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ABUJA TRUST

Mohammed
Abacha returns
to Kuje prison

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STAR INTERVIEW

DAN MARAYAJOS:

"I have made
over 1,000
records"

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60 killed as US bombs elders' convoy

By Musa Aliyu with
Agency Reports

Villagers in eastern Afghanistan said dozens of civilians have been killed when a convoy of vehicles carrying tribal elders to the inauguration of Hamid Karzai's interim government was bombed by American warplanes.

Residents of Asmani Kilai in Paktia province told a Reuters news agency television crew that the air strikes, which lasted seven hours from Thursday night into Friday morning, killed up to 60 people and destroyed 15 vehicles.

About 10 houses and a mosque were also destroyed, they said.

The television crew saw bullet-riddled vehicles and people salvaging possessions from the rubble of their homes.

The United States continues to insist that its planes attacked a convoy that was carrying leaders of the former Taliban regime, or its allies in Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda terror network, and had opened fire with anti-craft missiles.

Villager Khodai Noor said: "The people who got hit were going to congratulate"

Contd. on Pg 2



President Bush

Senator threatens resignation



Senator Samaila Mamman

PPPRC, NLC disagree over fuel price hike

The Petroleum Products Pricing Regulatory Committee (PPPRC) and the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) have disagreed over the proposed fuel pump price increase announced last week.

The PPPRC Chairman, Chief Rasheed Gbadamosi has last Wednesday announced an upward review in prices of petroleum products following the increase in the price of crude oil to be sold to NNPC from \$9.50 to \$18.

But while the NLC reacted to the announcement stating its opposition against the proposed price increase, the PPPRC through its Acting Secretary, Dr. Oluwale Oluleye, said the congress had earlier agreed to the increase.

However, last Friday the NLC restated its opposition

By Ahmed Shekarau, in
Abuja, and Shakirat
Abdulmajeed, in Lagos

to any hike in the prices of petroleum products in the country, stressing that the current price level for all categories of petroleum

Contd. on Pg 2

Obasanjo, Atiku out of Abuja

A power vacuum appears to have been created in the seat of government, Presidential Villa, Asokoro, Abuja as both President Olusegun Obasanjo and Vice-President Atiku Abubakar have travelled out of the capital city on different engagements.

The president, just back from an ECOWAS Summit in Dakar, Senegal, travelled out

Contd. on Pg 2

The controversy generated by the Electoral Act has continued to rage as a Senator has threatened to resign his seat if the Senate refuses to review the bill.

Senator Samaila Mamman (PDP, Katsina Central) who was Senate Leader when Evan Enwerem was Senate President, said he would resign from the Senate

Army promotes 9 Brigadiers- General, 213 other officers

Nine Brigadiers-General are among 221 senior officers the Nigerian Army promoted last week.

The nine Brigadiers-General were promoted to their next rank of Major General. Thirty-three officers of the rank of Colonel were promoted to Brigadiers-General, 88 Lieutenant Colonels to Colonels while 91 Majors were promoted to Lieutenant Colonels.

The Brigadiers-General elevated to Major-Generals

By Reuben Yunana

if the Upper House stands by its decision and refuses to revisit the controversial sections of the bill.

Mamman's threat comes on the heels of statements credited to the Senate President, Chief Anyim Pius Anyim last week that the Senate stood by its decision

By Hammeed M. Bello

are D.R.A Ndefo, General Officer Commanding 1 Division; J.O. Owonibi, Deputy Commandant, National War College; S. Iliya, Provost Marshal; M.A. Garba, Director of Policy, Army headquarters; A.A. Mshelbwala, Commander, Guards Brigade; G.I. Obiakor, Deputy Commandant, Nigerian Army Corps of Supply and Transport and S.A. Awosanya, Director of Army Finance and Accounts.

Promoted to the rank of
Contd. on Pg 2

with regard to the Electoral Act, which has generated intensive criticism throughout the country.


"We have done our best and we stand by our decision," the Senate President was quoted as saying while fielding questions from senior editors at a Senate Media round-table last week.

However, Senator Mamman told *Daily Trust* at the weekend that irrespective of the Senate President's pronouncement, the Senate must revisit the Electoral Bill when it reconvenes on January 22 else he will vacate his seat in the Senate.

"What President Olusegun Obasanjo signed into law was not the Electoral Bill submitted to him by the National Assembly. That bill still remains unsigned.

"When we reconvene next month, the issue will be raised and tackled. There is no need for any one to go to court. Nigerians should give us time to reconvene and make necessary amendments," he stated.

Contd. on Pg 2



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President Obasanjo

This is to inform and assure our numerous readers, distributors and advertisers that *Daily Trust* shall by the grace of God be on the streets throughout the forthcoming Christmas and New Year holidays. We wish you many happy returns.

NEWS

Nas, others drag NCAT to court

The Rector of the Nigeria College of Aviation Technology (NCAT), Zaria, Mr. Angus Ifeanyi Ozoka, has been dragged to court over alleged plans to move the institution to Enugu.

By Sani Babadoko

Baba Lawal Aliyu and Alhaji Wada Nas is praying the court to declare the purported transfer of NCAT from Zaria to Enugu as null and void.

The suit filed at the Federal High Court, Kaduna, last week Wednesday by B.L. Aliyu and Associates on behalf of Alhaji Bala Wakili,

It is also seeking a perpetual injunction restraining the Rector, NCAT or their agents from conducting any training of

students of NCAT in Enugu.

However, the Rector, Mr. Ozoka said in a statement in Abuja yesterday that the alleged movement of the college from Zaria was "false and a figment of some people's imagination."

He said the college was established by law and since the law had not been repealed, there was no reason to move the college from its present location.

He explained that the college decided to undertake the two-week concluding training in Enugu because of bad weather in Zaria at this time of the year.

He explained that the college decided to move a training session for eight students of the college because it was the best option among other alternatives of Ibadan and Ilorin.

Ozoka said that Ilorin, Ibadan and Enugu airports were considered for the training and Enugu was picked because of the busy traffic over Ilorin and Ibadan by aircraft going to and from Lagos.

He explained that it was not safe to expose trainee pilots to busy corridors and that relocating training sites away from Zaria was not a new development in the history of the college.

LIST OF SOME PROMOTED GENERALS

From Brigadier-General to Major-General	From Colonel to Brigadier-General
1. D.R.A. Ndefo, General Officer, Commanding 1 Division.	1. N.C. Agbogun, National War College.
2. J.O. Owonibi, Deputy Commandant, National War College.	2. G.T. Pedro, Commander, Headquarters, 1 Div. Garrison.
3. S. Iliya, Provost Marshal.	3. L.K.F. Aprezi, Commander, 3 Brigade.
4. M.A. Garba, Director of Policy, Army Headquarters.	4. A.N. Bamali, Defence Headquarters.
5. A.A. Mshelbwala, Commander, Guards Brigade.	5. S.A. Abduraman, Headquarters, Nig. Army.
6. G.I. Obiakor, Deputy Commandant, Nigeria Army Corps.	
7. S.A. Awosanya, Director of Army Finance/Accounts.	

Elders' convoy *Contd from Pg 1*

late Karzai on the transfer of power.

"There are no members of al-Qaeda or supporters of Bin Laden here."

He suggested that a local warlord might deliberately have misinformed U.S. forces, telling them by satellite phone that the convoy was carrying al-Qaeda leaders to settle score.

The commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, General Tommy Franks, said an investigation was underway. But he defended the pilots' actions, saying: "Friendly forces don't fire surface-to-air missiles at you. We believe it was a bad convoy. We have reason to believe it was a good target."

However, BBC correspondent in the Afghan capital, Kabul, said it was unlikely that al-Qaeda

fighters would travel in such a long convoy in areas they knew were being watched by American planes.

Mr. Karzai, the new prime minister, said he would check reports of the attack but did not believe tribal chiefs had been bombed.

"If they were al-Qaeda members then they were not tribal chiefs," he told reporters.

The villagers' account tallies with that of a delegation of tribal leaders from the eastern town of Gardez who attended Saturday's inauguration ceremony at Kabul.

They said they had expected to be joined by a convoy from the town of Khost, but it never arrived after U.S. Aircraft attacked it and 60 people were killed.

Obasanjo *Contd from Pg 1*

again to attend the burial of late Senegalese President, Leopold Senghor.

The president is expected to return to the country but he will only make a stop-over in Lagos and proceed to his Otta farm home in Ogun State where he is expected to spend the Christmas holidays.

On Friday, December 28, he is expected to make a trip to Yola where he would attend the wedding ceremony of Vice-President Atiku Abubakar's daughter. He returns to Otta the same day.

The next day, the president is expected to talk to the nation via the programme: "The President Explains," on radio Nigeria network service. The programme will be conducted at his Otta home.

Vice-President Atiku Abubakar, who on Friday travelled to Kaduna State for an official function after chairing last Thursday's National Economic Council (NEC) meeting, will also spend the Christmas break in Yola.

Meanwhile, the official number three man, Senate President, Anyim Pius

Anyim, who is on a trip to China, may not return to Abuja until after the Christmas break.

Also, the number four man in the power equation, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Alhaji Ghali Umar Na'Abba is said to have travelled to Kano for the Christmas break.

When *Daily Trust* correspondent called at the State House, Abuja, to make enquiries on the security implications of the seeming vacuum, security men at the pilot gate refused him entry saying there was no official engagement in the Villa since both the president and his vice had travelled.



Vice-President Atiku Abubakar

PPPRC *Contd from Pg 1*

products should remain as they are.

In a four-page statement issued by the congress and signed by its president, Comrade Adams Oshiomhole, and General Secretary, Comrade John Ejoha Odah, on the directive of the NLC National Executive Council held on December 12, 2001, the NLC stated that the current pump prices of fuel "afford all operators in the industry, including the Federal Government, sufficient profit margins and should, therefore, not be subject to further increment."

The NLC argued further that even if crude oil is sold to the NNPC at \$18 per barrel as being speculated, "landing costs of refined products should be well below the current price, especially if the N5.30 tax (being imposed by government on refined products) is removed."

In a reaction to the NLC's position, however, Dr. Oluleye said the congress' new stand smacks of double standards.

The PPPRC scribe told *Daily Trust* in an interview Friday that the NLC had agreed to a 7.5 percent increase in the pump prices of fuel.

"They (the NLC) agreed to the principles of liberalization and deregulation. But they insisted on 7.5 per cent increase which means they also know that prices cannot be static," Dr. Oluleye affirmed.

He further stated that even in the NLC's minority report, it declared its support for the liberalization of the downstream sector of the country's oil industry.

Speaking in the same vein, the Minister of State for Finance, Senator Jubril Martins-Kuye maintained that both the Federal Government and the

leadership of the NLC agreed to an increase in the pump prices of petroleum products in January next year.

Martins-Kuye who spoke to newsmen at the Murtala Mohammed Airport, Ikeja, Lagos on Saturday said the NLC leadership reasoned with government on the need to increase the fuel prices.

The minister emphasised that though the NLC does not want the prices to be raised to import parity level, it had agreed on the need to allow market forces determine prices of products.

Meanwhile, there is an uneasy calm in the country over whether or not the prices of fuel will be increased next year.

This followed the statement credited to Vice-President Atiku Abubakar denying plans by the Federal Government to increase the fuel prices.

The vice-president, who spoke on Saturday at the Murtala Mohammed Airport, Lagos, had reportedly debunked insinuations that the government would increase prices of petroleum products.

"Honestly, I am not aware of that. It is not the Federal Government palaver but that of NNPC. If there is anything like that, I am not aware of it. You know we are doing deregulation, liberalization, so government doesn't normally have a say in much of these things," he said.



Gaius-Obaseki, NNPC GMD

Senator *Contd from Pg 1*

Senator Mamman, who is a top notcher of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and which has itself stood solidly behind the Act, said the method adopted by the president in amending and signing the bill was "immoral."

He emphasized that he would resign if Senate does not expunge the controversial sections from the bill.

According to him, parts of the bill that need amendment include the controversial council chairmanship tenure, third term for presidential and governorship candidates and 80 (1) which bars new parties from the 2003 presidential and governorship elections.

Samaila Mamman's comments came even as the All People's Party (APP) Senate Leader, Senator du Dansadau, described the bill as "fake" stressing that Senate would revisit the issue, "even if heavens will fall."

Dansadau told journalists: "The authentic Electoral Bill which was sent to Mr. President for his assent has not been signed up to this moment.

"As far as we are concerned, and there is quite a number of us, what the president has signed is a fake Electoral Bill and even if heavens will fall, we are going to revisit that matter," he said.

He explained that though section 88 (c) of the Senate standing rules gives the president the latitude to propose an amendment to a bill, the president was wrong in making the said amendment directly to the joint conference committee instead of the two Houses.

He stressed that section 88 (c) was inconsistent with the provisions of the constitution which prohibits the Senate and the House of Representatives from delegating powers to any of its committees to make laws.

"How can we sit down and allow this serious violation of our constitution to happen?" he queried.

He accused the Senate leadership of cowardice for failing to convene the Senate last Thursday as earlier resolved.

According to him, the leadership was afraid of facing Senators' wrath over the Electoral Act.

Army *Contd from Pg 1*

Brigadiers-General include N.C. Agbogun of the National War College; G.T. Pedro, Commander Headquarters, 1 Division Garrison; LKF Aprezi, Commander, 3 Brigade; A.N. Bamali of Defence Headquarters; S.A. Abduraman of Headquarters, Nigerian Army Engineers; M.C. Ezeoke of the Headquarters, Nigerian Army Corps and G.T. Okulate, Commanding Officer, Military Hospital, Port Harcourt.

It will be recalled that in the middle of the year, the Chief of Defence Staff and the three Service Chiefs were the last batch of senior

military officers to be promoted.

Accordingly, the Chief of Defence Staff, formerly Vice Admiral Ogohi was promoted to a full Admiral, which makes him the most senior serving naval officer ever in Nigeria.

Chief of Army Staff, Alexander Ogomudia was promoted from a Major General to Lieutenant General, the Chief of Air Staff, Jonah Wuyep; from Air Vice Marshal to an Air Marshal while the Chief of Naval Staff, Afolayan, was promoted from a Rear Admiral to a Vice-Admiral.

NEWS

Kano crises: Non-indigenes call for probe

Non-indigenes in Kano State have called on the Federal Government to institute a judicial commission of inquiry to look into the frequent attacks on non-indigenes in the state by street urchins, popularly called "Yandaba."

The non-indigenes, who spoke through the Non-

indigenes Community Leaders Association (Kano State chapter), alluded to the October 12, 13 and 14, 2001 the violence which rocked Kano metropolis, leaving many dead and property worth millions of naira destroyed.

In a three-page communiqué made available

to Daily Trust yesterday, the association described the attacks on non-indigenes as "senseless, unprovoked and premeditated," stating that violence that targeted non-natives "took place almost simultaneously in parts of Kano at more than 20 locations in Kano metropolis such as, Zango, Dakata, Brigade, Hausawa, Sheka, Dawaki, Naibawa, Tukuntawa quarters, Shagari quarters, Gwammaja quarters, Ahmadiyya line area and Galadima market."

The communiqué, which was the resolution of an extra-ordinary meeting of the non-indigenes community leaders association on November 14, 2001, warned that if the threats by natives to engage in another orgy of violence was not nipped in the bud, it would do all within its power to ensure that a state of emergency is declared in the state.

The non-indigenes equally declared their loss of "confidence in the ability of the Kano State Police Command to protect their lives and property, saying, "the police and other security were alerted before hand but failed to act or do anything until the situation got out of hand."

The communiqué, which



Gov. Kwankwaso

is coming on the heels of last week's threat by the Igbo community in the state to evacuate, reads in part: "We call for a total ban on the independent Hisba or the Sharia police in Kano since it is now clear that they are the brain behind the recent riot in Kano which has turned Kano State from the "Centre of Commerce" to "centre of Death."

"We call on the government to rehabilitate all the displaced persons and the families of victims who lost their lives, rebuild the Churches and Mosques destroyed or burnt as a result of the mayhem."

The non-indigenes also called on the Federal

Government to intervene in the quit notices being served on non-indigenes to vacate shops and Churches by native landlords, and expressed gratitude to the Emir of Kano, Alhaji (Dr.) Ado Bayero, for his fatherly role during the crises.

The communiqué was signed by the President-General, Igbo Community Association in Kano, Chief Boniface Ibekwe; President, Yoruba Community in Kano State, Dr. Jimpat Ayelamgbe; Chairman, Council of Muslim Community in Kano State, Alhaji Abdul Ganiyu Ewulo; Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) President, Rev. J.A. Fadipe as well as the leaders of Akwa Ibom, Idoma, Tiv, Delta, Igala and Edo

Communities in the state.

The communiqué has been copied the President, the Senate President, Speaker, House of Representatives, the Kano State Governor, the Inspector-General of Police and the National Security Adviser amongst others.

It would be recalled that last Monday, the Igbo community in Kano wrote President Olusegun a letter, in which it threatened to leave Kano State following the murder of one Uche Nwama Ochukpue on December 10 at Yan Lemo market by suspected Islamic fundamentalist for allegedly driving his lorry over a

Qur'an.

Obasanjo orders NNPC to supply aviation fuel

President Olusegun Obasanjo has directed the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) to restore normal supply of aviation fuel, jet A1, to all airports in the country.

President Obasanjo's directive, which was contained in a press statement signed by Mr. Robert Audu, the Permanent Secretary in the Federal Ministry of Aviation and made to newsmen at the weekend, is also coming on the heels of the shortage of aviation fuel at the airports.

The shortage of the aviation fuel, which hit the aviation industry last week, has crippled the once buoyant industry, as most airlines have been forced to adjust their flight schedules.

According to reports, most passengers were left stranded at the airports last Friday as a result of the fuel shortage with Airline Operators of Nigeria (AON) calling for the immediate restoration of fuel supply in various airports.

The airports worst hit by the fuel shortage are the

By Tasshikalimah Hallah

Murtala Mohammed Airport, Lagos; Nmadi Azikiwe Airport, Abuja, and Port Harcourt Airport, all considered in the aviation circle as the most viable airports in the country.

According to the statement signed by Mr. Audu, "The minister of Aviation, Dr. (Mrs) Kema Chikwe, has noticed the sudden scarcity of aviation fuel in the nation's airports at this Yuletide period when many Nigerian are travelling for various festivities.

"Consequently, the Federal Ministry of Aviation has swiftly moved to check and correct the situation. Mr. President has accordingly been briefed and he has directed NNPC to normalise the situation which is reported to have improved in the last 24 hours.

"The government is quite concerned about the situation and the travelling public is assured that everything is being done to normalise the situation and ensure smooth flights this peak season."

Normalcy returns to Ile-Ife

Normalcy has gradually returned to Ile-Ife in Osun State following last week violent attack by irate youths protesting the assassination of a member of the Osun State House of Assembly, Late Hon. Odunayo Olagbaju, by unknown gunmen.

Hon. Olagbaju, a staunch supporter of the state Deputy Governor, Otunba Iyiola Omisore, was last week murdered by people suspected to be hired assassins in front of the Police Divisional Headquarters, More, Ile-Ife.

The deceased lawmaker, who represented Ife Central Constituency in the State Assembly, was believed to have stalled the impeachment move against the Deputy Governor by the State House of Assembly two weeks ago, a development that led to the pandemonium in the House where properties were seriously damaged.

The sudden death of Hon. Olagbaju brought the town of Ile-Ife to a stand still, as youths numbering over 1,000 took to the street, protesting the assassination

From Yinka Oladoyinbo, in Ibadan

six houses were set ablaze, a chieftain of the Alliance for Democracy from Ilaro ward, Lawrence Olayiwola was also murdered and the State's Deputy Speaker, Hon. Moses Gbotosho, escaped with matchet wounds.

However, Daily Trust findings over the weekend revealed that calm has gradually returned to the town as socio-economic activities that were paralysed last Thursday have started picking up in and across Ile-Ife.

In the same vein, vehicular movement that was totally paralysed during the violent protest is presently improving as motorists now ply major roads in the town undisturbed, as commercial activities have also picked up in major markets in the town.

When Daily Trust visited some major spots in the town like Iremo, Arubidi, Lagere, Sabo, Ilaro, Ilode and others, people around confirmed that the violent clashes as that followed the death of the lawmaker have stopped and normalcy has been restored in the town.

More private universities underway

The National Universities Commission (NUC), has recommended the approval of three new private universities to the Federal Executive Council (FEC) while three other applications are to be processed come next year.

The three new universities before the federal council are: Covenant University, Ota; Benson Idahosa University, Benin and Pan-African University, Lagos.

The others to be processed next year include CETEP, Lagos; Al-Luikah University, Ilorin and University of Africa, Obong Ntak, Akwa Ibom State.

Presenting the report card of the National Universities Commission in Abuja over the weekend, the Executive Secretary, Prof Peter Okebukola, said the commission, this year approved new faculties and programmes in some

By Ikenna Emeka Okpani

private universities already in operation and completed league table ranking of Nigerian universities by university programme and discipline.

In the year ahead, Prof Okebukola said the commission would support the take-off of the National Open University and ensure the improvement of the accreditation profile of programmes in federal universities at least up to 20 per cent.

However, he said the major constraints facing the commission are interruption of academic calendars, occasioned by strikes, poor funding and slow response by some universities to request for statistical data.



Prof. Borishade

Electoral Act will create crisis - Balarabe Musa

The National Chairman of the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP), Alhaji Abdulkadir Balarabe Musa, has declared that the Electoral Act will create crisis in the country.

The PRP boss, who was speaking on a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Hausa Service programme monitored in Abuja yesterday, said the law was not conceived for the progress of Nigeria and the nascent democracy.

He maintained that if the Electoral Act is allowed to stay the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) will manipulate it to win the 2003 elections.

His words: "This was what happened in the 1983 elections, when the then ruling National Party of

By Mustapha Isah Kwaru

Nigeria (NPN) used its incumbency to win the whole elections, this action prompted the military to take over power from NPN after only three months of stolen tenure.

He emphasised that

... big political blunder - Oniyangi

Former Minister of Communications and Wali of Ilorin, Alhaji Mahmud Akanbi Oniyangi, has described the controversial Electoral Act as a big political blunder of President Olusegun

some of the NPN people who masterminded the NPN victories in the 1983 were present in government, and explained, "This is why the same thing is hapenning now. But even if the military do not take over, there wouldn't be peace in the country."

From Abdul Laro

Obasanjo's regime. He declared in an interview with newsmen shortly after the inauguration of the new Kwara State executive of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Ilorin that "Nigerians cannot be prevented from getting to where they wish politically and democratically."

Alhaji Oniyangi said "as a Act law, they change the goal post in the middle of the game, all in an attempt to frustrate aspiring political parties."

On likely fallout of the controversial law, the former minister said despite the threat of declaration of emergency by the Federal Government, most states may dissolve local government councils next year in line with the old law.

Alhaji Oniyangi, however, praised the effort of President Obasanjo, saying he has brought stability to government despite ethnic, religious and other socio-economic problems confronting him, "though things have not yet changed for the better," he added

NEWS

Gov Hashidu charges Christian pilgrims

From Abdullahi Dutse, in Gombe

Gombe State Governor, Alhaji Abubakar Habu Hashidu, has reminded intending pilgrims from the state to regard pilgrimage more of a spiritual trip rather than a sightseeing exercise even as he charged them to be worthy ambassadors of the country while in the Holy Land.

Governor Hashidu gave the charge at the weekend in his farewell address in Gombe to the state contingent of this year's Christian Pilgrims to Israel held at the Jemel Hall, Gombe.

He emphasised that "the purpose of your visit to the Holy Land is not for sightseeing but spiritual rejuvenation," charging them to shun the temptation of engaging in illegal activities which would tarnish the image of the state and the country at large.

He added that as the country's ambassadors, they should strive to exhibit a high sense of discipline worthy of emulation by future pilgrims.

The governor disclosed that his administration will continue to respect the constitution which guarantees the freedom of religion and worship of every citizen, saying, "my advice to Nigerians is that they should imbibe the spirit of tolerance and accommodation which are important for our peaceful coexistence and the survival of the nation's young democracy."



Governor Habu Hashidu

Alhaji Hashidu, however, expressed displeasure over youths' increasing involvement in evil practices like cultism, drunkenness as well as armed robbery and called on religious leaders to concentrate on inculcating sound moral values in the youths.

In his speech earlier, the state chairman of the Pilgrims Board, Rev. (Dr.) Simon Ibrahim, had appealed to the governor for a permanent office complex to enhance the board's performance.



Customs Area Comptroller, Idiroko Command, Comptroller Hassan Kila, inspecting seized NOCLAC briefcases at Idiroko border...recently.

Osoba urges Christians to pray for God's mercy

From Olumide Bajulaiye, in Abeokuta

Christians in the country have been called upon to pray fervently for God's mercy for the continued sustenance of democracy in the country.

Ogun State Governor, Chief Olusegun Osoba, who made the call in his Christmas message to the people of the state and Nigerians, recalled that it was the prayers of Nigerians that have kept the people of the country together over the years.

He enjoined Nigerians to shun issues capable of causing ill-feelings, hatred and intolerance, adding that "by so doing, democracy stands the chance of survival and the nation the chance of becoming great."

He advised that "all christians should rededicate themselves to the true practice of their faith by upholding the attributes of our Lord Jesus Christ which are honesty, humility, selflessness and respect for other religious beliefs."

