

DAILY TRUST

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was
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Obasanjo sacks Malu, other Service Chiefs

The Federal Government yesterday announced the retirement of three service chiefs. They are: the Chief of Army Staff, Lt. General Victor Malu, Chief of Naval Staff, Vice-Admiral V.K. Ombu and the Chief of Air Staff, Vice-Marshal Ibrahim M. Alfa.

A statement signed by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Chief Ufot Ekaette announced the retirement, saying President Olusegun Obasanjo has accepted the retirement notices forwarded by the three service chiefs.

The three-paragraph statement did not give reasons for the retirements but said President Obasanjo commended them for their loyal service, professional-

By Suleiman Mohammed

ism and contribution to the on-going transition to democracy and wished them "every success in their future endeavours."

The statement also announced the appointment of Major-General A.O. Ogomudia as the new Chief of Army Staff, Rear Admiral S.I. Afolayan as Chief of Naval Staff and Air Vice Mar-

shal J.D. Wuyep as the Chief of Air Staff.

The retired service chiefs were sighted at the State House yesterday shortly before the government announcement.

See page 3 for details.

KUTA REPORT

Indicted Senators lose posts

By Reuben Yunana

Senators indicted by the Kuta Panel report have been relieved of their positions as chairmen or vice-chairmen of Senate Standing Committees.

Chairman, Senate Committee on Information, Senator Jonathan Zwingina, confirmed the development to *Daily Trust* after yesterday's sitting.

Although not indicted by

the Kuta Report, Senator Khairat Gwadabe was also relieved of her chairmanship of the Federal Capital Territory Committee.

The two developments confirmed *Daily Trust's* predictions yesterday that the indicted Senators and Gwadabe would lose their powerful Senate posts.

Senator Zwingina told

Daily Trust: "I think the resolutions of the Senate were very clear on the indicted Senators, which is that they should stand down from those committees where they were either chairmen or vice-chairmen."

Those in this category as reported by *Daily Trust* yesterday include: Senators Abubakar Girei, Gbenga

contd. on pg 2



Gen. Victor Malu (rtd)

Nigeria tasks African countries on AIDS

Nigeria yesterday stressed the need for concerted efforts by African countries to fight the dreaded Acquired Immune Deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) in order to protect future generations.

"The dual epidemics of HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis are devastating the continent, and there is no doubt that drastic measures have to be taken to combat the scourge, which affects our youths more than any other group," declared Vice-President Atiku Abubakar, who was Guest of Honour at the Technical/Ministerial workshop on HIV/AIDS, as a prelude to the Heads of State summit tomorrow.

By Suleiman Mohammed

The Vice-President, who declared open the workshop on the dreaded disease in Africa, noted that many African countries are witness-

ing the effects of the disease, saying, "now is the time to collectively stand up and fight the disease." While urging delegates at the work-

contd. on pg 2

NCC to auction Broadband Multi-Media Licences

By Osborne Adi Jnr.

Barely one month to the official take-off of the Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) in the country, the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) is set to auction Broadband Multi-Media Service licences.

Consequently, the Commission will release a comprehensive timetable in the next two weeks preparatory to the auction. Winners at the auction will be granted the franchise to operate the network in the country.

Executive Vice-Chairman of the NCC, Engr. Ernest Ndukwe, who dropped this hint at a stakeholders meeting in Abuja yesterday said all potential bidders would be equitably allocated resources for the development of the nation's telecom-

contd. on pg 2



From left: Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim, OAU Secretary-General, Vice President Atiku Abubakar and the Minister of Health, Professor A.B.C. Nwosu at the Ministerial/Technical meeting of African Heads of State on HIV/AIDS in Abuja... yesterday
Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje.

Oh God Almighty, guide our
President, his vice & democracy.

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NEWS

Rimi declares presidential interest

The race for the presidency may have begun in earnest with the declaration by the former governor of Kano State, Alhaji Muhammadu Abubakar Rimi to contest the 2003 presidential election.

This brings to five the number of politicians who have either declared their presidential ambitions personally, or done so through by their supporters.

The others include: the governor of Abia State, Chief Orji Uzor Kalu; his Zamfara State counterpart, Alhaji Ahmed Sani and the incumbent Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. Their campaign posters have already adorned the streets of major towns in the country, including the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Chief Gani Fawehinmi has declared interest to run under the National Conscience Party.

Rimi, who aspired for the position but later withdrew for Obasanjo who emerged winner to carry PDP ticket at the party's convention at Jos in 1998, made his declaration

By Ibrahim Modibbo and
Zubairu Shaba

to run again for the post shortly after he was conferred with an honorary doctorate degree by the University of Calabar last week.

"I am going to contest the presidential election, Rimi declared, adding: "there is nothing I can do than contest the presidential election in 2003, because the incumbent, President Olusegun Obasanjo has woefully failed to move the country forward."

This has laid to rest speculations on Rimi's ambition and confirms an earlier story by *Daily Trust* on Rimi's mobilisation drive in setting up a political structure to contest the 2003 presidential elections.

While emphasising his reasons to run against Obasanjo in 2003, Rimi said "President Obasanjo did not only disappoint those that voted him into power but even those that fought to ensure that his candidature became a reality".

This declaration has positioned Rimi as the first politician to come out openly to show interest in the presidential seat under the banner of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

Rimi gave an insight into his programme if voted into office. According to him, he will address pressing national issues, which Obasanjo has failed to do. He said the issues include the recurrent fuel crisis, shortage of water, electricity, bad roads, unemployment, non-payment of worker's salaries and raising the value of the naira.



Rimi

Nigeria contd. from pg 1

shop to evolve strategies for effective measure against the disease, Atiku Abubakar called for the exchange of ideas, of experience and resources by African countries in the fight.

"This summit is crucial as it represents the beginning of our collective response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, literally, it is a fight for survival, therefore, the outcome must reflect our vision for the future of our continent and its people," he said, and called for positive implementation of all strategies "in order to mitigate its catastrophic impact on our societies."

"It is my honest belief that with the commitment of

all African governments, our international friends, and (most importantly) every individual African, we will win the war against this epidemic," he declared.

The Secretary-General of the Organisation of Africa Unity (OAU), Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim, said the increasing number of AIDS victims in Africa was alarming, and needed strong commitment to overcome.

Health Minister, Professor A.B.C. Nwosu described the theme of the summit, "the quest for solution to an African crisis through global partnership", as appropriate, saying it would guide participants in the fight against the

dreaded disease.

Professor Nwosu said with about 24.5 million out of a total of 34.3 million infected people, African continent was in crisis situation, adding that about 3.8 million new cases of HIV were recorded last year in sub-Saharan African.

"In Nigeria, the prevalent rate amongst the sexually active, productive and reproductive age groups of 15-49 years, has been on the increase since the first national survey in 1991," he said, adding that about 2.6 million Nigerians are currently infected by the disease.

Sonke said the beauty contest process, which was used in the UK, is an efficient allocation system because it gives licences to those who value them most and is not designed with the objective of raising revenue.

He maintained that while the process is open, fair, transparent and objective, it also allows small companies the opportunity to obtain licences.

He said the process was tried and tested in the UK and was less likely to lead to high fees. The network has markets mostly in the financial institutions, broadcasting, educational institutions,

NCC contd. from pg 1

chances of scaling through since there is no limitation on the network and is capable of absorbing all demands.

NCC's SBMS consultant, Joe Sonke, from Radio Spectrum International of United Kingdom, who gave a brief on the operations of the network said licencing could be sold either through auction or what he called beauty contest.

Details of the two processes showed that auction could be conducted where demand exceeds supply, while beauty contest or comparative selection allows al-

munications network.

The spectrum Broadband Multi-Media Service is a wireless telecommunication network that features high-speed network service; File/Data Transfer; Video conferencing; Distance Learning and Tele-Medicine.

Licences for SBMS are based on national or regional network and are normally operated by Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and operational bands are obtainable on 3.5 GHZ, 10GHZ or 26GHZ.

Ndukwe said unlike the GSM, SBMS auction cost

About 40 people have died and over 700 others hospitalised following the outbreak of cerebro-spinal meningitis in Adamawa State.

The State Commissioner of Health, Alhaji Ahmadu Sameni, who disclosed this to newsmen in Yola, said the cases were recorded within the last one month.

He said however, that the government had intensified its efforts to fight the spread of the disease.

Daily Trust gathered that the outbreak of the epidemic occurred despite conducting

Meningitis kills 40 in Adamawa

From Abdullahi Tasiu
Abubakar, in Yola

an immunisation exercise against it in some parts of the state.

The Commissioner also confirmed an outbreak of measles in the state, saying that it had already claimed two lives and left several others in hospitals.

He called on the chairmen

of all the 21 local government areas in the state to intensify their efforts in the fight against the diseases.

He also appealed to the public to report promptly to the authority any sign of an outbreak of the diseases in their areas to enable the government to take appropriate action to control the situation.

Senate condemns Okadigbo, accepts apologies of Haruna Abubakar, others

By Reuben Yunana

Senate yesterday adopted a motion condemning former Senate President, Dr. Chuba Okadigbo, over certain statements credited to him even as it accepted the apologies of former Deputy Senate President, Haruna Abubakar, and other Senators indicted by the Kuta report.

The motion moved by Senator Arthur Nzeribe under Senate Standing Rule 18, Order 42, 45, 52 and 14, prayed the Senate to condemn in totality, the attempt "by certain persons" to purchase, through bribery, invoices from a National Assembly staff; and the Senate resolve that when the police had completed investigations and the "person or persons" are members of Senate, punitive action should be taken against them.

*that the Senate condemn the recent statements credited to Dr. Okadigbo in newspaper interviews and demand an apology from him failure of which he should be suspended.

*that the Senate call on the President Olusegun Obasanjo to give meaning to the anti-corruption campaign by prosecuting the Senators indicted by the Kuta report.

*that Senators distance themselves from the indicted

Senators by suspending them and withdrawing all their benefits except as conferred on them by the constitution.

Arguing for the motion, Nzeribe noted that last Friday a man said to be an aid of the former Deputy Senate President was arrested trying to buy vital documents from a Senate staff for N50,000.

He also noted that Okadigbo recently said in an interview that Senators were paid N500,000 each to remove him last year.

In his defence, Senator Haruna Abubakar said he had no knowledge of the

developments nor the arrested aid. He apologised, saying he would never do anything to tarnish the image of the Senate.

Other indicted Senators, like Rowland Ovie and Abubakar Girei, denied any knowledge of the events and said they would never bring the Senate into dispute.

Senate unanimously adopted the first three prayers but voted that the other prayers had been overtaken by events as the Presidency had already been given a report of the Kuta report for necessary action.

...raises committee to probe toxic fuel importation

By Reuben Yunana

Senate has named a nine-member committee to probe the importation of petroleum products into the country between 1995 to date, coinciding with the period the former Deputy Senate President, Alhaji Haruna Abubakar, was Managing Director of the Petroleum Products Marketing Company (PPMC), the company responsible for the importation.

The Senate action was sequel to the adoption of a motion recently sponsored by Senator Arthur Nzeribe for the probe of the importation of the killer-fuel during the period.

Nzeribe's motion had prayed for the setting up of an ad-hoc committee to investigate the importation as well as ascertain those behind it.

The committee is to be headed by Senator Ali Modu Sheriff. Other members of the committee are: Senators Akinfenwa, Maina Majo Lawal, John Nwanunu, Victor Oyofo, Wahab Dosunmu and Bello Gwarzo.

The rest are: Senators Arthur Nzeribe, the mover of the

Indicted Senators contd. from pg 1

Aluko, Florence Ita-Giwa and Ifeanyi Arar Ume.

As for Khairat Gwadabe, she lost her position via an announcement on the floor by Senate President Pius Anyim, following the movement of a motion to this effect by Senator Maman Ali for her replacement.

The Senate President had informed the Senate that the reconstitution of the commit-

tee of which he is chairman and not a matter for debate.

Consequently, Anyim yesterday announced Khairat's removal and her replacement with Senator Danbo Sodangi.

Reacting, Khairat said it was wrong for her to be removed without being given the opportunity to defend herself against the charge of incompetence.

motion and Daniel Saror.

Announcing the constitution of the committee, Senate President, Pius Anyim said: "when this motion was adopted, I did inform the chamber that I was going to consult with the selection committee to articulate the membership of this ad-hoc committee."

"And having duly consulted the selection committee, I hereby announce the chairman and members."

news to

Why Malu was removed

The announcement yesterday of the retirement of all the three Service Chiefs through a statement signed by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Chief Ufot J. Ekaette has laid to rest over four months of speculations that President Obasanjo was planning to retire some of the most senior military officers.

It, however, sparked-off more speculations on the reasons why the President had to retire the senior military officers, particularly because the five paragraph statement issued by the SGF did not state reasons for their retirement.

Weekly Trust newspaper of January 5 - 11, 2001 had earlier reported that the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Major General Victor Malu, and nine other senior military officers in the Service would be retired by June, 2001. But to the chagrin of many defence analysts, Malu as well as two other Service Chiefs are retired two months before the reported date.

Of particular importance is the fact that the statement did not state whether the retirement of the service chiefs was due to any professional incompetence, nor did it hinge on their years of service in the military.

While the retirement of the Chiefs of Air and Naval Staff Air Vice Marshal Isaac Alfa and Rear Admiral Victor Ombu, respectively may come as a surprise to many Nigerians, that of General Victor Malu may not be a surprise to keen observers of the nation's military.

In spite of Malu's good relationship with President Obasanjo at the inception of the present administration, reliable sources at the Defence Headquarters have hinted that Malu soon fell out of the good

books of the President.

Several reasons not directly related to professional incompetence have been linked to General Malu's retirement.

According to military analysts, the alleged face-off between President Obasanjo and Gen. Malu last year over the ethnic mayhem in Lagos has soured their relationship.

During one

of the stormy security meetings held at the Presidential Villa two days into the carnage in Lagos last week, *Daily Trust* learnt that Malu presented a defence intelligence report indicating the massacre of hundreds of northerners, and threatened to resign following Obasanjo's reluctance in giving approval for military intervention, arguing that he would not be the army chief and watch ethnic mayhem degenerate into a bloodbath.

Indeed, it was Malu's outrage that forced the federal government to take swift and decisive action in quelling the crisis.

There was also the call late last year by Professor Wole Soyinka, a Nobel Laureate and Yoruba supremacist, that Malu should be eased out of the army because of his involvement in the trial of coup plotters under Abacha.

General Malu had served as Chairman of the Special Military Tribunal that sentenced Lt. General Oladipo Diya and seven other coupists to death in 1998.

Malu did not only express satisfaction with the job he did under Abacha during his appearance before the Human Rights Violation Commission (Oputa Panel) late last year, he declared his preparedness to serve in the same capacity and given the same circumstance under General Abacha.

Malu's remarks, ostensibly, did not go down well with Yoruba irredentists who still believe that the 1997 coup plot

By Ismaila Lere & Ahmed Shekarau



President Olusegun Obasanjo

was a hoax, in spite of overwhelming evidence and video clips presented to the Oputa panel. Presidency sources hinted *Daily Trust* that Malu's testimonies at the panel did not go down well with the President either.

It was learnt that Professor Soyinka had expressed his determination to launch an aggressive crusade for Malu's removal. He started it off with a full-page article published in some dailies attacking the former COAS and pressing on President Obasanjo to remove him (Malu) so as to rid his government of an independent-minded army chief and soften the hardline stance of his NADECO critics.

In a dramatic twist of events, however, the nine other top military officers reported to have been served their retirement notices were not included in the retirement list, going by Ufot Ekaette's statement.

The other officers earlier mentioned include Major General Y.L. Ashe, Chief of Programmes and Plans, Army (COPPS-A); Major General V.B. Williams, Director of Army Finance; Major E.E. Achibong (Obasanjo's former ADC and younger brother to Brig. Gen. Dan Achibong (Rtd) GOC 2nd Division; and Major General Peter Gyang Sha, Commandant of NDA and former GOC 3rd Division, Jos who was said to have prevented Diya and other coupists from being transferred out of Jos when Gen-

eral Abacha

dies in 1998. Others are Major General Okon of the Defence Ministry; Major General Yellowe Duke, Chief of Operations, Army Headquarters, Brig. Gen. Aucho, Commandant, Army Headquarters, Lagos Garrison Command; Brig. Gen. Esekhome, Commandant, Army Engineering Corps;

and Colonel Olutara, Director of Military Intelligence.

Daily Trust reliably gathered from Defence sources that the Presidency may have withdrawn the retirement notices earlier served the other nine generals that were billed to be retired along with Gen. Malu.

This appears to have confirmed fears that the other nine generals were earlier targeted as scapegoats to pay price for Malu's "sins."

With the latest development, political observers speculate that President Obasanjo may have started the process of weeding out the last batch of top officers inherited from the Abacha-Abubakar regime. He is expected to replace them with officers the Presidency could vouch for their loyalty to the Commander-in-Chief.

Such political calculations are expected to smoothen the jagged road to 2003, when President Obasanjo would need the unwavering loyalty of his political and military appointees.

It will be recalled that early into the life of Obasanjo's presidency, the government undertook a massive cleansing exercise of alleged Abacha-Abubakar loyalists, which generated a cacophony of criticisms due to its ethnic lopsidedness. With the current retirements, the imbalance is expected to tilt further, even though one of the new appointees, Air Vice-Marshal J.D. Wuyep from Plateau State, is believed to be representing the North.

However, the exercise would pave way for the advancement of a crop of officers who are expected to have undivided loyalty to the president.



Lt. Gen. T. Y. Danjuma, Defence Minister



Gen. Victor Malu, outgoing Chief of Army Staff

NEWS

Forum seeks true federalism, resource control

The Citizens Forum for Constitutional Reform (CFCR), a coalition of more than 40 civil society organizations in Nigeria, has suggested the implementation of true federalism as a means of sustaining the current democratic process in the country.

The forum in its memorandum to the joint National Assembly committee on the review of the 1999 constitution, a copy of which was made available to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abuja yesterday, declared that certain minimum standards must be adhered to in the application of the new statute.

"They include the sanctity and supremacy of the written constitution which cannot be unilaterally amended by any level of government and the non-subordination of one level of government to the other," the document stated.

It was signed by Dr. Jibrin Ibrahim and Mr. Otiye Igbuzor, convener and secretary of the forum respectively.

It also listed the direct relationship between all levels of government and citizens, as well as the independence of the judiciary and relative fiscal autonomy, as other basic standards required by the federal system.

It recommended a return to the 1979 constitution as regards the appointment of chief judges and High Court judges of the states.

State governors, the document stated, should be allowed to appoint chief judges of the respective states after clearance by the states' Houses of Assembly and the state Judicial Service Committee.

The forum, which planned to embark on grassroots mobilisation of Nigerians to contribute to the making of the new constitution, further sought the application of fiscal federalism to enable federating units to control 50 percent of their resources.

It argued that under the proposed fiscal federalism, states should assume control

reforms in the nation's political process to encourage the majority of citizens to participate in their own affairs.

It specifically sought the review of the powers of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to be limited to the registration of only party manifestos, constitutions and the names of members, which should reflect gender balance.

"The composition, function and the power of states' independent electoral commissions in section 197 and part 2 of the third schedule, should be amended so that it will be similar to that of the INEC," it stated.

The forum also made observations on the provision of section 55 of the 1999 constitution which allowed the use of Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa languages in the National Assembly.

"The new provision should be that the business of the National Assembly shall be conducted in English and in any Nigerian language when adequate arrangements have been made," it declared.

The forum, which faulted the history of constitution making in the country, stated that the appointment of "wise men" to write the law, was not proper.

"The forum argues that the constitution review process in Nigeria should be guided by the principles of inclusivity, diversity, participation, transparency, autonomy, accountability and legitimacy," it stated.



President Obasanjo of natural resources and income from their respective areas, while they paid taxes to the federation account.

The coalition of civil society organizations also recommended sweeping

National Frontiers splits Afenifere

There may be a sharp division among the Yoruba socio-cultural group, *Afenifere*, over the purported attendance of some of its members at a political meeting with the National Frontiers as a top notcher of the group, Senator Ayo Fasanmi insists that *Afenifere* did not give any of its members mandate to attend the meeting.

Senator Fasanmi, who is the national Vice Chairman of the Alliance for Democracy (AD) South-West, told this reporter in Ibadan that those that attended the said meeting were there to represent themselves, as they were not given any mandate by the *Afenifere*.

The *Afenifere* chieftain claimed that he was at the last meeting of *Afenifere* and nothing concerning its representation by anybody at the National Frontiers meeting was discussed.

"I was at the last meeting of *Afenifere* and I can declare that we did not mention or discuss anything like that, I just read Senator Femi Okunroumu's comments in the papers like you," he added.

Stressing further on the claims of members of *Afenifere* that they were at the meeting of National Frontiers on the orders of

Afenifere, Senator Fasanmi maintained that he did not know who mandated them.

"Honestly, I don't know where they got their mandate from, but I know we (*Afenifere*) did not mandate them to represent us at that meeting".

He however said that the issue would be up for discussion during the *Afenifere* meeting scheduled for the country-home of its chairman, Chief Abraham Adesanya, on Thursday.

It would be recalled that some top members of *Afenifere* including Senator Femi Okunroumu, Ayo Opadokun, Secretary of *Afenifere* and Mr. Oladipo K. Olaitan of the House of Representatives, attended the meeting of a new political association, National Frontiers, in Abuja last week.

This move, many people believed, was an attempt by the *Afenifere* to dump the AD for another political party. Okunroumu and Opadokun, however, affirmed that they attended the meeting at the instance of the *Afenifere* group which was invited by the National Frontiers.

But Fasanmi, a second republic Senator, maintained that the situation would not cause any problem to the group, as the leadership of *Afenifere* would handle the issue maturely.

The chairmen of all the local government councils in Nigeria have resolved to protest to the federal government against the continuous deduction of the primary education funds from their federal allocations.

The federal government deducts, at source from the statutory allocations of the local councils, the financial obligations of the council which is being used in funding primary education in the country.

But in an interview with journalists in Yola, the chairman of Yola North Local Government Area of Adamawa State, Alhaji Aliyu Mohammed Attah, said that "all the chairmen of the 774 local government areas in the country have resolved to protest" against such practice.

He said the chairmen had discovered that they were being overcharged through such practice, which, he said, had negative consequences on the running of the local councils.

"The money being deducted from our allocation was too much. It is over and above what is being spent on primary education. It is really affecting us negatively," the chairman complained.

He pointed out that out of his local government council's allocation alone, the federal government deducts an average of N10 million (ten million naira) monthly for primary education which, he said, was far beyond what is being spent on primary education in the area.

Alhaji Attah said that his colleagues in other local government councils have similar problems, hence their decision to unite and confront the situation with a view to

LG chairmen protest deductions from federal allocations

From Abdullahi Tasiu
Abubakar, Yola

resolving it.

"We have formed a committee to investigate the issue; and we are taking our case to the federal government," he said.

On the activities of his council, the chairman disclosed that the council had embarked on various projects to provide potable water, electricity, education and healthcare services in the area.

He said the council had so far provided 12 boreholes, renovated many schools, built and renovated some clinics and is providing electricity to Bachure village in the area.

FG unfolds plan for Ajaokuta complex

By Suleiman Mohammed

President Olusegun Obasanjo yesterday announced that the much-awaited Ajaokuta Steel Complex will soon be commissioned to facilitate the provision of rail tracks and other implements needed by other sectors of the economy.

The president, who announced this when a delegation of Kogi traditional rulers led by the state governor, Prince Abubakar Audu paid him a visit at State House, Abuja, said his recent visit to the state was to assess the progress of work in the steel complex.

While reaffirming government's commitment to transform the economy, President Obasanjo said this cannot be achieved without peace and stability. The Kogi people have, despite their di-

versity, shown unity and harmony.

He then charged the traditional rulers to play positive roles in maintaining peace and unity in the country adding that government would do everything possible to improve their lot.

President Obasanjo disclosed that during his visit to Russia recently, the Ajaokuta complex was on the agenda, and assured that the outcome of his visits would manifest into reality before the end of his tenure.

While commending the state government for improving the state, President Obasanjo described Lokoja, the state capital as unique, being the only city where the Niger and Benue Rivers meet.

Earlier, Governor Abubakar Audu had said the visit was to thank President Obasanjo for his recent state visit to Kogi and follow-up on promises made by the President.

The Attah Igala and Chairman, Kogi State Council of Traditional Rulers, Alhaji Aliyu Obaje, commended the President and assured him of the support and loyalty of Kogi people throughout the country.

Minister warns pilgrims against absconding

The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Chief Dubem Onyia, has called on the Christian Pilgrims Committee to ensure that no pilgrim to the Holy Land absconds this year.

The minister, who gave this charge while inaugurating the committee in Abuja commended the board for the reduction in desertion recorded during last year's pilgrimage.

"I urge your committee to work harder for the total elimination of the ugly incidence of abscondment. In this way, the granting of the pilgrims group visa by the Israeli authorities will be made easier," he counselled.

Chief Onyia advised the committee to work towards early take off of this year's pilgrimage, adding that the government would provide adequate resources to facilitate the committee's work.

He, however, restated that the Federal Government would from next year scale down the level of its involvement in Muslims and Christian pilgrimages, and limit itself to consular services.

Members of the 16-member committee approved by President Olusegun Obasanjo include: Evangelist Bamidele

Olumilua (Chairman), Rev. Fr. Daniel Agber, Barrister Joshua Barau, Mr. Amadi Obiora and Chief Raymond Ekwunife.

Others are: Engineer Joshua Bob-Manuel, Chief A.A. Aina, Mr. Godie Ikechi, Chief Gabriel Aduku, Prince Okani, and Mr. Douglas Aji.

The rest are: Chief Kemi Jaiyeoba, Barrister Osagie

Ize-Iyamu, Mrs J.I. Enekebe of the Foreign Affairs as Secretary to the committee.

The function of the committee, according to the Minister of State, include organising 2001 Christian Pilgrimage to the Holy land and liaising with reputable airlines for smooth airlifting of the pilgrims to and from the Holy Land.



The Attah Igala, Alhaji Aliyu Obaje, the Kogi State governor, Alhaji Abubakar Audu, with President Olusegun Obasanjo and Chief Kolawole Jamodu, Minister of Industry, during their courtesy call at State House, Abuja . . . yesterday.

Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje.

DAILY TRUST

EDITORIAL

Globalisation: A dirge to local industry

At a recent meeting with President Olusegun Obasanjo in Abuja, the Nigerian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Mines and Agriculture alerted the federal government on the plight of the industrial sector. Led by its President, Alhaji Shehu Umaru Ndanusa, the association cautioned on the imminent danger, which a "full-throttle trade liberalisation" meant to local industries.

Indeed, since the late 1980s the private sector has consistently cried out over the fact that, "the full-throttle liberalisation policy has made our economy vulnerable and porous to importation of goods that could otherwise be produced locally."

Recently the Nigerian Tailoring, Textiles and Garment Workers Union (NTGWU) pointed out that because of the free for all importation and dumping of cheap textile materials from the Asian countries, over 150 textile industries have closed down. Speaking through its secretary-general, Comrade Issa Aremu, the union said it is only a matter of time for the few remaining to fold up. The union which carried its crusade to the National Assembly recently, said the full-fledged trade liberalisation of the economy sounded the death knell for the sector. They pointed out that Nigerian jobs are being taken away and given to textile workers in Asia and urged the federal legislators to take steps to redress the situation.

The same refrain could be heard from the agro-processing sector where the indiscriminate importation of numerous canned foods is threatening local food production and processing sector. Today canned beans, potato, rice, fruits and numerous other items could be found in our markets and department stores while those locally produced rot away in warehouses simply because those imported are cheaper than their local version. The story is the same with toiletries, electronics, chemicals and engineering.

The devastating effects of dumping in the name of trade liberalisation make it imperative for the government to take some drastic steps to check the trend. In this respect, we identify with the call on the government by the private sector for the creation of an anti-dumping commission with adequate representation from the organised private sector.

At a recent interactive session between the House of Representative Committee on Finance and the Ministry of Finance and CBN, participants identified low productivity as the reason for the drab performance of the economy. They also fingered inadequate infrastructures such as electricity, communications, and transportation among others as the cause of this uncompetitive production costs in Nigeria. By excessive reliance on imported goods, our economy is unwittingly sustaining jobs in those countries where such goods are imported while we continue to grapple with the scourge of unemployment. In fact a conscious effort to support local industries would go a long way in alleviating poverty than the Federal Government's pet Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) and its successor, the Youth Employment Scheme (YES) could do.

We note with concern the lack of a coordinated policy towards making thriving industries a source of employment by the present administration. For instance the economic blueprint of the Obasanjo administration, Nigerian Economic Policy (1999 - 2003), does not appear to emphasise industrial production as the thrust of its job creation strategy. Although it says the economy would be private sector driven, paragraph 15, under "Employment," only said; "to promote the goal of full employment and address the critical concern of youth employment, government will support the activities of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and Macro Credit Institutions while concerted efforts will be made to encourage and promote self-employment". To this strategy, we believe, should be added job creation through small and medium scale industries.

Finally, it will run counter to the grain of economic policy to canvass outright prohibition of goods that compete favourably with local ones but there is a measure of protection that local industries, where we are at a comparative disadvantage, should be given. Even within the framework of world globalisation there is room for a period of grace within which to allow sectors where we are lagging behind to catch up.

