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THURSDAY COLUMN

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2003

We deserve re-election

-Atiku

Two years to the general elections in 2003, Vice-President Atiku Abubakar has given reasons why the Obasanjo-Atiku ticket should be re-elected for a second term.

By Jibril Daudu and Mustapha Isah Kwaru
of America (VOA) newsmen during his last annual vacation that the achievements of the administration in the past two years are enough for the government to be returned to

power in 2003. He said beside the economic and political gains, the restoration of peace and unity amongst Nigerians is enough reason for the electorate to re-elect the government come 2003.

Gov restricts Emir

The Zamfara State Government has restricted the movement of the Emir of Talata Mafara, Alhaji Mohammed Bello Barmo, for receiving relief material from General Aliyu Gusau (rtd), the National Security Adviser (NSA) to the President, who was in the town to sympathise with victims of the recent flood disaster which almost destroyed the town.

From Salsu Zakari Maradun, in Gusau
emir. The ministry, said the commissioner, has the duty
contd. on pg 2

"When we came to power, there were various clashes among different ethnic groups, but the PDP government has solved these problems.

"Each month we recruit more policemen to protect the lives of our people," Atiku said, while
contd. on pg 2

Union warns OPC over Ilorin

Ilorin Descendants Progressive Union (IDPU) warned on Tuesday that any attempt to invade Ilorin, the Kwara State capital by the outlawed Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC), would bring greater calamities upon the congress.

From Abdul Laro, in Ilorin
humiliating and disastrous defeats as well as calamities for the aggressors.

He said "our position is clear and unequivocal, we
contd. on pg 2

FG endorses SAGEEM for N25b ID Card project

The Federal Government has put to rest the controversy over the N25 billion contract for the National Identity Card project as it confirmed the French company, S.A. SAGEEM as the approved contractor for the project.

The contract which became a subject of controversy between SAGEEM and Chams, which also bid for the project, would however, begin in January 2002, and be completed in three months.

Briefing State House correspondents after the Federal Executive Council (FEC), meeting yesterday, the Internal Affairs Minister, Chief



Senate President, Anyim Pius Anyim (left) welcomes Vice-President Atiku Abubakar to the opening of the 33rd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (African Region) in Abuja... yesterday. Pix: Felix Onigbode

NITEL rolls out rock-bottom GSM

Prices in the GSM telephone market appears set to crash as the Nigerian Telecommunications Limited (NITEL), rolls out its own network today with the cheapest connection fee expected to peak below N10,000.

By Osborne Adi Jr.
emerged yesterday in Abuja where the federal government vowed that it will not only take appropriate steps to bring down prices but make the service affordable to all Nigerians.

Indication to this effect wanted the emirate institution and we have it, we have our emir who is the traditional head of all, the different ethnic groups in the emir
contd. on pg 2

Communications Minister, Dr. Bello Mohammed, said at the signing of interconnectivity agreement between NITEL and the two other operators -ECONET wireless and MTN, that as far as government was in charge of NITEL, it would provide the cheapest services which every Nigerian irrespective of his social or economic status, could have access to.

"I want to assure that government is committed to ensuring that access to tele-

communication services is easily available and affordable to Nigerians. Appropriate steps will be taken to bring down prices not only of GSM, but all forms of telecommunication services," he said.

The minister noted that competition among the operators was already putting pressure on the industry and prices are being forced down.

"Government believes that very soon Nigerians will experience the tumbling of prices of GSM services and it will become clearer that GSM is after all for all Nigerians; rich and poor, urban and rural," he said.

Although details of the tariff regime to be charged by NITEL will be released
contd. on pg 2

The NSA, who is an indigene of the state was on arrival received by the Emir of Talata Mafara, who also doubled as the chairman of the committee set up by the state government to ascertain the number of people affected by the flood.

It is against this background that the state government felt offended and instantly decided to restrict his movement within his domain until further notice.

However, the state Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Alhaji Nasuha, while briefing newsmen in his office, explained that the emir had made a great mistake to have received the General and his entourage without informing the state gov-



Andre A...

UNDP reborn

Former military vice-president under the General Ibrahim Babangida administration, Admiral Augustus Aikhomu (rtd), Chief Sunday Awoniyi, Alhaji Saleh Jambo and Speaker of the House of Representatives in the Second Republic, Chief Edwin Ume Ezeoke, yesterday in Abuja, announced the emergence of a new political party, the United Nigeria Democratic Party (UNDP).

The new party is a fusion of a faction of the National Frontiers (NF) under the guidance of Chief Awoniyi and Chief Ezeoke and the National Solidarity Association (NSA) formed by close associates of former General Ibrahim Babangida (rtd) and led by Admiral Aikhomu (rtd).

For weeks now, negotiations between the Awoniyi faction of the National Frontiers (NF) had intensified following the sudden announcement by another faction of the NF led
contd. on pg 2

NEWS

Atiku *contd. from pg 1*

emphasising the restorations of peace in the country.

The Vice-President gave details of the administration's activities in the economic sector, particularly the privatisation of federal government companies. "Most of these companies were not operating before we came in; even the ones that were operational, were not making any profit. However, when they were privatised, the problem of wasting funds on them was solved."

The interview went on as follows:

As the local government elections approach, what would you present as achievements of the PDP administration that will convince Nigerians to re-elect you?

Thank God, the return of democratic rule is an achievement. Secondly, PDP government has restored peace and unity among Nigerians, because when we came into power, there were various clashes among different parts; south and north, but now you can see there is total peace in the country.

In order to ensure this, every month we recruit policemen to protect the lives and property of citizens. Because of the return of democratic rule coupled with a conducive environment, foreign firms have started investing in order to boost our economy. Federal Government has taken proper steps to improve the sector, especially in the provision of adequate power supply.

The ongoing privatisation of FG compa-

nies is a major achievement of the PDP government aimed at developing Nigeria's economy.

The companies are not operating before, even the ones that are operating, FG lost a lot of money on them.

But when they are privatised, they will commence operation fully.

The privatisation of NITEL next month will also boost telecommunications activities in Nigeria.

We have issued a license to foreign telecommunications companies in order to establish their companies that assist in competition with other countries.

These are the duties of the Federal Government which have reached a greater stage.

One of the most important occupations of Nigerians is farming which they depend on for their livelihood, what steps have you taken or would you take to improve the agricultural sector, especially in the north?

Of course, agricultural sector, since we assumed office, has received attention in the first year, FG reduced the price of fertilizer by about 25 per cent.

Custom duty and tax being paid on importing fertiliser has also been cancelled so that the price of fertilizer will go down.

Additionally this year, we improved agricultural bank, through which farmers will get a loan to boost their production with a lower interest.

We financed the bank

Gov *contd. from pg 1*

commissioner, has directed that henceforth, no traditional ruler should have any direct contact with any national body without the knowledge of the ministry or the state governor.

with adequate funds so that farmers can get loan easier.

We only charge 10 per cent interest as against other banks that charge 30 to 40 per cent.

All these are done so that farmers would get relief in their farming activities, especially in northern Nigeria.

After all, federal government alone is not responsible for improving agricultural production, state governors also have a vital role to play.

Both federal, state and local governments have responsibility in this regard.

Now, the FG has done its own duty, states and local governments have the responsibility of providing farming implements, enlighten farmers on the modern system of farming and other extension services.

So FG is now waiting for them to see how they handle their responsibilities.

Sir, when you came to office, FG increased the monthly allocation from the states and local governments, did you realise any improvement in that direction?

Yes, firstly this increment is constitutional, secondly, because this administration has prevented all ways of looting public funds, that is why states and local governments' monthly allocation is increased.

And I appreciate the efforts of most of the state governors, I go round most of the states and they have really tried for their development projects.

But I can't judge the per-

formance of local government chairmen, because it is the responsibility of the state governors to go round and investigate the performance of their various chairmen.

Sir, new political associations have emerged including DPN and many PDP members decamped to these associations, I think this indicates that they will be a threat to your party in the next elections?

I want to correct this mistake, most of the people who decamped to these associations are not PDP members, they are from APP. Those from PDP are not more than two or three people, like those either dismissed from the party or who left by themselves like Sunday Awoniyi and Habu Fari. Awoniyi is from Kogi State, so where can you find PDP in Kogi.

So many of those who left PDP didn't join any political association.

I didn't see any way that these associations could be a threat to PDP.

NITEL *contd. from pg 1*

today, indications at the ministry yesterday, showed that government was bent on making prices compete with what is obtainable within the West African countries of Benin Republic, Ghana, Togo and Cote d' Ivoire.

The minister announced that government was aware of the concern of Nigerians that going by the tariffs introduced so far by ECONET and MTN, the cost of the service might be beyond the reach of average Nigerians.

Bello said, it was the need to make GSM afford-

able that government recently waived payment of import duty, VAT, and tax for all telecommunications equipment imported for NITEL as well as raising a special urgent clearing arrangement for such goods when they arrived.

Also as a way of boosting development and increasing access while reducing cost, the Federal Executive Council approved the reduction of import duty payable on telecommunications equipment from 25 per cent to 5 per cent for two years period.

OPC *contd. from pg 1*

ate. A Yoruba Oba has no place in our history and we will not have one."

Alhaji Atanda explained that Ilorin is generally regarded as the home of peace and its people are peace-loving but this position should not be misconstrued as weakness on the part of the people to ward off decisively any attempt to unduly dabble into their affairs.

The uniqueness of Ilorin people, he stated, was de-

rived from the fact that people from varied and diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds came together to found what is known today as Ilorin.

The president then advised the OPC and its patrons to embark on serious historical research to enable them analyse correctly, "some of the peculiarities of our history so as to save them from their romantic illusion of installing a Yoruba Oba in Ilorin."

UNDP *contd. from pg 1*

by Alhaji Habu Fari, that it had fused with six other political associations to form the National Democratic Party (NDP).

With the successful conclusion of negotiations by the two groups which lasted from Tuesday to the early hours of Wednesday, and the formal presentation of the new party, the UNDP now becomes the fifth party seeking registration from the INEC.

The others being the National Democratic Party (NDP) headed by Alhaji Habu Fari; the National Conscience Party (NCP) chaired by Chief Gani Fawehinmi; the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) of Alhaji Balarabe Musa and the Progressive Liberation Party (PLP) with Dr. Ezekiel Izougbe as Protem chairman.

Launching the UNDP which has Alhaji Sale Jambo as protem national chairman yesterday, at the Sheraton Hotel, Abuja, Admiral Aikhomu said the new association was formed to provide an alternative to the non-performing administrations in the three tiers of government in the country, which have failed to redress the numerous problems besetting Nigeria.

Aikhomu said Nigerians were now dissatisfied and skeptic of all spheres of government, adding that "two years on, it is regrettable that all the three parties involved

in governance of the country have been unable to fulfil significantly, the electoral promises they made to people in 1999, in the various tiers of government.

"The nation has never experienced the kind of total collapse of safety and security of life and property as we are going through today. And government seems totally unable to effect any change," the retired admiral said.

He stated that the federal, state and local governments have continued to watch helplessly, while the nation's economy deteriorates further just as living conditions especially in the rural areas are getting worse.

Announcing that the UNDP will soon commence the process of seeking registration from INEC, Aikhomu said the party is determined to stop the ugly habit of grabbing the country's wealth by those in power and instead, promote the ethics of giving and service.

The new party which has "One Nigeria, Positive Change" as its slogan, similarly has as its motto the words, "equity, peace and prosperity" and a house as its logo signifying a party that will shelter and treat all Nigerians, no matter their status equally and justly.

Other members of the interim national executive committee named yesterday are, Alhaji Isa Mohammed

(national deputy chairman); Dr. Ukeye Nwokedoro as national secretary I and ambassador Hamza Abubakar as national secretary II.

ID Card *contd. from pg 1* while answering questions on the controversy generated over the contract, however, said that though 36 companies bid for the project, only six reached the final screening exercise before SAGEEM was considered.

He, however, denied any knowledge of the memos he allegedly wrote to President Obasanjo over the "incompetence" of SAGEEM in addition to the UN report on the company. He, however, admitted that the meeting approved the contract after President Obasanjo had announced the award to SAGEEM.

Explaining further, Transport Minister, Chief Ojo Maduekwe, explained that SAGEEM was considered because of its competence, credibility and experience. He expressed the hope that the issue of the National Identity Card project would soon be put to rest by Nigerians.

"We hope that after today, the matter will no longer be jinxed by the media and Nigerians," he declared, and expressed confidence that SAGEEM would live up to expectations.

FG proposes new NEPA Bill

The Federal Executive Council (FEC) has approved a draft Bill for the proposed law on electricity reform in the country, just as it announced that government has no intention to increase NEPA tariff for now.

Minister of Power and Steel, Dr. Olusegun Agagu, who announced this while briefing State House correspondents after the meeting yesterday, said the new Bill, expected to be passed into law by the National Assembly would pave way for the privatisation of NEPA next year.

He said, the proposed law provides for the estab-

lishment of the proposed Nigeria Electricity Regulatory Commission.

He added that with the approval of the new National Policy on Electricity Supply, the new law would encourage private sector participation in the power sub-sector in order to boost electricity supply in the country.

The minister, while assuring that there would be no increase in NEPA tariff because "Nigerians are now not happy with NEPA," explained further that his ministry has petitioned President

Obasanjo on the huge NEPA bills incurred by government agencies and parastatals, including the Presidential Villa.

According to him, about N60 million is being owed NEPA by various government organisations nationwide, and called on President Obasanjo to intervene in order to make NEPA more viable and ready for privatisation.

"We need money to continue service; we need to pay salaries and pensions. Now, most government agencies and parastatals formed the bulk of our debtors, and we have made representation to the president on that," he said.

NEWS

Bafarawa lambasts LG chairmen

Governor Attahiru Bafarawa of Sokoto State, yesterday lambasted local government council chairmen in the state, accusing them of financial recklessness, truancy and lying to the electorate.

Bafarawa, who was visibly annoyed, spent close to 20 minutes accusing the chairmen of non-performance, inciting the electorate against the government and using politics to tarnish his image.

The meeting with the chairmen in the council chambers of Government House, Sokoto, was enveloped by silence as the governor got loose and tongue-lashed the heads of the third-tier of government.

According to the governor, for now he has no political party as his goal was to take development to every

nook and cranny of the state as its chief executive.

Bafarawa described as lies claims by some of the council chairmen that he was withholding some of the files sent in for his approval. Contrary to such baseless accusations, Bafarawa said the state government was neither responsible for the delay in the release of their



Gov Attahiru Bafarawa

monthly grants nor for the deductions from their allocations.

Bafarawa said 90 percent of the positive developments achieved in the state from the inception of his administration were carried out in the PDP controlled local government councils.

The Sokoto State

governor cited the execution of hospitals, electricity projects and the construction of roads which he said were all located in the PDP-dominated local government councils.

According to Bafarawa, since the inception of the administration, revenue to the local governments have improved with each of them collecting over N1 billion from the federation account.

Commission unearths 32 abandoned FG projects

No fewer than 32 abandoned federal government projects have been identified in Adamawa State, according to the Chairman of the Commission of Inquiry or the Assessment of Failed or Non-performing Federal Government Contracts for Construction,



Gov Boni Haruna Supplies and Services, Alhaji Iguda Inuwa.

Inuwa, who gave the statistics when he visited the Governor of the state, Boni Haruna yesterday, said the projects included the 25,000 metric tonnes grain silo at Yola, projects at Federal Polytechnic, Mubi, INEC local government offices, and the national root crops research institute projects.

The chairman commended the state government for purchasing the abandoned Federal Housing Authority projects in Yola, which he observed would ameliorate the suffering of the people of the state.

Responding, Haruna said that the issue of failed contracts had shaped the policy thrust of his administration, adding that he had decided to complete all abandoned projects in the state, rather than start new ones.

Abia govt lifts suspension order on 14 traditional rulers

The suspension order slammed on 14 traditional rulers from Ukwu-Ngwa zone of Abia State last month, for visiting President Olusegun Obasanjo without official permission, have been lifted.

Governor Orji Kalu announced the lifting of the order during the coronation

of Chief John Chikezie, as the traditional ruler of Umuoge Mtigha, in Isiala Ngwo North Local Government Area of the state at the weekend.

He explained that the gesture was aimed at enthroning peace and unity which, he noted, was *sine quo non* to the rapid and overall development of the state, pointing out that some "mischief makers" in the state, were trying to cash-in on the crisis to cause disaffection



Gov Orji Kalu

among the people.

The governor remarked that bickering and misunderstanding, as agents of distabilisation, should not be allowed to thrive in the state, adding that his administration would do its best to continually promote peaceful co-existence among the people.

He urged the state council of traditional rulers to pardon the suspended monarchs in the interest of peace and development in line with the lifting of the suspension order.

NAN recalls that the traditional rulers council, last month suspended their 14 colleagues because of their Abuja trip. They were said to have failed to obtain permission from either their respective local governments or the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs before embarking on the journey.

Rtd AIG highlights dangers of ECOWAS protocol on free movement

Trade liberalisation backed up by the policy of borderless zones permitting free movement of goods and persons within ECOWAS member states, has serious security implications, Dr. Rose Abang-Wushishi, a retired Assistant Inspector-General of Police, has said.