Osoba urged Nigerians to use the festive period to reflect and pray earnestly for political stability, economic prosperity and industrial development of the country.

While calling on religious leaders to always inculcate in their followers be God-fearing values in all their actions, utterances and general conduct, Osoba advised that "they should eschew all those things capable of threatening the peaceful co-existence of the nation and her peoples."

Emir of Gwandu condemns hike in hajj fares

The Emir of Gwandu and Chairman, Kebbi State Council of Chiefs, Alhaji Al-Mustapha Haruna Jokolo, has condemned the hike in this year's hajj fares following the withdrawal of subsidy by the Federal Government.

Alhaji Jokolo, who spoke at the weekend when he led a delegation of members of the Gwandu Emirate Council on a courtesy visit to the

From Kabir Dogon-Daji, in Birnin-Kebbi

Kebbi State Governor, Alhaji Muhammadu Adamu Aliero, at the Government House, Birnin-Kebbi, said the hike was an attempt to deny muslims the right to worship.

"It is a deliberate plan to discourage the less-privileged ones from performing one of the cardinal principles of Islam by way of removing subsidy," he said.

Maintaining that the fares, categorised into N219,000 (minimum basic travelling allowance (BTA) and N277,000 (maximum BTA) were too exorbitant, the Emir stated that "whether or not muslims are frustrated into not going to the holy land, the holy Ka'aba and all other places of worship in the Holy land will be filled to capacity."

He enjoined the muslim umma to stand firm and defend their religious obligation even as he berated the Federal Government for focusing its attention on worldly things like football and beauty pageants at the expense of spiritual matters.



Al-Mustapha Haruna Jokolo, Emir of Gwandu.

LG boss warns against dissolution of councils

The chairman of Yola North Local Government Area in Adamawa State, Alhaji Ibrahim Attah, has warned against frequent dissolution of local government councils by state governors, saying "it can lead to chaos in the affected areas."

Reacting to a threat of his possible suspension by Governor Boni Haruna over alleged non-performance, the chairman said "such an action will be undemocratic and counter-productive."

Addressing newsmen in Yola at the weekend, Alhaji Ibrahim said: "I can't understand why civilian governors should dissolve civilian local government councils. It can bring (about) chaos."

Earlier, Governor Haruna had alleged that the Yola North chairman has proved incapable of handling the affairs of the council, noting that he has failed to ensure even basic sanitation in the area.

But the chairman denied the allegations, saying, "maybe he (the governor)

From Abdullahi Tasiu Abubakar, in

has not been privileged to go round and see what we have done. We have done our best."

The chairman said the council had, among others, constructed many culverts, rehabilitated some roads, purchased buses and reduced transport fares for intra-city bus service for its people.

He, however, said despite the governor's criticism of his performance, the council has maintained a healthy relationship with the state government.

"We enjoy a very healthy relationship with them (the state government). I have good relationship with His Excellency. We are in the same party, the same political association, under the same master," he said, making reference to their being under the Atiku Abubakar-led Peoples Democratic Movement (PDM) before the formation of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

Absenteeism: Teachers in Bokkos LG to forfeit salaries

From Buhari Bello, in Jos

Five hundred primary school teachers in Bokkos Local Government Area of Plateau State are to forfeit part of their salaries for the next three months for allegedly absenting themselves from their duty post.

The education secretary of the local government, Mr. David Ganjang, said the decision to take the measure became necessary "because several warnings fell on deaf ears."

He said he had earlier invited all teachers and warned them against truancy but unfortunately they could not abide by the directive.

The decision, he explained, was taken in order

to punish those found wanting in the performance of their duties, saying "the authority had no alternative than to adopt such a punitive measure since the teachers had been warned several times."

According to him, "despite the prompt payment of salaries, it is lamentable that such teachers could abandon their duty posts for private businesses."

Mr. Ganjang also explained that the teachers who are found wanting would be disciplined, adding that "henceforth, anyone caught in the act would be summarily dismissed."

News Focus

Will government increase fuel prices?

For the past four weeks, an uneasy calm has pervaded the nation over whether or not the Federal Government will increase the prices of petroleum products.

What will be the prices of the products? And when precisely will the increment take effect?

Last Wednesday, December 19, 2001, the Chairman of the Petroleum Products Pricing Regulatory Committee (PPPRC), Chief Rasheed Gbadamosi, told the nation at a news briefing that the prices of fuel would be reviewed upward. He did not, however, state what the new prices will be, and when the planned increase will take effect.

Currently, a litre of petrol (PMS) sells for N22; a litre of diesel (AGO) sells for N19, while kerosene (DPK) sells for N17 per litre.

The recent declaration by Chief Gbadamosi that there will be fuel price increase has, however led to speculations by various sections of the media that the prices of petrol may increase to as much as N25 or N30 per litre particularly because Gbadamosi failed to state a definite price for the products.

Also, the PPPRC chairman's pronouncement has led to speculative buying by some marketers and generated heated debates across the country with certain interest groups condemning the proposed price increase.

For instance, the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) issued its opposition to the proposed fuel price increase, in spite of the fact that it is

By Ahmed Shekarau,
Business Editor

represented by four of its members, including its president, Comrade Adams Oshiomhole, in the Chief Gbadamosi-led committee.

In the four-page statement jointly signed by Comrade Oshiomhole and his General Secretary, Comrade John Ejoha Odah, on the directive of the NLC National Executive Council, the NLC stated that the current pump prices of petroleum products "afford all operators in the industry, including the Federal Government, sufficient profit margins and should, therefore, not be subject to further increment."

It argued further that even if crude is sold to the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) for \$18 per barrel, "landing costs of refined products should be well below the current prices, especially if the N5.30 tax (being imposed by the government) is removed."

But while these controversies rage, Vice-President, Atiku Abubakar, denied knowledge of any plan by the government to increase fuel prices.

The vice president, who spoke with newsmen at the Murtala Mohammed International Airport, Lagos, on Saturday, debunked incinuations that the Federal Government has set up a machinery to increase fuel prices early next year.

"Honestly, I am not aware of that. It is not Federal Government palaver but that of NNPC. If there is anything like that, I am not aware of it. You know we are preoccupied deregulation, liberalisation,



President Olusegun Obasanjo

so government doesn't normally have say in much of these things," the Vice President said.

This position of the vice president came as a surprise to many Nigerians particularly because he (the VP) is the chairman of both the National Economic Council (NEC) and the National Council on Privatisation (NCP). It is, therefore, curious to many Nigerians that he is not aware of the plan to increase pump prices of fuel.

Also, the Petroleum Products Pricing Regulatory Committee, which announced the proposed fuel prices increase was set up last year by the Federal Government to among others, periodically approve benchmark prices for all petroleum products.

Prior to the recent announcement by Chief Rasheed Gbadamosi of the proposed fuel price increase, there had been a controversy on the issue about four weeks ago, when two members of the

Federal Executive Council (FEC) spoke differently on the matter.

While the Presidential Adviser on Petroleum and Energy, Dr. Rilwanu Lukman, said on Sunday, November 25, 2001 that the Federal Government would not continue to subsidise the prices of fuel in the country, the Minister of Finance, Mallam Adamu Ciroma, said the following day that there would be no any increase in pump prices.

Dr. Lukman, who addressed media executives at a dinner that Sunday night said "the current regular supply (of fuel) is artificial," and cannot be sustained by the government as it is sustained "only through subsidy."

Briefing the Professor Iya Abubakar-led Senate Committee on Finance the following morning (Monday, December 26, 2001), however, the Minister of Finance ruled out any fuel price increment,

even as government proposed to sell crude oil to the NNPC at \$18 per barrel.

According to the minister: "This year, crude is being made available to NNPC at the budget price of \$18 per barrel and considering this increase as compared to what obtained last year, government has decided not to add anything to the pump price."

He explained that with the current price of \$9.50 being paid by NNPC for crude oil, the government imposed a tax of N5.30 on the refined products, but that will be waived by the time NNPC starts paying \$18 per barrel for crude oil.

But with last week's announcement of an upward review in fuel prices by the PPPRC chairman, it became obvious that the prices of fuel will increase.

Indeed, the Group Managing Director of the NNPC, Mr. Jackson-Gaius Obaseki, had even alluded to that when he said last Friday that there will be no extraordinary increase in petrol pump price to consumers, even as the NNPC pays \$18 barrel for crude.

What has yet been ascertained, as stated earlier, is what will be the new prices of fuel?

Chief Gbadamosi himself, who announced the proposed fuel pump price increase only claimed that "there will be no quantum leap in prices." He did not state a definite figure that would be paid for the products.

Also, when asked to be specific on when Nigerians should expect that new price increase, Chief Gbadamosi

said "the date is not certain but it will coincide with NNPC's new price on crude."

When contacted for further clarifications on the issue, the Acting Secretary of the PPPRC, Dr. Oluwale Oluleye, told *Daily Trust* at the weekend that "there will be no official announcement by any government functionary," on what will be that new price and when it will take effect.

According to him, the pricing regulatory committee will only fix a certain ceiling based on what marketers could peg the prices of their products.

He said this decision was informed by the need to ensure competitive pricing of products."

Meanwhile, some interest groups like the NLC and the Alliance for Democracy (AD) have risen up in opposition against the proposal increment.

But the PPPRC's Acting Secretary, Dr. Oluleye, has faulted the NLC's opposition to the upward review on pump prices of fuel, which he said was dishonest.

According to him, "they (NLC) agreed to the principles of liberalisation and deregulation, but they insisted on a 7.5 per cent increase. Which means they also know that prices cannot be static. So what are we talking about?"

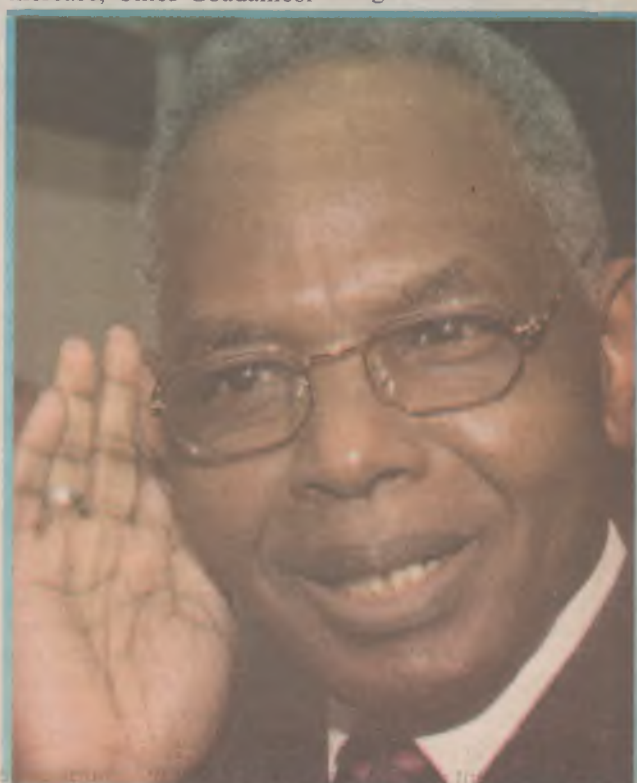
The uneasy situation in the nation's downstream oil sector has, however, given room to speculative buying by some marketers who may be hoarding the products in anticipation of very high prices that could generate huge interests for them.



Gaius Obaseki, NNPC GMD



Comrade Adams Oshiomhole, NLC President



Dr. Rilwanu Lukman, Special Adviser on Petroleum Matters

Opinion

Water scarcity
in Gombe State

By Abubakar Sadiq Bappah

Promise of overcoming the perennial water shortage, as the most enticing priority of the talakawas (i.e. the masses), has been used by every political aspirant in Gombe State to win their votes. Slogans such as *Ruwa sai Baba* (i.e. only Mr. X can provide water for you) are common place in the electioneering campaigns of the state's chief executive. Regrettably, after two years in office, the APP led government of Gombe state has also failed as did its predecessors since the creation of former Bauchi state, in solving the long surviving stigma of perennial scarcity of water in this area. The memorandum for the creation of Gombe state, at the eve of its creation, submitted that "The (water) project which recently received the blessing of the (then Bauchi) state government is in the tangles of bureaucratic red-tapism and its implementation is unnecessarily delayed."

However, Gombe State Water Corporation (GSWC) is busy sponsoring provocative gimmicks on electronic and print media in the name of the corporation's success story under the present administration. What a good example of the Qur'anic parable of those who want to reap from where they did not sow. The corporation expects credit for its woes. In fact, thousands of unsuspecting audience have been misinformed by a supposed "reliable source" as in the legendary of that Elephant which was placed in a dark house for people to feel with their palms and describe the poor animal.

An average citizen of this state is well informed and knows that the on going water project in the state capital is one of the World Bank water projects. The project has since begun in the state capital with the construction of about 14 boreholes and a huge reservoir conspicuously erected by mile 3 aimed at feeding some other reservoirs in the town. GSWC, therefore, deserves no KUDOS in this respect. Yet the project is tactfully being labelled as the most envisaged metropolitan dam project. Masses of Gombe state have come of age due to the questionable integrity of some supposed "messiahs" and can sense deception miles away. The most celebrated, yet ambiguous and quite executive regional water supply scheme is likely meant to serve some executive interests like its predecessors even when the present chief executive of the state was in a better position to act otherwise. Common sense suggests that serious agitation for township water supply would once more die a natural death as soon as the on going World Bank water scheme is completed and none would care to know the progress of SHAUKAD & RAZA for the next few years.

Gone are the days of "chlorinated water" for the peoples of Gombe state. People happily fetch untreated water at such epileptic instances of water supply. The quality and quantity of water supplied even to the state headquarters is simply pathetic. The situation is better imagined than experienced. In the absence of thorough disinfection routine, some reservoirs in the rural areas have turned to practical aquaria. One may least expect otherwise from a quality control unit with neither a test kit nor test laboratory. The consequence of which includes the epidemic typhoid fever and other water borne diseases. Now, instead of thinking positively towards procuring adequate disinfectants and other quality control facilities for proper dispensation, a consultant was swiftly engaged. The overhead cost for this exercise alone could go long way into equipping the corporation's in-house personnel.

An average student of management knows the existing difference between workers' incentives, such as vehicle loans and technical support equipment like machinery and computers. Rather than wasting efforts on aesthetic make-ups and well-publicised advertorials, GSWC should be more concerned with the recruitment of suitably qualified technical manpower, procurement of adequate office accommodation and the necessary technical support equipment. As a government subsidised water vendors, the corporation should procure with further subsidy more water tankers to alleviate the suffering of the masses as well as to check the excesses of private vendors. Those old water tankers, which are run almost at a practical loss, are grossly inadequate. Majority in the state capital relies on private vendors to supplement that brief once a week supply. Except those that can invoke the services of their personal tankers, boreholes, wells or public water tankers. Some anointed ones have sought a criminal alternative of using some machines to draw water into their earthen reservoirs for posterity and to the detriment of their neighbours. While some VIP's in such seriously disadvantaged areas, on the other hand, lay a lengthy pipeline to a better takeoff point. However, some quarters are privileged to feed directly from a borehole instead of the conventional reservoir method. In the light of the foregoing, the township network should be reorganised with view to extending the same to new extensions, disconnecting all illegal connections and facilitating eventual coupling to the proposed metropolitan water supply project.

Bappah is of the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi.

'NEPA has improved'

By Salisu Na'inna
Dambatta

The Federal Executive Council (FEC) has just approved 19 contracts worth over N25 billion for the upgrading, expansion, extension or the erection of new electric power transmission lines and distribution facilities on behalf of the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA).

Under the multi-billion naira contract some new 132 kv and 330 kv single double circuit transmissions lines to deliver electric power efficiently to parts of the country would be constructed. Jalingo, the Taraba State capital, which suffers from neglect in such matters, would soon enjoy the benefits of one of the transmission lines.

Some vital NEPA substations across the country would be rehabilitated or reinforced. Some would be expanded to meet the increasing demand for power in the localities they serve.

In Nigeria today, no public agency or utility is under more intense public scrutiny, focus or generating more interest and popular attention than the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA). This is not surprising, given the importance of energy, especially electricity, to modern life.

Another reason for the public interest in the NEPA, is the avowed commitment of the Obasanjo administration to raise the meagre and clearly

inadequate 1,250 megawatts of power being generated for the whole country in the past, to at least 4,000 megawatts, thereby meeting more than the recorded peak demand of electricity in the country, within less than two years. The target date for the 4,000 megawatts is December 31 2001.

The single most important question is this: can NEPA deliver? Nigerians, especially power consumers, should believe that the target is attainable and could even be surpassed. Already it is common to hear people saying, "NEPA has improved". Since some members of the public have testified that the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA), has indeed improved in providing electricity to Nigerians, the next question is, why did it happen?

The fact is that the NEPA improved because a deliberate effort was made, coupled

with appropriate financial investment in rehabilitating its broken down generating and distribution equipment, the replacement of obsolete ones and the provision of brand new ones in different parts of the country.

As of today, the NEPA generates and distributes 2,900 megawatts of electricity daily, that is 1,640 megawatts more

than it was making available to Nigerians before the renewal effort began months after the inception of the Obasanjo administration.

By the end of November, some additional 768 megawatts would be added to the system as more refurbished generating units at both our thermal and hydro, installations come on stream, thereby raising electric power available to consumers to some 3,668 megawatts or just some 332 megawatts short of the target of 4000 megawatts.

Information from the General Manager, Public Affairs, NEPA headquarters, Malam Muhammad Mousa-Booth shows that the 768 additional megawatts of power will be generated thus, Egbin thermal station, 220 mw; units 3 and 4 at Jebba; 180 mw; Delta station, 50 mw; Afam V, 138 mw; and rehabilitated units 8 and 12 at Kainji, 180 mw.

The general manager assured that within December, 2001, some refurbished generating units would be fully activated to generate and contribute 7381 megawatts of power. A publication obtained from him indicates that, Kainji unit 7 will generate 80 mw; Egbin unit 6, 220 mw; Afam IV Gas Turbine No18, 70 mw; Afam 6 138 mw; Sapele 75 mw; Delta 4 Turbine No 18, 17, 1000 mw; Delta: 2, 40 mw; and Ijora Gas Turbine, 15 mw.

When the additional 738 megawatts become available to consumers on top of the 3,668 megawatts generated at the end of November, the combined total generated megawatts of electricity in Nigeria would for the first time in history be 4,406. This will be some 406 megawatts above the minimum of 4000 megawatts ordered by the President.

Given the facts on the ground and the massive effort being put into renewing the NEPA, the likely scenario is that President Obasanjo's personal reputation and some of his political calculation which he seemed to have linked to the successful revitalization of the NEPA, would not only remain intact, but will probably be enhanced.

The fact of making the NEPA function properly and serve Nigerians adequately, would give a big boost to our sagging confidence and waning belief in our ability to effectively manage our public institutions and affairs. In a sense, it will confirm the assumption, once again, as frequently associated with football, that Nigerians could come from behind and do wonders, given the appropriate push.

Dambatta is a Chief Information Officer in the Presidency.

Jos crisis: The unavoidable options

By Ibrahim Attahir

Governments in Nigeria are good at sweeping issues under the carpet. Whenever there is a civil disturbance in this country, it is easy for the government to attribute it to unemployment, poverty, ignorance etc. The recent Jos religious crisis also came under similar funny explanations from some of the authorities concerned. A high-ranking official of Plateau State Government was quoted in the media attributing the crisis to unemployment and poverty.

For goodness sake, can being poor make somebody to foment trouble in other people's place of worship? Or is it sheer religious hatred and intolerance? Who is supposed to complain of unemployment in Plateau State? Is it the "indigenes" who have the sole right of employment or the Hausa-Fulani Muslims (Jasawa) who are mainly self-employed and not employed in government office except for few cases of favours. If truly the government of Plateau State has identified unemployment and poverty as the cause of the conflict between "the indigenes" and the Jasawa then what measures has it taken to solve the problem over the years? Is the government of Plateau State admitting the failure of its Poverty Eradication Programme? These are some of the mind-boggling questions that keep on repeating themselves and remain unanswered.

Another cause of the crisis is said to be appointment of one of the Jasawa as co-ordinator of the National Poverty Eradication Programme in Jos North Local Government. This reason is what goes to show that "the indigenes" are antagonistic to the Jasawa and that the latter do not have right to employment and public appointment. It is not that "the indigenes" are protesting on appointment of somebody being "non-indigene". The truth is that the protest is because he is a Muslim. We are all witnesses that the government of the defunct Plateau State during the 2nd republic under Mr. Solomon Lar, the champion of emancipation, appointed Mrs. Janet Akinrinade a Yoruba Christian as commissioner in Plateau State. But "the indigenes" did not protest. The only thing that qualified Mrs. Akinrinade for that high position was simply because of her NPP membership and Christian faith. She cannot be said to have lived all her life, paid tax there and contributed to all aspects of development of the state, as in the case of the Jasawa.

The first option is to continue to treat the Jasawa as non-indigenes who have no right to be respected and protected as it obtains now. The implication of this option is that the Jasawa will continue to be discriminated against, maltreated and marginalised in the scheme of things in Plateau State. Also it will "not be acceptable" to "the indigenes" to allow the Jasawa to observe their Friday congregational prayers freely. They will not be allowed to use the streets near their mosques for a short while for prayers thus diverting traffic to alternative routes. If the Jasawa dare try to assert their right then they will face mass annihilation and their lifetime investment will be open to destruction and vandalism. Be that as it may, if they are pushed to the wall, they will be forced to react. In short, peaceful co-existence will be difficult to attain in the Tin City and its environs. I believe nobody will like this option of living in perpetual turmoil. It will not be in the interest of anybody. National interest will be the chief sufferer.

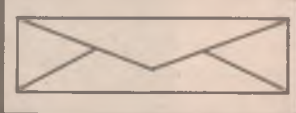
The second option is for the government and "indigenes" of Plateau State to accept the Jasawa as indigenes of the state whose right should be respected. There will then be mutual respect for both parties. Peace and tranquillity will be restored and there will be meaningful development. The Jasawa have not been known to be envious of developing anywhere they settle. I know of one of the Jasawa that has

no less than twenty landed properties in Jos but has no single hut outside Plateau State. Hardly can anybody show any tribe either among the minorities or the other major tribes that will have open mind towards a place in which they are regarded as settlers. This option, though painful to some of the "indigenes", is the most rational, practicable and in the national interest and some of the "indigenes" because, some others who are fair-minded are not antagonistic to the Jasawa. Some of my relations and friends were saved by "the indigenes" during the last Jos crisis. The federal government, as father of all, has an important role to play in this regard. I am happy about the recent pronouncement of President Olusegun Obasanjo on "indigenes-settlers acrimony". It is encouraging. We pray that his government will take immediate action on the issue.

If, however, the second option above is not acceptable then it is apparent that Muslims have become *personae non grata* in Plateau State. The third option will be for the governments of the states where the Jasawa originated from to take up the matter. The governments of the states should approach Plateau State government. They should negotiate for payment of compensation to their various indigenes for their landed properties. Then they should evacuate them to their various states. One will venture to say that even Muslims of Kanam and Wase local government areas of Plateau State who are reluctantly accepted as indigenes in Plateau State should be included in this arrangement. Israel has set an example of evacuating Jews from all parts of the world and resettling them in Palestine. The governor of Bauchi state, Alhaji Ahmadu Adamu Mu'azu should take the lead in this project because, having spent some part of his life in Plateau State, he must be conversant with the predicament of the Jasawa. He should reactivate Sabon Garin Na-Rabi by creating layouts there for settling the Jasawa. Then the Plateau State "indigenes" will have the all-Christian Plateau State they are dreaming of. Apart from the governors, other leaders of thought in the home states of the Jasawa should take the matter seriously. They will risk losing respect if they continue to be adamant when our kith and kin are being massacred in some parts of this country. Let us not be deceived by the setting up of a commission of inquiry, which is only meant to pacify people. Nothing positive comes out of similar commissions and tribunals set up elsewhere. Some of these commissions do very good work, but nobody hears anything about their reports once they are submitted. One is tempted to conclude that governments setting up those commissions already have their minds made up. They even make pronouncements on some issues and thus, if the findings of the commissions do not tally with the government's positions, the report is thrown in to the dustbin.

However, this option also has its own implications. If Plateau State becomes an all-Christian state, which is a no-go-area for Muslims, then we know what to expect from states where Jasawa came from. The Country will then be on its course of disintegration. However, if disintegration will bring peace, let it be. It is better to disintegrate and have peace than to unite and remain in crisis. After all what we called Nigerian is a colonial contraption. It is left for the parties involved and other stakeholders to make the right choice but, of course, they cannot avoid all of the options.

Attahir is of Majidadi Road, Abuja Quarters, Gombe



YOUR LETTERS

What is wrong with our naira?

Regulation of our national currency is a responsibility of the governing authority. Therefore the negative performance of the national currency is an indication of failed policies and programs of the regulation efforts. Economy is such a vital area whose dynamics depend on every aspect of government policies and plans. The strength of any currency depends on the performance of the economy. However, ours is an economy with too many loopholes which even non-students of economics could easily identify.

Nations and enclaves are made out of territorial demarcations and each devises it's own means of economic growth and sustenance. We seem to have a virtual territory in the sense that everything and anything finds unhindered access into the Nigerian territory. The few fairly essential as well as the largely irrelevant goods and services find easy passage to the shores of our nation.

