the General Manager Licensing, Mr. C. D. Gyang, who promised to look into the matter.

DUMEZ (NIGERIA) PLC.

(R.C. 1656)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Company will be held at the Nicon Hilton Hotel Abuja on **Wednesday 23rd January 2002 at 11.30 a.m.** to consider and if thought fit, pass the following resolutions which will be proposed as special resolutions:

1. "That the Directors be and are hereby authorized to take all necessary steps thereon and comply with all statutory requirements thereof to delist **DUMEZ (NIGERIA) PLC** from the Nigerian Stock Exchange."

2. That any Shareholder unwilling to remain with the Company as an unquoted Public Limited Liability Company has an option to en-cash his/her shares at the market price."

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD

CHIEF S.E. NOMUOJA
COMPANY SECRETARY

DUMEZ HOUSE
7/11 Sir Mobolaji Bank-Anthony Street,
LAGOS.
8th November 2001

NOTE

A Shareholder of the company entitled to attend and vote at the Extraordinary General meeting is entitled to appoint a proxy to attend and vote instead of him and such proxy need not be a member of the company.

A form of proxy is enclosed. To be valid, instrument of proxy should be duly stamped by the Commissioner of Stamp Duties. Executed proxy forms should be deposited at the office of the Registrars, United Bank for Africa Plc, Raymond House, 97/105 Broad Street, Lagos, not less than 48 hours before the time of the meeting.

This space is for sale

ABUJA TRUST

Edited by Kevin Ebele Adinnu

Abba-Gana calls for unity at Christmas

By Emmanuel Ande and Joseph Aiyejoto

The Minister of the Federal Capital Territory , Engr. Muhammed Abba-Gana, has implored residents of the territory to pray for the unity, peace and prosperity of the country as they celebrate the Christmas and the New Year festivals.

He stated this in his Christmas message to residents of the FCT.

"While praying, you pray within our country. Pray fervently for God's mercies and bountiful blessings," he charged the residents.

He enjoined them not to perceive Christmas simply as an occasion for merry making and feast.

"Christmas should be taken for what it really is, an opportunity to meditate and draw closer to God, the creator," the minister stressed.

The minister further urged residents of the FCT to see Christmas as a unique opportunity to mend fences with fellowmen by giving and sharing in the spirit of the season.

He urged them to imbibe the lessons of the life of Jesus Christ, whose birth Christmas commemorates.

Engr. Abba Gana further charged FCT residents to "let love, tolerance, patriotism and self discipline, guide their relationships with fellow Nigerians and humanity at large irrespective of religious, cultural or ethnic differences."

In a related development, the Bishop of the Catholic Archdiocese of Abuja, His Grace, Most Rev. John Onaiyekan, has advised Nigerians to reject all forms of hatred, revenge and rancour which he said destroyed peace and progress in the country. Bishop Onaiyekan gave the advice in his Christmas message to Christian faithfuls in this year's Christmas eve service held at Our Lady Queen of Nigeria Pro-Cathedral, Area 3, Garki, Abuja.

According to Onaiyekan, there is a fragile peace in the country, and every effort must be made to enhance the peaceful co-existence of the various ethnic and socio-religious groups in the nation.

He added that the September 11 terrorist attacks on the U.S. and the events afterwards behove on the world to strive for a world devoid of injustice, suppression, oppression and racism of all shades and colours.

Also preaching in a sermon, yesterday in Abuja, the parish Priest of SS Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Nyanya, Rev. Fr. Samuel Atumba, said that Christmas period is a time to reflect and pray over our past sins and that we should use the celebration to amicably settle our differences with our enemies.

"Christmas celebration is not a period of separation, it is a period of unity, a time we should pray hard so that God will forgive us for the sins we committed before the Christmas period," he said.

The parish Priest maintained that it is not what we eat on that day that matters, but how serious we pray to God to forgive us over our sins, adding that if your sins are forgiven by God other blessings shall follow you.

Commenting on the controversial electoral law recently signed into law by the president, he said that the electoral law is the beginning of the end of democracy if the "trouble clause" in the electoral law is not removed.

He pointed out that the electoral law has created division between the upper and the lower house.

Rev. Atumba also queried with the manner President Olusegun Obasanjo, rushed to sign the controversial law saying the many other bills are waiting for the president's attention but he abandoned them to sign the electoral law.

Engr. Abba-Gana, FCT Min.

Clear Wuse Modern Market of illegal structures --*Minister*

By Tashikalmah Hallah

As part of the efforts to check the recurrence of fire disasters in the Federal Capital Territory, (FCT), the Minister of the FCT, Engineer Muhammed Abba-Gana, has directed the Abuja Environmental Protection Board (AEPB) to clear the Wuse Modern Market of illegal structures.

Engineer Abba-Gana in a letter to the management of AEPB lamented the congestion of parking lots and the illegal extension of shops at the market saying the situation is not acceptable.

The minister, while making reference to the recent inferno that consumed the Wuse New Market, explained that the present condition of the Wuse Market is not quite different from the burnt market.

As he explained in the letter, "in an event of fire or any disaster, it will be difficult for fire fighters and other emergency workers, to respond immediately."

The minister in the letter also directed the AEPB to step up its campaign to rid the FCT of food vendors, vulcanisers, brick moulders among others to give Abuja a befitting capital akin to Washington and London.

Responding to the minister's directive, the AEPB has issued a stern warning to traders at the Wuse Market to remove the illegal structures or risk the wrath of the board.

The board responsed in a tense notice to the traders signed by the managing director of the board on behalf of the Minister of the FCT advised those operating illegal shops to remove them.

The notice read thus: "Traders occupying parking lots, emergency vehicle passage ways, drainages, perimeter fence, walk ways and open spaces are hereby advised to remove their goods, sheds, attachment to shops, extensions to shops, canopies etc, from such locations immediately.

"The authorities do not want a repetition of the Bakassi fire disaster before action is taken. "Failure to comply will lead to task force removal/arrest and possible prosecution in the interest of all."

A visit by *Abuja Trust* to the Wuse Modern Market showed that the traders are adamant to the warning.

According to some traders who spoke to *Abuja Trust*, they have nowhere to go, as both the FCT minister and the AEPB have not provided them alternatives.

The spirit of Christmas: Children celebrating at the Abuja Amusement Park,...yesterday. *Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje*

Police nab five in Kubwa over fireworks

By Hammeed Bello

Five persons were arrested by the police in Kubwa, an Abuja Suburb yesterday for throwing firecrackers, contrary to police order during the festive period.