This is because in the final analysis even within the framework of globalisation every country will still carry its own flag and bear its own peculiar problems.

WEDNESDAY COLUMN

Matters arising

By Mohammed Haruna

I see that my piece on "Resource Control: the greed factor" on these pages two weeks ago has provoked the anger of Midebo Bayagbon who writes for the *Vanguard*. Writing in the April 18 edition of the paper, Bayagbon, whom I suspect is from the oil producing Delta region, gave me the verbal lashing of my life. Not since Reuben Abati, *The Guardian's* wordsmith said I am a rude person and an intellectual of the Jihad for defending Sharia, have I been so tongue-lashed.

"Reading that crafty piece by Alhaji Mohammed Haruna, one of the few northern elites who has had something like a respectable career to his name", Bayagbon said of my article "I was greatly saddened that one of those I used to have some measure of respect for in journalism, could be so trite, so insincere, so manipulative and so greedy." My article, he further argued, showed I was merely trying to please some core northern elites whose stock-in-trade is to loot the treasury, buy flashy cars, build mansions in Abuja, Kaduna or Kano and export the bulk of their loot abroad. Bayagbon felt so strongly about my article that he captioned his rejoinder, "Mohammed Haruna and greedy northerners".

In spite of their harshness, however, you get the feel of the depth of Bayagbon's animosity against the so-called core northern elite, not in those words but in an earlier paragraph. He says in that paragraph that when Chinua Achebe wrote once-upon-a-time, that the problem with Nigeria was that of its leadership, the famous novelist was merely being nice. Achebe, Bayagbon says, "might well have written that the problem with Nigeria is the problem of the northern elite's: indolent, greedy and parasitic".

What did I say to provoke such strong diatribe against myself and fellow northerners? For those who may have missed my piece, all I said was that the primary motivation for both sides to the debate for control over oil is greed rather than the well-being of the majority poor Nigerians.

Bayagbon is angry that I should call those demanding for resource control greedy. With people from the oil-rich Delta region suffering from all these years of terrible neglect when they see oil wealth being used to develop Lagos, Abuja and elsewhere, it is understandable that any Delta indigene will be angry at being called greedy for demanding full control of what is underneath his soil.

Such anger, however, is not an excuse for Bayagbon's emotional outburst. Before I address his blind and somewhat unhelpful anger, however, let me take you back to another piece by another critic of mine on another topic altogether. This is the piece on *The New Nigerian*. Turi and I (January 24). The piece was a review of sorts of the book by Malam Turi Muhammadu, a former editor and managing director of the *New Nigerian*, on the first 20 years of the paper. It was also a bit of the story of the critical role the paper had played in my journalism career. Abu's rejoinder was carried by the *Daily Trust* of February 28.

Abu, whom I suspect was a ghost-writer, took very strong exception to my suggestion that the decline of the *New Nigerian* started in 1979 when Alhaji Tukur Othman took over the paper as managing director and meekly submitted to the federal government's interference with its editorial policies. Abu argued that I, as managing director from 1985 to 1989, was solely responsible for killing the paper out of my inexperience. He also made innuendos of financial improprieties on my part as one of the reasons for the decline of the paper and the collapse of my own magazine, the *Citizen*. He even insinuated, for good measure, that I killed the Peoples Bank of Nigeria on whose board I was!

My suspicion that Abu ghost-wrote the piece was because it mirrored the views of some insiders in the affairs of the *New Nigerian* who have never been happy with my career path in the paper. Some of them had the courage to say so publicly and of course, I had responded to their views as I robustly as I could, a response which led some of them to call for a truce. Apparently, they misunderstood my article as calling off the truce and so they decided to rejoin issues with me. This time, however, they seem to lack the courage to use their own names.

I have two other reasons to suspect Abu is a ghost. First, he gave the editors of *Daily Trust* a non-existent address as his. My own search in Kawo, Kaduna and enquiries from long time residents of the neighbourhood revealed that there is no Lemu Road there. Second, Abu tried to hide the facts with a pretence to having an inside knowledge of how I became managing director. The first distortion was that I became managing director at 29. The fact was that I was 35, which was not so youthful, considering General Yakubu Gowon became Head of State at 32 and long before him, people like Chief Mathew Mbu and Alhaji Maitama Sule became Federal Ministers at well below 30.

The second distortion, which actually is a bare-faced lie, was that I lobbied to become Federal Minister of Information. The truth was the exact opposite; I lobbied - if that was the word - NOT to become minister. At the time in question, rumours of possible candidates for the job, including mine, were flying around. At that time I was already managing the *New Nigerian* and I thought I wasn't making a good job of it, not from the professional side, but rather, from the management side as I was having problems keeping up a respectable circulation figure in the market and paying salaries as at when due. This was mainly because the owners were not giving me the usual grants.

When I heard rumours of my possible appointment as minister, I quickly ran to President Ibrahim Babangida then on a holiday break in Minna, and reminded him that our deal on being appointed managing director was that the paper would be sufficiently funded. Instead, I was hearing these rumours of being moved over as minister of information because the paper had not been sufficiently supportive of the government. As I remember it, Babangida asked me where I heard the rumour from and I said it was all over the place. He dismissed it and subsequently approved a grant of N2,000,000 for the paper, a sum which barely scratched the surface of its financial problems. Even then I got only half of it before I finally got the boot in February 1989.

On this issue, I thought it was instructive that when much later on I visited the late Col. U. K. Bello - Babangida's ADC and a

childhood friend - in his Dodan Barracks office, and the issue came up, he riled at me in Hausa as someone who will die a pauper, not because he thought public office was for taking personal advantage - he didn't - but because he thought I was too scared of its challenges to gain anything from its benefits.

To return to our angry friend Bayagbon: obviously, he holds a view which is widely shared among southerners - their elite and commoners alike - that Northerners are simply spongers on the national economy. There are, of course, a few exceptions to this view. One such prominent exception was the late Ken Saro-Wiwa.

In 1990, Ken told the *Daily Times* in an interview that as far as he was concerned, the Yoruba, and not the much-maligned Hausa-Fulani, have gained most from Nigeria's petrodollars. Predictably many Yorubas came down on him like tonnes of bricks. One respondent called Ken a coward and a disappointment and said he would stop reading his popular column, *Stimilia*, in the *Sunday Times*. Another, who was rather personal, said Ken was merely compensating for his short stature by developing a huge ego. Yet another, who was even more personal, sought to remind Ken that the Ogonis were cannibals, once-upon-a-time! And so on and so forth.

Far from being cowed by these reactions, Ken chose to re-affirm his position in his *Sunday Times* column on August 12, 1990. Under the title "Yorubaphobia", he insisted that "Yes, indeed the Yoruba have been the main beneficiaries of the petrodollars of the Niger-Delta and environs. The loss of the Qqoni, Ijaw, Urhobo. Isoko. Ekpeye, Ogbia, Jkwerre, Ibioro and Igbo has been the profit of the Yoruba."

In his inimitable plain speaking and simple diction, he sought to dismiss all accusations that he was a Yorubaphobe for merely stating that the Yorubas have benefited most from Nigeria's oil. He said he admired the Yoruba for their contribution to Nigeria just as he was critical of them for their negative qualities.

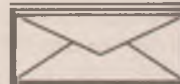
"The problem . . ." he argued, "is not whether pipelines are going from Ogoni to Akure, Ibadan and Lagos. They do. Metaphorically, if not in reality. Nor is it whether the Yoruba have got as much or more than the Hausa-Fulani. It is whether . . . the Yoruba can take all of us along the path of Nigeria that is fair to all ethnic groups, that Nigeria envisioned by the great African visionary and intellectual, Awolowo. For to whom much is given, much is expected."

Ken, as I said, was an exception among Southerners. Most Southern writers tend to agree with Bayagbon that Northerners are mostly, if not solely, to blame for the ills of this country. For example, writing in *The Comet* of February 11, Sina Odugbemi, one of its foremost columnists, said "Many, if not most of the radical proposals for restructuring the federation are a reaction to domination by the core north. People have been provoked and badly scared."

However, widespread as Bayagbon's and Odugbemi's views are in the South, they, as well as Ken, are wrong. Dead wrong. The so-called core North or even the wider North is no more responsible for the ills of this country than any other section or tribe. The problem with the ethnic perspective to the country's problems is that it distorts, or even ignores, the true class nature of the marginalisation of the vast majority of Nigerians whose lives have never been touched by oil money. In this regards, the most accurate insight into the issue was by one Sola Oke in reaction to Ken's "Yorubaphobia". Oke said among other things, that "The vast majority of Hausa-Fulani, the Igbo, the Yoruba, the Birom, the Efik, the Urhobo, name it, Sir Kay, are the true majority. It is you and I and the rest of the privileged class that are minority by virtue of cornering the bulk of the national wealth and prospects."

This "pampered" minority, he emphasised existed in all ethnic groups and other Nigerians were virtually their prisoners. It was true, he said, that the Yoruba controlled the higher percentage of the privileged class than the Ogoni and the Ijaw, and presumably the other ethnic groups. Even then, he argued, reversing the percentages of the ethnic members of this class is not the solution to Nigeria's problems.

The real war, writers like Bayagbon and Odugbemi must accept is, as Oke concluded, not between the Yoruba and the Hausa-Fulani and the Igbo and the other ethnic minorities - North or South. The real war is between the real majority impoverished Nigerians and "the selfish and insensitive minority" to use Oke's word. This class paradoxically includes columnists like Bayagbon, Odugbemi and myself. It is the greed of this class that I talked about when I wrote the piece that enraged Bayagbon so much, he apparently believed the best way to respond was to call me and all other Northerners every nasty name he could dredge up from his dictionary.



LETTER OF THE DAY

Whither Daily Trust in Hadejia

Please allow me a space in your widely read newspaper to express our problem on *Daily Trust* in Hadejia. The supply of *Daily Trust* to Hadejia comes late, why? We Hadejians are among the most ardent *Daily Trust* readers but we have to wait until the next day to read today's edition while other dailies are current. What I mean here is that the Monday paper will not reach here until Tuesday and also Tuesday

is issue on Wednesday, why? We asked our vendor what the problem was but he too could not provide a convincing answer.

Finally we hope that from now this problem will be solved in Hadejia. We thank you on your hard work. May Allah bless us all.

Ubau Mohammed Yahaya T.Y., Unguwar Malam Maidu. Hadejia local government area. Jigawa state.

Opinion

Africa: A call for peace

Emmanuel Onwubiko

Professor Festus Okafor, a highly respected scholar and philosopher at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State, made what is widely regarded as the most beautiful philosophical commentary on Africa.

He made this highly informative, educative, and philosophical remarks in his widely acclaimed book titled: "Africa at the Cross Roads." He wrote as follows: "Perhaps the most fascinating not only because of its potential, but because of a combination of other factors. It is the only continent that has been the proper abode for both the black and white race even from the pre-historic times. Did the Egyptians Kingdom not exist at the time of the Patriarchs? (Egypt is white). Was the Ethiopian Empire not mentioned by the Psalmist a thousand years before Christ? (Ethiopia is black)."

Geographically, Africa is the most balanced of all continents of the world. It has the Equator dividing it almost into two equal parts and the latitudinal line of the tropic of Cancer and Capricorn running across it's Northern and Southern land-masses respectively.

The geographical balance is underscored by the presence of the Sahara desert in the North, and the Kalahari desert in the South. The land mass of the continent itself is shaped like an amazing question mark.

Although, one of the world's biggest continents and one of the most blest, Africa lay hidden in somnolence and isolation both during pre-historic times and after it.

Today, Africa has refused to let her star loom with greater brilliance across the world's horizon. What we see today in Africa is mass hunger, poverty, political instability, economic depression, corruption, unemployment, social unrests, external debts burden, organized crime, religious warfare and civil unrests.

Today, Africa has assumed the status of the 'Slaughter House' of the human race by brutal human beings.

Today, the horn of Africa comprising of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, and Djibouti are aflame with anarchy and social chaos. For close to two decade since President Siade Barre was removed, Somalia has never had an organized government. Somalia is currently ruled by heartless warlords.

The West African sub-region is not spared of this ongoing massive inhumanity to man. Liberia, (with the recent rebel incursion allegedly from Guinea), Sierra Leone, Chad, Niger Republic (with the Tuareg rebels), Senegal (Cassamance region), and some other countries are currently engaged in serious civil warfare. The killing of the Nigerian dictator, Gen Bare Mainassara, by his body guards, demonstrates the high level of political instability in the West Africa sub-region.

There are widespread human rights violations in the East African countries of Zambia, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. The lord's resistance army are waging a brutal rebellion to unseat President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, who incidentally won a fraudulent Presidential election by a landslide victory early this year.

The North African sub-region is now a 'hot bed' of religion-motivated wars. Algeria, Egypt and Sudan are good examples of where millions of lives have been wasted in several religion-motivated violent crises.

Some central African countries of Rwanda, Burundi and Congo-Kinshasha have witnessed the bloodiest pogroms since the end of the World War II. The genocidal killing that took place in Rwanda in 1994 is the worst incidence of mass killing in history. The Tutsis and Hutus of Rwanda and Burundi have not yet known peace. The Congo democratic republic has assumed the status of the world's theatre of fratricidal warfare.

The current ongoing warfare in virtually all regions of the beautiful black continent also contradicts the long-tested and time-honored assessment of the traditional Africans by most scholars.

The traditional Africans in the assessment of Professor Festus Okafor, more than any people of the human race, had never known any compartmentalization of the metaphysical. Among them there has always existed a pervasive sense of ultimacy. For them, the world, and the universe for that matter, are ruled not by blind forces, but by divine Being—even if he be like the unknown God of the Greeks.

The present state of political and social degeneration, disorder, anarchy and chaos in our beautiful continent are attributable to the neglect of Africa's fundamental cultural values, by most contemporary Africans.

These cultural values embodies the following natural-tenets: kindness to each other, brotherhood, fraternal respect, respect for elders, respect to the sanctity, sacredness and sacrosanct of the human life.

Contemporary Africans are now pursuing cosmetic and temporary goals like political power, wealth at all cost and other selfish motives. It is the insatiable quest to accumulate all these selfish ends that gave rise to the current state of unrest in our once calmed and peaceful African continent.

The ongoing wars in most segments of the African continent have destroyed the economic fabric of these nations and devoured the enormous financial and human resources needed for the education, feeding and housing of our indigent citizenry.

Wars and civil conflicts have caused tremendous setbacks to the consolidation process of African countries and have devastated the network of mutual solidarity among communities.

This writer hereby call on all Africans to re-discover, internalise and externalise the attributes of love and peace. The discovery of love and peace is the surest way to attain greatness.

Emmanuel Onwubiko, wrote in from Wuse-Abuja.

Stalking General Abdulsalami Abubakar's apotheosis

Sadeeq Ben Hassan

So, Okey Ndiibe is outaged (see *The Guardian*, March 29, 2001 and April 5, 2001). His fuming grouse is with General Abdulsalami Abubakar, who had dared to commit two capital "crimes": firstly, to be worthy of honour and honoured by the Chicago State University, and secondly, to accept the honour and showing appreciation as well as sharing in the university's commitment to certain cherished ideals, by giving some financial support to the institution. There may be (may? There is) also a third crime the General committed, according to Ndiibe's contumacious write-up: he played the role of our Head of State which destiny thrust upon him.

With a hatchet man's zeal and sense of mission, Ndiibe, with a knifing sarcasm, posited that the General's loyalty was not solely to the uniform but to the blandishments of public office. He was, therefore, not a professional soldier. Ndiibe even believes that the circumstance of the General's ascension to power after General Abacha's death were all fairy tales. Furthermore, Ndiibe tried to show that General Abubakar was not an intellectual.

To complete the rout, Ndiibe felt it necessary to throw his venomous scalpel at the honour and repute of the General's family. He dismissed the General's marriage to "a jurist of considerable reputation" with aspersions to reduce the General to a spiteful ordinariness. Ndiibe's allusion to "all the traders these days who are able to marry University graduates..." in order to trivialise Justice Fati L. Abubakar's matrimony with the General equally disparages our traders who toil day and night to earn their living and sustain our economy.

General Abubakar, to the

best of my knowledge never waved the flag of intellectualism or that of a wife who is a jurist of (and quite truly) considerable reputation to either become the Head of State after General Abacha's demise or to be decorated. If he waved any flag at all, it was that of an unassuming nobility and humble simplicity to a fault, while remaining a soldier who had the intelligence to read the mood of his nation, and had the guts to stand by (against many odds) what the democratic yearning of the people demanded of him.

No doubt, the Nigerian military had been through a period of unhealthy politicisation, which diminished its professionalism and fighting efficiency. But that is an affliction of an entire system, not that of an individual. General Abubakar up till the time he became the Head of State had only held military positions. And recently, one of U.S.A's military staff colleges inducted General Abubakar into its Hall of Fame, an honour given purely on military considerations, not his being once a Head of State. How more professional could a soldier get in order for Ndiibe not to besmirch him?

Chief Abraham Adesanya, the veteran politician and one of those in the forefront knew it was only God who removed Abacha. And when General Abubakar distanced himself from Abacha's ambitions, he (Chief Adesanya) appreciated. Yet Ndiibe has the condescension to insult the Chief as naive. Governor Segun Osoba, Professor Ali Mazrui and many other reputable and intelligent people did not escape the indictment and opprobrious assault of Ndiibe. Their crime is to have dared to ap-

plaud General Abubakar, standing with him in Chicago for the CSU honour, which recognized the fulfillment of a humble undertaking to return Nigeria to democratic rule on May 29, 1999.

Ndiibe tried to resurrect the ghost of June 12 and exhumed Chief M.K.O. Abiola (may his soul rest in peace in Allah's mercies and forgiveness) for attention and credibility for his hatchet man's assignment. Otherwise how could he say that the release of M.K.O. Abiola was not the top moral priority of General Abubakar? Or that the General "elected not to do the right thing" by releasing Abiola, who subsequently died in detention. How could Ndiibe possibly attest to the veracity of his assertions? Did he think top Commonwealth officials like Chief Anyaoku, British diplomats, and above all U.S. top diplomats, who visited General Abubakar in Abuja during the early days of his administration and came out extolling the General, did so because he told them he would not release Abiola?

I believe that Ndiibe knows that the Americans in particular, given their commitment to democracy would not have kept their warm disposition towards the General if they had any iota of evidence to suggest that that Abiola died in "controversial circumstances."

While most people who ever met the General as the Head of State described him as self-effacing, Ndiibe with derision called him "self-conceited." This is because, according to Ndiibe, the General did "dictate which national honour was done him... and gave himself and IBB the highest possible decoration." It was of course true that the General's name appeared on the national honours list while

he was Head of State. But was (and still is) the award immediately to "Ndiibe" national honour was (and still is) the award to give a flag a few more feet hanging it.

But, the question is: all is Ndiibe's intention from that the General was around superlatives of accolades, and the Chicago State University's honour, showing that *Abdulsalami Abubakar* the distinguished *Lecturer* in the honour of the General was done for each year Ndiibe in any stature as a man served the ends of democracy.

Ndiibe has not told us the story we want to know. He also want to know how much the Rainbow Coalition's revered Jesse Jackson and the General paid to be honoured in Chicago in August 1999: we want to know the amount the General received the Republic of Ghana's highest national honour in May, 2000; we want to know how much the General paid to the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, to get him (General Abubakar) appointed a UN Special Envoy to the Congo.

Ndiibe will not be appeased even if the National Assembly takes up his (Ndiibe's) request to start a preponderant positive pursuit of accommodation into a national blackboard. Hatchet men cannot be appeased. Unless they repent, it is only when Ndiibe repents that he would appreciate the General Abubakar, though an angel (and who isn't), really deserves whatever honour is given.

Sadeeq Ben Hassan, lives at 43 Road, D-clause, Adoki Ababa crescent, Wuse District, Abuja.

Jolly Nyame and the Zing skirmish

By Mohammed Kabir Garba

There appears to be a frenzied excitement by a section of the Press over some political issues in Taraba State. Such media have been churning out numerous hearsay and outright falsehoods in the name of news or investigative reports based on information supplied by desperate "opposition groups" in Taraba State. The recent "Tazarce" protest in Zing Local Government presented even a better opportunity for more imaginary news, alleging the supposed rejection of Governor Jolly Nyame by his own people and by extension, the entire people of Taraba State.

The truth is that, so far, Governor Jolly Nyame has never made any categorical statement either to the press or his political associates on his re-election in 2003. When he was asked this question in a recent *Newswatch* interview, Governor Jolly Nyame pointedly declared that "it was for the people to decide." The reason is very simple, in all the previous elections he contested, the decision always came from the people. He is a servant of the people and so cannot impose his decision on them.

The "Tazarce" committee was set up in Jalingo three months ago to actualise the dream of the people to have

Governor Nyame re-elected. The committee has not received any financial support from the government. It is a private initiative launched by highly respected and responsible Tarabans with solid means of likelihood. They have also not received any government patronage by way of contract or appointment.

About a week ago, a member of the *Tazarce* group, in pursuance of his right to agitate took *Tazarce* to Zing Local Government. He did not consult with Governor Jolly Nyame, nor his supporters in Zing. The campaigner had his own agenda. He was not sent by the government or Governor Jolly Nyame to Zing. His comments at the supposed "Tazarce" rally were said to have sparked-off a protest by some youths who perceive his comments as an attempt by the organizer of the rally to impose his ambition on the people of Zing. The ensuing protest was clearly hijacked by hoodlums who capitalized on the situation to loot and injure Igbo traders as if they have something to do with PDP or *Tazarce*. This is what has been wrongly reported by some journalists as the rejection of Governor Nyame in his own local government. For one, Governor Nyame was not

at Zing during the rally, or even in the state at the time. How then can the press conclude that he was rejected in his local government? When he returned to the state on Wednesday 11th April 2001, Governor Nyame headed straight to Zing. He spent his Easter in Zing, faulting press reports that Zing was "deserted" and a "ghost town". Also, no member of the Nyame family was harassed, let alone, burning his father's house as erroneously reported by some media houses.

The existing opposition group is faceless and, therefore, not credible and brave enough to come out and challenge the government on matters of fact. It is this faceless group which recently sent a drunken fellow to the venue of the fund raising ceremony of the state PDP to distribute copies of a petition accusing Governor Nyame of hijacking the PDP in the state. For one, it was a clear act of irresponsibility and lack of respect for such a person to be sent into a gathering in which the Vice-President was represented by no less a personality than the Governor of Bauchi State as well as eminent citizens as, the Minister of State, Internal Affairs, Dr. Mohammed Shata and members of the National Assembly, in the name of protesting the "State of affairs" in

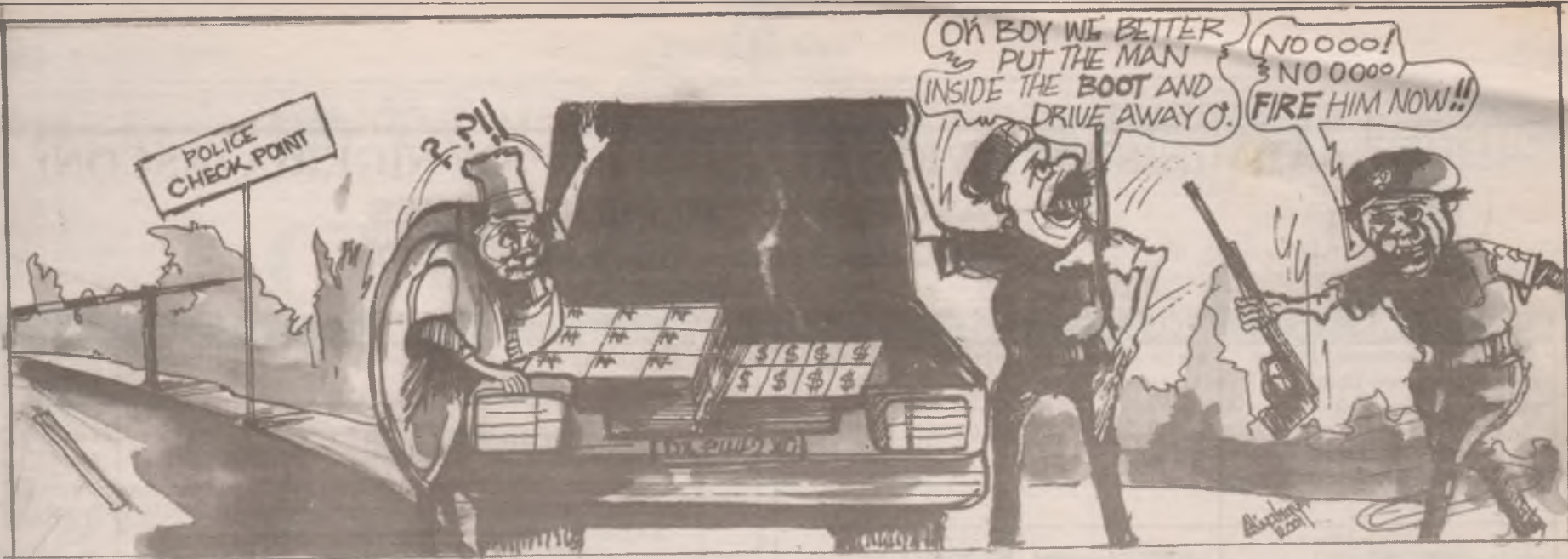
the PDP in Taraba State. To this date, authors of the petition, written in very impeccable English, are yet to own up.

In fact, in the absence of any tangible reason for criticizing the administration of Governor Nyame, the same opposition through the press has been hammering on the withdrawal of the erstwhile Chief of Staff, Mr. Joshua Kalla, from the government. The entire government machinery of Taraba State is seen as fighting Kalla, a cousin of Governor Nyame who left the government out of his own volition. The fact is that Governor Nyame has never spoken publicly against Kalla.

Conclusively, Jolly Nyame remains very strong at home in Zing and the only politician to beat in the state. The peace loving people of Zing cannot equally be blackmailed by creating the impression that they do not love their son. They are proud to have him as the Governor and are fully behind him. Therefore, attempts to exploit the so-called *Tazarce* riots is a futile mission which will not affect the governor's reputation nor his influence in Taraba politics. The only option is to join Nyame in uniting the state in order to forge ahead.

Aaron Artimas, is the Chief Press Secretary to the Taraba State Governor.

CARTOON



YOUR LETTERS

As the name implies, the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) sees to the day-to-day safety of commuters and perhaps, their property while on the nation's roads. The officers and men of the Commission keep surveillance on the roads making sure that those who ply the roads keep to the rules and regulation stipulated in our highway code. Some of the dos and don'ts, include: observing speed limits, not overtaking wrongly, avoiding overloading of vehicles, not driving

Upgrade FRSC to "National Safety Commission"

when drunk among others. In a nutshell, the function of FRSC is preventive.

Considering the fact that accidents occur in all aspects of our lives, at home, at the sea, in the air, on the railways, and everywhere, one begins to wonder why a commission should be set up to cater for only accidents on the road. Who then prevents mishaps on the waterways? What about the accidents on our railways, who cares for them? Let us accept that air

travels industry has in-built safety mechanism, as safety consciousness is the hallmark of those manning the sub-sector. Yet accidents do occur and that makes it imperative that a body saddled with the responsibility of catering for the safety of air travellers be considered.

Moreover, we live in a society where safety consciousness is almost at zero point. This explains why numerous avoidable accidents occur. Take, for

instance, the fire incident at Girls' Secondary School, Gindiri in Plateau State that claimed the lives of 24 female students and left many with various degrees of burns. Pipeline vandalism and the consequent incidents of fire outbreak that consumed lots of lives have been rampant in recent times. Similar domestic accidents occur in our homes.

Agreed that road carnage has been on the increase due to the pressure on the roads

following the inability of the government to explore or rehabilitate other means of transposition, particularly the railways and the vessels for water ways. It is only an imbalance that good governance and time will change. When things normalise and all the other means of transportation improve, commuters would patronise them as well and most likely, accidents might, as usual, occur and this presupposes that preventive measures to ac-

commodate such circumstances be put in place.

In as much as the wisdom of those who conceptualised the FRSC deserves commendation, the concept should be reviewed to meet the realities of the time. Society is dynamic; therefore government policies and programmes should be flexible to address the changes that go with it.

The National Safety Commission, which is being advocated for, should be aimed at preventing other accidents, which the FRSC at the moment could not handle due to its restriction to road accidents.

Safety schemes should go beyond carnage on our roads. Consideration should also be given to other factors that cause accidents. For instance, incidents of death as a result of accidental fall in a bathtub. It is a public knowledge that some prominent Nigerians, like former Governor of Kano State, Alhaji Sabo Bakin Zuwo died as a result of the injuries he sustained when he fell on his bathtub. The Safety Commission in question could be mandated to stop the continued use of such bathtubs that slip.

Also, the envisaged Commission, which has to be an enlargement of the FRSC, could be mandated to teach safety to the citizens. There is too much threat to the lives and property of the citizens of this country due to numerous avoidable accidents. To wit, fire outbreak due to faulty electric installations, "accidental discharge" from the police, accidents resulting from fake and substandard goods that have flooded this country among others.

Mr. Isaac Iheanyi
Ayozie, Mombassa street,
wuse - Abuja.

