

Special Report on the 1999

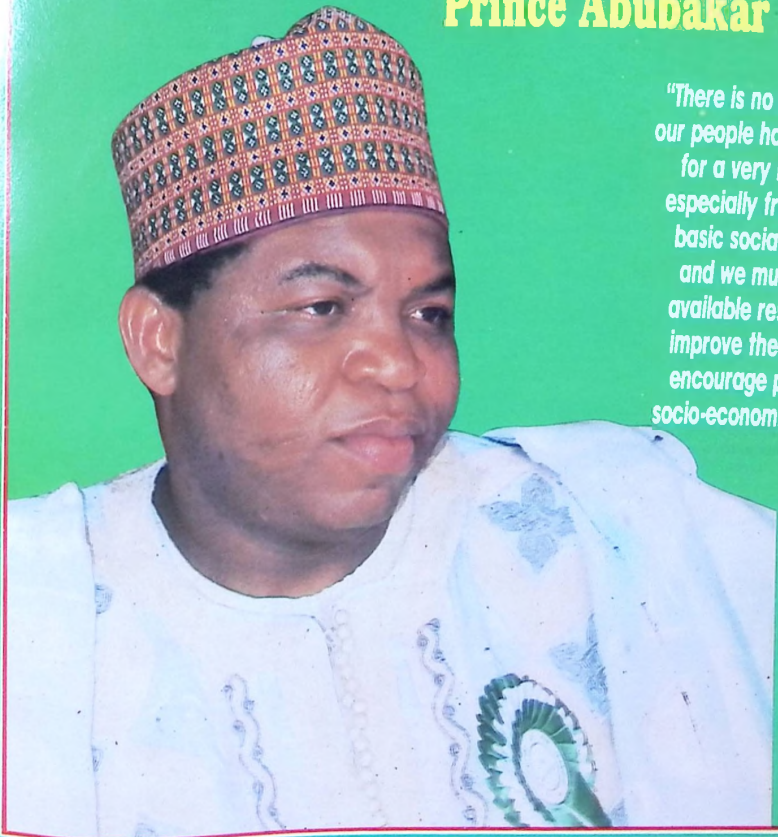
# TSM

The Sunday Magazine



## Giant strides of

## Prince Abubakar Audu



"There is no doubt that our people have suffered for a very long time especially from lack of basic social facilities and we must use all available resources to improve their lots and encourage productive socio-economic activities"

# KOGI STATE



**A** COMMITMENT to real change, to economic recovery, and to putting people first. That was the platform on which the Audu — Akande pair rode to victory. Barely one year after, there is already a new sense of hope in Kogi State, a new energy, and a new optimism for good reason: Prince Abubakar Audu, first Executive Governor of the nascent Kogi State has brought to his people renewed energy, new ideas, the courage, commitment and the compassion to turn Kogi State around.

After 16 years of unjustified neglect, there are many wounds left to heal: too many Kogites in poverty; to many indigenes of the State without jobs or health care; many indigenes of the state worried and afraid of the future. For Prince Abubakar Audu: "we as a people will not easily recover from this long period of narrow-minded policies that rewarded the few in the old dispensation, at the expense of the many; of mean spirited cynicism that promoted division instead of unity in the past; and indifference instead of compassion; but we will see the members of a large community now known as Kogi State recover, together."

Governor Audu challenges all indigenes of the State to join hands with him to reach out for "our dreams, to take responsibility for a future brighter than our past;" to believe in the spirit of a community that always promised greatness. From every semblance, the Governor's agenda for the rulership of the State is ambitious because he has seen and early enough that the problems of Kogi State are too urgent to delay.

The first priority of Governor Abubakar Audu on January 12, 1992 when he mounted the State's saddle of administration has been to, like an economic surgeon, turn round the economy with the care and regardness of the State. The Governor's mastercraftsmanship of State affairs reminds one of the words of America's Whitney Young who says that "while we may have come over here in different ships, when you look at the economy, we are all in the same boat now." In spite of the geopolitics of Kogi State, Prince Abubakar has been able to hold both the east and west together

Chief Samuel Akande, Deputy Governor, Kogi State



Alhaji Aliyu Omeiza, Secretary to Government, Kogi State

Alhaji Musa Abdullahi, Speaker



Prince A. Audu First Executive Governor of Kogi State

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with even distribution of social amenities such as roads, schools and agricultural machinery. He has also been very committed to reforming the State's health care system, to bring down costs and expand coverage; to provide every family of Kogi State with healthcare they can afford. There is only one straight description of Prince Abubakar's style of rulership and command of state affairs: "He has the big tent strategy of inclusion, togetherness and the big vision message of "Rebuild Kogi State to excel in Nigeria."

Apart from having inspired hope in the long-overlooked rural communities of the state with the fast rate of development projects,

many prominent sons of the state have endorsed him as the man who can inject the right dosage of leadership that will allow all Kogites fuse together to talk with one voice, act as one and succeed as a team. Surajudeen Abdullahi, Chairman of Kogi Local Government Council had this to say of him: "We all register our unalloyed support and loyalty with our Excellency's administration for its laudable and development — oriented achievements within such a short span of its existence. The people of Kogi State are solidly behind our Governor inspite of the mischievous machinations of a few detractors." Former chairman of Kogi Local Government Council, Bala Salisu, a staunch SDP member in the State, also gives Governor Audu passmarks for his development efforts. Says he: "Governor Abubakar Audu has fared well." In the state capital, he has exalted himself in the construction of roads, bridges and houses since the past one year. Six months after the Governor had taken over the mantle of State leadership, Bala Salisu had placed a half page congratulatory message in a Lagos — based national newspaper captioned: *I Doff My Cap*. In it Salisu noted that: "Barely 200 days you assumed office, your team has been able to leave an indelible mark in the development of our new state." Salisu advised Governor Audu: "Please don't look back," praying that Allah should guide Prince Abubakar Audu through the arduous task of state development.

Governor Abubakar Audu is a simple man. His personal goals are simple as they are altruistic. As he put it, "I am not a controversial man. All I want in life is to chart a positive course for myself and my people." Indeed in the short period since assuming office, Kogi has been put in a clear and firm course of development, breaking away from its past of deprivation and lethargy. It is a tough battle the young Governor has ahead of him as the problems are many. But they are not insurmountable. With a mammoth of problems awaiting limited resources, a systematic approach to problem solving has had to be adopted.



Alhaji Salawu Atimah,  
Commissioner for Agriculture



Mr. Peter Adams Dogwo,  
Commissioner for Works



Abubakr Usman, Finance  
& Economic Development  
Commissioner



Hon. Samson Odidi, Deputy  
Speaker, Kogi House  
of Assembly



Dr. S. S. Ameh, Justice  
Commissioner



Dr. Paul Amodu, Health  
Commissioner.



Mr. Paul Ojo Malefa,  
Education Commissioner



Mr. Dan Kadiri, Commissioner  
for Commerce & Industry

## Roads:

Before the Audu team took over the administration of the state, roads in almost all the 16 Local Government areas of the state and those linking Lokoja with other states were in a deplorable situation. During his electioneering campaign, Prince Abubakar had not only promised a resurfacing but a total overhaul of the road network within the state. This, he has since set out to achieve with his youthful Works Commissioner, Peter, Adams Dogwo. After 365 days in office, Governor Audu says with satisfaction: "I am dogged in my determination. Once I am convinced that what I am doing is right and it is in the right direction for my people, that's the way we are going to follow. There's no going back." The people in the rural communities of the state have within a short space of time, been linked to the state capital and are very grateful to the governor. So far, Prince Abubakar Audu has spent N400 million in capital investment for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of 250 kilometres of major township roads. Seven major town roads measuring several kilometres have been rehabilitated. They are those of Lokoja, Egbe, Kappa, Okene,

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folly. Kotto-Karfi and the N72 via the Egasa township road in Dekina Local Government areas which was commissioned by the governor on March 2, this year.

Recently, the state government awarded the N88.66 million contract for the construction of the Lokosa — Ganga — Ajakuta road. The road which is nearing completion is in realisation of the importance the Ajakuta Steel Complex, a federal government concern, will play in the economic development of the state. It will further provide the shortest link between Lokosa and commercial towns such as Port Harcourt in Rivers State, Onitsha in Anambra State and Aba in Abia State. Other road projects which the state government is still rehabilitating include the Okpara-Ekka-Isale, Ife-Ojokun, Isale — Prinjat, Dekina — Odeji — Ogama, and Tere — Oko-Eta.

The state government's road development also transcends local to the major towns. Prince Abubakar Audu is known to have put all government machinery at play to bring social amenities to all and sundry in the state. Exploiting the services of the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructures, (DFRRI), the state government has been able to construct more than 1,500 kilometres of rural roads in all the 16 local government areas of the state. In the next few weeks DFRRI will have completed some 500 kilometres roads, approved for construction by the state government in January.

Economic growth through government motivated industrial development in the state has been the policy reference point of his administration. But this, says Governor Audu cannot be totally achieved without good roads linking other states of the federation and federal roads in the Kogi State. While he is known to have been studiously playing his own part in road developments, he has been in close talks with the Federal Government on the state of federal roads in the state and as a result, rehabilitation work on two federal roads including the Okpara — Lokosa — Abba and the Idah — Odeji — Nwankwe roads has started. Audu's government is known to be seriously working Abba to begin the rehabilitation of the Awyigba — Dekina — Shantaku road. When a bridge planned to be built over River Niger to connect Lokosa with the Eastern axis of the state via Shantaku is finally put in place, the dreams of Prince Abubakar Audu in making Lokosa a Mecca of all business-owners would have come to reality.

## Rural Electrification

THE electrification of the suburban and rural communities in the state is one of Governor Audu's priority programmes. The more reason, why since the past one year, government has directed much effort towards making life more meaningful to rural dwellers by lighting up their villages with rural electricity and making hurricane lamps items of a past life. As Governor Audu has often stated, "You make rural areas more attractive for investors if essential services like electricity and water are available." And while commissioning the Kogi rural electrification project in Okpara Local Government area of the state, April 15, last year, he reminded the electorate that "My administration recognises that the greatest percentage of our people reside in the rural areas and it is imperative that the right atmosphere is created for them to fully exploit our immense economic potentials." In the past one year, therefore, Fesale, Ife, Iroye, Oyi, Ighagan, Okpogoro, Koto-Karfi, Dekina, Inyokpa, Ejejobo, Anyigba, Eji and Egarae have been electrified. More towns and villages have been slated for the next phase of the project.

## Water

A major concern at the outset of the administration was the growing health toll in the rural areas most of them avoidable deaths not unconnected with poor water supply and sanitation.



Prince Audu inspecting Newly completed ultra modern shopping centre of Lokosa.

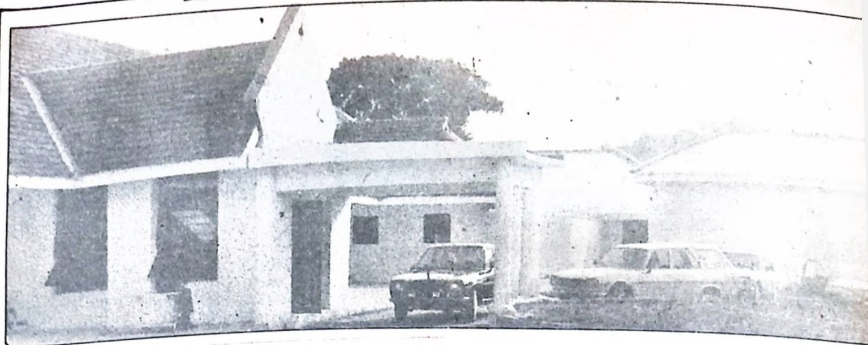


Gov. Audu commissioning water project.



Gov. Audu commissioning a rural electrification project.

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Typoid, cholera guinea-worm and dysentery took heavy toll and brought alarm in the communities. Governor Audu immediately embarked on efforts to improve the water — supply situation in the state as part of the strategy of eradication of the deadly water borne diseases.