Abang-Wushishi, a consultant criminologist and barrister-at-law, made the observation in a paper titled: "Law enforcement and trans-border relations in Africa," which she presented at a national seminar organised by the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR).

She said the extensive nature of the borders which is a major contributing factor to its porous nature, had further compounded the security problem, explaining

that hoodlums seized advantage of this to commit various types of trans-border crimes.

Abang-Wushishi said intensified patrol on the Nigerian side of the border adopted by the police seemed not enough to completely address the problem considering the porous nature of the borders.

She said similar exercises were carried out on the Benin and the Niger Republic sides of the border by the police of those countries without success, noting however that the West African Police Chiefs Committee (WAPCCO) formed to address the security problems had achieved some results.

Abang-Wushishi noted that in spite of efforts by the INTERPOL, hoodlums still

commit crimes in one ECOWAS member-state and take refuge in another member-state thereby making it extremely difficult to arrest such offenders. Based on mutual co-operation, she said that Nigeria and Niger Republic, have reached agreement on judicial convention of how to handle such crimes and suggested that Nigeria should enter into a similar agreement with neighbouring and other African countries.

In order to enhance border security and to reduce trans-border crimes to the barest minimum, she said that plans were underway for a joint border patrol of Nigeria-Benin Republic borders while arrangements had almost been concluded for the launching of a Nigeria-Niger joint border patrol.

Nigeria, S/Leone, Mali ask Charles Taylor to release political detainees

Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Mali, Tuesday called on the Liberian leader, President Charles Taylor, to as a matter of urgency, release his political opponents from detention to facilitate reconciliation in that country.

The three leaders, President Olusegun Obasanjo (Nigeria), President Alpha Omar Konare (Mali) and Ahmed Tijjan Kabah (Sierra Leone) jointly made the call in Abuja during a one-day working visit to Nigeria by the Malian and Sierra Leonian leaders.

The leaders noted in a communiqué that the continued fighting in Lofa County and the wanton displacement of people was uncalled for.

They expressed concern at the continued instability in the Mano River region, in view of its

By Suleiman Mohammed peace and stability of the ECOWAS sub-region.

They, however, noted with satisfaction, the willingness of members of the Mano River Union to meet periodically with a view to finding an early solution.

The communiqué, issued after a three-hour meeting at the presidential wing of the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja, further



welcomed the peace process in Sierra Leone since the Abuja talks of May 2-3, 2001, particularly on disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programme.

The leaders appealed for continued support from the international community, in order to sustain the confidence and commitments of the demobilized, and "demobilizing combatant." This, they reasoned would ensure its early completion and the ultimate success of the peace process.

The meeting, which deliberated on various issues affecting the sub-region, further called on Sierra Leone to work towards the early and smooth return of full democracy to that country.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly Mrs Ladi M.L. MAAJI, now Mrs Ladi M.L. TUKURA. Former documents re-



Chief Justice of the Federation, Justice Mohammed Uwais in a handshake with the Director of Development and Planning, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), Mr. Raja G. Gomez (right), with the Clerk of the National Assembly, Alhaji Ibrahim Salim during the 32nd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference.

NEWS

83 Technical colleges to benefit from education plan

About 83 Federal Government Colleges are to benefit from the newly-drawn up Federal Government's Education Development Plan (EDP), Education Minister, Prof. Babalola Borisade has said.

The minister who was speaking at the opening of a four-day retreat for principals and directorate level officers in federal unity schools in Kaduna, Tuesday said the components of the plan include upgrading of science and technical schools, organizing of technical workshops, completion of PTF-abandoned projects, provision of facilities, revitalising of healthcare and sporting facilities in the schools.

Prof. Barisade, who stated government's commitment to addressing the problem of

From Ibrahim Dan Halilu, in Kaduna
class size and teachers' population in federal unity colleges, said classroom size would be restructured to reduce congestion by making every class 40-45 students as against the present 90-100



Prof. Borisade before the end of next academic season.

He said reduced class size might require recruitment of more teachers and

building of new classrooms.

While appreciating the problems that ministerial list of school intakes might pose to the new class size policy, the minister assured the participants that adequate arrangements would be made to take care of the problem.

Zamfara State government has pledged an 18-seater-bus and a Peugeot 504 saloon car to the National Forum of Ex-Councillors (NFC).

The pledge was made by the state Governor, Alhaji Ahmad Sani (Yariman Bakura, Sardaunan Zamfara), while receiving the national chairman of the ex-councillors forum who paid him a courtesy visit at the

Zamfara pledges vehicles to ex-councillors

Government House, Gusau.

Alhaji Sani also promised to pay the annual rent of the office complex of the forum located at Tudun-Nupawa, in Kaduna to boost its morale.

He described the forum as not only a true representative of the grassroots but which also has the power to determine the type of government to be installed both at local, state and

federal levels.

While calling on the forum to avoid acts capable of causing disunity and tension amongst its members, the governor pledged his unwavering support to enable it attain greater heights.

Alhaji Sani, who commended the federal government for initiating a jumbo pay for councillors across the country, advised the ex-councillors forum to assist the nation in ensuring the survival of its nascent democracy.

He appealed to serving councillors in the country to support and donate generously to the forum as they will find themselves applying for its membership sooner or later.

Speaking earlier, the National Secretary of the forum, Hon. Ochi George, from Enugu, told the governor that the association was formed last year to enable members contribute their own quota towards strengthening the country's young democracy.



Gov Ahmed Sani

Why NITEL bill was increased - Minister

The Minister of Communications, Dr. Bello Halliru Mohammed, has disclosed the reasons behind the Federal Government's decision in increasing NITEL's bills.

According to a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Hausa service broadcast monitored in Abuja recently, the minister said that NITEL

By Mustpha Isa Kwaru

charges the lowest amount compared to other private telecommunication companies.

As such it became necessary to allow the company to compete in the same way with private ones.

Dr. Bello maintained that the measure was not

aimed at increasing the hardships to NITEL customers but rather an improvement in its privatization process which could boost the country's economy.

"This will motivate other private firms to buy shares during NITEL's privatization." He stated that after NITEL is privatized, the federal government would direct it along with private companies to reduce their bills, adding that there would be competition among them whereby customers would seek for companies with low charges.

The minister declared that in order to reduce the bills, the federal government has approved the reduction of tariffs paid on imported telecommunication facilities from 25 to 5 percent, saying that other measures are also in the pipeline.

Prove yourselves, Nwosu charges AIDS cure claimants

All orthodox and unorthodox medical practitioners have been charged to prove themselves and earn foreign exchange for Nigeria by the Minister of Health, Prof. Alphonsus Nwosu.

The minister, who was speaking with journalists on sundry issues, Tuesday night, said he was in support of individual research efforts on the pandemic, he said it

By Ikenna Emeka Okpani
would be a major breakthrough for a Nigerian to discover a cure for the disease.

"But we are against people administering drugs not approved by NAFDAC on people more so when they are imported," he said.

Prof. Nwosu disclosed that he was not against AIDS cure claimants administering their cure on those who

patronize them, saying "government will give patients alternatives in the form of cheap anti-retroviral drugs which will be available by September."

According to him, government has been able to achieve a situation where it would cost a dollar a day, the least in Africa, to manage an HIV victim. This, he said, would come to about N45,000 a year to manage a HIV-

positive patient.

Treatment for 15,000 people, made up of 10,000 adults and 5,000 children with HIV, will commence by September.

Prof. Nwosu berated AIDS cure claimants for charging exorbitant fees, pointing out that Nigerians have the choice to use the cheap anti-retroviral drugs government was bringing in or patronize the cure claimants.



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4 19 20 29 44 50

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DAILY TRUST

EDITORIAL

Welcome, costly GSM

On Tuesday, the much-awaited Global System for Mobile telecommunication (GSM) network in the country took off. Econet Wireless, one of the two private licences, took the lead with its successful inauguration of a 100,000-line network which will simultaneously begin operations in Lagos, Port Harcourt, Kaduna and Abuja.

MTN, the other operator, is launching its own network with another 100,000 lines within the week. It is expected that the Nigeria Telecommunications Limited (NITEL) will soon follow suit as arrangements are already in top gear for the installation and subsequent commissioning.

As Nigerians waited for the arrival of this latest development with high expectations and anxiety, the notorious "Nigerian factor" appears set to hijack this initiative that is intended to make telephone services not only available and cheap, but also, provide access to a larger percentage of the nation's population. This development is discernible in the tariff regime announced by the two companies. While Econet charges N15,000 connection fees; N35 airtime per minute for peak period and N24 off peak, MTN's tariff is N20,000 connection fee; N30 per minute for peak periods and N20 off peak time.

Besides, both operators are charging N4,000 monthly as rental fee. In short, potential GSM owners, from the tariffs introduced by the companies, will require between N40,000 and N45,000. These charges as astronomical as they appear, have started scaring away many Nigerians who had waited with immeasurable enthusiasm to own their lines and handsets at the launch of the network.

These charges, compared with those of other African countries where the two companies operate, do not offer any hope to the average Nigerian having access to the global network. It rather confirms initial fears that the entire system was tailored towards making it another elitist arrangement.

For instance, according to a recent report by the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), in South Africa, a prepaid cellular phone service provided by MTN costs about R1,000 (rand) or N13,673 including at least a Nokia 5110 handset and a starter pack containing the Sim card and cell phone number for connection. In Zimbabwe, Econet's prepaid cellular phone service costs 11,500 Zimbabwe dollars (ZD) or N28,000 and comes with similar package as in South Africa.

While we welcome the successful launch, we are constrained to state that, like millions of other Nigerians, we are discouraged by the high tariffs. It is our hope that the companies will take a second look at their charges with a view to making it more affordable and comparable to those in other countries.

The introduction of the network can only achieve the desired result if the man living in the remotest area of Nigeria can be encouraged to have access to this vital means of communication and not just for the elite club.



THURSDAY COLUMN

Oputa: Why former heads of state should appear

By Nick Dazang

Until very recently, and until the advent of the fiery Comrade Adams Oshiomhole as president of the Nigeria Labour Congress, the NLC carried on, not as a vanguard and defender of workers and the poor, but as their very quisling and betrayer.

Consider: until Comrade Oshiomhole's advent, Nigerian workers did not only pass through anguished dog days, they gave upon their leaders who brazenly worked in cahoots with tinpot dictators whose pre-occupations were to steal the nation blind, to subvert the popular will and to perpetuate themselves in power in spite of their glaring failings.

With the advent of Comrade Oshiomhole, however, life was breathed into a comatose NLC; the NLC was imbued with a robust sense of purpose and direction and Comrade Oshiomhole could mobilise a hitherto despondent and flaccid working class to fight the President Obasanjo regime over the matter of removal of oil subsidy to a standstill.

In the aftermath of the NLC's patriotic crusade against the withdrawal of oil subsidy, the NLC as a body, did not only re-acquire its balls, the rating of Comrade Oshiomhole as an authentic leader soared to the stratosphere. It is a matter of profound bewilderment and consternation therefore that Comrade Oshiomhole could descend from his exalted and Olympian height to champion the cause of some of Nigeria's discredited leaders.

Speaking at a recent dialogue in Abuja on "Trade Union Experience in Political Involvement Between Nigeria, Brazil, Zimbabwe and South Africa", Oshiomhole railed at the Human Rights Violation Investigation Commission (HRVIC) referred to in popular parlance as the Oputa panel. Comrade Oshiomhole's grouse against the Oputa panel was that it served as a propitious platform "for disgruntled elements to rubbish former head of state, General Abdulsalami Abubakar." Apart from taking exception to the sullying of Abdulsalami Abubakar, the NLC president held brief for the former head of state in the staunchest and probably the most unprecedented fashion in our annals. According to Oshiomhole, the Oputa panel should busy itself re-affirming well known truths, including the fact that Abubakar was honest, has integrity and presided over the process that gave life to democracy in the country. His words: "This singular display of integrity, which led to the present democratic dispensation, the fall-out of which is also the Oputa commission, belies the claims of desperate witnesses that lack honour and integrity trade before the panel."

Though there is no direct petition against General Abdulsalami Abubakar, unlike other former heads of state, and the references to him are tangential, they are nonetheless so damning and savage (some of them verge on brazen theft and others on treason) that they warrant his prompt appearance before the Oputa panel. And if our Comrade's solemn vouch that General Abdulsalami "is honest and has integrity" is valid, he should re-affirm Comrade Oshiomhole's testimonial by appearing before the Oputa panel and pummeling the allegations levelled against him. After all, a clear conscience fears no accusation.

Something, however, makes me cynical - even dubious - about Comrade Oshiomhole's curious characterisation of Abdulsalami Abubakar as "honest" and possessing "integrity". For if the benchmark for "honesty" and unimpeachable "integrity" is handing over power to civilians by a military dictator, then General Olusegun Obasanjo who set the precedent by being the first Nigerian military head of state to voluntarily hand over power to civilians should long have been canonised. And his every pronouncement ought to have assumed the status of hallowed law emanating from the Most High Himself. Besides, if we were to stretch Comrade Oshiomhole's logic a notch further, General Obasanjo's carryings-on since assuming office on May 29, 1999 should have been beyond the reproach of all, including the NLC which confronted him.

It is instructive that after Comrade Oshiomhole's languid and laughable defence of General Abdulsalami Abubakar, there have been well-calibrated and orchestrated campaigns in the media to cast those taking Abdulsalami and Company to the cleaners as desperate and disgruntled. There has also been a frenzied and feverish campaign to disparage the Oputa panel and to present it in the inauspicious mould of a circus. All these cowardly efforts are aimed at shielding some equally cowardly and timorous former heads of state from appearing before the Oputa panel. In fact, the Announcer-in-Chief and the Great Manipulator surpassed himself

last week in an argument legendary only for its illogic. According to him, the Dele Giwa case was not new: that it had been ongoing and in fact had reached the Supreme Court and wondered why it should elicit any interest. Interpretation: the case had been exhausted, it should be laid to rest as a consequence of which the former president did not deserve to appear before the Oputa panel.

To address the above *seriatim*: The point - which should not be glossed over - is that the Oputa panel is for the aggrieved - and if you like - the "disgruntled". It is such "disgruntled" persons that petition the panel and seek either for justice or reconciliation. But pray, what makes Brigadier-General Ibrahim Sabo "disgruntled" or "desperate"? Like his colleagues, General Sabo a brilliant soldier, was retired. He could not therefore be carrying on grumpily or be said to be disgruntled.

Secondly, the Oputa panel is one of the best accomplishments of the General Obasanjo regime thus far. In spite of its entertainment value, it is headed by a cerebral retired Justice of the Supreme Court and a man of unimpeachable integrity. Its proceedings are held in the full glare of klieg lights for everyone to see. Besides, except those who live in some extraterrestrial or the *Ultima Thule* itself, we know that the law in Nigeria seldom advances the cause of truth, the poor and the downtrodden hence the recourse of a large number of the downtrodden to the Oputa panel, even in the instance of cases that may be in court. To underline this fact, it is revealing that while a prominent lawyer seeks to shield another prominent personality from appearing before the Oputa panel, he (the lawyer) is in the forefront of a petition to the same panel! In addition, the Oputa panel has reconciled the Oputa amongst other warring communities even where a regular court has failed with distinction in such an enterprise. Little wonder, even at the twilight of the Oputa panel, petitions are being raised to it and well-meaning members of the society are urging that it be made a permanent commission.

Third, to argue, as indeed General Ibrahim Babangida did in an interview with the BBC last week, that the Dele Giwa case had gone to the Supreme Court and that it has been public knowledge for the past fifteen years, is neither here nor there. If the case had been on and had reached the Supreme Court, has it been adjudicated to the satisfaction of all, especially the aggrieved? Was the truth arrived at in the matter of the dastardly death of Dele Giwa? Why does General Babangida shy from answering questions relating to the death of a prominent journalist during his tenure? We know that the nature of our law is such that it sometimes thrives on technicalities and obfuscation rather than the truth and illumination of the case at hand. If the Dele Giwa case had been sufficiently illuminated and the culprits apprehended, probably no one would have insisted on taking the matter to the Oputa panel. Mercifully, the Oputa panel is a truth commission, not a legalistic one and in this matter, the questions it should seek answers to are the stubborn, well known ones that we have asked all along to the chagrin of the perpetrators: Who killed Dele Giwa? Why?

Beyond these, our past leaders who have petitions against them must appear. With the passage of time and information made available by some actors in our recent history it would seem some of them elevated their personal grievances to the level of state policy. Did Umaru Dikko pillage the public till with the wantonness we were made to believe by the General Buhari regime? Did he deserve to be crated like some endangered species and was the "Umaru Dikko Affair" of 1983, with all the mudslinging, necessary? Revelations made by former President Shehu Shagari in his memoirs, *Beckoned to Serve*, and numerous interviews granted to the media by Alhaji Isiyaku Ibrahim which present a poor Umaru Dikko struggling to survive in London, make one have misgivings.

Like the well-worn saying goes, silence is consent. And the refusal by former heads of state to appear before the Oputa panel to clear their names of grave allegations levelled against them, rather than vindicate them, or denigrate the panel, can only confirm their complicity. And as Justice Oputa himself has urged on several occasions, it is in their interest to appear before him. That should not be difficult to understand especially for some of them who once boasted of possessing a sense of history. Our leaders should appreciate that only those who are bereft of nobility or those who are indisciplined refuse either to show contrition for their faults or refuse to respect a law they have elected for themselves. The Oputa panel was set up by the Obasanjo regime and some of them either canvassed or bankrolled.

