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IGE'S MURDER LATEST

Senate may support state of emergency

Top on the agenda of the Senate emergency session tomorrow is a debate on whether to consider a declaration of a state of emergency in the troubled Osun, the home state of the slain Minister of Justice and Attorney-General of the Federation, Chief Bola Ige (SAN).

By Sani Babadoko and Mustapha Isah Kwaru

Sources told *Daily Trust* yesterday that the Senate was reconvening at the behest of President Olusegun Obasanjo, who has been deeply worried about the raging crisis in the

state which has resulted in the loss of at least six lives before last Sunday's murder of Chief Bola Ige in Ibadan.

It was gathered that President Obasanjo has favoured an immediate declaration of a state of emergency which would

have meant that the Osun State Governor, Chief Bisi Akande and his deputy, Chief Iyiola Omisore, the principal characters in the crisis will lose their positions as well as the dissolution of the State House of Assembly.

However, it was learnt that President Obasanjo dropped the idea after a discussion with Vice-President Atiku Abubakar who drew comparisons between the current situation in the South-West and the

Western regional crises of 1964 when the then Prime Minister, Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, declared a state of emergency in the region.

The declaration then escalated the violence rather than the desired effect of enthrone law and order, and eventually led to the first military coup of January 15, 1966.

An indication that the Senate would consider

Contd. on Pg 2



Chief Anyim Pius Anyim

Police offer N.5 million on assassination

The Nigeria Police has announced a reward of N500,000 to anyone with information on the assassination of Justice Minister, Chief Bola Ige, on Sunday.

A statement issued in Abuja yesterday by the deputy Force Public Relations Officer, CSP Olufemi Oyeleye, said that the police had commenced full scale investigation into the murder.

It stated that the investigation team, led by AIG (Force Investigation), Mrs. Abimbola Ojomo, had since commenced inquiries relevant to the case in both Osun and Oyo States and other parts of the country.

The police appealed to anyone with useful information to contact it on the following Abuja telephone numbers: 09-

2340422, 09-2340633, 09-2340424, 09-2340755 and 09-2340869.

In Osun and Oyo States, the statement said that the police could be contacted on: 035-243363, 02-2412824 respectively.

The statement assured the public that any information received would

be treated with "utmost confidentiality" while the identity of the informant would be kept secret.

Meanwhile, the Catholic Archbishop of Abuja, Most Rev. John Onaiyekan, has urged the law enforcement agencies to carry out a thorough investigation to

Contd. on Pg 2



Bystanders and rescue workers look at a mudslide which killed at least 13 people in Petropolis, about 50 miles north of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil... Tuesday.

We'll promote communal dialogue - Obasanjo

President Olusegun Obasanjo, still reeling from the shock of the assassination of Chief Bola Ige, said yesterday at Ibogun, Ogun State, that his administration will promote a

From Olumide Bajulaiye, in Abeokuta

dialogue of all ethnic groups in the country to ensure stability in the polity.

The president, who spoke while attending the annual Ibogun Elders Day celebration in Ibogun, his birth-place in Ifo Local Government Area, however, appealed to Nigerians of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds to eschew violence.

According to Obasanjo, "I want to assure you that come next year, this government will pursue the need to eschew bitterness. We will be guided by the need to es-

chew rancour, anger and substitute it with dialogue to ensure the enthronement of peace and making democracy work as it should" because there is no substitute for democracy. And if democracy works, no matter what we have to talk about, we will be able to talk

Contd. on Pg 2

Christian takes case to Sharia court

An Upper Sharia court in Sokoto on Monday sentenced two youths to amputation of the right wrist and three years imprisonment respectively for stealing personal belongings of a Christian girl.

From Sani Umar, in Sokoto

The convicts, Aminu Bello (20) who will have his right wrist amputated and Salisu Abdullahi (22), who will be given 50 strokes of the cane in addition to three

Contd. on Pg 2

ELECTORAL ACT

Reps cut recess short

There are strong indications that the House of Representatives may cut short its Christmas and New Year recess and return to Abuja to thrash out the controversies surrounding the Electoral Act.

Already, several members of the House are contacting each other and

From Musa Umar Kazaure, in Kano

advocating that the seven weeks recess be abridged to enable them return to the House and deal with the controversial sections of the Act.

The House Chairman, Inter Parliamentary Relations

Contd. on Pg 2

Zambians go to the polls today

Zambia holds a general election today with 11 political parties vying for the country's presidency, parliamentary seats and representation in local governments.

Presidential election results are expected to be

Contd. on Pg 2



President Obasanjo



Alhaji Ghali Na'Abba

NEWS

Saudi Arabian cleric commends Nigeria for Sharia

Nigerian government has been commended for the implementation of the Sharia legal system in some parts of the federation.

The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Medina in the Saudi Arabian Kingdom, Professor Saleh Al'Ubud, made the commendation during an International Islamic Forum organised in conjunction with the *Da'awah* Group of Nigeria (DGN) in Kano State for graduates of Saudi Arabian Universities from Africa.

From Jamilah Nuhu Musa, in Kano

Dr. Saleh Al'Ubud expressed dismay over the negative image of Islam as being propagated by the Western world and commended Nigeria for the promotion of Islam through Sharia implementation.

Dr. Saleh Al'Ubud who is the patron of the International Islamic Forum disclosed that the Saudi-Arabian Universities namely the King Abdulaziz University, the Islamic

University of Medina and the Ummul Qur'an University of Mecca have 200 foreign nationals as students with the African continent having the lion share especially Nigeria for facilitating continued spread of the Islamic knowledge.

Dr. Al'Ubud further disclosed that over 1,400 students from different parts of the world have graduated from the universities over the years.

He stated that the Saudi Arabian Kingdom has built over 1,360 mosques spread all over the world in addition to the expansion of the two holy mosques of Mecca and Medina.

The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Medina said that the choice of Kano for the graduation of the 120 students is in recognition of its frontline position in the propagation of Islam.

years imprisonment were found guilty of the offence after they stole some belongings of one Yemisi Nelson valued at N65,000.

Yemisi Nelson, a student of Usmanu Dan Fodio University, Sokoto, insisted on the case being heard by a Sharia court instead of a magistrate court even though she is a Christian.

Police Corporal Idris Abdullahi, who investigated the case listed the stolen items as a Sharp tape recorder, extension wire, electric pressing iron, Jimtex bag, five yards of brocade (*shada*), one pair of canvass shoes, a pair of eye glasses, four pairs of jeans, three undies (pants) one padlock

along with its keys, and cash of N15,000, among others.

He said the convicts were apprehended by some members of the Sharia Implementation Committee who sighted them coming out of the house with a large bag containing the items which they suspected were stolen.

Unknown to the thieves that they were being monitored they deposited the bag with an owner of a provision store at Rumjin Sambo, a few meters from the house they broke into.

Members of the committee called in the police and when the thieves came to collect the bag, they were refused by the trader,

but used force to collect it.

After collecting the bag, they rode on a motorcycle and sped away while the police and two members of the Sharia committee pursued them.

The judge, Alhaji Bawa Sahabi Tambuwal, said while sentencing Aminu Bello "The plaintiff is not a Muslim, she has voluntarily and willingly submitted herself to the Sharia legal system, I therefore sentenced you to amputation of the right wrist." However, the judge sentenced Salisu Abdullahi who was established as an accomplice to fifty strokes of the cane and three years imprisonment according to section 150 of the Sharia legal code of Sokoto State.

Zambia

announced by midnight the same day.

A day before voters queued at polling booths, every presidential candidate claimed to be the front-runner. Levy Mwanawasa of the ruling Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) was quoted by 'Post' newspaper as saying: "If the response from the public is something to go by, I am very confident of winning. However, I am not leaving any stone unturned until the votes are counted."

Forum for Democracy and Development (FDD) leader, Christon Tembo, said his party would form the next government in Zambia.

Tembo claimed his countrywide tour showed he

had popular support in Northern Copperbelt, North-Western, Eastern and Lusaka provinces.

"We have pockets here and there in other provinces but my overall assessment is that we are doing well all over the country. My chances of winning are very good. But if we lose genuinely in a free and fair election, we shall congratulate the winner," he said.

Another presidential hopeful, Anderson Mazoka of United Party for National Development (UPND) said, "voters have it within their power to decide whether Zambia should continue sliding into the abyss created by the MMD or to be saved from total collapse."

Senate

giving the president wide powers to ensure the security of lives and property in Osun State also came in an interview with the Deputy Senate President, Ibrahim Mantu, on the Hausa service of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) yesterday.

Mantu said though President Obasanjo has not made any request for powers to declare a state of emergency, "if that would assist in restoring law and order, there is nothing wrong with it. But we are going to discuss the issue when the Senate reconvenes tomorrow."

Meanwhile, the police have announced a N500,000 reward for any person or persons who could provide with information leading to the arrest of the murderers of Chief Bola Ige even as it was noted that some arrests have been made by the police in Ibadan and Osogbo.

It was gathered that security agencies are working on at least three theories in resolving the murder of the Justice Minister. One is that the assassination might have been a revenge for the alleged killing of the person who accosted Chief Ige at the Ooni's palace last week

humiliating him by removing his cap and glasses in public.

The individual involved was allegedly killed in Ile-Ife last week Friday and those sympathetic to him might have vowed to revenge the death.

The second theory is that Ige's assassination might be a fall out from the crisis in the Alliance for Democracy (AD) which have pitched Governor Akande against his deputy, Omisore. The crisis has resulted in gun battles in the Osun State House of Assembly and led to the killing of one of the members, Hon. Odunayo Olagboju.

A third theory is the power tussle within the pan-Yoruba cultural organisation, *Afenifere*. In particular, the formation of the Yoruba Council of Elders (YCE), which Chief Ige was reported to have helped to create as a counterforce to Chief Adesanya's leadership of the *Afenifere*.

Although Chief Ige was still the deputy leader of *Afenifere*, his action in creating a rival organ has been compared by some politicians in the region to that of Chief Ladoke Akintola against Chief Obafemi Awolowo in the Action Group (AG) during the first republic.

Committee, Hon. Farouq Lawan, hinted in Kano on Tuesday, that rather than reconvene on January 22, the House may return in the first week of January so that members can discuss amendment in the Electoral Bill in the interest of the polity and peace in the country.

He described President Olusegun Obasanjo's alleged tampering with the bill as an illegality, arguing, "you do not adopt fraudulent means to short-change the democratic process or the Nigerian people."

Hon. Lawan said the clause on the exclusion of new political parties from participating in the 2003 elections was never brought before the members nor discussed on the floor of the House.

He argued that since Nigerians have unanimously opposed the inclusion of the

Electoral Act

clause, the members have no choice than to expunge it.

"This is not dictatorship. This is democracy and you cannot impose an unpopular law on the people," he said.

On the conduct of local government elections in 2002, the former ethics and disciplinary committee chairman of the House said it will distract elected and political office holders from governance because attention would all be focused on winning the elections to the detriment of development efforts.

He said he preferred the House version of the bill which proposed the conduct of all the elections the same day so that everyone will be for himself without any room for joint politicking.

Said he: "When you allow someone in office to midwife an election, there is the tendency for him to use his

office to manipulate the process, and this will trigger off chaos and anarchy and therefore, endanger the entire democratic process."

Reacting to the president's claim that there was no money to implement the 2001 budget, Farouq, representing Shanono/Bagwai Federal Constituency, said the executive has not sufficiently convinced everybody that the implementation of the 2001 budget was transparent, open and fair.

He maintained that lack of money was not sufficient excuse "given the amount of revenue that accrued to Nigeria during the period, given amount of money appropriated and given the commitment and determination of the National Assembly to ensure that development projects were executed."

"In the 2000 budget, the

president complained that he refused to implement it because we tampered with his budget; that the budget was our budget. So in 2001, we decided to allow him go with his budget as presented with very minor changes. Yet, he could not implement his own crafted budget, using no money as an excuse." Rep. Lawan recalled.

He said the House will insist on knowing how Nigerians fared with the 2001 budget before discussing 2002 budget.

He regretted the loose state of security in the country, which he said has permitted the assassination of a minister with ease. He recalled that the House had earlier shown its concern and had deliberated on the state of security in the country over 10 times with resolutions urging the executive and security agencies to gear up over the dismal situation.

Police

fish out the perpetrators.

"The more this is accurately done, the more we will be in a better position to prevent and address such terrible incidences in future," Onaiyekan told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abuja, yesterday.

He said it was unfortunate that it was only when a big man with a big name was involved that "we shout about it, when on daily basis, when smaller flies are involved, nobody cares."

Onaiyekan said Nigerians should not forget that even the armed forces mauled down some people sometime ago.

He asked: "Are we doing enough to preserve the sanctity of human life or are we aligning ourselves by being insensitive to bloodshed?"

"This is what we should

really think and worry about," he stressed.

The Archbishop asked Nigerians to pray and work hard to clean up the political environment, saying that politics should not be seen as a matter of life and death.

He said no government could stand without a viable opposition and that the responsibility for this lies with the political elite and leaders who have the tendency to misuse power.

Onaiyekan said politicians should realise that the country does not belong to political parties, but to Nigerians who constituted membership of the parties.

"I am worried about 'partitocracy'. Instead of democracy we see more of the government of the people by the party for the party where if you don't belong, you don't get anything," he noted.

Dialogue

about them.

"No matter our disagreements, we will be able to talk about dialogue. A situation where we leave dialogue and substitute dialogue with violence is not human.

"I mean it is animalistic and any group of human beings who behave in such a way is not fit to be in the company of civilised people," Obasanjo added.

According to him, the events of the last few days, referring to Chief Bola Ige's murder, has robbed the Ibogun Elders Day celebration of the usual pomp and pageantry associated with the occasion.

He said: "The happiness and the pleasure of this occasion is somehow being diminished by the tragic in-

cident of the assassination of a friend, colleague, a patriot, a nationalist and somebody who has worked closely with me in the last two and a half years. May his soul rest in perfect peace."

In condemning the motives behind Chief Ige's assassination, Obasanjo asserted that "whatever may have been the motive of those who carried out this dastardly act, be it political, economic or whatever is absolutely unacceptable.

"And this government will leave no stone unturned to search for justice because, if this can happen and we can get away with it, then the lives of ordinary people in the country... I will say is insecure," he said.

NEWS

Nigerians should pray to avert disaster in 2003 -Makinde

The Archbishop, Methodist Church of Nigeria, Abuja branch, Archbishop Ola Makinde, has called on Nigerians to pray seriously and fast to avert disaster in 2003.

Makinde, who was reacting to the assassination of Chief Bola Ige, the Minister of Justice, in Ibadan on Sunday, said in Abuja, yesterday, that the handwritings on the wall were frightening.

Year 2003 must be a year dedicated to ardent prayer and fasting for the survival of the country and for God to dislodge and expose enemies of Nigeria. Unless we do this, the 2003 election will be a mirage.

Makinde expressed sadness over the death of Ige and said if Nigerians loved one another, there would be no hatred in politics,

commerce and in whatever they did.

He said there were misfits and satanic people in Nigeria's politics and advised the electorate not to vote for people who had no love in their vein.

"If they want to play the game with money, take their money and still vote according to your conscience," he said, adding that "Nigerians pretend to be religious, but are without any form of religion in them."

In screening candidates for future elections in the

country, Makinde advised INEC to pay particular attention to the character and antecedents of candidates, saying that character and not certificate "makes a man."

Makinde appealed to Governor Bisi Akande of Osun State and his deputy, Iyiola Omisore, to resign from office immediately since they have failed to reconcile themselves, saying that they were a disappointment and disgrace to the nation.

He also appealed to governors not in good terms with their deputies to emulate President Olusegun Obasanjo and Vice-President Atiku Abubakar and borrow from their relationship.

Prominent Nigerians including politicians, state governors, and members of the bar and the bench, on Monday, reacted to the assassination on Sunday of the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, Chief Bola Ige, at his residence in Ibadan.

One-time presidential candidate of the AD/APP, Chief Olu Falae, condemned the security situation of the country. Falae, who came in company of Ondo State Governor, Chief Adebayo Adefarati, to pay his condolence to the Ige family at their No. 8, Akinlabi Sanda Close, Bodija residence, emphasised that there was no security in the country.

The frontline politician and AD chieftain told newsmen that "when there is no security, there can be no economic progress or growth," stressing that if a

Falae, Adesina, others react to Ige's assassination

federal minister could be cut down as Ige was in his own house, then "it is terrible."

"We pray that the Lord Himself will intervene," he added.

In his reaction, Gov. Bola Tinubu of Lagos State said, "Bola Ige's virtues and ideals will never die. Those who think they can silence the Cicero have failed."

Gov. Lamidi Adesina of Oyo State formally announced the death of the minister through a statement which he personally issued.

The governor described the killing as "a disastrous political development, the full repercussions of which nobody can predict."

He declared that those who murdered Ige did it with the intention of escalating the tension that already subsisted in certain areas.

"They also did it with the intention to pull back the political gains of the Yoruba race. what we can do and what I appeal fervently that we do, is to calm down, allow peace to reign and allow all the security apparatus to do their work.

"If we do this, we would have scuttled the intention of the perpetrators of this cowardly act to cause

mayhem in the land.

"I was there moments after he was shot and killed and the bullets that pierced his heart were meant to silence the truth, but I assured my good people that the truth will not only be unfolded but will also unfold another chapter of our eventful triumph.

"I appeal to you not to seek vengeance through violence. For if you do that, you would have played into the hands of your enemies. Stay calm and watch as we unravel the sad event," Adesina stressed in his message laden with emotion.

The Vice-Chairman of Oyo State Council of Obas, who is also the Olugbon of Orile-Igbon, Oba Samuel Osunbade, described the killing as "a tragedy of a first class order."

"I don't know where we are going, just because of politics, and people start killing one another. A position which you hold for a little while and somebody else comes to replace you, and you think the best way to overcome your opponents is to kill him -that is too bad," the traditional ruler said.