In the last count, three water projects have been commissioned. They include the rehabilitation of the Lokoja water works which cost the Government N90 million. This has improved the water supply situation from a mere 19 litres per second to 60 litres per second or 750,000 gallons per minute. Other water projects already commissioned are the Ekuku dam water treatment plant at Okene and the expansion of Idah township water works. Also, the Ankpa water works has been refurbished. Rehabilitation work has also reached advanced stages at Dekina, Oboroko, Aiyetoro—Gbedde and Koton-karfe.

Desirous to find a lasting solution to the water problem, the state government worked closely with DFRRl to improve the water supply level to the rural areas.

## Housing

OVER the year, the area which constitutes the present Kogi State suffered immense developmental stagnation which has resulted in the pitiable absence of basic infrastructure, particularly residential structures. This is most evident in Lokoja, the ancient town which is now the capital of Kogi State. Lokoja, seemed to have been unprepared for the task of wearing the tunic of a state capital.

But when the creation of the state came as a blessing and the indigenes of the state in the services of the former Kwara and Benue States moved into Lokoja, they were faced with the problem of acute shortage of residential accommodation. The few available houses and the Hotels in the town proved acutely insufficient to host the people of the State. Workers thus resorted to sleeping in their cars and sub-standard structures.

Prince Abubakar Audu on assumption of office, took speedy steps to alleviate this problem. He immediately started work on the construction of 400 units of houses at the Lokongoma Housing Estate on the outskirts of Lokoja. Built in two phases, the entire project is nearing full completion but some of the houses on which work has been completed are now being occupied by some members of the Kogi State House of Assembly and some civil servants. There is also provision for middle income earners at Lokongoma. Phase two of the project cover about 500 housing units for the middle and low income earners. Said the governor in a recent interview: "All in all, about 800 housing units have been completed. If you go round, you'll see things for yourself. So far, all the commissioners, all the DGs, special advisers, General managers of various parastatals, chairmen of government-owned companies and departmental directors have all been adequately accommodated.



Prince Audu and Chief Akande planning strategies for the rapid development of the state.



Road Construction: One of the Audu's administration priorities

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Work on the New GRA extension has also been completed. About N100 million has so far been committed to the construction of 800 housing units with impressive results in the past one year.

The Auda administration did not also relax in arresting shortage of office accommodation. It immediately swung into action and so far 32 office blocks costing about N25 million were constructed, furnished and have since been occupied. The official residence of Sir Frederick Lugard, the colonial Governor-General of Nigeria, has also been refurbished and is now part of the Government House Complex. The complex which also houses the Governor's residence also has an executive council chamber. Also, three VIP Guest Houses and a Presidential Lodge have been built and fully furnished in Lokoja. In addition, work on six Government lodges located at Abuja, Ankpa, Isanlu, Oguma and Idah are in progress.

## Education

In articulating his education policy, Governor Auda said his inaugural speech on January 2, 1992 that "education for the citizens is the key to accelerated development because it provides an efficient work-force, promotes social integration among our people and generates positive response to calls for development." Within this first year, therefore, emphasis was placed on the rehabilitation of both students and facilities available for studies. From day one, the Governor announced automatic scholarship scheme for all students of Kogi origin in various institutions of higher learning. More than N127 million was spent on the automatic scholarship scheme. The State Government also halted the decay in many schools by spending N2 million for the renovation of eight hostels at Government Secondary School, Oboroke, and the construction of one borehole each at the government secondary schools in Lokoja and Kabba.

The State Government is also planning big for higher education in the state. With the release of N2 million for the rehabilitation of College of Education, Ankpa, the institution is now ready for its new status as a degree-awarding institution. Plans have reached advanced stage for the commencement of Kogi Polytechnic and a state university. Already, the sum of N5 million has been earmarked for the initial take-off of the polytechnic, while preliminary works for the university to be cited in Kabba is already on. Expansion and renovation works are in progress at the College of Agriculture, Osara which will commence its Diploma programme in the next academic session. An initial grant of N10 million has been released for the take off of the academic programme of Kogi Polytechnic which overall cost stands at N102 million.

## Health

**BELIEVING** in the saying that health is wealth, the administration has also taken giant strides in the health sector. The ultimate goal is to enable every resident of the state to have access to health facilities. The General Hospital, Lokoja, has already been upgraded to a specialist hospital. Four other hospitals have been slated for conversion to specialist hospitals under a special African Development Bank (ADB) N130 million loan package.

In addition, efforts are being made to secure another development loan of N450 million to upgrade the general hospitals at Ankpa, Okene, Mopa, Isanlu, Dekina, Iyale, Idah, Oguma, Koton-Karfe and Ogori. Also, under the World Bank assisted Health System Fund Project, health centres at Odolu, Aiyetoro-Gbedde, Abejokolo, Okenguen and Egume will be upgraded. The project is to cost N108 million.

The State Government has introduced a drug revolving loan scheme with an initial investment of N1.5 million. This has ensured the availability

of drugs in health institutions in all parts of the State. The World Bank also assisted with a \$2 million loan to ensure the sustainability of the drugs revolving loan scheme. The administration has already released N2 million counterpart funding for the scheme. The Government has commenced negotiations for another World Bank Loan of \$50 million for equipping government health institutions in the state.



Gov. Auda with his Deputy, Chief S. O. Akande having a look at a project plan.



Hajia Abiba Auda, wife of the Kogi State Gov., admiring Better Life Programme products.



Prince Auda: People's Governor

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## Commerce and Industry

**T**HE success of Governor Abubakar Audu's ambitious plans for Kogi State will depend on one factor — a solid industrial base. Thus, the administration has taken pragmatic steps to ensure rapid industrialisation. To achieve this, the Governor has set up a committee to implement the recommendations made by the committee on the Blueprint on Economic Development of Kogi State.

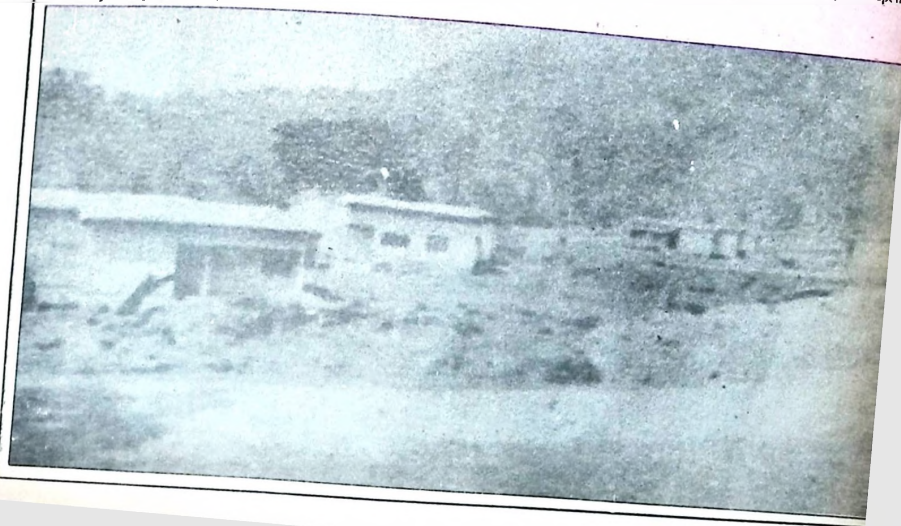
There is also the Kogi State Foundation whose responsibility is to articulate the direction of industrialisation of the state.

Apart from such preliminary steps, the State Government has gone a long way in translating some of its lofty ideals into reality. The sum of N2.3 million has been committed to the establishment of a cement company at Obajana near Lokoja. Preliminary work has commenced on this. Four companies have also been incorporated to boost economic activities in the state. They include Kogi Hotels and Tourism Company which has an equity share of N10 million, Kogi Building Society with N5 million equity share capital; Kogi Properties Limited with a share capital of N10 million; and Investment Company with a share capital of N10 million. The absence of decent shopping facilities was also a short-coming which the state Governor set out to correct immediately he assumed office. The State Government has since completed and commissioned a shopping arcade with 20 shops and 14 kiosks. To boost the tourism potential of Kogi State, construction work on an ultra modern 200 bedroom unit Tourism Center has commenced on the beach of River Niger in Lokoja. The integrated tourism project is to cost about N150 million on completion.

## Agriculture

**W**ITHIN the past one year, the State Government has demonstrated

*A view of one of the housing estates*



that Kogi State is indeed "the real bread basket of Nigeria." Realisation that the future of agriculture in the country depends on full mechanisation, the State Governor approved the expenditure of N43 million on the procurement of 20 tractors and N12 million on the refurbishing of 4 tractors, 45 plough and 36 ridgers. In the last farming season, over 23 trucks of fertilizer were delivered to the state. This represented only about 30 percent of what the State Government ordered. The shortfall in the supply of this vital input was caused by erratic allocation from the manufacturing companies. All necessary steps are already being taken to ensure increased delivery this year. Within the agricultural sector several agencies to improve agriculture services have taken-off with necessary fund backing. They are: Kogi Palm Produce Board, Kogi State Board, College of Agriculture Osara and Kogi Agro-Allied Investment Company.

Being essentially an agrarian society, concerted efforts have been made to give a boost to the initiative of peasant farmers. The programme of integrated rural road development is primarily intended to ease the transportation problem within farming communities in the state. The Kogi State Agricultural Development Project, KSADP, has been established with an initial investment of N144 million to be drawn from a World Bank loan on the project. The KSADP has already mapped out strategies to improve 300 kilometres of rural roads, provide 50 mapped out potable water and distribute 50 tonnes of various inputs.

## Justice

**T**HE last one year has been fruit-yielding efforts to bring the administration of justice closer to the people of the state. Five new high courts were established in Ajaokuta, Anvigha, Dekina, Isanlu and Koton-karfe. In addition, two sharia courts of appeal were opened at Anyigba and Kabhimment areas where none existed. "Our target," says Governor Audu, "to establish a high court in each local government headquarter." The judicial system in Kogi State has been expanded to ensure quick dispensation.

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tion of justice to justice delayed is justice denied. To man these new courts, more judicial officers were appointed.

## Sports

In the first one year, the state has made strides in sports competition in the country. This has been made possible with the encouragement given sportsmen and women by the State Government through the provision of sporting facilities. Already a contract worth N54 million has been awarded for the construction of an Olympic size stadium in Lokoja. In addition, the mini-stadium in the state capital is undergoing renovation, while N954,000 was spent on the purchase of sporting equipment within the past one year.

## Better Life Programme

THE Better Life Programme has been reinvigorated with the inception of this administration. Bureaucratic bottlenecks which hampered the full take-off of the programme when the state was created, have since been removed. Thus, the State Government assisted in the equipping of two fish-smoking sheds fitted with smoking kilns and ovens. The State Government also procured four oil processing machines and one gari processing machine which were loaned to five different women groups in the state. The State Government also approved a loan facility of N150,000 to enable women in all local government areas of the state execute some of their projects.

## Information

ONE of the guiding principles of the government is to run an open administration. "There is nothing for us to hide," Governor Audu often said. In pursuance of this principle, he took extra interest in the free flow of information to report activities of the government and people of the state. Consequently, during his one year in office, Governor Audu em-

*Prince Abubakar Audu, poised to develop the nascent state*

barked on an extension and integrated mass media development programme which even though capital intensive is providing adequate information to the citizens and mobilising them for accelerated growth and development of the state. The state had no access to the services of the Nigeria Television Authority. He has since established a television station at the cost of about N21 million in Lokoja. The 50 kilowatt AM station in Ochaia which was inherited from Benue State has since been activated, while work has reached an advanced stage in the construction of the 30 kilowatt FM stereo radio station in Lokoja. Moreover, the State Government-owned newspaper, The Graphic, is already on the streets and just recently its sister publication The Weekend Graphic was put into circulation. Said Governor Audu "We embarked on these extensive and integrated mass media development programmes to ensure that our people are adequately informed and mobilised to participate in the process of development."

## Conclusion

GOVERNOR Audu's first year in office has no doubt been an eventful one with numerous achievements to his credit. It is not in doubt that his administration has met all targets set for the year. This could not have been possible were it not for the resilience and great spirit of sacrifice demonstrated by the officials of the State Government.