The five persons, who were apparently carried away by the enthusiasm of the Yuletide, were said to be throwing the fire crackers on major streets, in parks in the neighbourhood when luck ran out on them.

A witness told *Abuja Trust* that the culprits who were mostly teenagers derived joy in the fire crackers which often terrorised residents of Kubwa who hardly sleep at night due to distraction by the explosion.

"I am happy with what the police did. These boys make life difficult for us here everyday by throwing the fire crackers near our house.

"My little baby almost died from the horror of the terrible sound of the explosion last week. I caught one of the boys and threatened to hand him over to the police when his parents had to plead with me," the witness said.

Mr. Andrew Ojeme, a parent of one of the boys arrested, told *Abuja Trust* that he would not seek the release of his son because he had warned him of the imminent danger of throwing fire crackers outside their residence.

Abuja Trust reliably gathered that the police had banned the use of fire crackers, especially in residential areas, considering that criminals capitalise on such opportunity to perpetrate their acts.

A respondent hinted *Abuja Trust* that following the last robbery case in Kubwa, in which a robber was shot dead and three of his colleagues arrested, the police have intensified their patrol of the area.

Abuja Trust

Features

Whither Abuja at 10?

Abuja turned on 10 December 12. Has it met the aspirations of its founding fathers? Has the masterplan been respected? Are the displaced indigenes contented and is life safe and cheap? ***Hammeed M. Bello*** *of* ***Abuja Trust*** *examines these issues closely in this piece.*

Abuja turned 10 on Wednesday December 12, 2001, as an effective Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Although the FCT was created on February 5, 1976, by the FCT Decree No. 6, it however became a functional capital of Nigeria December 12, 1991, when former head of state, General Ibrahim Babangida, moved to Abuja following the Gideon Orka coup.

Rather than excessive funfare and elaborate merriment, birthday celebrations, whether of an individual or a nation, is reasonably a period of sober reflection, of critical introspection to objectively examine the progress made, obstacles encountered and flaws made with a view to making amends.

One of the expectations of the founders of the FCT was to have a modern city that Nigerians would be proud of which can compete favourably with its counterparts anywhere in the world in terms of planning, organisation, facilities, beauty and modernity. 10 years of effective operation as FCT, have these laudable expectations been met? This question impresses on the minds of many. Similarly deserving attention are whether or not life in the FCT is cheap and safe; whether or not it is built to specifications (original masterplan) and the impact of that on residents, how and why the slums come about; in fact why the complaints of compensation and political marginalisation by the FCT indigenes and more.

President Olusegun Obasanjo, during his recent tour of the FCT, had ordered the demolition of illegal structures within the city without compensation to owners. Specifically, he ordered bungalows and duplexes to be pulled down as only high rise buildings are permissible by the masterplan of the city. This order by the president attests to the fact that the specifications of the original masterplan of Abuja has been distorted by influential individuals and authorities.

The Abuja masterplan which was prepared by the International Planning Associates (IPA), a consortium of planners based in Virgina, USA was designed to accommodate a projected population of 3.1 million people at optimum development of four phases.

Ideally, the plan was drawn without incorporating the suburbs, satellite towns and their accompanying slums, in terms of provision of facilities and infrastructure.

The reality however, is that today, slums and the satellite towns are competing with the city centre in population explosion. Inspite of government effort to dislodge those slums and shanties like Mabuchi, Karmo, Piwoyi, Aleita, Mpape and their likes, they have continued to defy their evacuation moves as activities in those areas continue to flourish daily.

In some quarters, it has been perceived that shanties and slums will continue to exist as long as adequate arrangements are not made to integrate them in the overall development plan of the FCT, especially that bulk of the labour that is needed for the projects in the city centre are got from the inhabitants of such settlements. It is necessary to make adequate provisions for these satellite settlements to avoid overstretching the city centre.

There has been complaints by indigenes of the FCT demanding $40 billion reparation for dispossessing them of their land in addition to demand for a state and a mayor to enable them exercise their franchise.

For example, prominent indigenes of the Abuja have threatened to create problems for the Federal Government if it fails to review the political and administrative structures of the FCT to accommodate their demands.

Nigeria's Ambassador to the Gambia, Ambassador Ayuba Ngbako, an indigene of the FCT, had urged the government to establish an elected mayoralty and a legislative council for the FCT for the indigenes to exercise their voting right.

In that regard, President Obasanjo had, during his tour of the FCT, declared that creation of a mayor for Abuja is impossible.

Apparently, the long years of military rule had contributed to the deviation from the specifications of Abuja plan. Similarly, conflict in policies prompted by favouratism, greed, personal aggrandisement and political manoeuvring largely contributed to lost in focus in the development of Abuja.

"It is necessary to make adequate provisions for these satellite settlements to avoid overstretching the city centre."

During the military rule, the most outstanding physical deviations from the specifications of Abuja masterplan were the Jabi dam, the parkway, establishment of military barracks, the Aso presidential villa, encroachment into the green areas and hilltops and integration of Garki village.

Similarly, the master plan provided for underground cabling network for power and telephone system. But upon distortions, NEPA and NITEL overhead lines traversed the F.C.T.

Also, roads that were supposed to be four lanes either way were reduced to two because of funds.

As a result of these distortions, social amenities like water supply, electricity, health care and educational system are overstretched beyond their limits.

Particularly disturbing is the rate at which every Dick and Harry engages in land business with careless abandon. Self appointed land lords and their agents, in partnership with their accomplices at the land development of the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) and the Area Councils prepare invalid documents and sell government land without regard for the law.

Apparently disturbed by this trend, President Obasanjo, during his tour of F.C.T. recently, declared war on any body including traditional rulers, who is caught in the business of land allocation.

Said the President: "No traditional ruler will go unpunished if caught in the untactful habit of selling land to the public. By constitution, nobody owns land except government and the power of allocating land is vested on the resident alone who can direct the FCT Minister to do so on behalf of the government."

Emphasising governments determination to deal decisively with those who interfere with the specified developmental plan of the F.C.T., the President stated interalia: "My administration cannot fold its hands and watch some disgruntled elements and unpatriotic people destroy the Federal Capital just because of their personal interest. I will fight them to the end."

Similarly, former Minister of State for F.C.T., Engineer Mark Okoye had frowned at the indiscriminate altering of Abuja master plan by individuals and authorities.

Engr. Okoye specifically canvassed for the involvement of professionals associated with development of modern city to retain the beauty of Abuja.