Sub-standard and often dangerous goods have been allowed to flood our markets thereby making demands for foreign exchange higher and higher and at the same time putting a nail in the coffin of our local manufacturing efforts. This is clandestinely referred as a free market by the imperialists. The CBN and other agencies involved in import regulations have lamented this unhealthy dispensation.

To achieve and maintain a stable and formidable currency, our local manufacturing efforts must be

encouraged at all cost while de-emphasising the demand for imported goods and services. It is therefore pertinent to revisit our import regulations so that only those goods and services we require are allowed passage.

The minister of commerce recently disclosed, in a media chat, government's plans to introduce quota system for imported goods. While commending such an effort, what remains to be seen was total commitment in that regard.

Yunusa Isa,
P. O. Box 10605, Kano,
Kano State.

Re-Special Adviser resigns

I read with surprise a page 3 column one story of *Daily Trust* Monday, December, 10, 2001 captioned: **Jigawa Political Crisis -Special Adviser resigns** and wish to correct this erroneous reportage by the reporter who claimed to have written the story from Dutse.

The truth of the matter is that the said special adviser, Alhaji Hassan Malam-Madori did not resign on his own. Rather, His Excellency, The executive governor of Jigawa State, Alhaji Ibrahim Saminu Turaki expelled Alhaji Hassan Malam-Madori on the ground of fraud involving millions of naira by the adviser when he

was supervising the state sports council four months before the resignation of the former deputy governor, Alhaji Kwatalo.

I am therefore advising the publisher and editor-in-chief of the *Daily Trust* to be wary of his reporters who sit in Kano and fabricate false newspaper headlines that portray the government and people of Jigawa State as "bad" without cross-checking their facts.

I also have the permission of His Excellency, the governor of Jigawa State to draw the attention of editors of *Daily Trust* of the misrepresentation, evasion of facts and lies carried on its editorial Monday, 10,

December, 2001 on the back page.

It is particularly false and very unbecoming of a national newspaper to brand a chief executive of a state as irresponsible no matter what. And in fact, Governor Saminu was in Abuja attending various functions when the editorial was wrongly reporting the governor to have been abroad.

I advise the Newspaper to withdraw the said editorial and apologise in the same column so that peace can

continue to reign between Jigawa State government and the management of *Daily Trust*. Best regards,

Usman Zakari Dutse,
Director of Press and Public Relations,
Government House,
Dutse, Jigawa State.

We consider our editorial of 10 December, 2001 a fair comment on the state of affairs in Jigawa State. But we are happy to publish any contrary opinion or facts that are available to us

- Editor-in-chief.

Plutocracy and democracy

It is known with democracy the world over, that money plays a significant role for the success of any political candidature. But in Nigeria, one can be forthright to say that the story is different for the fact that money has become an obsession to virtually all Nigerians, so much so that only a bloated plutocrat is considered elective, not being so naive to focus on the ills.

Democracy is defined as "the government of the people by the people and for the people", the people ought to be prudent in electing their leaders, men or women that could marshal development through delivering the goods, within their dominion irrespective of being rich or poor.

Furthermore, since it is

the tradition of any political party to screen and perhaps finance any candidate seeking office, that should be seen as an avenue of fishing out a rich candidate that is not trustworthy, hence giving room for a poor with integrity; as this trend will undoubtedly augur well to the Nigerian polity.

Ordinarily, a political party should be a complete synthesis of all social classes; hence giving full enfranchisement to the lower class in all party matters (such as the primaries etc). More so, the party should stick to its guns, by being defiant to any member, no matter rich he/she is or how much he/she has contributed if proven nihilistic to the party norms.

Bluntly speaking, come 2003 election, self-succession otherwise known as

Tazarce, will spell doom to the nation's democratic setting. While it is obvious that some of the elected members at all government levels are ineffective; by squandering public accounts, and living in clover, yet, they are determined to shoot their last bolt in succeeding themselves. It is worth noting money that they shall use in getting themselves re-elected, come next election.

Although there are good ones among them, we should be careful in our assessment before agreeing to the re-election so as not to extenuate their misdeeds after being enticed with the little amount.

Salahu Hamza Muhammed Turabu,
Yusuf Road, Off Hadejia Road,
Kano State.

Well done, Ibrahim Sa'idu

I am hereby expressing my appreciation to your newspaper for the wonderful job they have been doing. May the almighty Allah continue to guide you.

I am also seizing this opportunity to extend my congratulations to the rector, Federal Polytechnic Bauchi, Surveyor Ibrahim Sa'idu Jahun for his one year in office. Indeed, his one year in office is a landmark in the history of the polytechnic. He has made the polytechnic more useful, meaningful and responsive to the yearnings and aspirations of the immediate environment, i.e. Bauchi State and other neighbouring states.

His performance and conduct in office can be traced to his family back-ground. He is from the highly respected family of Gala-diman Bauchi one of the kingmakers in Bauchi Emirate and a family noted for knowledge and piety, therefore it can be said that he is born with a silver spoon and naturally gifted with leadership qualities from which the polytechnic is now benefiting tremendously.

Finally, I am praying that

the Almighty Allah may continue to guide, protect him and give him more wisdom in running the affairs of the polytechnic.

Kasimu Salihu,
Admissions Office,
Federal Polytechnic,
P. M. B. 0231, Bauchi,
Bauchi State.

Life is all a struggle

I wish you would give a space in this our leading newspaper in the North.

As I came across some newspapers and magazines published during IBB's regime (I was a kid then) I came to the conclusion that Nigeria will never develop, that we will continue to recycle round the zero degree of achieving nothing.

Most of the newspapers and magazines recount things happening to Obasanjo's government - economic devaluation, strikes, ethnic crises, etc. The Obasanjo government will come to pass still full of problems and radical approaches to our vital economic issues.

The only solution is, we struggle individually in this thorny world for both "Here" and "Hereafter".

Mohammed Shehu Gusau,
Federal Medical Centre,
P. M. B. 10008, Gusau,
Zamfara State.

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B R A N C H E S N A T I O N W I D E

TRUST INTERNATIONAL

World Report

India must show proof or remain silent

Tension between India and Pakistan is alarmingly mounting, with each threatening to bring the already volatile region to the brink once again. In this interview with Musa Aliyu, Pakistani High Commissioner, H.E. Mr. Ikram K. Fazli, speaks on a number of issues revolving around Kashmir, India's threat, Afghanistan, Osama bin Laden and the Middle East. Excerpts:

Your Excellency, tension is progressively mounting at the border between India and Pakistan with India threatening to launch its own kind of war on terrorism following the bombing of its parliament building by militants suspected to be of Pakistani origin. What would be Pakistani's reaction if India goes ahead to make good its threat?

Well — em ... what happened recently, the attack on India's parliament is most regrettable. And Pakistan is one of the first countries to condemn in the strongest of terms this attack. The president of Pakistan was seen on television (CNN and the BBC), saying that we offer our condolences and our commitments were toward finding those responsible. We have extended our cooperation the way we can because this is a very serious matter.

Now India is saying that certain organizations (Pakistani organizations) are responsible. So, we are saying that they should give us some kind of proof. And not just a wild allegation. And if they give us proof, we would investigate the matter. So that we've not received so far. But we stand by our commitment to offer full cooperation if there is any tangible proof of complicity by any organization which is based in Pakistan. But we've not received it but threatening noise. Our president has been on international televisions, advising India not to take any hasty step. Because if they do, as they are threatening, he did not mince words in telling them that force will be met with force.

So, we are all together in this global war on terrorism. We have been among the first victims of terrorism in the last 20 years. We are asking as any other country to wipe out terrorism. But we cannot take any action based on allegation which are not substantiated by concrete evidence.

You will recall that the issue of proof was what the Taliban in Afghanistan harped on, insisting on not handing over Osama bin Laden without convincing evidence shown to them. But America said, "we have proofs that bin Laden did it. We are not going to show you," and went ahead with its allies to attack Afghanistan. Suppose India decides to capitalize on this precedence laid by America?

No, there is a difference. The Americans said they have a proof but they did not want to compromise their sources that is why they didn't make the proof public. But they showed it to us and we were convinced about its authenticity, before we agreed to lend full support to the war against terrorism. But here we have a different ballgame. We are saying if they have any proof, let them show it to us. They don't have to make it public. We would give it all the seriousness a matter like this deserves.

Even long before September 11, Pakistan had banned a number of these organizations because we were not sure of the peaceful nature of their operations. But this is not the cause of the tension between the two countries. They have had between them deep seated causes for this tension. These have to be addressed. The core issue is that of Kashmir that has to be addressed. There is no point saying that the agitation on Kashmir is Pakistan-inspired. We lend all our diplomatic support to what is going on there because we're affected. So, the Kashmir issue has to be addressed.

What are the issues of contention on Kashmir?

You see, during the colonial era, British India was categorized into two. One was British India per se and the other was princely state. Princely state had its internal autonomy even though the paramount power rested with the colonial power in London. The creation of Pakistan through the principle of the partition of India led to the decision that those areas in which majority of Muslims were, geographically contiguous muslim majority areas of British India would form Pakistan. The princely states could either part of India or Pakistan. As for Kashmir, it was a special case. 90 per cent of its population is Muslim, geographically contiguous with what became Pakistan. Linguistic, religious, cultural, trade and other links with present day Pakistan. But did not even have a proper geographical links with what is now India. Despite these lines, the colonial regime went ahead to award Kashmir to India. The ruler of Kashmir who was a Hindu despite the Muslim population went ahead to announce the acceptance of India. This led to a revolt by the people which led to the first Kashmir war which lasted a year and four months (1947-1948). After the ceasefire

agreement in January 1949, there was a UN resolution calling for a determination of the future of Kashmir by the people. India accepted this and the government of Jawaharlal Nehru followed it with so many declarations, accepting the referendum. But up to date, India have refused to honour this commitment.

They reneged on this pledge?

Absolutely.

There is the fear that any explosion there will be very devastating because both

- Pakistani High Commissioner

out of hand?

Hopefully it won't get to a war situation but it is true that tension is rising. And like I said earlier we were among the first countries to condemn the attack on the parliament. If India is in the spirit to resolve it diplomatically, it should be in the position to accept our offer. If they show concrete evidence that organizations in Pakistan did it then we would take whatever action that is required to combat it.

Sometime ago, about three or four months, leaders of both countries met and we had hopefully expected the resolution of the Kashmir

continue. And they won the day. This could have been a dynamic way by which dialogue would be used to resolve the problem but the hardliners won the day.

Would your country subscribe to a situation whereby the UN directly establishes its presence in Kashmir and mediate until normalcy returns? What is the way forward?

Well, I think there is the UN resolution that a referendum be used to resolve the problem. We would be happy if this will happen. But the Indian government would not want it this way.

At the beginning of the war on terrorism in Afghanistan, Kashmir became quite volatile and then the attacks on Indian parliament were carried out (I think twice) within a short interval. Don't you think that certain groups are out to ridicule Pakistan being an American ally as if telling America, "your friend Pakistan also harbours terrorists".

You see, it's a very easy way out to blame a third country for all your problems. The fact of the matter is that for the past twelve or thirteen years, India, despite the small size of Kashmir has 600,000 armed forces, the highest concentration of forces in an area of its size in the world but they are unable to suppress these movements. These are indigenous movements. We have supported diplomatically and morally in all fora hoping for a solution. But as long as you are talking at crossed purposes, there is no way we can move forward. But if we accept that it is our problem which has to be addressed, then a way forward could be found.

As the Americans would want the world to believe, they are trying to see a return to peace in that region. Then suddenly they see Pakistan, a strong ally, going into a war, perhaps, a more costly and devastating one, with India. Don't you think they would be very disappointed in your country?

Yes. The last thing we would want is war. But our president was on record last week, saying that if Indian forces resorted to war, it would be met with force. So we have to defend our sovereignty and territorial integrity and protect our territories. Of course, it will be disappointing. It will shatter the peace process. We have to go the extra mile in search of peace but we have to address the question, why is there no peace?

Now let's go to the issue of Osama bin Laden. The Americans and their allies have accepted that bin Laden has escaped from Afghanistan. The speculation is that he may have slipped into Pakistan. Suppose it turns out to be true, would Pakistan subscribe to the use of force to fish him out given the kind of civilian casualties etc. Afghanistan witnessed?

This is a hypothetical question but it's certainly possible because the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan is very porous.

That is why we deplored our forces to prevent a thing like this. Even yesterday, there was a clash between the al-Qaeda and our forces. Suppose Osama bin Laden has to come to Pakistan, I don't think that the American forces would even need to use force to get him. Within Pakistan we have total control of our territory. We would fish him out.

Suppose Pakistani militants decide to support him?

I don't think our militants have that kind of power to resist the official Pakistani forces we would deploy. I can agree with you that he may have a number of sympathisers that may try to hide him. But we can establish that he was at a particular place at a particular time and given our commitment, we would be able to get him.

There is that position or belief that terrorism worldwide is directly linked to the situation in the Middle East particularly the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Would you see it that if this is resolved, it could automatically lead to the elimination of all forms of terrorism worldwide?

It is true that the core issue has to be addressed. We feel disappointed that in spite of the fact that the US is using its great authority to find a solution to the Middle East problems acceptable to our side, but its support to Israel is unshaken. This matter has to be addressed. So long as this blind support towards Israel remains an important ingredient of the America policy, people would keep saying that America is not impartial enough to be a go-between or the mediator. Unless America is completely impartial I doubt if enough concession will be made to the Palestinians allow for a peace settlement.

Finally, during your short stay in Nigeria you must have assessed the developments here. Can you rate Nigeria's democracy viz-a-viz the Pakistani-Nigerian relations?

Nigeria and Pakistan have enjoyed cordial relations for a long time and high degree of cooperation between them. We have a number of doctors and teachers working in Nigeria. Nigerians also go to Pakistan for a variety of trainings. Nigeria is the second biggest market for Pakistan in the African continent after South Africa. Pakistani exports to Nigeria have been increasing substantially in the last two years. We want to go beyond that. We want to have a more meaningful relationship. Our aim is to return to a democratic rule and our president in August this year unfolded a comprehensive timetable for a return to democracy in October next year. It is a four-phased process. Phase one is completed two and there are in the process and the final will be transfer of power to elected civilian representatives in October 2002. With this development, we hope there would be a tremendous increase in our relationship.



H.E. Mr. Ikram K. Fazli, Pakistani High Commissioner

countries are nuclear powers. Meanwhile, the Afghanistan crisis is still burning. Don't you think there should be restraints on both sides?

If the situation degenerates to a war, with the nuclear capacity of both India and Pakistan, I don't want to think of the consequences. But I believe there will be restraints because it is not necessary for force to be used. But if India in the hot pursuit of the men crosses the line of control which divides India Kashmir from the rest of Kashmir under our control, force will be met with force. Our leadership has said so.

As at Wednesday morning, India alleged that your country is massing up weapons along your common border. Later in the day, your defence minister also was on the air making belligerent statements. Don't you think that the situation is already getting

issue but it ended in a deadlock. What is now the way forward?

It was a very important meeting in which 90 per cent of the talks was on the Kashmir issue. When the final agreement on the issue was reached, there was a text (communiqué) on which both sides worked. Kashmir was singled out for urgent address. But on the status of Kashmir, as we wanted it, there was a disagreement which eventually created the impression that the talks failed. But it was a major event. The two leaders met, established a relationship and had a heart-to-heart discussion.

There was the hope that this talks will continue. Immediately after, we said the Indian prime minister could come to Pakistan, so that we continue the talks. But we understand that core hardliners in India do not want the peace process to

"Our president has been on international televisions, advising India not to take any hasty step. Because if they do, as they are threatening, he did not mince words in telling them that force will be met with force".

TRUST INTERNATIONAL

AFRICA & THE MIDDLE EAST



Iranian President, Muhammad Khatami, gestures as he speaks to students at Tehran University on December 22, 2001. The embattled Khatami promised angry students that he would remain faithful to reforms but said his hands were tied in the face of opposition by powerful hardliners.

Tsvangirai accuses Mugabe of terrorism

Zimbabwean opposition leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, has accused President Robert Mugabe of resorting to "state terrorism" to secure re-election in next year's presidential poll.

Mr. Tsvangirai was addressing a convention of his Movement for Democratic Change, MDC, which is meeting in the central city of Gweru to fine-tune its leader's presidential bid.

He said Mr. Mugabe was using "rogue elements" of veterans, ruling Zanu-PF party youths and army personnel in a campaign of violence.

Mr. Tsvangirai, who has twice been arrested in recent days, said the opposition would win at the ballot box.

He welcomed US President, George W. Bush's decision to sign legislation that opens the way for sanctions against Mr. Mugabe and his supporters.

"We have never campaigned for comprehensive sanctions that would hurt the people of this country, but for sanctions against the leader," he said.

The legislation allows for travel bans on Zimbabwe's government elite and restrictions on their business dealings in the United States.

Last week, Mr. Mugabe launched his re-election bid with a call of a "real war" against his political foes.

The MDC leader accused him of stepping up his assaults on the opposition.

"It is clear that the government is determined to see to it that the presidential elections are violent. The personal safety of the individual citizen is imperilled by state terrorism," Mr. Tsvangirai told 1,200 delegates at the annual event.

UN investigator faces genocide charges

One of the former employees of the United Nations tribunal which is investigating the 1994 genocide in Rwanda is himself being accused of involvement in the massacres.

Belgian police arrested Joseph Nzabirinda on Friday on four charges of genocide, complicity in genocide, crimes against humanity, extermination and rape, the tribunal said.

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) accuses Mr. Nzabirinda, then a youth leader, of helping to kill thousands of ethnic Tutsis in

the southern province of Butare.

In particular, he is accused of being involved in the massacre of Tutsis who sought refuge in the hills near the town of Ngoma, and of the rape of three women.

The tribunal says he was working with the mayor of Ngoma commune, Joseph Kanyabashi, who is already on trial before the ICTR.

Mr. Nzabirinda, 44, has been working for the ICTR, based in the northern Tanzanian town of Arusha, as an investigator for the defence team of Sylvain Nsabimana, former prefect of Butare, who is on trial with Mr. Kanyabashi.

Rwanda's Government said earlier this month that many investigators at the tribunal were suspected of involvement in the genocide and asked the ICTR to act.

It has also accused the tribunal of inefficiency.

President Paul Kagame in a recent interview said: "Given the resources at its disposal and given so far the cases that have been concluded, one can say they're doing relatively less than is otherwise demanded by the situation or should be expected."

Kingsley Chiedu Moghalu, the spokesperson for the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, told a BBC News Online Forum earlier this week that all investigators suspected of involvement in the massacres have now been expelled from the process.



Mr. Kofi Annan, UN scribe

Israel stops Arafat from Xmas mass

The Israeli Government has said that Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, will not be permitted to attend Christmas Eve mass in Bethlehem until attacks on Israelis stop.

In a statement, Israeli authorities said that Mr. Arafat "is not acting to dismantle Palestinian terror groups or stop terror attacks against Israel".

The midnight mass is held at Saint Catherine Church in Bethlehem, next to the Basilica of the Nativity, and Mr. Arafat would have to cross Israeli territory to reach the church.

He said he will go "on foot" if his request for an escort is denied. Mr. Arafat, a Muslim, has attended the church every year since 1995.

Mr. Arafat enjoys ecumenical support among Palestinians, and his wife Suha comes from a prominent Christian family.

The Israeli Government is angry at what it sees as little effort on Mr. Arafat's part to stem the wave of suicide attacks in Israel in the past few weeks, in which 27 people died.

The ban comes despite Mr. Arafat's call to stop all

attacks against Israel, which led to clashes on Friday between supporters of militant groups and police from the Palestinian Authority.

Six Palestinians killed in clashes were buried on Saturday.

The Palestinian leader has been confined to the West Bank town of Ramallah.

"We are not restricting Arafat's religious right; he is not Christian," said an Israeli Government official.

"He simply has more important things to do with his time, like make the arrests he's pledged."

The official statement from Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon's office mentioned the killing of tourism minister Rehavam Zeevi, who was shot in a Jerusalem hotel in October.

According to an anonymous official in Mr. Sharon's office quoted by the AFP news agency, the ban was imposed because Israel believes Mr. Arafat knows where Zeevi's killers are hiding, and has not arrested them.

Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon's spokesman Raanan Gissin told Reuters news agency that Mr. Sharon

had no opinion on the matter.

"The prime minister has not voiced his opinion because Arafat is not important enough to voice an opinion on," he said.

'Rwandan troop withdrawal is a propaganda'

The government of the Democratic Republic of Congo has described as propaganda a recent announcement by Rwanda that it has pulled out half its troops from the country.

A government statement said the false declarations by the Rwandan President, Paul Kagame, were aimed at delaying the effective pullout of Rwandan forces from Congo.

President Kagame told a press conference on Wednesday that Rwandan troops in the DRC - which it said were only sent to attack Rwandan rebels who have taken sanctuary there - had been halved to about 10,000 men.

Earlier this month, the United Nations envoy in Kinshasa, Amos Namananga Ngogi, accused Rwanda of increasing its military

presence in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Libya postpones AIDS case verdicts

Verdicts in the trial of six Bulgarians accused of deliberately infecting nearly 400 Libyan children with the HIV virus have been delayed until February.

It was the second time that verdicts have been postponed in the case, which started in February.

The six Bulgarians - five nurses and a doctor - could face the death penalty if found guilty of injecting the children with HIV-contaminated blood.

The judge said the postponement was necessary "to review the files of evidence further".

The trial has provoked

strong feelings in Bulgaria after two of the defendants alleged they had been tortured and made confessions under duress.

Bulgarian Foreign Minister, Solomon Passy, has been in Libya to discuss the case with officials.

The trial has also raised concern among human rights groups who have complained about reports that HIV-contaminated plasma was discovered at a defendant's apartment while she was in police custody, and the refusal of the court to allow expert opinion from Switzerland and France.

The medics, who deny the charges, had been working at a children's hospital in the northern city of Benghazi and have been in prison for almost three years.

A Palestinian doctor and nine Libyans have also been charged in the case, in which Libya says more than 20 children have already died.

The accused are charged with "premeditated murder with the aim of undermining Libyan security". All have pleaded not guilty.

Comoros decide on autonomy

Voting has started in the Comoro Islands, in the Indian Ocean, where people are deciding in a referendum whether to grant greater autonomy to the main islands in the archipelago.

The government hopes approval will resolve a long-running secessionist crisis.

The Comoros have experienced about 20 coups or attempted coups since

independence 26 years ago.

The most recent was only a few days ago, when a small group of white and mostly French mercenaries tried to take over the poorest island, Moheli.

A BBC correspondent in the region said some Comorans have predicted that turnout for the referendum will be higher because of that attempt.

One said it had reminded people that, without a strong government, anyone could come in and take over.

Diamond clash claims five in Sierra Leone

A senior United Nations official in Sierra Leone has said that five people were killed and about 40 wounded during two days of clashes in the east of the country, in a dispute over diamond mining.

The deputy commander of the UN peacekeepers in Sierra Leone, Major General Martin Luther Agwai, said

several hundred rebels and pro-government militiamen fought each other with knives, axes and stones in the town of Koidu on Wednesday and Thursday, but the situation was now under control.

He said both sides had agreed to halt illicit diamond mining earlier this month, but a disagreement over the date led to the rioting.

TRUST INTERNATIONAL

Foreign & Diplomatic

Argentina's new leader suspends debt payments

Argentina's newly installed interim president has announced that the government is to suspend foreign debt payments, triggering the biggest default in history.

Adolfo Rodriguez Saa told Congress: "I announce that the Argentine state will suspend the payment of foreign debt. This is not a rejection of foreign debt ... but rather the first move by a rational government to deal with the foreign debt correctly".

Mr. Rodriguez Saa said he

would not devalue the national currency, the peso, nor end its peg to the US dollar - seen by financial analysts as alternative ways to deal with Argentina's enormous economic problems.

Mr. Rodriguez Saa, a 54-year-old provincial governor, was speaking immediately after being appointed to serve as replacement president for Fernando de la Rúa, who resigned last week in the wake of rioting and protests which left at least 25 people dead.

Mr. Rodriguez Saa, who smiled broadly after taking the presidential oath, will hold office until March, when national presidential elections will be held.

His appointment was approved by 169 votes to 138 after opposition parties objected to the rules that have been drawn up for those elections.

In a populist address to Congress which was regularly interrupted by cheering and applause, Mr. Rodriguez Saa said he was taking power "in one of the most difficult and dramatic contexts".

He said last week's riots showed the need for a "new style of government" which represented all Argentines, especially the poor. He pledged a "new republic" to "tackle social injustice and eliminate social conflict".

He also announced plans to create one million jobs to combat unemployment, now at 18%, as well as to distribute emergency food supplies to the needy.

The programmes would be paid for using money that would otherwise have been spent on foreign debt payments, he said.

FBI interrogates suspected terrorist

FBI investigators are interrogating a man who tried to ignite explosives in his shoe during a flight from Paris to the United States.

American Airlines flight 63 en route to Miami was escorted in to land at Boston's Logan airport by two F-15 fighter jets after the man was subdued by crew members and passengers.

The man, of Middle Eastern appearance, was travelling on British passport, issued in the name of Richard Reid in Belgium three weeks ago.