Governor Audu is not carried away by the achievements of his administration. He is determined to do more for the betterment of the people of the state. "However, we expect from you total support and loyalty. Our main purpose in office is to help transform our highly endowed but hitherto neglected state into a place of pride for this generation and the generations to come. We will not be deterred from this noble goal," the Governor stated.

Thus, Governor Audu is determined to get Kogi State out of stagnation in order to realize a great state as often desired by great politicians. In his words, The Kogi State which we shall bequeath to the next generation of leaders is one of a peaceful, stable and prosperous community.



## Kogi Will Be Ahead of All Other States Created With Us

— Governor Abubakar Audu

*"I elected to lead my people like Moses from Egypt to the Promised Land. That indeed is my mission and by the Grace of God, after four years in the government of Kogi State, my works shall be testimonies of my achievement."*

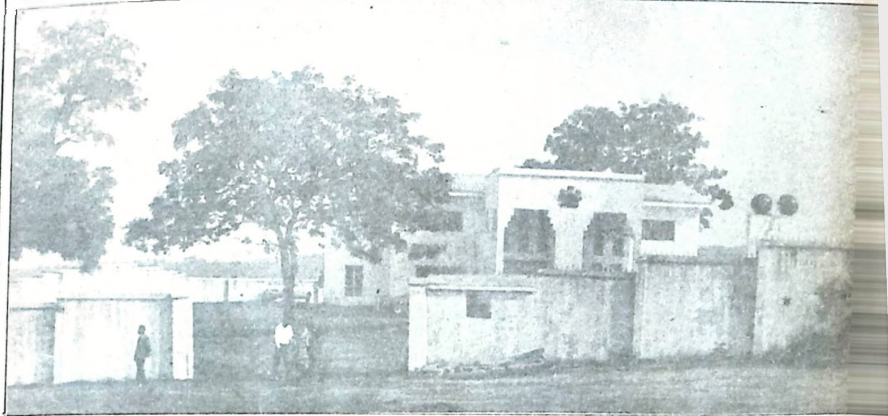
— Prince Abubakar Audu

**G**OVERNOR Abubakar Audu, first Executive Governor of Kogi State, recently spoke with Ono Bobi, Assistant Editor of the TSM on his experiences, achievements and aspirations. It is a compelling read:

Gov. Audu: Unparalleled achievement



Governor Audu stressing a point during an interview.



# KOGI STATE

**Q** Congratulations, Sir, for the good managerial work in stopping the civil service strike in your state in the bud. Did you borrow from your wealth of years as a banking chief to perform this feat?

**A** I do know experience is not something you can gain overnight. You gain it over a length of time and then you gain such experience you can work it when you see it is to be useful but when you see it is not useful or it is not useful you throw that and then think other than the experiences gained can be used in a better way. I think that such experience as a banker or professional, take all the life been taking dealings with the public, this extra exactly what the public wants and need to be done for them. I know how to handle human beings better, how to deal with them, how to handle them, the business you can do all these that your problems are left behind.

In any case, the strike was stopped whatever that time, did not go on strike. There were no strikes for some couple of days and I managed to talk them into agreement to call off the strike and we all went to work. We discontinued the strike and everybody is working normally, and it was not of their own will because I told them that the state belongs to all of us, the state does not belong to the Government, it belongs to all of us, because you make the laws, the commissioners, it belongs to all of us including our children, our great grand-children, our ancestors, they seek to try negotiating and they come along with the end today, we are happy it has been very, very peaceful.

**Q** It is there on record Sir that you inherited a debt load of N150 million. How have you been able to cope with the settling of these debts as well as forging ahead?

**A** I did not inherit N150 million, I inherited a debt load of N100 million. As a member of fact I wouldn't have wanted to make a public pronouncement on this. But since it is debt incurred by our predecessors in office, it is binding on us. We did not encash all the debts by face value as such. What we did immediately we took it, was to set up a small



Prince Audu: poised to leave a legacy.

Pioneering developmental efforts in the young state.



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panel to review the debts and determine their authenticity. All those confirmed to have been incurred in good faith, we are taking steps to pay by gradual process. Those that are not authentic ones, the fake ones, we will make sure that we are not held liable.

**Q:** About 10 months after your inauguration as Governor of the young state, your administration was said to have set up a television station on mount Patti. How has the station been performing and have you been able to replace the NTA staff with your own workers?

**A:** You have seen things yourself. You have been here and so I am sure you must have seen our television. The picture quality on the screen is the best without any iota of exaggeration among the entire television stations in Nigeria including those in Lagos. We have the *Weekly Graphic*, and the *Weekend Graphic* newspapers and by the Grace of God, with the efforts of the staff, we will soon have the *Daily Graphic*. We have also established our own radio station, the AM at Ochaja. It is undergoing test transmission. It is a 10KW and it has a mast of 850ft and has the capacity of a wide coverage. The station could be received anywhere in this country and even in Cameroun. We have also procured all the equipment for an FM Radio Station, we are busy erecting the building now and within short time, I think we will start on the first transmission of our FM based on the arrangement with the contractors. So we have done much on information dissemination within a relatively short time of one year in Kogi State. Besides that, we have done many other things which you will be able to testify to yourself and I think without any exaggeration. I don't think there is any state both old and new that has recorded this achievement within a period of 12 months. That I can say without mincing words. We meant business and we went for the best equipment. We have the most sophisticated TV equipment not only in Kogi, but in Nigeria. I was told by the NTA executives themselves that we have the best equipment, one of the best in Africa. As far as the equipment are concerned, I think South Africa comes next to us.

**Q:** You said something about the staff, whose staff? NTA staff or what?



Gov. Adu gives purposeful and visionary leadership.



An aerial view of Lokoja, Kogi state capital.

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Well the agreement is that virtually everything about NTA Lokoja belongs to the state government: the house that is occupied by the authority and the equipment. But the management of the station is given to NTA because of their expertise since they have been long in the industry. With the kind of sophisticated equipment, we can't put our own staff to take charge overnight. So what we have done is to allow NTA to handle the management and we are satisfied with the arrangement. We have no cause right now to review or revoke it but if we have any cause in future, we will not hesitate to do that.

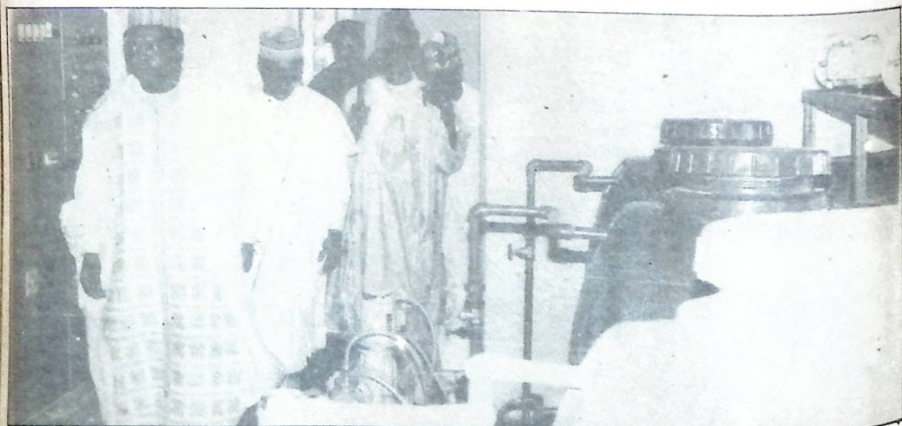
**Q:** First in January last year, you were said to have suspended the contract for a shopping complex awarded by your predecessor, Col. Danladi Zakari because of what you described as misplaced priority. In its place, you said you'll site an Amusement Park. What has become of the Park? Has the contract been awarded and what is its state of affairs?

**A:** What we did is not to terminate the contract but to transfer the contract from the building of a shopping complex to that of putting up housing structures for civil servants at a time when they were sleeping under substandard structures. It is unfair for us to start thinking as of that time of a shopping complex instead of providing accommodation for civil servants. That is why we converted the shopping complex project to residential project. Many residential houses have been built in Lokoja and all over Kogi State. All in all, about 800 housing units have been completed so far. If you go round, you will see things for yourself: all the D.Gs have been accommodated, all the commissioners and the special advisers have been accommodated. General Managers of various parastatals — accommodated, chairmen of parastatals and government owned companies and organisation have also been accommodated, including directors. One interesting thing of the whole arrangement, is that we did not cater for the senior civil servants alone. We also made provision for the people at the lower cadre. In fact, if you go to Lokogoma, you'll see the phase one of the state's housing project. It is designed to accommodate 350 low income earners. Lokogoma Phase Two is made for middle income earners. We have a unit of

three bedroom bungalows for them which has just been completed. We thank God that we have gone this far. Coming to your question about the shopping complex, when it was transferred to residential accommodation and its site was removed



Audu launching the state newspaper, *The Graphics*.



Prince Audu: determined to take the state to great height.

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from its present place, the former place became an eyesore noting that the place originally earmarked for the complex was right at the centre of the town and to leave it like that would constitute a serious menace to health. So what we did was to quickly turn it to an amusement park and the work is progressing quite satisfactorily.

**Q** You were quoted in December 1992 to have said you'll not borrow to finance a N30 million proposed Stadium Project. Have you been able to generate the sum and has the project taken off?

**A** The Stadium Project is in progress but the actual cost is N52 million not N30 million. The project is being executed by a reputable Israeli company. We have out of the N52 million paid N20 million upfront to enable the contractor mobilise for the job and to provide the synthetic tracks and electronic score boards. We are happy that you took the good decision to find things out for yourself, too.

**Q** From the look of things, Accommodation problem is still starring your Government in the face like a bad plague. How much have you striven to alter this?

**A** It appears I have used one answer for two questions but put it rightly, we have built a total number of 800 bungalows to accommodate all the civil servants and all public office holders. We have built 32 prototype office blocks and today almost all the civil servants are comfortable and can now run government job from their offices. Even the building for the AM and FM radio stations are in progress, there is also a proposal to build the state newspaper a glass house. We are also building the state's polytechnic and as at now hostels are almost ready. So I would say accommodation problem is no more starring at us like a bad plague, rather that there has been tremendous improvement. We still have plans to build a 200 bedroom five-star hotel which will be one of the best in the country because of the kind of facilities. The hotel will have four house boats because the hotel would be situated along the coastline of Rivers Niger and the Benue at



Abubakar Audu:



Governor Audu in an interview

# KOGI STATE

Well the agreement is that virtually everything about NTA okoja belongs to the state government; the house that is occupied by the authority and the equipment. But the management of the station is given to NTA because of their expertise since they have been long in the industry. With the kind of sophisticated equipment, we can't put our own staff to take charge overnight. So what we have done is to allow NTA to handle the management and we are satisfied with the arrangement. We have no cause right now to review or revoke it but we have any cause in future, we will not hesitate to do that.

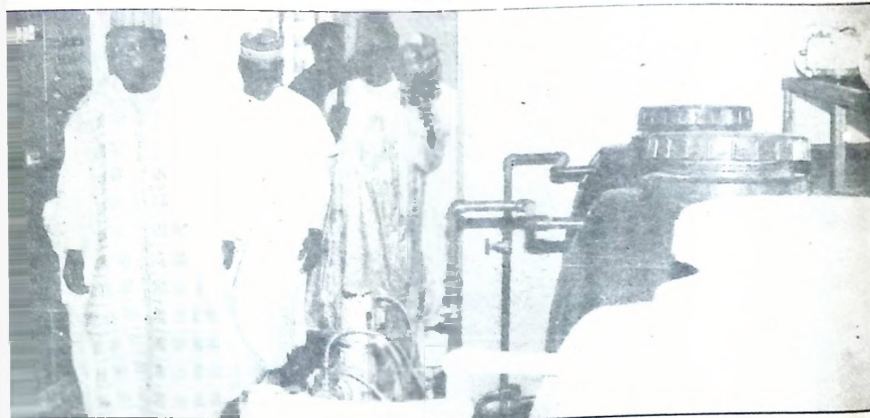
**Q** — First in January last year, you were said to have suspended the contract for a shopping complex awarded by your predecessor, Col. Danladi Zakari because of what you described as misplaced priority. In its place, you said you'll site an Amusement Park. What has become of the Park? Has the contract been awarded and what is its state of affairs?