Providing solution to the problems of slums in the F.C.T., Okoye stated that "areas like Lugbe with one million people could be created but F.C.D.A. should be able to provide the infrastructure before allowing the erection of buildings in order to avoid the squalor that may occur."

The Abuja city gate.

To bridge the gap between the rich and the poor residents of the F.C.T., Okoye suggested that efforts should be made to attend to the list of applications for land allocation especially those who applied since 1981–82.

Said he: "public officers in the grade of directors, directors-general, permanent secretaries and ministers who have cornered good numbers of plot in fictitious names should be made to return them because this is a clear case of self enrichment."

To solve the problem of development of Abuja, Okoye advised that if the government could not embark on parallel development of the whole territory, there may be a need to look at the size of FCT in which development could be funded adequately. The affected people, according to him, shall then be properly resettled within the states from where their villages were carved.

To stop further deterioration of the situation, residents have called on the FCDA to provide houses for government staff at all levels instead of living in exorbitant rented apartments at government expense. The corrective measure could also extend to the constitution of judicial enquiry on the allocation of plots to ensure that land improperly possessed are returned. All efforts must be geared towards ploughing the FCT, rather than plundering it.

The overhead bridge being constructed by Julius Berger at the Berger Junction.

Abuja Trust

Habitat (Property and Environment Column)

Estates in Abuja: their worth, their state

Estates and properties in Abuja have been feared to be affordable only to the rich considering their high prices. Apart from the slums and suburbs where the economically handicapped residents live, estates in the city centre are for a select few. *Danlami Baban Takko* in this piece samples opinions of estate managers on the state and worth of estates in Abuja

What is an estate? What is housing? Such questions are necessary to provide answers to the two constantly confused terms.

According to Abubakar Abdulkadir, an estate surveyor with the *Bello & Co* in Abuja, the word estate simply means interest. Interest in land. He said between a landlord and tenant each of them has interest in a particular property. So the aggregate of all these interests is what is called estate, which means interest in land. So, if you are a tenant, it means you have an estate in a particular property. But when we confine ourselves to housing, we are talking of the bricks and items that are assembled together to provide accommodation whether for residential or commercial purposes.

"That is the basic meaning of estate. But over time it has been adopted to other situations like when you have a premises with a number of housing units inside, say twenty block of flats, it could be regarded as an estate. This means a large concentration of housing units at a particular location. Property could also be regarded as an estate but property strictly speaking connotes ownership. When somebody therefore starts talking of property here, he is more or less talking about the ownership of a particular landed property. Most of these terms are quite technical and they have their origin in law, but these days peoples have used it to outstretch the meaning," Abubakar explained.

Justina Azubike, the Abuja branch manager of *Trustvile Property* (experts on estate & Property) observes that: " Houses generally in Abuja are costly in the sense that the cost of owning a plot is also very high. You can imagine a plot of say, one thousand square metres within Wuse II costing about thirty million naira (N30 million). By the time you start developing the land, you find out that the return on the initial involvement will force you to demand for a high rent. If you need a standard, well finished duplex on a rental basis, you have to pay as much as N2.5 million annually."

In Wuse II, the least amount charged on a property is N2.5 million when it is not a well-finished duplex. But averagely it is N2.5 million, N3.5 million or N4 million when marbles are used.

"Most houses in Abuja are not estates perse but are projects owned by different individuals that have certificate of occupancy. Talking about locations also, places like Wuse, Maitama and Asokoro charge much higher rents, than places like Garki and Wuse II, let alone Garki village. In a place like Wuse, one can get a land measuring up to 1,000 square metres costing twelve million or sixteen million naira, and that is why the cost of rent runs into millions of naira. You cannot talk of property without making reference to plot because it determines the cost of purchase or rentage of a building. You can get a duplex for one million or one point five million naira in Wuse, while in Wuse II, it is two point five million naira on average. This disparity is brought about because initially Wuse and Garki were first occupied and there were lots of activities going on around there. Places like Wuse II were developed later, after the people have taken their time by ensuring standards," Justina stated.

Inspite of the development going on in Abuja, however, it is not uncommon to find some buildings abandoned half-way during construction. What is responsible for this? Abubakar Abdulkadir noted that so many factors are responsible for this especially lack of finance: "... If somebody runs short of finance, probably his expectations didn't meet up with his dreams, is he bound to abandon whatever he is doing and look for ways of raising money. In the absence of money, one has to relax and appraise the whole situation and look for other avenues of getting money. Some people probably had the misfortune of losing jobs, as at the time they are embarking on the construction. In some cases, somebody could die in the process of construction and possibly his relatives are not in a position to continue. At times we have had cases like that when the uncompleted house would go up for sale."

There is also the case of people occupying such uncompleted buildings whether by consent or not. Abubakar identified influx of all shades of people into Abuja as the main cause of such illegal occupation. "Housing is one of the basic necessities of life, and as a human being, if you find yourself in Abuja, one way or the other you must find the means of accommodating yourself. Some people accommodate themselves under the bridge like what is happening in Lagos.

But it has been realised that most people that stay in uncompleted structures are in one way or the other criminals. This is an area that government should look into especially in view of the security problems in this country. The government should rid these structures of these illegal occupants or squatters."

Apart from the problem of squarting in estates in Abuja, quacks have also flooded the profession of estate development.

However, there is the Nigerian Institute of Estate Surveyors and Valuers which is basically established to promote the practice of the profession. If one is a graduate of Estate Manager and not a member of the institution, one may not be able to practice. It is also the aim of the association to champion the cause and interest of members.

But what are we seeing today? Are all those who call themselves experts in estate management legally qualified to do so? According to Abubakar, "strictly speaking, take the case of valuation which not everybody can do. But when it comes to issue of being an agent, may be somebody sourced a property for you, that aspect is more or less an affair, which everybody dabbles into it. In fact there is a saying here in Abuja that everybody is an estate agent in the city. But there is difference because as a professional, even if you come to me to source for accommodation, and you also go to somebody that is not a professional you will see the difference in our approach."

Of all the things being said about the estate, housing and properties, the question to be asked is what is cheaper? Is it building the estate or buying a completed one directly? Justina Azubike highlights more on this: "To me it is even cheaper to buy house than to buy plot in Abuja. Some plots cost more than some developed houses. Right now, I have a house for my client, which is valued at fifty million naira (N50 million) in Maitama. It was built on a plot of one thousand square metres, and you can't get that plot at N25 million. Unlike other areas where houses cost much, and by the time you remove the cost of plot you find that the development commands much money.