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Opinion

Dirty linen at Oputa panel

By Bashir Abdullahi Rijau

Military Government is entirely autocratic, it is oppressive and illegitimate. One may hardly pick any good thing about this aberration. After all, one does not expect any part of a body to be fresh when the head is rotten. It is not news that this divergence called military rule is Totalitarian and Draconian. It has only a torrential swiftness of illegality to showcase. Having said that, it is equally erroneous to expect any organ of this leprous system to be clean. It is therefore surprising when people try to make a mountain out of a molehill about the gross human rights abuses unleashed on them during the past military regimes at the ongoing Oputa panel on human rights violations.

If we must bring a culprit to testify at Oputa panel, and I think we should, we must not stop at merely dragging the head of an agency or directorate under military dictatorship who was only executing powers whose source was from the very system that brought them in. This administration must start by indicting the conspirators of the first crime, the original sin, the very first military officers that took part in the planning and execution of the first coup that unseated the government of the First Republic in Nigeria to testify. Yes, quite a number of them are still alive today. Let them come and tell us "Why They really Struck"

By extension, government should also call the subsequent coupists against the authorities of the second civilian administration in Nigeria and all their cohorts that served in various capacities to appear before the Oputa panel. The former heads of state, the ministers, the advisers, the governors, the commis-

sioners, the permanent secretaries etcetera. These are the very human rights violators that this civilian administration should drag before Oputa panel. And if this is not possible, then let us stop beating around the bush. Let us bury the hatchet and let everybody go and sin no more.

These untouchables, the sacred cows that are intimidating us with their stupendous wealth will help us appreciate how the overzealous monsters, the Tokoyas, Sabos,

Al-Mustaphas, Bamaiyis, Diyas and later Yakassais and Rogers who are simply carrying out orders in our society are created. Of course every monster has a creator. The government should not condone selective justice.

Watching Oputa panel the other day, I was surprised to see a case of one NDLEA officer dragging the then NDLEA boss, Gen Musa Bamaiyi to Oputa panel. I mean that was a clear case of routine official administration; the judgement may have been monstrous yet it is customary of military system of governance.

First, Bamaiyi was a soldier not a politician. And heading an illegitimate agency of an illegitimate government will not make him democratic. Nevertheless, for the sake of argument, let us assume the said officer has a case. Let us also consider the ASN (Assistant Superintendent of Narcotics) in question to be a military officer. Now if the ASN were a military officer he may only be a second lieutenant in the same army that his chairman is a general. There is a clear, seven seniority ranks between them. By sheer protocol, it is absurd for anybody to think that

ASN's case will be a matter for the general to conduct a personal interrogation and investigation before dismissing him. By every chance, there must be a chain of higher competent lieutenants whose judgement the general will genuinely rely on to dismiss him rather than a vendetta as we are asked to believe.

Essentially, Bamaiyi is not guiltier than the ASN because they were all part of the same illegality. The real question is, how reconciliation can be made when people are insulting our sense of reasoning with blatant lies, when truth is twisted, claims and counterclaim of how our wealth is being plundered are exchanged. When everybody is trying to save his neck and Nigerians are surprisingly clapping.

The greatest treat to the Nigerian nation right now is this network parade of shame. Having Nigeria's top security operatives revealing the most classified information of the nation to the bewilderment of the common man is more dangerous and detrimental to our unity.

The best we can do to these top living security operatives is to persuade them to keep quiet for good. The unity of this nation is above every individual or group.

It really does not matter who was bashed, incarcerated or even killed among the conspirators all in their stampede and scramble to steal our wealth. They are all guilty of the same crime. So, Mustapha or Sabo, Tokoya or Diya, Bamaiyi or Rogers should please shut up.

This Chally, sorry, Oputa show of Shame is enough. We do not want to hear more.

Bashir wrote in from Wuse II, Abuja.

The handshake and its enemies

By Okey Ikechukwu

President Olusegun Obasanjo is killing patriotism". So say those who are not pleased with the president's refusal to offload tons of cash on our sportsmen and women.

The Shagari government set a record in this regard by its material reward to footballers. Gen Babangida broke that record and moved on to "greater heights". The late Sani Abacha simply threw all sense of propriety through the window in these matters. Naturally, the Obasanjo government is expected to continue along the same line.

But why? In order to further devalue the concepts of honour and national service? In order to fan the reprehensible materialism that the last few military regimes made a national philosophy? In order to further create the wrong impression that everything has cash value and that a mercenary who is only working for cash is entitled to the epithet "patriot"? The truth is that President Obasanjo must either resist the noisy clamour for a return to the decay of values or accept personal responsibility for refusing to stand his ground in the face of the revolt of beneficiaries of a wretched social order.

It is a rare privilege and honour to wear the national colours. Neither our traditional notions of honour and community service nor the practice in other climes encourage us to give the impression that everything must have cash value. Heroism, etc. become meaningless in a society that establishes a linkage between material benefits and valour.

Surely our scientists, teachers, artistes, etc, make greater and more lasting contribution to humanity than sportsmen. Do we even consider the havoc we do to the psyche of the leaders of tomorrow when we give them the impression that athletes and sportsmen are the most appreciated? It is time we exhume and polished true patriotism in order to show that there is more to development and national greatness than the titillation of sports and games.

Plato, the Greek philosopher, was one of the greatest Olympic athletes of his time. Aristocles (not Aristotle) was his real name and he had such an impressive physique that every one referred to him as Platon which means "The broad one". This description took over his real name and there are even professors of philosophy today who do not know the man's real name.

What Plato bequeathed to the world is a deep and rich philosophy, not his prancings in the Olympic stadium. Sports and games are essential to exercise man's competitive powers. They also provide welcome release and diversion from the tedium of daily living. But one essential precondition for viable sports and games is an organized society. Brazil, Argentina etc. have viable industries and are exporters of different kinds of manufactured goods, including vehicles.

If the President must replace the handshake in order to become "popular" then he had better remain unpopular and save us from ourselves.

Ikechukwu is a special assistant to the Minister of Transport



YOUR LETTERS

Subsidise student readers please

I write to congratulate your newspaper for maintaining the journalistic professional ethics of objectivity in national coverage. I also wish to thank you for defending the cause of the North. Indeed your paper has excelled and to say the fact, is the only paper in Nigeria today that is unbiased and does not treat the Northerner as a 'leper', 'inferior', 'dumb' or 'lazy'.

It is also the only newspaper that does not imbibe ethnic sentiments in its reporting. Please

keep up the good work.

May I suggest to you however that you should employ an agent that will patronise the higher institutions in Bauchi, especially A.T.B. University, Federal Polytechnic and Abubakar Tatari Ali Polytechnic. The newspaper should be sold at a subsidised rate e.g. N30.

This is because right now at ATBU, Bauchi, the *Post Express* is selling at "N30 campus price" by its agent and people - workers and students - prefer buying

it than other publications because of its low price. However, I do prefer to buy your paper, but it's not everyday that one will have N50 or N60 to buy it. *Abi?*

So, please, in the interest of the North and the need to enlighten its people, it will be very

profitable and important for your paper to consider this proposal.

I pray that you will continue to promote the interest of the North and Islam, amin.

Aisha I. Mohammad (Mrs.),
C/o Hope Bakery,
Nassarawa, Bauchi,
Bauchi State.

Leave Abuja Stock Exchange alone

If someone like T. Y. Danjuma, the Defence Minister, and a soldier by profession, could say anything about the capital market, then Nigeria has indeed turned into a pool of economists and financial advisers. However, the consequence of such a remark is what annoys me. What kind of country is Nigeria and on what ground are we presently standing. This question is very relevant to the recent report that T. Y. Danjuma the nation's Defence Minister, has written a "memo" to the president, demanding the scrapping of the newborn Abuja Stock Exchange.

Did ASE pose any threat to any of Danjuma's uncountable holdings in virtually every sector of the Nigerian economy? Or is the Lagos Stock Exchange using

the retired soldier get the information from that stock exchanges across the global village are merging? From the Lagos Stock Exchange?

The federal government should in the final analyses seek the advice of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), the umbrella body of the Nigerian capital market, before taking any decision on the Abuja Stock Exchange. Anything short of that would portray the government as dancing to the tune of some ethnic jingoists, who see the ASE as Abacha's agenda of systematically bringing the North into the mainstream capital market.

Abdullahi Salihu Abubakar,
Anguwar Hausawa,
Box 8221, Garki, Abuja

Rest in peace: Jibril Bala Mohammed

When I received the news, I was absolutely shocked but with total submission to the will of almighty Allah the sudden death of my former lecturer, Dr. Jibril Bala Mohammed, who lost his life in a ghastly motor accident along Jos-Bauchi Road. Until his demise, he was an associate professor of mass communication at the University of Maiduguri.

Dr. Bala's death is a monumental loss not only for his family but for the nation as a whole. Late J. B. Mohammed was a very hardworking and intelligent scholar whom I can describe as a

the field of mass communication. He was a friend to all. A non-materialistic and straightforward lecturer and above all, a guru in the struggle against the exploitation of the proletariat.

Dr., though you have gone, the legacy you left behind shall always be remembered by many.

I hereby want to express condolence to the entire family of the deceased, the department of Mass Communication at the University of Maiduguri and the entire nation for such an irreparable loss.

Malam, rest in peace in the bosom of Allah.
Bashir Ambi Mohammed,
17, Bakinkura Street,

TRUST INTERNATIONAL

AFRICA & THE MIDDLE EAST



A Child holds a gun at a disarmament camp in Sierra Leone's eastern diamond town of Koidu... recently.

Gulf oil spill threatens Saudi Arabia

A team of Iranian environmental workers has begun trying to contain an oil spill from an Iraqi ship which was sunk in the northern Persian Gulf.

The Honduran-flagged vessel was trying to smuggle oil from Iraq and sank while being pursued by the US Navy, according to a regional marine organisation.

The Bahrain-based Marine Emergency Mutual Centre (MEMAC) says the five-kilometre (three-mile) wide oil slick could hit Iran's Cyrus oilfield or reach the Saudi Arabian coast within three weeks.

The US Navy, which leads multinational patrols in the Gulf enforcing United Nations sanctions against Iraq, said the Georgios, which had been intercepted three times in the past, was carrying nearly 1,900 tons of Iraqi crude oil.

"The ship has sunk to the bottom of Gulf waters and is still leaking oil. The leakage is very slow," MEMAC spokesman Captain Abdul Munim al-Janahi told French news agency AFP.

Captain al-Janahi said Iran had carried out an aerial surveillance of the area where the ship sank, about 188 kilometres (75 nautical miles) off the island of Khark, and had sent two flat-top barges there.

MEMAC said the main problem was that the

and was not designed to carry any liquids or fuel.

The ship's owners have claimed the Georgios was sunk by the US Navy, but the Americans have denied responsibility.

"We don't know how it sank. It was too fast to tell, but the ship was in very poor condition," Commander Jeff Alderson of the US Fifth Fleet told AFP.

Iraq is accused of trying to break the UN embargo, imposed after its invasion of Kuwait in 1990, by using aged vessels to smuggle crude oil.

Lebanon arrests 150 opposition members

The Lebanese army intelligence has arrested around 150 members of two Christian groups which represent the main force in the opposition to the Syrian presence in Lebanon, where Damascus maintains some 20,000 troops.

Those arrested on Tuesday evening were followers of two parties. One is the FNC - the Free National Current, which is tied to the exiled Christian leader Michel Aoun.

The other is the Lebanese Forces - a disbanded Christian militia whose leader, Samir Geagea is in jail.

Most of the arrested are students, but there are also several well-known party officials.

One of those arrested is Toufic Hindi, a leading member of the Lebanese Forces who was said to have been picked up from his home without a warrant.

Another of those detained is retired Lebanese army commander Nadim Lteif, who is the coordinator of the FNC.

Many people were arrested in the same location, leading to speculation that there were party meetings going on.

The army had issued a statement in which it warned against those who exploit the atmosphere of freedom to carry out acts of disorder, that have nothing to do with patriotism.

The arrests also come two days after the Maronite Patriarch Nasrallah Boutros Sfeir toured the Shouf mountains in a reconciliatory move towards Lebanon's Druze community.

During one of the masses of the weekend tour, Lebanese President Emile Lahoud was booed very loudly by supporters of the two Christian parties, who also clashed with security forces.

Families of those arrested planning held a rally yesterday at the residence of the Maronite patriarch demanding the release of

S/Leonean child victim for UK treatment

A boy tortured by rebels during Sierra Leone's civil war will be allowed to come to Britain for treatment after all, the Department of Health has confirmed.

Issa Kamara, 10, had been turned away by the National Health Service - even though doctors were willing to work for free to help him - because of "red tape".

But Jacqui Smith, Minister of State for Health, said on Tuesday evening that the youngster would undergo

surgery in Britain "at the earliest opportunity".

Issa was abducted and roasted over a fire by Sierra Leone rebels, who made his mother clap and sing as she watched.

He now needs emergency medical treatment on his badly burned hand, which doctors in his own country cannot provide.

A UK newspaper, the *Eastern Daily Press* in Norwich raised the money to fly him to the UK, and specialists at the Norwich and Norfolk Hospital offered to give up their free time

to carry out the operation.

But NHS rules said Issa could not be treated because of the lack of a "reciprocal agreement" - which in theory would allow UK nationals to travel for treatment in Sierra Leone in the same circumstances.

Ms Smith said the Department of Health had overcome the bureaucratic difficulties.

She said: "The case of this young boy has rightly touched everyone's heart.

"We share the view that the best possible outcome for Issa would be for him to receive treatment in this country.

"I am therefore pleased to confirm that Issa will receive the treatment he needs in the UK at the earliest possible opportunity."

"We are delighted he has found a way through the red tape."

Norwich North MP Dr Ian Gibson had offered Issa somewhere to stay, giving him temporary resident status and allowing him to receive the treatment he needs.

The move followed a meeting Mr Gibson had with Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott on Tuesday afternoon.

Peter Franzen, editor of the

Eastern Daily Press, welcomed the decision on Tuesday evening.

He said: "This is a victory for common sense. I think we have got to thank John Prescott for his intervention."

Dr Gibson told *BBC Radio 4's Today* programme that, "This is the sort of thing Britain does so well ... and we should really find ways round silly Home Office bureaucracy, or Department of Health bureaucracy, wherever it comes in.

He added that, "This is an important issue and one which should be solved without all this hoopah."

"It smacks a little of bureaucracy gone mad. I think we have to find a way through it."

Pinkie McCann, of the Sierra Leone charity Leononet Street Children, who knows Issa, said: "The problem is that the hand has been so badly burnt it has turned in on itself and there are no doctors in Sierra Leone who are able to perform this surgery.

She said that he believed adults were going to get him help: "He has believed what the adults have been telling him ... that 'we will get help for you, we will try to fix your hand'."

20 white farmers for trial in Zimbabwe

The Zimbabwean police have said that about 20 white farmers who are in jail will be charged with public violence and assault.

The news comes as hospital sources in Harare report the death of a white farmer who was critically injured when suspected pro-government militants allegedly attacked him with an axe at his farm in Kwekwe on Friday.

His death brings to nine the number of white farmers killed in land invasion incidents. Two black people, a policeman and a settler, have also been killed.

The farmers who are facing charges were arrested after a fight broke out between them and a group of militant government supporters who were occupying a farm.

Police in the town of Chinhoyi, 100 kilometres (60 miles) from the capital Harare, have used citizens' band radio to advise white people to stay away after several were said to have been beaten up by gangs of militants.

A group of white farmers had gone to protect a friend after about 50 militant invaded his land and attempted to break into

his house.

At least two of the farmers were hurt during the subsequent fight. One is reported to be suffering from broken ribs.

Friends of the white farmers claimed that the Zimbabwean police did not arrest any of the militants involved.

President Mugabe has said the occupations are a spontaneous expression of anger at the unequal distribution of fertile land between the black majority and the tiny white minority.



Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi, left, greets former U.S. Ambassador to Kenya, Prudence Bushnell, while current U.S. Ambassador Johnnie Carson watches, before inaugurating the monument, Tuesday, August 7, 2001, in Nairobi, on which are engraved the names of the 219 people including 12 Americans, killed during the bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi in 1998.

Moi dedicates park to 1998 bomb victims

President Daniel Arap Moi has inaugurated a memorial park to the victims of the 7 August 1998 US embassy bombing.

The park was opened on the Nairobi site where the embassy and a local bank building stood before being destroyed by the blast, which killed more than 200 Kenyan and United States citizens.

In May, a New York court found four people guilty of the bombing, which the US claims was the work of Saudi-born Osama bin Laden.

At the ceremony, some Kenyan victims demanded compensation from the US for

the injuries they had suffered.

President Moi said the bombing had shown that no country was exempted from the possible consequences of "blind rage and hatred that dominates the minds of international terrorists".

The bomb killed 207 Kenyans and 12 US citizens and left more than 4,000 injured.

Seconds after the US embassy in Nairobi was destroyed, a second, smaller blast rocked Tanzania's capital, Dar es Salaam, claiming another 11 lives.