Correspondents said the incident will fuel American and British fears that so-called "sleepers" working for Osama Bin Laden's al-Qaeda network are planning to follow up the 11 September attacks with more atrocities.

The US Federal Aviation Authority had issued an advisory on terrorism ahead of the Christmas season, including a warning to watch for explosives hidden in footwear.

Philippines frees Canadian hostage

Officials in the Philippines said troops and police have freed a Canadian held for ransom for over six weeks.

They rescued the man, Pierre Belanger, after a gunfight which left two of his alleged kidnappers dead.

The government said there were no casualties among its own forces in the clash on Mindanao Island in the south of the country.

The regional police director identified Mr. Belanger's abductors as an Islamic rebel group called the Pentagon, which is still

holding an Italian priest, Giuseppe Pierantoni, seized in October.

"The victim was rescued around 0100 today (1700 GMT Saturday). The rescue was conducted by combined elements of police and the military under the national anti-kidnapping task force," said Lt. General Roy Cimatu in the southern city of Zamboanga.

He said that Mr. Belanger was "fine but very haggard" on his release.

He said more details about the mission to free Mr. Belanger would be given.



Hamid Karzai prays after being sworn-in as leader of Afghan's interim government in Kabul ... Saturday.

Afghan cabinet holds first meeting

Afghanistan's new government is holding its first meeting in the capital, Kabul, focusing on the task of reconstructing the war-ravaged country.

The interim leader, Hamid Karzai, has said the 29-member cabinet faces political oblivion unless it can succeed in bringing peace and stability to the country.

Mr. Karzai has also said he will investigate reports that United States aircraft killed 60 civilians, including a delegation of elders on their way to the inauguration ceremony in Kabul.

The US said the convoy it attacked was carrying Taliban or al-Qaeda leaders.

BBC correspondent said Mr. Karzai's administration has popular backing for the moment at least.

Yesterday, demonstrators paraded through the streets

of Kabul, lending their vocal support to the government.

"The number one priority is to maintain and further provide peace and stability for Afghanistan, to give the Afghan people an opportunity to live at absolute ease," said Mr. Karzai.

"The revival of certain industries, the revival of agriculture, schools and hospitals... there is really no area in which Afghanistan does not require assistance," he told reporters.

Several countries have already promised to help revive an economy that is in ruins after more than 20 years of war and tribal division.

The inauguration of the interim government, which will serve for six months, was attended by 2,000 tribal leaders, incoming cabinet members and foreign diplomats.

... Karzai appeals for funds

Afghanistan's new leader, Hamid Karzai, has appealed for billions of dollars in international aid to help rebuild his war-ravaged country.

"The number one priority is to maintain and further provide peace and stability for Afghanistan, to give the Afghan people an opportunity to live at absolute ease," said Mr.

Karzai. He was speaking to journalists after being sworn in as head of a 30-strong United Nations-backed government at an emotional ceremony in the capital, Kabul.

"We basically need billions of dollars to overcome the difficulties in all spheres of economic activity and the infrastructure.

ODD WORLD

Judge orders couple to share daughter's ashes

A divorced Dutch couple were ordered to share the ashes of their dead daughter by a court on Thursday after a five-month wrangle.

The father took his ex-wife to court after she refused to share the cremated remains of their 18-year-old daughter, who died in August.

The mother had planned to scatter most of the ashes at sea and keep the rest in a vial around her neck.

"The judge ordered the mother to tell the crematorium to give some of the ashes to the father to enable him to place those ashes in an urn," the Utrecht court said in a summary of its ruling.

The couple divorced in 1998 after 21 years. The daughter, who was severely handicapped, lived with her mother.

60,000 Germans forced to sleep in cars

Bavaria's worst-ever traffic jam forced at least 60,000 Germans to spend the first night of the Christmas holidays trapped in their cars, as snow and ice brought chaos to the country's roads.

A 90-mile jam on the main north-south 9 motorway on Friday night was described by a police spokesman in Bavaria, southern Germany, as "certainly the worst we have ever seen."

People were trapped in their cars for up to 14 hours as wind blew snow into drifts up to 4 feet deep, a Bavarian Interior Ministry statement said.

The police spokesman said media reports that 100,000 were affected were credible.

In neighboring Switzerland, heavy snow forced about 40 scheduled flights to and from Zurich to be canceled on Saturday, an airport spokesman said, forcing many travelers to take the three-hour rail trip from Zurich to Geneva.

Germany's meteorological office said more snow was expected in coming days, with only the northwest of the country likely to escape the worst of the weather.

Father Xmas shoots woman

A man in a Santa suit set aside his bag of gifts, drew a gun from his trademark black belt and shot a woman on a Sao Paulo street, wounding her in the wrist and face, police said.

The unidentified Santa was handing out candy to motorists stopped at a traffic light when he yanked the draw strings on his bag of sweets, pulled a revolver from his belt and fired at a woman who was entering her car parked nearby, said a spokesman at the Sao Paulo police department.

"The woman was wounded in her wrist and face but was not seriously hurt," the spokeswoman said Tuesday. She said the incident did not appear to be a botched robbery but gave no other explanation for the shooting.

A witness helped police artists draw up a composite sketch of the shooter Santa after she saw him with his beard, red suit and gloves removed. Those items, along with the gun, were recovered by police.

Local media reported the woman was involved in a paternity suit and said police were investigating the crime as a possible act of retaliation.

Butcher kills girlfriend, carves body

German police said on Thursday they had arrested a butcher after he admitted killing his girlfriend and carving her body into dozens of small pieces found scattered around the eastern city of Dresden.

State prosecutor Claus Bogner, said that the butcher, 38, had confessed to killing his girlfriend, 41, in an argument last week and then cutting her body up into small pieces found in three different spots in Dresden and elsewhere this week.

Parts of a torso, head, legs as well as internal organs such as the heart were found lying on the ground or partially buried in Dresden as well as in Kahlau, a town in the neighboring province of Brandenburg.

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BUSINESS DAY



Enter Bank of Industry: The newly appointed Managing Director, Bank of Industry Limited, Dr. Lawrence Osa-Afiana (l), Alhaji N. Akwu of the Federal Ministry of Finance, and Mr. Emmanuel Ogbuehi (OON), the Protem Chairman of the former Nigerian Industrial Development Bank Limited (NIDB) and Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Industry at NIDB's last Annual General Meeting held last Thursday, in Abuja.

Bank of Industry offers long-tenured facilities

By Ahmed Shekarau

Small, medium and large-scale entrepreneurs wishing to expand, diversify and rehabilitate their ailing industries are to enjoy long-tenured loan facilities at concessionary interest rates from the new Bank of Industry (BOI).



Joseph Sanusi, CBN Governor.

The BOI which came into existence recently will also absorb exchange risks in respect of foreign currency denominated loans that may be taken by some industries in the country.

The new industry bank formally came into being last week following the approval by the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) of the conversion of the Nigerian Industrial Development Bank (NIDB) to Bank of Industry Limited and the expansion of the Bank's Memorandum and Articles of Association to incorporate the mandates of the Nigerian Bank for Commerce and Industry (NBCI) and the

National Economic Reconstruction Fund (NERFUND).

Already, the Federal Government has offered to provide N50 billion, in addition to the assets of the former NIDB along with those of NBCI and NERFUND, for the bank's take-off.

Also, the Federal Government has since appointed Dr. Lawrence Osa-Afian, a former MD of Citizens Bank as pioneer Managing Director for the bank.

A statement signed by Mr. Waheed A. Olagunju, Secretary and Assistant General Manager, Marketing Communications, said the BOI will commence full operations in the first quarter of next year.

The statement quoted the protem chairman of NIDB

and Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Industry, Mr. Emmanuel Ogbuehi as saying that the reconstruction of the NIDB into BOI "was sponsored by the Federal Government through the Ministry of Finance Incorporated (MOFI) and the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) who jointly account for 99.9 per cent of the Bank's equity."

He said there are forty-two other shareholders made up of private individuals and corporate organisations.

Mr. Ogbuehi explained that the highly strategic enterprise was embarked upon to establish a robust and well-equipped, proactive twenty-first century organisation with new a philosophy, orientation and values as well as the requisite capacity to render world class industrial financing and advisory services.

This, he emphasised, was

vital to the rejuvenation of the nation's depressed but highly crucial manufacturing sector.

Giving details, he revealed that BOI's primary function would be the provision of financial assistance for the establishment of large, medium and small projects as well as expansion, diversification, modernisation of existing enterprises and rehabilitation of ailing industries.

Mr. Ogbuehi further stated that BOI's mandate was now broad enough to accommodate the respective functions of the three merging institutions, specifically fund mobilisation; enterprise promotion and development; project appraisal, financing, implementation, investment supervision, and loan recovery.

Adebisi assures bank customers in Ogun

From Olumide Bajulaiye, in Abeokuta

The branch manager of National Bank of Nigeria, Abeokuta, Mr. Kingsley Adebisi, has assured residents of the state of the determination of the Committee of Bank Mangers in Abeokuta to ensure a trouble-free banking environment in Ogun State.

Mr. Adebisi who also is the Secretary of the committee made the disclosure in Abeokuta to our correspondent while outlining the activities of the committee and the vision behind its formation.

His words: "the purpose behind the formation of the committee, is to discuss issues of mutual interest amongst ourselves. Issues like security of customers because one customer could destabilise the entire banking industry in Abeokuta."

"In order to avoid such, and ensure that good service is delivered to our numerous clientele in a trouble-free banking environment, we initiated the idea of forming the committee," he stressed.

As part of efforts to

make much impact on all stakeholders, Adebisi disclosed that, an end of year party will be thrown by the committee to fetes banks' customers and other stakeholders, adding that "a guest speaker will address members of the committee on banking practices, aside the end of year celebrations."

Dignitaries expected at the occasion include the state Commissioner of Police, Mr. Udom Ekpoudom, Ogun State Controller of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), among others.

Seven-up hits N8bn turnover

From Bright Ewulu, in Lagos

Seven-Up Bottling Company Plc turnover has hit N8 billion rising from its 2000 record of N6.7 billion.

Also, the company recorded improvements in profit after tax which rose from N375.8 million in 2000 to N421.2 million in the current year, as its profit before tax also spiralled N428.8 million to N587.9 million currently.

The shareholders in an annual general meeting held at the Muson Centre, Onikan, in Lagos approved the payment of N163.9 million to shareholders of the company representing 50 kobo per share.

Chairman of the company, Anwar El-Khalil speaking at the event stated that the "financial performance of the company has been very impressive, despite the adverse and difficult operating environment.

According to him "the comparison to the previous year indicates that sales went up by 20 per cent, whereas profit before tax increased by 37 per cent.

"This was achieved, primarily as a result of various cost control measures exercised by the company in improving production yields and plant efficiencies and by closely monitoring operating expenses." These measures have enabled the company in protecting margins, despite



Kola Jamodu, Industry Minister.

inflationary increases to the cost safe," he remarked.

On the general economy, he opined that some stability has now returned to the foreign exchange markets.

He maintained that high crude oil prices in the international market has helped the government ease the financial pressure on its finances, adding that despite absence of noticeable economic improvements that sectors within the fast moving consumer goods industry recorded better than average results.

He therefore posited that "in line with this trend, we anticipate that the financial results from our operations for the first six months to be encouraging."

NACCIMA advocates monthly revenue review

From Bose Musari, in Lagos

The Nigerian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA) has called on the and the Revenue Mobilisation Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC) to always make monthly submissions to the Federal Ministry of Finance on matters bordering on revenue allocations.

According to NACCIMA, the commission should make submissions to the Federal Ministry of Finance, National Planning Commission (NPC) and Federation Account Allocation Committee monthly meetings in respect of past estimated and actual allocations for every state and local governments from the Federation Account.

This, the Association said is for the purpose of ensuring compliance with banks' laid down procedures.

In a recent quarterly publication of the association, NACCIMA maintained that the vertical allocation from the distributable pool, among the three tiers of government should be decentralised by

giving a higher percentage allocation to the states.

NACCIMA is also of the opinion that the allocation for derivation principle should be increased from its current 13 per cent.

"Other allocation principles should be reviewed in order to favour the poorer, smaller and newly created states," NACCIMA said, adding that allocations of VAT revenue to the states should be reviewed periodically.



Hamman Tukur, RMAFC Chairman.

BUSINESS DAY

Firms add 15 MW to Abuja power supply

By Ahmed Shekarau

Efforts to eliminate power outages in Abuja and other satellite towns of the Federal Capital Territory received another boost at the weekend, as Vice President Atiku Abubakar commissioned a 15 megawatts (MW) emergency power generation plant for the territory.

The new plant, the first indigenously built, independent power station in the country, was built by Geometric Power Company and Renatech Nigeria

Limited.

Speaking shortly before he switched on the power plant to supply electricity to the FCT, the Vice President said the 15 MW power station would help to relieve the fluctuation problem in the capital territory.

He stressed that "very soon, other higher capacity gas-powered stations will be commissioned to add to the available power in the country."

Speaking earlier at the

occasion, the Minister of State for Power and Steel, Malam Murtala Aliyu stated that the provision of the 15 MW power plant is very special to addressing Abuja's power problem which he said "requires a peculiar solution."

According to the minister, the initial provision of 90 MVA installed capacity at Apo-Abuja and the 132 KV Shiroro/Abuja double circuit transmission line are already over street.

The capital city's power problem, according to the

minister, requires emergency power generating projects like the Geometric/Renatech project, to eliminate outages in the city.

Malam Aliyu however emphasised that isolated power projects like the newly commissioned plant have short term solutions to the nagging power supply problems in the FCT.

According to him, "the long term solution lies with the provision of 3320 KV double circuit line transmission line from Shiroro to Abuja."

The minister commended the two companies for the project, stressing that: "By this feat our Nigerian engineers have demonstrated their capacity and ingenuity to compete even with the best in the world."

Horizon, indigenous firm, joins offshore operators

Nigeria's bid to join the league of deep water off-shore oil production countries received another boost last week with the signing of two more production sharing contracts on the deep water off-shore exploration and production.

The two new contracts were signed last week in Abuja between the Nigerian Petroleum Development Company (NPDC), a subsidiary of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), and Nigeria Agip Oil Company (NAOC) on one hand; and between the NPDC and Petrobras Nigeria alongside

Horizon, the first indigenous company to join in the production sharing contracts.

The NNPC had three weeks ago signed a contract with three firms on the OPL 250. The three firms are Chevron Nigeria Deepwater Limited, Shell Nigeria Offshore Prospecting Limited and Brasoil Services Nigeria a subsidiary of Petrobras.



Gaius-Obaseki, NNPC GMD.

Horizon, a mainly northern Nigerian oil company is the first indigenous firm to be licensed to operate in the year 2000 Licensing Round the upstream oil sector contracts. Horizon is in partnership with Petrobras Nigeria Limited, a subsidiary of Petrole Brasilia, which is the world's leading company in deepwater offshore oil exploration, both in terms of technology and resources for the operations.

Speaking shortly after the signing ceremony, the Managing Director of Petrobras Nigeria, Mr. Samir Passos Award said the event was remarkable, particularly because the OPL 324, was a very challenging bloc and territory where there is no any player, not even Brazil.

He however assured that with Petrobras' experience in deep water offshore exploration and production, Nigeria would further enhance its crude oil production capacity.

Earlier on, the Chief Operating Officer of Agip who flow in from Italy, Mr. Cao had also assured that NAOC will see to it that Nigeria's production capacity hits 1.5 million barrels per day (bpd) from its 1 million bpd capacity as at 1999.

He said with the signing of the agreement, NAOC with NPDC will mobilise to site as from today, Monday, December 24, 2001 to commence operations.

Also speaking at the occasion, the Group Managing Director of the NNPC, Mr. Jackson Gaius-Obaseki said the profit sharing ratio on these new contracts, like the first contract signed three weeks ago, will be 30:70 in favour of the NNPC and the contractors respectively.

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BUSINESS DAY

Nigerian Stock Dealings (NSE) Price List as at Friday (21/12/2001)

COMPANY	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	DEALS	VOLUME	VALUE
7UP	5.09	5.00	0.09	8	41,300	202,000.00
ACCESSBANK	1.30	1.30	0.00	1	400	520.00
AFPRINT	0.80	0.82	0.02	6	50,000	41,000.00
AFRIBANK	8.81	9.00	0.19	14	45,582	409,854.83
AFRPAINTS	0.72	0.72	0.00	1	500	360.00
AGIP	32.60	33.05	0.45	26	25,447	843,785.29
AIICO	3.14	2.99	0.15	2	10,000	29,900.00
ALEX	2.80	2.80	0.00	2	9,000	25,200.00
ALUMACO	0.84	0.84	0.00	16	214	179.76
AP	19.34	19.34	0.00	14	43,787	846,840.58
ASHAKACEM	22.60	21.99	0.61	48	371,162	8,036,031.26
BATA	0.38	0.38	0.00	2	34,400	13,072.00
BERGER	2.70	2.59	0.11	8	11,666	30,284.64
C&ILEASING	1.31	1.25	0.06	4	98,000	125,380.00
CADBURY	29.21	30.67	1.46	87	786,651	23,844,295.46
CAP	2.74	2.80	0.06	2	50,000	140,000.00
CAPOIL	0.39	0.39	0.00	1	2,000	780.00
CFAO	3.35	3.51	0.16	7	12,378	41,541.18
CHARTERED	4.35	4.35	0.00	4	2,665,806	11,596,251.75
CMB	0.95	0.95	0.00	13	101,770	96,681.50
COOPBANK	1.90	1.90	0.00	7	67,000	132,761.00
COSTAIN	0.70	0.68	0.02	1	2,000	1,360.00
CUTIX	2.66	2.66	0.00	4	11,451	29,159.66
DELTGLAS	5.00	5.01	0.01	1	2,000	10,020.00
DNMEYER	10.50	10.50	0.00	2	1,500	15,750.00
DUNLOP	3.53	3.52	0.01	24	89,052	313,826.19
ELLAHLAKES	0.50	0.50	0.00	1	2,000	1,000.00
ENAMELWA	3.52	3.51	0.01	1	150	526.50
ETERNAOIL	1.33	1.32	0.01	4	8,800	11,679.51
EVANSMED	1.53	1.53	0.00	5	1,567	2,397.51
FIRSTALUM	1.45	1.52	0.07	4	78,000	118,560.00
FIRSTBANK	23.99	24.60	0.61	205	459,099	11,022,765.66
FLOURMIL	15.00	15.10	0.10	55	151,003	2,272,124.30
FSB	8.70	8.98	0.28	35	247,990	2,175,239.20
GCAPPA	4.55	4.55	0.00	1	249	1,132.95
GUARANTY	6.60	6.65	0.05	78	1,176,305	7,758,454.30
GUINNESS	33.01	33.80	0.79	29	87,565	2,939,395.21
HALLBANK	3.79	3.78	0.01	2	2,100	7,958.00
IGL	4.22	4.22	0.00	20	284,759	1,202,128.98
IMB	1.06	1.03	0.03	16	363,006	375,982.74
INLANDBANK	1.05	1.09	0.04	3	46,984	51,183.04
JBERGER	44.00	44.01	0.01	1	410	18,044.10
JOHNHOLT	2.00	1.91	0.09	2	9,658	18,446.78
JOSBREW	0.76	0.76	0.00	2	1,400	1,064.00
LASACO	1.66	1.64	0.02	2	18,000	29,820.00
LENNARDS	0.30	0.30	0.00	1	1,500	450.00
LEVBROS	27.05	27.02	0.03	93	513,692	13,881,076.50
LIZOLOFIN	0.50	0.51	0.01	1	10,000	5,100.00
LONGMAN	5.32	5.19	0.13	4	47,500	246,525.00
MANNYBANK	1.30	1.30	0.00	9	204,600	256,102.50
MAY&BAKER	2.60	2.60	0.00	2	101,200	263,120.00
MOBIL	66.50	65.05	1.45	15	9,195	606,933.25
MORISON	26	3.26	0.00	7	15,445	48,775.82
NAL	.51	3.51	0.00	26	526,881	1,806,895.75
NASCON	0.69	0.69	0.00	1	600	414.00
NB	35.01	35.10	0.09	72	1,216,984	42,601,234.38
NBC	26.25	26.00	0.25	32	41,810	1,093,559.05
NRC	2.00	2.00	0.00	1	2,065	4,130.00
NESTLE	65.00	64.03	0.97	22	120,465	7,822,788.10
NIG-GERMAN	3.10	3.10	0.00	2	1,725	5,347.50
NIGERINS	4.33	4.33	0.00	3	2,500,000	10,825,000.00
NOLCHEM	27.50	27.50	0.00	25	13,389	368,257.19
OKOMUOIL	9.45	9.45	0.00	2	9,340	88,263.00
OLUGLASS	1.66	1.66	0.00	1	400	664.00
ORIENTBANK	1.45	1.45	0.00	1	350	507.50
OWENABANK	2.31	2.22	0.09	10	17,720	40,483.20
PREMBREW	1.24	1.24	0.00	1	500	620.00
PREMPAINTS	0.92	0.96	0.04	1	5,002	4,801.92
PRESTIGE	2.12	2.15	0.03	2	7,200	15,480.00
PZ	10.55	10.70	0.15	55	270,256	2,869,817.20
ROYALEX	4.52	4.50	0.02	6	19,500	87,695.34
RTBRISCOE	3.23	3.39	0.16	3	1,800	5,996.40
SAVANNA	1.01	0.96	0.05	11	140,932	139,321.36
SCOA	2.65	2.65	0.00	1	200	530.00
SKBEECHAM	1.97	2.05	0.08	9	74,441	152,028.21
TEXACO	63.00	63.10	0.10	13	7,957	501,391.80
TIB	2.18	2.18	0.00	8	4,200	9,156.00
TOTAL	65.01	67.00	1.99	13	9,567	637,747.08
TRADEBANK	1.19	1.19	0.00	5	5,000,988	5,701,175.72
TRIPLEG	1.07	1.07	0.00	1	3,000	3,210.00
UAC-PROP	4.45	4.65	0.20	65	5,778,93	25,581,284.00
UACN	3.77	3.89	0.12	62	510,713	1,937,171.87
UBA	11.00	10.51	0.49	56	168,272	1,839,788.55
UBN	24.91	24.9	0.00	49	129,400	3,223,354.00
UNIC	1.71	1.63	0.08	9	35,530	57,913.90
UNIDONDON	15.55	16.32	0.77	3	9,500	153,165.00
UNIPETROL	50.00	50.00	0.00	33	22,990	1,149,427.50
UNTL	4.00	4.00	0.00	4	4,500	18,000.00
UTB	3.24	3.24	0.00	1	1,000	3,250.00
UTC	0.99	0.99	0.00	2	3,110	3,078.90
VITAFOAM	4.30	4.35	0.05	19	175,250	774,606.60
VONO	1.87	1.87	0.00	1	320	598.40
WAPCO	23.52	23.00	0.62	20	21,070	488,889.00
WEMABANK	3.32	3.45	0.13	35	173,546	592,502.37
TOTAL				1,589	26,406,648	200,752,363.08

Nigerian Stock Dealings (NSE) Gainers/Losers as at Friday (21/12/2001)

Gainers			
COMPANY	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE
TOTAL	65.01	67.00	1.99
CADBURY	29.21	30.67	1.46
GUINNESS	33.01	33.80	0.79
UNIONDICON	15.55	16.32	0.77
FIRSTBANK	23.99	24.60	0.61
AGIP	32.60	33.05	0.45
FSB	8.70	8.98	0.58
UAC-PROP	4.45	4.65	0.20
AFRIBANK	8.81	9.00	0.19
CFAO	3.35	3.51	0.16
RTBRISCOE	3.23	3.39	0.16
PZ	10.55	10.70	0.15
WEMABANK	3.32	3.45	0.13
UACN	3.77	3.89	0.12
FLOURMILL	15.00	15.10	0.10
SKBEECHAM	1.97	2.05	0.08
FIRTALLUM	1.45	1.52	0.07
CAP	2.74	2.80	0.06
VITAFOAM	4.30	4.35	0.05
GUARANTY	6.60	6.65	0.05
INALNDBANK	1.05	1.09	0.04
PREMPAINTS	0.92	0.96	0.04
PRESTIGE	2.12	2.15	0.03
AFPRINT	0.80	0.82	0.02
LIZOLOFIN	0.50	0.51	0.01

Losers			
COMPANY	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE
MOBIL	66.50	65.05	1.45
NESTLE	65.00	64.03	0.97
WAPCO	23.62	23.00	0.62
ASHAKACEM	22.60	21.99	0.61
UBA	11.00	10.51	0.49
NBC	26.25	26.00	0.25
AIICO	3.14	2.99	0.15
LONGMAN	5.32	5.19	0.13
BERGER	2.70	2.59	0.11
JOHNHOLT	2.00	1.91	0.09
7UP	5.09	5.00	0.09
OWENABAN	2.31	2.22	0.09
UNIC	1.71	1.63	0.08
C&ILEASING	1.31	1.25	0.06
SAVANNA	1.01	0.96	0.05
LEBVROS	27.05	27.02	0.03
IMB	1.06	1.03	0.03
LASACO	1.66	1.64	0.02
ROYALEX	4.52	4.50	0.02
COSTAIN	0.70	0.68	0.02
ENAMELWA	3.52	3.51	0.01
DUNLOP	3.53	3.52	0.01
ETERNAOIL	1.33	1.32	0.01

Summary of Transactions

	OPENING	CLOSING	% AGE CHANGE	
MKT. CAP.	642,317,943,778.92	644,561,584,008.09	0.35	
INDEX	10,859.44	10,897.37	0.35	
DEALS	VOLUME	VALUE	No. OF COMPANIES	
	1,589	24,406,648	200,752,363.08	94

Source: NSE, Abuja Area Office

Total Plc. led gainers at NSE on Friday

Trading reports collected from Abuja Area Office of the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) on Friday, indicated that a total of 24.41 million shares valued at N200.75 million in 1,589 deals were traded on the floors of the exchange.