INEC Chairman, Abel Ibude Guobadia (left) and INEC Secretary, Mr Benjamin Ochei, during the meeting with State Independent Electoral Commissions (SIECs) and leaders of the three political parties in Abuja ...recently.

Gov Nyame calls for peace

Governor Jolly Nyame of Taraba State has urged the people of the state to ensure peaceful and harmonious co-existence amongst the various communities.

Nyame, who made the call in a broadcast to the people of the state to mark the Christmas celebration in Jalingo, said the birth of Jesus Christ was to glorify God in peace and goodwill among the people.

The governor assured the people of the state that Taraba would witness a transformation of peace and tangible socio-economic development.

He said that the nation had witnessed various incidents of ethnic and religious crises this year, and solicited for harmonious co-existence among the different communities in the state and nation.

Nyame also called on both Muslims and Christians in the state to use the teaching contained in the Holy books to ensure peace and harmony.

He emphasised that without a peaceful atmosphere, the elected democratic government could not perform its obligations to the people.

Allow free formation of political parties -Onaiyekan

The Catholic Archbishop of Abuja, Most Rev. John Onaiyekan, has said that nothing should be done to restrict the free formation of political parties and their free and fair participation in the 2003 election.

In a Christmas message titled "Welcoming Christ's gift of peace," Onaiyekan said it was necessary to liberate the political environment and make more room for free expression and association.

"The people of Nigeria have a right to be given all the options available, manipulating the system in order to stifle or kill dissenting voices only builds up tensions in which no one is at ease," he said.

Onaiyekan said that democratic politics should not be a matter of life and death, like military coups where "you dare not lose," adding that there was a role for the winners as well as for the losers for being in government.

He described

Christmas as a festival of peace and regretted that "at this Christmas 2001, what we see around us seems to indicate otherwise."

"Since the horrible events of Sept. 11, 2001 in New York and Washington, the world has witnessed one form of terrorism after the other," the archbishop said, adding "our planet has become so much less safe today than it was a year ago."

In Nigeria, he said, a lot of social dis-equilibrium was waiting to be addressed.

"There is need for greater equity, if not equality. We need to pay more attention to the needs of the weakest, the poorest, the sick, the handicapped, the voiceless," Onaiyekan said.

He said the government must pursue more vigorously good government, the establishment of a good political order and governance in the interest of the common good, pointing out that the days of governance as a fraudulent arrangement by a ruling clique to loot and pillage the

nation's resources should be gone forever.

Onaiyekan said that the memories and realities of past atrocities, abiding pains and guilt from the recent and not so recent past, had continued to haunt the national psyche.

"We had hoped that the now fading Oputa Panel would be an opportunity to excise, cast away forever, those demons. But it seems we have missed the golden opportunity to repair and to reconcile," he said.

The archbishop said that a grave responsibility for peace lied with those who organise the nation's political environment, adding that they must resist the temptation to whip up sectional bad blood for selfish reasons.

"Our differences, many though they may be, must be courageously addressed. Our ethnic and religious differences can be reconciled in a modus vivendi that will be fair to all concerned. This is possible with goodwill, with honest dialogue and with a genuine sense of patriotism," he concluded.

Christmas is time for sober reflection, says Makarfi

Governor Ahmed Makarfi of Kaduna State has said that Christmas period should not only be for merry-making, but also a time for sober reflection on the teachings of Jesus Christ.

In a Christmas and New Year message to the people of the state, on Tuesday in Kaduna, Makarfi said that the Christian philosophy is anchored on peace, harmony, brotherhood, humility and service to God.

The governor said that the people were passing through a difficult phase in the country's national life and called for total re-dedication and commitment to the ideal of peace, truth, fear of God, justice and fairplay.

"I call on our christian compatriots to continue to pray for the peace, harmony and unity of our dear nation in general and Kaduna State in particular," Makarfi added.

He also urged the people to put the fear of God in all that they do, adding that it was only through this

approach that Nigeria could succeed as a nation.

The governor urged the people to always expose destructive elements and suspicious characters in their midst, saying: "this season should rekindle in all of us the need for sacrifice and perseverance so that we can together move our society forward, you should shun all acts of destruction and sabotage."

Makarfi appealed to both commercial and private vehicle drivers to obey traffic rules and regulations at all times so that the celebration would be accident-free.



Gov. Ahmed Makarfi

NEWS

Non-payment of workers marx Xmas in Edo

The non-payment of salaries to workers by Edo State Government might have been responsible for the low key Christmas celebration in Edo State.

Except for banks and government offices in the state, business activities have fully returned to normal in Benin city yesterday as Christians neglected the boxing day holiday and opened shops and markets.

The Chairman of Edo State Cattle Dealers Association of Nigeria, Alhaji Abubakar, told *Daily Trust* that the sale of cows, goats, chickens, ducks and turkey had been very low as, according to him, government workers who constitute a large percentage of buyers complained of lack of money.

"We normally sell between 10 to 13 thousand cows during Christmas every year, but only about four thousand were sold this year. We had to transfer some of the cows two days to Christmas to Port-Harcourt where sales were better."

When *Daily Trust* went round Benin city yesterday morning, most shops and markets were opened for

From Shehu Abubakar in Benin City

normal business contrary to the usual practice in Edo State where Christmas celebrations last for a week.

One of the leaders of the Market Women Association at Ramat Park Market, Ikpoba Hill, Mrs Mary Eguavoen told *Daily Trust* that there was no need for them to celebrate with empty stomach following very low sales recorded this Christmas.

A dinner party organised by the state chairman of the Arewa Community, Alhaji Buba Abubakar Kumo, for its Christian members at Platon International Restaurant, Benin City, a



Gov. Lucky Igbinedion

faction of the community accused the chairman of diverting cows allegedly given by the state government to them for Sallah and Christmas respectively.

An independent investigation carried out by *Daily Trust* at the Government House, Benin city revealed that though cows were distributed by Government to various organisations and individuals, non was given to the Arewa community in the State.

Ex-Gov advises governors on LG council tenure

A former governor of the defunct Sokoto State, Malam Yahaya Abdulkarim, has cautioned state governors to handle the issue of local government councils tenure with utmost care in order not to destabilise the country's young democracy.

Abdulkarim, who spoke to a News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) correspondent, said the actions of the governors over the extension of tenure of the councils to four years has been a source of concern to most lovers of democracy.

He reminded the governors that Nigerians were no longer interested in military rule, considering the time and resources spent in giving birth to the present democratic structure, stressing that the action of the governors could invite chaos for the country.

Abdulkarim, who was in support of the extension of the councils' tenure, advised governors to challenge the Electoral Act in court so that the controversy could be put to rest, warned against personalising the issue,

The Minister of Water Resources, Alhaji Mukhtari Shagari, has said that 19,350 boreholes would be sunk throughout the country next year in order to provide drinkable water to the people.

Speaking during the distribution of 1,000 water pumps to dry season farmers at Alwassa village in Argungu Local Government Area of Kebbi State on Monday, Shagari said that 25 boreholes would be sunk in each of the country's 774 Local Government Areas, commencing from February.

He said that the project would ensure that water

which could lead to confusion in the electoral system.

"It is very common to have disagreement among parties in a democracy, but when any controversy arises on constitutional matters then courts are the right place to resolve them," he added.

Abdulkarim debunked claims in some quarters that Nigeria was heading for a one-party system going by the new electoral act, saying Nigerians were wise enough in choosing candidates rather than parties.

"It is unfortunate that some of the elite are under-rating the Nigerian electorate in casting their votes during elections, and it is a very wrong impression, because the electorate now go for persons not parties," he explained. He appealed to aggrieved parties to dialogue and find a lasting solution to the controversy so that the political environment could prosper, and solicited support for the federal government in its bid to improve the lot of the people.

FG to sink 19,350 boreholes next year

supply was made available to all Nigerians irrespective of their places of abode.

He said that the ministry had spent about N34 million to sink 1,000 tube wells as well as the purchase of 1,000 water pumps for use by farmers within the Zauro Polder Scheme area.

Shagari said that the 1,000 water pumps would be distributed to farmers within the five districts of Alwassa, Gotomo, Ambursa, Auro and Gwandadaji, that made up the Auro Polder Scheme to enable the farmers commence dry season farming before the completion of the main Zauro Polder Irrigation Scheme.

He enjoined the beneficiaries of the scheme to start their dry season farming in earnest in order to justify the huge investment made by the government.

He expressed optimism that the project would greatly assist to curtail rural

-urban migration by farmers during the dry season, as there would be enough work to keep them at home.

On the main Zauro Polder Irrigation Scheme, the minister said that the design work contract had been awarded and that it was after the completion of the design work that the actual cost of the project would be determined.

He said that the contract was awarded in order to look into complaints of possible ecological distortion and its negative impact on the people of Argungu emirate.

He gave the assurance that the irrigation scheme would commence next year, adding: "this government is firmly committed to the completion of the project, due to its gigantic nature."

One of the beneficiaries, Malam Ladan Gotomo, commended the Federal Government for fulfilling its promise of assisting the farmers within the Zauro Polder Fadama plains. (NAN)

Lagos AD condemns Ige's death

The Alliance for Democracy (AD), Lagos State, has bemoaned the death of Chief Bola Ige, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of the Federation.

Speaking through its Assistant Publicity Secretary, Mr Abiola Sappor, the party stated that Ige's death was unfortunate and condemnable.

He said it will be too

From Bright Ewulu, in Lagos

early now to apportion blame on anybody until an indept investigation was carried out by the police to ascertain those responsible.

On whether the politicians are over heating the system, Sappor stated that the ugly incidence is no enough excuse to scuttle the nascent democracy as it is still better than the best military regimes.

Sappor, therefore, warned the military not to use the excuse of the growing wave of violence across the country to seize power even though it is condemnable.

According to him, democracy is not a perfect situation and contributions from all and sundry is needed to make the polity meet the aspirations of Nigerians.

He called for unity among the rank and file of AD, adding that this time calls for sober reflection.



Late Bola Ige

...Niger chapter wants thorough investigation

The Niger State chapter of the Alliance for Democracy (AD) has called for an immediate and thorough investigation into the assassination of late Justice Minister, Bola Ige.

The state's AD Public Relations Officer, Mr. Adedapo Adeniyi, reacting to the death of the AD chieftain, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Minna on Monday that the tragedy was a bad signal for Nigeria's democracy.

Adeniyi described Ige's death as a very sad development in the country's political history and urged the Federal Government to step up investigations until the assassins were brought to justice as a matter of national emergency.

He described the death of the minister as a calamity not only to the AD and the Yoruba as a party and people but to democracy and Nigeria.

The PRO said that Ige's death had created a big vacuum in the AD, considering his calibre as a consistent democrat who worked to ensure the enthronement of democracy in the country.

He, however, cautioned that the death of the minister should not be associated with the AD crises, insisting that thorough investigation be conducted to apprehend the perpetrators of the heinous act.

He prayed for the repose of the soul of the late minister and for the family and Nigerians to bear the loss.

NTA 2 CHANNEL 5 Victoria Island, Lagos Your reachout station PROGRAMME SCHEDULE	
TIME	THURSDAY
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	Communication
8.00-8.30	Humour on Ice
8.30-9.00	Health & Sport
9.00-9.30	A Different World
9.30-10.00	Jazz House III
10.00-10.10	Cyber World
10.10-10.30	Cyber World
10.30-10.45	Zoo Adventure
10.45-11.00	Zoo Adventure
11.00-12.00	One on One
12.00-12.30	Suddenly Susan
12.30-1.00	Wonder Years
1.00-1.30	Focus
1.30-2.00	(N)
2.00-2.15	Shipping
2.15-2.30	(sp)
2.30-3.00	Superforce
3.00-3.30	Inside
3.30-4.00	Business(sp)
4.00-4.30	News Update
4.30-5.00	Zorro
5.00-5.30	Mort & Phil(sp)
5.30-6.00	Goge Africa(sp)
6.00-6.30	Crime
6.30-7.00	Fighters(N)
7.00-7.30	News at Seven
7.30-8.00	Video Fashion(sp)
8.00-8.30	The Super Story
8.30-9.00	(N)
9.00-10.00	NetworkNews
10.00-10.30	POINT
10.30-11.00	BLANCK(N)
11.00-11.30	From the
11.30-12.00	Grassroots(N)
12.00-12.30	Newsap
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	
3.30-4.30	Ramadan
4.30-5.00	Diet
5.00-6.00	Live

News Focus

Ige would have been killed - Omisore

About a week ago, there was a violent clash at the State House of Assembly, there are indications that the crisis ensued as a result of a move to impeach you. What is your comment on this and what is your level of involvement?

I know that you are aware that I was abroad on those days, Monday and Tuesday, when the crisis was on, I was in the World Bank discussing ways to get Osun State out of its impoverished state. I had a meeting with the World Bank president and other operatives,

It was in the course of the meeting that I learnt that there was fighting in Osun State. The fight started among the members of the House of Assembly and it was Akande that caused it.

How?

I heard that there was a motion to embarrass the deputy governor and I was told that Governor Akande had given them the instruction before he left for Mecca and that was what led to the crisis. When this motion was moved, members reacted negatively and fighting broke out in the House. They used microphone to beat themselves up. So, what is my involvement in that?

But some arrests were made and there is a report that majority of those arrested were linked to you?

What I was told is that people were arrested on the road, the Commissioner of Police had compromised. I read in the papers that it was two factions

quarters to prefer charges against the thugs. The Commissioner of Police has compromised and he is the one causing the crisis in this state and I am calling on the Inspector-General of Police to give us a neutral CP because I cannot trust the current one again. I am the deputy governor of this state and I



Omisore cannot trust the CP. He has become Akande's staff. I have not seen the CP in the last one year, I have not set my eyes on him and he is supposed to be coming here to see what is happening. He is supposed to be checking my guards here randomly.

Are you saying he has taken sides?

Yes, he has compromised.

With this development, can there ever be any meaningful reconciliation between you and the governor?

With somebody who

maintain my people here, water has not been supplied to this house in the last one year. The state government is owing me, on entitlement, on allowances on fuel and other things, close to N20 million and this is a person I fed and paid salaries. He was feeding fat on me. The car he drove to the secretariat was given to



him by me. The driver who I gave him was shot by his aides when they attempted to kill Olowofoyeku. The man has no conscience. But there will not be peace in the state until the wrongs are righted, until the murderers are brought to book. Rinde has come out to say that they were given money to impeach me and that one of them suggested that they should murder me. Who and who are to be victims, where does it start from? The police must come out quickly.

But, 2003 is still far away and we are already

istrator in this state and must not turn the state into his personal company. He is a thief, he has stolen so much money and he will continue to steal money. This is a man who did not leave Nigeria for eighteen years prior to his coming to power, he has, however, gone abroad, when he became the governor, more than ten times now on flimsy excuses. He said some students wanted to give him an award in Ghana and he gave some people money to go and represent him. Spending the people's money. He will go back to prison anyway, he will go on account of murder, looting and fraudulent practices. He and his Commissioner of Finance.

Will you not blame this escalating crisis on the leader of your party and Afenifere?

No, I cannot. In the last few months, Akande had been abusing the leaders of Afenifere. So, where do we start from? He has abused and insulted the leaders. He is a nonentity. There were facts that he was at one time mad, he is "Alawoku" and there is no way he can be totally cured of the madness in him. Recently too, Bola Ige came on radio here to insult me and my family. That is his last one. He was beaten yesterday, the people of Ife beat him up and he was crying like a baby as they removed his cap and his glasses. It took the intervention of SSS men and some of us, we had to beg the mob, to free him. He was disgraced out of Ife, he had to be dressed like a woman to get out of the town. That is to show that Bola Ige does not command any respect again in this state.

Chief Bola Ige was beaten at Ife? Is the attack not traceable to you, and why do you think such an ugly thing happened?

A: He has offended Ife people. If he insults me, he has insulted my people and they have the right to react.

So they were fighting on your behalf?

They were fighting for their own son, and they

have the right. Ife has been marginalised in this government and they have the right to react. The people are not happy, they provided about 50 per cent of the votes that got Akande into power. When he came to Ife, he told them that the more they vote the more would their gains be. They were then asking him at Ife if what he had done is what they deserved to be given, it was just a spontaneous reaction. I had to beg them because what the people wanted to do was more than that. If he is wise, he must not come to Ife again.

You said there won't be peace in the state until the wrongs are corrected?

(Cut in) Yes, until the murderers are brought to book. You know there was no peace in Egypt until the Israelites were freed, it is not a matter of brick-stone or threat, it is a matter of natural recourse. There was an attempt to murder, blood was involved, naturally, the blood will not let peace reign in the state. I had been keeping quiet, just watching them. Now, they went to the House of Assembly to start embarrassing me. The House started the whole crisis, I wasn't around. If I wanted to plan my own, this state will just be in ruins, I don't want to do anything that will destroy my reputation in this state. Everybody knows me in this state and I have

a good reputation among the people.

How will you describe the role of the state's House of Assembly in the entire crisis.

A: It is so unfortunate. There are cases in courts and I don't want to say anything about them. One thing is clear though, they are fighting themselves. Where there are bad eggs, the good ones will want to neutralize them. I think they are doing justice for themselves, it is too early to comment on them.

How true is the talk that you've switched romance over to the PDP?

The people saying this are blackmailers. I am not a small fry in AD so, why would I suddenly leave. I belong to the core Afenifere, Akande does not. My leaders know that I am not in PDP, I am for AD.

Don't you see the attack on Chief Ige as an embarrassment to the Yoruba race.

Bola Ige is a traitor in Afenifere, he has abused and embarrassed leaders of Afenifere, so, it is nemesis that is catching up with him. He is the 'Akintola' of our time. What Akintola did to Awolowo is what Bola Ige is doing to Adesanya and the Yoruba people.