Justice RO Kwach, chairman of the trust behind the park memorial, sparked outrage when he announced that visitors would be charged 20 shillings (25 cents) to help meet

maintenance costs.

Hundreds of people who had watched the ceremony through fences afterwards pushed their way past security guards and flooded the park, reading the 219 names inscribed on the newly unveiled black granite wall.

One of the bomb survivors, Jane Mutuku, her face still covered in scars, welcomed the new park.

She told *Associated Press* news agency: "It will give me more memories of the bomb but that's how you get over it."

The US has spent \$4.3 million helping bomb victims and rebuilding central Nairobi but some survivors feel it is not enough.



NIGERIA CUSTOMS SERVICE

PUBLIC NOTICE**GUIDELINES FOR CLEARANCE OF NON-CRI GOODS THROUGH DESTINATION INSPECTION**

Approval has been granted for clearance of goods landed in Nigeria without the mandatory Clean report of Inspection through destination Inspection. This category of goods commonly referred to as Non-CRI goods is now to be inspected locally for duty assessment and issuance of clean Report of Inspection (CRI) based on the following guidelines.

2. a. Affected importers are to submit the relevant import documents to the Inspection agent that covers the Zone from where the goods were imported.
- b. Documents to be submitted include Form 'M' (where available), attested Invoice i.e. combined certificate of Value and Origin (CCVO) and Original Bills of Lading for seaports, Airway Bills for airports or Way Bills for land borders). Where the import transactions did not pass through a Bank, the importer should submit a genuine invoice and the transportation documents to the Inspection Agents.
- c. The Inspection agents are to carry out a joint examination of the consignments with the officials of the Nigeria Customs Service at their respective locations before the issuance of the necessary Clean Report of inspection (CRI). All CRIs issued under this special concession should carry a special identity mark that will clearly distinguish them from normal CRIs to allow for proper records.
- d. All CRIs are to include the earlier imposed 50% of the assessed customs duty as penalty.
- e. Importers of the affected consignments are to commence processing their Single Good Declaration forms (SGDs) at the Customs Processing centre as soon as the relevant CRIs have been issued by the Inspection Agents.
- f. Consignments under this special CRI arrangement will no longer go through any further physical examination but will be released out to Customs control as soon as the SGDs have been processed.
3. This concession covers only Non-CRI goods that are not contraband or security goods as such goods will be outrightly seized.
4. The concession takes immediate effect and will last till Friday 31st August 2001.
5. These guidelines are specifically for Non-CRI consignments. Cases of under-valuation, concealment or under-declaration of quantities in respect of consignments already inspected abroad are not to be referred to the Inspection Agents but will continue to attract the necessary debit Notices and penalty.
6. All importers of Non-CRI consignments are hereby enjoined to take maximum advantage of this concession and submit their import documents for destination inspection.

MANAGEMENT

BUSINESS DAY

Security beefed up at Lagos ports

From Tokunbo Oloke, in Lagos

Efforts to rid the ports of unwanted elements commenced on Monday as people and vehicles were barred from entering through the main gates leading into the Apapa and Tincan ports.

As early as 8a.m. the security officials of both the port police and the Nigeria Ports Authority (NPA) were seen at the gates directing the customers to take the pedestrian gates while those who do not have valid identity cards were sent back.



Ojo Maduekwe, Transport Minister

Also, vehicles without valid port pass were equally barred from entering into the ports.

As a result of this

development, hundreds of port users and clearing agents were not allowed into the port.

Speaking on this development, the Assistant General Manager, Corporate Affairs, Mr. Bamidele Sanni, said the management of NPA required a modicum of sanity in the port, hence, the need to put a stop to the hitherto human traffic congestion in the port.

Said he: "In the history of ports worldwide, there is nothing called human traffics, everything had been streamlined and the time has come for us to start emulating these ports so that we would not be left behind in the cavity of maritime nations."

He added that his chairman reiterated that NADLE would not hesitate to tackle any issue the employers may face in the course of their operations, individually or collectively, adding that he urged the members of the association to be alive to their responsibilities in the implementation of the mandate of the council.

In his reaction, the NADLE chairman, Chief E. A. Umumakwe, expressed the hope that the new leadership would enjoy unhindered relationship with the council for the overall success of the ongoing port reforms.

NADLE was represented at the meeting by all the members of its new executive including Apostle G. O. Abu, national vice-chairman.

AON engages locally trained pilots

From Samson Ojo, in Lagos

More Nigerian trained pilots will soon be engaged in the nation's aviation industry as local airlines discard wet-lease airplanes.

Ray Megwa, Public Relations Officer of Airline Operators of Nigeria (AON), made this disclosure in Lagos in an exclusive interview with *Business Day*. He explained that AON has agreed to support the use of dry-lease air planes.

Business Day learnt that the agreement was reached with the Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA), at a meeting held last week.

Prior to this agreement, the AON pilots and engineers had protested the directive from the NCAA that all wet-lease planes in the country would be



Kema Chikwe, Aviation Minister

grounded.

But an industry watcher, who spoke to *Business Day* under condition of anonymity explained that the directive when implemented would reduce the number of operational vehicles in the country.

Already the *Business Day* source at the Ikeja Local Airport hinted that, it has become increasingly difficult to get seats on board existing planes, particularly on the Lagos-Abuja and Abuja-Lagos flight.

Mr. Megwa, who is also the Managing Director of Oriental Airlines, further said that the decision of the AON to comply with the directive was to create a level playing field for members and also increase the number

of qualified Nigerian crew to be employed.

On the need to create a level playing field, he said it was not in the interest of the operation that some members operate like trading companies while others bear the full cost of their operations.

Speaking further he explained that the AON had decided to abide by the deadline because it was extended several time.

Said he: "We are in support of the deadline. If we keep on extending it, it would be endless."

Business Day investigations revealed that there are presently five passengers planes on the wet-lease operation in Nigeria. Bellview Airlines operates two, Sosoliso Airline operates one and

Chanchangi Airlines operates two.

The palpable fear in the industry is that the sudden withdrawal of these aircraft may heighten the rush for planes already being experienced at the Lagos airport.

Business Day investigations at the domestic wing of the Lagos Airport revealed a mad struggle for the available seats in the plane. routes mostly affected are Lagos-Kaduna, Lagos-Port-Harcourt and Lagos-Abuja.

It would be recalled that NCAA had since March, issued notices to airline operators, warning against the use of wet-lease aircraft. The NCAA had reminded that the use of wet-lease air plane was a stop gap measure that should not be taken for a right.

ATSSSAN charges Kema Chikwe over job security

From Shakirat Abdulmajeed, in Lagos

The furore in the aviation industry may not yet be over as the Minister of Aviation Dr. (Mrs.) Kema Chikwe has been requested to make public pronouncement to re-assure the employees in the aviation industry of their safety, continuity and security of jobs in order to boost their morale.

The Air Transport Services Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (ATSSSAN) in an open letter to Chikwe posited that unless their request is acceded to, the minister should be prepared to be treating petitions and problems on a daily basis and possibly industrial disharmony.

ATSSSAN's position came on the heels of the recent removal of NAMA Managing Director, Alhaji I. U. Auyo and other top

executive officers in the aviation ministry which has been generating a lot of controversy in the aviation industry.

The letter titled: "Aviation Minister's Action: ATSSSAN Resolution" and signed by the General Secretary of ATSSSAN, Comrade M. Ekangu stated that the attendant effects associated with incessant removal of chief executives of parastatals in the aviation industry often result to mismanagement, dishonesty contract inflation for the singular belief that the appointments could be terminated anytime with impunity.

The union which posited that they are not opposed to any form of disciplinary action against

any staff no matter how highly placed, however, threatened upsurge in court litigation unless such disciplinary action is in conformity with laid-down procedures guided by the collective agreement or conditions of service applicable to parastatals.

Alleging that the minister's action is inadvertently affecting the morale and productivity of the airline workforce in the aviation industry, the union, however, advised that the Board of Directors of each parastatal should be given freedom to discharge its responsibilities as enshrined in the enabling decrees.

The union emphasised that the ministry should play the role of an appellate court or checks and balances on staff matters from managing director to the cleaner.

"In view of the foregoing, we have resolved to advice you and other eminent personalities involved in decision-making that, our union shall be greatly honoured to see the emergence of a substantive managing director for NAMA and directors of other aviation parastatals coming from the existing cadre of management staff."

Ethiopian Airlines to commence direct Hong Kong flight

Plans are underway for Ethiopian Airlines to commence direct flight connection from Nigeria to Hong Kong.

According to a press statement made available to *Business Day*, a cooperation agreement had also been signed between Ethiopian Airlines and Nigeria Airways to enable the former operate on behalf of the latter from Lagos to all Western Africa cities like Accra, Abidjan, Bamako and Lome.

The airline recently increased the frequency of its flight to and from Nigeria in response to increasing demand, with daily flights now operating to and from Lagos and two other direct weekly flight to and from Kano.

General Manager, (Nigeria) of the airlines, Mr. Assefa Dinsa, expressed their determination to provide maximum satisfaction for its teeming customers in the Nigerian and global aviation market.

Mr. Dinsa added: "Ethiopian Airlines strongly believes that our new facilities including increased frequency out of Lagos, new flights to and from Kano and the available capacity from Lagos to other West African

cities and the middle and far east, will satisfy the interest of our customers."

According to the general manager, the airline recently relocated to a new ultra-modern Lagos office in

Victoria Island "to provide spacious accommodation to create a more conducive working environment and additional facilities for service delivery to our valued customers."

TCB Plc elevates 14 staff

The management of Tropical Commercial Bank Plc has approved the appointment of Alhaji Murtala Sanusi as an Assistant General Manager of the bank.

Alhaji Murtala Sanusi, until his recent appointment was the Principal Manager, Branch Operations.

A graduate of Accounting, he holds a Masters Degree in banking and finance.



Adamu Ciroma, Finance Minister

From Jamilah Nuhu Musa, in Kano

Also promoted as the new acting head of Corporate Affairs Department is Malam Abba Ado Dandago whose appointment was sequel to the voluntary resignation of the former Head of Department, Malam Abubakar Shehu Minjibir.

Malam Abba Dandago is the current chairman of the Kano State chapter of the Nigeria Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) and a member of the Nigerian Institute of Management (NIM).

Other appointees include Saidu Musa Bala, Salisu Idris Ango and Hafisu Sani Gwarzo as officers.

Aliyu Lushe, Ahmed Hussaini, Idriss Ibrahim, Maharaz Ahmed Karaye and Amina Musa were elevated to supervisors.

Abdularauf Kabiru and Mahdi Shehu Ahmed were appointed senior clerks.

Nwokedi identifies cause of row over marginal fields

From Rakiya A. Muhammad, in Lagos

A legal luminary, Uche Nwokedi has blamed the continued imbroglio on marginal field development in the country to the non-enforcement of the relinquishment provision of the petroleum act.

He was making reference to the relinquishment provisions of the act, paragraph 12 (1) of the first schedule to the petroleum act which stipulates that "one half of the area of an Oil Mining Lease (OML) shall be relinquished 10 years after the grant of an OML."

Mr. Nwokedi maintained that it was clear from the various attempts of

the regulatory authorities to legislate on marginal field that this provision had not been properly enforced.

"It is my humble opinion that a robust enforcement of this relinquishment provision will go a long way to settle this issue," he added.

In the same vein, an expert, Dr. George Amaefule, has observed that improved contract terms will allow the development of several small fields to proceed and also entice new operators into the country.

He, however, said dedicated multinational teams were a key factor in successful marginal field development.



Gaius-Obaseki, NNPC M/D

BUSINESS DAY

Nigeria Airways resumes flight on Lagos-London route

Hopes for resuscitating the ailing national carrier was brightened yesterday with the announcement by the management of Nigeria Airways of the resumption of flight operations on London-Lagos route abandoned five year ago, with effect from August 16, 2001.

The airline will also resume flight operations on Lagos-Dubai-Jedda route on one frequency starting from August 23, 2001.

Announcing this heart-warming news yesterday at the Rotunda Hall of the National carrier headquarters, the Head of Public Affairs of Nigeria

*Lagos-Dubai-Jedda, too

From Shakirat Abdulmajeed, in Lagos

Airways Limited, Mr. Chris Aligbe, stated that they are resuming flight operations late in summer in order to make a point that it is only the national carrier that could be sensitive to the needs of Nigerians.

He stressed that the operation would be starting with three weekly frequencies, on Tuesday, Thursday and Sundays on three gateways, Lagos, Abuja and Port Harcourt with 747 - 200 series wet-lease aircraft.

He further disclosed that

flight operations on Dubai-Jedda route will commence a week after commencement of flight on the Lagos-London route, stressing that both operations had to be delayed till now to organise a proper back-up for the equipment (aircraft).

An elated Aligbe emphasised that "we are going back to London on our own, not as a joint venture, since it is better to have it all than to share."

He noted that flight operations to Jedda will be on every Monday while flight operations to Dubai will be every Friday.



Kema Chikwe, Aviation Minister

According to him the national carrier offers the most reasonable and acceptable fares, saying travellers to London for 25 day validity is \$499.00. One month excursion will pay \$599.00, two months excursion \$699.00, three months excursion \$799.00, six months excursion \$1,029.00 while travellers on one year excursion will pay \$1,470.00.

UBA raises share capital to N2b

United Bank for Africa (UBA) has increased its share capital from N1 billion to N2 billion by creating two billion ordinary shares of 50 kobo each.

The resolution to that effect was unanimously passed at the 40th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Bank held in Maiduguri.

Consequently, article 5.0 of the bank's Memorandum and Article of Association was amended through another resolution to reflect the new increase in share capital.

Also, eighty-five million ordinary shares of 50 kobo each representing 5 percent of the bank's new share capital were reserved for its employees with a view to motivating and retaining diligent staff.

From Abdulfattah Olajide, in Lagos

Speaking on the performance of the bank during the 2000/2001 financial year during the meeting, its chairman, Mr. Hakeem Bello-Osagie, said the bank's income increased to N19.39 billion in spite of intense and persistent competitive pressures.

He, however, said the bank's operating costs increased significantly over the years while there was a decline in its profit before tax to N1.68 billion in the financial year under review. He attributed the decline in profit to "the clean up of our portfolio" and increase in operating costs.

Nonetheless, the chairman said, the bank's balance sheet remained very strong and healthy, noting that its total assets grew to N188.03 billion from N120.83 billion in the previous financial year.

According to him, the bank's deposit also increased from N82.52 billion to N9.07 billion within the same period.

The bank's capital adequacy ratio remained "strong" at 14.11 percent, the chairman also stated.

...approves 5-year strategic plan

The Board of Directors of the United Bank for Africa (UBA) has approved a new five-year strategic plan for the bank.

Chairman of the Board, Mr. Hakeem Bello-Osagie, disclosed this at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the bank in Maiduguri.

According to the chairman, the new plan emphasised five core issues including a new and unique approach to consumer banking, implementation of a new core banking software and strategic cost management. Others include branch redesigning and rigorous performance management.

Mr. Bello-Osagie, who hinted that the implementation of the plan had already begun, expressed the conviction that developments in the current financial year would bear clear "testimony to the timeliness, appropriateness and adequacy of our response to the insights we have gained about the challenges of the future."

The UBA chairman noted that the emerging trend in the banking industry would challenge not only the ability of banks to sustain and improve their performance but also their very survival.

Remarking that the five year strategic plan would reposition UBA for future challenges and offer the bank a competition edge, he noted that the traditional sources of income of the bank came under significant pressure during the last financial year owing to stiff competition from banks, non-bank financial institutions and other indirect sources.

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LOCATIONS/DATES:

- Epe General Hospital, Epe, Lagos - August 9-11, 2001
- Awo-Omamma Community Hospital, Awo-Omamma, Imo State - August 16-18, 2001
- Gwagwalada General Hospital, Abuja - August 23-25, 2001

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Rural development leads to national progress

— Nigerien Minister

Madame Nana Aichatou Foumakoye is the Minister of Social Development, Population, Women Promotion and Youth Protection in the Republic of Niger. Recently on an official visit to Nigeria Habiba Adamu, our reporter, interviewed her. In this interview, she expands on the issue of political involvement of women in her country, HIV/AIDS, girl-child enrolment, development of the rural areas in Niger, and more. Excerpts:

What informed your choice of Nigeria as a model for policy formulation in your ministry?

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to express my opinion with regards to our visit to our Nigerian friends, sisters and brothers. Well, we felt it is very important for us in Niger to choose Nigeria as a model for policy formulation, especially in my ministry. Nigeria and Niger are like sister countries. We are like one community divided by borders. This is because of the fact that there are so many Nigeriens who are based in Nigeria and vice versa. We have been interacting for so many years, and the interaction still continues. When a Nigerian or Nigerien visit other countries, it seems difficult for them to differentiate their nationality. This is because of similarities in customs and habits, which makes it necessary for both countries to put heads together in order to solve our common problems.

Also, it is a well known fact that Nigeria is more developed than any other country in Africa. Nigeria is a country, which is next to the well-developed countries of the world. So, instead of Niger to go to another country, which is far from us, we decided to choose Nigeria. Like I said this is because Nigeria is a sister country to Niger. We have a close relationship and have been doing things together for long.