"On the development of Abuja generally, if you compare the master plan with what is on the ground now, you find out that areas that were originally mapped out to be play grounds and open spaces have been converted either into commercial use or residential purposes.

"All these had serious effects on the facilities because those facilities on the ground were meant for an initial use but because of the additional requirement, things became choked up. Most of the open spaces that were meant for people to relax have been converted into commercial uses and as you have noticed traffic in Abuja is something else."

If land were cheap, people would build houses and ease accommodation problem. In the first place Abuja was supposed to be a model city in which government is to own most of the properties but all these things have been altered.

Those who were compelled by one reason or another, to become "squatters" or "illegal occupants" see themselves as legitimate settlers. Isa, a watchman living in one of the uncompleted buildings located in Wuse II, denied the belief that people occupying such buildings are doing so illegally. In his words: "As for me I was legitimately employed by the owner of this building for about three years now and I am looking perfectly well everything you see in this house ever since. In the first place it important to realise that it not possible for someone start building a house a after abandoning it to lea it just like that witho putting a watchman to lo after it. Secondly I do think someone has t courage to occu someone's place without permission. So anyone y see like me in such a build must have a legitimate rea to stay. When asked ab his views on the allegat that such buildings are h out for criminals, Malam queried: "I have told before that it is not poss for someone to occupy a place illegally and nob can be foolish enough leave his uncomple building without some else looking after it, what do you want me to stay

Abuja Shopping Mall

The abandoned Sophitel Hotel at Area II, Garki, Abuja

Prototype buildings at the Jibi Housing scheme for the resettlement of Abuja indigenes

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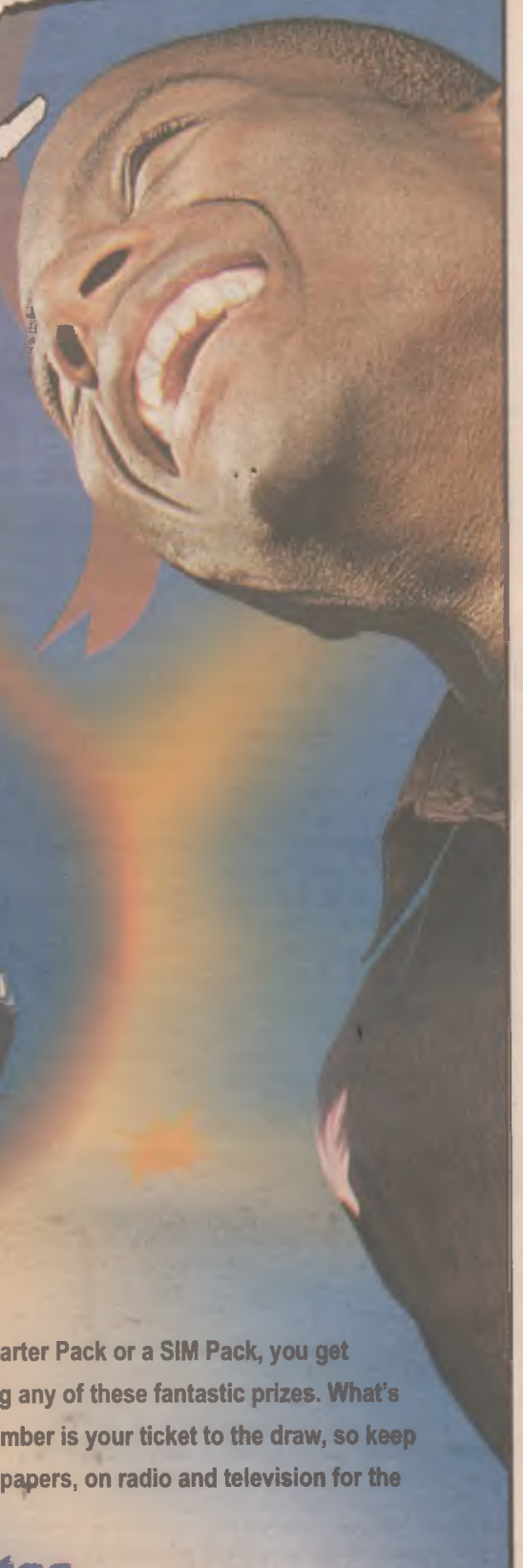

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Arts & Entertainment

Echoes of Christmas at Hilton

By Tadaferua Ujorha

Lovely sounds echoed within the sprawling lobby of the Nicon Hilton Hotel, Abuja when it organised the 2001 Christmas tree lighting ceremony which held on Wednesday December 6th.

Central to the events of that evening was the presence of young and talented pupils of three schools within Abuja. These included:

The Regent school which rendered the famous *'little Drummer Boy;* American International School regaled the audience with *'Deck The Hall,'* another favourite, and the International Community School, rendered *'a song of peace.'* All the pupils sang joyfully and vigorously, except for a few seconds, when a song seemed to get lost within the leaves of the radiant Christmas tree. But then, it seemed to float back again, and the crowd reconnected with the carol, alongside the eager pupils.

The General Manager of Nicon Hilton Hotel, Mr Andreas Searty welcomed the children and the audience to the event which was the Nicon Hilton's 2001 Christmas tree lighting ceremony. Shortly thereafter there was a Raffle Draw with a star prize courtesy of Alitalia Airways Mr. Bocchichio of Lodigiani Life Camp, Abuja, won a fully paid return ticket to Rome, which includes three nights at the Rome Hilton.

Concert

The Christmas Tree lighting ceremony was co-ordinated by Archbishop Peter Akinola, and there was an additional sequence of Christmas Carols rendered by the Anglican communion Choir too.

There were cakes and little snacks, and drinks were served, while all these lovely carols were being rendered, such that the guests and all persons passing through the lobby of the Nicon Hilton paused t view what was going o within the bright circle c persons. Mrs Day Benjamins Laniyi, th assistant sales manager o the Nicon Hilton, Abuja wa the talented compere for th event of that quite musica evening.

GM, Nicon Hilton, Mr. Andreas Searty, (Centre) with Children and other guests

Student of Regent International School Abuja, rendering 'Little Drummer Boy' during the Christmas tree lighting ceremony at Nicon Hilton Hotel, Abuja, recently.

Adidon dancers performing at Afolahan Square in Jalingo capital of Taraba State during President Olusegun Obasanjo's two day working visit to the State.