**A** — What we did is not to terminate the contract but to transfer the contract from the building of a shopping complex to that of putting up housing structures for civil servants at a time when they were sleeping under substandard structures. It is unfair for us to start thinking as of that time of a shopping complex instead of providing accommodation for civil servants. That is why we converted the shopping complex project to residential project. Many residential houses have been built in Lokoja and all over Kogi State. All in all, about 100 housing units have been completed so far. If you go round, you will see things for yourself; all the D.Gs have been accommodated, all the commissioners and the special advisers have been accommodated. General Managers of various parastatals — accommodated, chairmen of parastatals and government owned companies and organisation have also been accommodated, including directors. One interesting thing of the whole arrangement, is that we did not cater for the senior civil servants alone. We also made provision for the people of the lower cadre. In fact, if you go to Lokogoma, you'll see phase one of the state's housing project. It is designed to accommodate 350 low income earners. Lokogoma Phase Two made for middle income earners. We have a unit of 150

three bedroom bungalows for them which has just been completed. We thank God that we have gone this far. Concerning your question about the shopping complex, when it was transferred to residential accommodation and its site was rem



Adu launching the state newspaper, The Graphics.



Adu: determined to take the state to great height.

# KOGI STATE

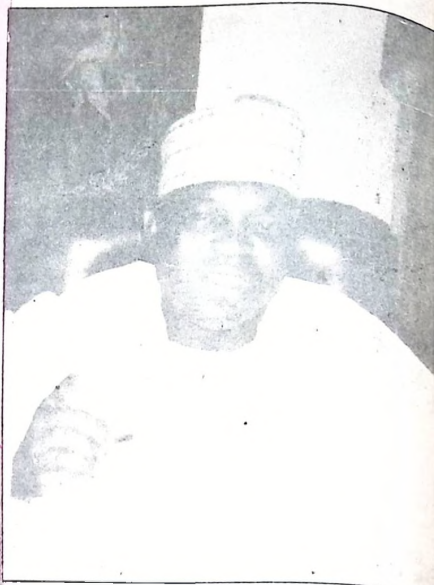
from its present place, the former place' became an eyesore noting that the place originally earmarked for the complex was right at the centre of the town and to leave it like that would constitute a serious menace to health. So what we did was to quickly turn it to an amusement park and the work is progressing quite satisfactorily.

**Q** - You were quoted in December 1992 to have said you'll not borrow to finance a N30 million proposed Stadium Project. Have you been able to generate the sum and has the project taken off?

**A** - The Stadium Project is in progress but the actual cost is N52 million not N30 million. The project is being executed by a reputable Israeli company. We have out of the N52 million paid N20 million upfront to enable the contractor mobilise for the job and to provide the synthetic tracks and electronic score boards. We are happy that you took the good decision to find things out for yourself, too.

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# KOGI STATE

point of the confluence. Each boat has a facility of four dorm three setters, toilets and kitchens so that if a tourist wishes to stay on board for days he can spend as many nights as he wishes. Of course, this is a means of fund generation for the state.

**Q** There are so many impressive developments in the state. What will you attribute this success to? What the secret of your success?

**A** I would say that it is a result of efficient management of the limited resources. Because all my life, I have not done any job other than fund management. I have been a banker all my life. I worked in various branches of the First Bank in Nigeria.

I was one of the first Nigerians to be appointed training officer of a bank. I was one of the first black men to become a manager of Standard Chartered Bank in London. I worked in New York, Wall Street, that is the world's largest financial centre. With that background, you can understand the difference. I could attribute our success so far to efficient management of limited resources placed at our disposal. Above all, we thank God for his guidance.

**Q** How easy or difficult has it been governing a state carved out of areas that had been neglected over many years?

**A** Well, it has not been very easy as a matter of fact. We have a lot of our people here who do not understand the problems of the state. I recognise one fact, that the compo-



Cheerful, amiable Audu

## THE MAN

### Abubakar Audu

**B**ORN on 27th October, 1947, PRINCE ABUBAKAR AUDU attended the famous Dennis Memorial Grammar School, (MGS) College, Jos. He proceeded to London to read Banking and Finance from 1975 to 1978.

A holder of many professional qualifications in different fields of Management Studies, PRINCE AUDU had put in well over 25 years of enviable service in the First Bank of Nigeria PLC, holding various positions including First Nigerian Training Officer and First African manager of Standard Chartered Bank, London. Later, he became Executive Director, F.S.B International Bank Ltd., Lagos. He held this position for a few years before going into politics. His professional contributions in numerous national and international seminars on banking, treasury management, finance and small-scale enterprises have remained outstanding.

These achievements earned him appointment as the Commissioner of Finance in Benue State under the government of the then Group Captain David Jang and he later worked with three other Military Governors. Prince Audu's contributions to the upliftment of Benue remain unparalleled in the history of that State.

With the creation of Kogi State, the generality of the people readily saw in him a leader needed to re-write the long history of neglect and underdevelopment in the new State. They saw in him, the administrative skill, the managerial ability, the experience and maturity and the rare acumen to selflessly resuscitate and harness the vast human and material resources with which the State is so richly endowed. Hence, he was given the mandate to rule the young State as its First Executive Civilian Governor of Kogi State.



# KOGI STATE

## The Land And Its People

KOGI State was created on August 27, 1991, along with eight others, bringing the number of states in the federation to 30. Its creation was seen as a significant development for the citizens because it brought about the re-union of people who had lived together for more than 70 years before they were separated in 1976 following the creation of more states by the Murtala Muhammed administration.

Made up of Igala, Ebiru, Kabba and Kogi divisions of the former Kabba Province, Kogi State is the most centrally located state in Nigeria. The state shares boundaries with Niger, Plateau and Federal Capital Territory to the North, while it is bordered by Benue State to the East and by Enugu, Edo, Ondo and Kwara states to the West.

**CAPITAL:** Lokoja. The rivers Niger and Benue confluence is the capital of Kogi State.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS:** With a population of 2,089,096, Kogi State has 16 local government areas: Adavi, Ajakuta, Anka, Bassa, Dekina, East Yagba, Idah, Ilumu, Kogi, Koton Karfe, Ofu, Okehi, Okene, Olamaboro, Oyi and West Yagba.

**OCCUPATION:** The climate and the vegetation favour agriculture. The land is very fertile and farming is therefore the major occupation of the people. Farmers produce root crops such as yam, cassava and cereals, rice, maize, guinea corn, beniseed, etc. as well as cash crops including cocoa, coffee and cashew.

**EXISTING INDUSTRIES:** Despite its relatively young age, Kogi State is blessed with a number of industries which will ultimately provide a strong economic base for the state. They include the following:

Industry	Location	Product/Services
Iron Ore Mining Company	Ibekede	Iron Ore Mining
Ajakuta Steel Company	Ajakuta	Iron & Steel Products
Ebiru Steel & Metal Products	Okene	Steel & Metal Products
Mopa Breweries	Mopa	Larger Beer
Mopa Valley Food Company	Mopa	Food Products
Oluyori Bottling Company	Isanlu	Soft Drinks
Jakura Marble Industry	Lokoja	Limestone, Marbles, Slabs
Joe Fadile Rotel Investment Coy <sup>o</sup>	Kabba	Feed Mills
Greenland Farms	Olufobi/Isanlu	Candles, Soaps, etc.
Abowa Nig. Ltd.	Egbe	Vegetable, Fruits, Rice
Mohike Foods Ltd.	Idah	Rice Milling
Polytechnic Energy Products	Idah	Food Processing
Okama Farms	Ogugu	Food Processing, Farms Products

15. New Nigeria Timber Co. Okada
16. Acharu Oil Mills Egombe
17. Idah Ceramic Company Idah

Steam Timber, Plywood  
Wooden utensils and decorative products.  
Paint, Oil Products  
Sanitary Wares

**MINERAL RESOURCES:** Kogi State is one of the most endowed with mineral resources in Nigeria. Virtually every valuable mineral resource is available in commercial quantities. Among them are the

following:

Min. Resources	Location	
1. Coal	Koton Karfe, Ogbu-Yaga	Okada
2. Limestone/ Marble	Jakura, Ososo, Osara, Ajakuta, Ekinrin-Ade	
3. Fluorite	Okanam Okene	
4. Gypsum	Agha	
5. Iron Ore	Aghaja Plateau, Itapopolilis, Lokoja, Aja-Ogumoko Hill, Agengja	
7. Cassiterite/ Columbite	Tantaku	Ebiru
8. Gold	Isanlu	Tin Coating and Alloys
9. Gem and Ornamental stones	Lokoja	Ornament
10. Quartz	Okene, Okehi, Egbe	
11. Talc	Isanlu-Makutu	
12. Mica	Isanlu, Ogbom	Ceramic Industry, Electrical Equipment
13. Crude Oil	Idah	Fuel and other petroleum products
14. Talc	Yagba	As filler for paper, iron ore, insecticides, paints, ceramic and lubricants.

**CONCLUSION:** A year may be a relatively short period in the life of a government that is expected to remain in office for four full years. For Governor Audu's administration, the period has been one of intense and remarkable development activity geared towards the dream of transforming the infant geo-political entity into a model, which is the expectation of its patriot, Prince Abubakar Audu.

If the achievements of the State under the supervision of its Chief Executive in its premier 365 days must be employed as an index for projecting into the future of the state, then it could be said that Kogi State would within the next few years become a "First among equals."

the story of his wasted years became life's referred point to the younger generations of his community and was incorporated into the villager's entertainment repertoire. The *sakpoba Mermaid* on the other hand recapitulates the fairy tale of the heartbreakingly beautiful but supernatural damsel who leaves her abode in the realm of mystery only to appear in the environs of the living, to enchant and ultimately harm those men who are out to give vent to their libidinous instincts. But intriguingly the *sakpoba mermaid* proves to be infinitely merciful and refreshingly different.

The death of Elama via the firing squad pushes to the fore, Nigeria of the oil boom era, up to the early 80s. The journey from the country side to the city in pursuit of greener pastures enshrined in *Wasted years* takes a new dimension in *Living with the Owl*. Elama attempts to break the chains of poverty as he takes a bold and adventurous leap from the country side to the city. But his proclivity to crime ensures that he is the one who is broken in the end. These pro-

tagonists of *Wasted Years* and *Living with the Owl* are ultimately drowned by cities which are said to be oceans and their magnetic beauties a snare.

A miniature portrait of Nigeria is captured in *Testimonies* which is a celebration of confusion and planlessness. This is not helped by the image of the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) said to be a pain in the necks of city dwellers and finally worsened by other incidents of inhumanity which have made the cities inhabitable and their inhabitants rabbits in a burrow.

"Where are your particulars?" This is a question which rings a stringent note of familiarity in the cities and casts visions of brutality, bribery, recklessness and killings associated with the police of contemporary Nigeria. When placed in juxtaposition with military coup diets which are faithful companions of the third world what we have is a macabre dance on the precipice.

One cannot fail to notice one or two shortcomings in as much as these stories are concerned. First and foremost, some of them push desires

and expectations up the precipice of near realisation only for them to come tumbling down in a heart-shattering anticlimax, as they end abruptly, leaving one or two questions unanswered. Second, some of the issues dealt with in some of the stories appear quite hazy and needed a little more clarification. Third, one finds it somewhat illogical with regards to *Wasted years* that a man engaged in a brawl in the night, should report for work in the morning with all the tell tales of the night's ugly business. Common sense will have dictated that he ought to appear in the office the next day, thoroughly spruced up.

All in all, this concatenation of stories interspersed with humour, suspense, intrigue and conflict provide interesting and penetrating insights into the Nigerian polity. With its flowing prose, it no doubt makes an arresting and compulsive reading.

**Title : *Frontiers (Nigerian Short Stories)***  
**Edited by: Asomwan Sonnie Adagbonyin**  
**Publishers: Kraft Books Limited, Ibadan.**  
**Page length: 155**

## Niteshift Hosts Bashorun MKO Abiola

**S**TILL living up to its billing as a celebrity hangout, Niteshift Entertainment Ltd. intends to present a jam of all jams tagged special *Guvnors total jam* and christened *Grand House Reception (GHR)* and celebrity show case.