I have gone through the Bank of the North's official write-up in the press entitled: "BON- four decades of earning your confidence" and I wish to criticize the Bank on its mission statement "to become the enabling factor and the Last Resort in advancing the interest of our customers and society" as being too mediocre, non-revolutionary and rather too casual. The vision of the bank should be more forward looking, more aggressive and should help to propel the bank to be among the TOP and the BEST in the industry. The word "enabling" is too casual and the phrase "the Last Resort" seems to suggest lack of seriousness

BON, time to shed the conservative posture

and drive. I hope the management can come out with a more serious and more aggressive vision or mission statement.

Also going through their write-up referred to above under "Our products and our services" I observed that there is nothing to show by way of new products. The products listed are the usual and conventional ones, which all banks traditionally have like current accounts, savings, fixed deposits, corporate finance, loan syndication, letters of credit etc. What about electronic money transfers from overseas like "Western Union"

which has proved to be a money-spinner for First Bank? Does Bank of the North have a Special Products Department? In my view, one of the ways the Bank can utilize its relatively wide net-work (with 100 branches as at this year) of operations to best advantage is to go into foreign partnerships with banks and other Financial Institutions similar to Western Union, Money Gram etc.

The Bank should also look into the possibility of re-engineering and re-structuring its operations. I have observed in their write-up that the only Divisions they have

are; Admin and Management Services, Information Technology, Banking Operations, Credit and Branch Operations and Secretary and Legal Division. It appears the Bank does not have a Strategic Planning Division, which should be able to plan for the future what the Bank ought to be in 10 or even 20 years time. The Strategic Planning Division should have been the think tank of the Bank.

Another area of the Bank's conservatism is that after 40 years of existence, it has not seen it fit or desirable to go public or at least to offload some of its shares to willing indigenes of the

Northern States who may want to invest in the Bank.

Besides, if the Bank is quoted on the Stock Exchange, it may, depending on how well it is doing with its stocks and market capitalization, attract some measure of greater credibility and respectability not only in Nigeria but internationally.

In addition, its performance on the Stock Exchange is also another useful mechanism for the Bank to mirror its performance and to take remedial steps from time to time.

Chris S. Audu, P.M.B.
21307, Ikeja, Lagos.

Educate our girls

The saying that if you educate a woman you educate a nation is quite true. Women are the backbone of every home, and every society. Every home can be a wonderful school, and every society a wonderful school if women within this society and home are properly educated.

Education enables a woman to, apart from educating her children and society, support her family financially by contributing to the up keep of her home through her earnings.

The notion by some northern parents that western education misleads the female child is baseless and unfounded, because the educated woman knows her

rights and assesses situations critically before taking decisions. she cannot be coerced into doing anything against her will.

I am, therefore, appealing to our parents to allow their girls to obtain both western and religious education.

They should know that Islam allows women to undertake business and work for their living. Khadijah, wife of prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) was a business-woman.

The masses should therefore, through the media, be educated on the need to educate our women.

Murjanatu A. Sa'eed,
Wadata Pharmacy, 10,
Ahmadu Bello way, Jos.

Kindly allow me a space to voice out my utter disappointment over the clear acts of discrimination in the University of Maiduguri Medical College.

The college has been hijacked by a group of tribalists who control all activities from admission to examination. They have been systematic weeding of Muslims in general and Northern Muslims in particular. As somebody affected, I cannot but speak out. They

Permit me space in your widely read newspaper to call on the Emir of Biu, in Biu local government area of Borno State, through the honourable Commissioner for local government and chieftaincy affairs to please create more Districts and Emirates in Kwaya Kusa-Bayo local government.

Stop this discrimination

impose severe and critical conditions for registration into the college while even an F9 candidate of Yoruba origin is admitted and issued registration permit with or without meeting the requirements. A clearly identifiable Muslim name or a Hausa/Fulani/Kanuri physical features could mean delay in, and stricter conditions for registration. The fact are there for anyone who cares to look! We are tired of this mess

and can no longer sit down and fold our arms. I am, therefore, calling on the University authority as well as groups like the Arewa Consultative Forum and other pro-northern groups to urgently help salvage the situation. The rate of failure of Northern Muslims is simply alarming. Enough is enough!

Audu 'Fidel' Borno,
Necas close, university of
Maiduguri, Borno state.

Bayo local government needs more districts and emirates

There is need to remind his Royal highness and his council to as a matter of urgency create more districts and Emirates in order to alleviate the people's suffering. We, the people of Bayo local government comprising of Wuyo, Balbaya, Dali, Gol

and Fikayel are left behind in terms of social amenities and political appointment. We are blessed with resources like all other communities in Borno state. We have Intelligent people both males and females who are capable of holding political offices, yet

we suffer neglect from successive administrations in the state. Therefore, I am calling on the administration to please as a matter of urgency, create Districts and an Emirate for the area.

Sulaiman Mohammed
Wuyo, Bayo, Borno state.



ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF COLLEGE OF NIGERIA (ASCON)

ASCON AD-HOC PROGRAMMES FROM APRIL - DECEMBER 2001

S/NO	COURSES	VENUE	COST	DATE	S/NO	COURSES	VENUE	COST	DATE
1	Local Government Treasury Management Workshop	State Secretariat, Conference Hall, Akure, Ondo State	N12,500.00	April 23-27, 2001	21.	Entrepreneurship Development Programme for Retiring Officers	Premier Hotel, Ibadan	N35,000.00	July 9 - 20, 2001
2.	3-Day Workshop on Security Awareness for Honourable members of National and State Assemblies	ASCON Complex, Badagry	N25,000.00	April 11 - 13, 2001	22.	Computer Application to Library services	ASCON Complex, Badagry	N25,000.00	August 13-17, 2001
3.	Primary Health Care Management Workshop	State Secretariat, Conference Hall, Uyo, Akwa-Ibom State	N12,500.00	May 7 - 11, 2001	23.	2nd Local Government Treasury Management Workshop	State Secretariat, Conference Hall Abakaliki, Ebonyi State	N12,500.00	August 13-17, 2001
4.	Democracy And Good Governance for Honourable Members of the National and State Assemblies	ASCON Complex, Badagry	N25,000.00	May 29 - 31, 2001	24.	Training Managers Retreat	Gateway Hotel, Otta, Ogun State	N20,000.00	August 27-31, 2001
5.	Assertiveness and Leadership Skills for Women Managers	Gateway Hotel, Otta Ogun State	N20,000.00	May 14 - 18, 2001	25.	Seminar on Total Quality Management (TQM) For Human Resource Management	Gateway Hotel, Otta, Ogun State	N20,000.00	August 20 - 24, 2001
6.	Internet connectivity Appreciation Workshop	ASCON Complex, Badagry	N30,000.00	May 7 - 9, 2001	26.	Workshop on Development Statistics	Gateway Hotel, Otta, Ogun	N20,000.00	August 20 - 24, 2001
7.	Public Policy Analysis And Management Workshop	Gateway Hotel, Abeokuta Ogun State	N25,000.00	May 21-25, 2001	27.	Workshop on Fraud Detection Prevention and Control	Plaza Hotel, Otta, Ogun State	N20,000.00	August 27 - 31, 2001
8.	Workshop on Strategies for Revenue Generation	Gateway Hotel, Otta, Ogun State	N20,000.00	May 21 - 25, 2001	28.	(Project) Report Writing and Presentation Workshop	Circular Hotel, Ilorin, Kwara State	N20,000.00	August 20 - 24, 2001
9.	National Workshop For Chief Executives of Public and Private Enterprises	AIRPORT HOTEL IKEJA	N40,000.00	May 22 - 24, 2001	29.	2nd Primary Health Care Management Workshop	Federal Secretariat Conference Hall, Kaduna, Kaduna State	N12,500.00	Sept. 24 - 28, 2001
10.	Local Government Maintenance Management Workshop	State Secretariat Conference Hall, Gusau, Zamfara State	N12,500.00	June 4 - 8, 2001	30.	Negotiating Skills in Labour Relations	Gateway Hotel, Otta, Ogun State	N20,000.00	Sept. 10 - 14, 2001
11.	Personnel Management Forum	ASCON Complex, Badagry	N25,000.00	June 12 - 14, 2001	31.	Senior Women in Management	Gateway Hotel, Otta, Ogun State	N20,000.00	Sept. 24 - 28, 2001
12.	Modern Trends in Leadership Delegation and Accountability	Gateway Hotel, Otta Ogun State	N25,000.00	June 18 - 20, 2001	32.	Data Processing and Analysis Using SPSS	ASCON Complex, Topo - Badagry	N30,000.00	Sept. 3- 14, 2001
13.	Feasibility Studies And investment Analysis Workshop	Gateway Hotel, Otta, Ogun State	N25,000.00	June 12 - 15, 2001	33.	Procurement and Materials Management	Circular Hotel, Ilorin, Kwara State	N20,500.00	Sept. 3 - 7, 2001
14.	2nd Accelerated and Sustainable Rural Development Workshop	Federal Secretariat Hall, Yola Adamawa State	N12,500.00	July 9 - 13, 2001	34.	Seminar On Total Quality Management (TQM)	Airport Hotel, Ikeja, Lagos	N20,000.00	Sept. 4 - 6, 2001
15.	One Week Security Management Course for Senior Staff of the National and State Assemblies	ASCON Complex, Badagry	N25,000.00	July 2-6, 2001	35.	Word Processing	ASCON Complex, Topo - Badagry	N20,000.00	Sept. 8 - 12, 2001
16.	A 3-Day Workshop on Conflict Management and Resolution for Honourable members of National and State Assemblies	ASCON Complex, Topo - Badagry	N25,000.00	July 25 - 27, 2001	36.	Advance Word Processing	ASCON Complex, Badagry	N15,000.00	Oct. 17 - 19, 2001
17.	Performance Appraisal for Productivity and Improvement Workshop	Gateway Hotel Otta, Ogun State	N20,000.00	July 9 - 13, 2001	37.	5 - Day Workshop on Facility Management	ASCON Complex, Badagry	N20,000.00	Oct. 22 - 26, 2001
18.	Management of Public Records	Rasco Hotel, Osogbo, Osun State	N20,000.00	July 2 - 6, 2001	38.	Seminar on Managing Negotiation	ASCON Complex, Badagry	N20,000.00	Oct. 22 - 26, 2001
19.	Work Proficiency and Performance Improvement Workshop	University of Ibadan Conference Centre, Ibadan	N20,000.00	July 16 - 20, 2001	39.	5-Day Advanced Workshop on Office Systems/Technology	ASCON Complex, Badagry	N20,000.00	Nov. 5 - 9, 2001
20	Auditing and Investigation	Premier Hotel, Ibadan	N20,000.00	July 16 - 20, 2001	40.	Computer Appreciation for Senior Managers	ASCON Complex, Badagry	N25,000.00	Nov. 19 - 23, 2001
					41.	2nd Local Government Maintenance Management Workshop	Federal Secretariat Conference Hall, Enugu, Enugu State	N25,000.00	Nov. 19 - 23, 2001
					42.	Workshop on Government Budgeting	Circular Hotel, Ilorin, Kwara State	N20,000.00	Nov. 19 - 23, 2001
					43.	Workshop on Final Accounts Preparation in Government	Plaza Hotel, Otta, Ogun State	N20,000.00	Dec. 4 - 8, 2001

NB: Please note that the cost excludes feeding and accommodation.

Further information on the above can be obtained from:

Director-General,
Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON),
P.M.B 1004,
Topo - Badagry, Lagos.
Tel: 01-2882907, 2882908, 2882909, 732272, 732306, 732300, 732273
Fax: 01-732306

Or

The Liason Officer,
Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON),
New Federal Secretariat,
Shehu Shagari Way,
P.M.B 150, Abuja.
Tel: 09-5236883, Fax: 09-52356883

TRUST INTERNATIONAL

FOREIGN & DIPLOMATIC

When African Heads of State meet in Nigeria this week to discuss an African strategy for the war against the HIV/AIDS pandemic stalking the continent they should be taken seriously. The same is true for South Africans gathering in Johannesburg to discuss the importance of civil society in their country.

Having former US president Bill Clinton hanging around won't help.

From Harlem to Abuja, our former President just can't seem to get enough of the company of black folks - and our admiration and gratitude! Such sentiments are not only wildly misplaced, they are dangerous.

The triumph of symbolism over substance is the true Clinton legacy in the African world. If African and African American leaders alike do not distinguish between the two, and insist upon the latter, the next generation will suffer.

Consider the price already paid:

During his first term in office, President Clinton withdrew US troops from Somalia and established the unspoken rule that no African concerns were worth risking American lives. The rule holds even in places where Washington has deep historic responsibilities for the problem, as it does in Mogadishu, and despite the fact that US armed forces are disproportionately of African descent. Clinton's administration not only failed to act against the genocide in Rwanda, it prevented the UN

Clinton and Africa

Former US President Bill Clinton is expected in Nigeria to participate in a conference on HIV/AIDS crisis ravaging the African continent, nay the world. The Executive Director of Africa Action in Washington, DC, Salih Booker, in this piece, x-rays the Clinton administration's policies towards Africa.



Clinton

from doing so as well.

Clinton also showed no love for African civil society when its practitioners led pro-

democracy struggles in Mobutu's Zaire, Moi's Kenya or Abacha's Nigeria. And for most of the Clinton years, US development assistance to Africa never great continued to decline.

In his second four years as President, Bill Clinton embraced a conservative Congressional initiative on trade with Africa in order to have a showpiece for a G-7 Summit he was hosting in 1997. The economic legacy he leaves in Africa legitimises the false dichotomy of "trade vs. aid" and ducks the more urgent issue of Debt cancellation.

Clinton's symbolically important 6-country Africa visit in 1998, including an airport apology in Kigali, Rwanda failed to produce sustained US support for peace, development and democracy in Africa.

Nor did the decision to bomb an aspirin factory in

Khartoum, following attacks against US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, address the real security needs of Africans in Sudan or east Africa more broadly. It

government from implementing a law designed to make essential medicines more affordable - the court case the drug companies finally abandoned this month, three years and 400,000 lives later. Vice President Al Gore played the role of enforcer until it became an embarrassment in his campaign to succeed Clinton.

In his last year in office and second trip to Africa, Bill Clinton pressed the Obasanjo government in Nigeria to increase oil production, while ignoring ongoing human rights violations in the Niger delta. The visit also coincided with the introduction of US special forces training for Nigeria's military, which has shouldered the bulk of West African peacekeeping

"Clinton's administration not only failed to act against the genocide in Rwanda, it prevented the UN from doing so as well."

proved merely an exercise in ineffectual bullying and a diversion from the sex scandal at the White House.

On a different pharmaceutical front, the Administration gave significant support to

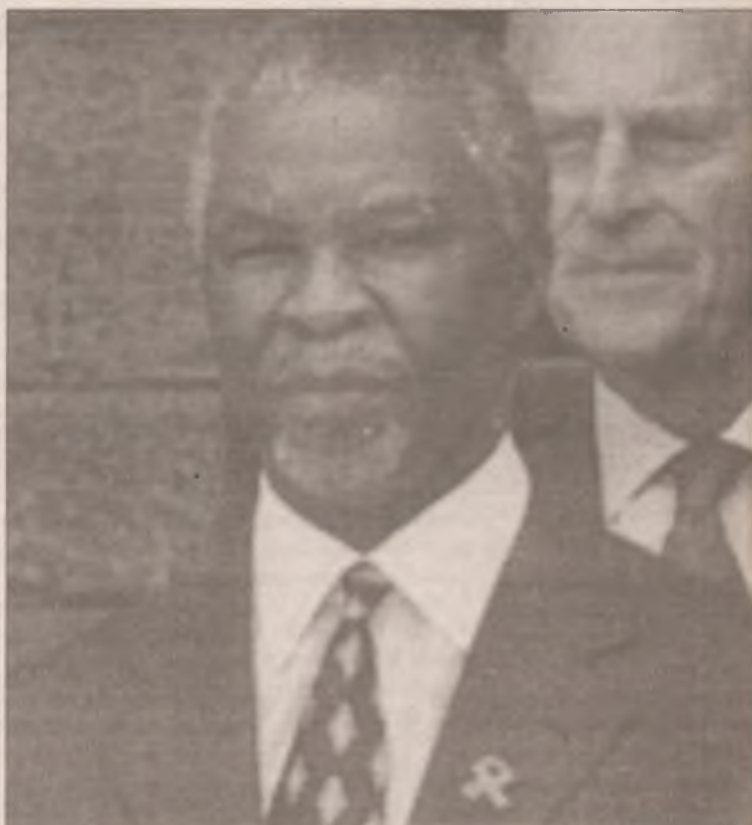
burdens. That US interest in Nigeria was confined to the cheap supply of oil and regional policing, while Africa's largest country is struggling to build a democracy under the weight of debts, was telling. That Nigerians seemed desperate for US attention any attention is perhaps profoundly revealing of the secret to Clinton's success through symbolism.

If Africans and African Americans continue to settle for symbolism over substance from US public policy officials, we will continue to be the victims of our own low expectations.

western drug companies in South Africa who were initiating a law suit to prevent Nelson Mandela's



Obasanjo



Mbeki

TRUST INTERNATIONAL

AFRICA & THE MIDDLE EAST

Lebanese Prime Minister meets Pope

The Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri has met Pope John Paul at the Vatican for a meeting concentrating on the Middle East crisis.

"The situation in Lebanon and the dramatic situation in the Middle East were the main themes of the talks," Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro Valls said.

Mr Hariri's visit to Rome came a week after an Israeli air raid on a Syrian military position in Lebanon and less than two weeks before the Pope is due to travel to Damascus and the city of Quintera on the Golan heights.

Unofficial sources said the Pope and Mr Hariri discussed the air raid, relations between Lebanon and Syria, and the papal visit to Syria.

Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro Valls told journalists that the Holy See believes international law and United Nations resolutions should be respected and negotiations resumed to further the Middle East peace process.

"The Holy See is taking the opportunity to stress once again that reconciliation is important

and an essential element for human and social reconstruction in Lebanon," he said.

The current high level of tension between Syria and Israel started last week with an attack by Lebanese Hezbollah fighters on an Israeli outpost in a disputed area where the borders of Lebanon, Syria and Israel meet.

One Israeli soldier was killed in the Hezbollah action, provoking Israel to warn that it held Syria responsible for such attacks.

Retaliation followed in the form of an Israeli air attack on a Syrian radar station in Lebanon which left three soldiers dead.

In his talks with the Pope, Mr Hariri, a Sunni Muslim, explained that it was in Lebanon's national interest for the Syrian army to remain there, Lebanese radio reported.

Mr Hariri was quoted as saying in an interview with Vatican media that the Syrian presence helped "entrench security and stability and helps us face the Israeli attacks in various fields".

Mr Hariri has travelled on to Washington for talks with President George W Bush on rebuilding the Lebanese economy and the country's sensitive position between Israel and Syria.

The Pope travels to Syria on May 5.

Tshisekedi returns to Congo DR

Etienne Tshisekedi, a high-profile Democratic Republic of Congo opposition leader has returned to Kinshasa after 15 months in exile.

Tshisekedi is in the DRC to participate in the planned "inter-Congolese dialogue" that is part of the peace process aimed at ending the two-and-a-half-year war in the country.

He has been a major figure in the country since independence and was a leading critic of former dictator Mobutu Sese Seko.

His return signals progress in the peace process that was kick-started by President Joseph

Kabila who succeeded his assassinated father Laurent Kabila in January.

In advance of Mr Tshisekedi's return, pro-government newspapers in Kinshasa were reporting on what they described as his plan to destabilise the country.

But on his arrival in Kinshasa Mr Tshisekedi made it clear that he was not interested in conflict.

Mr Tshisekedi fell out with Laurent Kabila soon after the latter ousted Mobutu Sese Seko in 1997.

He was banished from Kinshasa and placed under house arrest for breaching a ban on

political activity.

At the time he was told to stay out of politics until the transition to democracy occurred.

He left the DRC for eye treatment in South Africa and most recently he has been living in the former colonial power, Belgium.

There was heavy security in place on Monday for Mr Tshisekedi's arrival.

Supporters of his Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS) party were at the airport to meet him but journalists were kept at a distance.

According to the BBC, the arrival was low key, careful and

not provocative.

The "inter-Congolese" dialogue is aimed at producing a political settlement to the country's conflict.

It is supposed to bring together the Kabila government, rebel factions, political parties and members of civil society.

The war in the DRC involves rebels in the east of the country, backed by Uganda and Rwanda, fighting government forces supported by Zimbabwe, Namibia and Angola.

In recent weeks the warring parties have been withdrawing 15 km from the front line in accordance with a ceasefire.

3 UN workers charged with threat to kill US ambassador

Three United Nations workers have been charged in a Nairobi court with threatening to kill the United States ambassador to Kenya, Johnnie Carson.

The three accused are already the subject of a separate investigation within the Kenya office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The three employees at the UNHCR office in the Kenyan capital, George Ngodhe Juma, Peter Okoth Alingo and Susan Muthoni, are accused of asking a refugee to write letters in Arabic and in English in the name of Osama Bin Laden.

In the letters, the men are reported to have threatened Mr Carson and some senior UN officials with death if they did not leave Kenya.

A letter sent to UNHCR Kenya country representative Daniel Tshitungi warned: "Your security and that of your family are at risk... If you don't leave we know where your daughter goes to school... We will kidnap her."

Mr Laden is believed to be living in Afghanistan and is wanted by the United States on suspicion of having ordered the bombing of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in August 1998 in which more than 200 people died.

The three UN workers were also charged with seeking to extort more than \$22,000 (about N2.6 million) from African refugees in Kenyan camps seeking resettlement in Europe and the United States.

All three pleaded innocent to the charges.

The UNHCR office in Nairobi confirmed to the BBC that the three were part of a group of employees under investigation following allegations that UNHCR officials were extorting bribes from refugees return for resettlement in western countries.

More than 20 Kenyan employees in the Nairobi office have been sent on temporary leave since the UN investigation began.

Zimbabwe faults lawyers' criticism

The authorities in Zimbabwe have condemned a report by a senior delegation of international lawyers who said democracy and the rule of law in the country were "in the gravest peril".

Information Minister Jonathan Moyo said in a BBC interview that the group had failed to canvass a diverse spectrum of opinions in the country.

He said that during his meeting with the group, he had made preposterous claims about the land dispute in Zimbabwe.

The panel of judges and lawyers from the International Bar Association (IBA) on a weeklong visit said the rule of law in Zimbabwe has been badly undermined over the past year with the Government implicated in intimidating judges and lawyers.

Armed men rob South African AIDS boy

Three armed men have robbed the Johannesburg home of dying 12-year-old South African Aids activist Nkosi Johnson.

His foster mother, Gail Johnson, said the robbers broke in early on Monday, held up a nurse who was watching over Nkosi and threatened to shoot her if she made any noise.

Ms Johnson said she thought Nkosi, who has Aids-related brain damage and has been semi-comatose since early January, had witnessed the robbery.

The nurse overheard one of the robbers telling the boy to close his eyes before they fled with electrical goods and Ms Johnson's keys.

Ms Johnson said she believed she scared the robbers off when she woke up and ran to Nkosi's room to see what was happening.

"I don't know what this is going to do to him, as he saw everything," she said. "I am very angry and scared. This is a tragedy."

"They covered the nurse with a duvet and pointed a handgun at her and told her that she had to keep quiet, otherwise they would shoot her."

Ms Johnson said she had asked for police protection, but had been told there was a shortage of manpower.

"I am going to have to organise 24-hour security now," she said. "They are lucky I don't have a gun, otherwise I would have killed them."

Nkosi was born HIV-positive in Johannesburg in 1989 and given just nine months to live, but he survived and on 4 February turned 12.

The schoolboy became a leading public figure in the fight against HIV and Aids in 1997 after a group of parents opposed his admission to school because of his HIV status.

At last year's World Aids Conference, he made a moving

plea to President Thabo Mbeki to give victims of the disease anti-retroviral drugs.



Tshisekedi

As Mid East violence rages Perez to visit Powell soon

In another day of violence in the Middle East, a Palestinian boy was shot dead in the Gaza Strip while four people were injured in a car bomb in Israel.

As the violence continued, the United States announced that the Israeli Foreign Minister, Shimon Peres, would visit Washington early next month for talks with Secretary of State Colin Powell and possibly President Bush.

Palestinian officials said Israeli troops opened fire during a funeral procession for a Palestinian policeman near the Khan Younis refugee camp, killing 12-year-old Muhanad Muhareb.

In a separate incident, Israeli army radio said at least four people were injured when a car bomb exploded in the Israeli town of Or Yehuda, southeast of Tel Aviv.

The latest incidents follow an explosion on Sunday, when a Palestinian suicide bomber blew himself up near a bus in a suburb of Tel Aviv, killing one Israeli and wounding more than 40 others.

Mr Peres is due to hold two days of talks with the Bush administration beginning 4 May.

During his meetings with Colin Powell and the National Security Adviser, Condoleezza Rice, Mr. Peres is expected to seek a clarification of the American position, following recent US criticism of Israel's

actions, as well as explaining his own country's policy.

For the moment, the American approach is to concentrate on bringing the Israelis and Palestinians together for security talks in the hope that this will lower the level of violence and eventually lay a foundation for renewed peace talks.

Witnesses said hundreds of mourners were marching in an orderly fashion in the funeral near Khan Younis when a traditional mourning volley of gunfire was released. Israeli troops then opened fire from an army post about 500m away.

The 12-year-old boy was shot in the head and died.

The shooting coincided with another bomb explosion - the fourth since Saturday.

Militant Palestinians have said they carried out these bombings.

In a statement to Reuters news agency, the military wing of Hamas vowed to continue the seven-month old Palestinian uprising against the Israeli forces.

Hamas said that Sunday's suicide bomber was the fourth in a list of 10 people prepared to sacrifice their lives.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has blamed the Palestinian Authority for the suicide attack, a charge it denies.

He accuses the Palestinians of not honouring an agreement to stop such attacks.

Palestinian officials deny this, accusing Israel of flagrant violations of the Oslo peace accords - including sending troops and tanks into Palestinian-controlled territories last week.

But, even as the violence continues, a spokesman for Mr Sharon has said Israel has not rejected a joint Jordanian-Egyptian peace initiative, although he has serious reservations about it.

The plan - which has been accepted by the Palestinians - would see both sides committing themselves to stop the cycle of violence as peace talks were restarted.



Scene of a car bomb explosion in Israel, Monday April 23, 2001.

TRUST INTERNATIONAL

WORLD REPORT

ODD WORLD

Gorillas' friend wins global award

A Rwandan man is among six people to win an international award given annually for outstanding service to the environment.

Eugene Rutagarama, a biologist working for the International Gorilla Conservation Program (IGCP), has been honoured for his work to save mountain gorillas during and after the 1994 genocide in Rwanda.

Mr Rutagarama risked his life to protect the animals and support those caring for them.

He is one of this year's recipients of the Goldman Environmental Prize, which the organisers said is "given annually to environmental heroes" representing the different continents.

Each recipient will receive \$125,000 at a ceremony in San Francisco on 23 April.

Mr Rutagarama said he will use his prize to help national park staff and people living around two parks in Rwanda, Nyungwe Forest and the Volcano park in the Virunga mountains.

On a stopover in London, he told BBC News Online: "I want to use the money on projects they choose."

"Virunga straddles three countries, Rwanda, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)."

"As the IGCP's programme manager, I'm responsible for

staff in all three countries. And those in the DRC haven't been paid for the last six years."

Mr Rutagarama, a Tutsi, first had to flee Rwanda in 1960, when he was four years old. He and his family were forced into exile four more times before the 1994 conflict which killed almost a million people.

Among them were most of his relatives, including both parents and two brothers.

Yet he remains intent on working to save the mountain gorillas, the world's rarest primates. Only about 650 surviving globally, more than half of whom are in Virunga.

Mr Rutagarama said: "When I learnt about extinct species at university, I made the link with Rwanda's gorillas. So I felt a kind of duty to contribute to their survival."

"They're a sort of national symbol - each page of a Rwandan passport is watermarked with the image of a gorilla."

"After a humanitarian disaster as horrific as genocide, the common struggle to preserve something of shared value can form an ideal for people to believe in, and can assist the reconstruction of a devastated society."

"There are a lot of people taking care of people. There aren't many who are concerned for the gorillas."



Kevin Donaldson, the pilot of a missionary plane shot down by the Peruvian air force in Peru last week, in hospital. A woman and her 7-month-old daughter died when the plane was brought down.

Briton suspected of foot-and-mouth disease

The Department of Health in Britain is investigating a report that a Cambrian slaughter man may have contracted the foot-and-mouth virus.

If confirmed, the case would be only the second ever recorded in Britain, although experts say the illness is only mild in humans, and that no cases of human-to-human transmission have ever been recorded.

The reports add to fears over human health in relation to the crisis - with concerns over the release of carcinogenic dioxins from animal pyres.

Environment minister Michael Meacher conceded that the pyres could be a health risk.

The patient, from west Cumbria, had been heavily involved in the culling operation currently underway in the region, and as such was in regular, close contact with infected animals.

Dr Peter Tiplady, of North Cumbria Health Authority, said: "The man was accidentally sprayed with some material from a cow, and two weeks later developed symptoms similar to that in the animals - ulcers in the mouth and sore, itchy hands."