Culled from Tempo, 27 December, 2001

"Bola Ige is a traitor in Afenifere, he has abused and embarrassed leaders of Afenifere, so, it is nemesis that is catching up with him. He is the 'Akintola' of our time. What Akintola did to Awolowo is what Bola Ige is doing to Adesanya and the Yoruba people."

that were fighting and some thugs of the governor were arrested with cutlasses, charms and guns, they were left unattended to but arrested people who were just coming from the

wanted to take my life, somebody who does not wish me well, somebody who does not let me have my entitlement? I am spending close to seven million naira every month to

experiencing this...

(Cut in) I am not interested in 2003, I am concerned about what is happening now, the government on the ground. Akande is not a sole admin-



Late Chief Bola Ige

Opinion

Between democracy and justice

By J. O. Ayodele

Any keen observer of the Nigerian society since Chief Olusegun Obasanjo's ascension to power in May 1999 would readily attest to the fact that the nation and its citizens have witnessed some reasonable degree of freedom especially in the area of liberty of expression. This perhaps is so because Nigeria's rediscovered democracy has in every intent and purpose striven to show a departure from the past. But then, it is indeed very sad to discover that at this point in Nigeria's history, the quest for realisation of justice, fairness and equity is still a far cry although the government of President Olusegun Obasanjo has been investigating human right violations which allegedly took place in the past. There is however, no real reason to believe that issues bordering on administration of justice on the governed is a thing of the past, many instances abound where the government of the day either by commission or omission has closed its eyes and ears to some obvious form of unfairness administered on citizens of this country in disguise of justice.

It may not really be possible to catalogue all the shortcomings of the

government in this area of seeming injustice but two instances that easily come to mind are that of Rochas Okorocho and Mohammed Abacha.

In Rochas Okorocho's instance, President Olusegun Obasanjo appointed him chairman of the National Airport Management Agency (NAMA) but after a few months he was disgraced out of office over some allegations of financial mismanagement. The story that made the rounds then was that after a brief stay in office he was fired for what the government attributed to be fraudulent intent of inflating a proposed contract.

Expectedly, most Nigerians were happy at the break of the news. After all that action of government then seemed in line with President Obasanjo's earlier position that corruption will have no place in his administration.

Ironically, despite all the media glitz that followed the sack of Okorocho, the man stood his ground professing innocence and flaunting the minutes of the inaugural board meeting of NAMA which showed nothing about contract award was discussed and coincidentally was the only meeting held since his

appointment. As such no contract could have been awarded or inflated by him. This to most Nigerians was a rude shock, after all the federal government needed not toil to sack any of its appointees.

The confusion which this caused prompted the House of Representatives to wade into the issue in consonance with democratic practice. If Okorocho's denial was shocking to the nation then the outcome of the investigation by the House Committee on Aviation, the supervising ministry of NAMA was bewildering because the report of the investigation exonerated Chief Okorocho of any wrongdoing but indicted the Minister of Information, Jerry Gana for lying to the nation on the reasons behind Chief Okorocho's removal.

What the Rochas Okorocho situation aptly captures is that some innocent Nigerians get punished and most of those at the helm of affairs of the nation who dole out such unwarranted punishments will not hesitate going to great lengths to justify their wrong actions by peddling falsehood about the citizens.

Another clear case of seeming unfairness on the part of government which

though has been embodied in colouration of legal intrigues is the granting of bail to Ganiyu Adams, the controversial leader of the banned Odua Peoples Congress (OPC) a pan-Yoruba militant group against the refusal of bail to Mohammed Abacha, and many other Nigerian citizens who are behind bars. It is on record that Ganiyu Adams who was recently arrested after about a year of being declared wanted by the police authorities was granted bail in less than a week of his arrest while Mohammed Abacha has been incarcerated for over two years on allegation of criminal accessory after the fact of murder which from every legal interpretation is a lesser crime in nature than that of Ganiyu Adams.

As it is, one may rightly opine that the continued incarceration of Mohammed Abacha may also be a scheme hatched in similar fashion to that of Okorocho. One thinks that the earlier President Olusegun Obasanjo addresses these anomalies and injustice in governance, the better respect Nigeria's democracy will attract.

Ayodele writes from Irepodun Street, Akure, Ondo State.

Waiting for time

By Ordue Akase Gerger

On the first day of December this year, I had to be in Atio-Oglewu Ohimini local government of Benue State for the burial of my father, Justice A. P. Anyebe. After the burial, Barrister A. T. Ochojila took me to Oturkpo where I boarded a 505 commercial car for Gboko. In the car, I saw one Godshield Orokpo, a younger brother to Omale Orokpo. He had a radio cassette and after a careful perusal, I saw that the picture on the cassette so much resembled him. At that point, I became very curious and decided to talk to him. He told me that he is Idoma by tribe and that he stays in Abuja and the cassette was his.

These discoveries made me develop some interest in him. He told me and I saw that the title of the cassette was *The Difference Is Time*. Asked to explain what it meant, he said if A has the opportunity to own houses and B has not had the opportunity, all that B has to do is exercise patience, work hard and very soon, B will be in the position to build more and better houses and so, the difference between A and B is time. He said he used the issue of houses as an example, that the meaning covers the whole of life.

The more he spoke, the more I developed interest in him and his message. He also made me to be very interested in him and voluntarily gave the cassette to me. The idea was to enable me listen to it in a more relaxed atmosphere. I was very interested in him and his message because both of us come from Benue State where the elites - most of them - are not able to manage Benue State affairs positively. They are more interested in causing crises - avoidable crises - and in those circumstances, they divert people's attention from their atrocities and their (people's) problems. They are expert rogues. Benue State that was created in 1976 has nothing to show for it and its backwardness is blamed on Hausa-Fulani. They blame the death of BCC, Tarku, Lobi Bank, etc, On Hausa-Fulani. They want to be our masters now, we their slaves, our children slaves to their children. Our relationship with them is that of master and slave and not that of equal citizens. For Benue to have one of her sons in the position to beat all the criminally created hurdles and get at making his cassette has made me very, very fulfilled. If they are in disagreement with my position, they should show to the people what they have been doing with the huge allocations the state has been receiving from the federal government since 1976 and the Hausa-Fulani man that has been preventing them from developing the state.

I was also (and still remain) very delighted that I met Godshield Orokpo because of September 11 2001. After September 11, 2001, the American government came out with a statement: "Osama bin Laden was the prime suspect. The destruction that was caused does not have to be supported by even the staunchest American sane enemy". No quarrel there. We expected the USA to take her case to the UN. That was not done. USA was the complainant, the judge and the executor. This has happened in 2001! bin Laden has up till now only been a suspect - prime, or whatever. The Taliban did a very wise thing by asking for proof and this, the White House has not provided. All the so-called democratic countries in the world that have chosen to support the USA now should know that the difference between them now and Afghanistan is time. The USA armed Osama bin Laden against the USSR but now, she is after him. US! armed Iraq against Iran but now Baghdad is a "rogue" state. Israel is not a rogue state. Washington had for long used MKO Abiola to cause trouble in Africa but the same US was instrumental to his death at the end of the day.

"Leaders" in Benue and indeed the country should know that the difference between them and judgment day is time. What ever is not right cannot and shall not stand. Every act is a seed. No natural law has ever been altered. The difference between now and when our "leaders" will find themselves at the receiving end of what they are sowing (now) is time.

As for the USA, she should know that this is the beginning of the collapse of her criminal empire and when she finally collapses, she would have tasted the fruits of her actions in countries like Sudan, Vietnam, Falkland Islands, the good Palestinians, Afghans and Iraqis. The difference, certainly, is time.

Gerger is of 11 Agera Sena Street, Gboko, Benue State.

Kwatalo's political hara-kiri

By Sani Ibrahim Taura

The battle line is no doubt drawn between governors and their deputies in some designated states in Nigeria. But the much varied and vexed questions to ask in this regard are: are these infightings aimed towards upliftment of the mighty poor and the ignorant; are they competing for supremacy or are they all in all about political gimmick or hara-kiri?

Well, it will be interesting to answer these questions if one can particularly circumspect the imbroglio between Governor Saminu Turaki of Jigawa State and his erstwhile deputy, Alhaji Ibrahim Shehu Kwatalo.

An intellectual articulation, of views and discrete circumspection will vividly reveal that a deputy governor who supposedly is a second in command is the second most important who ordinarily should be loyal to his boss, but should always advise him on critical issues concerning the progress of the government and relentlessly pressure him to follow the right footing if he is perceived to have derailed, no matter how, no matter what. If he couldn't always and all the time succeed he could at a point in time in a particular circumstance succeed.

But the bone of contention here is, Mr. Kwatalo in resigning at the time when his people needed him most, when according to his allegation "the government is not meeting the contractual obligations of its electorate" and hence the most critical time when he must be around to criticise, oppose the government, pressurise it pushing it to the wall and hence making it meet the obligations of the electorate no matter what, no matter when.

But Mr. Kwatalo is a political leader elected on the platform of a political party. He did not only resign at the most inauspicious time when he should be more prepared to face the daunting challenges but dumped the political party that run from Rome to Rome, helter-skelter, hither and thither and put him into office. What then is the benefit of Kwatalo's resignation to the teeming masses of Hadejia senatorial district who have all along earnestly needed his assistance in the incumbent government? I think his at-home post resignation made him as common as a sugarcane farmer who is in fact even more important, who has nothing to do more than cultivating the sugarcane that can sustain the Hadejia sugar

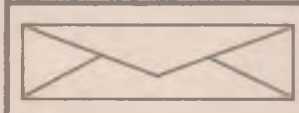
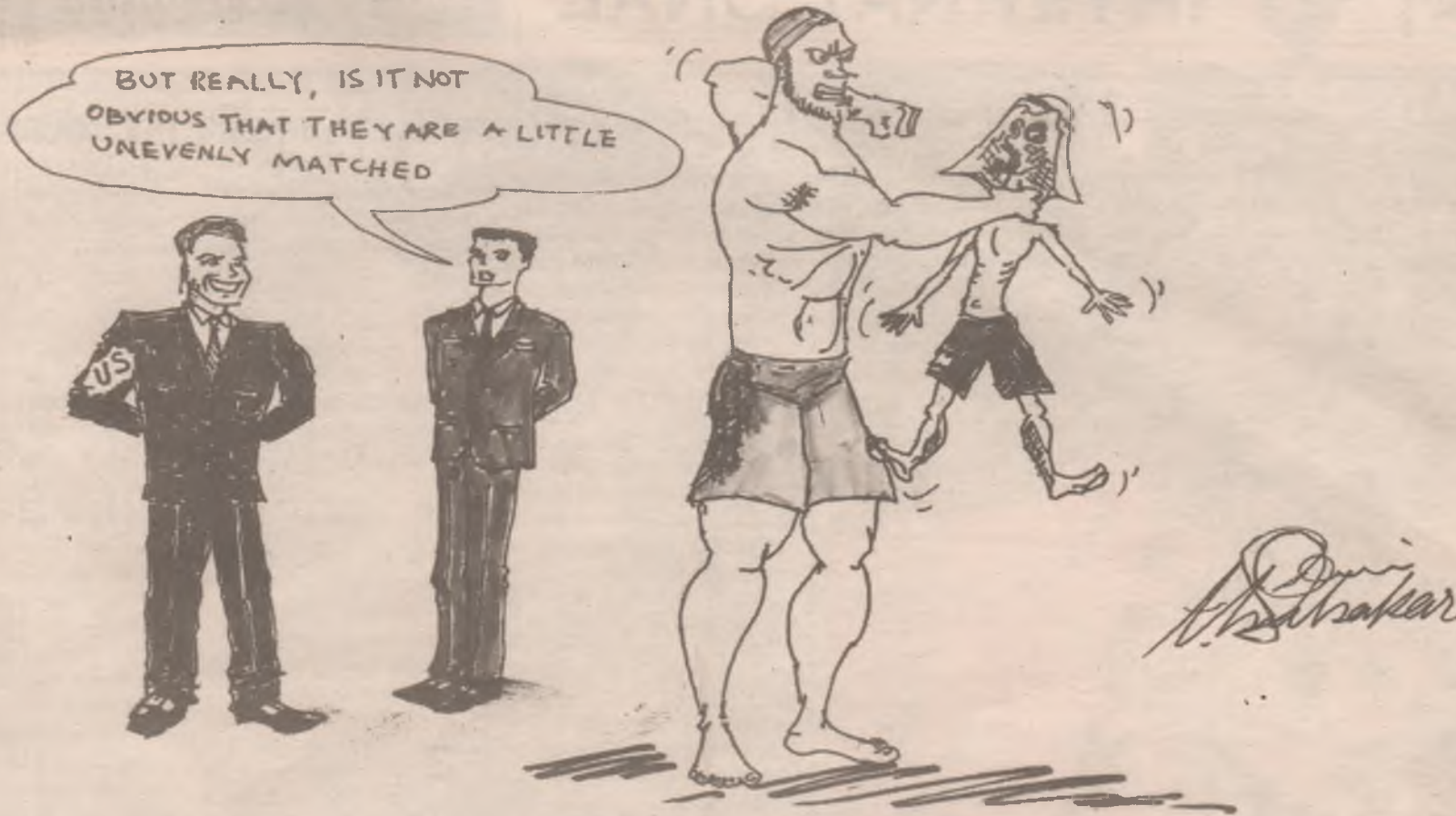
factory. Is he the Cincinnatus that clean the Augean stable? Is he truly a leader with the desire of his people at heart? Is he a principled politician? Does he really have the love of the party all along? Is he respecting and adhering to his party ideology or is he staging a political gimmick or a more political hara-kiri? By the time one analyses the above rhetorical questions, one cannot help but conclude that Mr. Kwatalo is staging a clandestine political gimmick which will surely in the long run boomerang tantamounting to political hara-kiri.

But if Mr. Kwatalo has for all this long been competing for the supremacy of leadership with his boss, then it is very unfortunate. But why feeling supreme while in the real sense one has all the resource to contest and compete for the number one post even at the initial stage? But if it is in the process of the dagger-drawn stage of the competition that made one to lose and was drawn to the lowly filth and made one to arm-twist, then it is pertinent to clarify here that the resignation, cross-carpeting and the campaign of calumny is well understood by the enlightened electorates, that Mr. Kwatalo's measure of last resort is a mere political gimmick which has no generalised community but personal interest. Hence it is not only vehemently rejected, but all the reasons so mentioned as the brain behind the resignation are mere blatant concoctions of falsehood and can be proved unacceptable. Mr. Kwatalo's proclamations of allegation against the government can only be proved genuine with some iota of truth if he was seen to be even in the beginning when the issue started, a custodian of such allegations and was vividly captured in the public fora or in a media campaign revolting.

The writer has heard with a lot of astonishment the past media campaign by Kwatalo explaining and praising the policies of the incumbent government claiming then that "the government is pursuing a range of long term plans, people should be patient it is the closest to the masses". The listeners to Radio Jigawa are a living testimony. It is then very unfortunate that Kwatalo's political manoeuvres are now full of deceit and hypocrisy capable of going nowhere.

Taura can be reached via e-mail through Sitaura@Altavista.com.

ISRAEL POUNDS PALESTINE HEAVILY



YOUR LETTERS

Well done, Hon. Kamilu

The enthronement of civilian administration in the country on the 29th May, 1999 brought with it a lot of expectation and high hopes among ordinary Nigerians. This is understandable considering the fact that the country went through more than 15 years of uninterrupted military rule which largely did more harm than good to the entire nation and succeeded in destroying virtually all reputable institutions and values.

At Wudil local government area of Kano State, the civilian administration under the able leadership of the chairman Honourable M. Kamilu Ado Isa was able to rise to the challenges of the time by facing the immediate problems of the council squarely and setting effective machinery in motion to deal with them to that effect.

At the inception of his administration, M. Kamilu identified low staff morale and general apathy among the citizens as the major problems of Wudil local government council. Through his open door policy and easy accessibility to all and sundry, in addition to his prompt and generous response to the issue of staff welfare, he succeeded within a short time in boosting staff morale and built people's confidence in government as the vehicle of progress and development. This did not come as a surprise to those that know him very well since his childhood and through out this working life as a teacher and later his brief stint as a private businessman. Malan Kamilu has also been a very accessible, hard working and honest individual.

However his singular and most important achievements which are not in

doubt, is the establishment and commencement of academic activities at Kano State University of Technology whose permanent campus is at Wudil town, the headquarters of the local government council. He toiled day and night and worked very hard with all his energy and resources to complement the efforts of the state government under the able leadership of Governor Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso to actualise the Kano State university dream.

Abdu Mohammad, Sabon Gari Wudil, Kano.

My dear commissioner, I find it very compelling to use this medium to inform you about my feelings on your recent appointment as the new Commissioner of information, Adamawa State. With this appointment, the governor has shown enough courage and maturity in handling the affairs of Madagali with dexterity and we are behind him in his campaign for a second term.

However, you should always do justice in the course of discharging your duties, and think of what you can do for Madagali rather than what Madagali can do for you. For you are to serve

Open letter to Dr. Abubakar Othman

as an ambassador and illustrious son of Madagali. You should remember that many have been there before you and many will be coming after you. Therefore don't create enmity and don't be at loggerheads with the chief executive and the legislature.

Use this opportunity to contribute your quota to the development of your local government, state and the nation in general. Tell the governor vividly the importance of creating more local governments to bring development to the grass root level, tell him also to redress

the injustice meted to us by creating Madagali Local Government with headquarters at Madagali and by giving our youths opportunity to serve in his government.

Therefore, Comrade, follow the benevolent steps of distinguished Madagalites as Muslims are enjoined to follow the sunnah of the holy prophet (SAW) such people as Prof. Abba Hassan, Alhaji

Mohammed Hamidu, Abdul-salam Bappah, Walin Madagali, Alhaji Sajo Moh Ijarafu and John Wajilda and lots of other like those who contributed in one way or the other to the development of Madagali and are also ready to do more if given a chance.