The Christmas Tree at the Nicon Hilton Hotel, Abuja

Big fun and partying at Sheraton

Sheraton Hotel and Towers is preparing a number of delightful events to coincide with the Christmas Party in the New Dazzle. Also there would be a new year Candlelight Dinner at Luigis.

Party

Festival Season. In a release from the Public Affairs unit of the hotel Santa's Grotto will open from 10th-26h December 2001. There would be a Christmas Dinner at Luigis restaurant on December 24th which will be accompanied by live music. While on December 25th there would be a Christmas luncheon with live entertainment also. On December 23rd there would be a

Writers at A.B.U. elect new ex-co

The Creative Writers Club of the Ahmadu Bello University on 23rd November 2001 held its annual elections which ushered in a new executive that would co-ordinate the activities of the club for the next one year.

The new executive are as follows:

Isitua special Peter - Chairman, Onwubu Ariri Patience -Editor in Chief

Writers

Okpanachi Onoja - Production Manager, Udiong Ime - Financial Secretary

Sodan Tahoma - Treasurer, Nzua Sylvester - P.R.O.

The workshop of the Creative Writers club holds every Thursday at room 70, Faculty of Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, by 5.00 p.m.

Sports

Benfica soccer player Argel (R) is challenged by Boavista Joaquim Silva Martelinho (L) during a Portuguese Premier League held at Bessa stadium on Sunday.

Raptors coach hospitalised

The Toronto Raptors 83-76 victory over Miami Heat was marred when assistant coach Stan Albeck was taken to hospital after a stroke.

Albeck, the 70-year-old former head coach of Cleveland, San Antonio, New Jersey and Chicago, fell ill half an hour before Sunday's game.

Head coach, Lenny Wilkins, was quoted as saying: "He did have a stroke."

No further information was available on Sunday.

Shooting guard, Vince Carter, witnessed the stroke along with his team mates.

He was quoted on the NBA website as saying: "He was turning red. He wasn't talking. He was just sitting there.

"Some of the guys were making sure he was OK, and half the guys were running in either direction looking for the doctor."

Carter put aside his shock to score 27 points and 10 rebounds for the Raptors, who recorded their third straight victory.

Elsewhere, The Milwaukee Bucks ended the San Antonio Spurs' 10-game winning streak with a 101-91 victory.

Sam Cassell scored 33 points for the Bucks, and Glenn Robinson added 30, as the Spurs lost at home for only the second season.

In Boston, Antoine Walker had 24 points and 11 rebounds, and Paul Pierce added 20 points, as the Celtics beat the Memphis Grizzlies 85-80.

The Celtics scored eight points in the final minute-and-a-half to win their sixth straight home game.

The Sacramento Kings had a season-high scoring total of 133 points against the Phoenix Suns.

Sacramento's 133-101 victory featured 26 points from Peja Stojakovic.

Memphis shock Lakers

Following up Thursday's shock win over the Knicks, the Memphis Grizzlies took the biggest NBA scalp of all on Friday, toppling the LA Lakers 114-108.

Point guard Jason Williams led the way with 26 points - 10 of them in the final four minutes - as the Grizzlies beat the champions for only the second time in 24 meetings.

Kobe Bryant scored 34 for LA and was backed up by centre Shaquille O'Neal, who had 26 points.

The Michael Jordan show rolled into Orlando and his Washington Wizards extended their eight-game win streak with a 93-75 win over the Magic.

Jordan scored only 12, but four of his team-mates also reached double figures.

Already without Grant Hill and Tracy McGrady for the season, Orlando had to play the second half without Mike Miller, who was sidelined by a bruised lower back.

The Indiana Pacers beat the New Jersey Nets 100-94, behind strong scoring efforts from Jermaine O'Neal and Reggie Miller.

Miller sank a short jump shot in the first quarter to move ahead of former Pacers coach Larry Bird into 19th place on the NBA's all-time scoring list.

In Boston, free-scoring Paul Pierce scored 17 of his 36 points in the final quarter to help his Celtics bury the Utah Jazz 98-92.

Karl Malone scored 22 points for Utah.

Allen Iverson scored a dozen points in a crucial third quarter to propel his struggling Philadelphia 76ers past the Atlanta Hawks 94-83.

In Miami, the Heat suffered more disappointment, giving up an overtime win to the Cleveland Cavaliers by a score of 86-81.

Things got better for the Charlotte Hornets, however, as they snapped a three-game losing streak by beating the Minnesota Timberwolves.

Hornets point guard Baron Davis outscored Minnesota lynchpin Kevin Garnett.

In San Antonio, the invaluable Tim Duncan scored 21 to help the Spurs to a crushing 109-74 rout of the Denver Nuggets.

The Detroit Pistons collapsed to a fourth straight loss against the Portland Trail Blazers.

Jerry Stackhouse had a chance to win the game for Detroit, but old college friend Rasheed Wallace scored 22 in a winning effort for Portland.

Vin Baker notched six of his 18 points in overtime to help the Seattle SuperSonics to a 111-108 win over Golden State Warriors.

Brigham Young guard Travis Hansen shoots over Stanford guard Chris Hernandez in the second half at the Thomas & Mack Center in Las Vegas, USA on Saturday.

Anelka debuts for Liverpool

Liverpool's controversial new boy, Nicolas Anelka, made a clear statement of his intent on arriving at Anfield by taking Robbie Fowler's number.

Anelka, who signed from Paris St Germain on loan at the weekend, wore a shirt with a number nine on the back at his unveiling alongside £3.5m Czech youngster, Milan Baros, on Monday.

Both strikers go straight into Liverpool's squad for the Boxing Day game at Aston Villa, a match the Reds dare not lose after demoralising defeats by Chelsea and Arsenal.

Anelka won the double with Arsenal before his turbulent exit from Highbury and even more troubled spells at Real Madrid and PSG.

But the 22-year-old French ace aims to make a fresh start and said he is hoping to make the move to Anfield permanent.

"At the moment I am only here on loan, but I am very interested in staying here," he said.

"There have been problems in the past, but it was Gerard Houllier who persuaded me to come back to England - it helps that he is French.

"But the main attraction was the trophies that Liverpool won last season and their past achievements impressed me.

"Gerard Houllier has told me that Liverpool are a very good team, and I already realised that."

Anelka has been brought in to plug the gap left by Fowler's £11m move to Leeds and assistant boss Phil Thompson revealed he would be given the former Kop idol's shirt number.

Despite the Frenchman's past troubles, Thompson had no second thoughts about signing Anelka.