"It is not a very serious illness. He is not at all unwell,

and we expect him to make a complete recovery."

Scientific advice is that it is highly improbable for the virus to pass from animals into the human population under any other circumstances, so the general population is not at risk.

Angus Nichol, director of the communicable diseases surveillance unit of the Public Health Laboratory Service, said: "Basically this is an animal virus - it doesn't like human beings."

"If you expose someone to massive amounts of the virus, they may get the disease, but they probably won't."

He said that when humans did contract foot-and-mouth, it was a very mild illness for them, which invariably cleared up within a matter of weeks.

However, a spokesman for the Department of Health said that it was aware of the case, and that the slaughter man in question had "all the symptoms" of the illness.

A spokesman said: "Foot-and-mouth in humans is very rare but it can occur - this case is being investigated urgently."

"However, foot-and-mouth is a mild illness in humans."

Officials said that the case would not be confirmed for at

least 48 hours, when the results of blood tests would be returned.

The symptoms are similar to another virus - hand, foot and mouth - which is completely unrelated.

The previous single human case in the UK was during the 1966 outbreak. The patient suffered no long-lasting effects to his health.

Professor Tony Hart, an expert in infectious diseases at the University of Liverpool, told the BBC: "Foot-and-mouth is predominantly a disease of animals, which, on very rare occasions is transmitted to humans."

"I imagine it would be transmitted through close contact between individuals and animals who are infected."

He said he was not aware of any other case in which a human, having picked up the infection,

passed it onto another human.

However, he said that it was possible that an infected human could pass the virus onto animals - which are far more susceptible to infection.

He said: "One can never say there is no danger but there have been no cases reported."

A spokesman for the PHLS said that it had been alerted to several suspected human cases of foot-and-mouth since the beginning of the outbreak - but tests for the virus had proved negative in each of them.

A spokesman said that human foot-and-mouth was "not a big public health issue".

He told BBC News Online: "Although we are keeping a lookout for this kind of thing, it really is vanishingly rare."

"Another explanation for this illness is the most likely answer."

US retires submarine commander

The commander of the American submarine that sank a Japanese fishery ship off Hawaii in February has been reprimanded at a final hearing into the accident and forced to retire from the US Navy.

Commander Scott Waddle was found guilty of dereliction of duty at a hearing in Honolulu presided over by the commander of the US Pacific Fleet, Admiral Thomas Fargo.

Nine Japanese students and sailors were killed when the submarine, USS Greenville, surfaced beneath their ship, the Ehime Maru, sinking it within minutes.

Admiral Fargo said the submarine's crew had known there were ships in the vicinity, and would have avoided the collision if they had made a proper periscope search.

"This collision was solely the fault of the USS Greenville," he told a news conference following the hearing. "This accident could and should have been avoided."

A naval court of inquiry had earlier recommended against holding a court-martial which could have led to Commander Waddle's imprisonment,

because it found no evidence of malice or criminal intent.

He had already accepted responsibility for the collision between the two vessels.

An investigation heard that the submarine would not have been at sea at all were it not for a group of civilian visitors that a retired admiral wanted to take on a tour.

It was claimed that there were failures in the sonar tracking of the Japanese ship and that because Commander Waddle had spent so much time with the 16 visitors that lunch, the submarine fell behind schedule.

Commander Waddle's lawyer said he would retire from the US Navy with his rank intact, on a full pension, with a honourable discharge.

In a statement afterwards, Commander Waddle said: "I understand and accept the punishment that Admiral Fargo has imposed."

"This hearing concludes a very difficult time for my family. It has effectively ended my navy career. It was not the end I had envisioned."

"While I regret that my navy career has ended in this way, I know that I am one of the lucky

Bush halts hi-tech arms sale to Taiwan

President Bush has reportedly decided not to sell destroyers with the advanced Aegis combat system to Taiwan on advice from Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld, according to US officials.

Instead of the advanced Aegis destroyers, Mr Rumsfeld has recommended that Taiwan get four Kidd-class destroyers.

China opposed the sale of the Aegis because of fears that the destroyers could provide Taiwan with a shield from the mainland's short-range ballistic missiles.

Full details of Mr Bush's decision have not been released, but key lawmakers are expected to be briefed Monday night. Mr Bush will give the Taiwan delegation his decision on Tuesday.

Sino-US relations were strained during the 11-day detention of 24 crewmembers of US surveillance plane, crippled in a collision with a Chinese fighter.

The stand off added to the significance of the annual arms sales to Taiwan, and the sales became seen as one of the most sensitive foreign policy decisions faced by President Bush since he came to office.

Taiwan had asked for the Aegis-equipped destroyers, P-3 submarine hunting plane, M1 tanks, satellite-guided bombs and diesel-powered submarines.

And President Bush has been

in a tug of war between rival wings of the Republican Party, hawks and business interests.

Hawks in the Republican Party, who are suspicious of China, have seized on the detention of the US crew as a means to push for the sales of more advanced weapons to Taiwan.

And some in Congress have threatened to revoke permanent normal trading relations with China.

Fearing a threat to trade, business groups have heavily lobbied the administration to maintain good relations with China.

Russia to put first tourist in space

Russia says it will go ahead with putting the first tourist into space even though America has not approved the project.

The space tourist, US multi-millionaire Dennis Tito, left for the launch pad at Baikonur in Kazakhstan on Monday.

Mr Tito "will travel to the [International Space] station no matter what", Russian Space Agency spokesman Sergei Gorbunov said.

The US space agency NASA has opposed Mr Tito's flight, saying that he may be a danger to his fellow crew and to the ISS.

"We will guarantee Mr Tito's safety during the flight," Mr Gorbunov told reporters on Monday.

It is not clear whether NASA could stop Mr Tito entering the

space station if it wanted to.

Mr Tito himself was in a buoyant mood before leaving Star City, near Moscow.

"I feel very confident. Both my commander and flight engineer feel that we'll have a very successful flight," he said.

If all goes to plan, Mr Tito will be flown into space on a Russian Soyuz mission to the International Space Station (ISS) by commander Talgat Musabayev and flight engineer Yuri Baturin on Saturday.

"I will be doing my own experiments, both stereo and video photography as well as still photography. And also hope to enjoy the beautiful view of the Earth," he told journalists.

Mr Tito and his fellow cosmonauts are due to dock with the ISS two days after launch.

They will return to Earth on 5 May.

The Russian space authorities have taken out a standard \$100,000 dollar (£69,000) insurance policy on the lives of each of the three Soyuz crew, including Mr Tito, the Russian news agency ITAR-TASS says.

The US space shuttle Endeavour is now docked with the platform and will undock on Saturday.

The station's current resident crew is commanded by a Russian, Yuri Usachev.

He is accompanied by US flight engineers James Voss and Susan Helms.

The trio are spending four and a half months aloft and are due to return to Earth on the Discovery shuttle in July.

Advertisements



TENDER NOTICE CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA NIGERIAN TREASURY BILLS

Notice is hereby given by the Central Bank of Nigeria that 91-day Federal Government of Nigeria Treasury Bills amounting to N21,000 million will be issued by an auction-based system on Thursday, 03/05/2001.

Interested Authorized Dealers (Commercial/Merchant Banks, Designated Discount Houses and Brokers) are invited to submit tenders to reach the Public Debt Office, Central Bank of Nigeria, Lagos, not later than 1.30 p.m on Tuesday, 01/05/2001.

Each tender must be in multiple of N1,000, subject to a minimum of N10,000 per tender. Authorized Dealers are allowed to submit multiple bids and quote multiple rates. A tender may be for own account of Authorised Dealers or made on behalf of interested members of the public, who are advised to apply to their banks or Brokers for the Bills.

Tenders for the Bills should be submitted on the prescribed printed forms in duplicate and in sealed envelopes clearly marked "TENDER FOR BILLS". The result of the tender will be announced before the close of business on Tuesday, 01/05/2001. The Bank reserves the right to reject any tender in part or in full.

Allotment letters will be issued to successful tenderers on Wednesday, 02/05/2001. Payment in full for the amounts of the accepted tenders must be made to the Central Bank of Nigeria not later than 1.30p. m on the issue date 03/05/2001. This will normally be effected by direct debit to the accounts of the affected Authorized Dealers which should ensure that their accounts with the Bank are adequately funded for this purpose.

**PUBLIC DEBT OFFICE
CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA
TINUBUS SQUARE
LAGOS.**

LOSST OF DOCUMENT

I, **ALHAJI ABBA BASHIR** and **ABDUL MAJID**, of No. Kinshasha road old GRA Maiduguri declare that the allocation letter, on Plot No 38B at B.B Bulumkutu Abuja and Plot N40B both issued by Maiduguri metropolitan on 11th January 1999 was lost and reported to the Dandal Police Station Maiduguri on the 30th March 2001.
If found please report to the nearest Police Station.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **MISS CORDELIA ONYEME**, now wish to be known as **MRS CORDELIA OTUYA**. All former documents remain valid. Office of SGF and University of Abuja take note.

I formerly known as **KABU MODU THLIZA**, now wish to be known as **NGAMARJU ANAMJA THLIZA**. Former documents remain valid, Borno State Agency for Mass literacy and the public to note.

PUBLIC NOTICE

THE REDEEMED LIFE MINISTRIES (a. k. a. Redeemed Life Bible Church)

The General Public is hereby notified that the above named Organisation with its headquarters in Abuja is seeking for Registration under the Companies and Allied Matters Decree 1 of 1990 Part C law of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

THE TRUSTEES ARE:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|----|
| 1. PASTOR NNAMDI I. ELESACHI | -GENERAL OVERSEER | -7 |
| 2. PASTOR O. OBOH | -SECRETARY GENERAL | -7 |
| 3. SISTER MARY ADELAKUN | -TREASURES | -7 |
| 4. SISTER PATRICIA N. ELESACHI | - MEMBER | -7 |
| 5. ELDER RASAQ ADELAKUN | - MEMBER | -7 |

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

GBAGYI KADUNA MULTI-PURPOSE ASSOCIATION, ABUJA CHAPTER (GBAKA)

The above named Association has applied for registration under Part 'C' of the Companies and Allied Matters Act Cap 59, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 1990.

The Trustees are:

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Ibrahim P. Jagaba | 2. Emmanuel A. Baba |
| 3. Abraham Tambari | 4. Eli Musa |
| 5. Danjuma Daniel | 6. Na'omi Yahaya |
| 7. Dauda Daniel | |

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

SIGNED: ELI MUSA and Associates.

CONFERENCE ON NEW PRODUCTS AND TECHNOLOGIES FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

Organise by
Psi Association for Technology and Sustainable Development (PATASD) University of Benin and the National agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure (NASENI)

Date: May 20-23 2001-04-23
Venue: Oba Akenzua Cultural Centre, Airport Road, Benin City.

CONFERENCE GOALS

Disseminate research and development results on new products and technologies to investors

- * Provide the enabling environment for linkages between researchers, industries and funding agencies;
- * Create a forum for sharing new ideas;
- * Create awareness on new products and technologies developed in Nigeria and
- * Provide a basis for the establishment of a data bank for SMEs.

SCOPE

Original papers will be presented in the following product categories:

Agro-processing, Electrical/Electronics/Computers and Software Development, Wood and Wood Products, Water, Waste management and Technology, Machine Building/Fabrication, Equipment, Spare Parts, Pharmaceutical products.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Industrialists, Manufacturers, Investors, Researchers, Engineers, Technologists, Scientists, Inventors, Innovators, Government Officials.

EXHIBITION

Companies, research institutes, universities, and individuals are invited to exhibit their products

FEES

Authors:	N2,000.00
Non-authors:	N6,000.00
Exhibition:	N6,000.00 per stand of 10' x 6' (min)
	N10,000.00 per stand of 10' x 11' (max)

PATENT

The National Office for Technology Acquisition and Promotion will have a stand to advice and give guidelines on patent procurement.

REGISTRATION

For registration contact:

Dr. Akii Ibhado or Engr. A.C. Igboanugo

Room 105, Department of Production Engineering University of Benin, Benin City.

Tel: 052- 256361

E-mail: ibhadode@uniben.edu

Dr. (Mrs.) R.C. Okechukwu

or Mr. N.P. Pawa National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure (NASENI), Idu Industrial Area Abuja.

Tel: 09-5239649 09-5235161

Fax: 09-5232698

E-mail: naseni-nvi@hotmail.com

OTHER SPONSORS

- Federal Ministry of Science and Technology
- University of Benin
- Edo State Government
- National Office for Technology Acquisition and Promotion
- Shell Petroleum Development Company-west
- Raw materials Research and Development 'council

BUSINESS DAY

Taraba State Governor, Rev. Jolly Nyame, has said that his administration's blue print would focus on the promotion of small and medium enterprises in the quest for industrialising the state.

Nyame, who spoke in an exclusive interview with *Business Day* in Abuja said due to the rural nature of the state, the wealth of the people can only effectively be mobilised and channelled for their own benefit if economic activities are tailored to suit their society.

According to him, most of the cottage industries being planned would be agriculturally-based in view of

Taraba poised to boost SMEs

**Agriculture leads industrialisation drive*

By Osborne Adi Jnr.

the fact that the state is highly endowed with vast natural resources and the inhabitants are mostly farmers.

Already, the state government has opened discussions with relevant SMEs operators in Pakistan in the bid to assist the state with the needed technology for the take-off of the programme.

As part of a deliberate plan to prepare farmers for



Gov. Nyame of Taraba State.

the industrial programme expected to cover the entire state, the government has purchased 48 tractors to be shared three each among the 16 local governments in the state.

Governor Nyame who spoke against the backdrop of the visit to China by the state business delegation, said a consortium of Chinese business concern have shown interest in harnessing the vast wood resource in the

state with the intention of setting up a timber factory.

He reiterated his administration's commitment towards industrialisation of Taraba, but was quick to add that the government will only promote the establishment of industries but not necessarily holding equity shares in them.

"What we want to do is to create the enabling environment and allow the private sector take charge of

running the industries," he said.

He also said that there are many incentives the state government has packaged for investors wishing to do business in the state, which are capable of making business very cheap and attractive.

"We can provide the land by giving certificate of occupancy free, provide electricity and other infrastructural facilities, that could ease the burden from the investors," he said.

NICON sets up benefits for travellers' scheme

NICON Insurance corporation has said it now pays beneficiaries of the travellers' personal accident insurance scheme (TIPAS) N50,000, up from the N30,000 it previously paid, the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports.

Vivien Mbonu, Corporate Affairs representative of NICON, made this known in a statement at the on-going 12th Enugu International Trade Fair.

Beneficiaries, who also suffer permanent disabilities would now receive N50,000 from NICON, she said, adding: "in the case of death of the insured in a motor accident, the next-of-kin would get N50,000 up from N30,000," Mbonu said.

TIPAS was introduced into the Nigeria Insurance market by NICON in March 1993 to "provide succour for passengers on inter-state trips, drivers and conductors."

Those, who have benefited from the scheme include private firms as well as government outfits.

NICON is using the opportunity of the 12th Enugu International Trade Fair to promote what it calls, organised group welfare insurance scheme; another unique product, which will soon be launched.

NICON, established by Act No. 22 of 1969, is wholly owned by the Federal Government, and also provides insurance and financial services to customers.

The Corporation, with a capital base of N1 billion fully paid up, has staff

strength of 13,000 as well as a network of branches all over Nigeria with a central office in London.

It is arguably the strongest insurance company in the West African Sub-region,

with widespread investment in NICON Hotels Ltd., Niger Insurance, NAL Merchant Bank, Nigeria Assurance Bank, Daily Times, NICON Trustees Ltd. and Inland Containers.

Coal Corporation remodels briquette stove

The Nigeria Coal Corporation (NCC), has remodelled the smokeless coal briquette stove which, according to the manufacturers, is environment friendly and has odourless emissions.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the remodelled stove on exhibition at the NCC stand at the 12th Enugu International Trade Fair, is now sold at N1,400.

The NCC marketing manager, Mr. Samuel Eze, said the stove could take four smokeless fuel (Briquettes) which burn for three hours each.

A carton of the briquettes containing 12 cuboids-shaped black briquettes are sold as N160 at the fair.

Sub-bituminous steam coals have been indicated in more than 22 coalfields in over 13 states of the country with a total of 639,000 met-

ric tonnes of proven coal reserves or an inferred reserve of about 2.75 billion metric tonnes.

There are at present, four existing coal mines – the Okpara and Onyeama underground mines in Enugu State, Okaba-Odagbo open cast mine in Kogi and Owukpa underground mine in Benue

SEC bans NAMBL from capital market

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has banned the Nigerian-American Merchant Bank Limited (NAMBL) from capital market activities.

According to SEC, this action stemmed from NAMBL's failure to comply with its decision conveyed to it via a letter dated April 2.

SEC which communicated the suspension via a statement signed by its Head of Corporate Affairs, Alhaji Illiyasu Dacko stated that the issue was instigated by the failure of NAMBL to comply with its 14 day ultimatum to honour its underwriting commitment, which arose as a result of the underwriting agreement accounted between it and ENPEE Industries Ltd.

Dacko disclosed that the underwriting agreement was

From Bright Ewulu, in Lagos

over ENPEE Industries Plc in its rights issue of 222,750,000 ordinary shares of 50k at N1.58 per share.

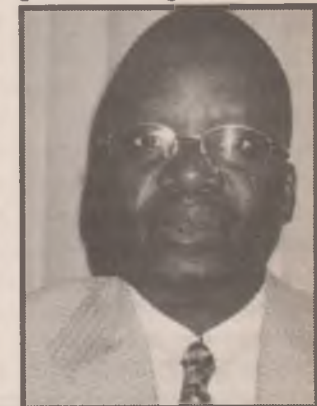
The suspended President of the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE), Alhaji S.O. Razak said the decision of the NSE to dismiss SEC's directive owe to the fact that the matter is already in court.

The NSE President, who signalled off trading at the Exchange stopped the brokers who had planned to boycott trading in solidarity with the leadership of the Exchange who were reportedly removed from office. SEC, pending their compliance to SEC's directive that NSE should return to its original name, Lagos Stock Exchange.

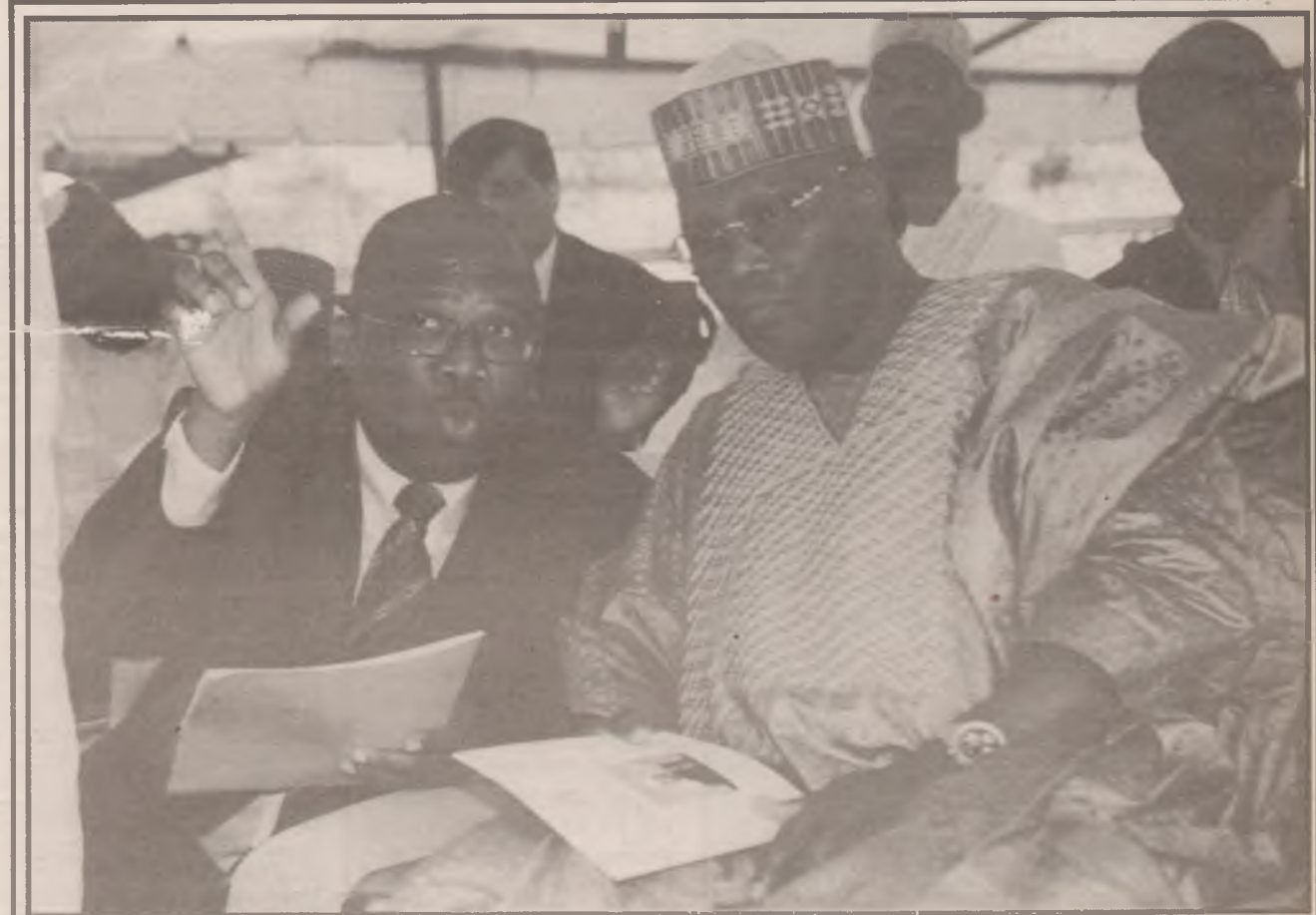
Due to the planned boycott by the workers trading was

delayed by 45 minutes at the NSE.

Analysts agreed that the traffic between the NSE and SEC is more than predates the present leadership of SEC, however, most of the optimism that none of these disagreements has reached the present proportions. But then others feel that the democratic dispensation is responsible for the recent legal tent of might.



Suleyman Ndanusa, D-G SEC.



Vice-President Atiku (right), listening to Mr. Abdulfatai Akin Kekere-Ekun, MD of Habib Nigeria Bank Limited, who stresses a point to the VP at the commissioning of the Bank's Corporate Office tagged: "Bashorun MKO Abiola House" recently in Abuja.



Kanu Agabi, Solid Minerals Development Minister.

BUSINESS DAY

Contrary to widely held nations that the imposition of certain economic measures on Nigeria by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank plunged the nation's economy to its present predicaments, the Finance Minister, Malam Adamu Ciroma, has absolved the two international finance institutions of any blame for the country's problems, saying that Nigerians should rather blame themselves.

"There is a lot of ignorance as to the contributions of the IMF and World Bank in our economic affairs. Somehow, mostly in academic circles, there is the notion that the IMF and World Bank impose policies, which are not in the interest

IMF, World Bank not responsible for Nigeria's economic woes - Ciroma

By Ahmed Shekarau

of this country on us. I want to say here and now, that this notion is absolutely wrong," he affirmed.

Ciroma made the observation while explaining the numerous contributions of the World Bank in the introduction and implementation of various economic policies that are beneficial to the country, at the signing of a \$97 million credit facility for community-based poverty reduction projects in 12 states at the weekend in Abuja.

The minister maintained that Nigeria is an active

member of the two institutions, stressing that "whatever we do, we as Nigerians must accept responsibility for our own actions." There is nobody who can impose his wishes on Nigeria, the minister argued further.

Ciroma affirmed that it is in the interest of the country to ensure that it establishes "confidence and good relationship" with the IMF and the World Bank. He said the two institutions are of particular importance to the country because other nations of the world depend on them to form their economic opinions or views about Ni-



Adamu Ciroma, Finance Minister.

geria.

He reiterated that Nigerians are capable of defending their interests, stressing that "it is out of wisdom and not out of compulsion that we choose to establish friendly and good relations with the IMF and World Bank."

The minister noted that the signing of the development credit facility on poverty reduction in 12 states is a good example of Nigeria's

"beneficial interaction" with the two institutions. He also cited the example of the Kainji Dam, which he said was constructed with an IMF loan.

The \$97 million or N13.1 billion credit facility is an interest-free loan granted for community-based poverty reduction projects in Abia, Cross River, Kogi, Benue, Yobe, Gombe, Ekiti, Enugu, Kebbi, Delta, Osun and Zamfara States. It is repayable within 35 years with a moratorium of 10 years. It, however, attracts a service charge of 0.75 per cent.

FANN workers threaten strike action

The senior staff of Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) may soon embark on a strike action if the management of the Authority fails to pay them the arrears of their new salary package for months of May and June last year.

Mr. Ndu Gold Ezebuio, Public Relations Officer of FAAN branch of the association told *Business Day* that they want the effective date to start from July, instead of May as being proposed by management.

He explained that the FAAN management is playing games with the staff, which makes the workers apprehensive that the unpaid salaries may end up in pri-

From Samson Ojo, in Lagos

vate pockets.

The angry FAAN staff had last year petitioned the Wages and Salaries Commission and the Minister of Aviation, Dr. (Mrs.) Kema Chikwe on the issue.

The Ministry of Aviation was said to have written to FAAN management to ascertain whether the Authority could afford to pay the salary. But FAAN management was said to have expressed a non-challant attitude towards the workers' demand by deliberately refusing to reply the enquiries of Ministry of Aviation.

In a circular to "All FAAN Staff" dated 22nd

March 2001, the FAAN branch of the Senior Staff Association stated certain decisions reached sequel to their general meeting held a few weeks ago.

The text of the statement read, "April 2001 deadline for the reversal of the effective date of their new salary structure and payment of the subsequent two months outstanding May/June 2000 arrears along with last month's salary."

"Mass protest against deduction for National Housing funds (NHF) Scheme beyond March 2001 and failure to refund the previous deductions along with April 2001 salary; thirdly "promotion of stagnated staff who have been "on bar" for the past eleven years and others who had been due for promotion since January this year."

The association further demand the immediate release of the pending staff conditions of service and resolved to defend the sources of FAAN's income against unscrupulous contractors "who are poised" to take over our revenue points for peanuts."

They vowed to chase away such contractors and their agents. Other demands of the association are for the disengagement of Accenture, a management consultancy from FAAN's re-engineering process. They also reject Leadership Development Consulting for the development of a career path for FAAN because according to them "FAAN is being turned into a training ground and used as guinea pig for experiments by all manner of consultants". Mr Ezebuio told *Business Day* that "we are interested in staff transformation, nothing else."

Shippers boss calls for upgrading of Inland Ports

As the effort by Nigeria Shippers Council to re-activate the operations of inland container ports gathers momentum, the Steering Committee Chairman, Kaduna State Shippers Association, Mr. Steve Amadi, has pointed out that the only way to effectively operate dry ports is to dump the 1999 port reforms report and upgrade the inland container depots to the states of dry ports.

Mr. Amadi, who noted that the patronage of hinterland port was crucial to the survival of the sea port business called on all the stakeholders to recognise the mutual benefit and interdependence between coastal and hinterland, adding that the dual operation of sea ports and dry ports will complement one another.

He said the 1996 ports reforms had negatively affected the operations of inland container depots as incidences of clearing containers very close to the shippers which is the paramount benefit of inland container depots (ICD) have been checked by the supposed reform.

The northern-based shipping group lamented that a situation where shippers are required to pay duties, obtain CRI and process the release of their container at the sea ports instead of ICDS is det-

From Ibrahim Ka-Almasih, in Kaduna

rimental to shipping business in the hinterland and the north as a whole.

Mr. Amadi, who is also the Managing Director/Chairman Board of Directors CRISP International Limited, Kaduna, a freight forwarding company, explained further that lack of legal instrument backing up the operations of such companies had been the hindrance to the operation of the ICD.

Other considerable factors, he said include what he called unnecessary charges, adding that although the shipping companies collect all their charges at the including container deposit of between N60,000 to N100,000.00, final release is still mandatory at the ICDs with additional



Isa Yuguda, Minister of State for Transport.

charges which could not be convincingly explained.

He said, however, that clearing of containers through the system was more complex than direct clearance at the seaport, because of double incidence of clearance as all containers had to pass through the same clearing process for direct release before final release to the consignees at the ICNL depot.

Mr. Amadi said that if the concept of the dry port was well understood, the establishment of Inland Containers Port would reduce the frustration, port congestion and hassles experienced by hinterland shippers, translating into tremendous advantage which would include provision of door to door service, for shippers, exporters of goods.

Meanwhile, the Kaduna State Shippers Association has agreed to seek the audience of the Vice-President, Minister of Transport, and the Kaduna State Governor on the need for total overhaul of Inland Containers Depots at the hinterland, particularly in Kaduna State where there is an existing infrastructure on ground, instead of constructing new ones.

The position paper was signed by the Steering Committee Chairman, Mr. Steve Amadi and the secretary, Mr. Olugbenga Jatau.

NSE trades 76.9 million shares

A total of 76.9 million shares worth N683.9 million were traded on the Nigerian Stock Exchange last week as against 69.1 million shares valued at N6,177.7 million and sold in the preceding week.