There were no transactions in the Industrial Loans/Preference Stocks sector and the Federal Government Development stocks sector.

Price Movement:

The Nigerian Stock Exchange All-Share Index closed that day at 10,897.37 an increase of 0.35 percent. The index opened at 10,859.44, while the market capitalisation closed at N644.56 billion, a decrease of 0.35 percent, it opened at N642.32 billion.

The bears led on the floor with a total of 23 companies losing and 25 companies gaining in their share prices.

Gains were recorded in the Petroleum Marketing, Food/Beverages & Tobacco, Breweries, Banking, Real Estate, Conglomerates, Automobile & Tyre, Healthcare, Industrial/Domestic Products, Chemical & Paints, Insurance and the Textiles sub sectors.

Total Plc led the price gainers, as it appreciated by 199 kobo to close the day at N67.00 per share, followed by Cadbury Plc which appreciated by 146 kobo to close at N30.67 per share.

Other price gainers include Guinness (79 kobo); Uniondicon (77 kobo); Firstbank (61 kobo); Agip (45 kobo); FSB (28 kobo); UAC Prop (20 kobo); Afribank (19 kobo); CFAO and Rtriscoe (16 kobo apiece); PZ (15 kobo); Wemabank (13 kobo); UACN (12 kobo) and Flourmill (10 kobo).

Losses were recorded in the Petroleum Marketing, Food/Beverages & Tobacco, Building Materials, Banking, Insurance, Printing and Publishing, Chemical & paints, Conglomerates, Managed Fund, Construction, Industrial/Domestic Products and the Automobile & Tyre sub sectors.

Mobil Plc led the price losers, dropping by 145 kobo to close at N65.05 per share followed by Nestle Food Plc, which lost 97 kobo, to close at N64.03 per share.

Other price losers include WAPCO (62 kobo); Ashakacem (61 kobo); UBA (49 kobo); NBC (25 kobo); AIICO (15 kobo); Longman (13 kobo); Berger (11 kobo); Johnholt, Seven-Up and Owenabank (9 kobo apiece); Unic (8 kobo); C&Ileasing (6 kobo); Savanna (5

Star Interview

Dan Maraya Jos: "I have made over 1,000 records."

Alhaji Adama Dan Maraya Jos sees himself not so much as a performing musician but as a developer of a Hausa tradition and an accomplished musician par excellence. In this interview with our Jos correspondent, Buhari Bello, he speaks on how he began his Musical career, his favourite musical instruments, and the problem of copyright in Nigeria. Excerpts:

What really inspired you into music?

It all started when I was a child, I actually inherited it from my father who used to be a royal singer at the palace. So when I grew up, I discovered that was his main occupation, and I inherited it from him. But along the line, I left that kind of music and developed my own music with the instrument popularly known among the Hausas as "Kuntiki".

Is there any difference between this kind of music and others?

Actually the only difference in the instrument is used for the music. Kuntiki is a unique one, but one can make all kinds of music with it. For example, this kind of musical instrument, has only one rope which is not unlike the rope of the Guitar.

Can you tell us the source of this kind of musical instrument?

Well, originally, the instrument came from Hausa land. It used to be music played by boys and girls, who are celebrating marriage, or marking a naming ceremony. Infact, up till date, the Hausa use it in celebrating one event or the other.

How can you describe the development of such a musical tradition in today's Nigeria. Is the tradition developing or declining?

Honestly, from all indications, one cannot say that we have developed from what it used to be, because there is lack of patriotism among our people. I say this because the Hausa



Alhaji Dan Maraya Jos explaining a point during the interview

singers are not well taken care of in the cultural affairs of their areas, and the nation in particular.

I think we can do much better if the society recognizes the importance of this legacy, because such music can be used in the process of mass mobilization, advertising and promotion, and this can be effective in enlightening the public on a number of issues

and policies.

Can you remember the first album you released?

Actually, my first music was the song I did for bus conductors which was called Karen mato.

What motivated you into making a song for the bus conductors?

Well, I made the song because at that time I was always travelling from one place to another. For in-

stance, a Journey from Jos to Maiduguri at that time usually took us between seven to eight days when there was no tarred road. I used to entertain them on the road, and sometime, if the vehicle developed a fault on the road, I usually played the music for them while they affected repairs on the vehicle. Sometimes I may decide to continue. I may decide to disembark on the road and come back home, after serenading them on the road.

How many albums have you released since you began a career in music?

Actually so far I have made over 1,000 records since I began a career in music. And for now, I equally have about 62 different albums that I am yet to release to the public.

When do we expect those albums?

I hope to release them to the public when I get the means and the opportunity to do so. I said so simply because we discovered that it is no longer profitable to produce a song in Nigeria today. You see, sometimes companies invite us to make songs for them, but at the end of the day, you discover that we are not given our due commissions.

The situation is even more painful with the high level of piracy, and the activities of those who sell our products without our knowledge. Because



Alhaji Dan Maraya Jos

of these reasons, I decided to keep my songs for now hoping that things would change.

What is your ambition in music and have you achieved it?

Honestly, one can only thank the Almighty for his blessing and wisdom. For me, I never adopted it to make money, but I was doing it as a hobby. I have made my fortune, and one can only thank God for everything because, today, I am recognised on account of my music.

How is the issue of copyright in Nigeria affecting your profession?

The situation is terrible because they used our talent and creativity to make money and leave us the way we are. In fact, in some cases you spend

spoiling the results of our good work.

What do you think should be done to protect your work against piracy?

For now the only body we depend on is the Performing Musicians Association of Nigeria (P.M.A.N) and the body is trying its best in protecting our collective interest in this regard.

Some people are of the opinion that musicians should be used in mass-mobilisation and the projection of peace and unity among Nigerians, now that its cohesion is being threatened? In what way can your songs be instrumental in this regard?

Well, I think musicians all over the world are instrumental in this context. For instance, after the Nigeria civil war, some of us were instrumental in encouraging the Nigerian soldiers through our songs. In the past, some of us were used in creating awareness on certain government policies and programmes like the Operation Feed the Nation, among others. So, I think there is a need to encourage the local singers because they played a vital role in the unification of the nation.

Honestly, one can only thank the Almighty for his blessing and wisdom. For me, I never adopted it to make money, but I was doing it as a hobby. I have made my fortune, and one can only thank God for everything because, today, I am recognised on account of my music.

more then five years without getting a return on the record you personally produced, because those who specialise in piracy and copyright are the ones

Star Feature

Three great royals of the North-West!

Umaru Nagwamatse of Kontagora, Queen Yargoje of ancient Zamfara, and Mohammed Kanta of Kebbi, are three royals of the North-West, who founded cities, and share a number of interesting similarities. Tadaferua Ujorha, recently enquired into their fascinating backgrounds.

Nagwamatse (b:1806) of Kontagora, Queen Yargoje (1310-1350) of ancient Zamfara, and Kanta of Kebbi (1516-1554) are memorable figures that flourished just a while ago. Not much is known at present about the career of Queen Yargoje, but substantial bits of information are available on Umaru Nagwamatse, the adventurous and bold Sarkin Sudan, and Scion of the Sokoto ruling family. He was the tenth son of Abubakar Atiku, the third Sarkin Musulmi of the caliphate.

Both Umaru Nagwamatse, Queen Yargoje and Kanta of Kebbi hailed from the North-Western part of what is now known as Nigeria. Indeed the areas they hailed from are virtually contiguous.

One tradition indicates that Umaru Nagwamatse attempted to subdue many areas of the old Zamfara Kingdom and bring them under his personal supervision, and this naturally encourages one to explore the similarities between these eminents.

From the 15th century, Zamfara Kingdom was one of the Kingdoms that made up the old Sokoto Caliphate and its first capital was located at Dutsi. However, Queen Yargoje relocated the capital to Kuyambana, a thickly forested zone to the South-West, and this area is today believed to be somewhere in Dansadau, a part of present day Zamfara State. On the other hand Umaru Nagwamatse is believed to be the founder

of Kontagora. One tradition holds that the name Kontagora emerged from a discussion which seemed to have involved Umaru Nagwamatse. On the other hand, Mohammed Kanta is regarded as the founder of Kebbi.

Apparently, an attempt was made to fetch water from a well, and someone seemed to have exclaimed "mukwanta-gora-nan" meaning "lay down the gourd here" or words to that effect. According to tradition it was from this event that the name of "Kontagora" came into being. Tales surrounding the origin of towns are often rooted in lore, drama and mastery and is very much so in this case.

Umaru Nagwamatse was a bold warrior and adventurer, who embarked upon a career of conquest among many groups, which grew to include the Kambari and the Gwari.

Another tradition holds that in the wake of his conquests, Umaru Nagwamatse established the "sansanin Kontagora" (i.e. the war camp of Kontagora) on the Kontagora River, which eventually developed into the town that now goes by the name Kontagora. Thus Queen Yargoje, Umaru Nagwamatse, and Mohammed Kanta are similar in terms of the fact that the trio founded communities, and the military significance of these new communities was upper most in the mind of this group of founders.

A terracotta figurine was recently unearthed, and it seems to be a

representation of Queen Yargoje, according to some sources. The figure shows a Queen of remarkable beauty sitting quite regally. A tradition posits that Queen Yargoje was a very powerful ruler too. It also holds that her reign ushered in an era of peace and progress to the kingdom. Queen Yargoje was the only Queen in a long line of Kings which included Dakka, Kakai-Kakai, and Dudufaru. Something of the peace and serene quality of her reign is seen in the Terracotta which is lofty and compelling in its simple presentation. Clearly Queen Yargoje was a dynamic figure, and Umaru Nagwamatse also possesses this quality too. The Caliph of Sokoto had to recall Nagwamatse to Sokoto in 1851, and this was on account of Nagwamatse's expansionist activities in Zamfara, which portrayed him as a strong-willed and determined character.

Also the famous rebellion of Mohammed Kanta was significant in the formation of the state of Kebbi.

These royals dwelled in a land, which was typical Savannah. This beautifully unfolding horizon naturally inspires the adventurous quality in man, and encourages him to briskly set about exploring his universe. This is applicable



This modern Queen Amina might provide a fair, but regal, impression of Queen Yargoje. The head-dress, the sword, and the majesty of the dress are important in this regard.

to Queen Yargoje, just as it equally applies to Umaru Nagwamatse, Sarkin Sudan of Kontagora and Mohammed Kanta of Kebbi.

On the other hand, the

circumstances, which allowed for a Queen to manifest in the old Zamfara Kingdom, are not very clear, and one cannot ignore this in exploring the life and activities of these three

royals. Indeed the appearance of a Queen in Ancient Zamfara seems to be the exception, rather than the rule. However, the origins of the monarchy at Kontagora and Kebbi are fairly clear.

From the 15th century, Zamfara Kingdom was one of the Kingdoms that made up the old Sokoto Caliphate and its first capital was located at Dutsi. However, Queen Yargoje relocated the capital to Kuyambana, a thickly forested zone to the South-West, and this area is today believed to be somewhere in Dansadau, a part of present day Zamfara State. On the other hand Umaru Nagwamatse is believed to be the founder of Kontagora. One tradition holds that the name Kontagora emerged from a discussion, which seemed to have involved Umaru Nagwamatse. On the other hand, Mohammed Kanta is regarded as the founder of Kebbi.

NEWS

Al-Mustapha commends Faseun

From Jamilah Nuhu Musa,
in Kano

Dr. Frederick Iyiola Faseun has been commended for his call on the Federal Government to release General Bamaiyi, Major Hamza Al-Mustapha and others standing trial for attempted murder of Chief Alex Ibru.

Alhaji Hadi Al-Mustapha, the younger brother of Major Al-Mustapha, gave the commendation in a press statement made available to *Daily Trust* in Kano at the weekend.

According to him, "it is commendable that Faseun has joined the forces seeking for fairness and justice in the trial. This shows that not all the Yorubas are happy over the continued detention of Al-Mustapha. And certainly Dr. Faseun has taken us by surprise in the sense that he has now seen the light and has joined the league of true Nigerians who have the interest of Nigeria at heart."

Alhaji Al-Mustapha also commended the likes of Chief Gani Fawehinmi who have also been in the vanguard of ensuring justice to all irrespective of their religions, tribes or geographical locations.

He stated that if government could free Ganiyu Adams and Faseun, "it is necessary for it to, in the interest of national unity, justice and equality, effect the unconditional release of Bamaiyi and others so that the impression does not subsist that they are suffering because they are Northerners."



Frederick Faseun



Vice-President Atiku Abubakar (r), going through some documents with the SGF, Chief Ufot Ekaette, during the Federal Executive Council (FEC) meeting held at the State House, Abuja... recently.

Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje

Electoral Act is anti-people – Activist

From Mamman Akpena,
in Lokoja

The Electoral Act recently assented to by the President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, has been condemned as "anti-people and capable of derailing our nascent democratic experiment."

A pro-democracy

activist and chairman of Democratic Sustenance (DS) in Kogi State, Barrister Shaibu Ocheni, stated this in Idah, Kogi State, in an interview with *Daily Trust*.

According to him, "President Obasanjo's attitude in the last two years only goes to prove that the dictatorial part of him has refused to die. The nation must reject the Electoral Act with all vehemence as allowing the bill to stay is tantamount to killing alternative voices."

Barrister Shaiabu, who particularly picked holes with the section 80 (1) said, "in this age and millennium when one-party dictatorship

has been discredited and discarded, it is shameful that we are treading the route."

He accused the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) of failing the nation, arguing that "a government that cannot commit about N10 billion needed to revive the Ajaokuta Steel Company but can conveniently spend N50 billion on a cosmetic project like the stadium in Abuja is clearly not interested in the people's well-being."

Barrister Shaibu urged the emerging political associations to team up with the National Assembly by ensuring that the section that precludes them from contesting elections at all levels is expunged from the Electoral Act through massive protests and rallies across the country.

The pro-democracy activist disclosed that his group will put everything in place to back any form of rally against the bill and warned the other two political parties to be weary of the section 80 (1) as the ruling party is keen on implementing a hidden agenda.

Speaking on the proposed hike in prices of petroleum products, the activist noted that "the ruling party has no vision, so I am not surprised about the proposed hike as all they are interested in is to remain in power."

He also berated the Federal Government for cancelling the former governor of old Kano State, Alhaji Abubakar Rimi's contract with the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN), saying "if Rimi, who is in the same party with Mr. President can be denied airtime, you can only imagine what would befall people from rival parties come 2003."

Tor Tiv calls for sober reflections

From Terna Doki,
in Makurdi

The paramount ruler of Tiv people and Tor Tiv (IV), HRH Dr. Alfred Akawe Torkula, has enjoined all Tiv sons and daughters to use this year's Christmas and New Year celebrations as times for sober reflections.

The Tor Tiv, who said this in Gboko at the weekend, explained that the Tiv Traditional Council (TTC's) decision was to enable the Tiv nation to introspect on the unfortunate crises involving the Tiv people and their neighbours. According to him, the unprecedented destruction of lives and property following the military invasion of Benue State "calls for sober reflections and prayers rather than the usual merriment associated with end of year festivities."

Dr. Torkula, who is the chairman of the Benue State Council of Chiefs, lamented the misfortunes that have befallen his subjects under the leadership of the Obasanjo Presidency, saying: "For over eight months, the killings of Tiv people in Nasarawa, Taraba and Plateau States have thrived unabatedly." Declaring that the volume of destruction to lives and property of Tiv people by hostile neighbours remain the darkest moments in Tiv history, the paramount ruler opined that "it is difficult to forget the nightmarish experiences, especially as what has been lost in the crises is irreparable."

The Tor Tiv stated that it was, therefore, imperative for all Tiv people to use the Christmas and New Year period to pray that God may intervene in the situation and bring succour to the families the bereaved.

Minister faults budget cut

By Tashikmah Hallah &
Mhii Samuel

Minister of Water Resources, Alhaji Muktari Shagari, at the weekend in Abuja faulted "the federal authorities responsible for the preparation of the budget" for slashing his ministry's 2002 budget proposal.

The minister, who did not specify the initial figure submitted to the said "authorities", explained that the proposal has been reduced to N30 billion for the 2002 fiscal year.

Alhaji Shagari, who spoke during a meeting with the chief executives of River Basin Development Authorities, warned them to be prudent in the management of monies released to them in order to make for greater impact.

The minister equally warned managing directors under his ministry not to go to the National Assembly to lobby for the increase in sectoral allocation, saying the ministry would consider it a serious offence for anyone to go to the National Assembly to lobby for increase in funding.

"If we learn of it, we will take severe actions," he added.

Shagari, who explained that the reduction in the ministry's budget proposal emanated from the vision of the president, counselled

that: "We must have confidence that the president knows what is right for us. It will amount to deception to raise people's hopes and expectations with huge budgets only to get cash strapped along the way. This government is one that prefers to tell the people the truth."

It will be recalled that the Ministry of Water Resources was one of the three sectors to which a special funding was made available in the 2001 appropriation Act, the others were the Ministry of Works and Housing as well as that of Power and Steel. If the proposal gets the assent of the National Assembly, it would be less than half of the ministry's N63 billion budget for this year.



Alhaji Muktari Shagari

Of the N63 billion appropriated to the ministry for this year, Alhaji Shagari explained that about 70 per cent of the amount has been released, adding that he has received confirmation from the Ministry of Finance that the remaining 30 per cent would be released before the year ends.

Emir urges subjects to support govt

By Sarah O. Ede

The Emir of Keffi, Alhaji Chindo Yamusa II, has enjoined his subjects to cooperate with the state government in its effort to develop the state.

Speaking at a dinner party in his palace in Keffi, to mark the end of the Ramadan, the Emir urged his subjects to equally check the activities of anti-social elements who may wish to disturb public peace.

He advised the people to also thank God for his mercies, saying "God deserves our thanks for his benevolence and we should also implore him to forgive us our sins and give us abundant rain so that our farmers can farm."

Also speaking at the occasion, the chairman of Keffi Local Government

Area, Capt. Ibrahim Abdullahi (rtd), urged the people of Keffi to use the lessons of Ramadan to evolve a truly pluralistic society in which differences are not only tolerated but used as a sources of strength.

The council chairman additionally called on his people to use the occasion to purify their souls, uphold the great virtues of peace and consolidate their relationships with their neighbours in an effort to build a better nation.

In another development, a group called the Concerned Citizens of Keffi (C.C.K.) has, in a goodwill message to the Nasarawa State Governor, Alhaji Abdullahi Adamu, commended him for his developmental strides and urged him to continue as the people are behind him.

NEWS

Briefs Lagos

The Nigeria Police Force (NFP) has smashed a 419 international syndicate and recovered a large sum of money alleged to have been fraudulently obtained from a Nigerian businesswoman (names withheld).

Addressing crime reporters at the weekend in Lagos, Haz Iwendu, the Force Public Relations Officer (FPRO), said the recovered money would be returned to the victim this week at a press conference to be hosted by the police, as well as officials of the Central Bank and two unnamed commercial banks.

Abuja

The Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), has given the management of New Nigerian Newspapers two weeks to offset salary arrears owed journalists in its employ or risk being shut down by the union.

The National President of the union, Mr. Smart Adeyemi, who was speaking at a media dinner organised by the Minister of Information and National Orientation, Prof. Jerry Gana, in Abuja recently, emphasised the need for adequate and timely remuneration of journalists to enable them discharge their duties adequately.

"People complain that journalists collect brown envelopes. Well, if their salaries are not paid as at when due, they will even collect red envelopes," he said.

Port Harcourt

Governor Peter Odili of Rivers State has blamed youths' restiveness in the state on injustices and bad government policies deliberately designed to truncate development in the South-South region.

He stated this when the special security committee on oil producing areas led by its Chairman, Lt. Gen. Alexander Ogomudia, paid him a courtesy visit at the Government House in Port Harcourt, the River State Capital.

Ibadan

The Oyo State governor, Alhaji Lam Adesina, has decried the state of insecurity in Nigeria and called on the Nigeria Police to be more committed to securing the lives and property of Nigerians.

Alhaji Adesina, who made the observation at the official commissioning of the new secretariat of Ogbomoso South Local Government Area of the state, noted that the spate of car-snatching, burglaries and assassinations was a pointer to the inefficiency of the Nigeria Police.

Government is committed to food production - Agric Minister

By Joseph Aiyejoto

The Minister of Agriculture, Alhaji Adamu Bello, has reiterated government's commitment to the acceleration of food and industrial crops production in the country to meet domestic and export needs.

Alhaji Adamu Bello made this disclosure in a keynote address presented at the weekend during the commissioning and handing over of 450 motorcycles to all the states Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs). He stated that government has noted with concern the problems being experienced by state governments in reach-

ing out to farmers effectively with proven technology and relevant extension messages. Hence, the decision to support them with necessary facilities such as transport, equipment and tools for effective delivery of extension service.

According to the Minister, who was represented by the Minister of State for Agriculture, Dr. Chris Agbobu, strengthening of agricultural extension service will bring about increased production, higher productivity, food security and improvements in the living standard of the rural populace. He added that agricultural extension is responsible for the transfer of improved agricultural technology from research to farmers, and providing feedback to research on farmers' problems with a view to finding solutions to such problems.

The motorcycles, according to the minister, were part of the package of assistance being provided by the Federal Government to radically improve extension delivery in

the country. The motorcycles are to be used strictly by extension agents to reach farmers in each state of the federation, including Abuja, the minister emphasised.

While the seven coastal states, which were two months ago given speed boats, received five motorcycles each, the remaining 29 states and the Federal Capital Territory received 12 motorcycles each. The total value of the 450 motorcycles, which the Federal Government provided under the Ag-

ricultural Extension Improvement Scheme, is N81 million

"These motorcycles should be used for the exact purpose for which they are meant i.e strengthening agricultural extension services through mobility so that our genuine concern for Nigerian farmers would bear abundant fruits through increased/improved agricultural productivity," the minister said. He further urged state governments to make concerted efforts to maintain the mini-

mum extension agent/farmer ratio recommended for effective extension delivery. Equally charged state governments not to allow the motorcycles and other facilities to suffer disuse through neglect or poor maintenance.

"We must all cultivate maintenance culture," he said adding that "government is concerned about the plight of farmers, and everything must be done to see desired improvements in the agricultural sector and hence the quality of life of the rural populace."



Alh. Adamu Bello

Nigeria, South Africa sign MOU on coal development

Nigeria and South Africa have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the development of Nigeria's coal industry, the Minister of Solid Minerals Development, Mr. Godwin Kanu Agabi, has said.

Speaking during the signing ceremony, the minister reiterated the present administration's resolve to fully exploit and develop the vast solid minerals deposits in the country.

Assuring that President Obasanjo was committed to the mineral sector development, Mr. Agabi cited the establishment of the

Presidential Committee on the Accelerated and Sustainable Development of Nigeria's Solid Minerals Potentials as a testimony of the President's support for the industry and urged LSC Consortium, the South African company, to live up to the contractual agreement.

In his remarks, the leader of the visiting team, Dr. Siphwe Cele of ABSA Bank of South Africa, assured the minister that his organisation would provide the skill, technology and finance for the development of Nigerian coal towards economic growth.

Minister reiterates FG's commitment to gender equality

By Habiba Adamu and Sarah Ede

The issues of gender equality would continue to receive adequate attention from the Federal Government as women are important partners in the task of national development, the Minister of Women Affairs and Youth Development, Hajiya Aisha Isma'il, has said.

She stated this in a keynote address in Abuja at the weekend during the opening ceremony of a three-day workshop organised by the National Centre for Women Development (NCWD) in collaboration with United Nations Population Fund (UNPFA).

Hajiya Aisha, who was

represented by the Director of Women Affairs in the Ministry, Hajia Halima Lawal, said gender concerns have always received the attention and commitment of government.

Her words: "With the mechanisms on ground and the political will of the current administration, the issues of gender equality as informed by pertinent data and information will continue to be a vehicle for the overall development of the country."

The minister further pointed out that the theme of the workshop: "Relating Gender Concern to National planning," is a challenge to pro-

professionals on gender issues, who "must develop appropriate processes and strategies to match and refine the methodologies associated with current national development planning."

In her welcome address, the Director-General of the centre, Dr. Stella O. Dorgu, stated that the workshop was been organised among other things to expose participants to the concept of gender planning and programming, train participants on the use of gender desegregated data and to sensitise participants on the importance of gender desegregated data in population control.

Committee advocates responsible students unionism

By Ikenna Emeka Okpani

The Resolution Committee on Politically-Victimised and Rusticated Staff and Students in Nigerian Institutions of Higher Learning has advocated the promotion of independent students unionism even as it disclosed that that has already ensured the re-absorption of some affected staff and students.