Niger and Nigeria realise the essence and importance of cooperating with each other. We have been holding meetings together within which we made so many promises. In order to



Madame Nana Aichatou Foumakoye, Nigerien Minister of Social Development, Population, Women Promotion and Youth Protection.

fulfil these promises and to succeed at the same time, both countries have to cooperate.

For instance, if we in Niger are facing a major problem which we are trying to curb, without Ni-

geria also taking a step in solving such problems in her country, then it would be a waste of time and effort. The same also applies to Nigeria. Therefore it is important for both countries to put heads together

and cooperate with each other for the good of both countries.

What is the level of women participation in politics in your country?

Even before the inception of democracy in Niger

in 1999, women have been playing a vital role in politics. More especially now that Niger is under a democratic government, and women have been contributing a lot. Many parties have been formed and women have become members of these political parties. Wherever they are women have been attending party meetings and make their contributions. Women come out en masse for elections and also involve themselves in decision-making at the party level.

But the sad thing about this is that, despite the efforts made by the women and the level of participation of women in politics, most of the candidates that stand for elections are men. Today we have just one woman out of 83 men in our House of Assembly. Out of 23 ministers, we have two women ministers. We believe that the number of women in government is low compared to their level of participation in politics. So, apart from these women, we have four directors-general, three secretaries-general to the minister and four women ambassadors.

What efforts are being made to improve the share of women in holding political offices in Niger?

We have many women organisations in Niger. These women organisations came together and discussed on what steps should be taken so as to avoid having a small number of women among political office holders. My ministry had also sponsored the passing of a Bill. The Niger Republic National Assembly has already passed the Bill into

law. Under this new law, such offices like governor, director-general, ministers, a certain number of them will

“Of course, for the development of rural areas, progress. More like Niger Republic its citizens are 50 percent, the rural areas try to develop developed first

be reserved for women which means from now on under this law 25 percent of high positions in government will be given to women in respect of positions like councillors and the rest women will have 10 percent.

We will soon commence a national tour of Niger because of the forthcoming primary elections. We are making efforts in drawing the attention of the Nigerien women to come out en-masse for elections which will be in a year's time or a few months so that women could be elected into political offices.

What is the HIV/AIDS infection rate among youths in your country like?

The rate in which this disease spreading is scaring. Initially in 1980 the number of people with HIV/AIDS diseases were few. According to research carried out on this disease it shows that since then the number increased to the extent that 90 percent of people in Niger have this disease. And towns like Masarumpa, Abidja etc, are places where we have large number of people carrying this disease. Most of these people are youths that are between the ages of 15 and 26. You can see that it is frightening situation.

Interview

most of these people with the AIDS infection are youths.

The main reason behind this is connected to frequent trips abroad by Nigeriens. Apart from that, poverty is also a major problem in our country that makes youths leave their towns and villages and migrate to cities. Since they are unemployed they turn out to be delinquents and commit all sorts of vices, which also helps in the spread of HIV/AIDS. Most of these youths do not know how to protect themselves from getting infected. Therefore this is a horrible reality for the government of Niger Republic.

So, what measures have been taken to curb the spread of the disease among women and children?

Well, Niger has taken measures and would continue to take more measures. Initially we organised pro-

grammes on how to fight the disease.

But later on we realised that the programmes are not enough. So, we decided to take it to the top where everybody would give his own quota in helping to fight the disease. A committee has been set up directly under the president. Specifically we have a programme that functions throughout the country in which every ministry must have a policy on how to fight the disease.

This programme, of which the committee is directly under the president, is funded by the World Bank. We have been making researches on how to carry out public enlightenment, how people would protect themselves from getting infected, how to provide those with the HIV/AIDS disease with medicines and so on. We would soon finish all strategies and arrangements regarding HIV/AIDS issue.

The wife of the president has also formed an organisation called *Magama* since women and children are the group of people mostly infected with this disease. *Magama* concentrates on enlightening them. This organisation contributes in drawing the attention of the people and the general public concerning the disease, so that God will protect us

from the epidemic.

Another problem is that most of the schools are miles away from home. Parents do not like leaving their children to travel far to another town or city in order to attend a school. Also we have a problem since the ratio is 2:1 in girls' attendance in schools.

The measures taken by government are to enlighten parents on the importance of education. Rich individuals and non-governmental organisations were not left out in this campaign. Traditional rulers also pledged their maximum cooperation in creating awareness among parents on the importance of education. These have been going on and so far we have received positive results.

In the ministry of education we have a special unit with the sole responsibility of encouraging girl-child enrolment in

schools.

What social programmes do you have for the development of the rural areas in Niger?

Of course, we have social programmes for the development of rural areas, since rural development leads to national progress. More especially in a country like Niger Re-

public, where 50 percent of its citizens are extremely poor, out of that 50 percent, the bulk of them are living in the rural areas. Therefore, for our country to develop, the rural areas have to be developed first.

Niger initiated a poverty alleviation programme since 1996. Many ministries are involved in this programme. The main focus of the programme is to find out how to assist people in abject poverty, and also help in boosting their ways of earning a living so that they would move out of their poor conditions. Public enlightenment on the importance of self-employment, for instance stopping beggars from begging. This public enlightenment also falls under the poverty alleviation programme. There is also another programme in the constitution of Niger Republic, which is a programme of a five-year period, 2000-2004. It centres on planning strategies and policies on how to eradicate poverty in the country so as to improve the living standard of the

masses in the rural areas.

Since 1999 the government has approved a policy on protection and social development or activities of women, children, beggars and the public. Already we have made plans and strategies on how to carry out everything in a successful way.

Government is not

subsidised price. Some time the government buys these food items from the local farmers and sells same to the people in its efforts to develop rural areas.

Whenever the president is abroad attending meetings or discussions, his main concern is how to assist people living in the

cussed so many things. From now on we agreed to put our heads together and work on things that concern women and children. Nigeria and Niger have some social problems in common, so we promised each other to find time to discuss on these issues before implementing whatever steps or measures we

we have social programmes for the development of rural areas, since rural development leads to national progress especially in a country like Niger Republic, where 50 percent of the population are extremely poor, out of that the bulk of them are living in the rural areas. Therefore, for our country to develop, the rural areas have to be developed first."



Minister of Women Affairs Hajiya Ismail (l) and Madame Nana Aichatou Foumakoye (r) during the visit.

alone in making efforts to alleviate and develop the rural areas. Non-governmental organisations and rich individuals are also involved in this programme.

This is because the non-governmental organisations are the ones always working with people in rural area. And Niger is a country in which most of its people are in poverty so we need all the help and assistance we can get from the rich citizens among us.

The president of Niger Republic, Mallam Tanja Mohammadu, is a person that likes helping and assisting the masses more especially those in the rural areas. The president has a programme of which every year 1000 schools, 1000 classes and 1000 hospital would be built in the country. He would personally go to rural areas to inspect the progress of these projects.

Last year we did not have a good harvest in Niger. The government had to import food items and sell it to people at a

rural areas. His concern is on fertilizer, seeds or anything relating to agriculture and to reduce the suffering of women. Regarding the latter, the president tasked my ministry to find out the ways to reduce difficulties and sufferings of the Nigerian women.

Under this programme 500 million CFA has been earmarked for disbursement as loans to rural women in order to reduce their suffering. Also, 1000 million machines would be distributed to these women. All these were done in an efforts to develop rural areas, so that Niger Republic would flourish.

What would you say are the gains to Niger?

At the beginning of this interview, Niger Republic and Nigeria are like sister countries. There are many gains of my visit to Nigeria. I met my Nigerian counterpart, the minister of Women Affairs and Youth Development, Hajiya Aisha Ismail and we dis-

decide to take. Because of the business involvements of Nigerian and Nigerian women, we decided to sit together and find ways for easier movement and transaction between the two countries so as to facilitate and encourage women in business.

The non-governmental organisations in Niger Republic and Niger Republic would also work together a stronger relationship. That would come out of interaction. That informed us about the situation with the committee for women affairs in those states. I requested to visit the two states because they share borders with Niger Republic and this would be an opportunity for women in these states to interact and transact business with women in the Border States of Niger Republic.

I am very happy with this visit to Nigeria and we would fly a time when Hajiya Aisha would visit Niger to strengthen our relationship.

NOCACO



NOCACO Makes Another History!

Northern Cable Processing and Manufacturing Company (NOCACO) Limited, the first Cable Industry established in Kaduna, in the North, for over twenty two years now, has made another history of recent. NOCACO has again become the first Manufacturer in the North to join the league of international business community because of the high quality standard of its cables.

The capability of NOCACO to produce very high quality cables that meet national and international standards, at costs that represent value at all times, has culminated in its ability to be the first Cable Manufacturer in the North to meet the requirements of International Organization for Standardisation otherwise known as ISO -9002. This is a certified quality system, which aims at achieving Total Quality Management (TQM) in the areas of quality system, production, installation and servicing.

NOCACO's present excellent achievement has already been certified and approved by the Standard Organization of Nigeria (SON). Consequently, apart from the numerous gold awards received by NOCACO in the previous years, the ISO -9002 certification can be regarded as the epitome of NOCACO's achievements in the production of very high quality cables.

NOCACO will therefore continue, more than ever before, to be more committed to the production of cables that meet national and international standards and in conformity with specific customer requirements. In addition, the cost of production shall represent value at all times. NOCACO is also prepared to face the challenges posed by the requirements of ISO - 9002, which include, among others; continuous and updating of its production and testing equipment in consonance with the development in the international cable industry; provision of adequate resources for meeting the appropriate and presents as well as ensuring that the staff are well trained and highly motivated to meet the current and challenges in the new millennium.

NOCACO is indeed highly appreciative of the tremendous support, goodwill, encouragement and patronage always received from the public and private sectors of the economy as well as from contractors, distributors, individuals etc. without which these chains of successes recorded by NOCACO over the years would have been possible.

The Board of Directors, Management and Staff of NOCACO thank all and sundry for their monumental support and encouragement and wish to reiterate that the Company will continue to progress and excel in meeting all the requirements of its customers at both national and international levels and in consonance with the requirements of ISO - 9002 which insist on Total Quality Management at all levels.

(Sgnd.)

Management

NEWS

Kwankwaso blames LGs over street begging

Local Government Councils in Kano State have been blamed for the failure of the state government's effort to rid the state of street begging.

Making the accusation in Kano, Governor Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso said the local governments have failed to redeem their pledges of financial support to the disabled and the destitute in their respective areas in order to discourage them from street begging.

From Musa Umar Kazaure, in Kano

earlier agreed by both arms of government.

On its part, he said the state government has already approved financial assistance to the disabled and destitute to stop them from street begging, stating that the workshop was part of the



Gov. Kwankwaso

state government's strategy to reduce unemployment among youths.

The workshop which was organised by the Guidance and Counselling Board is aimed at training over 2,400 youths in the state to reduce the rate of unemployment.

The Commissioners of Police, zone 10, comprising Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara States, have been commended for effectively combating crime in the zone and urged to continue in that manner.

This observation was made by the new Assistant Inspector General of Police (AIG) in charge of Zone 10, Alhaji Hamisu Isah, while speaking with the press in his office in Sokoto last week.

Alhaji Isah said since his assumption of office, he has

AIG commends CPs for fight against crime

From Abdulfata Abdulsalami, in Sokoto

monitored the situation from all the command and has not received any complaint either from the public or members of the force.

He thanked the three governors of the zone for the assistance they have been rendering to the police in the zone and urged them to

continue in that direction so that the society can be crime free.

Alhaji Isah called on the press to assist the zone in the area of information dissemination on the achievements of the police so that the public could be carried along.

He assured the press in the zone of his preparedness to work harmoniously with them as he considered them partners in progress.

The AIG advised the press to always endeavour to confirm issues from the command before writing their stories.



Gov. Bafarawa

NUJ donates computers, generators to 18 state councils

In an effort to boost the current capacity-building process of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), 14 new computer sets and four electric generators have been donated to 18 state councils of the Nigeria Union of Journalists, the second time in the last four months.

The equipment which are worth about N2 million, were presented free of charge by the National Secretariat of the union at its recently-concluded National Executive Council (NEC) meeting held at the Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON), Badagry, in addition to the earlier donated 10 fax machines, four electric generators and computer sets each by the union's leadership in Ilorin last Match.

Special Guest of Honour at the three-day conference, Senate President, Anyim Pius Anyim, while presenting the equipment to the leadership of the lucky councils, commended the union for embarking on the process of preparing Nigerian journalists adequately for the challenge of the millennium.

According to a press release signed by NUJ's Assistant National Secretary, Olu Akinbayewa JP, he pleaded that the National Assembly would do all things within its powers to assist the

union in the area of an unhindered free-flow of information.

The National President of the union Mr. Smart Adeyemi, whose administration made history by donating equipment to councils under the union, assured that the remaining councils would benefit from the programme before the end of the year, stressing that he was poised to making Nigerian journalists, through the state councils, independent of the "Greek gift" syndrome mostly extended by government.

NAPEP co-ordinator charges members

The Lagos State co-ordinator of the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), Dr. Adedotun Adegbola, has charged members of the co-ordinating committees of the agency in the state not to play politics with the poverty alleviation scheme.

He made the appeal recently, during the managerial meeting of the state co-ordinating committee of the agency held at its secretariat, in Lagos.

According to Dr. Adegbola, NAPEP should not be seen as a project of the ruling party, but as a programme meant for the eradication of poverty in the country.

According to him, the Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) failed because it was viewed as a project of the People's Democratic Party, rather than a project meant for the indigent in the country.

Dr. Adegbola further explained that the composition of the co-ordinating committees of the agency from the local government areas to the state and federal levels was satisfactorily done.

The NAPEP co-ordinator, however, frowned at the non-challant attitude of local government councils in the state for not providing offices within their council secretariats for the agency.

From Samson Ojo, in Lagos

He disclosed that N411 million was allocated to the agency in Lagos State alone for the remaining part of the year. He also disclosed that all abandoned federal projects in the state and those needing rehabilitation would form part of the assignment of the agency.

LG chairman supports creation of new councils

The chairman of Gusau Local Government Area of Zamfara State, Alhaji Aminu Adamu Dankangila, has described the current proposal to create new local government areas in the

country as a great idea and a welcome development.

Alhaji Dankangila while speaking to newsmen in his office in Gusau, the state capital said with the creation of additional local governments in the country, the heavy burden on the

existing local government would lessen and it would bring government closer to the people.

The chairman explained that if new local government areas are created, unemployment could be reduced as many youths would get employed in their various new local government areas.

Commenting on the achievements of his council in the last two years, Alhaji Dankangila said he has been able to put in place some important infrastructure and facilities in various locations in the local government area.

He said his council had expended over N50 million on the construction of various projects such as dispensaries, clinics, abattoirs and roads as well as making adequate arrangements for the completion of the projects in the area.



Gov Ahmed Sani

"OPC threat to nation's politics"

A renowned public affairs commentator in Kano, Malam Anas Mamman Nayaba, has described the persistent campaign of genocide by men of the Oodua People's Congress (OPC) as a threat to the nation's political interest.

He told *Daily Trust* in an

From Aliyu M. Sulaiman, in Kano

interview recently that the atrocities being perpetrated by drop OPC's called for serious concern, stressing that the Obasanjo's administration was making a costly mistake by allowing terrorists to hold the nation to ransom.

Nayaba maintained that

in the march towards a sustainable democracy, agents of criminal banditry had to be fished out to allow peace to prevail. "Without peace democracy won't flourish," he added.

He called on the Hausa-Fulani in the North to wake up from their slumber to fight for their rights under the current political dispensation.

Liquor licensing board chairman gets accolades

The Chairman of Niger State Liquor Licensing Board, Alhaji Mohammed Awal Bida, has become a darling of the state, as the populace continue to commend the actives of his board

The accolade trailed him shortly after the release of a progress report made available to media correspondents in the state.

Speaking before the journalists, Alhaji Mohammed Awal explained that since his board started work two years ago, tremendous progress had been made in the attempt to eradicate alcohol in the state, in view of the bad attitude it breeds in the society.

He further said that since

From Kashim Sule, in Minna

he began his work two years ago, drunkenness has seriously subsided and this has gladdened both muslims and christians, as the two major religions strongly condemn alcohol consumption.

He said that apart from liquor which the Board was created purposely to regulate, hotels and bars which are havens for rogues, prostitutes and shady characters, all inspired by alcohol, have been seriously curtailed.

The chairman stated that the report covered the period between January and June.

During the period, he said 473 suspects were

arrested for distribution of beer, prostitution and operation of beer houses without authority.

He said that the number of arrests made at the top three offending local governments areas that transgressed liquor laws were Mokwa 96, Kontagora, 841, and Gbaka 45.

Whenever people were arrested, he said, "special courts usually try the suspects, and convict them, if found guilty."

However, in most cases, offenders had paid fines in lieu of their sentences, as most of them were big shots in the society, he said.

Oyo Council of Chiefs' crisis deepens

From Yinka Oladoyinbo, in Ibadan

The crisis bedevilling the Oyo State Council of Chiefs over the adoption of Justice Oloko report has deepened as one of the council's six vice-chairmen, the Okare of Saki, Oba Tijani Abimbola Oyedakun, has concluded plans to polarise the Oyo-Alaafin traditional council.