He said: "I believe he can put behind him his problems. Everyone needs a fresh start and this will clear his head and he will get down to doing what he does best - playing football.

"He'll love it here. We have French-speaking lads and they all get on very well.

"Gerard insists on that and we have shown what a great mix and camaraderie we have here."

Before his move from Arsenal, Anelka was quoted as saying he disliked England and the English game but now says it was not like that.

"When I left Arsenal I never said I didn't like England, my problems were only of my own making in my head."

Baros said he had always dreamed of playing in the Premiership.

"I have always been interested in English football and it was always an ambition to play here, and now I have achieved my ambition.

"I feel very confident about playing for Liverpool. It is up to me now to prove that I can be a Liverpool player and achieve my best with Liverpool."

Premiership League

Boxing Day games

Arsenal	v	Chelsea
Aston Villa	v	Liverpool
Blackburn	v	Sunderland
Bolton	v	Leeds
Everton	v	Man United
Ipswich	v	Leicester
Fulham	v	Charlton
Newcastle	v	Middlesbro
South'mpton	v	Spurs
West Ham	v	Derby

McGimpsey named Walker Cup captain

The Royal and Ancient Club have kept with tradition by not keeping Peter McEvoy as Walker Cup captain after one home and one away match.

Northern Ireland's Garth McGimpsey will be at the reins for the defence of the trophy at Ganton in Yorkshire in September 2003.

As captain McEvoy led the Britain and Ireland side to two impressive victories over the American team, beating them by 15-9 on both occasions.

His term of office also saw Britain and Ireland win the world team title in Chile in 1998 and finish second to the Americans in Berlin last year.

McEvoy is favourite to become the next chairman of selectors.

The defence of the trophy at Sea Island in Georgia this August earned the Walker Cup side the prestigious Golf Writers' Trophy.

McGimpsey was a teammate of McEvoy in 1989 when Britain and Ireland had their first-ever win in America.

Liverpool's new strikers faced the cameras on Monday.

Spurs to contest Sheringham expulsion

Tottenham have confirmed they will appealed against Teddy Sheringham's controversial sending-off during their home defeat by Ipswich on Saturday.

Sheringham was given his marching orders by referee Mike Riley for allegedly throwing a punch at John McGreal during a tangle.

But the striker believes television replays support his claims of innocence.

The Football Association - who had already been notified of Tottenham's intention to appeal - are still awaiting Riley's report.

The referee has accepted Glenn Hoddle's insistence that he take a second look at the incident on video.

If Sheringham's red card stands, he will miss the FA Cup third round tie against Coventry, the first leg of the Worthington Cup semi-final against Chelsea and the return Premiership match against Ipswich at Portman Road.

Sheringham protested his innocence after the match, insisting: "I had to raise my arms to get the fellow off me because he was pulling my shirt as he had been all day.

"If anything it was pushing but when the referee came up and told the other fellow he was giving him the yellow card for what he was doing I feared the worst.

"When I look at the incident again I can see what a difficult job the referee has.

"All I can say is that I never had any intention to throw a punch and I just hope he sees it that way when he looks at it again."

Sports

SAFA takes over Johannesburg stadium

South African Football Association (SAFA) has taken over the 78,000 capacity Johannesburg FNB stadium at no cost as no money exchanged hands with the previous owners of trust comprising First National Bank and Grinaker Construction.

SAFA president, Moleti Oliphani, said the soccer controlling body would spend about $20 million to upgrade the stadium.

The face-lift will include the completion of the second phase of the stadium, which will increase its capacity from 78,000 to 130,000. It will also house the new SAFA headquarters but FNB will retain the naming rights to the stadium for the newt 10 years.

"We have very big plans to make this a state-of-the-art world-class stadium. It will play a pivotal role in our bid to host both the 2006 African Nations Cup finals and the 2010 World Cup finals," said Oliphani.

The immediate plans for the stadium include building an office block and adding 200 extra suites.

Others include the construction of a business centre, a hotel to accommodate national teams and a soccer academy within the complex.

"We aim to have all the renovation of a business by the time the FIFA inspection committee arrives in 2003 to look over our facilities to stage the 2010 World Cup finals," added Oliphant.

Work on the stadium is expected to begin in the new year.

FNB senior executive Pat. Lamont said at the handover that the transfer had bene a long and involved process.

"We have gone through good and bad times but ultimately the plans was that this stadium would become the home to South African football," said Lamont, who assured that his bank would not abandon SAFA or the stadium.

"We are still very much on board with SAFA and kept the naming rights to make sure that our commercial relationship with SAFA continues and goes forwards," said the FNB official.

Oliphant said that the association would take out a body with a bank although it may not necessarily be the FNB to raise the $20 million required to revamp the stadium.

Lazio's Simone Inzaghi, left, fights for the ball with PSV Eindhoven's Ernest Faber during their UEFA Champions League group D soccer match at Rome's Olympic stadium... recently.

Biu Utd begs Borno gov't

Cash-strapped Biu United FC has appealed to the Borno State government to release the N1 million it pleaded to give the club to enable the club prepare for the new season.

Maina Idrissa, the sports officer of Biu Local Government, owners of the club, who made the appeal in Biu said the council was finding it difficult to fund the club alone as its purse was lean as a result of its other commitments.

Idrissa said that its efforts to have the money released after the pledge was made one year ago, have been unsuccessful.

He noted that the club was next to El-Kanemi Warriors in Borno, saying that if its numerous problems were not promptly solved, Biu United could fold up.

The sports officer said the club was not a beneficiary of the recent donations made to clubs that participated in the local governments including those given to Bama and Jajeri United in Bama Local Government by the Borno government.

Biu United is representing Borno in national league amateur division two.

Three Nigerian clubs for second round

All three Nigerian clubs participating in the on-going Africa Handball Club Championship in Benin have qualified for the second round of the competition.

Edo Dynamos and Niger United of Minna got through in the male category while Topline of Borno made it in the female category. Grasshoppers are not taking part.

Dynamos topped group C, after winning their three games while Niger United places second in its group after recording two victories and one loss to Zamalek of Egypt in group A.

Topline finished behind Petro Athletico of Angola in group A.

Jigawa players accuse club officials

By Patrick Andrew

Players of Jigawa Golden Stars have alleged that some government officials attached to the club were fleecing the State government in the name of managing the club.

The players also alleged that these officials were working assiduously to frustrate government efforts to complete the construction of the Dutse Stadium .

According to the players who preferred not to be named, the over N400,000 spent weekly in the name of managing the club goes largely into private pockets.