Speaking during the presentation of its report last week, the chairman of the committee, Dr. S. K. Babalola, said university management and students should be made to appreciate the benefits of harmonious cooperation and collaboration as partners in progress.

"Independent students unionism should be promoted, encouraged and protected by the enabling Acts of all tertiary institutions.

"Under no guise should school managements dissolve or sack lawfully constituted students union governments outside the statutes," he said.

Dr. Babalola pointed out that students' union leaders should be made to see themselves as complementing their institutions' efforts in managing conflicts between students and management, rather than being the source of the conflicts.

On the issue of rusticated staff, the committee said in most of the cases considered, the university management were used by erstwhile military dictators.

tions across the nation of students' victimisation and 707 petitions in 39 institutions on staff victimisation.

Receiving the report, the Minister of Education, Prof. Borisade, thanked the committee for their work and commended them for reinstating affected staff and students in some institutions.

He averred that as contrary to media reports, the action was not targeted at an ethnic group but was aimed at ensuring justice for all.

The committee received 167 petitions from 24 institu-

NTA 2 CHANNEL 5 Victoria Island, Lagos Your reach out station PROGRAMME SCHEDULE	
TIME	MONDAY
6.00-6.30	Aerobics
6.30-7.00	Peri. The Globe/ Cartoon
7.00-7.05	News
7.05-7.30	Reports
7.30-8.00	Traffic Watch
8.00-8.30	Humour on Ice
8.30-9.00	Sports
9.00-9.30	Upside Your Head(B)
9.30-10.00	Variety Spectacular
10.00-10.10	Nature
10.10-10.30	Works
10.30-10.45	One
10.45-11.00	Cube
11.00-12.00	One on One
12.00-12.30	Energy World(sp)
12.30-1.00	Sports Report
1.00-1.30	M M B
1.30-2.00	(sp)
2.00-2.15	News of the Hour(N)
2.15-2.30	50
2.30-3.00	Minutes
3.00-3.30	Spiderman
3.30-4.00	Movies, Music & More®
4.00-4.30	News Update
4.30-5.00	Talking Finger (N) Live
5.00-5.30	The Tiger, The Bear
5.30-6.00	Free Willy
6.00-6.30	Work it Out(N)
6.30-7.00	Tax Matters(sp)
7.00-7.30	News at Seven
7.30-8.00	Expose(B)
8.00-8.30	Masquerade(N)
8.30-9.00	Road to Mall(sp) Live
9.00-10.00	Network News
10.00-10.30	Oge(B)
10.30-11.00	Patsie
11.00-11.30	Gang(N)
11.30-12.00	90 Minutes
12.00-12.30	(N)
12.30-1.00	Local Movies
1.00-1.30	Local Movies
1.30-2.00	Local Movies
1.00-2.00	NBA Action
2.00-2.30	
2.30-3.30	Ramadan
3.30-4.30	Diet
4.30-5.00	Live
5.00-6.00	

INSIDE POLITICS

APP convention: Our tenure expires in December 2002 - Moghalu

The All People's Party (APP) is scheduled to hold its national convention January 19, in Abuja. Our correspondent, Henry Omu, spoke to the party's National Secretary, Chief George Moghalu, on preparations for the convention, the Electoral Act and the clamour for the sack of the Alhaji Yusuf Ali-led national executive. Excerpts.

Sir, what is the position of the APP in respect of the Electoral Act recently signed into law by President Obasanjo?

The truth is that, we've made our views known. First of all, I want to begin by saying and we should appreciate that PDP as a political party, have absolute majority in the National Assembly, and is in control of the Federal Government.

As such, we shouldn't lose sight of the fact that we can only have our say as the opposition but they will have their way. You see, the Electoral Act has generated so much controversy because of specific issues or reasons. One of which is how the clause 80 (2) was reintroduced into the Act.

Secondly, the issue of registration of political parties. I think these were the two issues, and APP as a party, condemned it without any contradiction. The idea of smuggling in an aspect of the Act, I don't think is the best one should expect in this circumstance. It doesn't show that we know what we are doing. And, it leaves a lot of room for government to give some few explanations. So, we are not comfortable about it and we've made this very clear.

Another area is that APP as a political party, feel that the proper thing to have been done was in line with what we call we made after our national executive council meeting in Ilorin. That there was need for an in-depth consultation. So, when Mr. President came out to say that he has consulted within his party, we didn't feel comfortable. Because we are talking about a law that affects the three parties, that affects political associations, that affects Nigerians even those who are not partisan. But I think the proper thing to do was to set up a tripartite committee, involve the three political parties, because the fact is that this country today is controlled by three parties and we all have a stake in the country.

When you come to the issue of registration of new political parties, we are not comfortable with the Act at all, because we made a proposition when the National Assembly was considering the bill. We said parties should be registered.

We also added that there was a need to ascertain the breadth and strength of these associations before they are registered, because we wanted to avoid a situation where somebody would sit in his room, use his phone to reach his friends throughout the country and refer to themselves as a political party. So, we felt that the only way to achieve that is to allow them participate in the local government elections, so that you can see their strength. When we were making this proposition, we were banking on local government election coming first in 2002, and subsequent elections in 2003. We felt that if they were given the opportunity to test their strength and breadth in 2002, some will die naturally and those who are lucky to scale through will have opportunity in participating in 2003 and thereafter. But with the way the elections have now been positioned, it means that the new parties have been shot in the leg. The door has been shut permanently against them.

Is this closing of the door against the new parties democratic or in the nation's interest?

You see, what is democracy after all. It's a matter of majority. If it is the PDP's position that that is what they want, we can only have our say and they will have their way. Because we must still subject this to voting in the National Assembly and they will have their way. As a party, we feel the Act is not fair and not in the interest of our democracy.

But, your party's national vice-chairman, (South-



Chief George Moghalu (left) had said that all APP governors will hold elections next year?

I think either Chief Lanre Rasaq was quoted out of context or that is his personal opinion. But that is not the view of the party.

What then is APP's position in terms of council elections?

In term of council polls... the position of the APP as it concerns state INEC is that we don't want it. And if we don't want it as a party, we will therefore support anything that will make it ineffective. Because we anticipate a situation where governors would sit and determine who will win local government elections and they will frustrate the entire system.

So, we want to avoid that and that is to say if by extending the local government chairmen tenure, the state INEC becomes ineffective, so be it. You see, all the blame has to be heaped on the 1999 constitution.

Here is a constitution that gave a part of government powers to enact laws on local government and gave another part of government the authority to determine timetable. The constitution is not specific on whose duties it is. You see, the ambiguity is part of the problems we have in this country.

In effect, you are saying APP governors won't hold council polls in 2002?

Yes! What I can tell you precisely is that as soon as our leadership, most of whom went for the lesser hajj are back, we are going to meet and take a specific position. But one thing I can assure you is that APP governors are law-abiding, they believe in the rule of law and they are people who will follow the constitution and they are people, who are very loyal to the party.

Is it true that some political associations are already discussing with your party, because of the stiff clauses in the Electoral Act?

One thing I can tell you certainly, without fear of contradiction is that APP as a political party, we have it as a policy to reach out. We have been doing that, reaching out to individuals who are not partisan, but whom we consider influential, people whom we think have electoral value. We have been reaching out to students, market women and political groupings and associations. So, the process of reaching out to people has been a continu-

"Look at most countries in Africa, look at the world, most governments that didn't perform are being changed and Nigeria won't be an exception."

ous one in our party. However, we are going to sustain the effort to continue the reaching-out and like I have always said about the APP, we are like a church with its doors wide open. People can come in at any time and we are also going out to look for the people because politics is all about numbers, about people.

Don't you think the Electoral Act will lead to a one-party state and was fashioned to ensure the re-election of Obasanjo for a second term?

They will be disappointed, because we are confident, we are going to win the presidential elections in 2003: Nigerians will reject them (PDP).

But, being the party in power, don't you think?

What has that got to do. That is even the more reason why they will be rejected. Look at most countries in Africa, look at the world, most governments that didn't perform are being changed and Nigeria won't be an exception.

Why?

Because, they will have to produce their report card to Nigerians as far as we are concerned. So, if they have done well, Nigerians will bring them. And if they insist that they must remain there, then Nigerians will resist them.

But, in a democracy number counts The PDP can employ its majority to frustrate an opposition party like yours?

Yes, they will make attempt at that, but what you don't understand is that a good number of people who are pretending to be PDP, may not be PDP. But they are pretending to be PDP at this time, to get what they want for this time. When there is an opportunity for them to prove their loyalty, they will tell you, they are for Nigerians.

Sir, what can you tell us about your convention?

Yes, the convention is coming up. It has already been scheduled. Like you are aware, it would've been this month, but because of the Ramadan period and Christmas, period, our last NEC meeting in Ilorin shifted it to January 19, 2002 and it is on course. It will hold in Abuja.

Unlike the PDP national convention, events in the APP seem to be too quiet?

You may be right to say so. PDP had an election convention. Ours is not an election convention. Therefore, don't expect anybody to start campaigning. It's a routine convention. Our constitution says, we must hold at least one convention in two years but the tenure of this elected executive, of which am a member, will last three years.

It will elapse in December 2002. So, if it is an election convention, there would be campaign going on. But, those who known know there is no vacancy, why campaign.

But some of your members have called for a change in the national leadership of the APP. Why is this so?

It is a continuous process. Some people may be ganging up to sack the national leadership... but the point is, how possible this is. The truth is that all positions in the party, including the one am holding would be determined by Nigerians, who are members of APP, at the appropriate convention.

RIGHT WAY

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EVER SINCE HE BECAME A SENATOR, HE HAS BOUGHT A FLEET OF CARS AND BUILT THREE HOUSES IN HIS VILLAGE.

REALLY? SO, IS THAT WHY YOU WANT TO RECALL HIM FROM THE SENATE?

YES!...THE MAN IS SIMPLY NOT INTERESTED IN OUR BAGFUL OF PROBLEMS!

THE ONLY BAG HE'S INTERESTED IN IS GHANA - MUST-GO BAGS!

send your comments to P.O.Box 4447, Surulere, Lagos. Tel: 7748695. E-mail: eadtmg@siotel.com, tmg-nig@beta.linkserv.com

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I, ALH. IBRAHIM DAWAKI OF No. 34, Umaru Muhammadu Road, Sokoto, do hereby declare the lost of my Certificate of Occupancy, Plot No. 139 KATAMPE EXTENSION FCT/ABJ/SO.1417 which I discovered missing. Please if it is sold to anyone or in possession of anyone, he should bear in mind that it is a stolen property. The Person who bought or in possession should surrender it to the department of Land & Survey administration, MFCT. Failure to comply will attract legal action against the holder now or in the future, when he comes up to make claims.

SIGNED
ABUBAKAR SHAABAN



Edited by Kevin Ebele Adinnu

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Mohammed Abacha returns to Kuje prison

Mohammed Abacha, eldest son of former Head of State, late Gen. Sani Abacha, at the weekend returned to Kuje prison, in Abuja, after spending 11 days on admission at the National Hospital in the capital city for kidney related ailment.

The young Abacha was brought to the hospital on Dec. 10, following complaints of failing health since his detention in October, 1999 for alleged complicity in the murder of Mrs. Kudirat Abiola and other criminal charges.

He went through a series of tests and medical examinations between Dec. 10 and 11, before it was confirmed that he had "kidney stones", a medical term indicating the presence of deposits of calcium in the kidney and was admitted for close surveillance.

While on admission, the detainee was placed in a single room in the private ward wing of the well-

equipped hospital, with all facilities including a television set, refrigerator, and toilet.

He also had the rare opportunity after two years, to spend the sallah celebrations with his mother, Mrs. Maryam Abacha, brothers and sisters, who

relocated temporarily from their Gidado road residence in Kano to Abuja, for a daily shuttle to the hospital.

Hospital sources told newsmen in Abuja yesterday, that the detainee was discharged on Friday.

"We had to discharge him on Friday, because some

of our consultants and specialist doctors are on Christmas and New Year break, so he has to go back to Kuje and report back first week of January, when they will be around," one of the medical personnel said.

The sources further said that the young Abacha was

expected to return to the hospital on Jan. 6, for further diagnosis and other medical tests.

He was arrested in October 1999, and kept in detention at Kirikiri prison in Lagos, and was later brought to Kuje prison early in the year.



Mohammed Abacha, enter a Black Maria on his way to Kuje prison... recently

Lack of recreation drives people from Abuja -entertainer

The mass exodus of people from Abuja to other parts of the

country for the Christmas and New year celebrations has been attributed to the

absence of easy and convenient entertainment and recreation centres within the city.

According to Mrs Charity Tyoahile, an Abuja-based caterer and entertainer who spoke to *Abuja Trust* at the weekend, there is need to transform Abuja city into a haven of entertainment to discourage such exodus. This she said, is by establishing more spots where people can relax after the hustle and bustle of the work period.

Mrs. Tyoahile said on her part, she would use her newly commissioned Charity restaurant in Mabushi to "arrest" people who were tired of the bureaucracy of office life, and need to relax.

She said the movement of the restaurant from its former location in Wuse Zone 6 was in determination of preparing Mabushi for the Christmas and new year celebrations.

"I am on the verge of turning the dull town into a

bubbling one. It is high time people spent their holidays in Abuja," she said.

Mrs Tyoahile optimised that Mabushi would within the festive period, become a "jamming point" for city dwellers, adding that she

would use the restaurant to promote Nigerian culture by featuring the "Swange" dancers to thrill her customers.

"I can see it, it's never going to be a dull moment here," she interjected.

FCT police command gets new PRO

By Uwem Umo

The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Police Command has appointed a new Public Relations Officer (PRO) to head its Public Affairs and Information department.

He is Mr. Nendel J.D. Gomwalk, an Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP).

Mr. Gomwalk who hails from Plateau State, is a 1992

graduate of chemistry from the Federal University of Technology, Yola, Adamawa State.

He enlisted in the Nigeria Police in June 1994 and was posted to the FCT command in 1996 after passing out from the Police Academy in Kano.

Mr. Gomwalk has worked in the General Investigation Department, (G.I.D) Abuja, G.I.D Zone 7 headquarters as a staff officer to the Inspector-General of Police (IGP).

He has also been a Staff Officer Junior (SOJ) FCT Command, Abuja, Admin. Officer, Operations 'B' dept, FCT command and was recently redeployed as officer in charge, Central Area Market, Wuse.

Mr. Gomwalk has also attended the Advanced Detective Course (ADC) at Police Staff College (Jos), Plateau State.



Mr. Gomwalk

Abuja streets dry up

By Ikenna Emeka Okpani

Major streets and satellite towns in the FCT hitherto densely populated have been depleted following massive exodus of Abuja residents to their villages for Christmas and new year celebrations.

In Karmo where people usually shoved one another to board buses at bus stops, *Abuja Trust* observed that bus operators now beg people to enter their buses while passengers take time to board buses of their choice.

Elsewhere, the usual traffic jams in Wuse, especially around junctions and traffic lights have disappeared. Cars now ply

the roads, easily unhindered by human or vehicular traffic.

However the situation is different in major bus terminals where people are boarding buses to travel out of Abuja.

When *Abuja Trust* visited Idu Park Saturday night, over a hundred luxuries buses were seen loading passengers travelling to different cities in the south.

The transporters were busy struggling among themselves to win passengers to board their own buses.

Abuja Trust

Abaji to establish public library

Plans are underway for the construction of an Ultra-modern library complex being the first public library in the Abaji Area Council, the Council Chairman, Hon. Hassan Sokodabo, has said.

Disclosing this to *Abuja Trust*, the chairman said "our children in the higher institutions, when on holidays hardly find a place to read conveniently. Even the students in the secondary

By Yakubu Ozohu-Suleiman

schools equally find it difficult getting a convenient place to prepare for their SSCE and GCE. This, among others, is why we have deemed it necessary to construct a public library."

The chairman however placed the execution of the plan on the condition that adequate funds were available. "We are hoping to

fund the project from the usual federal government subvention to the local government councils. But if we find out that we are not going to get enough from the subvention, we may have no option than resort to assistance from the ministry of the Federal Capital Territory."

The chairman added that the design of the library had been completed and passed to a consultant quantity surveyor for appropriate billing which would be ready by next year.

Union Bank emerges best clearing bank in Abuja

Union Bank of Nigeria Plc has emerged the best clearing bank in the Federal Capital Territory this year with the Bank of the North and Wema Bank as first and second runners up.

The Branch Controller of the Central Bank of Nigeria, Malam Garba Ahmed, announced the awards over the weekend at the Bankers Award night organised by the Abuja Bankers Clearing House Committee.

Malam Ahmed who chaired the event and out of the 71 banks that operate in Abuja, the three banks were noted for their resourcefulness, efficiency, effectiveness and punctuality in the Abuja clearing area.

According to him, 688,306 items valued at N6.8 billion were exchanged on the floor of the clearing house this year.

He attributed this to the increase in membership of the clearing house from four

commercial banks in 1991 to 65 as at December 18 this year.

"For those banks that have not established their presence in the FCT, I appeal to them to hasten up to do so as the commercial, business, social and political environment are vibrant enough to accommodate and sustain the interest of all banks," Malam Ahmed stated.

He appealed to banks to make the practice of universal banking in Nigeria, introduced January this year, a huge success.

11 outgoing branch managers of 10 commercial banks also received gifts at the event.

They are Alex Ojukwu, Platinum Bank Ltd; E.A. Somoye, Eko International Bank; Dauda Yohanna, Chartered Bank Plc; and Esan Olubunmi, Gateway Bank.

Others are C.O. Oyeoni, Societe Generale Bank; Abdulrahman Ahmadu, Inter City Merchant Bank; Ghali

Ahmed Lawal, Assurance Bank Ltd; and Peter Adilekan, Equity Bank of Nigeria Ltd.

The rest are B.A Balogun and Mrs R.O. Abiodun of Wema Bank Plc and Alex Uka of Gulf Bank Nig Plc.

Aliyu A. Kalgo of Habib Nigeria Bank Ltd emerged the luckiest Branch Manager of the year.

Speaking to *Abuja Trust* after the event, the Branch Manager of Bank of the North Ltd, Alhaji Ibrahim Abdullahi attributed the bank's award to its good customer relations, efficient services and punctuality to the clearing house.

He expressed happiness that Bank of the North was again this year selected as one of the best three banks out of the 71 that operate in the FCT.

Bank of the North previously emerged the best but came second this year. "It is part of the dynamics of banking," Alhaji Ibrahim Abdullahi explained.

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I, formerly known as **MISS ESTHER BAGUDU**, now wish to be called **MRS. FATI MOHAMMED**. All former documents remain valid. Taraba State Primary School Management Board. College of Education, Jalingo and public to note.

I, formerly known and addressed as **KAKA GUMSU BUKAR**, now wish to be called and addressed as **KAKA GUMSU ALI BUKAR DATORI**. All former document remain valid the general public should take note.

I, formerly called **BABA MALLAM ALHAJI** now wish to be called **MAMMAN BABA BAITUNA**. UNIMAID and general public to note.

Formerly known as **MISS BINTU OMOLAYO AZEEZ**, now wish to be known as **MRS JOKE OMOLAYO IFANEGAN**. All former documents remain valid. General public to note.

I formerly known as **BINTA MURTALA TUKUR** now wish to be known and addressed as **BINTU GARBA ABUBAKAR**. All former documents remain valid. NSITF Kaduna and General Public should please note.

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On or Before 21st January, 2002

PUBLIC NOTICE

DR ALBAN AWARENESS FOUNDATION

The general public is hereby notified that the above named foundation with its Headquarters in Lagos is seeking for registration under the Companies and allied matters Act No 1 of 1990 Part C.

The Trustees are:-

1. Dr Alban Uzoma Nwapa
2. Mal. Ibrahim Bashir
3. A. I Idris
4. F. O. Shofolawe Bakare

Any objection to the registration should be forwarded to the Registrar General Corporate Affairs Commission Area 11 Garki P.M.B. 198 Abuja to reach him within (28) Twenty - Eight days from the date of this publication.



Manager, Bank of the North, Abuja Branch, Alhaji Ibrahim Abdullahi (right), receives the prize for the second best commercial bank in the FCT from the chairman, House of Reps committee on Banking and Currency, Hon Dauda G. Bundot...Thursday

Abuja Trust

Features

Wednesday, December 5, 2001, drivers, **Lessons from VIO safety campaign**

Wednesday, December 5, 2001, drivers, *okada* riders, government agencies, delegates and the general public gathered en masse at the Jabi Motor Park to mark the 'Ember Months Safety Campaign Rally' organised by the FCT Directorate of Road Traffic Services (VIO).

The rally did not only witness massive turn-out of stake holders in the country, it was also an open forum where individuals and groups aired their views on the nature, problems and prospects of the Nigerian road and its usage, with special focus on the FCT.

Many have observed that the network of roads in the FCT were accident-prone. A number of questions as to the safety of road users were therefore raised. Many of the road junctions, it was observed, are without traffic lights. There are equally cases of bends and roundabout within the streets and major roads where extreme closeness of structures to the roadsides prevents vehicles from noticing one another from adjacent directions. Absence of traffic lights in such places tends to have worsened the problem.

Much more importantly, however, is the attitude of other road users, especially the *okada* riders and commercial drivers.

As a matter of fact, the *ember* months safety campaign rally was organised with more specific focus on enlightening these categories of road users. Chief speakers at the occasion included the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of the Federal Capital Territory, Dr. Mu'azu Babangida Aliyu, the FCDA Director of Health Services Dr. Moses Ayo, and the Director of FCT Road Traffic

per hour, which places life at high accident risk..

Other causes of road accidents, as identified by the director, included weariness of the drivers, drunkenness, sickness and lack of concentration. Drivers, he said, could be tired for one reason or another but would insist on driving, even on the highway.

He also identified drunkenness as one serious cause of accident that requires drastic measure.

In his speech, the Director of Road Traffic Services, Mr. Samson Ataiyero, lamented the loss of lives on road accidents. "For us to be wasting life which is the principal catalyst to societal development through road accident is indeed a thing of worry, concern and is highly regrettable."

Mr. Ataiyero added that the purpose of the rally was to reach out to prospective road users and talk with them, keep them alive so as to ensure that they appreciate their roles and discharge their duties towards societal development and nation building.

Mr. Ataiyero further identified causes of road accidents as including the use of vehicles that are not road worthy, most of which move with high risk of knocking down on the way or even having break failures. Lack of spare tyres, he said, is also one of the causes of accidents on the highways.

The director did not forget careless attitude of vehicle owners towards maintenance of vehicles. Before vehicles are put on the highways, owners do not often take time to service the engines and check the tyres.

These, among others, the Director said, calls for serious

"For us to be wasting life which is the principal catalyst to societal development through road traffic accident is indeed a thing of worry, concern and is highly regrettable."

Services, Mr. Samson A. Ataiyero.

The FCDA Director of Health Services, who spoke on the causes of road accidents, listed haste and overspeeding as the major causes of road accident. He observed that road users would want to make in 30 minutes, a journey that is supposed to last for two hours. He identified that the normal speed for commercial vehicles on the highway is 90 kilometres per hour while the private vehicles can go up to 100 kilometres per hour. Drivers, he noted, most frequently run at a speed of between 140-160 kilometres

consideration on the part of vehicle owners within and outside the federal capital territory.

The statistics of road accident for the year 2000 was put at 595, with about 980 casualties. Mr. Simon Ataiyero observed that no nation develops without a formidable workforce. Incidentally, he said the group that is being destroyed by the daily accidents on the roads are the nation's workforce.

The Director stated that as further steps towards ensuring safety of lives and properties on FCT roads, the road traffic directorate is

As part of efforts to reduce accidents on FCT roads and save dear lives, the FCT Directorate of Road Traffic Service (VIO) last week held a road safety campaign to sensitise road users on the danger of reckless driving. Yakubu Ozohu-Suleiman of Abuja Trust captured the event in this piece.

giving consideration for the issuance of specialist licences in three categories namely: passenger services vehicle (PSV), goods services vehicles (GSV) and dangerous chemicals and materials (GCM) licences as against the present practice of group 'E' drivers licence being the only requirement to drive passenger service vehicle (PSV) with the consequences of daily carnage on the roads. The Director emphasised his call for road users to obey road traffic regulations and laws.

Lectures were given in both Pidgin English, Hausa and English languages on the traffic rules and regulations, the laws and correct interpretations of traffic lights and the various categories of punishment that await offenders.

The MFCT Permanent Secretary stated that the ministry has concluded arrangement that by next year, every major traffic light would be assigned policemen, Road Safety and VIO Corps to monitor road users and fine offenders appropriately. The Permanent Secretary added that it was for that reason, among others, that the ministry decided to upgrade the VIO from a Department to a full fledged Directorate with autonomy.

The Permanent Secretary, while requesting that the rally be made a quarterly programme of the VIO, observed that majority of road users do not go for a confirmation of their driving skills at the VIO. Most of them, he said, do not even understand the differences between the inner lane and the outer lane. "When you are in the inner lane and you are driving faster because you should do that from the inner lane, you would incur traffic offence. That is not how it should be." The Permanent Secretary added that MFCT would explore all avenues to enforce road traffic laws. "Those that cannot drive, we would stop them from driving. We would remove ramshackle vehicles from the road. Every year, you must make your vehicles available to the VIO for inspection after which you would be issued a sticker as additional licence to certify that your vehicle is roadworthy.