Daily Trust gathered that the monarch had summoned a meeting of all Obas and Chiefs in Oke-Ogun area to his palace on Tuesday at the

instance of the secretary to the Oyo State Government, Chief Michael Koleoso, for the formation of the Oke-Ogun Council of Obas and Chiefs.

The Oyo State Traditional Rulers' Councils included all the Obas from Oke-Ogun, including the Okare of Saki under the leadership of the Alaafin of Oyo, Oba Lamidi Adeyemi.

The Oyo State Council of Obas may have been functionalised and polarised as two councils now exist in the state.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

The Company

Nigeria LNG Limited seeks to engage personnel for immediate employment in the following positions:

A. SENIOR MANPOWER DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

REF: HRD/2001/41
LOCATION: LAGOS

THE JOB

The appointee will amongst others:

- Develop and implement the Management Development Plan for the Company.
- In consultation with the Management, assist in the implementation of the Nigerianisation, Succession and Career Development Plans of the Company.
- Be the focal point for the Competence Assessment and Development programme and ensure its implementation.
- Establish effective and exciting Manpower Development interventions and best practice - sharing resources for our partner institutions locally and globally.
- Prepare all Manpower Development documentation and statistics to ensure the implementation of broadening schemes such as internal and external cross-postings, special assignments and training programmes.
- Initiate and design policies that can improve Manpower Development systems/plans.
- Design a variety of customised Manpower Development programs. Conduct and evaluate sessions for employees across the Company.

THE PERSON

The right candidate must:

- Possess a B.Sc. (Hons) degree in Social Science or Engineering obtained at a minimum of a 2nd Class Lower.
- Have a minimum of 7 years post-graduation experience out of which 3 years should have been spent on Training and Manpower Development activities.
- Must be computer literate, and possess a high of presentation, influencing, administrative and interpersonal skills.
- Membership of professional organisations such as CIPD, IPM would be an added advantage.
- Maintain high professional standards, discipline and communicate effectively.

B. HEAD, MARINE

Ref: POM/2001/43
LOCATION: BONNY

THE JOB

The appointee will amongst others:

- Establish, adapt and monitor HSE requirements for all NLNG Bonny marine operations and ensure that operations are conducted within HSE regulations at all times.
- Provide specialist marine advice during construction, commissioning and operation of new LPG jetty.
- Ensures implementation and monitoring of compliance with National and International Marine Legislation and Standards with particular regard to HSE.
- Develop and maintain relevant external contacts (Agents, Oil companies, service providers).
- Be responsible for negotiation and administration of contracts for marine services and ensures services are fit for

- purpose and of the required standard.
- Be the focal point for marine operations at Bonny terminal and its approaches; marine operations at the materials handling base and the contractual aspect of the passenger boat service between Bonny and Port Harcourt.

THE PERSON

The right candidate must:

- Possess a minimum Class 1 (Master's Foreign Going) Certificate of Competency with Gas Endorsement.
- Have a minimum of 12 years experience within the Marine Industry out of which 5 should have been service on gas/oil tankers up to and including the rank of Chief Officer.
- Be between 35 to 45 years of age.
- Possess sound practical and theoretical gas handling experience and expertise.
- Have a sound understanding of ship shore operational matters and industry standards.
- Have good working knowledge of marine contracts and operational/commercial interface.
- Experience of Terminal operations is desirable.
- Maintain high professionalism, standards, discipline and communicate effectively with all levels of internal and external parties.

C. PIPELINE SUPERVISOR

REF: POG/2001/44
LOCATION: BONNY

THE JOB

The appointee will amongst others:

- Supervise pipeline operational activities at the concentrated areas and right-of-way.
- Ensure that pipeline field operations and maintenance work are executed in a timely, expeditious and safe manner.
- Supervise local pipeline maintenance contractors.
- Liaise with other specialist in regards to Cathodic Protection Monitoring.
- Organise pipeline inspections and document results for reference and comparison.

THE PERSON

The right candidate must:

- Possess a B.Sc degree in any of the Sciences (minimum of Second Class Lower).
- Must be between 25-35 years of age.
- Have acquired a minimum of 3 years post-graduation experience in operations in the oil and gas industry.
- Be computer literate in MS Word, Excel and Power-Point
- Have good knowledge of valves and field instruments.
- Attendance of HSE Management course will be an added advantage.

D. PIPELINE ENGINEER
 REF: POG/2001/45
 LOCATION: BONNY

THE JOB

The appointee will amongst others:

- ✓ Ensure compliance with company approved HSE regulations within the Gas pipeline transmission system.
- ✓ Maintain up-to-date pipeline procedures and ensure they are in line with International and Company standards.
- ✓ Be responsible for sphering/pigging operations planning.
- ✓ Evaluate all pipeline interface requirements with 3rd parties.

THE PERSON

The right candidate must:

- Possess a B.Sc degree in Mechanical or Chemical Engineering obtained at a minimum of a 2nd Class Lower.
- Be between 30-40 years of age.
- Have acquired a minimum of 5 years post-graduation experience in pipeline design/operations maintenance in Petrochemical or Oil/Gas industry.
- Have a sound working knowledge of Project Planning Software.
- Be computer literate.
- Attendance of HSE management course would be an added advantage.

E. SHIFT SUPERVISOR
 REF: POP/2001/46
 LOCATION: BONNY

THE JOB

The appointee will amongst others:

- ✓ Ensure that HSE considerations in daily plans within the NLNG plant are understood and adhered to by shift operators.
- ✓ Assist in the development and execution of the Startup and Shutdown plans.
- ✓ Assist in the development and maintenance of Operations procedures and standards.
- ✓ Assist in the development of operational improvements and increased plant availability and capacity.
- ✓ Supervise all shift activities in the plant to ensure safe plant conditions at all times.
- ✓ Assist Shift Superintendents in ensuring that systems are in place and exercises carried out for effective emergency response.
- ✓ Coordinate process and maintenance activities.

THE PERSON

The right candidate must:

- Possess a HND in Petrochemical, Mechanical, or Chemical Engineering obtained at a minimum of Lower Credit.
- Be between 30-45 years of age.
- Have acquired a minimum of 5 years post-graduation experience in the Petrochemical or Oil/Gas industry as a Senior Operator.
- Have a good communication and computing skills.
- Have ability to analyse problems.

F. JOB INSTRUCTOR
 REF: POP/2001/47
 LOCATION: BONNY

THE JOB

The appointee will amongst others:

- ✓ Train and develop Shift Operators.
- ✓ Provide input to the development of the training schedules for the Shift Operators.
- ✓ Ensure implementation of the agreed training schedule for Operators.
- ✓ Ensure that operations procedures for the relevant tasks are understood and followed by the Shift Operators.

THE PERSON

The right candidate must:

- Possess a HND in Petrochemical, Mechanical or Chemical Engineering obtained at a minimum of Lower Credit.
- Be between 30-45 years of age.
- Have acquired a minimum of 5 years post-graduation experience in the Petrochemical or Oil/Gas industry as Senior operator.
- Have good communication and computing skills.
- Have ability to analyse problems.

METHOD OF APPLYING

Interested applicants should apply to the:

Personnel Manager Nigeria LNG Limited C&C Building Plot 1684, Sanusi Fafunwa St Victoria Island P.M.B. 12774 Marina-Lagos Nigeria.	Personnel Manager Nigeria LNG Limited Amadi Creek Plant Complex Off Eastern Bye-Pass Port Harcourt Rivers State.	Personnel Manager Nigeria LNG Limited Plant Complex Bonny Island Rivers State.	Personnel Manager Nigeria LNG Limited House 20 Shell Trustees Estate Maitama Abuja.
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Forwarding their curriculum vitae (CV) together with photocopies of their credentials attached, to reach the addressee within two weeks of the publication of this advertisement, quoting the references of the position applied for at the top-left side of the envelope. Only short-listed applications will be acknowledged.





HABITAT (Housing and Environment)



FG establishes nursery belt in Gboko

The Federal Ministry of Environment is poised to combat deforestation in Benue State with the establishment soon of a standard Seedling Nursery in Gboko.

Minister of Environment, Alhaji Mohammed Kabir Sa'id, said in Makurdi that approval had already been given for the nursery which would produce one million seedlings annually for distribution to communities free of charge.

He explained that the ministry's desertification control programme has been extended to Benue State because deforestation had reduced vegetation cover in the state leading to desert-like conditions.

"It is my candid opinion that there is synergy between poverty and environmental degradation. The major objective of the Federal Ministry of Environment in

Stories by Tashikalmah Hallah

this regard is to develop strategies and programmes for sound and sustainable management of the environment by the most vulnerable groups particularly women and children," he said.

Accordingly, he said, the ministry has given priority activities designed to focus on the development for all stricken areas, integrated strategies and programmes that will ensure sound and sustainable management of the environment, resource mobilisation poverty eradication and income generation.

With specific reference to Benue State, he said, the Ministry of Environment has decided to tackle the problem of poverty through the promotion of environmentally sustainable income-generating activities.

Other measures being put in place by the ministry to address poverty and environmental degradation include rehabilitating degraded resources and promoting the sustainable use of such resources by impoverished areas and groups.

"The micro watershed programme which is about to commence is one of the programmes and I am happy



Alhaji Muhammed Sa'id

to state that Benue State is one of the six beneficiary States in the country," he said.

On flooding and erosion in the state, the minister said: I understand that flood and erosion are the two environmental problems, confronting this dynamic state, arising from both natural and man-made factors, especially with the hazard regulation of Lagdo Dam in the Cameroun Republic.

"From reports reaching me, over 30 percent of the most productive part of the state is affected each year resulting in annual migration of people and animals."

This situation is unacceptable, he declared, adding: "We assure you that we would endeavour to investigate and access the situation with a view to providing permanent solution to alleviate the suffering," he concluded.

You and the environment



By Dr. Sani Mashi

Structure of a proposed national drought and desertification agency

In my previous write-up on this column, I have justifiably established that we need in Nigeria a well-integrated drought and desertification strategy, to be implemented by a federal parastatal. This is particularly needed to promote a shift of emphasis from our traditionally post-disaster and ad-hoc approach, to a pre-disaster preparedness approach. We also need to develop early warning systems so that we can predict before hand the occurrence of a problem. In this regard, we would be able to integrate planning against disasters in our planning processes, develop effective coping strategies and employing as many possible options as are available in solving the problems. Doing all these necessarily implies that a better co-ordination is required linking different levels of government, stakeholders, non-governmental and community-based organisations, and all others with stakes in resource management in the affected region: The task of accomplishing these is to be vested on a federal agency to be called National Drought and Desertification Agency (NDDA).

The NDDA is to be an agency of the federal ministry of environment. It is to be headquartered in one of the affected states, but with state offices in the other affected states of Kebbi, Sokoto, Zamfara, Katsina, Kano, Jigawa, Bauchi, Yobe and Borno. Already, some well-developed facilities exist at Kano where is located the now-collapsing Afforestation Programme Co-ordination Unit (APCU). APCU is one of the ad-hoc, un-systematised approaches of desertification and drought control in the country. Since the dollar component upon which the project is based dried-up, it has now become a near moribund. Its facilities can be taken over by NDDA and its functions absorbed by it.

The NDDA is to have five departments/units. The first is administration and finance, which shall be responsible for the day-to-day running of affairs of the agency. Since all parastatals have such a department, no elaborate discussion of its structure is necessary here. The second department is to be called the monitoring unit. This unit will have a leading role in providing timely and accurate information on the status of drought and desertification. In particular, specialists with varied specialisation including socio-economics, environmental sciences, engineering, surveying, remote sensing, geographic information system, computer science, climatology, soil science, agronomy. Physical planning and related disciplines are to constitute the bulk of the staff strength of this department. They should be adequately equipped to be able to report, analyse and synthesise information on environmental conditions necessarily important in mitigating drought and desertification effects. The third department is to be called Impact Assessment Unit. This unit should be made up of key personnel with expertise and experience that are required in gathering and analysing data on the direct and indirect effects of droughts and gather and analyse data on real-time situation of resources (water, land, crops, livestock etc) in the affected areas. On the basis of such data, areas for short and long-term rehabilitation and intervention could be identified, and appropriate intervention required outlined. The fourth department is to be called response task force unit whose primary role is to respond to the problems of drought and desertification in a way to alleviate their impacts. It should particularly take inventory of all forms of assistance available from all sources (state, federal local and outside) and relate them with what is required based on real-time situation reports from the affected areas. On this basis, the unit could be in a position to address short-term emergency situations and long-term mitigation measures required to reduce the vulnerability of the affected people. In particular, this department should be in contact with relief-providing agencies such as the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and Relief Agencies of Governments of the affected states. The fifth department is to be called planning and mitigation unit. This unit should have as its primary responsibility the development and implementation of plans aimed at long-term solutions particularly co-ordinate all existing programmes (such as afforestation programmes of states and federal governments), and new ones (such as the N15 billion shelterbelt programme just launched) related to desertification and drought controls. In this respect, all existing agencies in-charge of implementing programmes aimed at drought and desertification controls can be converted into this department.

Outlined above is a brief idea I do have on what is to be the most appropriate strategy of confronting the enormous problems the people of northern Nigeria face, as they continue to live in the midst of drought and desertification. A possible issue that may be raised here is why must there be a whole parastatal to take care of the drought and desertification areas of Nigeria, when such areas neither have oil, nor are they contributing any significant proportion to Nigeria's foreign earning and the GDP. In the first place, one needs to consider that over a historical scale, these areas have contributed resources towards national development in a proportion that we probably have never cared to quantify. But at least we all know how much impact revenue from sales of cotton, groundnut, hides and skins made on the national economy before the discovery of oil. It is probably because of the over-exploitation of resources of such areas in those times that we now have desertification problems in alarming situation in those areas. Secondly, we are part of the country with supposedly equal importance as others. Thus, if others could have a parastatal established to cater for these problems, we equally could have ours since we have committed no offence against the country as to deserve a permanent neglect. Third, the drought and desertification affected areas constitute about 40 percent of the country's landmass, and produce over 60 percent of its grain and livestock requirements. Thus, by allowing the areas to continue dying, we are deliberately killing the country. The earlier the parastatal is established the better.

Dr Sani A. Mashi, Department of Geography, University of Abuja.

Minister laments desert encroachment

The issue of desertification is one of the major environmental threats facing the northern states of this country, especially those lying in the area north of the latitude eleven degree north.

"It is estimated that the country is currently losing about 350,000 square metres of its landmass annually to the advancing deserts in eleven states in the north.

"It is also a known fact that access roads, farmlands and entire villages have disappeared under sand-dunes."

These were the words of Alhaji Muhammad Kabir Sa'id minister environment while lamenting the effects of

desertification and its antecedent on the people of the north to *Daily Trust*.

According to the minister, in most of the states in the core north, an estimated 50 percent to 70 percent of land is vulnerable to wind erosion.

Implying that the livelihood of over 40 million Nigerians in the affected states is threatened by the phenomena, adding that "desertification is therefore a serious disaster in Nigeria that must be halted immediately to ensure sustainable development."

However, the minister explained that President Olusegun Obasanjo had approved the establishment of a

Green Belt across the northern part of the country spanning a length of the 1,500km and a width of one kilometre through Borno, Yobe, Jigawa, Kano, Zamfara, Sokoto and Kebbi States.

This massive forest wall, he said, will serve as a wedge against the southward spread of the desert, as it involves the planting of over 150 million trees covering about 150,000 hectares.

The ministry of environment, he explained, have already started implementing the programme by approving the establishment of 50 standard nursery centres in severe and moderately desertification-prone

states at the cost of N403million and each of the nursery centres is capable of producing one million seedlings annually, he added.

"The approach we are now adopting in attending to environmental problems is quite different from what it used to be.

"You can see that the government is now rigorously as attending to these issues, because as you have rightly said it is fast encroaching from the north to the south, at an alarming rate.

"You go to all the local government in the frontline states, there is one project on that issue, maybe you are not investigative that is why you don't know them," he said.

Reducing carbon emissions level in Nigerian cities

Over the years, the earth's atmosphere has been subjected to a wide range of natural and human pollutants, including smoke from forests fire, wind-blown dusts, materials from volcanic activity and natural gaseous emissions.

Also, some environmentally unfriendly human activities have, for decades, adversely affected and contributed a vast cocktail of pollutants into the atmosphere as well as contributed risks to human health.

Such unwholesome human actions include the emissions into the atmosphere of oxides of sulphur and nitrogen, particulate matter, hydrocarbons, lead as well as other variety of hazardous chemicals.

Globally, about 110 million tones of sulphur oxides are said to have been vented into the atmosphere in

1980 alone. This was accompanied by 59 million tonnes of nitrogen-based oxides, 194 million tonnes of carbon dioxide and 40 million tonnes of ammonia, according to studies.

Studies also show that member states of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) account for more than half of the World's atmospheric pollution level, the level of which is still rising continually.

Experts say most air pollutants penetrate the human system through breathing. Consequently, they say, the respiratory tract is the organ that suffers the damage most. Reports say Germany is reported to have the highest air pollution rate in the world, with over 40 percent of the population suffering from chronic breathing difficulties. Although the World Health

Organisation (WHO) has, as far back as 1973, introduced a global programme designed to regulate air quality worldwide, the issue of air pollution and the need to protect human health through a legislation to reduce atmospheric pollution has been a new issue in most of the developing countries, including Nigeria.