The transactions pushed up the All-Share Index to 9562.96, a 2.1 per cent rise over the figure in the preceding week.

The banking sub-sector was the most active last week with a turnover of 40.7 million shares valued at N308.5 million which exchanged in 2915 deals, while the conglomerates came second with 8.8 million shares worth N56.2 million.

All the transactions were in the equities as the Federal Government Development stocks sector and the industrial Loans/Preference stocks sector remained inactive.

Julius Berger Plc, with a price appreciation of 310k led the price gainers last week and closed at N55.1. DN Meyer Plc and Lever Brothers followed with a gain of 280k and 278k respectively.

The other price gainers included Total Ni. Plc 250k; WAPCO Plc 215k; Longman Nig. Plc 114k; Nig. Breweries Plc 105k; Guinness Nig. Plc 90kl and Agip 71k.

The price losers were led by Texaco, which sed 150k to close at N64.50, followed by Beta glass 94k; Nigerian-German Chemicals 78k; Van Leer 24k and Prestige Assurance 23k.

Exchange rates for World currencies against the US dollar as at April 23

	CURRENT	HIGH	LOW
Euro	0.9002	0.9082	0.8991
Japanese Yen	121.9	122.53	121.44
British Pound	1.4404	1.4473	1.4383
Swiss Franc	1.7006	1.7027	1.686
Austrian Schilling	15.2807	15.3028	15.1579
Belgian Franc	44.797	4.862	44.437
Danish Crown	8.2861	8.3	8.2141
Dutch Guilder	2.4472	2.4507	2.4275
Finnish Markka	6.6027	6.6122	6.5496
French Franc	7.2844	7.2949	7.2258
German Mark	2.1719	2.1751	2.1545
Greek Drachma	378.4	378.95	375.36
Irish Punt	1.1428	1.1527	1.1417
Italian Lire	2150.22	2153.33	2132.93
Norwegian Crown	9.0486	9.0622	8.9796
Portuguese Escudo	222.63	222.96	220.84
Spanish Peseta	184.77	185.04	183.28
Swedish Crown	10.146	10.1588	10.019
Australian Dollar	0.5055	0.5195	0.504
Brazilian Real	2.229	2.234	2.23
Canadian Dollar	1.5484	1.5496	1.543
Hong Kong Dollar	7.7988	7.7992	7.7992
Mexican Peso	9.385	9.411	9.384
Russian Rouble	28.849	28.878	28.84
Singapore Dollar	1.8097	1.814	1.8091
South African Rand	8.1682	8.19	8.1455

BUSINESS DAY

Dredging of River Niger will enhance tourism – Maduekwe

By Ahmed Shekarau

The on-going dredging of the Lower River Niger is expected to open Nigeria's inland waterways to international tourists as well as foreign entrepreneurs hoping to do business in the country's hinterland, the Minister of Transport, Chief Ojo Maduekwe has said.

The minister said when he received in audience a business delegation from the Netherlands in his office in Abuja, that the dredging of the river is "extremely" important to the present administration.

Maduekwe noted that it will make the country accessible to investors and businessmen from the whole world and make Nigerians have easy access to products of other countries of the world.

He urged members of the Dutch business delegation to avail themselves of the abundant investment opportunities in various sectors of the Nigerian economy, stressing that the present investment climate in the country is open to foreign investments. He said the on-going privatization programme in Nigeria is "a no-horse-barred privatisation".

Responding to a question by a member of the Dutch business team on Nigeria's cabotage law, the minister noted that in accordance with the nation's new democratic culture, the National Assembly is conducting a public hearing on the matter with a view to reviewing the situation.

Maduekwe explained

further that: "Cabotage is the big buzz word now in Nigeria," adding that the government is very cautious in handling the issue.

He noted that Nigerians differ on whether or not to abolish the law. "While some people want us to



Ojo Maduekwe, Transport Minister.

adopt cabotage culture, others believe we should look

at it critically from our own background."

He said central to the issue is the government's efforts to revive the shipping industry, which has been comatose for years, noting that "the National Assembly is providing a very strategic culture through the public hearing."

In his response, the leader of the delegation, who is also Netherlands' Ambassador to Nigeria, assured the minister that the Dutch business delegation will scout for many investment opportunities in the country, particularly in the transport sector.

Other members of the team include the Dutch Minister of Foreign Trade, as well as representatives of several Dutch companies such as Amsterdam Port Consultants and Hasconing Engineers Ltd.

Kuwait to shutdown refinery for 35 days

Kuwait plans a total shutdown at its Shuaiba refinery for 35 days as from April 28 for general repairs to eventually lift output to the design capacity of 195,000 BPD from a current 120,000 BPD, an industry source said.

"This is a general repair plan which could cost over a million dinars (\$3.3 million) and is expected to restore the refinery to a new standard to meet its design capacity," an oil industry executive familiar with the repairs said.

The executive said the plant, the smallest of three domestic refineries, had been running at around 120,000 barrels per day (BPD) in recent months.

"There are problems at area eight, one of the units

is not operating well but after the repair work, it will come back to its fully capacity and all the vessels will be open," he added.

"The repair work is also aimed at avoiding (future) accidents", he said of the refinery which was hit by an explosion last year that killed two Kuwaiti workers.

Shuaiba operations were not affected by the blast but the country's largest refinery, the 450,000 BPD Ahmadi, was forced to close down in June when six people were killed in a huge explosion. It is now operating at around 285,000 BPD.

While Mina Abdullah refinery has a capacity of 285,000 BPD, Asian markets are the main customers for Kuwaiti products.

Australia rejects Shell bid to control leading resources company

The Australian government yesterday blocked the Royal Dutch Shell Group's bid for Australia's Woodside Shell's 10 billion-Australian dollar (N650 million). Offer for Woodside raised concerns about the operation and marketing of Australia's North-West Shelf (NWS) energy project, federal treasurer Peter Costello said.

"After long and careful deliberations I have today made orders under the foreign acquisition and takeovers act prohibiting Shell from acquiring a substantial shareholding in Woodside which would result in a change in control of Woodside," Costello told



Ron Van Den Berg, Shell MD.

journalists.

From small beginnings in the mid-1950s, Woodside has developed into a leading Australian company as an oil

and gas explorer, developer and producer.

The NWS project was Australia's largest developed energy resource project and had been pioneered by Australians through Woodside, although overseas capital had helped in its development.

Costello said while Australia welcomed foreign investment and had a liberal foreign investment policy, he had to consider the future of the NWS project.

"Woodside is the operator of the project and it is in the national interest of Australia that the project be developed to its full capacity and that Australia's export sales from the NWS are maximized," he said.

NIPR advised to help carve better image for Nigeria

Mr. Bobo Brown, Public Affairs Manager of the East operations of the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), has called on public relations practitioners in the country to join hands with the government to carve a better image for the country.

Speaking at a national conference of Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) in Port Harcourt, Brown said that Nigeria had been having an image problem.

"The crushing poverty and manifest injustice in our society has deprived most Nigerians of basic dignity,

Brown said that time had come for all public relations practitioners to intervene with a view to polishing the battered image of the country.

He said that professionals often suffered most when a country had an image problem, adding that the situation was made worse by the pervading atmosphere of instability in the country.

He said that worsening problems among the populace, compounded by the poor state of the economy, could threaten democracy and people in government to tackle the nation's problems

decisively. Brown told the NIPR members to seize the opportunity of the conference to forge a new vision for the country.

"Such a vision should be to make the NIPR relevant to society by mobilizing national attention on the root causes of our problems," he said.

He said that the NIPR had an important role to play in the effort to build the country and urged the members to live up to expectation, because the institute could not afford to fail in the effort to sustain democracy and develop the country.

Zambia to export power to Namibia

Zambia has signed a contract to export power to Namibia from its Victoria Falls Hydropower Station, the times of Zambia reported.

The newspaper said the contract, signed on Monday, involved the upgrading of a power line to make the export possible.

The project would cost 16 million dollars (N208 million), to be funded by the African Development Bank and Development

Bank of South Africa, the report said.

Zambia's Deputy Energy Minister, Celestino Chibamba was quoted as saying at the signing ceremony that the project would go into operation next year after the finalisation of all logistic requirements by both governments.

Zambia had several large-scale hydropower stations, with a sufficient power pool for export to its neighbours, said the paper.



(L-R) President Obasanjo, Mr. David Fokerts-Landau, Chairman and Chief Kola Daisi, Secretary of Presidential Adversary Council during the Council's inauguration at the Presidential Villa, Abuja recently.

Kenya's expenditure on imports hits 1.6bn Shillings

Kenya's bill for importing cereals rose to 1.6 billion shillings (N27.8 billion) in 2000, up from 1 billion shillings (N17.3 billion) in 1999, the East African Standard newspaper reported yesterday.

Kenya, an agricultural country, is currently a net importer of basic foods such as wheat, rice, maize and sugar, and it used about 333 million dollars (N43.3 billion) in 1997

to import such commodities.

The Central Bank of Kenya was quoted as saying recently that this huge expenditure is not sustainable in the long term, particularly in the light of the country's current tight fiscal constraints.



Jerry Gana, Information & National Orientation Minister. resulting in an image crisis for the entire country," he said.

ADAMAWA STATE HOSTS FIRST LADY

The first Lady, Mrs Stella Obasanjo, paid a two day official visit to Adamawa State early this month where she, among other things, attended the launching of the pet programme of the wife of the State Governor, Mrs. Zainab Boni Haruna, known as the Rural Empowerment Acceleration Programme (REAP). These pictures captured the august visit.



Front seat (L-R) Gov Boni Haruna, Mrs Obasanjo, Mrs Atiku and Mrs Haruna



In a jolly mood: Mrs Atiku receives Mrs Obasanjo while Gov Haruna and his wife as well as Chief (Mrs) Titi Ajanaku, Special Adviser (on Women Affairs) to President Obasanjo and other dignitaries look on.



Mrs Obasanjo Commissioning the secretariat of REAP as Mrs Haruna holds the tape on her right



Gov Haruna (2nd Right) talking to Mrs Obasanjo while his wife 1st left, President of NCWS Hajia Zainab Maina (2nd left), Mrs Atiku and Chief (Mrs) Ajanaku look on.



Mrs Obasanjo, flanked by Gov Boni Haruna and his wife, being welcomed by children at the Yola Airport



Mrs Stella Obasanjo delivering her address at the launching of REAP



Mrs Zainab Boni Haruna delivering her address at the launching of REAP in Yola



Mrs Obasanjo (centre) sitting with wives of Governors, including Mrs Haruna (2nd Right)



Front seat (L-R) Mrs Obasanjo, Mrs Atiku, Mrs Haruna, Deputy Governor Bello Tukur and Chief (Mrs) Ajanaku

Star Feature

Bida: The art of weaving

At Bida there are numerous guilds and groups of artisans, and it is difficult to discuss Bida, this mobile cultural capital of the Nupe speaking people, without considering these guilds or groups of artisans, and the activities of each.

The abundance of talent in man, together with the sheer wealth of the physical environment seems to have resulted in the preponderance of these groups of artisans at Bida, and you encounter them at every turn. These may be blacksmiths, or brass smiths, or the weavers of Bida, who are almost eternally busy at their looms.

The physical growth of Bida town is closely related to the presence of these guilds which have expanded over a period of time and attracted a vast clientele in the process, while also providing jobs for many. These guilds also have a coterie of officials who are classified as leaders of the various bodies.

Thus, there is a sense in which one can view Bida as classical example of how guilds of craftsmen played a powerful, though subtle role, in the growth and development of a community.

The weavers of Bida are one such group which has a subtle but vital influence in the community. A source who would not like to give her name opined that weaving requires a lot of patience, the power of concentration, and also an eye for beauty and detail. The traditional loom stands in a corner both neutral and involved. The lady working at the loom

By Tadaferua Ujorha

beauty in its various forms. This 'eye' would actually view the cloth in its finished form long before the threads are united on the loom. Finer skills are required to ensure that each thread is skil-

cedents stretching to the beginnings of the first human communities upon the planet. Our source implied that it takes her about a week to weave a length of cloth. This is so, especially if she is not disturbed or distracted in any way. To many of the women at Bida, weaving is done using

the method employed by their forebears which is in the form of a wooden loom, in front of which the weaver sits and gently coaxes the thread, to unite and yield a variety of colours. The loom is almost noiseless as it unfolds yard after yard of splendid cloth.



Another woman busy at the loom

Pix by Felix Onigbinde

fully kept in its proper place, such that in the process of weaving there would only be an harmonious unfolding of colours.

At Bida, the weavers are principally women. It is essentially a feminine activity. From the quiet ambience of their various homes, they produce colours of a lofty kind which become fine illustrations

"The art of weaving calls for an eye which can perceive the splendour of beauty in its various forms. This 'eye' would actually view the cloth in its finished form long before the threads are united on the loom. Finer skills are required to ensure that each thread is skilfully kept in its proper place, such that in the process of weaving there would only be an harmonious unfolding of colours."



A woman at the loom

places a series of colours side by side, or conveniently mixed and after days of working at the loom, the colours unite and the cloth can be removed from the loom in its complete form.

The art of weaving calls for an eye which can perceive the splendour of

on the cloths which they are forming.

The art of weaving is an ancient tradition, which has ante-



A little adjustment at the loom

Pix by Felix Onigbinde

Feature

'Hustlers' invade Abuja night life

By Austine Odo

It is 6:15 p.m. on a Friday. A taxi stops by the Wuse Zone 4 corner shop. Four girls in their 20s, well-dressed and well perfumed, alight and make their way into a nearby restaurant. Seconds later, another set arrive, and head for a hidden restaurant just by the road. And in another minute, more arrive. You would think they were coming for a party. It's no party, at least in the sense one knows of a party, where a particular celebration takes place. These girls, most of who appear decent, and speak impeccable English, as I later discovered, have come to "hustle" for men. They would hang around restaurants, cafes, or bars till dusk, when night life begins. The approach of dusk is the approach of cash. Then, their patrons, after the day's job, go out to relax, drink and select any 'beauty' they behold. They come in different shapes, complexions, dressings and styles. What is common amongst them, however, is that they are all after cash. Not just cash, but real cash. They hunt for it, as long as necessary, even if it means hanging out till dawn.

My friend, Daniel gave me a first hand experience the other night. He had walked up to a girl, and I listened to their conversation after a drink.

"Hi," Daniel had called, "what is your name?"

"Linda," came the reply.

"I feel like getting closer," said Daniel.

"Where do you stay?" enquired Linda.

"Wuse Zone 6."

"I take N3000 for a night,"

"I will give you N1000."

"Not my type," replied Linda, and she walked away. Daniel and I looked at each other obviously ashamed. What amazed me was Linda's lack of appreciation for the drinks and chicken which she had made my friend to buy. She consumed them and shunned my friend.

Moments later, a Lincoln navigator jeep cruised by, and after a few seconds of silent negotiation with the elderly occupant, the door opened and Linda was driven away.

Zone 4 is not the only haven for the hustlers. In other places such as Wuse Zone 6 junction, Area 11, and most high-brow areas, the girls hang out, putting some heat into night life. In many high-brow hotels, scores of gorgeously dressed ladies hold sway, some even pose as very successful business women, and

you would take them for their words. The interesting thing is that they are highly patronised by the rich, or so it seems, as they come in flashy cars. Their patrons are not just youths. They include the elderly and highly-placed, whom one would expect to be responsibly married and comfortable.

You could see them hanging by phone booths, making endless phone calls, especially late in the

down. I never spoke to a man before, and I despised my friends who did it. Things got so bad for us, at a stage I almost committed suicide. One day my friend invited me for her birthday party and she convinced me to go home with a man. I returned with N5000, and it has been so afterwards."

Clara became philosophical when I asked how she thinks this lifestyle would affect her in the long run, and she quoted



An artist's impression of a popular junction in Abuja

Aliyu Yahaya

evenings. They move in pairs, or groups of three and four. In some cases, those who choose, render ancillary services in pubs or restaurants, not for any regular pay, but to use such places as rendezvous for their patrons.

They are not necessarily cheap, and of most them are not. Clara, a lady of about 22 years, appeared so comely that I wondered about her. Apart from being an under-graduate, Clara could pass for a beauty-queen.

Shakespeare;

"My brother, you see, I agree with Shakespeare, that life is but a walking shadow, a poor player, that struts and frets his hour upon the stage. It is like a story, told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

She disclosed while almost fighting back tears, that she had resigned herself to fate.

"I never thought of this lifestyle, never. I can't just imagine myself... but I have to

and could make her father receive many visitors if she placed an advert for her marriage. She says she has no regrets for being an escort, which she prefers to be called.

"I agreed to speak with you for reasons best known to me. I have no regrets being an escort. I have many testimonies to give. I am happy the way I am. I feed myself, clothe myself, nobody does it for me," she said.

Though their claims to tertiary

education could not be independently verified, their expressions and comportment confirmed it. But while it can be said that some entered the business by accident, some appear to have sold their souls to it. Their speech, gait, and mannerism clearly show that they are the "Akpruka" type. Such women are unrefined and could be very rude and unfriendly.

While there is a class that live in decently rented

based in brothels, spread around the satellite villages around Abuja.

Coming to Abuja is coming to make money by any means, provided it does not involve killing, stealing or duping, according to Sandra, who said she escaped the Sharia riot in Tudun Wada, Kaduna to relocate to Nyanya where she operates in a brothel. Sandra speaks Pidgin English.

"I don't dey for this work o. I get husband before, but e dey suffer me, and money, e no get. I dey see other girls de wear better-better clothes. I hear say them de work for Kaduna, na im I follow my friend, Endurance when she come do Christmas for village."

That was several years ago. Today, Sandra says she can boast of a four-room apartment in her village, a motor-bike which she hires out for Okada, and a provision store, all in her home in one of the North-Central States.

Why then, in spite of this investment, does she still keep a life in the brothel and hustles for men at night?

"Mister man, e don do for you o, no be say you put medicine for mouth. Wetin you de ask this, you de ask that?" she retorted.

Ada hustles mainly in Wuse Zone 6. She stays in Kubwa village. By 6:00 p.m. every day, she is already by the Wuse market, waiting for nightfall.

"I was deported," she said, "and no one knows how I live. I used to take a good care of my people till I was deported, now, what do you expect me to do?"

The general excuse among the ladies revolves round economic hardship.

There are some that have become so immersed in the business that only a special miracle can dislodge them from it. And while some would gladly consider marriage in the long run, others have vowed to remain as they are rather than venture into it, probably due to a past failed experience.

One thing appears certain, the fear of HIV/AIDS infection is secondary to them. In fact, some, such fear does not exist. They have a general belief that one is destined to die anyway, and whichever way it comes does not matter.

But the threat posed to the lives of these Nigerians by HIV/AIDS and the social stigma that accompany their business is by extension an epitome of the threat and stigma of the economic slavery which has held many Nigerians spell bound.

Austine Odo works with Daily Trust, Abuja.

"There are some that have become so immersed in the business that only a special miracle can dislodge them from it. And while some would gladly consider marriage in the long run, others have vowed to remain as they are rather than venture into it, probably due to a past failed experience.

One thing appears certain, the fear of HIV/AIDS infection is secondary to them. In fact, to some, such fear do not exist. They have a general belief that one is destined to die anyway, and whichever way it comes does not matter."

She did not hesitate to express herself when I conversed with her.

"All that glitters is not gold," she told me, "I thought life was a bed of roses until I lost my dad when I was in my 200 level. He was my everything. I had no boy friend, my mother does not work. Everything turned upside

complete my studies, anyhow." I am hoping to round-off my degree programme by next year, and if possible, settle down for marriage."

Asked how she copes with the possibility of being HIV infected, she declined comment.

Edna is not as beautiful as Clara, but she is already a graduate

accommodation (courtesy of numerous sugar daddies), some live in groups of four and five in make-shift apartments in the suburbs such as Kubwa, Lugbe, Nyanya. Some operate from family homes or relatives' residences, while others squat with friends.

Yet, there are some that are

NEWS

Nigeria intensifies internal security mechanism

The Federal Government has mapped out strategies to checkmate any invasion of Nigeria, by nationals of neighbouring countries who pose security threats to lives and property in the country.

An official of the Ministry of Internal Affairs told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abuja yesterday that "although, government is adhering to ECOWAS protocols on the movement of people, goods and services, it will treat the security of its citizens and their property lightly." The source said that the incursion of some bandits and bandits from neighbouring Cameroon, Chad and Niger Republics into Nigeria was giving government great concern and its internal security and the welfare of its citizens.

"All necessary diplomatic steps and other security monitoring mechanisms have been put in place to address the issue, so that our people are not subjected to ill-treatment by other nationals," the official stressed.

He said also that government was currently making efforts to intensify air, land and sea surveillance of the country's borders. "Modern border patrol vehicles, monitoring and communication equipments and offices, will be provided in areas where they are lacking," he stressed.

"Government is currently equipping the Immigration and Customs Services to reinforce their capability to withstand any threat to Nigeria's borders," he added.

The source also said that ECOWAS member-countries had been sensitized to ensure that the organisation's treaties were not indiscriminately violated by their citizens.

Recently, hordes of nationals and other illegal immigrants besieged Nigeria to seek refuge and succour from their famine-ravaged countries posing incalculable risk to lives and properties.



Controller General of Nigeria Immigration Service, Lady Uzomaka C. Nwizu chatting with Director, Planning, Research & Statistics, Mr. Deji Omotade during the Nigeria Immigration Service conference on Socio-Economic Development of the Nation in Abuja ... yesterday. Pix: Felix Onigbinde

Emergence of democracy not sufficient for rule of law – Anyim

The Senate President, Dr. Ayim Pius Anyim, has cautioned that the emergence of a democratic regime is not sufficient for the observance of the rule of law.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the British/Nigerian law week in Abuja, the number one lawmaker said the collective function of the bar, bench, the legislators and the law enforcement agencies is necessary to make the rule of law meaningful, effective and relevant.

"Building a country that is fair to all citizens is the greatest challenge of our democracy," he said.

Senator Anyim also said that it can only talk of the rule of law in a democratic system which is not the case with military regimes, where the constitution is deliberately



Chief Pius Anyim

In a week, residents of Rivers States expect the test-running of the Rivers State's multi-billion-naira gas turbine project, Governor Peter Odili announced, also that the project was under serious threat.

Odili told residents of Afam, near Port Harcourt at the weekend when he disclosed that government had uncovered plans by some people to blow up the turbine.

"Those behind the plot have been holding secret nocturnal meetings on how to use explosives to blow up the gas line to the gas turbine," Odili said. He said the people behind the plot were apparently disappointed that the project did not fail as they

Odili commissions multi-billion naira gas turbine

anticipated.

"No amount of sabotage will stop the gas turbine projects because the God we worship is a living God," the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) quotes the governor as saying.

Describing the plot as devilish, Odili reassured people of the state that his administration was committed to extending electricity to all parts of the state as earlier promised.

He said that President Olusegun Obasanjo had been duly informed of the "unhealthy" development, noting that the Federal Government had given assurances to assist the state.



President Obasanjo

On April 6, Odili told Rivers state leaders of though that test-running of the gas turbines would start by the middle of April.

Gov. admits federal presence in Kaduna

Even as criticisms of marginalisation and neglect against the Federal Government are loud in some states, Governor Ahmed Makarfi of Kaduna state, at the weekend, declared that the Federal Government had done a lot to develop the state.

Receiving the Minister of State for Works and Housing, Mr. Garba Ali Madaki in Kaduna, Makarfi said he was "highly appreciative" of the efforts the Federal Government had so far made to develop the state.

The governor stated that the Federal Government was executing projects that would help to improve the lot of the people, and that he was satisfied that their impact was being felt more in the areas of road construction and rehabilitation.

take firm steps to ensure that the people of the state eschewed violence and live peacefully with one another so that the state would witness rapid socio-economic growth.

Earlier, the minister had said he was in the state to monitor the progress of work on federal road projects, and that the idea was to ensure that he was not fed with wrong information by the ministry's field staff.

Ali said he was impressed with the effort the state government was making to restore peace in the area, adding that its decision to continue drumming into the ears of the people, the need to live peacefully with one another, was a step in the right direction.

He said that the whole of Eleme, Khana, Gokana, Tai and Okrika local government areas of the state would enjoy electricity from the turbines by end of April.

Rivers state, one of Nigeria's industrial hub has one of the worst cases of power outages in the country, forcing the Odili administration to announce plans to dump NEPA. Sources told NAN that the management of NEPA had not been at ease since the Rivers government embarked on the gas turbine project.

When contacted, a dependable source said that the authority was still in the dark "as to how the Rivers state government wants to provide its electricity to the people."

Rivers warns trouble-making youths

The Rivers State government has vowed that it will descend heavily on youths forming trouble in various communities in the state.

On Easter Monday, youths in the industrial town of Eleme, near Port Harcourt went on the rampage barricading roads and disrupting oil-lifting operations at the Port Harcourt Refining Company.

The incident caused difficulties for commuters and motorists and an acute scarcity of gasoline and other related products.

"Any person, who conducts himself in any manner likely to cause a breach of the peace or engages in unlawful assembly will face the wrath of the law," Rivers Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Mrs. Aleruchi Cookey-Gam, warned in a statement made available to NAN.

He stated that he would

She advised aggrieved people to channel their complaints to the government through the secretary to the state government.

Cookey-Gam said that government was committed to upholding the rule of law, noting that it would not fail in its duty of maintaining law and order.

Ethically divided Rivers has been in various crisis, with many communities at daggers drawn with their neighbours over various issues, ranging from land disputes to economic matters.

On their part, youths have descended heavily on oil companies operating in the state in a bid to force the companies to solve their economic problems. The development has made many investors, especially foreigners, to shun the state, an industrial engine room of the country.

NEWS

Health ministry to eradicate polio by 2002

By Ikenna Emeka Okpani

In its determination to eradicate polio by the year 2002, the Federal Ministry of Health has successfully conducted a total of eleven rounds of National Immunisation Days (NIDs) since the introduction of the house-to-house strategy for polio eradication in 1990.

This disclosure was made by the Minister of State for Health, Dr. Amina Ndalolo, while unveiling the plaque of the Larry Hout national polio laboratory at the University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital.

According to the minister, her ministry had also intensified surveillance of acute flaccid paralysis nationwide with a view to strengthening laboratory facilities to provide quality services.

She commended the late Rotarian Larry Hout for putting in so much efforts into raising funds for the establishment of the national polio laboratory in the hospital.

Expressing the Federal Government's appreciation to the World Health Organisation (WHO) and Rotary International for their contributions toward equipping the laboratory, Dr. Ndalolo assured that government would take immediate steps to ensure effective functioning of the laboratory.

To this end, the ministry has made available to the laboratory, two sophis-



Prof. A.B.C. Nwosu

ticated biosafety cabinets, a four-wheel drive vehicle, stand-by generator and split unit air conditioners.

She expressed optimism that, with the massive human, material and financial resources being mobilized and committed to the fight against polio, the target of achieving the eradication of polio by 2002 and subsequent global certification by 2005 would be realized.

Also speaking at the occasion, the chairman of Nigeria National Polio Plus Committee, Rotarian PGD Ade-Adefeso, said the purpose of the polio plus partners initiated in 1995 was to assist Rotarians in polio-endemic regions obtain tools and the supplies necessary for polio eradication.

On the unveiling of the plaque, the Rotarian described it as an honour done to Larry Hout, a former District Governor of Rotary International District 5100 in Oregon, USA, who in his lifetime, assisted in raising the funds for the establishment of the national polio laboratory in Maiduguri, now named after him.

A release made available to *Daily Trust* and signed by J.A. Odaudu, the chief press secretary to the Minister of State for Health, said that the Rotary International had spent over \$15 million on its polio eradication programme, initiated in 1985.

Vice-President Atiku Abubakar at the weekend in Uyo urged the private sector to contribute its quota in the development of education in the country. "Apart from regular payment of education tax, they should evolve policies to boost education and manpower development among the populace," Abubakar said.

He said that the emergence of NGOs that were advocating the rights of the child nationwide, was a healthy development. Abubakar who was speak-

Vice-President solicits private sector contribution to education

ing at the launching of the Child Education Development Network (CEDNET), an NGO established by Dr. Grace Ekpenyong and some USA-based trustees called on other organizations to complement the federal and state governments' efforts in the education sector.

The Vice-President, represented by the Minister of State for Environment, Dr. Ime Okopido, stated that the future development of any country

depended on the children of today.

He said that the CEDNET vision to sensitise and mobilise private sector support to supplement government efforts at educational development deserved the support of all. Earlier, the co-ordinator of CEDNET in Nigeria, Dr. Grace Ekpenyong, said that the organization had in its first outing assisted in the building of a dormitory for the Loreto Girls Juniorate, Abak, and the supply of potable water to the school.

On CEDNET, Ekpenyong, who is the wife of Akwa Ibom deputy governor, said that there was need for well-placed persons to take a trip to their alma-mater to see the state of decay in infrastructure with a view to assisting it.

She said that her organization was equally interested in mobilising and encouraging women "at the grassroot level to engage in gainful ventures".

"Since education is the fundamental right of the child, it behoves on all to support government effort in developing our schools to the expected standards".



Senate President, Sen. Atiku Abubakar (right), Sen. David Mark (centre) and Justice Michael Ogunbiyi during the British/Nigeria Law Week in Abuja ... recently.