Abubakar Kolone Madagali, P. O. Box 200, Madagali, Adamawa State.

Reflections on Gamawa local government

As we celebrate more than two years of the current democratic administration of Gamawa Local Government, there is no better time than now to take a serious look at the journey so far and bring to focus the highlight of the administration's unprecedented record of ineptitude and low scorecard as demonstrated by the local government council through paid advertisement carried by Tell magazine.

Our intention here however, is not to simply review and expectedly remonstrate against the administration's scorecard for the two-year period, because doing that will belittle the enormity of the message we intend to pass across. It will also accord legitimacy to the highly bastardised record sheet compiled and presented by a

paid spin-doctor.

One can now better appreciate our main grouse about the overall performance of the administration and her actions/inactions by attempting to answer the following powers.

What was the total receipts of the local government in the entire 24 months of this administration out of which only paltry sums of N2.89 million was expended on education (exclusive of salaries), N12.75 million on water supply, N5.86 million on agricultural inputs and N4.33 million spent on health?

How many unemployed youth did the local council engage during the two-year period and of course how many disengaged at the inception of the administration?

What was the motivating factor behind the electri-

fication of eleven villages, half of which do not have functional primary schools nor available clean water for their consumption?

How many of the dispensaries purportedly build during the tenure of this administration are commissioned and made functional?

What is the moral justification of using public money or fund to recruit drug thugs and all sorts of miscreants thereby breeding unproductive and unemployed unemployable array of youths who will constitute public nuisance to the entire society?

We should also not allow political hangers-on and opportunists to take a front burner in political landscaping of our locality. *Ubale Ismail, Secretary, Gamawa Patriotic Movement, Bauchi State.*

Joint venture of pig and hen

The heavenly style of the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran had answered all our hopes! -It did not appear to us, even in Nigeria, that life could supply any greater felicity. Many followers of the revolution are already so confirmed in habits of honesty, truthfulness, and industry that the temptation to act otherwise has ceased to trouble them. The most significant outcome of the revolution was that the growth of man along spiritual and moral lines was promoted and the Imam Khomeini's simplicity and truth might be something uncommon - all these reflections trouble the tranquillity of neo-colonialists.

The pig said to the hen, "Let's form a joint venture". "What did you have in mind?" Asked the pig. The hen replied, "Given our resources, what could be more natural than ham and eggs?"

A prominently displayed sign at Tehran Airport quotes Imam Khomeini, "We are with the innocents of the world". This, seemingly, includes all the third world countries comprising over three-fourths of the world. What, then, were the conduits through which Imam Khomeini hoped to reach the other have-nots of the world?

A consensus has emerged that "the have" had made a 'pig' out of the "have-nots". Not only were things not improving, they were getting worse, while the oil flowed out. The wheels just spun, but the meter kept ticking. The rich were getting richer, the poor, poorer. We are again, somebody within, again we are... waiting for an echo. Hoping it will run backward and be merciful: we are, are again, again are...

Chindo Yakubu Kani, Ayyamullah Islamic Foundation, Badagry Expressway, Oto Awori, Lagos. Chindokani@yahoo.com

TRUST INTERNATIONAL

AFRICA & THE MIDDLE EAST



AIDS sufferer Cinde, decides which gift to open at a Christmas day lunch at the Sparrows Rainbow village, in Roodepoort, South Africa. Seriously-ill Cinde, is one of the many children being cared for at the Sparrows Nest, an overcrowded nearby suburban home which cares for abandoned and terminally ill babies and children.

Three killed in Israel border clash

Three people have been killed in a skirmish along the normally peaceful border between Israel and Jordan.

An Israeli patrol was ambushed by unidentified Arab gunmen on Tuesday morning, leaving one soldier dead and four wounded. Israeli troops gave chase and shot two men dead on the Israeli side of the border, the army said.

Israel and Jordan signed a peace treaty in 1994, only the second between Israel and a Arab state.

In a separate development, the militant Palestinian group Islamic Jihad has said it will

stop all military operations against Israel, the French news agency AFP reports.

Nafez Azzam, a high-ranking Islamic Jihad official, said the group was following the example of its larger rival Hamas, and acting "in line with Palestinian unity, which stipulates the end of military operations against Israel".

The Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, has called for an end to attacks on Israel.

BBC correspondent in Jerusalem said a major military operation is still under way as Israel searches for possible other gunmen who may be hiding.

Helicopters and special

forces have been deployed in the search. The incident took place near the Beit Shean Valley, south of the town of Tiberias.

An Israeli army officer told army radio that his forces had pursued the attackers.

Israel's labour opens revote for party leader

Israel's centre-left Labour Party launched a revote yesterday at 40 polling stations to try to end a leadership battle that Defence Minister, Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, was favoured to win.

Rival candidate Avraham Burg, the speaker of Israel's parliament, led the original vote in early September by a one per cent margin.

But the party postponed releasing official election results at the time and decided to conduct a revote at 40 polling stations after Ben-Eliezer demanded an investigation into alleged irregularities among ballots cast by Druze Muslims.

Ben-Eliezer, a 65-year-old former general, has been far more supportive of right-wing Likud Party Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon's policies in dealing with a Palestinian uprising than the dovish Burg,

46, has been.

But if elected, Ben-Eliezer told Israel's *Army Radio* last Wednesday he would lead labour out of Sharon's coalition, "if we see ... a chance for a political breakthrough or a vital economic issue and that our position in government prevents its fulfilment."



Prime Minister Sharon

No al-Qaeda elements in Somalia, president says

Somalia's president denied allegations that his country was a haven for militants from Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network and said US delegations sent to Somalia had found no evidence of such links.

"American delegations have visited Somalia lately and these delegations did not see any terrorist camps or groups," President Abdiqassim Salad Hassan told *Asharq al-Awsat* newspaper in an interview published yesterday.

Somalia, named as one of the states Washington could target in a widened war of terror beyond Afghanistan, has lacked a central government since 1991 and is controlled by Hassan's transitional government and rival warlords.

"The United States knows well there are no terrorist camps in Somalia, therefore we see no acceptable reason for an American strike against Somalia," he said.

"Somalia has no one belonging to al-Qaeda," Hassan said. "We are exerting intense efforts to convince the United States we are combating internal terrorism and chaos, and that we are in a dire need for its assistance and cooperation in this respect," he added.

Soon after the September 11 hijacked plane attacks on US landmarks, Washington

suspected bin Laden of masterminding the attacks and named the Somali al-Itihad al-Islamiya movement on a list of groups linked to his Islamist al-Qaeda network.

"The Somali al-Itihad al-Islamiya organisation has been dissolved and has no actual presence. There cannot be a

link between two sides while one does not exist," Hassan told the Arabic-language newspaper.

There has been speculation the al-Itihad group remains active in parts of Somalia including the northern coastal town of Las Qoray in the Puntland region.

Mandela hosts 8,000 poor children

Former South African President, Nelson Mandela, has held a Christmas party for 8,000 poor children in the village where he grew up.

He went ahead with the annual event despite rain, saying: "There are hundreds of children still waiting. It doesn't matter if I get my hair wet."

He described it as "just as rewarding as building schools, hospitals and community centres, or providing scholarships to our children".

He and his wife, Graca, gave presents to hundreds of children who waited in long queues to meet him.

Mr. Mandela has held the party in the village of Qunu annually for the past nine years.

He still maintains a home in the village where he grew

up. "The organiser of the event, Gavin Koppel, said the party had attracted an unprecedented number of children in the poor Eastern Cape region.

"Many of these poverty-stricken children look forward to this event as the only highlight in their lives," Mr. Koppel told the French news agency AFP.

Mr. Mandela said he enjoyed the event, too. "There is nothing more personally satisfying than to witness happiness and enjoyment over the festive season on the faces of children who hail from desperately indigent homes."

Mr. Mandela and his wife have taken a personal interest in promoting the welfare of children and in recent months have tried to move the issue to the centre of the international agenda.

They are hoping world leaders will make a commitment to shielding children from war, disease and poverty in the long term.



Dr. Nelson Mandela

Burundi army claims killing 500 rebels

The army in Burundi says it has killed more than 500 rebels in an operation against an opposition stronghold near the capital, Bujumbura.

The army attacked the area around the Tenga forest, used by the rebels for raids on the capital, with heavy artillery and jets.

Twenty-eight soldiers were also killed, the army said.

BBC Prime Ndikumagenge in Burundi says that there are hopes that the rebel defeat might encourage them to enter negotiations with the reconciliation government, which was sworn in last month.

There is no independent confirmation of the army's death toll, and our correspondent, who was taken to the area, said Tenga did not show the signs of an area where such a large number of people were killed.

There were no dead bodies around, nor the stench of their decay, he said.

A junior officer said the army had buried the bodies to be able to occupy the area.

More than 250,000 people have been killed during the past eight years in the civil war between the mainly Hutu rebels and the Tutsi-led army.

The fighting intensified last month when the power-sharing government was set up under the terms of a peace deal.

The National Liberation Army (FNL) did not sign the peace deal.

Instead they stepped up their attacks, particularly in the Bujumbura area, and had been terrorising and killing people in the northern suburbs of Kinama and Kamenge.

Under the peace deal, the transitional government, will be led for 18 months by Tutsi President Pierre Buyoya, who is then to step down for a Hutu head of state for the latter half

of a period prior to elections.

But the FNL and another rebel group, after refusing the sign the deal, stepped up its attacks.

The army waged a major offensive on rebels in Tenga between October and December last year when more than 300 people were killed.

But the military was unable to prevent the rebels from regrouping in the forest at the end of February and launching an attack on the north-eastern Kinama district of Bujumbura.

US warned over Middle East

The United States must do more to kick-start the Middle East peace process, International Development Secretary, Clare Short, has said.

She told the BBC Newshour programme there was no excuse for the 11 September terrorist attacks, but warned the continuing Israeli-Palestinian conflict - in which the Israelis have traditionally been able to rely on strong US support - served to increase resentment against America in the region.

The interview went out as the latest twist in the Middle East conflict saw Israel decide to stop Yasser Arafat from attending a symbolic Christmas Eve Mass in the West Bank town of Bethlehem,

to Palestinian fury.

Ms Short also spoke out against the "very foolish" attitude of hawks in Washington who were opposed to nation building in failed states, such as Afghanistan.

If it prevailed, she suggested, then "the rest of us have got to do the job".

Ms Short, in a pre-recorded interview for the BBC World Service Newshour programme broadcast on Tuesday, also criticised the UK Government for giving Tanzania the go-ahead to buy a £28m air traffic control system from a British manufacturer.

But she also stressed that the government had become increasingly conscious of its

moral duty to put concern for the world's poor above commercial interests.

On the Middle East, Ms Short urged President George W. Bush's administration to put more effort into finding a settlement between Israel and Palestinians.

"Wicked and evil" On the 11 September attacks, Ms Short stressed: "There is no explanation that legitimises what was done... it is always wrong to deliberately kill civilians."

"It was wrong, it was wicked, it was evil."

America had to realise a "major cause" of the criticism it attracted around the world was the unresolved Middle East conflict.

TRUST INTERNATIONAL

World Report

Pakistan arrests Kashmiri militant leader

Pakistan has arrested the head of a prominent Kashmiri militant group implicated by India in the attack on the Delhi parliament 10 days ago.

The arrest of Maulana Masood Azhar, head of the Jaish-e-Mohammad group, is seen as a move to defuse increasing tension with India along the border in disputed Kashmir.

Mr. Azhar was detained in Punjab province on charges of making provocative speeches and instigating trouble.

The authorities' move came a day after Islamabad froze the accounts and assets of another militant group, Lashkar-e-Toiba - also blamed by India for the attack on the parliament compound.

Tension has escalated between the two nuclear powers in recent days.

The Indian Army has started evacuating villagers from its side of the border with Pakistan as both sides continue to bolster their forces in Kashmir and exchange artillery fire.

The Indian Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, said Delhi did not want war, but war was being thrust upon it and the country would have to face it.

Bomb suspect part of network, FBI alleges

The FBI believes the man suspected of trying to blow up a passenger plane with explosives hidden in his shoes last Saturday had an accomplice, US media reports say.

The *Boston Globe* newspaper said it had received information from the FBI suggesting that the suspect identified as Richard Reid - who was carrying a UK passport - was acting as part of a wider network.

Meanwhile in the UK, *The Times* newspaper said Mr. Reid could be linked to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network, after it traced him to a London mosque also attended by a man charged with the September 11 attacks.

The leader of the Brixton mosque, in south London, told the newspaper that Mr. Reid was incapable of acting alone.

He is reported to have converted to Islam in prison, where he served time for a string of convictions such as street muggings.

Richard Reid, whose identity is still being questioned and investigated, is now in custody and has been ordered to appear in a Boston court tomorrow.



Laughing: It's a serious matter.

80 homes destroyed as Australian inferno rages on

Strong winds are fanning the flames of bush fires raging out of control in Australia as hundreds of people flee.

Towns, holiday resorts and national parks have been evacuated in the eastern state of New South Wales. At least 80 homes have been engulfed in flames, with

hundreds more under threat.

The state government has declared a number of regions disaster areas - including outlying parts of Sydney, which is blanketed in smoke haze.

Settlements in the Blue Mountains, 80 kilometres west of Sydney, have been devastated.

Firefighters are unlikely to get any help from the weather soon, with hot, dry, strong winds forecast for the next several days.

New South Wales emergencies minister, Bob Debus, told *BBC* that the fires were "extraordinarily fierce" with flames leaping as high as 60 metres.

A line of fire is extending

almost unbroken for 25 kilometres about 15 kilometres from Sydney's southern suburbs.

BBC correspondent in Sydney said the firemen - many of them volunteers who gave up Christmas to fight the blazes - could face their most dangerous days in many years.

Prime Minister, John Howard, is due to fly over the worst affected areas to see the scale of the damage.

Many residents were forced to abandon Christmas celebrations and spent Tuesday fighting fires in their backyards in an effort to save their homes.

Some 5,000 firefighters helped by aircraft dropping water are trying to control at least 70 bush fires in temperatures around 40 Celsius and winds of 90 km/h.

Brazilian mudslides kill 42

Flooding and mudslides in the Brazilian state of Rio de Janeiro have killed at least 42 people, many of them children.

Some 2,000 people have been left homeless, and about 50 people are still missing.

The worst-hit area is Petropolis, a mountain town outside Rio de Janeiro that has been virtually cut off by the disaster.

Torrential rain, which began on Sunday night, triggered mudslides that swept away scores of flimsy shacks built on steep slopes.

Rescuers struggled for hours to find people buried beneath tonnes of mud and rubble.

The state governor, Anthony Garotinho, has promised help for the victims - but also criticised

local officials for allowing people to build homes in high-risk areas.

In low-lying Rio suburbs, many rivers burst their banks and flooded hundreds of homes.

Roads were also blocked by fallen trees.

Hundreds of volunteers, including soldiers and firefighters, are helping to clear streets.

The occasional sodden toy is a sad reminder that this tragedy happened at Christmas and many families will be spending the holidays in temporary shelters.

The amount of rain that fell in 20 hours was the same as normally falls in a month in Rio.

Mr. Garotinho, who flew over the affected areas, said the state government was co-ordinating emergency relief.

He said many of the shanty town dwellers knew the risks they faced.

ODD WORLD

'Laugh your illness away'

More than 900 people gathered in the southern Indian city of Bangalore to gain good health by bursting into peals of laughter.

The three-day meeting was organised by the All-India Laughter Convention.

In a world of miracle drugs, alternative medicines and self-help literature, the Convention believes in the simple concept of laughter therapy.

Speaking to the *BBC*, the founder of the Laughter Club International, Dr. Madan Kataria, said the convention provided a forum for laughter buffs to meet and exchange new laughing techniques.

Delegates danced and also held laughter competitions and gibberish contests.

Laughing helps to boost the immune system apart from relaxing the body, according to Dr. Kataria.

Dr. Kataria said several diseases like asthma, anxiety, gastric ulcers and certain sexual disorders could be cured by laughing regularly.

But this is yet to be scientifically proved.

Members from different socio-economic backgrounds shared their experiences and benefits of laughter at the conference.

Disbelieving priest earns suspension

An Irish Protestant minister who does not believe in Christmas or that Jesus was the Son of God has been suspended from his post for three months to "reflect on his statements."

Andrew Furlong, Dean of Clonmacnoise and Rector of Trim in County Meath, startled worshippers in his quiet Irish midlands parish when his unconventional views on traditional Christian teachings were aired in articles published on his Web site.

"I don't believe the traditional understanding of Christmas, that God took human form and was born as a babe in Bethlehem," he told *Reuters* on Monday.

Furlong, 54, who was ordained in the Anglican Church of Ireland in the early 1970s, said he has held his unorthodox beliefs for more than 30 years but had not shared them previously with his parishioners.

"With the deepest respect for others and their beliefs, to my mind Jesus, and John the Baptist also, were mistaken and misguided 'end time' prophets," he wrote in one article.

"Jesus was neither a mediator nor a saviour, neither superhuman nor divine. We need to leave him to his place in history and move on."

Justice suggests no-trial jail option

The idea of locking up people who pose a danger to the community, before they have committed a crime, has been suggested by the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Woolf.

In an interview with *BBC* Radio 4's Today programme, he said some form of "civil detention" for a small number of people such as violent paedophiles might have to be considered, despite the implications for human rights.

Penal reform group Nacro expressed alarm, warning that Lord Woolf's comments begged many questions and would cause considerable controversy.

The suggestion follows intense public debate surrounding how to deal with dangerous paedophiles such as Sarah Payne's murderer, Roy Whiting.

Lord Woolf - the most senior judge in England and Wales - said some kind of early intervention was needed as by the time such people had committed a crime it was too late.

Xmas pressure harasses women

While thousands of Britons flocked to the shops in a last-minute Christmas gift-buying frenzy on Monday, the pressure to be festive proved just a little too much for three harassed women.