"Officials from Government House and Caretaker Committee board running Sports, and others numbering about ten weekly consumed N180,000, even as some amount goes for the accommodation expenses and allowances for the players. In fact the Special Adviser on Sports collects N50,000 every week, while other officials including the permanent secretary, board members of the Sports Council collect between N20,000 to N30,000 each week purportedly as allowances for accompanying the club for their away matches." They said.

The players explained that since the Stars play their home matches in Kaduna, these officials collect some amount every week both for their home and away matches.

Besides, the players questioned the justification of spending N10 million to lay boreholes at the Dutse Stadium which was yet to be completed arguing that "were the officials serious they would have committed the N10 million released by the government into some concrete work in the Stadium."

They argued that the officials because what they make from the government on weekly basis do not want the Dutse Stadium completed "as it would halt their source of fleecing the State government in the name of running Jigawa Golden Stars."

According to them on an average, 16 officials including the technical crew who are very relevant accompany the team. Even players have been "sacrifised" for some officials to make trips."

The players lauded the government for releasing of N5 million for the Dutse Stadium but advised that the present crop of officials overseeing Sports should not be relied upon to the supervision of the project.

The players who spoke to Trustsports in Makurdi where the club engaged Lobi Stars in a league match said if the government does not halt he trend the club not make no success.

Bayern Munich sign Ballack for next season

German and European champions, Bayern Munich, have signed Bayer Leverkusen midfielder, Michael Ballack, in a 28 million marks ($12.71) deal.

The 25-year-old German international will join Bayern at the end of the current season after signing a contract until 2006.

"We're very happy that he's picked us...for him personally it was the right decision," Bayern manager, Uli Hoeness, was quoted as saying.

Bayern coach, Ottmar Hitzfeld told Bild am Sonntag newspaper on Sunday he hoped to be able to bild a new squad around players like Ballack and midfielder, Sebastian Deisler, who is to join the club from Hertha Berlin.

The club, which is set to lose captain Stefan Effenberg at the end of the season, are lying fifth in the Bundesliga after failing to win any their last six games.

The Jos Branch Manager of Inter City Bank Plc presenting the cups and checque to the Tournament Manager of Jos Annual Polo Tournament, Mr. Huroun Audu, standing from the left Mohammed Nda and Sule Umar. The captain of Jos polo club.

Inter City sponsors major trophy

Jos Polo

Inter City Bank has pledged to sustain its sponsorship of polo tournaments in the country as its contribution to the development of sport.

Managing Director of the Bank, Alhaji Lamis Shehu Dikko, has disclosed, noting that the decision to sustain the sponsorship of polo tournament was predicated on long-standing commitment to the development of sporting activities amongst the citizenry and the cultivation of excellence in various aspects of national life.

Consequently, the bank which sponsored trophies in the Port Harcourt, Minna, Kano, Katsina and the Kaduna polo tournaments, would debut at the Jos polo fiesta which begins today as one of the major sponsors.

The bank has a trophy which bears its name, which would be competed for at the tournament expected to attract the game de-la-crème of polo stars.

Meanwhile, Jos polo could would launch on appeal fund to raise N75m needed for the rebuilding of structures and facilities damaged during the September inferno in Jos.

The launching would proceed the one-week tournament in which several other trophies would be competed for.

Several top government functionaries are expected to grace the launching.

FLATS TO LET

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EDITORIAL

Obasanjo and unguarded pronouncements

Recently the president, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo has been credited with public pronouncements that can only debase the high office he occupies.

On one occasion, Mr. President was credited with remarking that one of Nigeria's foremost economists, Professor Sam Aluko is senile and not competent enough to criticise President Obasanjo's economic policies. The President even went further, roping in Professor Aluko's son, Gbenga, a Senator of the Federal Republic, into the fray by insinuating that Gbenga Aluko is of dubious character.

At about the same time the president also undermined the National Assembly by declaring his invulnerability to impeachment threats by its members.

More recently, while on a visit to the Nigerian Law School at Bwari, President Obasanjo again shocked Nigerians by casting uncorroborated aspersions on the moral character of all the members of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). The president did not only rule out any further negotiation with the strike-prone ASUU, which is untactical in itself, but inferred that they do not even deserve the salaries they get.

Collectively, the statements, to say the least, are quite unnecessary and totally inappropriate to the person occupying the exalted office of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Taken separately, we consider the remark on the person of Professor Sam Aluko as most unfortunate and unstatesmanlike. Coming as a response to Aluko's honest criticism of Obasanjo's economic policies, the presidential attack on the person of the learned professor underscores the growing perception that President Obasanjo is intolerant of criticism even if well motivated. Even in autocratic regimes, a measure of objective criticism is tolerated while in democracy, honest criticisms are seen as the ingredients of successful governance.

Equally injurious to the president's democratic credentials is the remark challenging both the power and the competence of the National Assembly to exercise its constitutional responsibilities with respect to impeachable situations should the need arise. Even if the president feels he is on sure ground constitutionally, what he should do is to explain himself as civilly as possible and then allow the facts to vindicate him.

As for ASUU, we appreciate the fact that the president's anger was to a certain extent justifiable but there is certainly no justification for the president's unguarded remarks that may end up dragging his office down.

We urge the president to be more restrained, more careful and more measured in his public utterances. Such seemingly careless and inappropriate remarks tend to portray the president, wrongly or rightly, as a president that is either deliberately crass with his words or naturally hot-tempered and unduly impatient. For a president that was democratically elected, such vices could have very serious consequences for the sustenance of that democratic mandate.

WEDNESDAY COLUMN

2001: The year that changed the world?

By Mohammed Haruna

As the year 2001 draws to an end pundits and laymen alike have been taking stock of events of the year and speculating about what the next one holds. Opinions differ about the significance of the major events of the year, but probably most opinions will regard the September 11 terrorist attack on America as the most momentous.

The Economist has described it on the cover of its edition of September 15 as "The day the world changed". I personally do not think so because what was new about September 11 was not the nature and magnitude of the event. Poor and weak countries and people of the world have all too frequently suffered far worse devastation than September 11 from the hands of the more powerful countries of the world.

What was really new about September 11 was the victim rather than the event; until September 11, hardly could anyone have imagined that what has gone around the world could come around to America, given its almighty war machine, coupled with its almighty status today as the world's only super power. It is only to that extent that September 11 may indeed have been "the day the world changed". Or has it?