The representative of *okada* riders and drivers made an appeal to relevant authorities to expand the roads within the satellite towns, especially Idu-Karmo and Gwagwa where they said the major proportion of Abuja population reside. "In the Gwagwa, Idu-Karmo and

Dei-Dei roads, early in the morning before seven o'clock, the road is already jam packed with vehicles - cars, trucks, *okadas*, even human traffic and water vendors etc. The road is only one, and so every user plies it. The problem has often caused lateness of workers to their respective businesses. Some would

have to trek a distance of over six kilometres before they get vehicles. After all these, they get tired and may not be able to work coupled with the high charges that such traffic hold up attracts everyday."

Mr. Eke Richard, a senior road traffic officers and the information and press relations officer at the VIO confirmed the complaints tendered by the

representative of drivers and *okada* riders, calling on the government to recognise the fact that the residents of the area constitute very large proportion of the FCT population. The road, he said, should be made more motorable and comfortable.

Members of the public in attendance equally called on government to establish a formidable police and road traffic post in Idu, Karmo, to ensure adequate road motoring and prevention of associated crimes and offences.



MFCT Permanent Secretary, Dr. Babangida Mu'azu Aliyu speaking at the safety campaign.



Members of the Road Traffic Services (VIO) at the occasion.



The campaign was carried out on the streets of the FCT.

Abuja Trust

Habitat (property and environment column)

Land acquisition and compensation

By Udosen Warsaw

In the early 90s in Lagos, the controversial land use Act reared its ugly head as a handy excuse for the seizure of the landed property of two residents within Agege local Government Area. The expanse of land estimated then to contain about 18 plots, situated at Ajangbadi/Ogba road belongs to two sisters. The land which was bequeathed to them in 1969 by their grandfather was purchased way back in 1924.

The survey plan covering the land bears No. K/3239. In the 1992, the land was taken over by the local government authority which handed it over to the Lagos state waste disposal board to use as a refuse dump. All entreaties directed to the Federal Ministry of Environment and physical planning at Alausa went unheeded. When the local authority, via public notice placed in *Daily Times* of March 27, 1995, indicated its intention to put up a shopping complex on this disputed land the two sisters decided to appeal to the court of law.

It was in the course of the hearing of the suit No. 10/1166/95 that the land use Act defence was resorted to by the local government. The council indicated that sec 28(3) (a) the act vested the state authority with the power to revoke any certificate of occupancy in favour of anybody as much as the purpose for such revocation is based on overall public interest. The council claimed that it applied in November 1993 to the state government for the land in dispute for the purpose of erecting market/shopping complex and allied services. And that the request was formally granted them on February 1994. But the presiding Judge S.O. Adagua, who granted an injunction restraining the council from trespassing on the land pending the determination of the suit.

Nevertheless, the council persisted in harassing the owners, a situation that led to the filling of contempt proceeding against the local authority. Counsel to the sisters, Mr. Mayomi Afekhua disclosed that when military administration of Col. Marwa (rtd) noticed the intricacy of the case, it soft-pedalled, filling a defence that it was not aware of the previous court injunction. However, in June 1999, defying the court injunction, the council went ahead to chase away the owners and commenced construction of a shopping complex worth over N300 Million.

The land use Degree of 1078 provides for adequate compensation on compulsorily acquired interest in land (sec 29). The 1979 constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria Sec. 40 (1) also provides that "no movable property or any interest in any immovable property shall be taken possession of compulsorily and no right over on interest in any such property shall be acquired compulsorily in any part of Nigeria except in the manner and for the purposes prescribed by a law that among other things; requires the prompt payment of compensation therefore; gives to any person claiming such compensation a right of access for the determination if his interest in the property and the amount of compensation to court of law or tribunal or body having jurisdiction in that part of Nigeria"

In this case, the old man has not even been "inadequately compensated." He cannot go to court, as he has no money, so life goes on with his family on such a dangerous spot. What will become of this old man? As stipulated by the Land Use Decree 1978 (sec.29) he should be compensated for his interest on the property including crops, trees and other unexhausted improvements on the land such as his fish pond, shrine and graves. Interest should also accrue to him on delayed payment of compensation.

According to law, the purpose of compensation is to pay to the affected persons the money equivalent for the loss, or in other words the pecuniary value to the owner for the loss suffered and which value should not be less than the money worth of property had he not been deprived of the property.

In practice however, compensation is almost grossly inadequate. For instance (sec.29 of LUD 1978), no compensation is due to (Undeveloped) land even if owner bought it for a N100 million. What is payable is the amount equal to the rent paid, if any, by the occupier during the year of revocation as all land is deemed to owned by the government. Under this head there is no provision for compensation to the holder of the right of occupancy; it is the occupier who is entitled to a refund of whatever rent he has paid for the year.

Other similar stories abound in the different parts of the country including Lagos and the FCT affecting both the rich and poor, the later being more hard hit. It is of my view that the Land Use Decree should be updated and modified to accommodate issues overlooked previously. A lot has been learned over the years.

The government should be able to assess and pay compensation promptly or re-housing as an alternative to compensation especially on such cases as the one narrated. **Mr. Udosen is the resident surveyor of Country Home, Abuja.**

The Headquarters of the bankers bank, Central Bank of Nigeria, is nearing completion.

Located along Tafawa Balewa Way, near the Women Centre, this imposing structure covers approximately 8,000 square metre, being constructed by Julius Berger Construction Company.

Elegantly built to occupy at least 12 floors, the structure dominates the whole landscape with its attractive design in steel and glass.

The project is engineered by Mac ADOG and Associates, BOMEG Associates, InterPlan Engr with Hassan & Partners as the consultant Electrical Engineers. AHMADU & Partners with ETTE ARO & Partners are the cost consultants.

The edifice provides for an external parking space for visitors and upper and lower level parking space for staff.

The ultra-modern CBN complex



The new Central Bank of Nigeria headquarters, Central District Abuja, under construction.

Air-condition is centrally provided by NAIRDA.

Expected to be completed

soon, the CBN structure will help save the ace bank the burden of high cost of

renting premises for temporary office space in FCT.

Life in Abuja suburbs

That Abuja, the capital city of Nigeria, is in a valley is not in doubt. That it is also inheriting all the characteristics of Lagos is also unquestionable.

The mixture and blend of Nigerians from all walks of life, the noise and rush at bus-stops are indexes. As for the missing molves, the Okada riders have simply replaced them.

But what makes Abuja tick? *Abuja Trust* survey around the FCT revealed that suburbs make Abuja what it is.

"When I came to Abuja, I thought the streets would

be paved with gold or at least naira notes, but all I found was heat, thirst, and suffering," said Chimah, a resident of Karmo, an Abuja suburb.

He said Karmo offers all the opportunities the city centre offers and at less cost.

Mr. Yakubu Oseni, a private developer, however feels differently. "That Abuja is the capital city only makes it attractive for governmental and administrative purpose. My grouse with Abuja is its lack of industries, therefore investors are forced to produce elsewhere and transport same to Abuja at

Stories by Nasir Imam

high cost."

The suburbs of Abuja which include, Zuba among others, provide accommodation, office and residential, for the teeming civil servants that cannot be accommodated in the city centre.

For Adekunle Ajayi, a taxi driver, "the problem of Abuja is lack of provision of low-income housing for the teeming residents that is why the suburbs are congested." He identified lack of sufficient parks and open spaces as problems adding

that the few that exist are mostly in the city centre.

Most residents of Abuja live in the suburbs and at night, they rush to abandon the city centre, making the central area to be deserted at night.

Notorious areas of Abuja that provide cover at night for all kinds of body business include, zone 4, Areas I, 3 and II. But it is in the suburbs that this notoriety is heightened. Little wonder that Abuja was rated the city with the highest number of increasing HIV/AIDS patients.

But the biggest problem of the suburbs is the problem of commuting in the city centre especially in rush hours. The dualisation of the Kubwa-Berger Road, and the Nyanya-Keffi Road might ease the problem in the short and medium term.

Shehu Sani, a colbler, who stays at Zuba said roads are important "but without enough commercial vehicles to ease commuters hardship, little can be achieved." Others believe only a mass transit scheme that could solve this major problem of Abuja residents.



A demolished property in Nyanya, to make way for the Abuja - Keffi dualisation project

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	2680	Market space @ Apo	N40,000.00
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	731	Shop @ Kubwa	N50,000.00
	847	Mechanic shed @ Apo	N200,000.00
	344	Land 2,500m ² @ CKK ext.	
		Filling Station	N4 million
	F/27B	2 Hectre land at Shere farm and Bwari	N4 million
	F/27B	3,000.63m ² land at Kwali	N2 million
	EI	1,099.198m ² @ Asokoro	N5 million
	LD98	1,600 @ Guzaje district	N4 million

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- 2 Bedroom flats @ Asokoro, Garki II (X2 years)
- 4 Bedroom Bungalows @ Asokoro, Area II, Kado Estate and Kubwa (X2 years)
- 1 Room self-contained @ Garki II, Zone 7, Zone 6, Asokoro, Kubwa (@2 years)
- 5 Bedroom Duplexes @ Maitama, Zone 6, Wuse II, Area 8
- 6 room Boys Quarters, Wuse II
- Office spaces at Wuse Zone 1, Garki
- Shops to let and land in various places



**The Presidency
Bureau of Public Enterprises
Nigeria**

**Selection of Research Firms
For the Design and Implementation of Benchmark/Baseline
Quantitative and Qualitative Attitudinal Research on Privatisation**

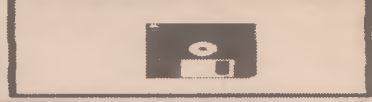
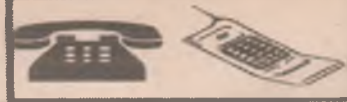
REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

1. As part of the Federal Government of Nigeria's (FGN) privatisation program, the National Council on Privatisation (NCP) through its Secretariat, the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE), hereby invites eligible consortia of research firms to indicate their interest in providing sociological research services for the purpose of conducting a benchmark study on public opinions and attitudes towards the FGN's privatisation program.
2. The research is aimed at providing a baseline for subsequent design of the next-phase consensus building and communications program in support of the FGN's privatisation program funded by the World Bank.
3. The NCP reserves the right to retain the successful consortium to undertake future tracking studies and an additional benchmark study, which will be conducted at strategically timed intervals over the first twelve (12) months of the public communications program.
4. The research is meant to rectify major flaws evident in a benchmark opinion poll conducted last year.
5. The research will include a qualitative component in the form of focus group discussions (FGDs) to discern the concerns of special interest groups and target audiences, as well as a quantitative component using a survey of the general population to gauge public understanding and support for the privatisation exercise.
6. The BPE requires that all research firms responding to this request for expressions of interest have at least ten (10) years of relevant experience. This includes previous work on analogous projects in developing countries of no less than five (5) years.
7. The successful consortium will be able to demonstrate experience in both international best practice in research design and methodology, and local experience in implementation. Preference will be given to any consortium including a local consortium member with experience in research implementation in Nigeria. (Please note that the determinants for applying this preference will be specified under evaluation criteria of the RFP to be issued subsequently.)
8. The overriding objectives of the research project are to:
 - Test public attitudes, awareness, support and concerns vis-à-vis the FGN's privatisation exercise;
 - Determine benchmarks against which to evaluate the progress of subsequent communications, consensus building and awareness activities;
 - Identify sources through which the Nigerian public most regularly receives information on privatisation and determine its attitudes towards these sources;
 - Provide the NCP and BPE with recommendations on how to incorporate the outcomes of the research in the next phase of the FGN's public communications program;
 - Suggest possible messages that correspond to the views and opinions collected as part of the research project;
9. Track progress of the communications program and conduct a further benchmark study (upon request by the FGN).
9. The successful consortium will be required to display the following breakdown in responsibilities between partners:
 - General oversight;
 - Design of research materials and proper methodologies best suited to arriving at a representative measure of Nigerian popular opinion;
 - Identification of assumptions to be tested during FGDs;
 - Logistical arrangements for conduct of survey and focus groups;
 - Conduct and moderation of focus groups and survey;
 - Compilation and analysis of focus group results;
 - Survey data collection and processing;
 - Analysis of survey data;
 - Preparation of initial report on survey and focus group findings;
 - Presentation of final report;
 - Development and presentation of measures to safeguard the integrity of the research process;
 - Implementation of measures designed as above and evidence thereto.
10. Interested consortia must provide information indicating their qualifications to perform the project. This should include company literature, CVs of key team personnel, brochures, descriptions of similar assignments, and other such supporting documentation.
11. The successful consortium will be selected in accordance with the procedures set out in the World Bank's Guidelines: *Selection and Employment of Consultants by World Bank Borrowers*, January 1997 (revised September 1997)
12. Interested consortia may obtain further information at the address below from 8.00 am to 5 pm Monday through Friday (except public holidays).
13. Expressions of interest must be delivered to the address below by 31st January, 2002, no later than 5.00 pm.

**Director General
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1 Osun Crescent
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Abuja, Nigeria
Tel: +234 9 4134638-46,
Fax: +234 9 4134671/2/4
E-mail: bpe@bpeng.org**

Requests for proposals will be issued to short-listed consortia only following evaluation of expressions of interest.

I.T. WORLD



GSM operators deploy 280,000 lines in 4 months

The successful role out of the Global Systems for Mobile Communications (GSM) by the three digital mobile operators in August has enhanced telecommunications in the country with the deployment of over 280,000 mobile lines in Lagos, Abuja, Port Harcourt, Uyo, Kaduna and Onitsha.

The three GSM operators, MTN Nigeria Limited, Econet Wireless Limited and Nigerian Telecommunications Limited

By Ahmed Shekarau

(NITEL) rolled out their digital mobile services in August this year.

MTN took the lead on the 7th of August this year when it rolled out in Lagos, followed by Econet, and finally NITEL which rolled out at the end of October.

According to the Executive Vice Chairman of the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), Engr. Ernest Ndukwe, the

successful role out of the service by the operators has recorded a combined deployment of over 280,000 mobile lines in just four months of GSM Service in Nigeria.

Engr. Ndukwe said at a meeting with media executives last week in Abuja that "Nigeria now ranks as the fastest growing mobile phone market in Africa."

According to him, the mobile network operators have concluded plans to

launch their services in Kano, Abuja and Enugu before the end of this month.

Already, the digital mobile phone services are being enjoyed in Lagos, Abuja, Port Harcourt, Uyo, Kaduna and Onitsha.

The NCC Chief executive noted with satisfaction the spread of individual subscriber base of the GSM Services across different echelon of the Nigerian society, including artisans like 'Okada' drivers, painters, tailors, as well as market women.

He reassured that the increasing competition in the sector would drive down prices of the services, citing example of the Pay-As-You-Go Package which has dramatically plummeted from N30,000 to N16,999.

You and your computer

How to get through windows 'Help' dialog boxes

By Hassan Idris

All versions of windows programmes have similar 'Help' dialog boxes with tabs that display sets of related options to assist you execute operating commands and other functions.

In this section we are discussing "list boxes, check boxes, option buttons, command buttons, and other standard dialog box features.

The first method of getting a 'Help' on computer operation is to look at the top right corner of any windows program, you will see a 'Help' or a Question mark(?) button.

If you click the 'Help' or Question mark (?) button, your mouse pointer immediately grows and becomes a 'Question mark' (?) itself.

You will surely see a list of options based on operating commands which you may like to select and click and get the basic explanation on how to operate the system.

The alternative way of getting information about a 'Help' dialog box option is to right-click the mouse pointer, and then click "What's This?" option.

How to get on-screen help

You should simply open the 'Start' menu and then click 'Help.' You will see a help window appearing and showing tabs for table of contents of 'Help' topics. And a kind of searchable index. The content tab is useful for finding how to perform a specific task e.g. run a software program or maintain your computer.

On your computer screen windows will display content tab list of several 'books' of 'help' topics. You need to double click any book to see its topic. You can select and double-click on 'Introducing Windows' and later on double-click on 'Getting your work Done.'

At this point, if you double-click on any 'Help' topic its explanation will appear on the screen. At the bottom of the animation screen you should click the 'Play' button and start playing the program.

Now if you want to go back to the list of help topics when the animation is being played, just click the 'Help Topics' button at the top of the help window immediately.

Next, you are back at the 'Content list'. You may double-click another topic and double-click an open book to close it or double-click a close book to see the topics in that book.

If you finish with the 'Help' system, click the 'close' button (x) at the top right corner of the window.

In addition, you will get 10 minutes guide tour' if you double-click the icon 'Tour' at the top of the content list, you will get a multimedia tour which explains the basics of windows program.

How to search the index for specific help

In order to get into any windows 'Help' system, click the start button and click the 'Help'.

Now the content tab appears up front. Click the 'Index' tab option to display complete index of entries in the 'Help' system.

There is text box for you to type the index entry or alternatively, you should select and drag the scroll box to view additional entries. At least you can click your desired entry and get the 'Help' information you want.

If you highlight the desired entry index, double-click it or click the display to see its content.

The 'Help' topics normally disappear and a new window appears with an explanation for the selected topic. Click it to start performing the task.

In the 'Help' window environment you may see green underlined words. This means if you click one you will get a new box appearing to provide and additional information on the word(s).

Click a button to view more information about a topic at the bottom of any 'Help' window.

Again, you should always get back to the index by clicking on 'Help Topics' to exit the 'Help' system, or click close button at the upper right corner of the window.

Finally, to find these help issues easier it is advisable to search the index for specific topics of 'Help' menu.



Nigerian IT Professionals in diaspora under the auspices of 'Brain Drain Brain Gain' (BDBG) in collaboration with the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) recently organised a four-day conference on "Technology Innovation and Socio-Economic Development in Africa." Picture shows the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Engr. Mohammed Abba-Gana (m) flanked by Dr. Joyce Nwegwe, Special Assistant to the President on Nigerians in the Diaspora (r) and Professor Gabriel Ajayi, DG of NITDA (l) during the conference.

FG to introduce IT education in primary schools

The Federal Government has announced plans to introduce information technology (IT) education in primary schools in the country.

The Director of Technology and Science Department (TSD) in the Federal Ministry of Education, Alhaji Ibrahim K. Zaifada disclosed at the "Science Orientation Workshop for Co-ordinators of Nomadic Education" in Abuja.

Alh. Zaifada, who was represented by the Deputy Director TSD, Mr. A. Ogunshina said IT education will also be introduced in the nomadic schools in the country.

He said in today's world, there is a basic science literacy level below which Nigeria cannot neglect if, it must fit into the competitive arena.

He added that in the propagation of science education in this age and time, it becomes only realistic that issues of population and family life, which he said have become major social but scientific problems, must receive equal attention.

He stressed that

By Hassan Idris

scientifically inclined issues like reproductive health science, are the major science and technology issues to be considered in schools.

According to him, the

nomadic children placed in the informal education sector should not be left out of the life opportunity of being integrated into today's world of science and technology as well as the opportunity to be better informed in population and

family issues.

He told the participants at the workshop of their responsibility to design the best and innovative teaching methods and practical approach in teaching the new scientific concepts to the nomadic pupils.

...Creates office to encourage brain gain

In a bid to encourage Nigerian professionals based abroad to come back home and contribute to the country's information technology (IT) revolution, the Federal Government has created an office to co-ordinate activities of Nigerians in diaspora.

President Olusegun Obasanjo stated that the Federal Government was keen in supporting IT professionals in diaspora with the hope of encouraging them to participate in the government's national development. The president stated this through the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Alhaji Mohammed Abba Gana, at the First African Conference on Technology and Innovation, in Abuja.

At the four-day conference which was

organised by Nigerians abroad under the auspices of "Brain Drain Brain Gain" in Collaboration with the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), Mr President expressed total support for them to come home and contribute to the implementation of the national IT policy.

He said "we would do our best to provide the enabling environment necessary to foster socio-economic development in the belief and hope that other Nigerians in diaspora will be encouraged to invest in our nation's development."

President Obasanjo pointed that the lack of development in IT field has stymied the nation's economic growth and widened the digital divide

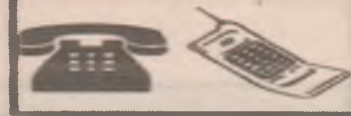
between countries in the north and south hemisphere.

Speaking at the occasion, the Minister of Science and Technology, Professor Turner Isoun told participants at the conference that the present democratic administration in Nigeria has created an enabling environment for the brain drain to be transformed into brain gain.

The minister who was represented by the Director General of the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), Professor Gabriel Ajayi, disclosed that the objective of the Brain Drain Brain Gain Inc. is to among others gather together into one place the expertise and human resources of expatriate Nigerians abroad for national and continental development.



I.T. WORLD



AIX hole exposes computers to hacking - Study

A security hole in software from Sun Microsystems Inc. and International Business Machines Corp. could allow malicious hackers to take control of powerful servers running in many corpo-

rations and universities, security experts said on Wednesday.

Internet Security Systems Inc. researchers have uncovered evidence in Internet chat rooms that hackers have already

started developing tools to take advantage of the vulnerability, said Dan Ingevaldson, a team leader at ISS' X-Force research and development lab.

The vulnerability affects the latest release of Sun's operating system, Solaris 8, and earlier versions, as well as IBM's AIX versions 4.3 and 5.1, according to an advisory issued by the Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) at Carnegie Mellon University.

The hole is located in the "login" program that allows people to sign on to the operating system remotely by entering a username and password, ISS said. The vulnerability can be exploited only if certain remote command protocols, such as Telnet, are enabled, which they usually are by default, the company said.

ISS discovered the loophole in October and has been working with Sun and CERT on a fix, said Ingevaldson.

"We're not aware of anyone experiencing a

problem with this," said Sun spokesman, Russ Castronovo.

The security hole is very serious because there are so many computers in corporations and universities that run Solaris and because of the amount of harm someone could do if they

were to gain complete control over a vulnerable machine, he said.

"Once you have super-user access to a machine, you can do anything you want, modify files, create them, sniff network traffic," Ingevaldson said.

A temporary software

patch is available for download from <http://sunsolve.sun.com/securitypatch> and a fully supported and tested fix will be available next week. Fixes are pending for AIX, according to CERT, Ingevaldson said.



US Attorney, Mr. Justin Hughes, a legal specialist in protection against computer hackers at a conference on Intellectual property in Africa in Abuja... recently

Firm says hack turns servers into waiting zombies

A company that processes credit card transactions for Web sites confirmed Thursday, that customer Web servers have been hacked and could be used in a massive Internet attack on other computers.

CCBill of Tempe, Ariz., issued a statement to all of its customers warning of the security breach. In an e-mail, the company urged its customers to change their server passwords and search their systems for stealth software called a "bot" that could be hidden in the system.

The bot, dubbed "eggdrop," is designed to listen for instructions via an Instant Relay Chat channel, said Dayne Jordan, co-owner of CompleteWeb, a Columbus, Ohio-based

Internet Service Provider.

Once activated, they could swing into action, turning hacked Web servers into unwitting drones that could be used to take down major Web sites.

On Thursday afternoon there were about 1,200 bots in the IRC channel, Jordan said, despite claims of CCBill that only a "minimal percentage" of its customers have been hacked.

"The bots are sitting there and waiting. If someone comes into the channel and executes the right command these machines could be used to launch a huge distributed denial-of-service attack," he said.

In a denial-of-service attack, multiple servers are

remotely commanded to flood a particular Web site with so much traffic that it is rendered inaccessible to legitimate Internet traffic. Such a concerted attack from numerous drone computers shut down a handful of sites including Yahoo and eBay in February 2000.

Alan Paller, Research Director of the System Networking, Administration and Security Institute, called the hack a "really bad infestation."

In addition to the bots that could be used to turn the Web servers into zombies, administrative user-names and passwords of CCBill's Web site customers and user-names and passwords of their customers have possibly been exposed, Jordan said.

IBM, Ariba stage B2B revival

Business-to-business software may be one of the dirty words of 2001, but the much-hyped technology isn't dead yet.

So says IBM, which Friday said it was making a renewed push into the market through an alliance with one-time B2B highflier Ariba.

IBM will offer Ariba's purchasing software as a paid-for service over the Internet. The software lets companies connect to suppliers to buy basic goods, such as office supplies and furniture, at much lower costs than traditional methods that rely on phone or fax.

The new service, called Quick Start, can get companies up and running and purchasing goods within 21 days, IBM said. Towers Perrin, a large U.S.-based management consulting firm, is one customer using the IBM's new service to wring costs out of its internal purchasing processes.

The company typically spends hundreds of millions of dollars every year buying office supplies—desks, chairs and computers—from up to 60 different suppliers.

But the process is so complex, and its business so large, that its very difficult to control who's buying what, where, and for how much money, said John Hays, Director of global sourcing and procurement for Towers Perrin.

"It's a major problem,"

Hays said. "We had no real ability to manage, spend and vendor relationships throughout the country on a day-to-day basis," he said.

Using Ariba's software, Hays said, Towers Perrin has now managed to whittle its list of suppliers down to just one, a shift in its business strategy that the company believes will help it save between 20 percent and 35 percent off its annual purchasing costs.

"We expect to save in excess of \$80 million in five years," Hays added. IBM's deal with Ariba comes at a

time when most business-to-business software companies are struggling to keep their heads above water amid sharp economic downturn and a drastic reduction in business-software spending.