Pix: Felix Onigbinde

Akinyemi urges bonding between Nigerians, democracy

Tell Magazine's 10th anniversary lecture on Monday offered a forum for some prominent Nigerians to comment on the state of the nation with former Minister of External Affairs, Prof. Bolaji Akinyemi advocating the establishment of a bond of interest between democracy and the people as an attitude against military incursion.

Leading the discussion on "Democracy: bonding with the people," Akinyemi said that the government should treat bonding as a top priority, insisting that the present administration should allow the people to determine their fate.



President Obasanjo

He explained that the primary purpose of democracy was to renew the bond between the people and the politician, as well as remind them that they had a stake in governance. The former minister also spoke of the need for participatory democracy to enable every Nigerian to participate in issues relating to the development of the country and help the elite to define issues and offer solutions to them.

He further spoke of the need for a national conference, even with the word "sovereign" removed. Akinyemi also called for a national job placement scheme to alleviate the suffering of the people, adding that this could provide a bond for the people under the present democratic government.

He urged the Federal Government to authorize the private sector to increase employment opportunities by employing 15 percent of its present workforce at its expense, while local governments should recruit artisans, especially in the rural areas, for beautification and rehabilitation programmes.

Timely intervention by the police in Lagos yesterday averted what could have resulted in another breakdown of law and order in Obalende area of the state.

The Commissioner of Police, Lagos State, Mr. Mike Okiro, in a telephone chat with *Daily Trust* over the yesterday morning disturbances in Obalende, said that the clash was between two factions of motor park touts (a.k.a. *Agbero*).

He stated that the two factions of the street miscreants were fighting for supremacy in Obalende, one of the popular commercial vehicles terminus in Lagos. Okiro revealed that a faction of the hoodlums had earlier arrived the bus-stop that morning and started collecting the illegal handling and parking fees from the motorists.

The fees ranging from N50

Police avert riot in Lagos

to N20 for 911 buses popularly called *Molue* and small buses respectively did not go down well with the others who claimed they have been collecting the said amount and that Obalende was their "beat".

The refusal of the encroaching faction to vacate the bus-stop for the alleged owners resulted in free for all fight, at the end an unconfirmed report has it that two persons were allegedly killed.

Daily Trust gathered that over 15 persons have been arrested by the police at Onikan police station and would soon be charged to court for breach of police peace.

Okiro said police mobile force had taken over the busy Obalende bus-stop to forestall further insurgency by the hoodlums.

Wife of Kaduna deputy gov. dies

The wife of the deputy governor of Kaduna State, Mrs. Stephanie Shakari, died early on Monday at a private hospital in Kaduna, a family source at the deputy governor's office said.

The source at Tafawa Balewa road residence of the deputy governor in Kaduna, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) that the

deceased was rushed to a "nearby hospital," where she died after a brief illness. The press secretary to the deputy governor, Mr. Benjamin Toro, however, explained that the deputy governor was out of town at the time of the incident.

He was reported to have travelled to Akure, Ondo State, on a condolence visit to a friend.

203 persons die in auto accident in Ogun state

From Wisdom Patrick, in Lagos

A total of 203 people died in auto accidents in Ogun state during the first quarter of this year alone.

In a statistics of road traffic accidents and offences in the state for the first quarter of this year made available to *Daily Trust* yesterday in Lagos, over 362 persons were allegedly injured in road mishaps in the state.

It was gathered that the state recorded about 294 accidents during the period. In all, 54 of such accidents involved vehicles. The statistics revealed that 125 of such accidents were serious while 113 were fatal.

It was learnt that, police charged 77 persons to court for accident related offences. *Daily Trust* was told that one person has been corrected so far while two were discharged and acquitted.

Daily Trust gathered also that in all, a fine of N5,010 was

imposed while one person was sentenced to one month imprisonment in a traffic related offence. The report indicated that a total of 233 cases were reported as road traffic offences.

It was learnt that over 23 cases were being currently prosecuted, stating further that a similar number (23) persons were also convicted for traffic offences in the state.

Daily Trust investigations in the traffic department of the state police command revealed that over 60 percent of the accidents occurred along Lagos/Abeokuta expressway. It was also gathered that bad road and activities of hoodlums along the highway contributed to series of senseless killings in automobile crashes in the state.



INSIDE POLITICS

AD Chairman wants government to monetise allowances

The national chairman of the Alliance for Democracy (AD), Alhaji Adamu Abdulkadir, has urged the Federal Government to speed up the monetisation of allowances of political appointees and those of civil servants.

This, he said, would stop the drain on government resources. Abdulkadir told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abuja yesterday that it was not the responsibility of government to accommodate its appointees, buy cars and employ drivers for them.

"If the allowances of government appointees are monetised, such officers will be forced to rent their own houses, buy their own cars and employ their own drivers, and the money spent on such perquisites could be diverted to something else," he said.

The AD chairman said that if a minister was removed from office, he would not have to think of where to go or how to return government property since he already had his own.

Abdulkadir said that government has lost a lot of money through the carelessness of some drivers who smashed government vehicles with reckless abandon,

pointing out that if allowances were monetised, government would no longer bother itself about replacing official vehicles.

He also said that the monetisation of allowances would lead to a fall in rent, particularly in Abuja because some appointees would prefer to go outside Abuja to secure accommodation.

"Monetisation is what government should do from the ministers downward and forget about housing them. They should also encourage mortgage institutions to build houses for sale to workers," the AD chairman counselled.

Abdulkadir also suggested that government should encourage banks to start giving loans to civil servants to enable them to build



Abdulkadir their own houses. He blamed the CBN for the fall in the value of the Naira, saying that

the bank had not been fair to the nation's currency. "The CBN has done nothing to protect the naira and this is one of its primary responsibilities," he stressed. Abdulkadir wondered why the value of the Naira had fallen when Nigeria was making more foreign exchange from the sale of oil than it did a few years ago. "When oil was selling at 12 dollars per barrel, the naira was 90 to one dollar. Why should the value of the naira keep falling now that oil is selling at about thrice the price a few years ago?" Abdulkadir asked.

The National Secretary of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Mr. Benjamin Ochai, has denied rumours that the Commission is soon to commence the delimitation of constituencies.

In a statement issued in Abuja yesterday, Ochai said INEC was not embarking on the exercise for now, adding that rumours making the rounds to that effect were not true.

He noted that INEC had received numerous and unsolicited requests from various communities across the country for the creation of new constituencies or the

INEC will not embark on delimitation of constituencies - Secretary

adjustment of existing ones.

"To take stock of these requests and assess the magnitude of the problem as expressed by the communities, the Commission requested its resident electoral commissioners in the states to forward such requests to the headquarters," Ochai said.

The statement added that, if INEC eventually decides to embark on the exercise, it would do so in accordance with the relevant provisions of the constitution, adding that "all relevant



Dr. Abel Guobadia stakeholders will be duly consulted."

Lawmaker enlightens electorate on assemblymen's disposition

Disturbed by the notion that members of the National Assembly were selfish and careless

about the plight of the electorate, a member of the Lower House, Rep. Abdullahi Matori, has begun

an enlightenment campaign in his constituency, "to tell the people the true position of things."

Matori, who represents Bauchi Federal Constituency, told his people in Bauchi at the weekend that the Presidency was to be blamed over the non-provision of roads, boreholes and health centres in each constituency.

"The 2000 budget made provision of about N80 million for the amenities but President Olusegun Obasanjo failed to provide the funds in preference for a new plane which the Lower House also rejected," Matori said.

He explained that the Lower House was willing to approve the purchase of a new plane for the President provided he included the provision of amenities to the constituencies.

He said that the 2001 budget made provision for a 200-km road, three boreholes and a medical centre for each federal constituency and blamed the Presidency for failure to release the funds.

While pleading with his constituents for understanding, Rep. Matori said efforts were being made to convince the Presidency to include the provision of amenities with the request for a plane because of the importance of the amenities to the electorates.



Ghali

Governor Akande wants PDP to publish its accounts

The governor of Osun, Chief Adebisi Akande, has challenged the PDP to publicly declare its account.

Akande, who threw the challenge on Monday at

count".

The governor also charged the party to let Nigerians know its sources of funds, saying, "you won't believe it, the party is keeping money for next elections."

He opined that the PDP-led federal government had failed Nigerians, because of what he called "poor economic policies".

Akande said, "before the advent of this administration, one U.S. dollar was selling for N80.00, while it now sells for N140.00, adding that workers could not enjoy the increase in their salaries as a result of the situation.

Akande said that many of President Obasanjo's aides and ministers had served under the military and they are the major causes of the poor economic policies.

The governor, therefore, urged the people of the state not to be deceived by PDP's campaign, saying that the AD in Osun had the best "people-oriented programmes".



Gov. Akande Ipetu-Ijesa, in a public enlightenment programme tagged "Labe Odan", also accused the federal government of "Reckless spending". He said, "The PDP at the center has nothing to show Nigerians after two years, but is only saving money for future elections; the PDP should tell Nigerians how much they have in their ac-



Chairman, House Committee on Transport, Hon. Okey Odeh, (r), chatting with Deputy House Leader, Hon. Mao Ohunabwa, (l), during the public hearing on the proposed bill to set up a Chartered Institute of Freight Forwarders of Nigeria, held at the National Assembly complex in Abuja...recently. Pix: Felix Onigbinde.

Senator accuses INEC of rigging

In a reaction to the results of last Saturday's House of Assembly bye-elections in Chikum federal constituency of Kaduna state, Senator Ahmed Mukhtar Aruwa, has accused the Independent National Electoral Commission in Kaduna state of rigging the elections in favour of the PDP.

Addressing newsmen in his Kaduna residence on Monday, Senator Aruwa said "the INEC was highly involved in rigging the election because on Friday night prior to the distribution of electoral materials, an informant told me that 9 out of 17 ballot boxes will not be delivered to their polling units. INEC's excuse would be that they had no access to the polling units."

Sen. Aruwa, representing APP (Kaduna Central Constituency), said that his party

petitioned the state resident electoral commissioner at about 1am. He also alleged that the Kaduna state government gave out sums of money amounting to N3,000 to various individuals in addition to house to house purchase of ballot papers.

He said, therefore, that the results, which showed that the PDP candidate won by 100,190 votes, followed by Mrs. Martina Solomon of the APP, who got 9,720 votes and the AD candidate who got 2,110 votes, were fake.

He said, he would sponsor a bill in the Senate that would prescribe punishments against INEC officials who capitalised on their sensitive positions to rig elections in favour of others.

Senator Aruwa also described the suspension of oil explorations in the north as the handwork of some anti-north elements in the govern-

ment, and said that the north may be compelled to raise funds to finance explorations in the region. He reasoned that it took 20 years to discover oil in the Delta area so it was too early for the government to suspend exploration in the north just after about one year, adding that "with or without oil, it was time for the north to look inwards with a view to curtailing the blackmail of the oil producing states. Aruwa also attributed the failure of the Nigerian economy; fall in the value of the naira and increasing poverty to the poor leadership of President Olusegun Obasanjo.

On the recent decision of the Senate to implement the recommendations of the Kuta Panel's report as suggested by the Oyofo committee, Senator Aruwa, who was also one of those indicted by the panel said he was ready to abide by it.

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Ladies' Line

Self-defence for women

Self-defence is all about awareness and attitude, meaning that women must be aware of their surroundings at all times, so they can protect themselves if ever faced with a potentially dangerous situation. Sisters can increase their confidence level (aka "street smarts") by joining a gym, taking boxing lessons, practicing Taekwondo at home, or enrolling in self-defence classes. These women know that there are no guarantees when it comes to protecting themselves, but being mentally and physically prepared can increase their options and can lead to a successful escape from danger.

Knowledge is power, so arm yourself with the following information provided by law enforcement officials and safety experts. According to experts, there are some simple self-defence tips that can make you safer at home, at work and at play.

Don't make yourself a target

Looking vulnerable (walking down the street with your head down, slouching, looking lost, or carrying too many bags) is an open invitation to a potential offender, says Ronald Hampton, executive director of the National Black Police Association. "Most of the time, when something happens to us, it is because we aren't paying attention," he says. "You should always be on your toes. If you are going from one place to another, carry yourself with a sense of confidence, even if you don't know where you're going." Your eyes are your first line of defence. Keep your head up and look straight ahead, regularly scanning the area from side to side. Recognizing a situation in front of you will give you more time and more options to avoid trouble. Additionally, look inside elevators, and other enclosed areas carefully before venturing inside. Be sure to wear functional clothes. Avoid sling purses draped across the front because an offender can use the purse to pull you down or forward.

Avoid confrontation

Using the high-powered Bruce Lee kicks that you learned in karate class is, in fact, the last thing that you want to do. Safety experts recommend that you take preventive measures to avoid a confrontation completely- (only use physical confrontation as a backup to your psychological ability to get out of a situation.) So if that means crossing the street to avoid a situation, do it. If it means bowing out of an argument with an aggressive friend or stranger, do it. If it means handing over your purse to a robber, do it-and flee. Contrary to popular belief, self-defence is not about fighting; it's about doing what you have to do to save your life.

Don't surrender

If an offender wants your valuables, give them up, warns Officer Ron Rufo of the I Chicago Police Department's preventive programs division. Experts also advise you to avoid going into an alley, car, or abandoned building with the offender; do whatever it takes to flee. "The [non-violent] offender doesn't want to be noticed; he wants to get in and get out of there," Officer Rufo explains. "Therefore, if an offender grabs your purse and wants to pull you into an alley, his intentions are not good. He wants to sexually abuse, severely beat or maybe even kill you. Always get away because the longer you are with the offender, the more likely you will be able to identify him in a line-up, and he knows this."

Use verbal enforcement

Forget what your debutante aunt told you about making a scene in public. You are fighting for your life, and the noise you make can save your life! Self-defence instructor Carrie Rentschler notes the "key to fighting back lies in the transformation of fear into anger and

power. Becoming angry allows you to relax and use adrenaline to demand that an attack stop...using your voice transforms fear into anger by pushing energy out at the attacker." One of the first lessons that women are taught in rape-prevention seminars is to yell out a loud, shrilling NO! to the potential assailant. Not only will you catch the attacker off guard, but you'll more than likely get the attention of other people in the area. Never hesitate to attract attention if you are in trouble.

Don't let your guard down

Don't assume that all offenders are men in ski masks, warns officer Rufo, who points out that some are well-dressed and others are women, who are partial to snatching your handbags. "There was a well-dressed thief who wore a mink stole," he recalls. "She walked around with an air of authority and when she entered someone's office space, no one questioned who she was. She went from floor to floor of this office building stealing purses." At your workplace, watch for those who loiter around the revolving door, Rufo advises.

One of the most dangerous mistakes women make is to let their guard down once they've reached their car. Granted, most women feel safe once they've reached their haven on wheels after darting across a dimly lit parking lot, but experts warn that there are some major safety precautions women should take before breathing easy. First of all, when you are walking toward your car, have your keys ready and placed in-between your fingers on your dominant hand. Not only will you be ready for a quick entrance into your vehicle, but just in case an assailant accosts you, you can use your keys as a weapon, says Officer Rufo, who gives a few other car safety tips. "We recommend that you: 1) put your packages in the trunk; 2) get into the car and secure your child, and 3) lock all doors immediately and pull away. If someone wants your car, give it to them." But then you must flip the script if a child is involved, he says, adding: "You must become the aggressor and say, 'You can have this car, but give me my child!' A thief doesn't want to be a kidnapper as well, because it would be worse for him [when he's apprehended]."

To avoid a carjacking, have your doors locked and windows rolled up nearly all the way when you're driving. Whenever you come to a stop, allow yourself enough space between your car and the one in front of you, in case you have to manoeuvre at a second's notice.

Don't look for love in all the wrong places

Self-protection advocates recommend that first dates be spent in public, well-trafficked areas, and, if possible, you should take a friend along. (Spending a first date in a dark movie theatre or in a secluded area is not advised.) Pay attention to the red flags; if someone tries to get you to drink against your will, know that they do not have your best interests at heart. Look into your date's eyes and trust your gut feeling about him. Be wary of someone who is too "touchy-feely" on your date; if he makes unrecorded advances, cut the date short immediately.

Don't be a creature habit.

You get up at 5:30 a.m., go for your morning jog, come home, shower, and dress for work and stop by

The neighbourhood bagel shop on your way to the office. Sound familiar? Unbeknownst to many, habits are dangerous, because criminals, statistically, are more likely to have memorized your patterns of behaviour. The burglar knows when your home is empty. The sex offender knows when you leave the house alone. Officer Rufo warns women to change their routes if they work out daily, and if possible, to take a friend along.

Hampton agrees. "Vary everything that you do. If someone wants to do something to you, they will pay attention to your habits," he says. "And if you do work out, the time of day is important. It's much better to work out in the morning when the sun comes up than it is to run, ride or walk in the park after dark."

When you are out of town, the safety rules still apply. Be conscious of your surroundings to eliminate the offender's element of surprise.

Make a commitment to yourself.

You are worthy of protection, but don't live in a shroud of paranoia. To some, it may appear that taking precautions and being paranoid are one and the same. But nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, paranoia can be paralyzing. "If you're paranoid, you are stricken with fear, and fear doesn't allow you to be prepared to deal with threatening situations," says Hampton. Conversely, self-defence is about being aware, and being empowered, not being afraid. Make a commitment to value your well being enough to invest in it, which means learning all you can about protecting yourself and foiling the plots of those around us who are up to no good.

Condensed from *Ebony*



Women should recognise a potentially dangerous situation

5-Minute Fiction

With Ms. Farouq

Our neighbour's son

Fatima walked into her father's sitting room and immediately felt that something was wrong. The atmosphere was tense, something about her mother's expression disturbed her but she walked on till she came a few steps to where her two parents sat, then she lowered herself and sat on the carpet.

"Good evening" she said respectfully, "I was told that you wanted to see me."

"Yes" her mother was the first to respond, "It's about the young man you presented to us. He came to see your father in the company of his friends and relations while you were at the campus this afternoon. After the introductions, Alhaji found out that the young man wasn't a stranger at all, we knew his parents well."

"I see" Fatima answered shyly, her face lowered to the carpet.

"Unfortunately" her mother continued, "we have to discourage this match, the two of you are not at all suitable."

"Why" Fatima asked looking up in surprise "why are we not suitable?"

"You see his parents were our neighbours once, a long time ago. You were a little more than a year old when we left the city and came to live here, in the GRA. As our poor neighbours, we tried to discharge our obligations to them. Every year your father gave his father a Sallah ram. And I always sent clothes to him and his siblings, those clothes that your elder sisters and brothers had used. His mother was always grateful for those gifts, she used to say that there was no way they could afford such high quality clothes, if we didn't give them. So you see that was the wide difference between us. You can't now turn around and marry one of them."

"But why not mother, he is no longer poor, at least he is no longer receiving charity from you or anyone else. He is a successful young engineer who is completely self-reliant. Why should his humble origins stand in our way?"

"Because people don't forget such things. People knew how we were in relation to them. In fact, once when I ran into his mother after his father's death, she told me that it was the money that Alhaji here" she gestured towards her husband "gave to her that helped her set up a small provisions store to enable her take care of her family. It is probably from the proceeds of that investment that she trained your young engineer. How can you marry someone who probably owes even his university degree to your father's generosity?"

"Mother, if this is the only thing you have against him then with all due respect I'd like you to know that I still prefer to marry him than anybody else."

"But Fatima you can't do this to us, your elder sisters are all married to men with better backgrounds than him, do you want to be the odd one out?"

"Her elder sisters got married to strangers" Her father interrupted sitting up in his chair "you only imagined they had better backgrounds because you didn't live with their parents. I tried to discourage you before you called Fatima in but you wouldn't listen. There is absolutely nothing wrong with Fatima marrying this young man if he is of sound character and mind. There is nothing wrong with being poor. I was poor too before I became rich."

"But our old friends all knew about the poor neighbours we were always assisting, they will find it a source of gossip. Indeed they will laugh at us."

"Then they are not fit to be called friends. In any case who will remember those neighbours we had decades ago? Unless you took the trouble to tell them." Alhaji responded.

"You'll be surprised how much people remember if it suits them." Fatima's mother insisted.

"Well then if they do, tell them you are simply impressed with the boy's character. Tell them that his parents were poor but very noble in conduct. May be I've never told you this, but I'd always secretly admired Malam Abdu, that's Muhammad's father. He was the only man on the whole of that street that had never begged me for anything. There were days when I'd meet neighbours waiting for me in front of the house long before I came out, but that man was never one of them. When I insisted on giving him ram every sallah it was more out of admiration for his quiet pride than anything else. He wasn't that poor, did you ever see him fail to buy naming rams whenever his wife had a child? He always provided for his family to the best of his ability. That was why I encouraged you to give his wife clothes because he was the type that should be assisted. He wasn't rich yet he was content with what he had and wouldn't beg. Even the Holy Quran recommends people like that as most deserving of help, not those who go round begging."

Hajiya was quiet after her husband had stopped talking. Then she said, "I only want what is best for her, I don't want my daughter to suffer."

"Fatima will not suffer *Insha-Allah*, if that boy is anything like his father, be sure she has made the right choice. You know, long after we moved here, I used to go back to the city and pray in our neighbourhood mosque, just to meet up with my old neighbours. Every one always spoke well of Malam Abdu. Even when he died that was how I got to hear about it, then I went and consoled his widow. Just be happy for Fatima and entrust her to the care of the Almighty."

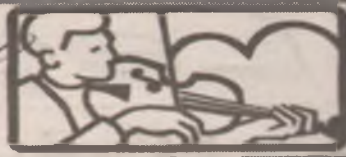
"I will try Alhaji, I will try my best." Hajiya replied.

When Fatima looked up at her father with a smile of joy and relief, she didn't expect to see the tension disappear from her mother's face.

But to her surprise, it was all gone.



Arts & Entertainment



'Too busy' Elton sells off 20 cars

About 20 of pop star Elton John's luxury cars are going under the hammer in a sale expected to fetch up to £1 million.

The entertainer, who faces a multi-million pound legal bill after losing a High Court case last week, says he is selling up because he travels abroad so much.

"I would rather they went to people who can get pleasure out of them every day," said Sir Elton.

The sale includes Aston Martins, Ferraris and six post-war Bentleys - all with top of the range sound systems and maintained in mint condition at his Woodside Home in Windsor.

Among the highlights is an Aston Martin once painted the colours of Watford Football Club

— the team at one stage owned by the soccer-mad star.

A black 1973 Rolls-Royce Phantom VI is expected to fetch between

Music

£110,000 and £150,000 and another lot is a 1987 Ferrari Testarossa Sir



Elton John shows off some of the cars up for sale.

Elton received as a 40th birthday present.

All the cars, apart from the Ferraris, are British-made.

The star's passion for cars began in 1970 when he traded a Ford Escort for an Aston Martin as he tasted success in the music industry.

"Once you've driven a great car you never want to go back," he said nostalgically.

The star learnt to drive at 17 and has driven all the vehicles offered for sale.

A spokesperson for the Christie's auction house said they

expected the collection to raise about £1 million "but realise it could fetch much more." The sale will take place in central London on June 5.

Sir Elton's extravagant spending habits were exposed during the recent suit against his former accountant and ex-manager, with outlay on property and personal items once amounting to almost £40 million over a 20-month period.

The star, who once boasted that he could find a shop in the Sahara desert, maintains four luxury homes around the globe and an overflowing wardrobe of outrageous outfits which he periodically sells for charity.

Freer medal awarded to Islamic scholar, Oleg Grabar

Award

By William Amin

A leading U.S. museum has honoured a prominent scholar for his life's work of teaching and writing about Islamic art and architecture.

On April 5, 2001, the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., bestowed on Professor Oleg Grabar the prestigious Charles Lang Freer medal "in recognition of his enormous impact on American understanding of Islamic art," according to Freer Director, Milo C. Beach.

The Freer medal was created in 1956 to recognize scholars for distinguished contributions to the knowledge and understanding of Oriental civilizations, as reflected in

art. Grabar is the third scholar of Islamic art to win the award, after Iranian art specialist, Roman Ghirshman in 1974 and Ernst Kuhnel in 1960. The Freer Gallery is part of the Smithsonian complex of national museums in Washington. The Freer medal commemorates Charles Lang Freer (1856-1919), who founded the Freer Gallery, which currently houses more than 26,000 art works.

In his acceptance speech, Grabar praised the U.S. government's Fulbright program and the Ford Foundation for providing funds to scholars to pursue foreign studies. He also recognized

the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for its work of protecting cultural monuments around the world. Grabar completed his doctoral studies in Oriental languages, literature, and art history at Princeton University in 1955 and taught those subjects at Harvard and Michigan Universities.

Since Grabar began writing and

lecturing about Islamic art and architecture, university enrollment in these topics has risen and major U.S. museums have expanded their Islamic art collections and held more frequent art exhibitions and cultural events featuring Islam and the Middle East. In addition, overseas travel to visit Islamic landmarks, even by non-Muslims, is booming, and; with higher flows of immigrants to the United States from Arab and Muslim

countries, U.S. schools and media are making efforts to examine Islamic culture and heritage.

Grabar said Western understanding and appreciation of Islamic arts would be even greater if the ruling authorities in many Muslim countries did not hamper the study of Islamic cultural achievements by

Western scholars. He said the authorities often restrict visas and travel permits and refuse access to monuments for academics from some countries and reject academic publications based on who wrote them, instead of their merit.

Grabar said "absolutely first-rate" modern art and artists exist across the Islamic world from Morocco to Indonesia. "What is really still missing is the presence of a passionate person" to create a collective cultural sense and lead a united, global promotional campaign for Islamic art, he said. An exhibition devoted to the "Arab Lands" could be a smashing success if held in a cosmopolitan city such as New York, he added.

William Amin is a Washington File Staff Writer.

Conductor dies on stage

The Italian conductor, Giuseppe Sinopoli, has died after suffering a massive heart attack during a performance at the Deutsche Oper in Berlin.

Sinopoli, who was 54, was on the rostrum conducting Verdi's Aida when he dropped his baton and collapsed in the third act.

He was rushed to hospital, but doctors were unable to resuscitate him and pronounced him dead early Saturday morning.

The music world reacted with shock.

Organisers of the Wagner Festival at Bayreuth in Germany, where he was to conduct the Ring Cycle later this year, said they were "dejected and stunned".

They have just over three months to find a replacement for what is one of the most gruelling jobs in the opera world.

In Italy, Prime Minister Giuliano Amato as well as members of the government coalition and the opposition paid tribute to Sinopoli as a leading light of Italian culture and a significant representative of the international arts scene.

Brilliant career Giuseppe Sinopoli had worked at many of the world's major opera venues,

amongst them the Metropolitan Opera in New York, La Scala in Milan, the Paris Opera and the Royal Opera House in London.

Music

Sinopoli was born in Venice in 1946, and studied music at the city's conservatory in the late 1960s and

summer courses in the German town of Darmstadt in 1968.

Seven years later, he was to found the Bruno Maderna ensemble, named after the Venetian conductor under whom he studied in Darmstadt.

It was after this that Sinopoli began in earnest his career as both a composer and conductor.

He was appointed chief conductor at Rome's St Cecilia National Academy in 1983.

A year later he took up the same post at the city's Philharmonic Orchestra.



Sinopoli in rehearsal with the Semper Opera three years ago.

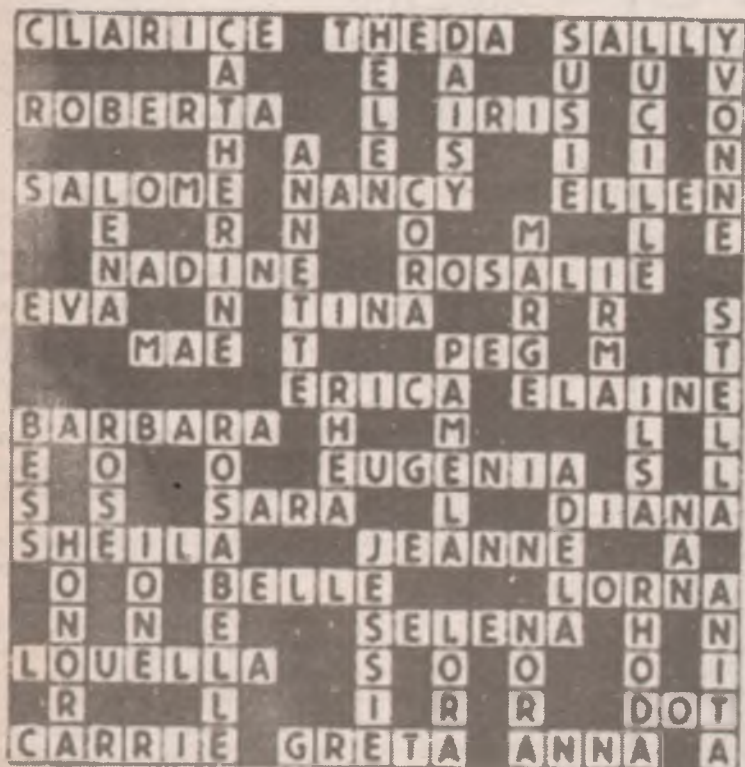
early 70s. He simultaneously took a degree in medicine at the nearby University of Padua, graduating in 1972 with doctoral dissertations on criminal anthropology and on the physiology of the acoustic mental area.