This carnival is expected to feature unprecedented side attractions including fashion-hit-parade and hit concerts by very senior front-line guest artistes.

Scheduled for Wednesday March 31, 1993, the carnival and celebrity show case is expected to have multimillionaire and SDP presidential aspirant, MKO Abiola a chief, as their heartbeat.

You will recall that such personalities as Emeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, Ikemba Nnewi, Tam David-West, ex-oil minister, Onyeka Onwenu, songstress, Funmi Adams, ace footballer Segun Odegbami and the Ozzidi King, Sony Okosun have at one time or the other been the Guvnor's guests at Niteshift.

Bashorun MKO Abiola...the guest



Ken Caleb Oumese





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cording to a source at the Ministry was that Awoye replied some hours late, the Ministry refused to take the reply but later called him (Awoye) back to hand-in the reply.

Although no official reason was given why Awoye and Akah were suspended in the first place, TSM investigations revealed that it was over a major bribe scandal surrounding NPA's gigantic communications project called *Troposcatter*. The project aimed to intensively upgrade the Port Authority's communications system — coast, port to port as well as within the ports, was initiated by former Managing Director, M.K. Ibrahim, and crystallized by Bamanga Tukur in 1980. Tukur subsequently appointed Communications and Equipment Consultants Ltd. (CEC) of Martelle, Copperfield, England as NPA's consultants on the *Troposcatter* project.

The initial contact worth about 5 million dollars was awarded to a United States based company called Corronics Systems Ltd, CSL. But a review of the project showed a requirement of an additional *Troposcatter* equipment which put an additional 70 million dollars on the contract. This, according to our sources, has not been officially awarded CSL.

In brief, the reason behind Awoye and Akah's suspension is this: Dike Nworah, a chief (Owelle of Akwa) and a Director of CSL, wrote a 38-paged petition, dated February 26 to the Secretary of Transport, and Communications, which he copied the presidency, alleging that Awoye and Akah refused to pay his company the sum of almost 5 million US dollars which NPA was owing his company, but instead turned around to blackmail the project because he refused to pay a 50 percent kickback to Awoye, upfront. Already, claimed Nworah, the usual known Nigerian 10 percent kickback had been paid Awoye upfront.

Ordinarily the petition would've been on Awoye only, but Nworah joined Akah because aside from the fact that Akah, in his capacity as the Telecommunications boss of NPA, deals directly with Nworah on the *Troposcatter* project, he was allegedly, according to Nworah in his petition, Awoye's "chief collector" and the person who came to him to ask for the 50 percent kickback. Even more, Nworah alleges that Akah was the person to whom he paid the usual 10 percent kickback, amounting to 446,800 US dollars, in far away New York. In fact Nworah alleges that he and Akah went to Barclays Bank, New York together after official Banking hours, where he with-

drew that sum of money and helped Akah open an account in that Bank.

Back to the hotel where they stayed together, Akah Alleged phone Awoye to confirm that everything went fine. Nworah and Akah allegedly came back to Nigeria in the same airline, British Airways.

What blew the lid off the scandal was the refusal of NPA to settle the long-standing debt, being owed CLS perhaps it would not even have broken out if Awoye had answered to three other letters written to him by the Ministry last year asking him about the *Troposcatter* project and why CLS has not been paid. Perhaps the scandal would not have broken out if Awoye hadn't allegedly, (according to Nworah), sent Akah to ask him for a 50 percent kickback on the debt, taking refuge in the fact that the "NPA now has a Board and the members need to be given something before they approve the payment of almost 5 million US dollars."

Nworah said that it was at this juncture that his wife who was in the kitchen rushed out and told Akah off saying, "you and Awoye are greedy people. Go and tell Awoye that, two of you do a job for somebody to and pay the person 50 percent kickback."

But the operative word there is "perhaps." None of those happened. And the scandal broke out possibly because the *Troposcatter* Project could be described as a troublesome baby.

A troublesome baby comes with unusual problems. So did the project. First among the deluge of problems was that the project was reviewed and revised to a 60 digital tropo circuits on the hops with 4 digital microwave spurs each with 60 circuits. No doubt the review of the project meant it became bigger. And so NPA wasn't quite sure anymore if it could solely carry out the project nor was it sure of the economic viability of the project.

Come to think of it, NPA wasn't even sure if it wanted to reaward the con-

tract for the upgraded Digital System to CSL even though CSL sent in a quotation as was confirmed in a personal letter dated November 19, 1992, written to Akah by Nworah urging him to ensure that CSL's new proposal received active sympathy in Nigeria Ports PLC.

But to show that NPA hadn't quit made up its mind on the project, Akah on the same date Nworah sent him personal note telling him CSL had put in new quotation and urging him to help. He wrote to Communication and Equipment Consultants Ltd, NP, communications consultants on the project, telling the company that because of a review which has updated the project, "There is an urgent need for the economic viability of this updated system to be studied and a report issued to enable our management have convincing materials on which to base their decision." The NPA Communications Consultants were instructed by Akah to show amongst other things, about the project: Revenue projections, Amortization Period, Operating Costs, possible subscribers to the system, Billing and Accounting Systems Management, and suggestions on possible sources of funding for project completion.

However, CEC never submitted the report even though the company acknowledged the receipt of Akah's letter, because according to Akah, the Managing Director of the company "Col. J.D. Parker died in the last quarter of 1992 and the CEC (the company died with him."

When Parker died, Akah quickly recommended a Lagos based company *Telnet Nigeria Ltd* to take over from CEC and advised NPA on the viability of the Tropo project Akah in a reply to the query given to him by Adeosun, based on Nworah's petition, said that Telnet was appointed to enable NPA take a firm decision on the main question — "shall we justifiably continue to put money in to the *Troposcatter* Project? It was in our eagerness to get the best for the Nigerian Ports coupled with the impossibility of getting any response from CEC after the death of Col. J.D. Parker."

According to our sources, Telnet allegedly advised NPA that the Tropo project as has been updated would be too big for NPA and advised that NITEL be contacted to take over the project. We also gathered that Telnet may have advised that the project would not be economically viable for NPA.

Nworah didn't quite take kindly to Telnet's recommendations considered

ing that his company had been on the project, and that NPA was owing it. He felt somebody was anxious to push his company out of the project. Which was what prompted Nworah in his petition to accuse the NPA of rushing to commission Telnet to evaluate the project. He alleged in paragraph 5 that Telnet Ltd. is run by Akah's friend. "Telnet are not Tropo experts. Their knowledge of Tropo technology is rudimentary, if not a complete *tahula rasa*."

Akah denies that Telnet is run by his friends and emphasises that. *Troposcatter* is simply *Radio*. To say Telnet or any other company that consults in telecommunications does not understand radio is funny." He said that Dr. Nworah trained as a historian and has not retrained as an engineer. He gives Telnet a clean bill saying, "my opinion of Telnet Nigeria Ltd. is that it is a well organised company having in its employ well qualified, knowledgeable, experienced and hard working engineers and the company has integrity."

However, Nworah preferred another company to Telnet. In paragraph 6 of his petition he says that he recommended *Messrs Procom Associates* of the USA to serve as consultants to the Tropo project. But Akah replied that he found Nworah's recommendation funny. Said he, "I find this the most ridiculous offer I have and will ever hope to come across in my life. I should ask, "Is it normal for a contractor to appoint for his employer consultants that will surpersive his works."

Telnet was not the only body according to both Akah and Awoye, which said that the Tropo project was above NPA. According to them, the *Awoye Judicial Panel* which was set up by the Buhari regime to look into NPA contracts between 1979 and 1983 held the same view. Akah, while attaching minutes of a meeting held on August 26, 1988 between the NPA and the Ministry of Communications under the auspices of Transport Ministry pointed out, "The Tropo project in itself has been decided by other bodies outside the NPA to be above the NPA. Unfortunately meetings held with NITEL for the eventual transfer of the project to her proved unsuccessful because NITEL declined the interest pointing to non-profitability of the venture as their reason."

But Nworah who spoke to *TSM* unofficially in the night of Wednesday March 10 and officially in the morning of Thursday March 11 and again in the morning of Sunday March 14, but wouldn't accept to be recorded because his lawyer advised him not to speak to the press asks why it was only



Tukur: former MD of then NPA who appointed CEC as consultants to the project

now that Awoye and Akan are pointing out the non viability of the project. He says that Awoye and Akah's previous comments on the project point to the contrary. He alleges that the problem was that he refused to pay Awoye, through Akah, a 50 percent kickback, upfront, after he had paid a 10 percent kickback, upfront, so that the debt would be paid his company. He also alleges that it was because he refused to pay the extra kick back that Awoye and Akah are blackmailing the project and threatening him.

While all attempts made by *TSM* to see and talk to Awoye proved abortive, (our Reporter went to his Ikoyi house five times and phoned his house 3 times but was always told Awoye had gone out, at times as early as 6.30 a.m.) Akah is singing, not unexpectedly, a different tune from Nworah.

He told Adeosun in his reply to Nworah's petition and allegation of blackmail on the *Troposcatter* project that Nworah was the person who tried to bribe him with the sum of 1,000,000 US dollars (one million dollars) if he, Akah, convinced NPA to not only pay his company, CSL, the debt of 4,025,355 US dollars but reward the reversed contract to CSL and allowed work to start soonest. He attaches an

undated and unsigned hand written note by Nworah to him in which the offer was made. Akah's story: "Truly Dr. Nworah mentioned money to me for the first and only time about October 22. He called me late at night and requested that I see him before I go to work the next morning for an issue of "great importance to me as a person". I had some appointments to keep that morning so I told him I would be able to come over to his house three days hence. I encouraged him to talk to me on the phone which he declined. We then agreed he would leave a letter for me at home and I would on reading the letter instigate him with my reaction. When I got home the next day, I found an undated, unsigned, handwriting recognized as Dr. Nworah's. By this note Dr. Nworah offered me, as a person, 1,000,000 US dollars if I colluded with him to swindle my employers of the sum of 4,025,355 US dollars. I ignored this note. In a later telephone conversation, I told Dr. Nworah that his problems would be attended to more quickly if he directed his mind to the issues at stake."

The issues at stake, according to Akah's reply to his query included among others (a): A letter from the thet

Nigerian Ports Authority instructing Cortronics (Nworah's company) to go ahead and place firm orders for the additional Troposcatter equipment to be manufactured in spite of the fact that Form M and letter of credit were not established nor was Import License provided and (b) A letter from the then Nigerian Ports Authority instructing her to pay 14,326 US dollars to Messrs CEC Ltd on her behalf.

But Nworah in his chat with us cries foul. He faulted Akah's version. In the first place, he said that he never went to Akah's house to drop any note. In the second place he says that he never offered Akah any bribe in Akah's personal capacity. His story is this: Akah came to his house in the morning of October 22 1992 and told him that he was sent by Awoye to tell him (Nworah) that he (Nworah) should give 50 per cent kickback, upfront, before the debt owed his company would be paid by NPA. A shocked Nworah said he reminded Akah that he had paid a 10 per cent kickback on the debt and that Awoye and Akah had told him that they used part of the money to settle everybody concerned. Nworah said Akah now told him that more people were now involved because aside from the fact that Nworah had told a lot of big people about the debt, the NPA now had an enlarged board and that everybody would need to be settled.

According to Nworah, he brought out a piece of paper and on it wrote that CSL (his company) would give a kickback of 1m US dollars (including the US \$446,800 10 percent they had given before) if NPA would pay them the debt and reward the contract to them. He said it was in a bid to add the extra sum that made up the previous 10 percent given, to 1million US dollars, that he wrote it down on a piece of paper. He alleged that Akah refused the 1 million dollars on the grounds that Awoye would reject it and that all they wanted was 50 per cent which would add up to over 2 million US dollars, or no dice. Nworah said that it was at this juncture that his wife who was in the kitchen rushed out and told Akah off saying, "you and Awoye are greedy people. Go and tell Awoye that two of you should resign from NPA, and set up your own company and when you do a job for somebody go and pay the person 50 per cent kickback." At this point, Nworah said, Akah left the house after reminding him of an Igbo proverb. It is the paper on which he made the addition and wrote 1 million US dollars that he told us Akah allegedly doctored and was brandishing as bribe offered him.