Companies such as its rival Commerce One burst into the scene in 1999 with the promise of saving companies billions of dollars by connecting them with suppliers to buy discounted goods over the Web, in the process threatening to displace established giants in industries ranging from manufacturing to retail.

Microsoft sues Linux over name

Microsoft asked a court on Thursday to stop a Linux start-up from using a name the software giant contends, infringes on the Windows trademark.

The Redmond, Washington-based software giant filed a motion with the U.S. Court for the Western District of Washington against Lindows, which is developing a version of the Linux operating system that will run popular applications written for Microsoft's Windows OS.


Microsoft contends the company, which plans to formally release its product next year, purposely is trying to confuse Lindows with Windows. The suit asks the court to order the start-up to

stop using the Lindows name and also seeks unspecified monetary damages.

"We're not asking the court to stop the company from making their products," said Microsoft spokesman Jon Murchinson. "What we're saying is they should not use a name that could confuse the public and infringe on our valuable trademark."

Lindows is based on the Wine project, an open-source effort to mimic the commands that Windows programs use. The San Diego-based Lindows company was launched earlier this year by Michael Robertson, former CEO of digital music site MP3.com.

Robertson characterized the move as another attempt by Microsoft to thwart a viable threat to its Windows empire.




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NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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SPORTS



Egypt's Al Ahly soccer players celebrate with the cup after beating South Africa's Mamelodi Sundowns of the Confederation of African Football Champions League in Cairo on Friday.

Egypt celebrates Ahly's victory

Tens of thousands of Egyptian football fans partied all night in Cairo following Ahly's victory in the 2001 Champions League final on Friday night.

It was Ahly's third success in the competition and has recorded seventh continental title.

As the side celebrated their 10th win, 4-1 on aggregate, over South Africa's Sundowns, so did their fans with the 100,000 spectators in the Cairo stadium spilling onto the streets to party.

The area surrounding the stadium became a sea of red as the fans hailed a new hero in 24-year-old Khaled Bebo, who sealed the victory with a hat-trick.

Ahly's ecstatic Portuguese coach Manuel Jose also paid tribute to the fans.

"I have never seen anything like it before, they were amazing," he said.

He also expressed his pride in the accomplishment of his team of young players and said

that he expected to win after the great result in Pretoria, a 1-1 draw a fortnight before.

"At some stage in the game especially in the second half, Sundowns were much better but that is normal since you can't dominate the whole game in such a match," he commented.

Bibo, whose hat-trick was the first in the Champions League finals, said that he had dreamt about scoring in the final game.

"But never in my wildest dreams did I think that I would score three goals," the delighted striker said.

Bibo had been suspended in the first leg in Pretoria.

Meanwhile a disappointed Sundowns coach Ted Dimitru said he felt somewhat sorry for his players.

Missed chances "I can't blame them for the score because they were very unlucky but they wasted many chances. Ahly scored three goals out of the only

four chances," he said.

Dimitru also blamed poor refereeing for the first goal, which came from a penalty kick.

The match was watched by FIFA President Sepp Blatter, who later said that he was very

proud with what he saw including the magnificent crowd who gave the match a unique flavour.

He also praised the good organisation and the standard of the game.

Meanwhile CAF president

Congo Kinshasa faces expulsion

Congo Kinshasa are in danger of missing next month's African Cup of Nations.

Football's world governing body, FIFA, has ordered the sacked football federation's vice-president to be reinstated or the country will face suspension from all international football matches.

FIFA has given the government a deadline of December 31.

The government fired Constant Omari, in November, for criticising sports minister Thimotee Moleka in a television programme.

FIFA said the autonomy of the Congolese football federation, FECOFA was not being respected.

The development of Congolese football also risked being hampered by the country's political authorities, it said.

It added that, in conjunction with the African ruling body, CAF, it had done everything possible this year to "normalise

Congolese football.

FECOFA is an elected member of Fifa and the government has no right to sack one of its members, it said.

Guinea is currently under a FIFA suspension following the sacking of its football executive board by the government.

Moleka and Omari have been in dispute for the past months, largely over the control of funds.

Omari accused Moleka of running the national team, "The Simbas", the same way he ran a local club, FC Kalamu, when he was its president.

FC Kalamu used to be one of the strongest teams in the capital Kinshasa, but it is now languishing in the second division.

Football in Congo has a history of internal wranglings.

In 1994, two separate bodies of the football federation attended the Nations Cup in Tunisia.

And in recent years, The Simbas have witnessed a constant cycle of hiring and sacking of its coaches.

The Simbas are currently in Turkey, on a training tour as part of their preparations for the Nations Cup.

They recently toured Belgium and South Africa on a similar exercise.

The Simbas are drawn in a tough Nations Cup group in Mali against the defending champions Cameroon, Togo and Ivory Coast.

Deportivo increases Barca woes

Deportivo Coruna reclaimed top spot in the Spanish first division with a 2-0 win at home to title rivals Real Betis on Saturday, while Barcelona's woes continued as they went down 2-0 at city rivals Espanyol.

Deportivo's efficient victory, which came via goals from Roy Makaay and Sergio Gonzalez, gave them 33 points from 18 matches and left Real Madrid, now third with 31, needing to win away at Real Mallorca on Sunday to go into 2002 as leaders.

Celta Vigo climbed up to second, ahead of Real Madrid on goal difference, as Catania

grabbed the only goal in a 1-0 win at Sevilla. Betis, who also have 31 points, slipped from second to fourth.

Valencia's 2-1 victory at home to Malaga saw them climb to sixth on 30 points.

Alaves, ahead of Valencia on goal difference, could draw level with Deportivo Coruna if they win at bottom club Rayo Vallecano on Sunday.

After 18 games, Barcelona are down in eighth place on 27 points, six behind Deportivo, after their dismal defeat to Espanyol who claimed victory thanks to two Raul Tamudo goals in the second half.

Barcelona looked a strong

bet to kick start their title campaign as they made a confident start.

They missed two clear chances to take the lead, though. Geovanni shot weakly when put through on goal by Patrick Kluyvert and then the Dutch international fired over after a Marc Overmars run had set him up.

Barcelona paid the price for their slipshod approach when Tamudo gave Espanyol the lead on 58 minutes, albeit thanks to a large slice of luck.

Frank de Boer slightly underhit a pass back to Roberto Bonano and Tamudo, racing in to challenge, looked as surprised as anyone when the goalkeeper's clearance struck him and bounced back into the net.

Tamudo knocked in the second goal at the far post on 70 minutes. This time it was more a case of bad marking as he was left unchallenged to head in a corner.

"We controlled the game and had chances but the ball just didn't go in," said Barcelona coach Carles Rexach.

"Their first goal changed everything. We're optimistic, though. With a bit of luck things will change."

While Barca continue to slip down the table, Real Sociedad look to be on the rise after they turned in easily their best per-

formance of the season to thrash Valladolid 6-0.

Turkish midfielder, Tayfun Korkut, scored twice but the architect of victory was Russian international Dmitry Khokhlov who was outstanding in his attacking midfield role.

Former Liverpool goalkeeper, Sander Westerveld, hardly had a shot to save on his debut for John Toshack's side which moved up a place to 18th.

"We had the skill in front of goal that we've lacked in other games," Toshack said. "We didn't see much work from Westerveld today but he'll have a job to do in the future."



Rivaldo, Barca star

Kuerten may play at Wimbledon

French Open champion Gustavo Kuerten has signalled his intent to play at Wimbledon next year.

Woods in award hat-trick

Tiger Woods has won the USPGA Tour Player of the Year award for the third year in a row.

It is also the fourth time in five years that Woods, who celebrates his 26th birthday on December 30, has been awarded the Jack Nicklaus Trophy.

Woods became the first man to hold all four Majors at the same time with his victory at the Masters in April.

"It's always very special to be selected for an individual award like this by your peers," Woods said.

"I look forward next year to building upon what I have accomplished in the past several years."

For the third consecutive year, Woods also picked up the Arnold Palmer Award as the tour's leading money winner and the Byron Nelson Trophy as the scoring average leader.

Woods posted a phenomenal average score of 68.81 per round.

Woods finished ahead of David Duval, Phil Mickelson and David Toms in the race for the Player of the Year award.

The Brazilian, who spent much of this year as number one in the world rankings, made a much-publicised decision not to play the oldest Grand Slam tournament this year.

Injuries to his back and ankle were the official reason for Kuerten's absence, but the three-time French Open champion is not comfortable on grass.

The fact that Wimbledon comes only a few weeks after the French Open also played a major part in his decision, and Kuerten admits that Roland Garros will always take precedence.

"Something happens inside me each time I come to play in this tournament," he said.

"Much will depend on how I play at Roland Garros and how I feel physically, but I would like to play at Wimbledon."

The Brazilian returned to training on Tuesday and said his aim is to regain the top ranking he lost to Australian Lleyton Hewitt in November.

"Now I want to feel in top form again and I will work hard to achieve this," he said.

He will open his season with a friendly tournament between Brazilian and Argentine players in Rio de Janeiro in the first week of January.

Kuerten will then head for Melbourne to begin his preparations for the Australian Open, which starts on January 14.



Kuerten's best effort is the last eight at Wimbledon.

Hopkins faces \$6m suit

Undisputed world middleweight champion Bernard Hopkins is at the centre of a \$6m (£4.1m) lawsuit.

He is being sued by former adviser Lou DiBella, who has accused Hopkins of betraying his trust and confidence.

DiBella claims he was unfairly dismissed as a consultant to the fighter after his win over Felix Trinidad on September 29.

DiBella alleges Hopkins made false statements after his sacking attracted negative publicity.

Earlier this week, Hopkins

said he had paid DiBella to arrange fights for him while DiBella was still employed by a cable television network.

"It's a complete, absolute and utter lie," said Judd Burstein, DiBella's lawyer.

DiBella believes he is responsible for much of Hopkins' success.

He claims he provided financial, as well as moral, support until the boxer finally got a chance to fight for the world title.

DiBella is seeking libel and breach of contract damages on "a remarkable betrayal of trust and confidence".



Aku orders reinvestigation on Eromogbe

Sports Minister, Ishaya Mark Aku, has ordered reinvestigation of the impersonation allegation levelled against an Eagles, Richard Eromogbe.

The minister's order may have re-opened the canker worms of the controversy which had compelled the Presidency to initiate the setting up of two separate investigation panels with a view to unearthing the truth of the matter.

Aku, handed down the order before proceeding on vacation last weekend following what ministry sources termed "the conflicting 'facts' that emerged in the separate reports submitted to the presidency and the minister."

The presidency had directed the Sports Ministry to investigate the matter even as it initiated a separate independent panel through the State Security Service (SSS) to turn

By Patrick Andrew
its searchlight into the controversy.

Ministry sources said whereas the SSS reports established the case of impersonation and indicted the technical crew of the Golden Eagles, the other report from the ministry's team exonerated them. Instead, it recommended the prosecution of media houses which had made reports on the case.

Speaking at a briefing in Lagos, last Thursday, Aku said "John's case it's sad, it's really bad. Those who have been indicted would be prosecuted. But I must first of all inform Mr. President, then we can make it a media affair."

Aku, who was highly disappointed with the panel instituted by the ministry and its alleged complicity in the report, instructed them to return to the basis for a more

thorough job.

Trustsports learnt that the initial independent panel set up by the NFA to investigate the matter had indicted an official of the Eagles technical crew of complicity but that aspect was mellowed down upon allegedly because the relationship between the official and the minister.

Besides, several facts



Aku, Sports Minister

were allegedly not included in the NFA report presented to the ministry even as the ministry's panel adopted in total the submissions of the NFA panel while turning blind eyes on available evidences of alleged impersonation and age-cheat cases rampant in the squad which participated in the World U-17 Championship in Trinidad and Tobago, last September.

Aku, we learnt was particularly furious with the ministry's panel for doing a poor job in the face of abundant evidences, a development that compelled him to order reinvestigation of the case.

However, it was not clear whether he would insist on the same panel, strengthen it or set up an entirely new panel to handle the investigation.

Trustsports recalls that President Olusegun Obasanjo had vowed to return all medals won by the Golden Eagles in the World U-17 fiesta in Trinidad and Tobago should the case of impersonation be established against any member of the Eagles.

An NPA player, John Aikhimien, who claims to be Richard Eromogbe is at the centre of the controversy.



Stanford guard Casey Jacobsen, left, shoots over Brigham Young forward Eric Nielsen in the first half in Las Vegas on Saturday.

Ojugbana, Laloko top list

The race for the vacant position of the NFA Secretary-General may have been narrowed to trio following the completion of the oral interview yesterday.

Trustsports learnt Charles Ojugbana and coach Kashimawo Laloko top the



Dominic Oneya, NFA boss

S.G. job list of candidates recommended for consideration by the consultancy firm that handled the interview.

The list for the SG job surprisingly excluded Paul Bassey said to have paraded the best credentials even as the name of Taiwo Oyunjobi also failed to get mentioned.

However, the panel was instructed to recommend three names for each vacant positions but in the order of their merits.

Last Friday, six candidates who scaled through the written interview for the SG's job were engaged in oral interviews while that for the HODs technical, marketing took place the following day. The

HOD female and national competitions come up yesterday.

The two front runners for the SG job have all been involved with the NFA for years.

Coach Laloko was until last year the HOD technical department before retiring to head the Pepsi Football Academy.

Similarly, Ojugbana had served in various capacities including HOD proleague, international and until the latest restructuring of the NFA HOD Statistics and Planning.

Paul Bassey, who may likely make the final list has been CAF media officer, with sufficient clout with FIFA officials. The veteran sports journalist is the publisher of *Today's Sports*.

Girard takes WBA crown

France's Bruno Girard stopped American Robert Koon in the 11th round on Saturday to take the vacant WBA light-heavyweight title.

The referee ended the bout in Orleans after Girard, 31, hammered his opponent with a left punch followed by a right.

Koon had been pinned to the ropes for much of the last four rounds and in the final two swayed giddily, his nose bleeding.

Although seven years older than his opponent, Girard looked by the leaner and fitter of the two and had Koon retreating throughout the match.

"I could have gone faster," said Girard. "But in his punches I felt that he was hurting me."

The Frenchman, a former WBA super middleweight champion, now has a record of 32 wins, two draws and three defeats.

Koon, from Mobile, Alabama, has a record of 29 wins, one draw and nine defeats.

He was a late replacement for countryman Lou Del Valle, ranked No. 1 in the WBA standings for the category.

Del Valle drew against Girard in the title bout last August, but missed the mandatory rematch because of a hand injury.

The light-heavyweight

title was left vacant by Roy Jones Jr's promotion to WBA Super World Champion status on grounds he held the WBA, WBC and IBF crowns in the category.



Manchester United's striker, Ruud van Nistelrooy, scored three goals as Manchester United overwhelmed Southampton 6-1 at Old Trafford in the Premiership league match on Saturday.

Akinbiyi seeks Eagles shirt

Striker Ade Akinbiyi, with English Premiership club Leicester, says he wants to resume his international career with Nigeria's Super Eagles.

Akinbiyi hopes his current form will impress coach Amodu Shaibu to get him invited into the squad for the African Nations Cup in Mali.

It will be the platform to establish himself and play for Nigeria at the World Cup in Korea and Japan, he said.

"It would be my dream to play against England in the World Cup," said Akinbiyi, referring to the Group F clash

in Osaka, Japan next June. Shaibu and Shaibu qualified the Super Eagles for the World Cup.

Akinbiyi, 27, said: "I knew I stood little chance of returning to the team during the World Cup qualifiers because Nigeria were in the doldrums then."

He said he expected to be in Nigeria's provisional squad for the Nations Cup when it was announced in November. Akinbiyi, who was born in London but has Nigerian parents, is a muscularly built striker with a lot of pace.

But his inaccuracy in front of goal has made him unpopular with Leicester fans. And they always taunt him with chants of: "Akin-Bad-Buy" or "Akin-Panic-Buy."

Nigeria sacked Bonfrere in April after a poor run of re-

Coria suspended for drug

Guillermo Coria of Argentina has been suspended for seven months and fined £68,000 by the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) after testing positive for the banned steroid Nandrolone.

The 19-year-old Coria has also been deducted ranking points after testing positive at the Open Seat Godo tournament in Barcelona, Spain, in April.

The young Argentine has been handed the punishment despite evidence supporting Coria's claim that he ingested the banned substance in a nutritional substance.

"I am devastated by this penalty, which I consider too harsh in light of the fact I proved to the tribunal that I did everything possible to abide by our anti-doping rules," Coria said.

"I have not, and would never take, banned substances to enhance performance."

ATP Chief Executive Officer Mark Miles said: "This decision is a very clear warning to tennis players and all world-class athletes about the risks of consuming dietary supplements."

"Even though the evidence in this case showed that the supplements consumed by Mr Coria were contaminated during manufacturing and did not list the banned substance on the label, he still must pay a significant price through suspension and forfeiture of points and prize money."

Coria was ranked as high as 30 in the ATP entry system in April, but has not played on the ATP Tour since the first week of August.

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MONDAY COLUMN

Walking the anti-corruption talk

By Sam Nda-Isaiah

During the days of the late Gen. Sani Abacha as the Head of State, bank owners and directors who fiddled with depositors' funds had a rough time. And that was rightly so. Before then, to be a bank director was the closest thing to the bliss of paradise. You didn't need to do a hard days job. The Strong Rooms of the banks were virtually converted to the directors' private exchequers and they did whatever they wished with the funds without regards to the civilized banking tenets of trust and accountability. The depositor's funds were part of the trappings and accoutrements of their power and they revelled in it.

Those were the days when corruption was not only the accepted social mores but also the growth occupation. Sani Abacha came, fought the bank managers to a standstill, imprisoned the thieving directors and withdrew some of the bank's licences. Nigerians hailed Abacha as the greatest anti-corruption exponent that ever resided in the State House. Then Abacha died.

Because the cat died, the rats went back to business as usual. But that was also when it was discovered that while Abacha was jailing bank directors for stealing N100 million, he was stealing N100 billion. One may say that it takes a deep level of spiritual depravity to do this. But that is the nature of power in Nigeria and we are beginning to find out that this nature is not confined to military regimes alone.

During the presidential campaigns that led to the restoration of civilian democracy in Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, the president, never failed to roundly and loudly condemn corruption. He promised to find a lasting solution to it. That was one of the issues that clearly differentiated and separated him from other contenders. His other opponents didn't even utter the word corruption. Most of them didn't have the moral equipment to do so. Nigerians started rejoicing when Obasanjo won. Some of them who could afford it filled their glasses with champagne, but before they could taste it, it went flat.

I am one of those who believe without reservation that the president was not posturing on the issue of corruption during the campaign and immediately after. But I started doubting his honesty on the matter by his choice of aides and ministers and all kinds of "fixers," most of whom "fixed" Nigeria into its present state. So when the president began to compromise, it was not difficult to see the reason why. As the late Chief M. K. O. Abiola once quipped, you cannot jump into water and complain that you are wet.

One of the earliest incidences that shook my confidence in the sincerity of Obasanjo government in its self-assigned war against corruption was when very early in his administration, a minister was involved in a large scale corruption involving the purchase of some houses. Clearly, the houses were purchased at egregiously inflated rates. One expected that a major example would be made of the minister to serve as a deterrent to other public officers who still doubted the President's resolve on the matter. But the president came out to tell us some incoherent things I cannot immediately recall and said something to the effect that the then Minister was acting on his own and should defend himself. Relatedly, the Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance, Chief Martins Kuye was asked to testify on the issue and he was less than open with the investigating committee. The least that could have happened at that time would have been for the president to fire both ministers and then hand them over to the Anti-Corruption Commission headed by Alhaji Mustapha Akanbi, a well respected jurist. The president didn't do that.

Last week, I had a chance meeting with a very distinguished Senator, Alhaji Idris Abubakar of Gombe State. In a country with a senate of everything goes, Senator Abubakar has kept his dignity and seems to be serving his nation diligently in that very important office. I confronted the Senator frontally on the activities of the Senate in the last few days especially its scandalous dereliction of duty in calling the president to order and giving the nation the true picture when the president defended his lacklustre handling of the 2001 appropriation bill, on the ground that the nation didn't make enough money. The Senator told me that he had not been in the country for sometime and that since he came back, he had not received proper briefing on the issue. But he took the president's words with a "sack of salt" and was characteristically point-blank about it. You can trust the Senator to be aboveboard on such matters. Remember the Bola Ige saga? My point in all these is that we should not expect the truth from the government regarding the finances of this country if it still retains a lying minister of finance.

The paradox in this is that the president is a top gun in

Transparency International, a body that continues to award Nigeria the trophy as the most corrupt country in the whole world. In fact it was when Obasanjo became the president that we took the gold medal. I remember that the government, particularly the president himself, was unhappy by the assessment of the world body about 2 years ago. But he must have forgotten that Transparency International is not like the PDP that he can fiddle with, even though like the PDP, he is a patron of the organization. It should interest the president to know that only members of his government were miffed by the assessment of the body. A majority of Nigerians and the International Community were satisfied with the assessment and from all indications on ground, Nigeria is poised to receive that infamous trophy again.

Nigerians no longer believe all the blabbering and quibbling on anti-corruption of the Obasanjo government. There are too many reasons for this. Apart from the one above, the government still deceives itself that Nigerians have forgotten the N4 million bribe scandal that rocked the House of Representatives sometimes ago when it was alleged that it had attempted to bribe some members of the House to remove their Speaker. Also we are yet to know how much public funds was used in the removal of Dr. Chuba Okadigbo but as the experience of retribution shows us, we will not have to wait too long. One day we will be told free of charge. This government cannot stand the scrutiny of its own anti-corruption policy.

N10 billion was voted in the 2001 Appropriation Bill to pay PTF contractors that had completed their jobs over 3 years ago. Of this amount, we were told that N3.5 billion was "removed" at source after the appropriation. Who removed it and why was it removed? Is the National Assembly, which approved the appropriation aware of this illegality? And why did it take the PTF up till December to start disbursing funds that were approved in January?

Nigerians are yet to forget how Obasanjo's men at the PTF, Barrister Gaius Yaro, Abdu Abdurraheem and Baba Goni Machina were accused of underhand dealings. Nigerians remember the sacking of these thieving IMC members but cannot remember the government handing them over to appropriate authorities, in this case, the Anti-Corruption Commission. We also recently heard Chief Segun Osoba complaining that a stretch of road, which his government has successfully constructed for N308 million, has been awarded by the president's men for N640 million. As I write this, Nigerians are yet to know the exact amount that has been recovered by the government from the Abacha family. Add this to the corruption of the contraption called Electoral Decree, sorry Electoral Act, and the immorality that went with the passing of the infamous bill, then you will know what I am talking about. If with all these unresolved issues of propriety, Obasanjo still expects Nigerians to take him seriously when he talks anti-corruption, then he must be expecting too much from them. The courtiers around the president may be telling him that he is the best thing that has happened to Nigeria. But my own advice to him is that he should not believe them. It is a lie.

The only occasion I think this government did anything anti-corruption at all, was when at the inception of the administration, the Minister of Defence, Gen. T. Y. Danjuma had his Permanent Secretary arrested and charged with corruption on some shady deal. That was when Danjuma himself took his friend, the president, seriously and thought they were coming to do a clean sweep of the Augean Stables. I am sure he now knows better.

Not a few people have summed the difference between this government and previous corrupt governments as the difference between tweedledum and tweedledee. With the clear indubitable and incontrovertible evidence on ground, I think I am about to join this group. Unless of-course this government changes direction by turning right and keeping straight.

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EDITORIAL

Stopping the slide to one-party state (2)

If the allegation that the presidency is simultaneously destabilising the APP and AD, and making the PDP inviting with inducements is true, there is cause to fear that as we approach 2003, there would be a further constriction of the political space.

With the decamping to the PDP of notables like Chief Tom Ikimi, Chief Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu, Dr. Olabode Jumoke, and Alhaji Kwatalo, amongst others, it is feared that the decampings would become a gale in the coming months.

We, therefore, call on the federal government to clear the air on those grave allegations that are at the root of our democratic experiment even as we urge for an urgent review of the controversial Electoral Law.

And we unequivocally condemn the casuistry of our destiny by trivial statements as that credited to Senator Jonathan Zwingina that the president is the nation's chief lawmaker.

To accept that would entail accepting also that he is the chief law interpreter. And only a nation that celebrates sycophancy will be comfortable with the obnoxious idea of a superhuman president who is at once its chief lawmaker, chief law-interpreter and chief law-executor. This is the type of environment that created civilian dictators like the late Mobutu Sese Seko, Daniel arap Moi and Hastings Kamuzu Banda to mention just a few.

We further condemn the unscrupulous members of the political class who are wittingly and unwittingly weakening the foundations of our democracy by showing little faith in the democratic project particularly and the Nigerian dream generally.

For in conveniently decamping to the PDP, they shamelessly advertise to the whole world that they are in politics for what they can get out of it and not what they can put in. And by such immoral behaviour, they help strengthen the hands of a president whose understanding of democracy is at best elementary, to entrench one-man rule.

Lastly, we would like to advise the National Assembly to start the process of expunging from our statutes the controversial clauses. If, as we are constantly reminded, Nigeria is bigger than any individual, we counsel that no personal interest should be bigger than the national interest. This is the surest way of arresting the impending slide into a one-party state.