Disappointed with his studies in the Venice Conservatory Sinopoli attended

In 1985 he made his debut at the Met with Puccini's Tosca and at Bayreuth with Tannhauser by Wagner.

Sinopoli went to Berlin in 1990 to lead the Deutsche Oper and two years later to Dresden to take over as music director of the city's Staatskapelle orchestra.

Solution to yesterday's puzzle



Arts & Entertainment

New Nigerian: The first 20 years by Turi Muhammadu Part XIX

To ban the BBC!

In yesterday's account we read about developments in the Northern Nigeria during the civil war, and the position of foreign nations on the Nigerian crisis. Today we read about the workers' strike and the anti-tax riot in the old Western State. Also the Federal Government considers banning the BBC from Nigeria.

Books

According to the Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Nigerian Armed Force "The whole nation has to be put on a state of preparedness to face all eventualities because of foreign intervention and because of our experiences from abortive peace talks in Kampala, Niamey and Addis-Ababa. It is now quite clear that in 1969, we have to fight resolutely for peace".

In its editorial on the same day, titled "Sweat and toil", the *New Nigerian* said: "As we enter the new year, we are carrying with us the most pressing problems of the old. For the war continues... The year 1968 was a difficult one. There is no reason to believe that 1969 will be less difficult".

Apart from the war itself, the New Year also inherited unprecedented wave of workers' strikes for improved salaries and other working conditions. In a tradition, which has become entrenched since 1968, various unions threatened and in many cases did down their tools. The roll call included such giants as the 40,000 strong Western State Chapter of the Nigeria Union of Teachers and the Post and Telecommunications Staff. Others were the Nigerian Railway Corporation and the Nigeria Nurses Association.

Faced with a perplexing war, the federal government which was the employer of these public sector workers was forced to bargain from a very weak position. Indeed, it was apparent that the period under review was not one in which the government could be expected to make generous concessions as demanded by the unions. This was the reason why some of the workers such as the federation of Senior Staff Unions of Statutory Corporations withdrew their strike threats immediately after it was made. However, the pervasiveness of the strike cannot be over emphasised as even members of the Ministry of Defence Civil Employees Union actually gave government a 21-day ultimatum as reported in the *New Nigerian* of January 15. This was despite the fact that this group represented workers essential for the task at hand.

After the war and the strikes, the next biggest headaches of 1969 were the anti-tax riots in the Western State. These riots, which were carried over from the previous year, showed no signs of abating. On New Year's Day alone, three people were killed in Abeokuta and 1,500 arrested. According to a *New Nigerian* report published on January 7, the probe panel into the anti-tax riots, which began sitting on January 6,

disclosed that thirty lives had been lost thus far. The Wild West indeed!

Faced with this deadly combination of war, strikes and riots, no economy "Could possibly boom. Nigeria's did not. The mass inter-regional movement of people disrupted trade while investments and commerce declined. Import and export volume, for example, fell by 12 per cent in 1968 and would fall even lower in 1969. According to a report in the *New Nigerian* of March 7, the Federal Government would have to spend £1,163 million on a four-year reconstruction programme to undo the damages of the civil war.

A growing economy was needed both for the prosecution of the war on a sustained basis and for rehabilitation and reconstruction of the liberated areas. For instance, the Administrator of the East Central State, Mr. Ukpabi Asika, was saddled with the task of resettling three million people.

In spite of difficulties outlined above the most pervasive issue was the raging war. The various attempts at a peaceful resolution mentioned by Gowon in his New Year broadcast had no effect. Even as early in the year as February 1, the *New Nigerian* reported that the rebels had carried out air raids in the Mid-Western and South-Eastern States. Four Nigerians were killed in one such raid eight miles from Benin which had been liberated in the previous year.

In order not to lose its gains, the federal side had to resort to pre-emptive air attacks. This led to the bombardment of Umuahia, the last rebel stronghold and an attack on Aba. According to the *New Nigerian* edition of February 11, two towns-Elali and Obum-were liberated as a result of that exercise. During the course of the first six months of 1969, several more towns were liberated from the stranglehold of the rebels.

Added to the necessity of ensuring effective governance of the liberated areas, this task stretched the nation's resources to the limit. Yet, the feat was accomplished. For instance, an Executive Council for Rivers State comprising eight civilians and the Military Administrator were named. Ken Saro Wiwa was appointed member of the Executive Council with responsibility as Administrator of Bonny Province.

The greatest source of concern over the war were those from abroad, for, as the war dragged on, it became apparent that several countries

including Ivory Coast, Tanzania, Zambia and Dahomey in Africa as well as France, Britain and the US in the West were supporting the rebels in one way or another. This support was most insidious on the part of France and the US because it was persistently denied by the two governments. West Germany and the Scandinavian countries as well as the invidious Caritas -the so called Catholic Relief Organisation -interpreted the war on religious grounds.

On January 2, the *New Nigerian* reported, the US Ambassador to Nigeria, Albert Mathews, pledging the support of the diplomatic corps to the Federal Military Government against the rebels. But this was a message about which many Nigerians in and out of government were sceptical. On February 1, the same



Sir Ahmadu Bello

paper reported that Police Commissioner Alhaji Audu Bako, the Military Governor of Kano had said Nigeria was suspicious of the US involvement in the civil war. He was speaking in the aftermath of the controversy over the donation of eight master airplanes for transportation of relief materials to the rebel-held areas.

Over the months, there were persistent complaints from the Federal Government that the US and France as well as the Geneva based International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Vatican's Caritas and the Joint Church Aid were arming the rebels under the cover of

relief supplies and humanitarian missions. For example, a report culled from the London based Sunday Telegraph and published in the *New Nigerian* of February 10 said that the French alone were delivering 150 tons of arms to Ojukwu every week. These were routed through the French-speaking West African countries especially Dahomey to which Nigeria protested over the use of its air space for illegal ICRC and other flights.

However, not all was lost on the international arena. Major world bodies such as the UN and OAU remained supportive of the federal cause. The UN Secretary General, U. Thant, maintained a personal representative in Nigeria for six months at a time while the OAU had a committee on the Nigerian crisis headed by Ethiopia's Emperor Haile Selassie. There was also the International Observers team, which visited various parts of the country including the crisis-free North where they inspected houses abandoned by the Igbos at the outbreak of the war.

The cumulative effect of all these was that most responsible members of the international community understood and identified with the cause of the federal government of keeping Nigeria together and united in spite of the skilful and effective anti Nigeria propaganda of the rebels. Apart from regular statements of support, these friendly nations ranging from the USSR to Kenya and from Egypt to Indonesia contributed in blocking the rebel's path to victory. One such classic move was when the rebel's envoys were barred from entering the UN building in New York by the Organisation.

To those who opposed it, the government was unequivocal. Representing General Gowon at the 28 nations Commonwealth meeting in London in January, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the Vice Chairman of the Federal Executive Council told the world: "Nigeria is not accountable to any foreign country for the conduct of her internal affairs".

"Similarly, when the then Federal Commissioner for Information Chief Anthony Enahoro disclosed that the Federal Government was considering banning the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) from Nigeria, the *New Nigerian* promptly followed the revelation with an editorial titled 'Unwarranted hostility'."

According to the report in the *New Nigerian* of January 7, the Federal Government had earlier on ensured that the Nigerian civil war was not an agenda for discussion at the meeting.

The *New Nigerian* had become completely disenchanted with Western nations and organisations especially the Commonwealth. In particular, the insincerity of Britain had become marked in its indefensible position over the unilateral declaration of independence by Ian Smith's minority government in Rhodesia as well as its racist immigration policy. In an editorial titled "A piece of diplomatic chicanery" published on January 11, the paper said "it would be futile to put further pressure on Britain to do anything about Rhodesia". Before this, an editorial titled "The future of the Commonwealth" and published on January 4 had noted that "The world is becoming increasingly quizzical and the younger generation are too practical not to see through the gaps which form the old fraying threads of an incongruously woven fabric".

Similarly, when the then Federal Commissioner for Information Chief Anthony Enahoro disclosed that the Federal Government was considering banning the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) from Nigeria, the *New Nigerian* promptly followed the revelation with an editorial titled "Unwarranted hostility".

In the editorial published on January 14, the paper supported all forms of "punitive measures against the BBC". in retaliation for its meddlesomeness. The remarkable thing here was that despite the enormous need the government had to rally 'all round its cause, it did not take the machinations of such powerful enemies lightly.

There can be no complete analysis of the *New Nigerian* in this period without mentioning the famous "sex-in-a-car" scoop. This was a news story about how Andrew Obeya, the then Secretary to the Benue-Plateau State Government, was reportedly caught making love to a married woman in his car. The story which made the headline in the paper's February 1 edition was to become the subject of several court cases involving the Editor of the *New Nigerian*, Malam Adamu Ciroma, and Stephen Bamigbele his reporter on the one hand and Obeya on the other. With characteristic courage, the paper stood by its story even though it gave the accused ample opportunity to air his side.

To be continued

NEWS

Govt will continue to guarantee religious rights

The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Chief Duben Onyia, said today in Abuja that the Federal Government would continue to guarantee every Nigerian the right to practice his religious belief including his right to visit the holy land.

Speaking at the inauguration of the 16-member Christian Pilgrims committee 2001, Onyia reiterated government's determination to scale down the level of its involvement in pilgrimage affairs as from next year.

He, however, assured that government would continue to provide consular assistance to Nigerian pilgrims. Onyia reminded members of the committee that one of the problems the government had always been faced with was "the predictable abscondment of Nigerian pilgrims in the holy land."

"Although the level of abscondment recorded during last year's pilgrimage was less than two per cent, I urge your committee to work harder for the total elimination of the ugly incidence of abscondment," he said.

The Minister said the elimination of abscondment would make the granting of pilgrims group visas by the Israeli authorities much easier.

In organising the 2001 pilgrimage, the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the committee is expected to liaise with reputable airlines for the smooth airlift of the pilgrims to and from the holy land; fix airfares payable by each pilgrim as well as liaise with tour agents in Israel.

The committee, which is expected to liaise with various State Christian Pilgrims Welfare Boards in carrying out its functions, will also take charge of all matters pertaining to the welfare of Christian pilgrims generally.

Onyia assured that government would place adequate resources at the disposal of the committee for the execution of its assignment.

Responding on behalf of the members, the Chairman of the Committee and former Governor of Ondo State, Evangelist Bamidele

Olumilua, assured the Minister that his committee would work hard to realise the objective for which it was set up.

"The committee will also work towards reducing the abscondment rate from the two per cent recorded last year, he said.

Commission promises to investigate murder allegation against Amucheazi

The Human Rights Violation Investigation Commission has said it would investigate the allegation of murder against former Director of the National Orientation Agency (NOA), Prof. Elochukwu Oputa, gave the Commission's views on Monday during its public sitting in Enugu.

Oputa was moved when four placard-carrying children stood up for about 10 minutes during the proceedings of the Commission.

"Call those children to come closer," the Chairman directed.

As the children moved towards members of the panel, Oputa asked them

Vice-President Atiku Abubakar today in Abuja urged African nations to mobilise resources to wage war against the scourge of HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, which were already affecting the social and economic development of the continent.

Addressing participants at the opening of a Technical and Ministerial Workshop on HIV/AIDS, tubercu-

what they wanted the Commission to do for them.

They urged the Commission, one after the other, to prevail on Amucheazi "to stop killing us and chasing us away from our homes".

Some of the placards read, "Motherless and Homeless Children, We beg Oputa Human Rights Panel to stop Prof. Amucheazi from killing us", and "No more justice in Anambra State courts."

The father of the children, who said that he had forwarded a petition to the Commission after he failed to obtain justice from an Obosi Magistrate's court, allegedly due to the influence of Amucheazi.

Atiku urges African countries to jointly fight HIV/AIDS

losis and other related infectious diseases; Abubakar said that such action was necessary for the survival of future generations of the continent.

The workshop was a precursor to the First African Summit on HIV/AIDS.

"there is greater need for African nations to support each other and mobilise resources from within and outside their borders to overcome these dreadful diseases and for future generations to survive as a people and as a continent," he said.

Abubakar emphasised the need for African countries to exchange ideas, share experiences and put in place measures that would effectively combat the epidemics.

He described the HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis as devastating in the African continent, a situation, which called for drastic measures to combat the scourge that affected more of the youths.

He said the diseases were already taking their toll on the workforce of many Afri-

can countries as evidenced in their declining status, adding that "now is the time to collectively stand up and fight the diseases."

On the workshop, Abubakar advised participants to evolve policies, strategies and frameworks for fighting the diseases, but added that ways of implementing such recommendations should be identified.

Turnout for the workshop was impressive as participants from many African countries, the United States and Non-Governmental organisations attended.



Vice-President Atiku Abubakar.

ADVERTORIAL

WHAT DOES OPPOSITION WANT WITH HAJJ?

It has never come to me as a surprise to hear somebody from the opposition levelling unfounded accusations on the Government. It is normal and expected in every democratic society. What is surprising is to accuse the Government of financial recklessness just because it sponsored some people to perform Hajj.

No right thinking Muslim would say that sponsoring people to perform Hajj is financial recklessness. This is because Hajj is an obligatory pillar of Islam and as a State majority of whose population are Muslims, the Government is duty bound to assist its people perform this obligatory injunction.

State Government is sponsoring even Christians for their holy visit to Israel. In Adamawa State more than 100 Christians went for the visit to Israel and only two paid for their passage.

Furthermore, there was no Government in Sokoto State since the time of Usman Faruk to date that has not sponsored people to perform Hajj with State funds. There were even instances when State funds were used to sponsored a large number of non-indigenes to Hajj in this State.

I wonder where was the Chairman of PDP than that he kept mum only to raise his voice now because the State Government has sponsored 100 people to perform the Hajj.

I could remember that when Abubakar Shehu Tambawal was a member of the State Executive Council, the Government then sponsored harlots and free-women and even introduced a competition among youth clubs with the promise of Hajj seats as the price, compared to this, then what is wrong in sponsoring members of the Ulama and the needy to Hajj?

I believe it is just not right for one to just condemn positive actions of a Government just because he found himself in the opposition. At the same time having once being a member of the State Executive Council, the Chairman should have reflected on their past deeds before condemning others.

No one could accuse the present Government of misplacement of priorities. This is because it has pursued with rigour the execution of programmes directly linked to the welfare of the people. Cast road network, health services,

rural development, education, social welfare, agriculture etc.

There is no single sector where significant progress has not been made within the almost two years of the Bafarawa administration. These developments are on the ground for all to see and bear witness. Unlike the past 20 or 50 years when development in the State was at standstill.

I believe in a democratic setting, it is the voice of reason that supersedes the voice dissent. Being the Chairman of the PDP, Alhaji Abubakar Shehu Tambawal is entitled to his opinions, but the question is, is his opinion that of the majority even within his party? The answer is no. Because majority of the people of the State have hailed and acclaimed Bafarawa's gesture. They have equally also appreciated his untiring efforts to develop the State.

The people are the one's to judge not the PDP or its Chairman. I remember last year the State PDP was given ten Hajj seats which it never rejected neither criticized.

The APP controlled Government has been magnanimous to the PDP in relation to Hajj matters. Two members of the PDP namely Tanimu Dangaladima Kyadawa and Alhaji Barmo Galadima Danchadi are on the board of the State Pilgrimages Welfare Agency. They are representing PDP and they never voiced that party's objection.

Like the Hausa saying "Ba kullum take Juma'a ba". Though the party did not get any seat this year it got some last year and may yet get in years to come. Having enjoyed the privileged the PDP should have been contented to let others enjoy it. Not to cry wolf because the party was not allocated Hajj seats this year.

Compared to the State Government. What project can the PDP controlled Federal Government boast of in Sokoto State or even the whole country. Alhaji Abubakar Shehu should have reflected to see what the PDP has brought which is nothing but endless crisis one after the other. With failure to pay State salaries, to ethnic violence and marginalisation, while the President is busy on foreign trips or trying to persuade the National Assembly to let him acquire a new President fleet. There is no significant change and no development efforts, Poverty Alleviation? UBE? And other endless phony projects without result. Those are issues that need to be objectively criticized. I believed one has to put his house

in order before condemning others. Unlike the Federal Government, the APP Government in Sokoto State has been fair to all many parties, many PDP Supporters in the State have benefited from government patronage.

It will be fair for the Sokoto State Chairman of the PDP to reflect and see what they have done to the State during their tenure in the aborted third republic. Most of the present elders, of the party in the State have been either within the then State Executive Council of party leaders. But what legacy have they left behind?

I recalled that during the tenure of the State PDP Chairman as Commissioner of education, the Chairman slated two hours daily from 10-12noon for distributing money to parties supporters in his office. I believe this is not what can be called good financial management. I also equally believed that the money distributed by the Chairman at that time was from the Public funds because his salary could not be enough for such spree.

No wonder the recent criticism by the Chairman came at a time when his party has been dormant for quite sometimes without even a State Chairman. His criticism therefore, can be likened to the cry of a lonely wolf seeking to attract attention.

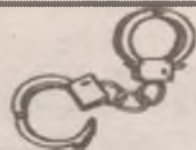
The Chairman should realized that the Government has many obligations to its people and one of such obligations is to help them discharge their religious duties.

I would not be surprised that the Chairman is crying wolf because he has not been able to secure a contract from the State Government.

Lastly, I feel bound as a patriotic indigene of Sokoto State to call on all patriotic indigenes of the State to discard political differences and cooperate with the Government in the task of developing the State.



Alhaji Hussaini Tukur Faru, Sokoto



Crime & Punishment



Adams Oshiomhole, NLC, others sued for N10m

By Uwem Umo

The National President of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Mr. Adams Oshiomhole has been sued at a Federal High Court sitting in Abuja for N10m

The National President of the National Union of Air Transport Employees (NUATE), Mr. Corman C. Nnorom instituted the suit against the President of the NLC and 13 others for their infringement of his fundamental rights to fair hearing and association.

According to the originating summons filed at the Federal High Court, Abuja pursuant to Order 2 Rule 1 (1) of the Fundamental Human Right (Enforcement Procedure) Rule Cap-62 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 1990, the plaintiff is seeking an order of the court to grant him leave to apply for the enforcement of his fundamental right to association and for redress for infringement of same.

In his affidavit in support of his application, the former chairman of NUATE is seeking

ing a declaration of the court that his purported suspension from participating in any meeting of the organs of the NLC for a period of two years is ultra vires, illegal and void and that his suspension as the National President of NUATE is also ultra vires, illegal and void.

Chief Nnorom is also seeking an order of injunction restraining Adams Oshiomhole and thirteen others, by themselves, agents, privies, officers, employees or otherwise from continuing in any way to enforce the said suspension and order restraining them from preventing him from performing his functions as the duly elected president of NUATE and as a member of the Central Working Committee and National Executive Council of NUATE.

Furthermore, Chief Nnorom is seeking an order of the court directing the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice (14th defendant) to commis-



Adams Oshiomhole is seeking an investigation into the allegation of attempt to offer and receive bribe levelled against him.

It will be recalled that at the National Executive Council meeting of the NLC held between June 12 and 13, 2000, the president of the NLC, Mr. Adams Oshiomhole accused Mr. Nnorom of attempting to sabotage the strike action embarked upon at the time by the NLC by negotiating with government official for a bribe of N140m for the officers of the NLC to stop the strike.

Following the allegation, a five man committee was set up by the central working committee of the NLC to investigate the matter and the plaintiff is claiming that the committee was composed of people biased against him while he was also not given a fair hearing by being allowed to cross examine those who testified or accused him of the allegation of bribery. The plaintiff in his affidavit accused the NLC president of dictatorial tendencies and also of teleguiding the investigating committee.

The case comes up on May 7, 2001 before Justice (Mrs) Binta Murtalla Nyako.

Court orders lawyer's arrest

An Asaba Chief Magistrate Court presided over by Mr. Steve Okebu has issued a warrant of arrest for one Moses Oddiri, a Lagos lawyer, who allegedly escaped from lawful custody at the Ogwashi-Ukwu prisons on February 23 this year.

Okebu said he order is based on the combined provisions of Sections 143, 281(1) and 351 of the criminal procedure laws of Bendel state, also applicable in Delta.

He also ordered the Delta state commissioner of police

to carry out a comprehensive investigation into the manner and circumstances surrounding the incident, saying that the police should report back to the court within 14 days.

In making the ruling, the Chief Magistrate said that any prison staff involved in the escape or surreptitious smuggling out of the suspect, should be arrested arraigned for frustrating the course of justice.

He also ordered the comptroller of the Federal prisons Ogwashi-Ukwu to be present in court on May 15 to listen to the findings of the court.

Okebu's ruling followed an application made by Senior State Counsel, Marcel Okoj asking for an inquiry to unravel the mystery surrounding Oddiri's escape from lawful custody and for an order on the comptroller of prisons to produce Oddiri at the next hearing, while prisons staff involved be punished.

Okebu in the ruling, however, discountenanced arguments by Oddiri counsel, I.S. Ujubo, that the court should adjourn the matter indefinitely, because of an appeal coming up before the Court of Appeal in Benin.

The magistrate said that the Court of Appeal did not order a stay of proceedings, saying that it had jurisdiction over the matter based on the ruling of Asaba High Court, which overturned the ruling of a Lagos High Court granting Oddiri bail.

Oddiri is standing trial over alleged seditious publications accusing the Delta state governor, James Ibori of complicity in the murder of Chief Alfred Rewane.

Police nab robbery gang in Lagos

The police in Lagos have nabbed three members of a notorious robbery gang that have been giving residents of Surulere local government area in Lagos sleepless nights.

Some residents of the area arrested the suspects following a police tip off.

In a criminal charge No. A/69/2001 filed by the police against the suspects before a Lagos Chief Magistrate court Igboere, the accused persons - Augustine Nkwo (25 years), Onyeka Ajufo (31 years) and 25-year-old Julius Okoh were alleged to have conspired together with others now on the run on 20 March at 2001 Surulere to commit armed robbery.

Julius Okoh, according to the prosecutor was found to be in unlawful possession of one locally made double barrel gun, which he could not give satisfactory account.

The prosecutor also alleged that Onyeka Ajufo was found with ten (10) wraps of

From Adelanwa Bamgboye, in Lagos

weeds suspected to be Indian hemp.



Smith, IG

Chief magistrate A.O. Odugbesan in her ruling ordered that the accused persons be remanded in the prison custody pending at legal advice from the Lagos State Director of Public Prosecution (DPP).

No plea was taken from the accused while further hearing was fixed for 28 May, 2001.

...apologise for wrong prosecution

The Nigerian Police through prosecuting Deputy of Superintendent of Police (DSP), Ochogun over the weekend at the Igboere Chief Magistrate Court Lagos withdrew criminal charges and apologised to Lagos based Lawyer, Michael Akintunde Savage who was on 8th March 2001 arraigned over alleged robbery.

Before the charge was struck out by senior magistrate Jimoh Fashola, prosecuting DSP Ochogun assured the court that if the investigation had been done, the accused would not have been arraigned in the first instance.

Daily Trust gathered that Michael Savage who is 18 years in the bar had visited the zone II command in the discharge of his professional duties.

Since the evidence of in-

From Adelanwa Bamgboye, in Lagos

volvement in the alleged robbery was found against him, the Police prosecutor withdrew the charge and apologised to the lawyer.

Michael Akintunde Sav-

age, a lawyer and son of Mr. Justice Babatunde Savage, a former Lagos High Court Judge was represented by Chief Kin Sikuade (SAN) with him were Chief Shotayo-Aro, Admole Ekundayo and Segun Oyename.

Three suspects face robbery charge

Three men suspected to be security guards at Hallmark Bank Lagos have been arraigned before a Chief Magistrate Court in Lagos where they were charged with armed conspiracy and armed robbery.

The accused persons were alleged to have conspired with others now on the run on March 4th, 2001 at about 3:20 hours at Hallmark Bank Branch at No.60/62 Enu-Owa Street Idumagbo, Lagos to commit armed robbery.

Specifically, 1 Deho Timothy (29 years) Sunday Ogah (48 years) and 26 year old

From Adelanwa Bamgboye, in Lagos

Adewale Sunday were said to have robbed the sum of N13,553,000 property of Hallmark Bank Branch Idumagbo - Lagos.

Prosecuting Police Inspector, Onyenadiri R.C. from Alagbon Aagbon close, Ikoyi, Lagos, told the court that the accused persons committed the offence while armed with offensive weapons to wit guns and other dangerous items.

The charge No. B/59/2001 was read out to the accused persons in English Language, but no plea was taken from them.



President, National Association of Nigerian Students, Mr. Olaleye Olusegun, making a point while IGP, Musiliu Smith, (right), DIG Bukar Ali, (centre), listen during the IGP/student leaders summit in Abuja...recently.

Pix: Felix Onigbinde

Abuja News

Farmers association seeks clarification on deregulation

The National Farmers' Association under the auspices of National Agricultural Coordinating Committee yesterday, stormed the National press center in their thousands seeking clarification on what the government meant by deregulation.

In his address at the occasion, the chairman of the association, Alhaji Abubakar Wodi, said the Farmers' mission was to "receive the briefing fresh from the original source."

He said the grassroots farmers, which he claimed make up about 75% of the total population of the nation were left out in the process towards deregulation.

According to him, it was because of "out size and significance in the economic sector that we have decided to request you to grant us the briefing session." This, he said, would make the farmers partake in the decision-making process on the road to deregulation.

The chairman who blamed the woes of Agriculture in recent times on military incursion into politics, said the sector is basically suffering from neglect. Furthermore, he listed three factors which had

By Ikenna Emeka Okpani

led to what he called Waterloo of Agriculture in Nigeria. They include the intervention and long stay of the military in power, the civil war which



depleted the hefty and robust youths who hitherto worked on the farms into the army; and the exploration of petroleum products leading to abandonment of the agricultural sector.

Seeking to know more about deregulation which he described as a new vocabulary, especially to the grassroots farmers, the chairman asked the Minister of Information and National Orientation, Prof Jerry Gana,

to explain what was responsible for the failure to implement the price tag for petroleum products? What prospects awaited the grassroots farmers under deregulated petroleum products? What were the security measures for ensuring that our operations and such vital products—petrol, diesel, kerosene and engine oil remain available at affordable prices. He also sought to know if the hike in transport fare would come down among others.

In his answers, Prof Gana praised the level of mobilization of the farmers, describing it as worthy of emulation. He said the federal government was determined to give every support necessary to farmers to help them produce adequate food for the population.

Deregulation, the minister said, "simply means opening the market for more people to come in, to remove the monopoly of the NNPC. It is just a kind of market liberalization so that other people can participate," he said.

For this to work, according to Prof Gana, government cannot sit in the office and fix prices for petroleum products but would allow market forces to work out the price.

"It is likely that prices might slightly increase but as more companies compete, the prices will normalize. This will lead to rise in some places and fall in some others," the minister emphasized.

Noticing that government regulated prices for petroleum products had always been flaunted, Prof. Gana allayed the fear of the people that prices might not be reasonable. He said a regulatory agency made up of Stakeholders, like Nigerian Labour Congress, farmers, journalist, private sector, e.t.c. will be established to monitor the activities of the independent refineries and suppliers.

On the fear that transport fares would be hiked, the minister said that government was working towards bringing in new efficient cars and buses which consume less fuel. He also said the railway was being revived to provide the required alternative to road transport.

The Minister thanked the farmers for seeking clarification from his office and urged them to support deregulation as this was the only way of making them king in the petroleum distribution network.

Massive housing scheme underway in Abuja — Abba-Gana

By Emmanuel Ande

A plan to build a large-scale housing estate aimed at addressing problems of low-income earners, is underway in Abuja.

The Federal Capital Territory minister Engr. Mohammed Abba-Gana, disclosed this on Monday when he featured on the African Independent Television (AIT) live programme "Ka Kaki".

In a press statement issued to *Daily Trust*, the minister said the cardinal programmes of the Obasanjo administration in the FCT, was to improve the satellite towns and the opening up of new layouts for decent low-cost housing estates.

Engr. Abba-Gana, disclosed that the new housing scheme would take off fully before the end of this year.

According to him, the federal government has already earmarked a huge sum of money for the take-off of the programme.

He added that the private sector will also be involved in the scheme.

Engr. Abba-Gana said the government private sector partnership in housing development would entail real estate development, which will add to create job opportunities for Nigerians.

The minister pointed out that the envisaged partnership between government and business in the physical and infrastructural development of the territory, would reduce the accommodation costs.

Engr. Abba-Gana said his ministry was already holding discussions on the scheme with both Nigerian and international private investors.

Speaking on power supply, he emphasized that the federal government has taken measures to ensure reliable power supply not only in the FCT but all over the federation.

The problem of electricity supply, he explained, was not created by this administration, saying, "we inherited it from past regimes."

He, however, promised that the Obasanjo government was determined to bring about a lasting solution to the problem.

Engr. Abba-Gana said at this end, the National Assembly has already approved money for the rehabilitation of power stations at Kainji, Shiroro, Afam, Sapele, Jibia and other power-generation stations in Nigeria.

He expressed optimism that by the end of this year, the electricity generating capacity of the stations would reach at least 3000 megawatts.