But Akah even denies the initial 10 per cent kickback he allegedly received from Nworah on behalf of Awoye. In his reply to this allegation made by Nworah in paragraphs 30 and 31 of his petition to the Ministry, Akah said, "The Managing Director never sent me to Dr. Nworah and I never said so to him. I never went to Dr. Nworah to negotiate bribes. The Managing Director never instructed me to meet Dr. Nworah in New York nor did I do so."

**Nworah told TSM, for instance, that Awoye and Akah had told him that Williams was one of the people settled with the sum of 50,000 dollars from the initial 10 percent paid Awoye. Nworah, however, said that he asked the DG if Awoye had given her 50,000 US dollars as Awoye claimed but that the DG screamed and phoned Awoye immediately in his presence asking Awoye if he, Awoye, had ever given her N1.00 since he assumed office as the MD of Nigerian Port Plc.**

He said there were discrepancies in the money Nworah is claiming to have given him. For instance, he said, the money given to him according to Dr. Nworah was: in para 30 said to be 50 per cent of Cortronic legitimate revenue. The revenue was 943,500 US dollars. 50 percent would have been 471,750 dollars.

\* In para 31 said to be 446,800 dollars.

\* In para 33 said to be about 500,000 US dollars.

\* In para 4 said to be 446,200 dollars. Based on these alleged discrepancies, which he pointed out, he added, "The question is how much did Dr. Nworah in his imagination actually give me? When one is involved in fabrication it is impossible to be consistent. I honestly believe that Dr. Nworah has an axe to grind with chief Awoye... This man (Nworah) talks only of share money! Share money!! and under stands nothing else."

However Nworah insists he paid the 10 percent in dollars to Akah at the Barclays Bank New York and that he was the one who helped Akah put it in an account in same bank. Asked why he offered such bribe and later still why made it up to 1 million dollars, he told us, "I was being blackmailed. My company's money was tied up. I was blackmailed into giving them kickbacks. It was when Akah came up with the 50 per cent angle that I made up my mind that enough was enough."

According to Nworah, this was not the first time he was having same experience with Awoye and Akah. He revealed that the very first week Awoye was appointed Acting Managing Director, Awoye demanded and received an upfront kickback of N500,000.00 from him. The story: Nworah alleged that NPA was owing his company a certain amount of money and that it was the week Awoye was appointed that the then Transport Minister, (name withheld by us) approved the payment. He alleged that Awoye showed him the approval by the Minister and said that he should give him (Awoye) the sum of N500,000 immediately or that he (Awoye) would tear the approval letter and that he heeded the money at once because he (Awoye) was travelling the next morning. He said Awoye told him that the then Minister's share was N200,000 while his (Awoye) own was N300,000. When Awoye wouldn't budge, Nworah said he had to run to the bank and brought the money which he put inside a bag provided by Awoye. He alleged that he took the money to Awoye's office and gave him and that it was Akah who counted the money in Awoye's office in the presence of another NPA top official (name withheld by us). He also alleges that in the night Akah came to his house and asked him for his own share and after he hesitated a little because he felt Awoye should've given Akah some, considering that Akah took the pains to count it, he agreed to give Akah N10,000. But listen to this. Nworah alleged that Akah asked him to convert the money to pounds which he did and wrote a cheque of £500,000 for him.

### Shonekan: A test case for Transitional Council's pledge to investigate corruption

He said the bank, Barclays Bank England would confirm and that his cheque stamp was also available.

Akahi dismisses all Nworah's allegations as false and said that the problem with Nworah was that Nworah claims and talks a lot and was fond of dropping names and flaunting his influence and connections. For example, Akahi claims that Nworah told him that he (Nworah) removed a former NPA Managing Director, M. K. Ibrahim from office because Ibrahim put the *Tropo Project* on hold after CSL refused to bribe him. According to Akahi, Nworah told him that he asked the Presidency to remove Ibrahim, and Ibrahim was removed.

He also claimed that Nworah told him that it was he, Nworah, who also removed Abdullahi Shelling, a retired general and former NPA MD from office when Shelling allegedly said the *Tropo* project was a fraud and would, therefore, have nothing to do with it. He equally claims that Nworah told him that he, Nworah, single handedly put in Awoye as Acting MD and later confirmed him and that in that same manner he could sack him as well.

He also says Nworah's petition was not surprising and informed Adeosun, Dr. Dike Nworah is a commissioned agent whose full time job is extorting money from governmental organisations through frivolous documentation. He does not own an office, he can

concoct as many lies as can leave Lucifer speechless. If he is going to act true to type, many more petitions are on the way."

But Nworah dismisses Akahi who is from a town close to his, and who he told us was coming to his house twice a day, and who attended the same secondary school with him, Government College Umuahia, and cleared his first imported Mercedes Benz for him, as "corruption personified." He claims, Akahi is Awoye's "Chief collector", and debunks Akahi's claim of being a junior staff in NPA. He asks, how can Akahi claim to be a junior staff and he lives in a magnificent house with a choice environment at Ikoyi when his senior live in Apapa? How can a junior staff own four cars two of which are Mercedes Benz?"

Also debunking that he was the one who removed Shelling from office he asks, "who am I to remove Shelling? It was Awoye who wrote about 15 petitions against Shelling and removed him from office."

Tacitly supporting Nworah's claim that it was Awoye who removed Shelling via petitions, the General Secretary of NPA workers, P. A. Oribabor, told TSM that Awoye's appointment as MD was abnormal because it ran contrary to civil service structure which emphasises upliftment on the basis of position. "To put Awoye as the MD, we learnt from NPA sources, about 20 Directors were retired.

We also gathered at NPA that it was Awoye who allegedly constantly misled the Workers Union with information on the state of finances and activities of Shelling. Awoye was then a Director in the Audit department.

However sources also describe Awoye as a fastidious man who took proper care of staff welfare and reviewed them salaries unlike Shelling, whose tenure when staff salaries were usually late in coming. But another source at NPA too, dismissed Awoye's good rapport with staff as his subtle way of making staff look elsewhere while he handled Contractors.

What has, however, surprised many is why it took the ministry so long to act even though the name of the Director General of the ministry, Mrs. Williams has been mentioned in the allegations and counter-allegations between Nworah and Awoye.

Nworah told TSM, for instance that Awoye and Akahi had told him that Williams was one of the people settled with the sum of 50,000 dollars from the initial 10 per cent paid Awoye. Nworah however, said that he asked the DG if Awoye had given her 50,000 US dollars as Awoye claimed but that the DG screamed and phoned Awoye immediately in his presence asking Awoye if he, Awoye, had ever given her N1.00 since he assumed office as the MD of Nigerian Ports Plc. Nworah said Awoye denied ever telling him that he gave the DG 50,000 dollars.

Nworah swears to the integrity of the DG and said, "Awoye never gave anybody anything. Not Mrs. Williams. In fact, he didn't know I was in Mrs. Williams' office when she phoned to ask him and he denied immediately."

For now, Awoye and Akahi's fate seem to be at the mercy of the Secretary of Transport who queried them after Nworah's petition and allegations. The question is, will they be called back, dismissed or prosecuted? We gathered that the police have been briefed. Already Wali Ahmed, GM of Western Zone of NPA has been appointed Acting MD of NPA.

But we gathered authoritative that Awoye is making frantic effort to get out of trouble. A source told us that Awoye had been paying visits to a former Nigerian Head of State and another prominent female Yoruba Managing Director of a company who was a former Bank Chairman to help him out of the problem.

Born on September 21, 1943, Awoye, a Chartered Accountant, joined the NPA on September 21, 1977, as Principal Accountant. He was appointed acting MD of NPA on May 23, 1991 and was confirmed in November of 1992.

# A can of worms

**"Power corrupts, Absolute Power Corrupts Absolutely."**

— Lord Acton

By Obinna Nwachukwu

At its birth in 1954, the then Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) was expected to render the following services: providing cargo handling and quay facilities; improving the harbours and approaches to the ports; dredging as well as maintaining pilotage services; lighting, buoys and navigational aids in all Nigerian ports and co-operating with neighbouring landlocked countries unimpeded access to the sea.

In spite of these tasks before it, the NPA's ability to scoop up funds is still being adversely affected by corruption among port officials, about 40 per cent under utilization of port facilities and drop to about 14 million metric tonnes per annum of the throughput of the ports which is a far cry from their installed capacity of 25 million.

For example, Warri, Sapele, Koko

and Calabar ports are suffering from under utilization due to less traffic of cargo. Despite the facilities available (though most of them are now dilapidated) and their advantage to importers and exporters especially in the east and North-eastern parts of the country, the ports are still neglected. The situation was so pathetic that Mohammed Barau, administration of the zone in 1990 pleaded with importers and exporters within the area to sue the ports.

Where the problem is not that of under utilization, it is congestion. And this is noticeable in Apapa, Tin Can and Roro Ports all located in Lagos State. The case of RORO Port is the worst. The port which solely handles all imported second-hand vehicles is now crying for help. Sagir Mohammed, its manager does not hide his predicament as he unfolded to newsmen early this year the situation of things in the port. Said Mohammed, "Within the two years of our existence, it seems we have grown too big for our boots. We have goods scattered all over the place" — Apapa, Tin Can, even in the Container Terminal, Ijora. The situation we now find ourselves, is unprecedented."

Unfortunately, these administrative lapses not mended, the NPA has always felt its revenue generating prowess and potential are not strong enough.

The management alleged that it was because of statutory bottlenecks, saying that its tariffs should be reviewed. The authority had earlier reviewed its tariff based on 1972/73 cost estimates which were approved by government in 1977. Another review based on 1982 and pre-82 years estimates, was approved and gazetted as part of Nigerian Laws. Not contented with these, the management of NPA pressurized for more, prompting government in 1990 to begin plans to commercialize and privatize the authority with the hope that it would help overcome some of the problems besetting the gateway to Nigeria's economy especially in the area of revenue generation. This eventually came into being in January, 1991. The Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA), metamorphosed into Nigerian Port Plc (NP PLC).

With all these now in place, Nigerian Ports Plc is still a shadow of itself — an epitome of the direct opposite of the established it. Beginning with the corrupt practices among the various law enforcement agencies, through the menace of touts, Nigerian ports especially the seaports, have continued to constitute the agony of all private businessmen who have anything to do with them as sharp practices of unimagineable proportions are daily occurrence. Fraud, cheating and even outright thuggery are the order of the day, a situation which obviously meant that huge amounts were lost by the Federal Government through these nefarious



Nigeria Ports Plc: how genuine are some contracts.

acts. A good example in this case will suffice.

At the gate to any Nigerian seaport, there is no proper screening. Anybody who shows up at the gate and can produce his five naira is given a gate pass. Nobody cares to ask whether you have any legal business to transact inside the ports. And while some people queue up to pay this fee, others struggle and manipulate their ways into the complex. And when you gain entry, you can do whatever you like. A good number of people milling around the port premises are layabouts, crooks, touts and criminals. Even food vendors are involved. This is because the ports hold a lot of attraction for criminals because of illegal but lucrative activities that go on there. There have been cases where bills of lading were intercepted through a courier company all the way from Port Harcourt. Some people brought these bills of lading to Lagos because the vessels carrying the goods were supposed to berth in Lagos. This was at the RORO Port. These fraudsters sold these bills of lading to people, showed them the cars in the port and left those who purchased the vehicles, paid, cleared out - the vehicles with genuine stolen bills of lading before the actual owners came around to complain that their bills of lading were stolen.

Sometimes, these criminals will go all out to forge Nigerian Port Plc identity card (with the connivance of port officials). They also have a way of getting customs, or Navy car stickers which they paste on the windscreen of a Tokunbo car with fake plate numbers. Most of the time, they succeed in manipulating their way out of the gates. These are called 'Wharf Rats' or 'Commandos'.