The political importance of air pollution became evident when it was identified as a trans-boundary problem whose effective control will require international co-operation. In political terms, its significance was re-emphasised when plans to reduce carbon emission from motor vehicles by 70 per cent by the year 2010 create serious furor among the developed nations, including the United States, the major culprit.

However, despite the global initiative by WHO, statistics show that more than

one billion people around the world are now regularly breathing air so polluted that it breaches internationally recognised safety limits.

In Athens, on a heavily polluted days, death rates increase sixfold. Breathing the air in Bombay, India is equivalent to smoking 10 stick of cigarettes, reports say. But the effect of air pollution is not limited to human health alone as experts say air pollution also hampers agricultural productivity and damages forests, water, natural resources and buildings.

Although estimates on annual damages resulting from air pollution are not handy globally, an OECD report indicated that the damage resulting from air pollution worldwide amounted to one percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in France and two percent of GDP in Netherlands.

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THE CHAIRMAN, NORTHERN COMMUNITY RIVERS STATE, HEARTILY CONGRATULATES OUR ESTEEMED MOTHER AND SISTER DR. (MRS.) BOLERE ELIZABETH KETEBU NWOKEAFOR ON HER ELECTION AS THE PRESIDENT GENERAL, NATIONAL, COUNCIL OF WOMEN SOCIETIES (NCWS)

Your Election is certainly a bold statement in your long quest to serve humanity.



ALH. ALI KWANDE
*The Chairman Northern Community
Rivers State*



MRS. KETEBU-NWOKRAFOR
President NCWS

We are praying the Almighty God to protect and keep you on course

LONG LIVE NORTHERN COMMUNITY, RIVERS STATE!

LONG LIVE THE GOVERNMENT OF RIVERS STATE!!

LONG LIVE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA!!!

ALH. ALI KWANDE
Chairman, Northern Community, Rivers State
49, Bonny Street, PHC.
Tel: 084-231487

Ilorin Descendant Progressive Union (IDPU)



No Place for a Yoruba Oba in Ilorin Emirate

The Ilorin Descendants Progressive Union, IDPU deems it fit to once again make some clarification on some newspaper reports on Ilorin, its people and the Emirate institution with a view to correcting the erroneous impression being created by the moribund Odua Peoples Congress, OPC and its allies.

For the avoidance of doubt, let the whole world be rightly informed that there is no tension whatsoever in Ilorin particularly with regards to the position of our revered Emir. The reported tension is only the figment of the imagination of the OPC and its allies existing, of course, only on the pages of some South West dailies.

We also want to place on record that the concept of a foreigner ruling over the people of Ilorin is a serious misconception, misinformation and above all, a mischievous attempt to attract sympathy and relevance to a group (OPC) that has lost focus and relevance in the present scheme of things. Our Emir, Alhaji Ibrahim Sulu Gambari is a bonafide indigene of Ilorin who rightly qualifies to occupy that exalted office.

THE PEOPLE OF ILORIN

The people of Ilorin are no doubt unique in the Nigerian history. This uniqueness is derived from the fact that people from varied and diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds came together to found what is known today as Ilorin. These different ethnic groups include Fulanis, Nupes, Barubas, Gobirawas, Kanuris, Kemberis and Gwaris, among others. In spite of their different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, the people were bounded and are still bound together by Islam, culminating in the emergence of a unique culture, for the people.

Let us repeat for the sake of emphasis that the unifying factor among the diverse peoples who established Ilorin is Islam. Their acceptance of the emirate system was willingly, while Yoruba was adopted as lingua franca for the ease of communication among the different people that make up the emirate. These circumstances have given us our unique institutions.

The fact that we have adopted Yoruba as our lingua franca does not make us Yoruba people, in fact there is a clear distinction between Yoruba people and Yoruba speaking people. For instance, the fact that various ethnic groups in America have adopted English as their lingua franca does not make Americans English men.

The IDPU urges the OPC and its patrons to go into serious historical research to enable them analyse correctly, some of the peculiarities of our history so as to save them from their romantic illusion of installing a Yoruba Oba for Ilorin.

Nothing can be more insulting than the thought of installing a Yoruba Oba for the people of Ilorin or dragging them to South West. The OPC should be told that Ilorin has never belonged to the South West, we don't pray to belong and we shall never belong, hence the gulf of difference between our culture and theirs. Any attempt therefore to merge Ilorin with the Yoruba people of the South West will be vehemently resisted.

We would want the OPC and the entire world to know that Ilorin is outside the enclave the OPC claims to be protecting. We equally want to remind them that Ilorin has never been conquered in history by any aggressor and will never be conquered. Bi'iznillahi.

Let the OPC be reminded that various aggressions against Ilorin have ended in humiliating and disastrous defeats as well as calamities for the aggressors. The OPC may need to go and find out what befell our aggressors in the wars of Ogidi, Ogele, Mugba Mugba, Kanla and Eleduwe. More importantly, the OPC should not forget so soon, the calamity that befell their members last year during their abortive invasion of Ilorin to install a Yoruba Oba.

They are warned that another attempt will definitely bring them greater calamities. This is not an empty threat, we mean it.

Although Ilorin is generally regarded as the home of peace and its people are peace loving, this should not be misconstrued as weakness on the part of the people to ward off decisively any attempt to unduly dabble into their affairs.

Once again, the OPC should be warned that what our forefathers used to fight and won previous wars against their predecessors is still very much in our possession. This in essence implies that whatever power the OPC thinks it has will definitely be a mismatch to our superior war machine.

Finally, let me remind the OPC and its allies in the South West that history is the record of what has happened not what they wished had happened nor what a theory or ideology says should happen. If the OPC and its sympathizers carefully study the history of Ilorin, they would be properly educated to enable them assess rightly, our beliefs, our past and present as well as project into the future.

Our position is clear and unequivocal. We wanted the emirate institution and we have it.

We have our Emir who is the traditional head of all the different ethnic groups in the emirate. A Yoruba Oba has no place in our history and we will not have one.

(Bi'iznillahi)

Alhaji Abdullahi Attandu, National President, IDPU

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Our client a commercial bank with over 25 branches in the country desires to recruit the following positions to fill the existing vacancies.

Chief Inspector – CI001

The job holder will among others.

- Develop internal control policies and procedures
- Ensure that professional standards and ethics are adhered to in the discharge of duties
- Ensure that each department /branch complies with laid down procedures
- Be responsible for the general coordination and supervision of the department.

Desired candidates should have a high level analytical and investigative skills, very good inter personal relations and good knowledge of products and services in the banking industry.

Candidates should possess the following qualifications:

- A good first Degree in Accounting, Banking and Finance and or any Finance related Discipline
- Professional qualification in Accounting or Banking and Finance
- 10 years post qualification experience in a banking environment covering at least three critical functional areas.
- Computer Audit experience will be a strong advantage

Candidates who are present below Manager level positions are not likely to qualify

Internal Auditors – CI002

Preferred candidates should possess the following qualifications:

- A good first degree in Accounting, Banking and Finance or any finance related discipline
- Professional qualification in Accounting or Banking and Finance
- 5 years post qualification experience in a banking environment covering at least two critical functional areas
- Computer audit experience will be a strong advantage

In addition, candidates should have a good knowledge of banking products and services and be between 30 and 35 years.

IT Personal – IT001

Preferred candidates should possess the following qualifications:

- A good first degree in Engineering or Computer Science
- A well above average knowledge of modern trends and development in the IT industry
- 3 years post qualification experience in IT department of a commercial bank or consulting firm

Secretaries – Sec 001

Desired candidates should possess the following qualifications

- HND Secretarial Administration or a good first degree plus Secretariat Training
- Good working knowledge of basic computer applications
- 3-5 years post qualification experience in a banking environment

Candidates should be between 25 and 30 years.

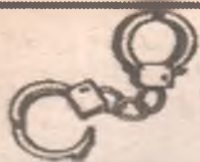
Interested candidates should send their applications and detailed resumes to:

The Principal Partner

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Crime & Punishment



Thieves raid PTF estate in Abuja

The residents of the defunct Petroleum (Special) Trust Fund (PTF) estate in Wuse district, Abuja recently woke up to discover that they were paid a costly visit by men of the underworld.

According to some residents in the estate, the thieves cannibalised most cars parked in the estate, paying particular attention to Mercedes Benz models and removing the head lamps and engine parts.

Malam Aliyu Musa a resident, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Tuesday that "most of us woke up this morning to realise that many cars parked by the residents were cannibalised," Musa said.

He also said that residents were wondering how the thieves managed to gain

access to the estate in spite of the fact that security men were on duty.

Some residents however, said they suspected "foul play," insisting that it was difficult for ordinary thieves to have access and enough time to cannibalise the cars undisturbed.

"This has never happened even at a time when no uniformed security guards were manning the gate and patrolling the estate," a resident said.



Dika Bwala, FCT Police Boss

Driver jailed for offering bribe

An Abuja Upper Area Court, has sentenced a middle-aged driver, Adebayo, to one year imprisonment with an option of N5,000 fine for offering a N290 gratification to a police officer.

The prosecuting police officer, Mr. Bukar Ijafu, told the court that the convict, on August 2, beat the traffic light opposite Wuse Market, Abuja and was arrested by a traffic warden, Mr. Adeka Danjuma.

The convict, who earlier pleaded not guilty to the charge, later changed his

plea.

Counsel to the accused, Mr. Anthony Agbonlahor, appealed to the court to be lenient with his client, saying that he had a family of two wives and eight children.

Agbonlahor said that the difficult situation in the country had made his client to convert his private vehicle to a commercial one.

The presiding judge, Malam Aliyu Abdulrahman, commended the police for helping the Federal Government to fight corruption.

Police arrest wanted criminal in Zaria

A notorious criminal simply called Salmanu, who has been on the list of wanted persons of the police for the past 14 months, has been arrested by the police in Zaria, Kaduna State, the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports.

Confirming the arrest to NAN in Zaria, the Assistant Commissioner of Police in charge of Zaria, Alhaji Suleiman Lawal, said the suspect has already made useful statements to the police.

He said already, four members of dare-devil gang headed by the suspect, have been apprehended while efforts are on to arrest the remaining members.

The police boss said a member of the gang, called bashir, who has initially refused to cooperate with police, has changed his mind following the arrest of Salmanu.

Lawal stated that the residents of Tudun Wada, Gyallesu, Tudun Jukun and

Zaria city had, "at various times, been attacked by these notorious criminals.

APP crisis: govt officials quizzed over assassination attempt

From Abdul Laro, in Ilorin

Some key officials in government have been quizzed over the assassination attempt on two members of the factionalised All Peoples Party in Kwara State. Daily Trust learnt at the recently

The key officials, (names withheld) were according to sources close to government, interrogated by the state security service headquarters, in Ilorin on Friday following the brutal attempt on the life of former female Commissioner of Education and the immediate past chairman of Edu Local Government Council, Hajiya Nimota Ibrahim and Mr. James Kolo respectively.

The two APP chieftains were attacked by four gunmen at Hajiya Ibrahim's private residence at Kulende quarters, Ilorin, the state capital.

The attack on Hajiya

Ibrahim came barely 24 hours after addressing a press conference where she said further attack on their group would be resisted to the last man.

However, the report of the attack appears to have jolted the people in the corridors of power with shock being expressed and the motive of the attack unknown.

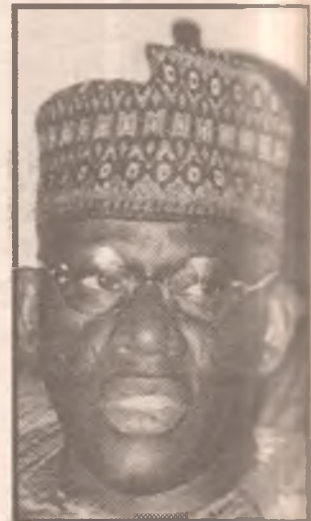
Daily Trust learnt that the state chief executive was visibly shaken and had to cancel some major trips planned for the weekend, while security operatives are working round the clock to unravel the motive and the brains behind the Thursday night attack.

It would be recalled that during the second anniversary of civil rule in the state, governor Lawal

had accused the former female commissioner of peddling rumours to the effect that he planned to remove the Emir of Ilorin, Alhaji Ibrahim Sulu Gambari.

The governor had warned that the former commissioner should be careful or "she will be looking for self-made problems."

Governor Lawal also denied the said rumour saying "he will never in his time remove or dethrone any traditional ruler and neither will it happen after his tenure."



Gov. Lawal

Bizman drags police commissioner, two others to court

The commissioner of police Lagos State, the Divisional Police Officer (DPO), Area 'F', Ikeja and one ASP, London Aliba from the General Investigating Department (G.I.D.) Ikeja have been dragged before a Lagos Chief Magistrate Court, by a Lagos based businessman Mr. Lanre Aliu.

In a 28 paragraph affidavit sworn to by the applicant Mr. Lanre Aliu in support of a motion on notice, he asked the court to make an order releasing Civic Honda Accord (2.0) Saloon with Reg. No. BW322LSR to him.

He stated that he was accosted at the Ikeja Airport Hotel, Lagos on February 6, 2000 by his erstwhile classmate in Kaduna Polytechnic one Abdulazeez

Bello who alleged that he (Lanre Aliu) duped him.

The applicant stated further that he had to abandon his Honda Accord car as a result of threat of being taken to an Army Barracks at gun point.

He stated that "at the time I ran away for my life from my car with my car key, the roof of the car was opened as well as the two sides glasses are still open today because the car is automatic."

According to the applicant, the car was taken to Ikeja police station adding that, "I reported twice to the police station and demanded for the release of my car but the police refused saying they were waiting for the complainant who has not shown up till today, 16 months after the car was detained."

The applicant claimed that when he approached the police for the release of the car, they sought on harassing him and threatening to detain him.

On the strength of this the lawyer to the applicant Kenneth Aigbe filed motion seeking the release of the car unconditionally in the interest of justice.

At the resumed hearing, the court granted leave to the applicant to move his motion. While arguing the motion on notice, Kenneth Aigbe Esq. told the court that the respondents have been served but that they have filed no reply.

According to the lawyer, they have no defence and that the respondents have admitted the applicants claims since the proof of service was served on them by the court bailiff.

In her decision, Chief Magistrate Ayo Odugbesen adjourned ruling till Friday August 10, 2001.

Fake lawyer arrested

From Adelanwa Bamgboye, in Lagos

A fake lawyer who claimed to be Sunday O. Peters has been arrested at a Lagos Chief Magistrate Court sitting at Ikeja.

According to eyewitness account, the fake lawyer had earlier in the day announced his appearance before the Ikeja Chief Magistrate Court No. 4 in a criminal matter pending before the court. Some lawyers accosted him after the proceedings to demand his identity.

He insisted that he is a qualified lawyer, a barrister and an advocate of the

Supreme Court. Four lawyers including two ex-scribe of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) Mers Joe Egbunbo and Paul Agbo cross examined him.

Asked when and where he studied, the fake lawyer claimed that he read law at the University of Ibadan (U.I.) in 1991 but as at that date, (U.I.) had not started offering law.

The fake lawyer also softened when he was asked to give the name of the Director-General (DG) of the Nigeria Law School as at the time he claimed to have been called to the bar in 1991.



Kwara State Commissioner of Police, Mr. Ghazali Lawal (centre) holds aloft a 24 round (G3 model) automatic self loading military rifle (SLR) recovered from some hoodlums in Ilorin during a press briefing recently. Note that the bolt of the Gun has been cut off for easy carriage and concealing.

Abuja News

Family escapes death in collapsed building

By Austine Odo

A family of five narrowly escaped death Sunday when their house collapsed after several hours of rainfall in Karimo, an Abuja suburb.

Sympathisers helped to pull out the belongings of the Rahim family after the building collapsed during the morning downpour. No member of the family was injured, but the family was obviously confused on where to go from there.

Mrs. Rahim was full of praises to God that the incident took place during the day. Though apparently perturbed, she was philosophical at the sight of her scattered belongings, including a pot of boiled rice, which was overturned by the falling walls. She clutched tenaciously to her seven month old baby who wept as she moved her things out of the wreck.

"Praised be to God for His kindness, it would have been a different story had this happened at night. I always say the Lord loves me. Infact,

I don't know how to thank Him," she said as neighbours helped in packing their property.

Her husband was not as pleased, as he kept asking where to move his family.

"At times like this, I feel eternity, I just lost my father, I spent a lot to go home and come back, and here I am again, in a wrecked building," he lamented, though not particularly talking to *Daily Trust*. As the packing progressed, their four year old daughter kept crying for food; "Mama, mama, give me rice, I wan eat rice," she cried.

Neighbours who helped to salvage the property were seen discussing how to provide an immediate accommodation for the family. It was not immediately concluded, where to resettle them.

Daily Trust discovered that the collapsed building was built of mud, and not cement blocks as most modern buildings are. The Rahims' house is one of the

many such buildings scattered around in Abuja's squatter settlements. The planlessness and substandard nature of such settlements and the danger they pose to residents have continued to give government a serious cause for concern.