Liz Mace, a mother of five, was so irritated that all her family wanted to do was slump in front of the television instead of helping to decorate the Christmas tree that she hurled the set out of the house.

And in a case of turkey rage, two women came to blows over the last frozen bird in a south Wales supermarket.

Mace, 40, was said to have wrenched the family television from its socket, carried to the front door, lifted it over her head and thrown it out of the house.

According to *The Times* newspaper, the sound of it smashing as it rolled down the front steps of her home in Southampton, southern England, had the desired effect and the family began hanging decorations on the tree.

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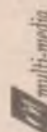
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NEWS

11 die in auto-accident

Eleven people, including a two-year-old girl, died on Monday following a motor accident along the notorious Gusau-Sokoto road.

An eyewitness told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Gusau that the accident happened around Danmarke village in Bungudu local government area when a bus carrying about 20 passengers collided with a Mitsubishi pick-up loaded with cows.

According to the eye witness, nine people died on the spot, while the remaining two died at the Federal Medical Centre, Gusau.

NAN learnt that the 20 people in the bus were travelling to Sokoto from Malumfashi in Katsina State to attend a wedding ceremony scheduled for Tuesday.

When NAN visited the Federal Medical Centre in Gusau, only five injured people were receiving

treatment.

However, the Chief



Chief Tony Anenih

Nursing Officer in the centre, Alhaji Garba Mu'azu, told NAN that the 11 dead persons had been buried, stressing that arrangements had been made to convey the five injured to their home town in Malumfashi "because of the current nurses' strike."

NAN reported that accidents along the Gusau-Sokoto road had now become a daily phenomenon because of the deplorable condition of the road.

The Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) has concluded arrangements to present a bill to the National Assembly for a new salary scale for working journalists as from next month.

The National President of the union, Prince Smart Adeyemi, stated this in Lokoja while declaring the third quarter meeting of the National Executive Council of the union.

According to Smart, "everything is already in place to organise a public hearing on the bill for the

New salary scale for journalist underway

From Mamman Apkena in Lokoja

reformation of the journalism profession as practice, and to ensure that individuals without adequate funds do not flood media outfits.

Mr. Adeyemi further revealed that his administration would begin a mass transit scheme in order to generate funds for the union to enable it function effectively without depending on charity.

The national president further explained that in the last two years, he had completed a 45-bed hotel in Abuja, adding that a printing press would be established next year in Abuja with a view to making it one of the most vibrant media in the country whose news content would be dependable at all times.

Speaking earlier, the state governor, Prince Abubakar Audu, commended the fair coverage of his administration's programme and projects in the last 30 months.

Also speaking at the occasion, the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Alhaji Mohammed Abba Gana, revealed that over 20 housing units have been allocated to NUJ members in the federal capital, Abuja.

The minister solicited the co-operation of media practitioners in the coverage of government activities as both journalists and government are all working towards the improvement of the larger society.

NOA DG tasks AD governors, Afenifere on peace

By Hammeed M. Bello

The Director-General of the National Orientation Agency (NOA), Dr. Ifeanyi Chukwuka, Tuesday in Abuja, tasked governors of Alliance for Democracy (AD)-controlled states and leaders of the Pan-Yoruba socio-political group Afenifere, to put their house in order so as to forestall precipitating a national crisis.

Dr. Chukwuka, who was reacting to the Sunday night assassination of the Minister of Justice and Attorney-General of the Federation, Chief Ajibola Ige (SAN), as well as the murder last week of Hon. Olagbagu of the Osun State House of Assembly by unidentified gunmen, called on Yoruba leaders to ensure that their assassins are quickly brought to justice.

He condemned the killings as "an extreme expression of intolerance" as no amount of political disagreements should degenerate to the level of

blood-letting.

In a press statement signed by the Personal Assistance to the Director-General, Mr. Charles Onyekamu, and made available to Daily Trust, Dr. Chukwuka blamed the political and cultural leaders in the South-West for fanning the embers of intolerance through their unguarded utterances and called for "responsible politics" in order to save our nascent democracy.

Describing the political crises in the South-West zone as "festering sore", the director-general challenged the South-West political elite to prove to Nigerians that they are indeed leaders.

On the controversy generated by the recent signing into law of the Electoral Bill by the president, Dr. Chukwuka advised all aggrieved parties to follow the president's counsel by going to court for a judicial arbitration.

The Bauchi State Police Command would prosecute people who illegally destroy statues at strategic locations within the metropolis under the guise of Sharia legal system, the command's Public Relations Officer, Edwin Mpka, has said.

Mpka told NAN on Monday in Bauchi that unidentified "hoodlums" has unlawfully destroyed statues depicting birds and a gallant soldier ostensibly to conform with the Sharia legal code, adding "people should allow the usual process involved in Sharia

Bauchi police to prosecute destroyers of statues

implementation in the state." He said while people may feel slighted over the existence of statues in the metropolis, "emotions must be controlled for the due process of the law to take place and that can only be done under a peaceful atmosphere."

According to the chairman of the state Sharia Commission, Muktar Adamu, Sharia abhors the

erection of statues that depict a living thing, adding, "our role on this issue remains advisory and it is the state legislature and executive arm that can stop the trend."

He stressed that people who engaged in such actions could portray Sharia in negative light, "but we appeal to people to maintain law and order in their actions and allow the law take its due course."

50 Congolese policemen graduate from Nigeria

From Abdullahi Bego, in Maiduguri

A batch of 50 Congolese policemen have graduated from a three-month intensive training at the Nigeria Police College, Maiduguri, as they prepare to begin a one-month anti-riot course at the Mobile Police Force (MPF) training camp on Gwoza Hills before returning home.

The Congolese police contingent arrived the country at the behest of President Joseph Desire Kabila to Nigeria's President Obasanjo for his country's police, struggling to maintain law and order

in the war-torn country, to be trained in Nigeria.

Speaking at the graduation ceremony in Maiduguri, the commandant of the Police



Mr. Musiliu Smith (IGP)

College, Alhaji Mukhtari Abba (CP) said a total of 1,200 Congolese police will be trained by his college in batches over the next few months.

The commandant said the graduating Congolese police received two-months basic (police) training and one month of detective/intelligence training.

Alhaji Mukhtari Abba commended the trainees for their "willingness to learn," describing them as active, disciplined and intelligent.

He added that their training in Nigeria is a demonstration of the international recognition of the Nigeria Police in peace-keeping roles.

Karu council boss enjoins Christians to shun evil

Christians have been enjoined to use the season of Christmas to draw closer to God and shun all kinds of evils.

The Chairman of Karu local government council in Nasarawa State, Hon. Musa Bako Karshi, made the call in his goodwill message to the Christian community in Nigeria as they join their brothers worldwide to celebrate Christmas, which marks the birth of Christ.

He stressed the need for both Christians and Muslims to live in peace with one another irrespective of their religious beliefs, saying 'no

meaningful development can take place in an atmosphere characterised by civil and sectarian disturbances."

Hon. Musa, therefore, called for tolerance among communities in the area, adding that "we should not allow religion or ethnicity to divide us."

The chairman urged the political elite and religious leaders to promote peaceful co-existence in their domains through constant dialogue and social interactions. He equally appealed to adherents of the Christian faith not to allow the significance of the celebration to be lost to

them as Christmas goes beyond merry-making.

His words: "The activities that go with the celebrations like wining, dinning and general merriment may tempt one to miss the symbolism of Christmas. So I urge Christians to remember and reflect on the virtues of love, peace, humility, selflessness and unaffected piety which Jesus Christ Himself exemplified while on earth here."

PUBLIC NOTICE

DIVINE GRACE CHAPEL MINISTRIES WORLD WIDE

The general Public is hereby notified that the above named association has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission for registration under part C of the Companies and Allied Matters Act 1990. The Trustees are:-

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|-----------|
| 1. Pastor Emmanuel Akor | - | Chairman |
| 2. Deacon Albert Udokang | - | Secretary |
| 3. Deacon (ENGR) Prince Etumnu | - | Member |
| 4. Pastor David Adinzie | - | Member |
| 5. Deacon Austin Njoku | - | Member |

Any objection to the registration should be forwarded to the Registrar General, Corporate Affairs Commission P.M.B. 198 Area 11 - Garki, Abuja, within 28 days of this publication.

Signed
DEACON ALBERT UDOKANG
(Secretary)

Harmattan derives from one of the Ghanaian languages and it translates as "doctor", because its dryness provides relief from the traditional heat, and sometimes, dampness, of the hot season.

The harmattan wind emanates from the Sahara desert, from where the North East trade wind travels hundreds of kilometres carrying dust particles towards the Sub-Saharan countries, which are the nations of the West African region.

In Nigeria, the harmattan is experienced earlier in the northern part of the country, than the South, due to the formers proximity to the Sahara desert. It is usually experienced after the rainy season has subsided, thereby ushering in the dry hot season, and the presence of the harmattan at this point, provides a hazy brownish complexion to the environment, and leaves most trees barren.

Meanwhile, the advent of the harmattan is known to change the pattern of life in respect to the environment and the physiological make up of people. People at this point are compelled to make certain adjustments when the harmattan sets in. There is a serious re-

sponse to certain dress codes like sweaters, cardigans, veils etc to suit the early morning and evening chills of the cold, dusty and windy weather.

On the other hand, it is a period that makes most people worry about their physiological well being, owing to catarrh, skin cracks and scalding of lips prevalent at this period. However, against this backdrop the dusty weather is received with mixed reactions. To some people it is pleasant weather, while to some others, it is the

converse, and a period to worry much about. *Daily Trust* sought the opinion of some people in terms of their reaction to this weather. Mrs. Beatrice Ekpe, a teacher sees nothing good in the harmattan. Her contention has to do with the physiological changes it brings about. In her words: "At this time of the year, I have to worry about catarrh, and the irritating feelings in my nostrils when the dusty wind is blowing. In fact I feel horrible," she affirmed. Meanwhile for Aniefiok Eshiet, a nurse, her problem is with her skin which gets dry at the onset of the dry season. "To me the harmattan is very unfavourable. It makes my skin stiff and my lips crack. At times the creams I use

Harmattan: Shifting dress c

prove futile,' she said. On the other hand, many see the harmattan or the "doctor" as a pleasant weather and a perfect mate for the blazing sunshine, the absence of which makes activities under the sun cumbersome and stressful. The early morning and evening chill to some, is a form of winter, which in the tropics makes profound demands for woollen clothing for purposes of protection from the weather. Jerome Issac, an engineer is fascinated about the countryside atmosphere created.

In his words: "This is a period I love to go and camp or relax in my backyard and read my books, because the dry environment is very conducive for that."

Eke Robinson, an environmentalist who operates a refuse disposal outfit, sees the period as good for business. "The dryness which the harmattan creates in the environment makes for healthy and easy disposal of refuse, unlike the rainy season where it is indeed more challenging to dispose of refuse."

Meanwhile, most traders at this moment

When the dry or harmattan season breaks, people normally effect many changes in their dress and eating habits. Our reporter, Victor Akobundu recently explored the subtle, but mild influence of the Harmattan season.



The tree bare of leaves stands as a powerful symbol of this season.

On the other hand, it is a period that makes most people worry about their physiological well being, owing to the catarrh, skin cracks and scalding of lips prevalent at this period. However, against this backdrop the dusty weather is received with mixed reactions. To some people it is pleasant weather, while to some others, it is the converse, and a period to worry much about.

are elated at the advent of the harmattan, giving rise to the occasional demand for specific clothing to beat off the chill and dust borne by the harmattan. Even the demand for certain cosmetics has increased lately. A trader who identifies himself as Chuks told

Daily Trust that he had to blend his cap and hat business with sweaters and cardigans, simply because of the increasing demand for them "since I mixed this business, the market has been going well, but I know this is seasonal, but when the harmattan is over, I will go back to

my normal business of selling hats and caps," he affirmed. Emma, who runs a cosmetic shop, disclosed to *Daily Trust* that demands for cosmetics like Vaseline ointment and glycerine products, have also soared resulting from the dryness of skins, and cracking of lips and toes, experienced by an increasing number of persons in the season. "I had never thought of this, until I noticed

Feature

Prices and soaring costs

that these products such as Vaseline and glycerine ointment have been in high demand. The rush for these products however, made me to realise that it was the harmattan that gave rise to this.”

Another group of people who see this season as being worthwhile, are the Muslim faithfuls who recently ended the 40-day fast. They term the harmattan season as a very conducive period to observe the 40-day fast, given its dry nature and protection from intense heat.

Usman Aliyu, a devout Muslim, says the harmattan season is succour and a relief whenever he is fasting. “I feel okay both within and outside me. I can withstand the thirst for water. Because of the cool nature of the season, I don’t sweat profusely as such,” he said.

In the same vein, the Harmattan season falls within a period of

festivity, a time the Christians observe Christmas, and the Muslims sometimes celebrate the Sallah. Meanwhile Christmas and Sallah just recently celebrated are moments that call for merry making. Consequently demands for livestock like cattle, sheep, rams, goats, chicken, turkey etc. have naturally risen. It is however, against this backdrop that *Daily Trust* went round to get the current price of these livestock.

Investigations revealed that costs of livestock at Dei-Dei International livestock market in Abuja have risen. The cost of

chickens, turkeys, guinea fowls etc are expected to increase this season.

Alhaji Ibrahim Ustaz, who sells chickens, turkey and guinea fowls, disclosed to *Daily Trust* that the price of a big chicken goes for N1, 100 and is expected to rise to N1, 500 during the festive period, while a fowl goes for N600.00, and is expected to increase to N800.00. Alhaji Ustaz also stated that a Turkey which currently goes for N5, 500.00 will sell for N7, 500. Meanwhile, he declared that the prices are expected to return to normal after the New Year celebra-

tions.

As for the cost of livestock like cattle rams, goats etc, a dealer disclosed to *Daily Trust* that despite the fact that there has been a rush for these livestock as a consequence of the festive period, the change in price was largely due to an increase in the cost of



In the season, people are shifting from these normal T-shirts to thick sweaters and cardigans
Pix: Felix Onigbinde

transportation, especially as there have been queues at filling stations. Therefore, the price of cattle ranges between N45, 000.00-N15, 000.00, while goats go for between N7, 800-N8, 000.00. rams go for N10, 000.00.



FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, KANO

CONGRATULATIONS

The Provost, Dr. Tijjani Isma'il, on behalf of the Governing Council, Management, Staff and entire Students of the Federal College of Education, Kano, rejoices with our Chairman.



ALHAJI IBRAHIM GUSAU OON
Sarkin Mallamai, Sokoto

On the conferment of a National Merit Award of the Officer of the Order of the Niger by the President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo (GCFR) on Tuesday 18th December, 2001. The award is a further testimony of your dedication, honesty, transparency and services to the Almighty Allah and to your fatherland. While we are proud to be associated with your wisdom, fatherly guide and experience, we wish you Allah’s continuous guidance and blessings. Amen.

Dr. Tijjani Isma'il mnae
PROVOST

BUSINESS DAY

CBN controller alerts over threats to economy

The entire financial system and the national economy may be in great danger unless operators in the financial sector display transparency and respect for ethics governing the industry, the Ogun State Controller of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Mr. Adekunle Ogunsanya has warned.

Raising the alarm in Abeokuta, Mr. Ogunsanya, said in a lecture delivered at the end of the party organised by the committee of bank managers, at the weekend.

In a paper titled:

From Olumide Bajulaiye, in Abeokuta

Transparency and Ethics in the Nigerian Banking Industry – Mechanisms for Growth and Sound Financial System; he explained that “the most recent distress syndrome witnessed in the financial system, was largely attributable to the lack of transparency and ethical conduct exhibited by some operators in the industry.”

The CBN boss stressed that “except something drastic is done to arrest the trend, the entire financial system and the national economy may be negatively affected.”

His words: “Instances abound where official policies and practices of banks, were exploitative in nature and therefore, contravene sound principles. It is ironic and sad to observe that good intentions of

financial policies by the apex bank are negatively applied.”

Speaking further, Ogunsanya explained that “the exploitative clauses inherent therein, are designed to take advantage of the ignorance of the customer, whereas banks are expected to be financial advisers to their customers.”

While expressing the

readiness of the CBN to apply appropriate punitive measures to check operators and institutions that may contravene laid down rules and regulations guiding the financial sector, the CBN controller, listed some ills of the unethical practices as follows:

“Unethical acts, could cumulatively retard the growth of the economy by frustrating the development of entrepreneurship through under-utilisation of assets to finance expansion, with the

resultant sub-optimal growth of the economy.”

“Unethical acts like falsification of book of accounts, window dressing to hide losses, main pulsation of transactions and value dates, and fraud by management and staff of banks, are destructive and costly in the long run.”

He added, they would also result in loss of customers, corrosion of capital, greater susceptibility to fraud and forgeries and erosion of public confidence in the financial system.”

Insurers raise N23bn premium on motor insurance

Insurance companies in Nigeria realised a total of N23.4 billion as gross premium on motor insurance between 1989 and 1998, according to a report by the Accident Offices Committee

of the Nigerian Insurers Association (NIA).

The report, a copy of which was made available to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Lagos showed that he highest amount of N5.4 billion was paid in 1998, followed by N5.1 billion in 1997 and N4.1 billion in 1996.

The report also showed that about N3.06 billion was realised in 1995, N2.3 billion in 1994, N1.4 billion in 1993, N819.8 million in 1992, while N385.4 million was made in 1990.

Gross premium on motor insurance totalling N234.3 million was made in 1991, while the least amount of N279.4 million was realised in 1989.



Joseph Sanusi, CBN Governor.

Plateau turns 3 outfits into limited liability companies

Plateau State government has converted its printing press, fertiliser blending plant and the exercise book production unit of the Plateau Publishing

Company (PPC) to limited liability companies to make them profit-oriented.