Even security agents are not left out. At the RORO port for instance, there is what is known as Eight Units - police, Navy, Customs, Ports Security-men, National Drug Law Enforcement Agents, State Security Services (SSS), Fire Brigade and the Valentine Security (a private security outfit). The Nigerian ports officials in the marketing and documentation units are equally guilty of taking and demanding gratifications. Sagir Mohammed, in his frank manner told *ISM* last January, that he has lost confidence in the system. "This is an outfit where top staffers have been caught stealing. Some top officers have been organising and stealing cars, and airconditioners, taking them out in the dead of the night with the security van allocated to them to go round." A security van, Mohammed, said, was once used as a vehicle for

conveying stolen goods from the ports to buyers. A very senior official was the one who drove the vehicle while another top official took charge of sharing proceeds from their loot.

Anthony Abayomi Awoye, the recently suspended managing director of Nigerian Ports Plc cannot claim ignorance of atrocities perpetuated daily in the sea ports. At least, an incident which happened during his visit to RORO Port is a case in point. During that visit, one of the boys (a car speculator) who did not know Awoye came and asked, "Oga, you want prelude (Honda prelude) or Accord?" The managing director appeared embarrassed.

If this is not a good reason enough, the fact that Awoye has spent a long time with the then Ports Authority, and for the fact that he worked in the audit department, places him in a good position

**The Nigerian Ports officials in the marketing and documentation units are equally guilty of taking and demanding gratifications.**

to know the real state of affairs. The trend is not new. It is a can full of worms.

In December, 1990 an attempt by some top officials of the then Nigerian Ports Authority in its London Office to swindle about N42.5 million (then 2.5 million pound sterling) from the Authority's revenue was foiled. The fraud was discovered by NPA auditors who were working on the account books of the authority. In the same month, a drama was to be acted at the Apapa Port over the sudden disappearance of large quantities of seized contraband goods valued at over N1 million inside the Port complex, the goods, consisted of second-hand tyres, textile materials, tinned food items, apples and other contrabands. It was later discovered that the disappearance of the goods was as a result of fraudulent dealings at the Port by Senior Port officials. A month before this, an NPA top-short, A.P. Attah a major, manhandled a night guard, Foreman Omoni, at his official residence in Ikoyi. This was after a traditional ritual conducted by the official. He was later sent on compulsory leave. Attah was before this

time. NPA's chief executive officer in charge of security. A panel headed by the authority's deputy director, Okupa (Mrs.) found Attah guilty and recommended "very harsh punishment" for him.

In January, 1991, five top officials of the authority were also sacked over their alleged involvement in illegal sale of customers' cargoes worth thousands of naira. The goods which included electronics were reportedly tagged "over time cargoes" and sold-off by the officials to enrich themselves. Among those who were sacked was a director who was one of the first three top officers at the port. Others were a traffic officer 1, a Traffic Officer II, a Senior officer, and a Higher Operations officer. The letter conveying the termination of their appointments stated that their "services are no longer required and your appointment with the Authority is hereby terminated with immediate effect, in accordance with section 13.02 of the conditions of service (revised as at 1st January, 1985)."

During the same period, the authority concluded arrangements with the Technical Committee on Commercialization and Privatization (TCPC) to allow private operations (as part of the privatization programme of NPA) to run the ports. The danger inherent in allowing private bonded warehouse terminals to operate, observers noted, was to serve dubious Nigerians to import arms and ammunition as well as illegally minted Naira notes. Not only that, the authority, in a show of excess wealth or whatever, paid and bought a floating dock for N24 million despite the fact that its economic market value at that time was N13,000,000. These happened during the tenure of Abdullahi Shelleng, a retired major-general as managing director.

This ugly trend, perhaps orchestrated his sudden removal on 23rd May, 1991 and the appointment of Abayomi Awoye then director in the audit division as acting managing director. Shelleng was badly criticized by his staff for allegedly involving himself in shady contract deals, bribery and corruption, as well as neglecting the welfare of the workers which included irregular payment of their salaries. He left alongside seven of his directors.

Ironically, Awoye who spearheaded the protest against Shelleng succeeded his boss. But the trappings of the office and cares of this world which he launched a one-man crusade against later enveloped him as our investigations have shown. A case of power corrupting absolutely.

# Beyond any bad building, is death...

*And the menace is on the increase. What protection do Nigerians have from the architects' council?*

By Isodi Dike

**T**HE building, 3A Bakare-Faro Street, Mosafejo, Amukoko, Lagos is not an ordinary one. The light brown painted two-storey building stands dangerous bent, almost to a perfect right angle. This gives the impression, and it is the fact too, that a section of the foundation had caved in. Both the structures and its occupants have never failed to elicit curious glances from passers-by. And they are very many.

Why anyone in his right sense

should choose to live in such a house is a query that is always at the back of their minds. Wale Badmus, is the resident medical doctor of Ife-Oluwa Clinic and Maternity Home which is housed at "house 3A." He told TSM that in 1987 when the building was being constructed that a particular section slid when the builders got to the first floor. The landlord then called in his architects, who carried out a thorough study. Their finding was that the foundation caved in because of the type of soil there but that they were happy to inform them that having compressed the first layer of soil, the building can go no further because it rested firmly on solid earth.

The builders then went ahead and completed the building. Badmus was not satisfied. He decided to conduct his own test. Two years ago he measured the distance between the floor and one of the windows. It was 15 centimetres. Six months later he measured it. It remained 15 centimetres. According to him, he has continued to conduct his test every "now and then" because that is "where he live and take care of people."

But Wale Badmus is lucky, to have

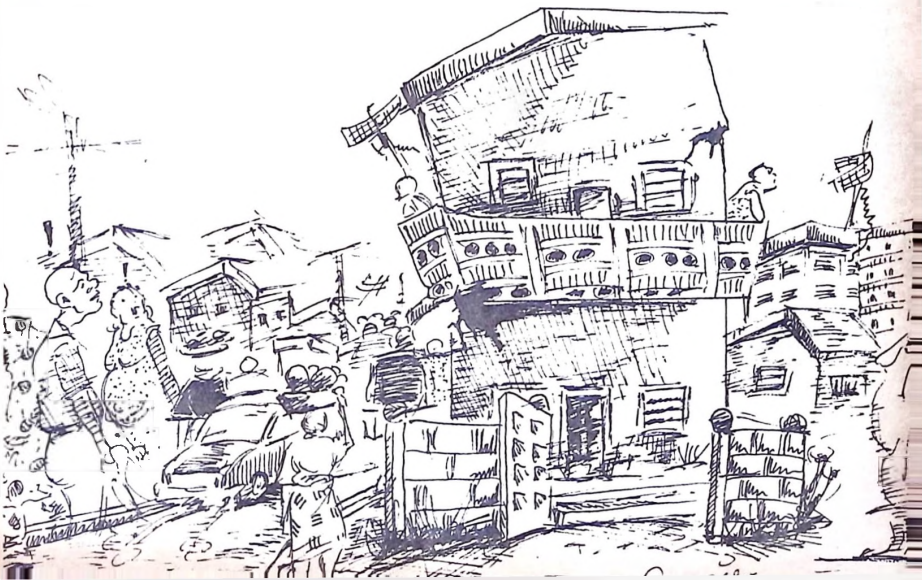
a landlord who cares enough to involve the experts. Not so, many other Nigerians who have lost their lives and property from several collapsed buildings across the length and breadth of the federation.

In May 1992, two separate buildings collapsed while under construction. At 109, Western Avenue, Iponri, Lagos a five-storey building went under when the fourth floor slab was being cast. As if that was not enough another building gave way by the junction of Ayilara Street and Ojuelegba Street in Surulere.

February 22, 1990 saw the turn of a three-storey building at 44, Enu-Owa Street as it collapsed when workers were just laying the beam of the floor.

TSM gathered that the frequent cases of collapsing buildings have continued unabated because of the "lack of expert inputs and continued dependence on untrained personnel for housing construction." There is also the problem of "severe handicaps facing both state and council planning officials by way of staff shortages for monitoring new developments.

However, something worthwhile ought to be done. This is why the recent developments in the building industry came as a welcome one. The Architects Registration Council of Nigeria (ARCON) in an attempt to clean its house is bracing up to wield the big stick.





*We Knew It Was Only A  
Matter Of Time Till It  
Turned This Ravishing*

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Discover Clear Essence Extra  
Relief Swiss Collagen  
& Vitamin E Lotion.

---

now all skin types can  
retain youthful levels of  
hydration from morning  
to night.

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starts with backing the  
right candidate.



*M.K.O.*  
**ABIOLA** for **PRESIDENT**

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# Our critics are unfair

— Akwa Ibom State First Lady

*She was a Banker before she became a First Lady. Now, see what her banking experience has done in Akwa Ibom State.*

uary 2, 1992.

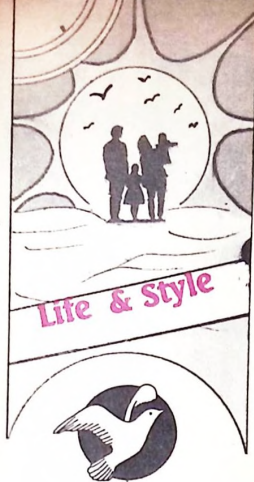
Until then, she was a General Manager at the Century Merchant Bank, Lagos. Isemin's training as a banker has come in hand in Akwa Ibom State. And so, she is the first Lady to establish a Bank for the state chapter of Better Life. She is the first to establish an Investment company which she told TSM engages in "real trading not petty

trading."

In this interview with us which she calmly granted even though that meant going late for an appointment with Rebecca Aikhomu, wife of Vice President Augustus Aikhomu, Isemin talks about her experience as a First Lady, her job, women politicians, how her experience as a banker has guided her in most of her projects in the state and her courtship days. Excerpts.

How has it been with you at Government House, Uyo? What difference exists between when you were not a First Lady and now?

When I was not in Government House, I was a free citizen of Nigeria. I enjoyed my privacy. I could wake up and go to where I wanted to without having to explain to protocol. Now I have to take permission from protocol be-



By Comfort Obi

HERE is something about Imoh Isemin, Akwa Ibom State First Lady that draws one to her. Perhaps her ready smile. Perhaps her unassuming nature. Perhaps the childish innocence she radiates.

She does not let the much flaunted title, *First Lady*, get at her. And so, she discusses freely with her staff, asks them whether she's turned out well enough to grant a news magazine an interview with cameras flashing. She looks at her stomach and asks whether it is bulging because she just ate.

That was our experience with her when she granted us an interview two weeks ago at the Akwa Ibom State Government Lodge, Lagos.

Dressed in a white long skirt made of satin lace with a red headtie, a red shoe and a red hand bag to boot, Isemin came out to meet us as soon as we were announced. She introduced herself asked us our names and with a laugh began to ask her aides if she looked okay and if her stomach was bulging because she just ate.

Even though Isemin is into aerobics

like most modern women, she really has no weight problem, considering that she is mother of six children, two of them already in the university.

Aged about 40 years, Isemin who has a masters degree in Economics from the university of Lagos was a Banker before she became a First Lady on Janu-



Isemin....I'm used to rural w

wise, they are sent to the rural health centre and they are the responsibility of the Better Life.

We also have this programme in which we have embarked on mass deworming of school children — primary school children. Our target is half a million children. We've started already last week. As at now, we've dewormed about 10,000 children. We also have on ground a plan for a cancer screening centre because anybody who wears the shoes knows where it pinches most and our women suffer from breast cancer and all that and when they die, they say it is a witch that killed the person. So, we have this on our grand board and by the grace of God we'll be able to pull it off soon.

On education we have a mass programme on adult literacy. As of now we have five adult literacy centres in each local government in addition to the one that is being done by the primary health department of the Ministry. Ours is different. We also have, at least, one in each local government area, a craft training centre for young girls, school drop — outs and adults who have finished having their babies and probably don't know what next to do. We train them in all kinds of craft work, hair dressing and secretarial studies.

On agriculture, at least every local

government area has a farm, almost all the wards have a standard farm each, and we supply them with inputs like fertiliser. We also have our own tractors which are available free of charge to any female farmer who wants to till her farm. And then, at the Better life State level we have big farms and we have incorporated a firm to handle our agricultural aspect — *Ufuru Farms Ltd.*

And then, let me say this, we have a bank. We are the first Better Life Chapter all over the Federation to establish a bank.

(Cuts in) That's because you're a banker?