On his programme of transforming Abuja from a concrete to a garden city, the FCT minister said his ministry was set for the official take-off of the tree-planting campaign.

He said his concept of Abuja was that of "a green serene city with trees and flowers lining the streets. Such trees he stressed, would not only provide shades but also harbour friendly birds and animals.

Engr. Abba-Gana, who is the first top government functionary to feature on the "Ka Kaki" programme, after the return of the AIT to the airwaves, praised the electronic medium for its creative programming and wished them success in their endeavours.

Cornershops may serve as courtrooms in Abuja

By Emmanuel Ande

Worried by the shortage of courtrooms in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) the newly elected chairman of Nigeria Bar Association (NBA), Abuja branch, Mr. Ola Olanipekun, has urged the Chief Judge of Federal Capital Territory, Justice Mohammed Saleh, to hire cornershops and private buildings as courtrooms.

In a news bulletin of the associations, the chairman said the working condition of

magistrates is appalling as about four magistrates share one chamber and one courtroom, adding that it reduces their productivity.

Olanipekun also drew the attention of the Chief Judge to the behaviour of some High Court Staff who charge arbitrary fees for services and preferred processing declaration of age forms.

The chairman requested for the release of the NBA dressing room which the

court has taken over, saying the indignity of lawyers dressing outside the court was needless and preventable.

In his response, the Chief Judge said the basic problem of the judiciary was lack of funds, adding that the court has not received her capital vote for the year 2001, four months into the year.

He further disclosed that the high court has constructed about 10 court rooms but cannot occupy it owing to lack of facilities like

access roads, water and light.

The Chief judge also told the visiting delegation that within six weeks the members of NBA will witness a positive change in the FCT Judiciary Commission. Commenting on the unruly behaviour of the high court staff, he said a disciplinary judge would be appointed to handle such complaints.

Airport staff undergo noise screening

By Austine Odo

As part of activities for the celebration of this year's International noise awareness day, the Federal Ministry of Environment yesterday, conducted a screening exercise among workers at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International airport, Abuja to determine the effect of airport noise on the workers.

The screening, is a follow-up to last year's exercise which revealed an appreciable loss of hearing among airport workers, is a step towards controlling noise pollution in the environment.

More than one hundred airport workers were screened, including their Assistant General Manager

Operations, Mr. Michael Owolabi, who disclosed that the airport authorities were taking steps to implement the ministry's recommendations on noise pollution among staff, which he said, was causing auditory ailments among them. He stated that the airport authorities would not hesitate to implement the ministry's recommendations on the exercise, which he described as desirable.

Environment ministry officials, said the choice of the airport was informed by their operational strategy, to study the effect of noise in different environments such as the railways, motor parks and airports. This they said, would include screening of school children and communities living around the airport.

"We have targeted airports and motor parks to see the effect of noise among workers in these places," the officials said, adding that the exercise will be extended to the textile factories as part of an environmental health audit of workers in that sector.



Mrs. Kema Chikwe



Wife of the Vice-President, Mrs. Titi Abubakar (left) and wife of Rivers State Governor, Hon. Justice Odili during the opening of WOCLEF building in Abuja ... recently.

Pix by Felix Onigbinde



**FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA
NATIONAL COUNCIL ON PRIVATISATION**

**INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST IN
PRIVATISATION BY CONCESSIONING
OF
(1) INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR COMPLEX, LAGOS
(2) NATIONAL ARTS THEATRE, LAGOS
(3) TAFAWA BALEWA SQUARE, LAGOS**

1. In line with the on-going Privatisation Programme of the Federal Government of Nigeria, the National Council on Privatisation hereby invites Expressions of Interest (EOIs) from prospective Concessionaires in the above listed enterprises.

2. International Trade Complex, Lagos is strategically located along Lagos-Badagry Expressway, a major gateway into Nigeria. It is involved in renting out office accommodation, organization of exhibitions and trade fairs, renting out of facilities like halls and open spaces for seminars, weddings, conferences and other ceremonies, as well as the publication of information booklets.

National Arts Theatre, Lagos is strategically located in Iganmu, Lagos, and was established by Decree No. 47 of 1991 to provide technical and professional support services to national and international performers, and it is also an avenue for exhibition of arts, paintings, furniture, building materials, science equipment and other industrial products. Other services like seminars, weddings, conferences and other ceremonies are hosted.

Tafawa Balewa Square Investment Ltd is located at Racecourse in the heart of Lagos. It was designed to provide hire facilities for social gathering. It is also involved in property development and management. There is ample land for additional development of commercial facilities.

3. Interested Concessionaires must possess the right technical, financial and management capacities in facility management and real estate development in order to be successful in the pre-qualification exercise, which will short-list candidates.
4. To qualify, Interested Concessionaires must possess verifiable evidence of the following:
- Experience of managing similar facilities overseas and/or in Nigeria
 - Ample financial resources to grow the facility and enhance shareholder's value.
5. Only qualified bidders will be contacted and given a period of four weeks within which they are expected to carry out due diligence on the facility they are interested in, before submitting a bid. Upon receipt of bids from qualified bidders, the National Council on Privatization (NCP) shall invite one or more of the top bidders for negotiation, which might include a final opportunity to further, revise their bids.
6. Interested Concessionaires should indicate their interest by providing the following:
- Full name of the Company and the contact person, postal address, telephone and fax numbers and e-mail address;
 - Ownership structure;
 - Name(s) of major shareholders and percentage shareholding;
 - Financial Strength:
 - Annual Turnover
 - Net Income

- Total Assets
- Net Assets
- Liquidity Ratio
- Shareholder's equity (including minority interest)
- Market capitalization (if applicable)
- Audit Accounts for the last three years
- Technical and Operational Capabilities:
 - Years in the Estate Management industry
 - Number of countries operating in, and
 - Number of professionals employed (% of all employees)
- Company Experience:
 - How many years of operating in Nigeria
 - How many years of operating outside Nigeria
 - Network in Nigeria
 - International Experience
- Management Team:
 - Number of years at Management level of the Chief Executive
 - Percentage with less than 10 years experience in the industry
 - Percentage of management with relevant Post Graduate Professional qualification
 - Aggregate years in the industry
 - Percentage of Nigerians in the management team
- Minimum period for which a commitment will be made to remain in the company and provide managerial and technical direction;
- Evidence of ample financial resources;
- Percentage equity stake being sought in company;
- Payment of a non-refundable fee of \$15,000

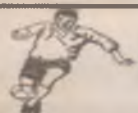
7. Enquiries should be directed to:

Attention: Mr Nasir Ahmad el-Rufai
Member/Secretary
 National Council on Privatisation
Secretariat:
 Bureau of Public Enterprises
 Plot 1 Osun Crescent
 Off Ibrahim Babangida Way
 Maitama District
 P.M.B. 442, Garki, Abuja, Nigeria
 Tel: 234-9-4134636-46
 Fax: 234-9-4134642, 4134661,
 e-mail: bpegen@micro.com.ng; bpe@bpeng.org

NEXT STEPS

The Information Memorandum and Bidding Instructions on the enterprise(s) will be made available to short-listed candidates. Bids will be opened at 11a.m. on May 28, 2001. The National Council on Privatisation will announce the winner within four weeks of the negotiation.

All expressions of interest must be received not later than 5:00p.m May 25, 2001.



SPORTS



Struggling Brazil desperate for win against Peru

Four-time world champions Brazil, the only country to have played at all 16 World Cups, take on Peru Wednesday knowing that defeat could leave their record in serious danger.

Brazil's reputation as world beaters is in tatters after a series of dismal performances and results in the South American World Cup qualifying group, culminating in last month's stunning 1-0 defeat in Ecuador.

Coach Emerson Leao, who has made sweeping changes with former world player of the year, Rivaldo among the casualties, knows that the knives will be out should his team fail again.

The game will be played in Sao Paulo's Morumbi stadium and it's notoriously fickle crowd, which threw Brazilian flags onto the pitch in protest during Brazil's last match at the venue - even though they beat Colombia 1-0.

Brazil have slumped to third in the group with 20 points from 11 games, only one ahead of Ecuador and two ahead of Colombia. Meanwhile, they are eight points behind leaders Argentina and three adrift of Paraguay.

Only the top four teams qualify automatically for Japan and South Korea next

year, while the fifth plays off against the Oceania region winners, so Brazil know they cannot afford any more slip ups.

Leao, who took over only six months ago, has included seven uncapped players in his squad and only three of the country's foreign-based stars.

He claimed that the others, Rivaldo and Real Madrid's Roberto Carlos included, are at their maximum limit after a long European season during which they have commuted once a month to South America.

The overseas players, however, have been accused of lack of effort. After the defeat by Ecuador, former captain Zico compared the players to civil servants "who just turn up for work to clock in."

"Let's be optimistic, said Lead when he was asked about the possible consequences of another defeat. "I don't think we can play that badly for two games in a row."

Peru are seventh with 11 points but, after a convincing 3-1 win over arch-rivals Chile last month, have discovered their confidence.

Peruvian hopes of victory will depend largely on whether German-based striker Claudio Pizarro is able to find his goal scoring touch at international level.

Pizarro is among the top



Desperate...Brazil, seeking World Cup redemption, will face the Peruvian challenge in Sao Paulo tonight.

scorers in the Bundesliga, but has managed only one goal in the World Cup qualifiers and has been guilty of some poor marksmanship. Had he been in on form, Peru, who always create plenty of chances, would probably be several points better off.

Two other teams in desperate need of points meet Tuesday in Santiago when Chile, ravaged by injury and suspension, take on Uruguay. Chile, missing Reinaldo

Navia, Jorge Vargas, Ricardo Rojas and Miguel Ramirez through suspension and striker Marcelo Salas through injury, are languishing eighth place with only ten points.

Uruguay are sixth after last month's home defeat by Paraguay and have slipped three points behind fifth-placed Colombia. They will be missing Juventus defender, Paolo Montero, who pick up a second yellow card in the last match.

Colombia visit table-propping Venezuela, who have lost all but one of their eleven games.

Central defender Jorge Bermudez, captain of Argentine and South American champions Boca Juniors, is in Colombian squad and expected to play his first game for Colombia in nearly a year.

He was dropped following the 3-1 defeat at home to Argentina last June and then fell out with coach Luis Garcia. Colombia are without injured goalkeeper Oscar Cordoba, Bermudez team mate at Boca.

Ecuador, who believe they have a chance of qualifying for their first World Cup, are at home to Paraguay at high altitude in Quito, where they have dropped only one point in six outings.

Paraguay, however, have a reasonable away record and have done well in their previous games at altitude, drawing with Bolivia in La Paz and beating Colombia in Bogota.

Argentina, virtually certain of qualifying, make the dreaded trip to La Paz, where they take on Bolivia at 3,600 metres above sea level.

Beaten 2-1 in their last World Cup match in a La Paz four years ago, Argentine have left out striker Gabriel Batistuta and replaced with Juan Esnaider.

Fenech leads call to ban women's boxing

Former world champion, Jeff Fenech has called for a ban on women's boxing after Australia's Patricia Devellerez was left in a coma after a weekend bout in New Zealand.

Devellerez, 25, was knocked out by New Zealander Agnes Tuitama in an invitational amateur tournament held in Christchurch.

She was taken to a nearby hospital and underwent surgery to drill a hole in her skull to relieve pressure on her brain and was induced into a coma by doctors.

The inaugural women's boxing world championships are scheduled to take place in Texas later this year but Fenech, who won three world titles during a glittering career in the ring, told the ABC he wanted women's boxing banned.

"I don't care what anybody says, we all may be equal, two arms and two legs, but ladies aren't as tough as men," Fenech said.

"They can't take punishment the way a man can and I don't think it's ladylike for a lady to fight."

"Obviously we live in a democratic world so we're free to do what we want to do but ladies fighting, for me, is a no-no."

Barcelona axe Serra Ferrer

Lorenc Serra Ferrer's reign as Barcelona coach ended on Monday when he was sacked after a string of poor results.

Club president Joan Gaspart announced the decision following a three-hour meeting with the board of directors - 24 hours after the Catalan giants suffered a humiliating 3-1 defeat to relegation-threatened Osasuna.

Barcelona finished Sunday's game with just eight men on the field after Simao, Ivan de la Pena and Sergi were all given their matching orders.

"I take full responsibility for this decision," said Gaspart.

"It was my decision to appoint him, although all the other candidates pledged to do so as well, and it's my decision to let him go."

"I met with Serra Ferrer face to face earlier on Monday."

"He was not in agreement with this decision. It's the saddest day in my career as Barcelona president."

Gaspart revealed technical director Carles Rexach will take temporary control until the end of the season, assisted by former club captain Jose Ramon Alexanco.

Rexach has already experienced the pressures of the Nou Camp when he was given temporary charge following the departure of Johan Cryuff in 1996.

He said: "My job is to bring some enjoyment back to the side over the remainder of the season."

"We also need to boost our morale and show our quality."

However, Gaspart said

Serra Ferrer will retain his former role as director of football - he still has four years left on his contract in the position - but will have no direct input on the remainder of the season.

Barcelona currently lie in fifth position in the Spanish

league, a massive 17 points behind league leaders and arch rivals Real Madrid.

Speculation now surrounds Valencia coach Hector Cuper as a possible replacement at the Nou Camp next season.

Juventus confirm Davids failed test

Serie A side Juventus have confirmed that Edgar Davids failed a drug test after his side's game



Davids

against Udinese on 4 March. The Italian giants were informed by the Italian Olympic Committee (CONI) that the Dutch midfielder had failed the anti-doping test.

Juventus revealed on their website that Davids had given a "non-negative" result.

But they would not confirm that the drug in question was nandrolone, which had been widely reported.

The news follows Lazio defender Fernando Couto's second failed test, announced at the weekend, which revealed he had excess nandrolone in his system.

Juventus midfielder Davids came under suspicion

on Saturday night after news leaked that a Serie A player had returned a positive sample.

And several newspapers named Davids as the man believed to have failed a post-match test.

Earlier, Davids' Holland team-mate Clarence Seedorf jumped to his defence.

Davids has a history of eye problems and wears protective glasses during matches, and Seedorf said: "If there is anything positive in the test it should come from medicine for his eyes."

"I've known him for a long time and he is always careful about what he takes."

A mandatory follow-up test of the original sample will now follow.

Davids, a mainstay of the Dutch national team, could face up to a two-year ban from both league and international competition if the drug is found to be nandrolone.

Earlier this season, Perugia players Christian Bucci and Salvatore Monaco were suspended for 16 months, the second-longest doping penalty in league history.

The longest Serie A doping suspension was a two-year penalty levied against former Perugia goalkeeper Angelo Pagotto in the mid-1990s.

Ikpeba wants out of Dortmund

Former African Footballer of the Year, Victor Ikpeba of Nigeria, has made it clear he would like to leave his German club Borussia Dortmund because the team's coach no longer appears to see a role for him in the starting line-up.

The Nigerian striker has had a miserable season at the Bundesliga club after being ignored by coach Matthias Sammer and the team's administrative manager Michael Zorc - both former heroes of the club.

"If they believe I have no future here, then I must move on," said Ikpeba in a hard-hitting interview in the German media this weekend.

"I have no idea why they don't think I fit in. I cannot understand it," said Ikpeba, who was a big-money signing from Monaco two years ago.

Sammer, the former German international, has said publicly that Ikpeba does not feature in his plans.

Dortmund currently lie third in the Bundesliga, just three points behind leaders Schalke 04, and are one of eight clubs who still have a chance to take the German title.

On Friday, they played bottom-placed VfL Bochum and won 5-0 but Ikpeba did not play.

He has not featured in the side since mid-February, when he played just five minutes as a late substitute.

In total, the 27-year-old has played just eight games and scored once this season.

"I don't think that I've really played bad this sea-

son," he said.

"In the beginning of the season I was injury-free but why I don't get used any more I don't have an answer for," he lamented.

"I have given my all here but I have not been allowed to grow at Dortmund or develop into a big star," he added.

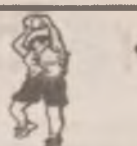
Ikpeba says he has yet to decide on a firm course of action but added: "Nothing is sure. My contract runs for two more years and if I want to stay I'll stay. But that will only be if I'm happy here."

He did admit in the interview, however, that he had received no firm offers from elsewhere, although 1860 Munich are said to have made a tentative approach.

Ikpeba can also move elsewhere in Europe because he holds Belgian nationality from his time at FC Liege.



Ikpeba...sleepless in Dortmund



Sports



Super Eagles are tired, says Erico

Former Super Eagles coach, Joe Erico has joined other well-meaning Nigerians calling for the re-organisation of the team.

Erico, who believed that the Super Eagles can still win the only ticket in Group A, told *Trustsports* that the present players in the national team have served their time enough, adding that the time has come for some of these boys to retire.

"For Nigeria to have a strong and balanced national team, young and dynamic players must be injected into the team. The team should be a mixture of old and young players," he advised.

The ex-Green Eagles goalkeeper blamed the Super Eagles technical adviser, Bonfrere Jo for the team's re-

From Richard Abayomi, in Lagos

cent woeful performance, saying that the Dutchman does not have monopoly of knowledge.

NHF names six zonal managers

The Nigeria Hockey Federation (NHF), has named the six zonal managers expected to handle its youth development project across the country, the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports.

The project, which is being organised in conjunction with International Hockey Federation (FIH) and billed to take off next month, is aimed at introducing and promoting hockey among the young-

"When Westerhof was in Nigeria, he maintained an open door policy, everybody had access to him. Sometime he came to us to ask for names of players to be invited into the national team,"

he revealed.

On his position on local players into the national team, the exponent of joga-bonito said, "there is no problem with the content of the league, the only problem is administration."

sters especially those below 18 years.

The zones located in Bayelsa, Edo, Bauchi, Kaduna, Lagos and the Federal Capital Territory, were announced last month by the NHF. Peter Abiche, NHF secretary told NAN yesterday in Lagos that the managers would initiate and implement programmes to encourage the young ones to develop interest in the game.

Abiche said that part of

their mandate was the introduction of hockey to secondary schools in their zones in NHF's bid to increase the number of youths playing hockey.

He said that they would be required to sensitise other youths especially school leavers and others to make them take up hockey as a sport.

According to the secretary, Nuhu Babas will be in charge of Bauchi zone, Bako Chom Lagos zone, Vincent Ouse for Kaduna while Bassey Edit, Bright Dako and Charles Berena would oversee Benin, FCT and Bayelsa zones respectively.



Super Eagles line-up before an international engagement. Erico says they are tired.

Eleven spectators injured in scaffold mishap

Tragedy struck Sunday evening when a 30ft long scaffold used for fixing floodlights collapsed during a basketball match between Bayero University Kano, and Ahmadu Bello University Zaria in the on-going 18th NUGA Games injuring about 11 spectators.

According to eyewitness account, the basketball court was filled to capacity thereby forcing some of the spectators to climb the scaffold in order to have a more vantage view of the competition which, unfortunately broke down.

Those that sustained minor injuries were immediately rushed to the institution's clinic otherwise called Sick Bay where they were treated and discharged between the hours of 10.00 p.m. and 12.00 p.m. on Sunday.

Those that sustained se-

Stories from Waziri Isa Gwantu, in Zaria

rious injuries were however, rushed to the university's teaching hospital, Tudun Wada, for emergency treatment.

When *Trustsports* visited the teaching hospital, he saw four of the victims responding to treatment.

The victims who spoke to this reporter gave their names as Sam Oruerio from University of Benin who sustained injuries on his head and Oluwale Oni from Bayero University Kano who sustained injury on his left hand.

Others are Idisape Enegide, a hockey player from Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife who sustained injury on his neck and Kolawole Beyioku, a cricket player from the host university, all the victims apart from

Kolawole, told *Trustsports* that they have started feeling better and attended to by doctors and nurses.

Don't disappoint us, Uncle K tells ABU athletes

One-time Sole Administrator of ABU, General Mamman Dan Tsoho Kontagora (rtd) popularly called "Uncle K", has implored ABU participants in the on-going 18th NUGA Games to do ABU proud by winning all the gold medals expected from them.

"Uncle K" who was speaking in an exclusive interview with NUGA News said, "ABU athletes who are undisputed champions of many NUGA events, I believe will not disappoint us, especially this time around that they are hosting."

"As the host university,

we expect a lot from you. If you can be champions outside your own homes, we expect you to be super champions of this edition of the games, considering the home advantage you have, among other series of advantages, he told the students.

The two-time minister said he would not want to promise any ABU athlete who, eventually excelled at the end of the games anything now, however noted that he will continue to follow the events closely and with the usual view of assisting in whichever way that

may be necessary as far as sports development is concerned in the premier university.

General Kontagora who said he was overwhelmed by the kinds of improvement he noticed in the university bare three years after he handed over the institution's mantle of leadership to Prof. Abdullahi Mahadi hoped that the tempo will be maintained.

On ABU's new sports complex, General Kontagora stated that he was delighted on seeing how a virgin and barely land he knew had been transformed into a

sport edifice of international standard.

He however, hoped that the vice-chancellor will work hard to maintain the sporting facilities put in place courtesy of the NUGA Games, regretting that concerted efforts during his tenure as sole administrator to build such befitting complex met brick walls.

The sole administrator noted that he identified, during his tenure, that if sporting activities had long been encouraged by previous administrations, some of the crises that engulfed and almost grounded the university would not have occurred because actors of such crises would have been engaged in sports.

"To ensure enduring and lasting peace in the university, therefore, I recommend that the university authorities should go on to encourage and sponsor sporting activities because it goes along way not only in building the body and the mind but help in curtailing crime in the society," he advised.

NUGA introduces NUAC, NUFOL

The National President of NUGA, Mr. Shedrack Adeoti, has announced the introduction of two new game, bringing to three the number of games to be organised by NUGA secretariat for students in the nation's ivory towers.

The games, according to the NUGA strongman, are Nigerian University Athletics Championship (NUAC) and Nigerian University Football League (NUFOL).

The NUGA president, who made the disclosure Saturday in his goodwill message at the opening ceremony of the on-going 18th edition of Nigerian Universities Games (NUGA), said while NUAC is expected to be sponsored by Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited, NUFOL is expected to be jointly sponsored by NICON and Amstel Malta (Nigerian Breweries).

Mr. Adeoti said, "the need to introduce the additional games was borne out of NUGA's commitment to provide the right form and opportunity for the students in our universities with different ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds not to only compete in sporting events and learn techniques from one another, but also to

exchange ideas, promote understanding and build up friendship."

He pointed out that the on-going games in ABU which is the fourth in the NUGA presidential system has recorded tremendous improvement in facilities.

"The list of NUGA member universities has also increased from 35 to 37 with the

admission of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki and Kogi State University, Anyigba," he highlighted.

Mr. Shedrack who appealed to all competitors at the games to place premium on winning legitimately and honestly, stressed that "NUGA is aware of the fact that we live today in a world that is achievement oriented.

NUGA: PRELIM RESULTS

BADMINTON: MALE TEAM

OAU 3, Ambrose Ali Uni. 1
Unimaid 3, Ben. State Uni. 0
Uniport 0, ABU 3

FEMALE CATEGORY:

OAU 0, Uniben 2
FUT Yola 0, Michael Okpara Univ. 2
Uni Uyo vs Unilag (W/O in favour of Uyo)
BUK 1, ABU 2

VOLLEY BALL (FEMALE)

ABU 1, Unijos 3
Unical 3, OAU 2

HANDBALL (FEMALE)

Unimaid 31, OAU 21
MALE
Unimaid 27, FUT Minna 18
ABU 32, UNN 24

BASKETBALL (FEMALE)

Uniben 52, Uyo 5
OAU 27, ATBU 19
OAU 50, ATBU 55 (MALE)

FOOTBALL

BUK 3, Benue State Univ. 0
LAUTECH 2, FUT Owerri 0



The bride and bridegroom polo teams tussle for the ball during a match to commemorate Aminu Abubakar Alhaji's wedding in Kaduna...recently.

Pix: Joe Oroye

Ahmodu slams Bonfrere

He was let loose last Saturday in Freetown after Super Eagles humiliation by Leone Stars in the World Cup qualifier, as coach Shuiabu Amodu took on the Dutchman over his excesses.

Trustsports gathered that the Super Eagles assistant coach could not stomach Bonfrere Jo's excesses any longer when it became obvious that the Dutchman might not qualify Nigeria for her third World Cup.

Amodu's outburst, *Trustsports* learnt, was informed by the fact that the Dutchman had relegated him to the background, as he was not allowed to make any input into the team for a long time.

Amodu was, however, quoted as saying that the Dutchman cannot be as patriotic as himself being a Nigerian and that he cannot afford to see the man turning Nigerian coaches to ball boys in their own country.

It was learnt that the NFA officials in Freetown had to intervene to bring the situation under control

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Oliseh, Okocha abandon Eagles

The thick gloom hovering over Nigeria's World Cup 2002 qualification quest was compounded yesterday with five key members of the Super Eagles, signaling their intention to discontinue participating in the remaining matches.

Leading the five is skipper Sunday Oliseh of Borussia Dortmund Germany, Derby County's sweeper, Taribo West, Real Malloca's Finidi George, Arsenal Kanu Nwankwo and PSG's Austin Okocha. They cited crowded club schedule as the main reason for opting out of the three remaining matches.

Skipper Oliseh, whose leadership of the Eagles has yielded nothing but failure, said he would abandon ship mid-stream because he doesn't think there was still any chance of Nigeria's qualification noting that it was however, not impossible for the country to scale through to the Japan/Korea World Cup 2002.

The five players who would not show any remorse for their individual and collective roles in Nigeria's failure to secure the 2002 World Cup qualification with relative ease, said the hope of qualifica-

Stories by Patrick Andrew

tion was rather dim with Saturday's 0-1 lost to the Leone Stars in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

Meanwhile, Johannes Bonfrere, the Eagles technical adviser, who had earlier vowed to throw in the towel should the Eagles fail to beat the Leone Stars have reneged on this words.

Bonfrere said on arrival from Freetown, Sierra Leone that he would not resign because the players have pleaded with him to stay

with the team and to serve out his contract. The contract which expires in 2002 was predicated on Nigeria's qualification for the Japan/Korea World Cup.

Bonfrere, who had earlier challenged Tijjani Yusuf, the NFA scribe, to stake his job if the Eagles beat their counterparts last Saturday, vehemently denied ever staking his resignation on the outcome of the match against Sierra Leone.

The Dutchman would not be bothered about the

emergency meeting of the board of NFA, scheduled to hold on Thursday. Bonfrere said he would rather be concerned with the May 5 cracker against Liberia scheduled for Port Harcourt than worry about whatever outcome of the emergency meeting.

The board has scheduled a crucial meeting in Abuja where it is expected to assess Nigeria's chances for qualification, if any, and what needs to be done to facilitate the qualification.

Sports Ministry, National Assembly want Bonfrere sacked

The incessant calls for the termination of Johannes Bonfrere's contract took a new dimension yesterday as both the National Assembly and the Sports Ministry threw their weights behind the call.

Sports Minister, Ishaya Mark Aku said the ministry was overwhelmed by the clarion calls for the sacking of the Super Eagles technical adviser, and would not hesitate to ratify whatever decision the board of the Nigerian Football Association (NFA) decides on Thursday.

Aku said Banfrere's continued stay in Nigeria

has given everyone enormous concern over the future of Nigerian football, noting that the termination of Bonfrere's contract would save Nigeria from further plunge to oblivion.

Similarly, the vice-chairman of the Senate Sports Committee, Senator Abubakar Sodangi said the National Assembly would be behind any action taken by the NFA to redeem Nigeria from further disgrace in football.

Sen. Sodangi said, "the Senate was disturbed that minnows are rubbing Nigeria in football simply because of the incompetence

of a so-called technical adviser who has been unable to harness the abundant talent in the country to give us a credible Super Eagles."

According to him, "the entire National Assembly is disturbed and very worried that in spite of available talents, the Dutchman has not been able to groom and blend them for effective results hence, would support any action taken to rid the country of Bonfrere."

He assured that the National Assembly would facilitate the payment of 180,000 dollars, said to be due to Bonfrere in the event of the termination of his contract.



Toronto Raptors Doug Christie in action against the Cleveland Cavs...recently.



Inspiring...Juventus midfielder Alessandro Del Piero has been in sparkling form, recently, as the Bianconeri chase for Italian Championship.



Oliseh

Professor Nomau's travails, written & illustrated by Bulama Mustapha

HATIIYA AMINA WAS OVERJOYED WHEN SHE HEARD NURA'S DISCOVERY

THANK YOU GOD FOR YOU HAVE HEARD ME.

SOME MORE NEWS HATIIYA.

WE ALSO DISCOVERED A PIECE OF PAPER TODAY AT THE FEDERAL RESEARCH CENTRE AND ALSO THE A.S.U. LABORATORY. THESE PIECES OF PAPERS CARRY THE NAME OF AN EXPLOSIVE DEVICE CALLED C-4.

SEEING THESE PAPERS AT BOTH SCENES PROVES THAT THE EXPLOSIONS WERE CONNECTED, AND THAT THAT EXPLOSIVE WAS USED

HOWEVER, WE NEED TO BE CERTAIN SO WE'VE TAKEN THE PIECES OF PAPERS TO THE MILITARY LAB FOR ANALYSIS.

TO BE CONTINUED