Briefing newsmen in Jos on the outcome of last week's executive council meeting, the state Commissioner for Agriculture, Mr. Sam Parah, said sometime last year, the government set up a committee to look into the operations of the three outfits and far-reaching recommendations were made to the government.

Parah explained that the white paper on their conversion had since been released by the government and would be fully

implemented.

According to him, the printing company will now bear Plateau Printing Press Limited and is headed by a general manager in the person of Mrs. Godiya Bewarang.

He disclosed that the exercise book unit of the PPC would be called CACTUS and Allied Products Company Limited with one Mr. Miri as the general manager.

On road construction, Parah said the government had approved the construction of Langshi-Sharam-Garam road in Kanke Local Government Area at a cost of N120 million to boost the socio-economic activities of the area.

He announced that the state was among six in the federation billed to benefit from the allocation of farming input under the 1999 Japanese grant aimed at promoting rice production and processing.

He said the state had received 12 motorcycles out of the 450 purchased by the federal government to enhance the activities of Agriculture Development Project (ADP).

The commissioner called on the recipients of the motorcycles to make proper use of them and said that any form of misuse would not be condoned.

Crude oil export slumps

The nation has recorded a downward slide in crude oil export from over 17 million net barrels to over 10 million net barrels.

Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) source indicated that total crude oil export for the week ended December 9, was 10,745,652 net barrels against the previous week's figure of 17,878,463. This shows a drop of 7,132,811 net barrels.

However, crude oil production for the period under review rose to 15,884,535 from a previous week figure of 13,600,749 net barrels.

Total crude supplies to refineries was 1,133,379. Condensate production and export were 666,420 and 951,115 net barrels respectively. There was a record of ten oil spillage incidents during the period. The incidents which were reported in the eastern zone of the Niger Delta involved only 14 barrels of crude oil.

No spillage was reported in the western zone. Reports on downstream activities indicated that a total of 13 petroleum product outlets were sealed for diversion and

From Rakiya A. Muhammad, in Lagos

dispensing with malfunctioning pumps in Delta, Edo, Ondo Ekiti as well as Kwara zones.

Thirty dispensing pumps in another seven stations were sealed for under-dispensing are related offences in the Delta, Ekiti zone.

253 7Up staff get long-service awards

Seven-Up Bottling Company Plc bestowed long service awards on 253 of its staff nationwide. The beneficiaries were those who have served the company variously for 10, 15, 20 and 25 years.

While those in the 25 years category got N15,000 and a deep freeze each and 12 crates of company products, those who have served for 20 years got N10,000, double-door refrigerator, 10 crates of company products.

Others that are of the 15 years category in addition to the certificate received N7,500 14 inch colour Tv and eight crates of company products; whereas those that got 10 years service awards also received N5,000 cash radio cassette player and six crates of company products.

A breakdown of the awardees showed that four of the recipients namely Mr. H. Adio, I. Akinsowon, S. Ishola and E. O. Ogunbowale were among the staff that have served the company for 25 years.

A total of 37 staff were in the 20 years category, 40

From Bright Ewulu, in Lagos

in the 15 year category while the remainder 172 were in the 10 years category to bring the total number to 253.

Speaking during the occasion, Seven-Up's Deputy Managing Director, Mr. Ken Nelson stressed that the annual long service award and end of year party was instituted by the company to motivate the staff and reward them for their contributions to the success of the company.

Head of Human Resources of the company, Mr. Femi Mokikon stated that the year 2001 was a difficult one for most manufacturing company's, but that the company employed an additional 205 staff to man their new plant in Ilorin, Kwara State.

Mokikon stated that his biggest challenge in the passing year was not within the group, but outside as the company was heartily besieged by unemployed Nigerians, saying that government should address the problem of unemployment.



Oladipo Bailey, Commissioner for Insurance.

Adeniyi now Omegabank chairman

The board of Omegabank Plc has elected a prominent lawyer and former Ondo State Chairman of the Nigeria Bar Association (NBA), Chief Anthony Adeniyi as chairman of the bank to replace Chief Blessing Kayode whose tenure expired recently.

A statement signed by Ayo Arowojolu, corporate affairs officer of the bank said Chief Adeniyi, 50 years old had “a brilliant law practice spanning over 21 years,” and has since 1993 been a director of the bank.

According to the statement, the new chairman had joined the board first in 1993 as a director representing public interest in the bank, and in 1999 he was elected to represent the interest of Ekiti State in the

bank.

A traditional chief of Ikere-Ekiti town in Ekiti State, Chief Adeniyi is also a politician of repute since 1994 when he was elected as a delegate to the Constituent Assembly.

After he graduated from the then University of Ife in 1978, Chief Adeniyi, after spending one year at the Nigeria Law School, started his legal practice in Akure where in 1990 he was elected NBA chairman. He is also the immediate past chairman of the NBA in Ondo State.

His election as chairman of the National Bank followed a meeting of the board recently where he was unanimously elected by the other directors. Chief Adeniyi is married with four children.



Rilwanu Lukman, Adviser on Petroleum.



Governor Dariye of Plateau State.

BUSINESS DAY

NEPA uncovers 2,000 illegal consumers in Ebonyi

By Ahmed Shekarau, with Agency Reports

The National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) in Ebonyi has uncovered 2,000 illegal consumers since its management commenced a nationwide registration exercise in August, even as it hands over vehicles to the Inspector General of Police (IGP), Mr. Musiliu Smith at the Police Headquarters in Abuja tomorrow.

Among those caught were unduly registered consumers of NEPA power supply in Abakaliki urban, Abakaliki suburbs and those at Afikpo area, according to the District Manager of NEPA in Abakaliki, Mr. Uche Dike.

Dike told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abakaliki that in the district, NEPA had 14,000 registered customers before the August census began, but now had 2,000 additional consumers.

However, power supply has been restored to Akpoha-Amasiri, in Afikpo area, where hoodlums recently vandalised NEPA electrical materials worth N7.6 million.

The district manager said, "NEPA fought to restore supply to the area, as part of its commitment to maintain the healthy record that the authority already has in the state.

Dike enjoined NEPA customers and other members of the public to ensure the security of electricity installations in their areas, adding that the current federal government efforts to improve NEPA's services would be defeated if people failed to adopt measures to protect such facilities.

Meanwhile, the National Electric Power Authority will tomorrow in Abuja hand-over patrol vehicles to the Police to assist them stem the rising tide of vandalism of NEPA equipment in the country.

ELECTRICITY WATCH



The Chairman of NEPA's Technical Board, Senator Liyel Imoke and the Authority's Managing Director, Engineer Joseph Makoku at a recent function in Abuja. Are they strategising on how they can eliminate power outages in the country?

Jos residents decry incessant power outages

With only four days to December 31 when electricity is expected to improve nationwide, electricity consumers in Jos and some other towns within Plateau State have decried the erratic power supply in their areas.

To them, power failure would remain part of their lives beyond the December 31 ultimatum given to NEPA by the Federal Government to ensure steady power supply in the country.

Traders, civil servants and other professionals in Jos who spoke to *Business Day* on the issue said there is no significant improvement that could usher in an era of steady supply of electricity in the country come December 31, 2001, especially in Plateau State.

The National Electric Power Authority (NEPA), had made efforts to provide

From Buhari Bello, in Jos

steady supply of electricity within Jos and environs during the two-day official visit of President Olusegun Obasanjo to Plateau State penultimate week. But it could not sustain the effort shortly after his departure.

According to one of the respondents, Mrs. Belinda Kukwa, manager of a business centre in Jos, there is still hope for the best regardless of any situation.

She however expressed dismay at the inability of NEPA to constantly brief Nigerians on its level of preparedness to ensure steady power supply before the expiry of the deadline.

She said: "It is NEPA that should come out and tell us how prepared they are to provide the 24 hour uninterrupted power supply and not the president coming out to it it has to be done

on a particular day."

A correspondent of The Guardian newspaper in Jos, Malam Isa Abdulsalami told *Business Day* that: "From the discussions I had with one NEPA boss, one may believe that December 31 deadline may be met."

He said that there are "remarkable improvements in the supply of electricity in the area he resides, "but you know it is not enough to expect that miracles could be done before the end of the year which is fastly approaching."

The situation is said to be worse in the South-East Senatorial District of the state comprising Kanam, Wase, Langtang North, Langtang South, Shendam, Mikang and Quan-Pa'an local government areas.

For instance, even while President Obasanjo visited Shendam, Mikang and Quan-Pa'an local governments penultimate Friday, December 14, residents said there was no light all through his tour of these areas.

The Speaker of the Shendam Local Government Legislative Arm, Alhaji Idris Othman confirmed to *Business Day* that "the whole of these three local governments (Shendam, Mikang and Quan-Pa'an) were in complete blackout for the past three days before the president's visit."

"You can see that both my house and several other houses of people who could afford it depend mostly on Lister generating sets for power supply, while the NEPA source serves as a contingent means," he affirmed.

Mixed reactions trail NEPA's performance in Lagos

There have been mixed reactions in Lagos over National Electric Power Authority's (NEPA) efforts to meet up the December 31 deadline of the President for the nation to have uninterrupted power supply.

According to a resident of the former federal capital city, Mr. Mike Kolawole, power supply to places like Iyanipaja and Apapa has improved "tremendously."

He said of Iyanipaja especially that light hardly intrudes except for an hour or two on daily basis.

With barely six days to the deadline, however, the chairman and people of Bammeko-Bamisile Community in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State have in a press release commended the efforts of the Federal Government and NEPA towards ensuring steady power supply in the area.

In the statement signed by the community development association chairman, Elder Kunle Oniya, the community commended the Akowonjo District Manager for his frequent on site visits and urged NEPA to keep up the effort.

The Seven Up Head of Human Resources, Mr. Femi Mokikon in a chat told *Business Day* that much is still desired from NEPA as the companies most times use their generators to

From Bright Ewulu, in Lagos

provide needed power at their various factories. Mokikon stated that for over 15 months in the part of Lagos he lives NEPA has not been supplying electricity.

He urged the government to ensure that the issue of power generation and supply is adequately taken care of if they are serious about transforming the economy.

Other correspondents who spoke to us complain that their areas have not had light for upwards of four days, however most of them agree that the power has generally improved from what it use to be in the years gone by.

Investigations by our correspondent in most parts of Lagos show that load-shedding still continues.



Governor Bola Tinubu of Lagos State.

December 31 deadline realistic, says NEPA Manager

Despite the skepticism being expressed by Nigerians on the December 31 deadline for steady electricity supply in the country, the Senior Manager Incharge of Distribution, Jos District of NEPA, Mr. Okore Damian has said that it is realisable.

Speaking exclusively to *Business Day* recently in Jos District Office of NEPA, the distribution manager hinted that efforts are being intensified to boost power supply nation-wide.



Joseph Makoku, NEPA MD.

According to him, "we are hoping and in fact we are very optimistic that the December 31, deadline will be met."

He disclosed that NEPA offices nationwide have received new transformers to boost power distribution, saying that Jos has so far collected and commissioned four transformers this year.

"Whatever you see happening to NEPA today in Plateau State is equally taking place in every part of the country because the Federal Government has been providing money for the project," he explained.

On the erratic power supply currently being experienced in the state capital and environs, Mr. Damian noted that it was largely due to the ongoing test of the newly installed transformers preparatory to the end of this month.

He therefore called on NEPA consumers in the state to exercise patience and understanding, saying that "we are fully aware of the deadline given by the president and we are not sleeping on the matter."

...improves performance in Zamfara

The National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) has improved its services in some parts of Zamfara State in the past four days following series of complaints by its customers.

Business Day investigations in Gusau, Kaura-Namoda and Tsafe, the three urban centres that are connected to the national grid revealed that most parts of these areas now enjoy several hours of steady power supply unlike before.

Many customers of NEPA who spoke to our reporter expressed satisfaction with the development, especially chief executives of medium

From Salisu Zakari Maradun, in Gusau

and small-scale industries in Gusau.

Alhaji Lawali Isiyaka, the Chairman of Lumana Motors based in Gusau explained that the situation has now become better than in the last one week.

According to him, "within last week, power failure was very common and chronic, as a result of which many businesses, such as welding, photocopying centres who solely relied on the NEPA went out of business. But the situation has improved within this week."

Malam Aminu Ibrahim, a grinding machine operator in

Tsafe told *Business Day* that in their area, they get eleven hours of power supply.

Said he: "There was no how we could get up to two hours of power supply before now. But at least, we now enjoy the supply for more than ten hours, so there is a great improvement," he explained.

Several people in these areas visited by *Business Day* expressed their happiness and optimism that the change in power supply situation would continue to justify the confidence they have in NEPA, while others prayed that President Obasanjo's promise would definitely kept by NEPA.



INSIDE POLITICS

Akume, Tsav stand off splits Tivland

The year 2001, is one the Tiv people of Benue State will live to remember. For the year may have begun on a happy note for the Tivs, but the same cannot be said to be true from the middle of the year to the present moment.

As a people, the Tivs have suffered from so many calamities this year. Such painful moments include the many communal clashes involving the Tiv people in states like Nasarawa and Taraba States, both of them neighbouring states with a large concentration of Tivs.

Similarly, the Tivs, the largest ethnic group in Benue State, apart from having political power in the state in their grip, had also produced prominent figures in the Obasanjo administration. Chief Barnabas Gemade, a Tivman was chairman of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and Lt. Gen. Victor Malu (rtd.) was Chief of Army Staff.

Both men held powerful positions, and these could have elicited some envy from other ethnic groups in the country. These two once powerful men however tasted the bitter pills of high-tech power game, as they were removed from office in a manner too bitter to forget.

But, the biggest calamity of all began on June 12, 2001, when the Chief of Azara, in Nasarawa State was murdered in cold-blood allegedly by Tiv militiamen. The repercussions of that crime left many people dead including Tiv men and women as well as children.

Many Tivs were rendered homeless and turned into refugees. As if on cue, the Taraba/Benue crisis surfaced. The clashes here, where on a

By Henry Omu
scale too inhuman to mention. Then the killing of 19 soldiers in Zaki-Biam by the Tiv militia. The response by aggrieved soldiers was the complete destruction of Zaki-Biam.



Akume

Since then, the flow of refugees has become unstoppable.

However, it is the "war" being waged against the Tivs on all sides by their neighbours, that is now the source of the political struggle between the Benue State governor, George Akume and former Lagos State Police Commissioner, Alhaji Abubakar Tsav.

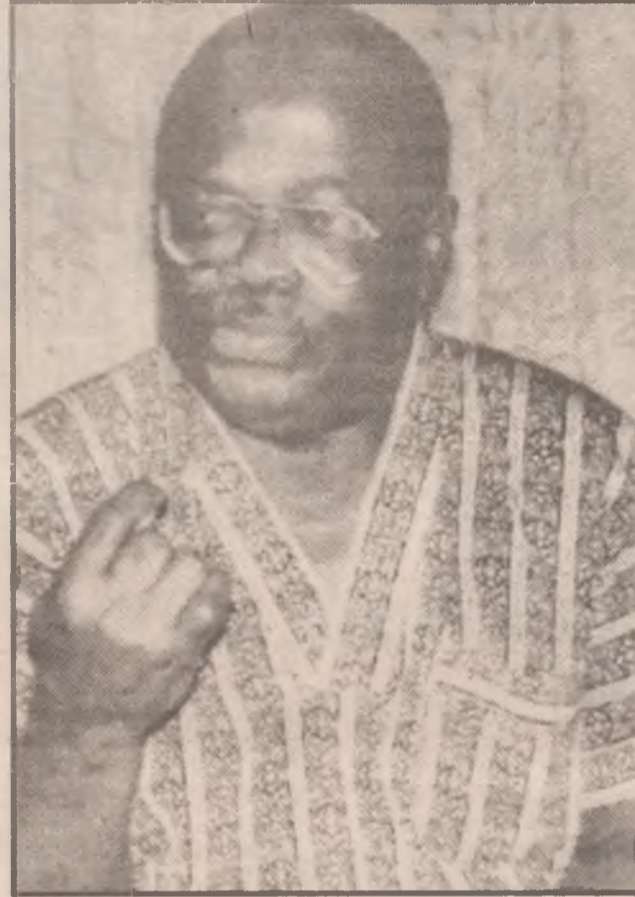
At the height of the Tiv/Jukun crisis in Taraba State and the revenge mission by soldiers on Zaki-Biam, Tsav accused the Benue governor of not taking enough security measures to protect the Tiv people. Tsav said Akume should be held responsible for the blood of innocent Tiv people slaughtered by the rampaging soldiers.

These allegations were offensive to Akume loyalists, who insist that

the governor did everything possible to avert the bloodshed that befell the Tiv nation.

Furthermore, Tsav blamed the state government for abandoning two Tiv

for the dropping of Prof. Iyorchia Ayu as industry minister by President Obasanjo. Prof. Ayu being an ally of Gov. Akume. Both men had their pound of flesh when they marshalled their political



Tsav

communities to their fate early this year, while they killed each other. He claimed that Tiv elite fuelled the crisis, an allegation he repeated after the Zaki-Biam reprisal attacks by soldiers.

This claims made by Tsav have however been debunked by Akume loyalists, who complain that Tsav never sought audience or gave advice to Akume on how to solve any of these crises. The ex-police commissioner however denies this charge, saying he had written several times to the governor, offering advice on security situation in the state.

Tsav in a letter dated November, 9, addressed to Akume wrote, "after a full assessment of the whole situation, I find your government directly responsible for what has befallen our people and you therefore need to apologise to the people of Benue State, instead of trading accusations with perceived enemies of Tiv people. Our leaders are the enemies of the Tiv people."

The former police boss knows what he is talking about. After all, Gemade as PDP national chairman was allegedly responsible

for the dropping of Prof. Iyorchia Ayu as industry minister by President Obasanjo. Prof. Ayu being an ally of Gov. Akume. Both men had their pound of flesh when they marshalled their political

Akanbi," Tsav added.