Well, we are doing well, very well. I just wish that others should be able to copy us. We are encouraging the local governments chapters of the Better Life to invest in their own LGA Community banks. With these banks our women will now have better credit facilities.

Do you have a co-ordinator or a General Manager for the bank?

A General Manager  
A woman?

No, a man. Everything shouldn't be women now. Actually he is a youngman and he is the Manager and Chief Executive of the Bank. And it is a youngman also who is the Head of the Credit Department. You see I had to go out and shop for them. I didn't want to be sentimental on matters like

that, I'm not saying that there aren't good ladies but they were the ones I found while I was looking and they are good.

Then, we've also started a magazine, *Ufuru*. It is quite a colourful and high class magazine because we believe that our rural women work and they should have the best. This will raise their consciousness to higher ideals, to higher achievements. So we have this magazine and we hope to use it to project the Better Life Programme in the state, and in the nation. The magazine is printed in two parts. English and Efik, in fact all dialects.

There is this impression that the Better Life Programme is for the elite in the society. That it has made no impact whatsoever on the real rural woman. What have you done so far to involve — the real rural woman in the programme.

It is a most unfortunate impression and it is absolutely false. Without sounding like a praise singer, I think the best thing that has happened to the Nigerian woman is the Better Life Programme. And the Nigerian woman owes this to the vision, the foresight of our very hard working and thoughtful First Lady, Mrs. Maryam Babangida. Mrs. Babangida has gradually raised the standard of women in Nigeria and for this, we remain grateful. She is a

Continued on Page 58

Isemin...Our critics are ignorant



# Male accessories

**OUT**

**TIE...**Cotton and plain looking ties. Large sizes also.

**SHOES.....**Heavy skin are fast going out of fashion

**SUSPENDERS...**

**CUFFLINKS....**The big-size chunky-looking ones

**SLIPPERS....**

**CAPS....**

**SHIRTS....**

**SUNGLASSES...**

**WRISTWATCHES....**

**FABRICS.....**

**BRIEF-CASE ....**Heavy skin leather.

**IN**

Silk and flowered. Price, from N380

Simple but fashionable leather and suede price from N400.

There are cheap and inferior ones. But original suspenders cost from N400 — N1,700.

Cufflinks come more dainty and fashionable. Gold Cufflinks are still in vogue. But more preferred is black on gold or silver. They cost from N800.

Leather is not in great demand. But they come handy for casual dressing. Price from N1,000.

Caps on caftan suits. Price from N1,250

Conventional designer packet shirts price from N1,000. Native casual shirts and trousers commonly made from purplin, linen or cotton. Price N1,500 — N3,000.

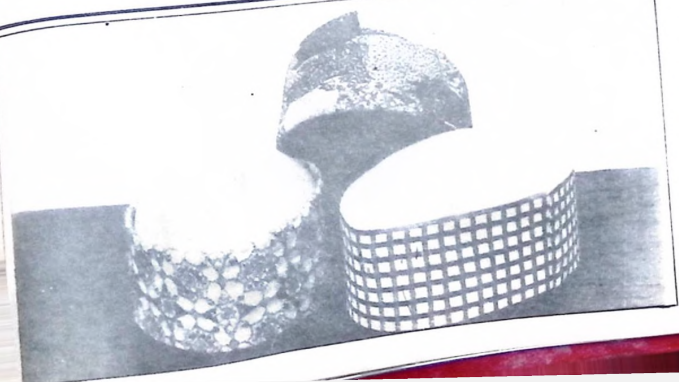
Comes in various shapes and sizes. Price from N2,950.

A necessary or sure fashion accessories any day. Most opt for gold and silver colour. Conservatives go for leather price: from N2,000.

Linen, Garbadine, Satin, Jarcade cotton lace, Voile for native wears: Brocade and Aso Oke.

Lighter ones are preferred, plain leather is the in thing. A popular colour is black. Price from N900.00

By Felicia Oamen and Gra





yegbuia



## Radio Mbaise At It Again

**DAMIAN** Ikechukwu Arganwa, popularly known as Radio Mbaise, called at TSM office recently. His aim was to bring to public notice his new break through in the world of technology. This time it is a public address system known as Dam Electric. According to Damian, this is not an invention of his but an improvement on the conventional system. Dam Electric has some innovations which make its utility value higher than the imported system. The conventional type is built solely for indoor use. But Dam Electric could be used in open fields as well. The conventional system is made of plastic body but Dam Electric is made of wood treated to look like plastic. The imported system has an in-built battery while Dam Electric has its battery facilities off the system. Dam Electric has a cordless microphone that works 100 metres off the system unlike the conventional one which can only go 20 metres off the system. According to Damian this product is another baby of SAP and one way the government can justify SAP is for state governments to demand for this product rather than the imported one. It cost N20,000.



## Trophy For The National Association Of Nigerian Nurses & Midwives

**THE** presentation ceremony of a trophy by Rebecca Aikhomu, wife of the Vice President, to the National Association of Nigerian Nurses and Midwives was held on Thursday 11, 1993 at 17, Ikoyi Crescent, Ikoyi,

Lagos. *Picture shows (Mrs.) Aikhomu (left) presenting the trophy to F.J. Edorien (Dr.) Acting Director Hospital Services on behalf of MANN.*



## Royco Fish Cube Is Born

**IT** was at the L'Hôtel Eko Meridian penultimate Monday, the 15th of March, Levor Brothers Nigeria LPC launched their new product: Royco fish cube.

Present at the occasion were Eedlyn Brohne, Executive Director, First Bank of Nigeria PLC (Chief launcher) Princess Abiola Elegbete Fernandez, the Erelu of Lagos, and other dignitaries.

The first of its kind in Nigeria and, indeed, in Africa, Royco Fish Cube is meant for all occasions because of its distinct taste.





### "Watch And Win"

SO and U held its final draw of "Watch and Win," a viewer — incentive promo launched last month to increase viewership for *Mauritius 93*. The date was on Saturday, March 12; the place: the National Theatre, Iganna, Lagos.

With about 33,070 entries from all the states in the federation, it was indeed wonderful as 31 people won colour television each, while others received T-shirts. The star prize, Daewoo — Tico, would be given to the winner at a latter date.



### Wingold Savings And Loans Package

Determined to re establish the fast fading confidence in the finance world, a new finance company, **Wingold Savings and Loans** recently opened its doors on the high brow Allen Avenue, Ikeja, Lagos.

With highly rated finance wizards with academic backgrounds cutting across

Nigeria and countries abroad, especial U.S and Britain, **Ogbuefi Goddy Eze**, chairman **Udom Oge Udom (MD)** and their team seemed poised to raise a new hope for Nigerians in areas that include **Savings Account**, **Home Ownership Savings** among others.

Here is a welcome smile from **Ogbuefi Eze** to **Chuka Mbanefo (Director)** at the Press briefing in Sheraton, Lagos.

Compiled by **Grace Oneyebula**

great woman. It is those who don't understand that criticize from outside. I predict that time will come when Nigerians as a whole, man or woman, rural or urban will come to appreciate what Maryam Babangida has done for the Nigerian women.

The programme is not for the elite. But unfortunately it is the elite that are mostly seen on television. But the elite serve a useful purpose. I believe that the so called elite who has gone to school would understand government policies and is the only one who can explain to the rural people. As the First Lady, Mrs. Maryam Babangida, once pointed out, the blind does not lead the blind. Those critics should look at the positive aspect of the programme — mobilization of women, enlightenment, education, awareness, it is all there for the critics to see.

And as for what we've done to benefit the real rural women in the state, we've done quite a lot. Take agriculture for instance, there is hardly any community in my state that does not have a cooperative society. And in these Better Life cooperative societies, they have projects in agriculture, crafts and all that. The health programme which I mentioned before, the *Door-step programme*, is meant for these people — right down to the roots — the elderly, the very rural people. Given the totality of our programme, it is this group which wouldn't benefit before that we have designed this for, so nobody is cheated. We reach them.

We also have a scholarship scheme for the rural women. What we do is we have questionnaires and we give to selected children of only the very rural woman who now sit for our scholarship qualifying examination and we select from there. Also our mass literacy programme. Who else would benefit but the very rural illiterate woman. Even the men are benefitting now. In fact, we have more men than women registering at our Better Life Mass Literacy Centres.

Then we also give loans to cooperative societies. These get to all the women. And we also have an investment company because we believe that as we grow older, we should be able to provide some of our needs instead of depending on government for funding. So, we have this company that engages in trading, real solid trading, not the petty trading to generate revenue for some of our programmes.

What was your husband doing before he entered politics?

He was Executive Director in Avery Nigeria Ltd.

Did he consult you before he entered politics?

Yes, he always consults me. But I must say that at the very beginning, I wasn't interested. I was scared, I had butterflies in my stomach. I mean, that's natural. But when I discovered that he was serious, I had no choice but to give him my full support.

Did you accompany him to political campaigns?

Sometimes, not always because I was in Lagos. I was still working and all our children were down in Lagos. One person had to take care of them.

So, when did you quit your job? When he finally won?

No, just before the final elections, I had to go and join him.

You were very sure he was going to win, otherwise, you sure you have quit your job?

There was no way anybody could be 100 percent sure but I knew he had a very strong chance.

Sure otherwise, you'd have stayed put on your job?

Well, the situation was that I needed to be there to stand by him.

Would you encourage him to go back for a second term or would you rather he goes back to his former job and to yours?

The decision is his. I don't believe in influencing such decisions. He is a man.

Are you likely to go back to your job — later when your husband serves out his term(s)?

It depends.

On what?

On the circumstances?

What circumstances?

Let's see, really, I won't give a yes or no answer so, don't push.

Aside from the Better Life Programme, how have you helped your husband in governance?

By keeping the house for him. By understanding, not nagging him. By giving him peace of mind. By giving him enough love to cushion the stress of office. By making our family a peaceful one. By making subtle suggestions now and then. I don't interfere, I don't push him, but I have my subtle ways of making useful suggestions.

Do you have the same impression I have that most Nigerian women in politics aren't really serious — not as serious as the men. No good shot yet. They hide under this "it is because I'm a woman that's why they are treating me this way." What's your impression?

I think they have been very serious. In fact, to me I think they have been more serious than the men. But you have to understand the circumstances. Their own circumstances. That one, they are joining politics newly. They have not been part of politics of Nigeria, real politicking before the advent of Better Life. Most

of the women joined now because of the prop from Better Life. So, it is fairly new and anything that is new takes time before you learn the terrain. They have been very serious but our men have their ways. Unfortunately, women find it difficult to do most of those things that men do. Take for instance, they attend meetings at night. No woman would leave her home, her children and attend such very late meetings. I don't know why they don't hold the meetings in the afternoon? These things scare women away.

What's your background like?

I was born in the village. My parents are still alive. I attended about five or six primary schools because my father was a teacher. I went to Cornelia Cornelius Secondary School. Uyo, did my A Level then to the University of Lagos where I read Economics and then went back to do my masters degree in same university. After my masters, I joined ICON Ltd Merchant Bankers as a youth corper and thereafter, joined the bank as a full time staff. And then I was sent to Morgan Guaranty Trust Company of New York on Wall Street on a banking course for a year. When I came back, I was sent to the main stream of banking. I've attended several, and I mean real several courses both overseas and locally on banking, personnel management, marketing, you name it. In 1988, December, I joined Century Merchant Bank as Head of Corporate Banking that is in charge of Loans and all that and then rose to the position of General Manager before I finally lost my job, thanks to my husband's involvement in politics.

You have six children, and you don't quite look it. When did you get married?

Yes, I've been married for as long as I can remember.

Tell us, what year?

1972. That's quite some time.

Yes, but you don't look it.

I married quite young, at the age of 18. I have two kids in the university. The rest are scattered here and there.

How did you meet your husband?

I can't remember. But it wasn't a boy meet girl affair and they lived happy ever after.

Where did you meet him — in the University or Uyo?

In Uyo, when I was doing my A Level. It was a long courtship.

You mean you were married before you entered the university and he put you through university, masters degree, courses and all?

Yes. He's been my back bone.

Is he romantic?

I am not complaining. He's been my all and all.

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