President Olusegun Obasanjo recently instructed the Federal Capital Development Authority to pull down illegal structures and illegal settlements in the FCT. Since then however, residents of such places have been calling on government to consider alternative places for them before the demolition starts. They believe that government did not consider the poor and under privileged in the Abuja master plan, leading to the concentration of development in elitist settlements like Maitama, Asokoro and Wuse.

The settlers say failure to provide alternative accommodation before demolition will lead to a catastrophe and social malady.

The Abuja chapter chairman of the Nigeria Labour Congress, Comrade

Mohammad Zubairu, in a recent meeting with the FCT Minister, Engr. Mohammed Abba-Gana, appealed for a humane handling of the demolition exercise, to save many civil servants and other less endowed Nigerians who live in such settlements, the agony of homelessness.



President Olusegun Obasanjo.

Gurara to end Abuja water problem - Shagari

The perennial water shortage in Abuja will soon end, following government's renewed initiative to complete the Gurara water transfer project.

The project, which is meant to boost water supply to the FCT and environs through the transfer of water from Gurara River in Kaduna State to the lower Usuma Dam, is to gulp N41 billion.

According to the Water Resources Minister, Alhaji Mukhtari Shehu Shagari who paid a surprise visit to the project site yesterday, the project would generate 21 megawatts of electricity, which will be of immense benefit to local communities and the FCT.

The visit which was the second in a month, was to make an on the spot assessment on progress of the work done so far and to impress on the

contractors to increase the pace of work.

During the inspection, the Minister disclosed that his ministry would eventually include irrigation schemes for the benefit of the local communities who would thereby be engaged in all year round farming.

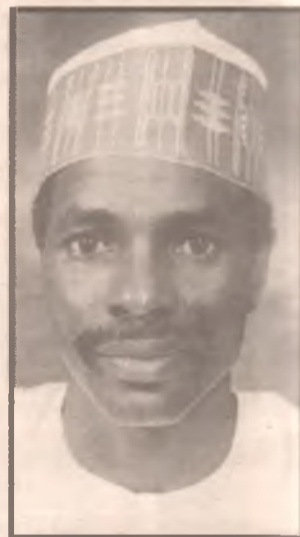
Speaking on the rural communities, Alhaji Shagari promised adequate compensation for all those who would be adversely affected by the project.

The Minister specifically directed the contractors to employ local people from the area as well as engage qualified Nigerian engineers who must benefit from the experience.

At the project site of SCC Nig. Ltd, which was contracted to lay the 75km pipe from the Gurara Dam to the FCT, Alhaji Shagari impressed upon the contractors, the need to complete the project on schedule.

The Minister concluded his working visit with a stop-over at the Lower Usuma Dam which will be the recipient of the water transferred from Gurara, stressing the need to complete the project on schedule so that the growing population of the FCT and its environs would be served with water for the next 50 years.

The project, which is being handled by Salini and SCC, is expected to be completed in 2003.



Alhaji Mukhtari Shehu Shagari, Water Resources Minister.

American company to build low cost houses in Abuja

A United States company, which specialises in building standard low cost houses is to assist the Federal Government in the construction of housing units in Abuja, the nation's capital.

The project which is a strategy aimed at reducing the acute accommodation problems in the FCT, is soon to be flagged off by President Olusegun Obasanjo with an initial take-off of 5,000 units, FCT Minister, Engr. Mohammed Abba-Gana has said.

Similarly, the Abuja Chamber of Commerce, Mines and Agriculture (ABUCCIMA) will also build 10,000 housing units to complement Federal Government's effort in this regard.

ABUCCIMA promised to build the 10,000 units to serve the "urgent need" to inject new housing units in the FCT to help ameliorate the sufferings of Abuja residents.

According to ABUCCIMA President, Mr. Samuel Ogundare, who led executive officers of the chamber to the FCT minister, Engr. Abba-Gana at the weekend, the situation

whereby only the Federal Government shouldered the responsibility of housing in the FCT has to change.

"We all know that up till now, the Federal Government had shouldered the greater proportion of this responsibility. This position is what our dream project hopes to change," Mr. Ogundare said.

According to the chamber president, investing in housing in the FCT, apart from being a social responsibility offers good returns.

He said the private sector had a duty to get involved in housing in the FCT, and ABUCCIMA in turn, had a duty to lead the way.

The FCT Minister, in his response, praised the chamber for the initiative and promised to hold discussions with its members on the matter. He also urged the chamber to help in developing other sectors like mass transportation, health care, education and tourism.

Retrenchment underway in FHA

Over half the number of workers at the Federal Housing Authority (FHA), may soon lose their jobs.

Speaking with newsmen in Abuja on Tuesday, the Managing Director, FHA, Engr. Ibrahim Mustapha, said the action had become necessary since government was going to hands off the agency when it becomes commercialised.

He said since the Authority is going to be commercialised, it is not possible for it to accommodate unresourceful

staff, adding that some of the staff, are not useful to the authority.

Mustapha also maintained that the retrenchment exercise would also enable the Authority to refocus and redefine its duties to yield democratic dividends to the people.

He stated that the survival of the FHA purely depends on the patronage of the public, noting that its major obligation is to make sure that those who invested their money got the desired benefits.

The FHA chief executive

further disclosed that in the next two weeks, work would commence on the rebuilding of the Federal Housing Estate in Lugbe, a project he described as the worst among FHA projects in Abuja.

He said that more than half of the FHA structures in Lugbe would be demolished because of their bad condition.

Commenting on the allegation of witch-hunting of staff who were close to the former managing director by recommending them to be retrenched, he said he had no enemy in FHA.



The Permanent Secretary, Establishment and Pensions, Office of Head of Service of the Federation, Dr. Aboki Zhama (left)...

FCT residents speak on transportation problem

Residents of the Federal Capital Territory have appealed to transport authorities in Abuja to synchronise traffic light signals in the city.

According to the residents who spoke to *Daily Trust* in separate exclusive interviews in Abuja yesterday, traffic lights in the city's junctions should be linked to a master controller.

Mrs. Evelyn Okafor, a civil servant in Garki, observed that careless drivers are not obeying the traffic control signals, and as a result, many accidents are recorded in the city. She said the synchronisation of the city's traffic light junctions would aid smooth flow of traffic from one point to the other, thereby helping traffic controllers to effectively check erring drivers.

Also speaking, Mr. Ephraim Ogbeide, a trader in

deployment of more traffic controllers to major junctions within the city.

Also speaking to *Daily Trust* on ways to improve transportation within Abuja, Mr. James Tar, a businessman, said the only way government could tackle the transport crisis in the FCT is to establish a new viable transport system or boost Abuja Urban Mass Transport Company (AUMTCO) to checkmate the activities of the privately owned commercial vehicles.

He said hikes in transport fare are caused by some groups of misguided people to disrupt the activities of the present government.

Alhaji Sule Haruna, an employee of the Ministry of Federal Capital Territory (MFCT) said, the rehabilitation of AUMTCO is the only answer

He maintained that government owed the public a responsibility of catering for them and that the only way to do it is to provide all the needed social amenities, including an effective and efficient transport system.





SPORTS



Johnson faults election of governors into associations

Former Nigeria Amateur Boxing Association chairman, David Johnson, has faulted the election of state governors as chairmen of some sports association.

Johnson, who took a critical look at the new development in the sports circle submitted that the coming in of these states chief executives would do more harm than good to the various associations they are serving.

The former boxer noted that it would be practically impossible for a state governor to function effectively as the head of a small unit like

From Babs Oyetero, in Lagos

a sports association.

The Plateau State born sports administrator argued that if the state governors are truly inclined to sports development they would have sports in their respective states.

"Their coming in may spell doom for the associations as these governor may not contribute much to the success of these associations.

It will be recalled that Johnson presided over the affairs of NABA for four years and his tenure witnessed a lot of internal crisis, which really affected the progress of the association.

Thiam triumphs in 400m

Senegal's Amy Mbacke Thiam won a thrilling women's 400m final at the World Championships in Edmonton.

Thiam pipped Jamaica's Lorraine Fenton to the line by two hundredths of a second in a time of 49.86 seconds with Mexico's Ana Guevara taking third in 49.97.

Race favourite Grit Breuer of Germany looked in contention coming into the final 200m, but she failed to find her famous kick as the leading trio broke away.

Guevara headed the pack down the final 50, before Thiam and Fenton produced a battle royale in one of the most exciting finals of the championships.

Finidi set for Ipswich move

English Premiership side, Ipswich Town look set to sign Real Mallorca star Finidi George after the clubs resolved the £3.5m payment of the transfer fee.

The Spanish club delayed the move earlier on Tuesday because they had not received evidence that the Premiership side had the funds to finance the move for the Nigerian international.

Mallorca club president Mateo Alemany confirmed on Real Mallorca website www.marea.os that the issue had been settled.

The winger will now be withdrawn from the Mallorca squad for Wednesday's Champions League qualifier against Hadjuk Split in Croatia.



Ukraine's Zhanna Pintusevich-Block, left, beats Marion Jones, of the United States, as Jones stumbles over the line in the women's 100-meter final on Monday during the World Track & Field Championships at Commonwealth Stadium in Edmonton, Alberta.



Finidi

Gerrard commits to Liverpool

Steven Gerrard has given Liverpool a boost in the build-up to the season by pledging his long-term future to the club.

The England international midfielder told the News of the World: "I don't

Finidi has already agreed personal terms and passed a medical at Portman Road.

He will be eligible to take part in Ipswich's UEFA Cup campaign.

Kanu drops Arsenal hint

Super Eagles and Arsenal striker Nwankwo Kanu has warned the club he will leave unless he plays more first team games.

Kanu made 24 starts last season when he spent most of the time on the bench and the lanky forward is not prepared

to suffer the same treatment again this term.

"I deserve a place in the first team at Arsenal," said the former African Player of the Year.

"One thing I'm sure of is that I will not want to sit on the bench like last season," he added.

Kanu arrived at Highbury from Inter Milan in a £4.5m deal and says he could return to the Italian club if his fortunes do not improve at Arsenal.

"Inter have been asking after me but nothing is concrete yet," he said.

"I still have a lot of admirers at Inter particularly club president Moratti, who is like a father to me.

"However, there is no need for me to rush out. With me, anything is possible and I could be playing for Inter again," he concluded.

Kanu has also been linked to Greek side Olympiakos and Glasgow Rangers during the summer.

Corporate bodies threaten to pull out of sports associations

Government policy for private sector participation in sports sponsorship may be thwarted by the threat by multinational corporations to withdraw their membership from the 28 national sports associations.

The government had in pursuance of its new policy for private sector sponsorship

of sports nominated these corporations into the boards of each of the 28 national associations.

But when elections into these boards were conducted last week, these multinational corporations were allegedly subjected to shabby treatment and ridicule a development that compelled them to recon-

sider the efficacy of their membership of the boards.

Besides, some corporations which had presented candidates for election as chairmen of their respective associations were rebuffed through electoral manipulation which they argued ran at variance with the intention of the government.

The multinational corporations have alleged that the sports ministry did little or nothing to protect their interest.

Sequel to the corporate threat, not a few petitions have been forwarded to the Presidency to either call the sports ministry to order or outrightly cancel some results.

Beside the corporate bodies, individuals including a Lagos-based boxing promoter want the presidency to restate its position on private sector participation in sports sponsorship.

The petitions addressed mostly to the office of the Vice-President insisted that the relegation and humiliation of these corporate bodies was a mockery of the present administration's quest to enliven sports sponsorship through full participation of the private sector.

Just last week, perhaps in a swift reaction, the presidency had written a terse memo to the sports ministry cautioning against compromising government's drive

Vasco keep Brazilian flag flying

After losing this year to Ecuador, France, Australia, Uruguay, Mexico and Honduras, Brazil would love to turn back the hands of time.

That's exactly what the Vasco da Gama club have just done. They have reunited the strike partnership of Romário and Bebeto, now with a combined age of 72 but boasting a magnificent track record.

The pair were superb seven years ago when Brazil last won the World Cup. And in 1989 they formed the spearhead as Brazil won their first Copa America for 40 years.

They always seemed the perfect hunting partners, the cheetah and the hyena. Bebeto is the former, sleek and somehow vulnerable.

Romário is the latter, stocky, forthright and adept at living off scraps.

Their different characteristics and personalities formed a wonderful blend on the field.

But those same differ-

gether over the short space of time of a tournament, a longer spell at club level seemed beyond them.

For just over half an hour they played alongside each other for the Flamengo club nearly five years ago.

My most vivid memory of the game is watching the great pair exchange passes in the pre-match warm up, the ball giving them an easy intimacy they could never achieve with words.

Bebeto was the captain. The side made a poor start to the season, and great efforts were made to bring Romário back from Spain.

It was a blow for Bebeto's ego. On a cold afternoon at the Maracanã, Romário pulled a muscle and limped off.

By the time he was fit to return, Bebeto had already moved on.

But age appears to have mellowed them both. Or perhaps time has provided the perspective that, for better or worse, their stories run to-

National volleyball team heads to Egypt

The national volleyball team departed Lagos yesterday to Egypt for the qualifier of the world tournament billed for August 10 - August 12.

The Volleyball Federation of Nigeria (VBFN) said that the team left aboard a Kenyan Airways flight.

The team comprises 10 players and their coach, Suraju Onatuga.

They are Thomas Aroko, the captain, Shina Ogungbemi, Johnson Ighomor, Dennis Eleri, Chika Eni, Emmanuel Jatto, Sunday Yunana, Sanni Mohammed, Phillip Ighomor and Jobah Adamu.

The Nigeria team would play in group 'A' against Egypt, Cameroon and Morocco.

The captain of the team said "we have trained well and we are going to Egypt not just to play but to win."

Aroko said that volleyball was developing well in Nigeria, but needed more technical depth, adding: "We want an experienced person to lead the technical committee to make the sport grow as fast as we would want it to."

The players who arrived by 3p.m. were seen going for their medical check-up in readiness for their journey.

The female team would be returning to Nigeria on Wednesday aboard the same airline.

The only result in so far in the female matches is that against Moroccans in which Nigeria won by 3-2.



Great Britain's Mark Lewis-Francis reacts as he wins his men's 100 meters

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DAILY TRUST

Sports Illustrated

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Airways denies negligence over Nigerian athlete's death

South Africa Airways (SAA) has described as "unfortunate" the death of a Nigerian athlete aboard its flight SA 203 last month but absolved itself of any form of negligence, even as the corpse of the deceased coach was still lying in a Johannesburg mortuary almost four weeks after the incident.

"The whole matter was quite unfortunate and we can understand the concern of passengers. But we are not negligent in any way," Rich Mkhondo, SAA's executive-manager for corporate communications told the Southern Africa correspondent of the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) yesterday in Johannesburg.

Human rights activists have accused SAA of "wilful negligence" over the death of the taekwando coach, Yusuf Yahaya, on July 13 in Johannesburg, shortly before the South African national carrier flight departed for Lagos.

Yahaya and his team of athletes were returning to Nigeria from Korea, where they represented Nigeria at the World Taekwando Festival. The team was in transit through South Africa.

The activists also protested alleged "shabby treatment" by the SAA as they "were forcefully disembarked from the plane after they had taken seats, having been duly checked-in and issued boarding passes." They demanded apology from the airline, while threatening court action.

But SAA, in its first official reaction to the July 13 incident, said that it was not true that the South African national carrier was "inconsiderate or did not care for the welfare of its passengers."

"When our crew realised that the deceased passenger was not feeling well after boarding, we called in medical personnel who gave him first aid treatment and took him to the airport clinic where he died shortly after," said the SAA spokesman.

"Then, some passengers on board became unruly following the critical health situation of the deceased and it was decided that the entire economy class of the aircraft be evacuated and re-boarded," Mkhondo told NAN in Johannesburg, insisting that SAA had strictly followed aviation rules in handling the situation.

The corpse of the late Nigerian athlete was still lying in Germiston Mortuary near Johannesburg Airport up till now as neither the family of the deceased nor the National

By Ismaila Umaru Lere, with agency report

Sports Commission, his employers, had contacted the Nigeria mission in South Africa on arrangements for the repatriation of his remains back to Nigeria.

The mission had already accumulated over N8,000

charges at N300 per day since Yahaya's body was deposited in the mortuary 26 days ago.

The passport and return tickets of deceased have been retrieved from the airline by the mission, while his death and burial certificates have already been processed with South African authorities.



Ethiopian Derartu Tulu (240) finishes first as compatriot Berhane Adere (230) finishes second and Gete Wami (241), also of Ethiopia, comes in third in the women's 10000 meter final at the World Championships in Athletics, in Edmonton on Tuesday. Tulu won with a time of 31 minutes, 48.81 seconds. Paula Radcliffe (311) of Great Britain finished fourth.



Gustavo Kuerten of Brazil returns a forehand to Gaston Gaudio of Argentina during the Masters Series event in Montreal, Canada. Kuerten won the match 6-1, 6-4.



Amy Mbacke Thiam of Senegal smiles as she crosses the finish line to win the gold medal in the Women's 400 meters at the World Track and Field Championships at Commonwealth Stadium in Edmonton, Canada on Tuesday. In rear is Germany's Grit Breuer who came in 4th.

Strands of Fate: written & illustrated by Bulama Mustapha



170 to be continued. (16)