This threat by the former commissioner of police is what is now causing ripples in government circles in Benue. Senior government officials and Akume loyalists are said to be brain-storming on how to stop Tsav, and invariably contain the raging political tide against their boss.

But Akume seems not to be shaken by the Tsav accusations and is quoted to have told journalists in Makurdi that, "those who live in glass houses do not throw stones." He refused to expatiate.

His supporters and political allies are not taking Tsav lightly. They have continued to troop to government house to pledge their loyalty, and use the opportunity to condemn and castigate Tsav. Akume was reported in the press, to have used one of such occasions to say that, Tsav is annoyed with him because he was not offered the chairmanship of the Muslim Welfare Pilgrims Board. Tsav, is said to have denied the allegation and classified it as "spurious."

How far the feuding parties will go in this "war" is what only they can answer. One thing is however certain. Benue cannot afford to be engulfed by another political crises after tasting the bitterness of communal clashes, its economic life-wire in tatters and thousands squatting in makeshift homes as refugees and a bleak future.

Tsav may be right in one score. The elites and leaders of the Tivs are watching silently as these two gladiators battle each other, without doing anything to halt the feud.

Are they waiting for the crises to boil over before taking action? Only time will tell.

forces against Gemade's bid for a second term in the last PDP convention. Both men supported Chief Audu Ogbeh, an Idoma man against a fellow Tiv man.

Refusing to join Tsav in a press "war", Akume dug deep and pulled a joker when the Kunau traditional council threatened to strip Tsav of the chieftaincy title awarded him for his contributions to community development, if he fails to apologise to Akume and the Tiv nation over his comments. Observers interpreted the threat as having been induced by the governor.

Not to be out done, Tsav again pulled a surprise. He has threatened to drag Akume before the justice Akanbi a n t i - c o r r u p t i o n commission over charges of corrupt enrichment.

This new dimension to the political crisis is however giving citizens of Benue sleepless nights, because of their fear that the crisis may escalate. Tsav is alleging that Akume has cornered state resources to expand his financial empire. For Benue to develop, he says Akume must be made to face the law.

court if his allegations are false.

Tsav's letter reads: "I accused the governor of massive corruption e.g. I said he built palaces in Gboko, Makurdi and has bought houses in Maitama (Abuja), Suleja and Kaduna within two years of his tenure as governor unlike Aper Aku."

He went further to say, "I have not included the inflated contracts e.g. judges quarters, Taraku mills, Aper Aku stadium, plastic factory, supply of Korean jeeps by Kim, the building of a hotel for him at Abuja by Kim. The purchase of vehicles for women and an actress in Lagos. The whole affair is messy, dishonest, and clumsy.

"If you are aggrieved take me to court, where I will say more on oath, but do not forget to be ready for Mr. Justice Mustapha

But Akume seems not to be shaken by the Tsav accusations and is quoted to have told journalists in Makurdi that, "those who live in glass houses do not throw stones." He refused to expatiate.

But, the biggest calamity of all began on June 12, 2001, when the Chief of Azara, in Nasarawa State was murdered in cold-blood allegedly by the Tiv militia.

This space is for sale

Ordeals of a child scavenger P. 18



Usefull addresses in Abuja - P. 19

Where to stay in Abuja - P. 19



Edited by Kevin Ebele Adinnu

Scientific breakthrough

Woman delivers 'frozen' test-tube baby

By Jibril Daudu and Ismaila Umaru Lere

A team of medical experts at Nisa Premier Hospital Abuja, led by Dr. Ibrahim Wada, has delivered a woman (names withheld) of a frozen test-tube baby, the first in the country.

Dr. Wada a consultant gynaecologist, told *Abuja Trust* that the woman had been infertile for 11 years and that her embryo was frozen for four months to prepare the womb to carry it after an invitro fertilisation (IVF) attempt last year.

The consultant gynaecologist, who made history in 1998 when he delivered the first in vitro fertilisation (IVF) baby to a Kaduna based couple, said that "this is the first time in Nigeria that human life is being born after it has been preserved outside the body for four months."

"Most of the keeping of life outside the body has so far been like two to three days maximum," he said.

According to Dr. Wada, the conception and delivery were achieved after the eggs were fertilised outside the body with her husband's sperms and eight of her embryo were preserved at a temperature of -160° centigrade in liquid nitrogen. Four months later February this year, he explained, the woman was given special medications which prepared her womb for the embryos.

Abaji moves to eradicate polio

Moves towards eradicating polio and other deadly diseases have been put in place at Abaji area council, a suburb of the Federal Capital Territory, the chairman of the council, Mr. Hassan Sokodabo, has said.

He disclosed this shortly after receiving a merit award from Country Associates Network, in collaboration with UNICEF Zone C. The award is based on his contributions to the success of national and state programmes on immunisation in the Abaji Area Council.

Alhaji Sokodabo bagged another award in the week from the Arewa Youth Development Foundation as the best local government chairman of the year (2001) from the North Central zone of Nigeria following his outstanding efforts in

that the woman became pregnant when the embryos were returned to her womb and the pregnancy progressed without complications. The woman delivered a healthy male child by caesarean section at 37 weeks gestation, he said.

Four out of the original frozen eight embryos, he said successfully resumed normal life activities when they were carefully brought to body temperatures of 37° centigrade. Dr Wada told *Abuja Trust*

According to Dr. Wada, the Ministry of Science and Technology has verified and authenticated his breakthrough, but lamented the slow response of the Ministry of Health.

"I praise the Ministry of Science and Technology for all the psychological

support they've given us. Whatever we've done, check. "We are very happy. At least, if not the first, we are the only unit at the present time that has the federal government's authentication and verification," he emphasised.

Dr. Wada said that the total cost of delivery through invitro fertilisation ranges between N250,000 and N400,000 adding that they have a programme to accommodate the poor.

"We have treated people for less than N50,000," he told *Abuja Trust*.

The team of experts at the Nisa Premier Hospital started their strings of breakthroughs in 1998 when it delivered Baby Hannatu through in vitro fertilisation (IVF).

In 1999 and 2000 the team delivered the first set of IVF twins and triplets in Nigeria respectively.

They have also delivered several babies from Intra-Cytoplasmic Sperm Injection (ICSI) and Epididymal Sperm Aspiration (PESA).



The test-tube baby delivered at the Nisa Premier Hospital, Abuja... recently

Water scarcity hits Wuse district

By Austine Odo

Residents of many parts of Wuse district in Abuja are going through great difficulty getting water for domestic use.

Abuja Trust

investigations in several parts of the district revealed that many households have not got water for more than a week now. This has resulted in serious difficulty for the residents, especially as there was increasing need for water during the Christmas.

When *Abuja Trust* visited Kinshasa and Ssassandra, along with other streets on Christmas and boxing days, residents were seen haggling prices with water hawkers.

Police warn FCT residents on impostors

The Federal Capital Territory police command has drawn the attention of residents of Abuja to the existence of some notorious criminals who go round the city to dupe innocent residents.

In a statement in Abuja, the police Public Relations Officer for the command, Mr. Nendel Gomwalk, said the criminals used forged documents to extort large sums of money from members of the public.

He said personnel of the State Security Service recently arrested a man, Abayomi Akinsanya, who was going round impersonating as an army officer, and handed him over to the police.

The man was arrested at

The residents said they had been buying water for more than a week now. According to a resident of Kinshasa Street, Mrs. Nkiruka Agwu, acute water scarcity had made things difficult for the residents. She said no explanation had been given for the development.

Mrs. Agwu told *Abuja Trust* that with a family of five, she buys more than 10 jerry cans of water daily.

Residents of many parts

of Wuse II are also facing the same problem. At the OAU quarters, residents said the water supply was cut early last week, making things extremely difficult for them.

"We have to buy water to cook, we bought five jerry cans of water today, and we are still buying, nobody has told us why this is happening," a resident said yesterday.

On Christmas day, many children were seen with containers in the early hours of the day, looking for where to fetch water. Some parents took containers in their cars to nearby locations where they could get it. The situation has enhanced the fortunes of the water hawkers who are making more sales than ever before. Though the price of the 50 litre plastic can has not generally increased from the normal N20, many more people are buying water in Wuse now.

Water scarcity is common in many parts of the capital city, with the satellite towns being the worst hit. In most of the satellite towns, the only source of water supply is the hawkers.

Abuja Trust

People

Ordeals of a child-scavenger

Some children are born poor while others inherit poverty and yet, some other ones are impoverished by economic inequalities. 16 years old Ismail is forced into professional scavenging owing to his poor background. Yakubu Ozohu-Suleiman of Abuja Trust



Ismail Sadiq smiling the pains out of his routine scavenging.

young boy set out to visit refuse dumps. For the poor masses of this country, we are all familiar with how dirty refuse dump could be because we see it frequently. Even the waste bin distributed by the Environmental Protection

Ismail said, "I don't know. I think it is not necessary to wear hand gloves and rubber boot. I don't even have money to buy them. What I get from this work is so insufficient that I only manage to feed myself with it and save a little for my mother whom I get back to at home in Kano.

Apart from the fact that Ismail, just as majority of his colleagues, ignorantly do not find it necessary to wear something to protect him against the diseases that may result, he equally does not take any form of preventive drug. He does not consider it necessary to visit clinics at intervals for medication. In this case, the young boy is apparently vulnerable to various forms of diseases.

Ismail does not and cannot afford accommodation of his own in FCT where he does his job. According to him, anywhere he finds himself after delivering his items to his master is O.K. to live and sleep till the following day. Income depends on how much waste materials you are able to gather at the end of the day. "If I could get N200 in a day, it's a great amount of money," said Ismail, adding that days when he feels tired and unable to go out, he may not eat. "Only the goodwill of my colleagues I

permit me to take his photograph. I did exactly so not only to obtain his permission but as a mark of my sympathy for the boy who was very dirty and exuding some repulsive odour. Such odour that has been brought upon him by his various encounters with refuse. Such odour, which in itself is a continuous emission of harmful microbes.

There is a defence for scavenging as a job. It is a source of income. But, there is no defence for the involvement of children who are supposed to be in schools. There is a defence for employers of scavenger. They are provided with cheaper raw materials, which they simply recycle to produce new ones. Production cost is reduced and it pleases the economy and the environment to convert used products into new ones instead of them to constitute health hazard. But what about the people who go about collecting the waste materials? How safe are they? How protected are they?

In the advanced countries where waste conversion is modernized owing to advancement in technology, mode of collection is more refined. No individual is made to, unprotected and without any form of medication, go about scanning waste dumps for convertible materials. Ismail, like his colleagues, are helpless and vulnerable.

enjoy on days like that."

Ismail who only could speak pidgin English insisted that I give him N50 before he would



Ismail ready to forge ahead with scavenging. Pix: Yakubu Ozohu-Suleiman

If you are less than 18 years, you are a child, not yet an adult. Going by this popular estimation, Ismail, at 16, is a child. He is a scavenger. For the benefit of those who may not have a clear picture of the scavenger as a worker, he is that person who treks limitless distances from one refuse dump to another in search of waste materials that may be recycled to produce new ones.

In Nigeria, the job of scavenging is assuming serious importance that we are beginning to give our touch with raw materials for industries. So, in every part of the country today, it is common to see young men, even children, hang sacks on their back with sticks on their hand and moving from one refuse dump to another, collecting such things as bottles, slippers and other forms of organic and inorganic waste materials.

There is no doubt that scavenging has become another form of employment on its own which does not require any skilled labour. So, for the masses in Nigeria, it is an opportunity to explore. For the children who never grow up to know their parents, I mean the orphans, there is no alternative.

All the way from Kano, Ismail Sadiq, an orphan who lost his father left behind his poor mother who could do nothing to educate her only child. Ismail is just 16 years old. Although there are boys who are quite younger and are into the job of scavenging, nobody would wish that his child, at a tender school age, become a scavenger. Ismail said, "it is not my wish to be a scavenger

"At the age of 16, Ismail is supposed to be in his senior secondary school pursuing his SSCE. Ordinarily, if there is any difficulty to be encountered at this time in his life, it should be that of academics, not that of fending for himself through scavenging in refuse dumps for that matter!"

associating with refuse dump, but the truth is that I don't have choice."

At the age of 16, Ismail is supposed to be in his senior secondary school pursuing his SSCE. Ordinarily, if there is any difficulty to be encountered at this time in his life, it should be that of academics, not that of fending for himself through scavenging in refuse dumps for that matter!

But like his colleagues in the business, Ismail wakes up in the morning and all he thinks about is which refuse dump to visit, else he would have no food to eat let alone sharing with his mother.

What seems more important is the condition under which the

Agencies in the Federal Capital Territory, for instance, can be very pungent in terms of odour when exposed. And there is no doubt that once opened, millions of bacteria capable causing different harms are released. All of these are taken-in by the scavengers who do not have any form of protection against those bacteria.

In this particular encounter, Ismail was seen on mere bathroom slippers. He did not have hand gloves on, nothing to cover his nose and mouth, no protective wears at all! He cannot avoid contact between his hands and the refuse materials even though he holds a stick with which he searches the dump.

Abuja Trust

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SPORTS



CAF plans World Cup bid talks

African football governing body, CAF, will discuss a new system for selecting its five World Cup teams at next month's African Nations Cup finals in Mali.

CAF president, Issa Hayatou, quoted by media reports, said if its members' congress agree to the new plan, it will come into effect from the 2006 Nations Cup.

The new method, which some member countries are in support of, will have the Nations Cup finals serve as qualifiers for the World Cup, he said. "It will be an acceptable formula while an acceptable formula will be used to pick the fifth team," Hayatou said in the Cameroonian capital of Yaounde.

The host country for the 2006 Nations Cup finals is yet to be chosen but Egypt, Algeria, South Africa and Gabon have submitted their bids.

Hayatou said the new system will eliminate the frequent friction between overseas clubs and African countries over players for international matches.

"We have noted that our professional players are being relied upon too much by overseas clubs, and this has got to be protected. We have got to be professional, protect our players and the national football associations."

There has been constant disputes between African players and their national associations and overseas clubs on players' availability for international games.

While the countries want their players for all international engagements, the clubs maintain they pay their wages and cannot afford to have them away from duty.

Hayatou said if nothing is done to resolve the conflict, more problems could arise.

"European clubs can recruit our players and refuse to let them go, which is good for our national players. Or they refuse, which is good for the continent's players," he said.

FIFA had tried in the past to solve the club-versus-country rows.

It is now planning to introduce a uniform world football calendar for all its member associations.

Pakistan's prolific opening batsman, Saif Anwar, has been ruled out of a tour of Bangladesh after suffering a wrist injury.

Anwar has been advised (to rest) for two to three months rest by doctors who have diagnosed a stress fracture in his wrist," Pakistan cricket boards spokesman, Khalid Butt, said from Lahore.

Anwar suffered the injury in a tournament in Sharjah in November. Doctors in Abu Dhabi put his injured wrist in plaster but during a training camp in Lahore for the Bangladesh tour he again complained of wrist problems.

Pakistan ruled out Anwar

"It is bitterly disappointing to suffer this injury at this stage, with a lot of cricket coming up," Anwar told Reuters.

He will not only miss the Bangladesh tour, where Pakistan are due to play two test and three one-dayers from January 3, but probably also the home series against the West Indies in February and March.

"It is just one of those things, nothing can be done about it. I just hope I can make a comeback quickly," said Anwar.

Anwar, 33, has scored 4,052 runs in 55 tests and 8,348 runs in 230 one-day internationals. His last test appearance against Bangladesh in August saw him notch a run-a-ball century.

Anwar has been plagued by health problems. A knee injury kept him out of the team from nearly six months last year.

He also suffered from a mysterious stomach bug which forced him to return home early from a New Zealand tour this year.

Zabaleta takes Hopman place

Mariano Zabaleta will represent Argentina in place of the suspended Guillermo Coria in this week's Hopman Cup.

Coria, who was due to take part in the mixed doubles tournament, tested positive for a banned substance, Nandrolone and was subsequently suspended for seven months and fined £68,000 by the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP).

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.

"I am devastated by this penalty, which I consider too harsh in light of the fact 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."

Zabaleta, a US Open quarter-finalist this year, is ranked 60th in the world.

His participation in the eight-team event, starting on Saturday at the Burswood Dome in Australia, was confirmed by Hopman Cup director Paul McNamee.



Brescia midfielder, Antonio Filippini, right, tries to stop Juventus Dutch midfielder, Edgar Davids, during their Italian first division soccer match at the Brescia Mario Rigamonti stadium, Italy, on Sunday

Liverpool warns Anelka

Nicolas Anelka has been warned not to step out of line if he is to secure a £17million permanent switch to Liverpool.

The talented but temperamental striker is on loan at Anfield until the end of the season.

Boss Gerard Houllier, known for his strict player discipline, has made it clear to Anelka that any repeat of his previous antics will not be tolerated.

The 22-year-old was involved in acrimonious departures from Arsenal and Real Madrid, two of his former clubs.

And his relationship with Paris St Germain coach Luis

Fernandez has also ended on a sour note, prompting his exit to England.

However, Houllier has repeatedly stressed the importance of team unity.

And he has outlined to Anelka exactly how he expects him to behave.

"We have a strict disciplinary code of conduct that applies to everybody," said Chief Executive Rick Parry.

"Gerard is confident his attitude is right.

"We are taking it a step at a time, but we are not worried about what has happened in the past.

"We are happy with his ability, which is not in doubt.

"Nicolas is keen to put

the past behind him and he wants to play for Liverpool

and play in the World," he added.

Injury knocks off O'Neal

Los Angeles Lakers star, Shaquille O'Neal, was placed on the injured list before Tuesday night's game against the Philadelphia 76ers because of soreness in his big right toe.

To replace the NBA's most dominant big man, the Lakers activated centre Jelani McCoy from the injured list.

The move means O'Neal will miss at least five games, starting with the Christmas night contest against the Philadelphia 76ers, a rematch of the NBA Finals last June.