If September 11 has changed the world at all, the signs are that it is for the worse, if not for the majority of mankind who are poor and weak, certainly for the majority of the world's Muslims and Arabs. The most objective test of the nature of the change lies in whether America and the rest of the West are as ready and willing to be tough on the sources of so called global terrorism, as they have demonstrated in their readiness and willingness to be tough on global terrorism itself.

So far America and the West have failed this test. First, rather than treat September 11 as crime, they chose to declare it as an act of war so that they can easily shift the burden of proof on the accused – this time, as on several occasions before, Osama bin Laden and his Al-Qaeeda organisation and their Taliban Afghan hosts. So far the evidence that the West has adduced, including the recent videotape of bin Laden allegedly celebrating the attack, have been dismissed by many knowledgeable Western analysts as either not being up to scratch or even as mere fabrication. Here it is significant that even some leading members of the American Congress have been sceptical about the authenticity of the videotapes which have been widely shown on CNN and other global television stations.

It is a sign of the lack of confidence by the Americans in the quality of their evidence against bin Laden that they have decided to bypass their regular court system and instead try alleged perpetrators of September 11 by military tribunals, a decision whose fairness and objectivity has been called into question by many Westerners, including Establishment newspapers like *The New York Times*.

Having decided to treat September 11 as an act of war rather than the crime that it is, the Americans then decided to persuade, cajole or bully everyone into supporting their decision to bomb the Afghans back into beyond the Stone Age for harbouring bin Laden. Part of their strategy of beating Muslims and Arabs into line was for the Americans to be seen for once as unequivocally supporting the just cause of the Palestinians for a state of their own. Hitherto the Americans have tried to broker peace in the Middle East unequivocally on the side of Israel, even though they have pretended to be even-handed.

Not many Muslim and Arab leaders were convinced that the Americans were genuinely interested in justice for the Palestinians in trying to give the impression of reining in the Israelis in their heavily armed aggression against stone-throwing Palestinians. Certainly the belief on the streets of Muslim and Arab countries was that the Americans were merely pretending to restrain the Israelis in order to contain any popular opposition to the bombing of Afghanistan.

It would seem as if the sceptics of genuine American concern for the lot of Palestinians have, once again, been proved right. With the collapse of the Taliban regime much sooner than even the most optimistic military pundits expected, the Americans have quickly reverted back to type.

Clearly, they must now be reckoning that they don't need Muslim and Arab support any more and they therefore do not need to pretend any more that they give a damn about the right of Palestinians to statehood. This is why they have now abandoned the Palestinians to a fate far worse than that of the Afghanis, in the hands of Ariel Sharon, the Israeli Prime Minister, long the implacable foe of Palestinians and Palestinian statehood. That the Americans no longer see any need to pretend that they care for the Palestinians can be seen from the one-sided pressure they have mounted on Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, to clamp down on Hamas and Islamic Jihad that are in the forefront of Palestinian resistance to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land. While the Americans have been pressuring Arafat, they have not done anything or said a word about Israeli policy of building Jewish settlements on Palestinian land, nor have they done anything concrete to stop the Israelis from their policy of collective punishment of the Palestinians for the perceived sins of Palestinian militants.

Yet these twin policies of Jewish settlements on Palestinian land and the collective punishment of Palestinians for the activities of their militants have been the sources of the crisis in the Middle East, which in turn, may have been the main source of September 11.

Form all this it is obvious that if September 11 has changed the world at all, it seems to have made the Americans rather more aggressive in the pursuit of what they see as their national interests. As Richard Dowden, a former Africa editor of *The Economist,* said in an article in the current edition of *BBC Focus on Africa* magazine, September 11 seems to have taken us back to the Cold-War era when America's and the West's obsession with containing communism led them to turn a blind eye on, or even openly support, terrible regimes that the West regarded as its allies.

"If the war on terrorism does continue for a long time and becomes the single issue of world politics," said Dowden, "there is the danger that the post-Cold War agenda of good governance, respect for human rights and free market economics will be allowed to slip away, particularly in those countries strategically important to America".

Nigeria, because of its human and natural resources, especially oil, is obviously one such country. Already Nigerians are feeling the impact of America's obsession with September 11. One manifestation of this impact was a recent interview by President Obasanjo with a French newspaper in which he reportedly advocated for American bombing of Sudan and Somalia as alleged supporters of terrorist organisations. Obasanjo's views were obviously without regard for Nigerian Muslims who form the majority of the country's population and who have opposed the American bombing of Afghanistan.

Obviously, Obasanjo's remarks were aimed at pleasing the Americans who are reportedly disillusioned with his record in office in the last two and a half years.

Worse than these unfortunate remarks, there have been many cases of overzealous soldiers and policemen stopping bus drivers and motorcyclists with Osama bin Laden stickers of their vehicles and forcing them to remove the stickers and at times asking them to swallow the stickers! There have, indeed, been cases of even more serious infractions of the rights of Nigerians to freely express themselves on September 11.

In his article, Dowden has spoken about "Clever African leaders" who will try to use September 11 to extract benefits in exchange for supporting America in its war against global terror. They will try to do this by casting local opposition in the image of terrorists especially if they happen to be Muslims, militant or otherwise.

If these African leaders are really clever, they should learn from the fate of erstwhile American allies like the late Shah of Iran, Reza Pahlavi, Iraq's Saddam Hussein, Panama's Emmanuel Noriega and even Osama bin Laden himself, that it is not so clever to be America's poodle because the Americans are fond of dumping any poodle that they no longer find useful.

The death of Bola Ige

As I was concluding this piece, news came in of the cold-blooded murder of Chief Bola Ige, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of the Federation, in his home in Ibadan on Sunday night. The days are early to know the reason for the murder, but whatever it is, the case is bound to have serious implications for the security, peace and stability of the country – in particular the South West, where he comes from.

When I read about his humiliation in the palace of the Ooni of Ife recently – some party thugs reportedly forcibly removed his cap and eyeglasses and threw them away. In the end, reports said, the chief had to be smuggled out of the palace for his own safety. I knew there was bound to be more trouble ahead. Still I did not, for one moment, imagine that Ige would be the victim of the scourge of crime in the country, or more probably of the serious rift which has riven the AD/*Afenifere* apart, partly as a result of Ige's action in helping to found the rival Yoruba Elders Forum.

If the tragic death of Ige prompts the authorities into dealing with the source of crime in the country and also into re-examining their political strategies for survival that have caused serious divisions in the country. then Ige would not have died in vain. May his soul rest in peace.

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