"He's had arthritis in his big toe for a long time," team physician, Dr. Steve Lombardo, said at halftime of Tuesday night's game. "It just recently flared up, an occupational hazard.

"With this kind of sport — running, jumping, pushing off — it's more likely to flare up."

Lombardo said treatment such as ultrasound, physical therapy, heat and ice, plus rest is the best way to deal with the problem.

"There is a surgery that can be done for it," Lombardo said. "I don't think it'll come to that. It could disappear in the same fashion it appeared."

Lombardo also said he didn't believe O'Neal's weight was an issue, saying a 120-pound person could have the same problem, and

added he didn't believe the ailment was career threatening.

The 29-year-old O'Neal is tied for fifth in the NBA in scoring with a 26.0-point average, and is fifth in rebounding with an 11.5 average.

O'Neal has been hampered by soreness for several weeks, but didn't miss any of his team's first 23 games.

O'Neal is also bothered by a sore left foot, for which he will undergo an MRI exam.

O'Neal was replaced in the starting lineup against the 76ers by Slava Medvedenko.

The decision to place O'Neal on the injured list was made after Lombardo examined him about 45 minutes before the game.

Before being examined, O'Neal said he wasn't concerned, adding: "Take a game or two off, I'll be back."

O'Neal, eligible to be activated before the Lakers play host to Phoenix on Jan. 4, was obviously hampered against Memphis.

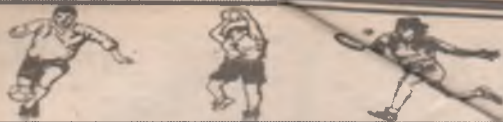
The Lakers took Saturday off, and O'Neal didn't practice the following two days.

"It was pretty obvious he wasn't playing the way he wants to play," Jackson said. "The defense aspect of it is probably the one thing that bothers him the most."

O'Neal sat out eight games last season, but was at his best in the playoffs, when the Lakers went 15-1 to win their second straight championship.



South African batsman Neil McKenzie in action during the first day of the second cricket test match in Melbourne, Australia, on Wednesday. South Africa are 3 for 89 late in the often rain-delayed first day of the match.



SPORTS



Eagles begin camping

The Super Eagles are expected to formally hit the Gateway Hotel, Otta camp today to begin rigorous built-up for the 23rd Nations Cup fiesta in Bamako, Mali on January 19.

The squad which was earlier scheduled to begin camping on Xmas eve was excused by Acting NFA scribe, Mr. Patrick Okpomo, to enable players celebrate the yuletide with their families.

Trustsports though was unable to establish the precise numbers of players currently in town for the camping programme even as Premiership star, Finidi George of Ipswich, Chelsea striker, Celestine Babayaro and Arsenal's support striker, Nwankwo Kanu, may not be available for the initial camping due to club engagements.

Barca president backs team

Barcelona president, Joan Gaspart, has pledged his support to coach, Carles Rexach, and ruled out signing new players during the winter break, despite the club's poor recent form.

After a bright start to the season, Barca have taken just eight points from their last eight games and slipped to eighth in the table, six points behind leaders Deportivo Coruna.

"We're not in a crisis situation," Gaspart told reporters yesterday. "In March we could be league leaders and in charge in Europe."

"The first team are not in their best form and I'm not satisfied. We are concerned but there's no need to dramatise the situation."

Rexach's side are going well in the Champions League with four points from two second-phase games.

"We're not thinking of signing any players in December or changing anyone's role here. In June we put in place the coaching and playing staff and we continue to have faith in them," Gaspart said.

Spanish clubs now have a transfer window during a

By Patrick Andrew

currently in town for the camping programme even as Premiership star, Finidi George of Ipswich, Chelsea striker, Celestine Babayaro and Arsenal's support striker, Nwankwo Kanu, may not be available for the initial camping due to club engagements.

But the likes of Yobo Joseph, Taribo West, Justice Christopher, skipper Sunday Oliseh, Garba Lawal, Tijani Babangida, Austin Okocha, Isaac Okoronkwo and the freshers in the squad, Ikpe

short winter break. Barcelona resume their league campaign with a home game against Real Zaragoza on January 6.

Pro-league Fixtures Week III

Div I		
Berger	v	Sharks
Warriors	v	Rangers
Plateau Utd	v	Pillar
Gombe Utd	v	Insurance
Jigawa	v	Enyima
Wikki	v	Lobi
Div IIA		
Zamfara	v	BCC Lions
Kwara Utd	v	Mighty Jet
NEPA	v	Bida Lions
Tornadoes	v	Kogi Utd
Raiders	v	Black Stars
Adamawa	v	Wambai
Ranch Bees	v	Katsina Utd
Div IIB		
Union Bank	v	Delta Utd
3SC	v	Dolphin
Igbino	v	Okomu Oil
Ebonyi Angels	v	Bendel Utd
NITEL	v	Kwara Stars
Bayelsa	v	Athletico
Udoji Utd	v	Air Safety

Nations

Ekong, Felix Aladesanmi many of the 33 given final nod to hit the camp may turn up early.

Chief coach, Shuaibu Amodu, Stephen Keshi and Joe Erico are to sweat it out with the squad until January 5 when those shortlisted would fly to Egypt for a clash with the Pharaohs.

Amodu though has been under intense media pressure to consider James Obiora and Wilson Oruma, who have had spectacular performances for their clubs in recent months.

But the technical crew has been reticence preferring instead to monitor three earlier shortlisted out of the initial 44 pencilled down for screening. The Eagles will do battle with Algeria, Mali and Liberia in the Nations Cup.



Kanu Nwankwo

Tunisia drops three from squad

World Cup finalists, Tunisia, have sacked three players from their squad following violent incidents in recent club matches, a soccer official said.

Goalkeeper, Mohammed Zouabi, striker, Imed Benyounes and defender, Mohamed Mkache, were dismissed, a Tunisian Football

Premiership League results

Arsenal	2	-	Chelsea	1
Bolton	0	-	Leeds Utd	3
Fulham	0	-	Chalton	0
Southampton	1	-	Tottenham	0
Westham	4	-	Derby	0
IpswWilla	1	-	Liverpool	2
Newcastle	2	-	Leicester	0
Blackburn	0	-	M'borough	0
Everton	0	-	Derland	2

Federation official told Reuters.

"The three players were sacked from the national team after the incidents in Sfax and Sousse, as such behaviour does not fit the sport's spirit," said the official, who did not wish to be named.

Esperance de Tunis' Zouabi and Etoile du Sahel's Mkacher, were among players

involved in violence which marred a game on Sunday in coastal city of Sousse. Etoile beat Esperance 2-0.

Benyounes, from Club Sfaxien, was punished for punching Hammam Lif coach, Ridha Akacha, a week ago when the two sides played a first division match in the southern city of Sfax.

Tunisia's French coach, Henri Michel, has replaced the three sacked players in the squad of 22 for today's friendly against an Andalusian select team in Seville, Spain.

The squad included Brazilian-born Adailton Parreira do Santos - who recently received Tunisia citizenship - goalkeeper Chokri el Quer and veteran internationals Mounir Boukadida and Zoubir Baya.

Tunisia will play Libria in a friendly on Sunday in Tunis before the African Nations Cup finals begin on January 19 in Mali.

Tunisia are drawn in group H for next year's World Cup finals in South Korea and Japan. They face co-hosts Japan, Belgium and Russia. It is the third time Tunisia have played in the World Cup finals after 1978 and 1998.

Ghana misses top stars

Ghana was without most of her foreign-based players for the pre-African Nations Cup friendly against Mali on Christmas Day.

An overwhelming majority of football fans in Mali are keen admirers of the Ghanaian game but the absence of players like Bayern Munich's Samuel Osei Kuffour affected attendance at the match.

Ghana's coach, Fred Osam-Duodu, had lined up his biggest number of foreign-based players since he took over last April but some had pulled out through injury and club commitments.

However, two Greek-based players travelled to Mali - the Panathinaikos striker Derrick Boateng and Kofi Amponsah of Paok Salonika.

Alex Techie-Mensah of Swiss side Neuchatel Xamax was the other foreign-based player whose appearance in a Black Stars shirt was confirmed.

Osam-Duodu said: "I'm not happy about the absence of the foreign-based players

because this is the time we should have our best players together to prepare for the tournament.

"Mali is very hot and I think most of those who really have a chance of making the final 22-man squad should have been here by now."

Austrian-based Charles Amoah had been ruled out with a toe infection and Peter Ofori-Quaye of Greek club Olympiakos was also reported injured.

Osam-Duodu fielded a largely home-based squad which drew 1-1 with Algeria in Algiers on December 5.

The side was drawn mainly from Hearts of Oak, Asante Kotoko and Obuasi Goldfields.

Man Utd places Cole on transfer market

Andy Cole has been put up for sale by Manchester United, according to the Daily Mirror.

And the paper claims Aston Villa are leading the chase for the £10m-rated striker, whose name has been officially circulated to various Premier League clubs.

Since the arrival of Ruud van Nistelrooy over the summer, Cole has been frustrated by a lack of first-team appearances.

But a move to Villa would revive his hopes of making Sven-Goran Eriksson's squad for the World Cup in Korea and Japan next year.

However, Villa manager, John Gregory, would need to sell a record £9.5million signing of Juan Pablo Angel to finance a deal for Cole.



Real Madrid's Raul Gonzalez, right, gets his shot blocked by Gimnastic de Tarragona's Marcelo during a King's Cup 2nd round soccer match in Madrid, Spain. Real won 4-2...recently.



Los Angeles Lakers' Samaki Walker, left, goes up for a rebound against Philadelphia 76ers' Dikembe Mutombo during the third quarter on Xmas day, in Los Angeles, USA. Walker scored a season-high 18 points and pulled down 10 rebounds. The Lakers came from behind to win, 88-82.

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THURSDAY COLUMN

As we step into 2002

By Danlami Baban Takko

In his autobiography titled *The Greatest* the legendary boxing champion Muhammad Ali says of a fight I for me I know no fighter can survive to make the fight for himself when he is defeated. And I have to get up and accept the consequences. I don't know humiliating the loss, come out my way but in 2001, I am sure considerable and come back and might have felt a sense of defeat. Looking back, they felt disappointed that two years from military dictatorship did not deliver the number of dividends of democracy. They have talked about dividends of democracy. They have every right to complain. The simple fact being that life is still very hard. Not to talk of executive and legislative irresponsibilities and all that. To be fair however, some fair-minded elected leaders have succeeded in giving hope to their people through the provision of the much-needed social amenities. But when you feel utterly disappointed, if care is not taken, defeat creeps in. Yet we must take consolation in the words of Muhammad Ali. As a people aspiring towards greatness, we must look beyond defeat and cheerfully brace up for the emerging challenges, come 2002.

First of all, we have to examine ourselves. If the history, image and actions of great men is to serve as a mirror for the society to look inward, surely Muhammad Ali's words must not be confined to the level of consolation talk but must be seen as a yardstick to measure how far we have gone in our journey towards nobility as a people. However, we must rise above petty things and aspire for worthy values for as the indefatigable emancipator of the *talakawas*, the late Malam Aminu Kano of blessed memory observed; "I find that the needs of the body are simple and that devoting time and emotional energies to rich living wastes human spirit, in this way distracting the self from realising its full potential. Hence pleasure of the flesh and self-indulgence are unimportant to me".

No people succeed by paying greater attention to base and unimportant things. In order to achieve greater things which of course, should be our resolution for the year 2002, it is an incontestable fact that we should rise above the lure of pleasure and self-indulgence. One is not unmindful of the fact that it takes courage to put into practice what the late Aminu Kano had said. But in life courage is necessary, absolutely necessary. Kabir Dangogo rightfully observes "courage makes a newspaper, and I make bold to add also 'courage makes a nation'. Still on courage, which imperatively should also be part of our resolution for the coming year, the late political sage, Chief Obafemi Awolowo said in *Nigeria's path to greatness* "After life had done terrible things to Peter, he heard a voice that said to him among other things, 'blessed be all sorrows, hardships and endurances that demand courage, blessed be all those things for of those things come the making of man'".

We need courage as a nation to rise above the troubles of insufficient amount of wages, unending electricity interruptions, ethno-religious conflicts and other catalogue of destructive impediments. Let us make the year 2002 a year of determination and courage - determine more than ever before to face our sorrow, anguish and discomfort with the highest show of endurance. In x-raying our leaders we must not forget about ourselves. In other words let us change ourselves so as to change our leaders - for good. Let us not forget that if our leaders are bad it is because we are responsible for creating a fertile ground for them to be so. If we don't want to be like them we should change them to be like us.

People make a revolution succeed. Leaders alone cannot. Castro's revolution was a success because the Cu-

bans were behind him. Lenin too achieved the feat because the Russians stood up by him. Back home, Shehu Usman Danfodio alone couldn't have succeeded in establishing the Sokoto caliphate in the absence of willing warriors and *jama'a* the people who were ready to lay down their lives for the jihad. We must therefore make the year 2002 a year of change - change from despair to hope, year of self-examination. The story is told of a king who was always bitterly complaining about how things had gone wrong in his kingdom. A man appeared to him and assured the king that solution to problems confronting his kingdom had finally been found. The king ordered all the people to assemble the next day at his palace to hear the man. The next day all the people assembled and the man presented himself before the king. Everybody expected some revelations or suggestion of some sorts. The man simply handed down a mirror to the king.



Former boxing champion Muhammad Ali



President Olusegun Obasanjo

The king looked through the mirror but couldn't see any image but his. Instantly, the king got the message. From that day, things started taking a good shape in the kingdom.

While we search ourselves, our leaders shouldn't take us for a ride. They must be accountable and responsible for all their actions. In the coming year, we expect our legislators in particular to be more sensible and alive to their responsibilities by checking any possible excesses on the part of the executive. They must begin the year by hoisting the nation's top agenda at the moment - the Electoral Bill, or is it law? We understand there is an element of executive or presidential 419 about the issue. Whatever it is, the interest of the nation should be paramount in the minds of the legislators and not the whims and caprices of Pius Anyim or the loud-mouthed Zwingina. By signing the controversial bill into law, President Obasanjo should blame no one but himself especially when people like Ojukwu make secession threats. Rascals or not, as however the president may want us to believe they are, the fact is there is no greater rascality than the illegal signing of a bill that has no blessing of the lawmakers. However if two wrongs do not make a right, it is pertinent to warn the ex-Biafran warlord about the consequences of taking his people once again to the theatre of war - only to abandon them at the last minute to find a hiding place in Ivory Coast! Here, it is appropriate to remind Ojukwu and ourselves with the following comments by General Yakubu Gowon at the end of the tragic civil war. He said: "Our war to crush Ojukwu's rebellion was done to preserve the territorial integrity and defend the unity of Nigeria among other reasons. A disintegrated Nigeria will only create small successor states which could easily become victims of perpetual war, misery and neo-colonialism. Our duty was clear and we are today vindicated." The year 2002 should be a year for the resolution of conflicts and keeping the country united - a task that

must be done. Let us agree with President Obasanjo when he described Agbani Dariego (Miss World) as "... better than religious crises". Personally, I do not see the worth of beauty contests, but I believe we need more Dariegos more than we need the unfortunate eruption of any conflict of religious or ethnic colouration, especially against the background of current disturbing trends.

The year 2002 should also be a year of greater dedication and commitment to duty - duty to ourselves, to our families, neighbours and to the society and the world in general.

Anything that is worth doing must be done well. The story of Ben Kingsley a British born actor who acted as Gandhi, should serve as an example of how much one should put in anything worthwhile. Watching through the film, one would think that the man was the real Gandhi. Many in India had that feeling. Once an old man fell to his knees at Kingsley's feet and kissed his sandals. "No, no", said the actor, "I am not Gandhi. I am an actor".

"Yes," said the man, "but you have brought him back to us." Arriving in India a month before the start of shooting, Kingsley shaved his head, started to lose 20 pounds, got very dark in the sun, memorise practically the whole of the script, saw a five-hour documentary on the Mahatma and spent two hours a day learning yoga and another two hours a day learning to use the spinning wheel (as Gandhi did during his lifetime).

When he was alive, Mahatma Gandhi was capable of fasting for days without moving from his bed. Therefore, when Kingsley came to act for the fasting scenes, he didn't eat from the evening before shooting through the day that the shooting took place. "I felt that I would

be doing myself a disservice if I could still taste the residue of food in my mouth and feel some digestive process or the comfort of food in my stomach".

Such degree of commitment and dedication to a cause, which Kingsley exemplified, should be our resolution for the coming year. At the same time, we must be watchful and responsive to events and happenings unfolding themselves before our naked eyes. It happened in 2001, it may reappear in 2002. Remember the September 11 attack? The attack really shook the world and we have not seen the end of it. With Usama bin Laden and Mullah Umar still at large, the war is not yet over and the American mission, cruel and devastating as it is, can best be described as a failed mission or a mission unaccomplished. We are still waiting for the proper definition of the word 'terrorism'. Otherwise our lives are in danger for lack of security as one stands the risk of being labelled a terrorist anytime, any day.

Finally, the year 2002 should also afford us an opportunity to give religion a chance to play a significant role in our conduct. For no matter what we have to say, we must not forget the words of Dr. Maurice Bucaille, a French scientist who had cause to speak on religion in his book *What is the origin of man?* He said, "Religion was indeed essentially considered to proceed from belief, with its accompanying element of mystery, while science was seen to be based on reason, for only those facts that could be proven by science were acknowledged as true. Today, however, it is strictly scientific data, which, when applied to an examination of the holy scripture, reveal that religion may be viewed in a light that is different from a pure and simple belief that leaves no room for reason. At the same time however, science is progressing in leaps and bounds, accumulating ever more varied and complex findings, and thereby giving rise to a growing number of genuine enigmas. The fact is science alone seems incapable of providing answers to some of the questions it raises".

Welcome 2002.