

DAILY TRUST

Trust Is A Burden

VOL. 2 NO. 22

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 15, 2001

JIMADA-ULA 26, 1422 A.H.

N50



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WEDNESDAY COLUMN

Kabiru Jinjiri on:
**Adverse effects
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OPUTA

IBB lists conditions for appearance

Former military president, General Ibrahim Babangida, has listed some conditions which must be met before he will appear at the Human Rights Violation Investigation Commission (HRVIC).

Speaking on behalf of

Babangida at a news conference in Abuja yesterday, his counsel, Mustapha Wali, said that the conditions included "creating a conducive environment" by the commission and the reopening of the petition which was adjourned indefinitely on July 11.

According to him, "the present environment was not only un conducive for Babangida but also for the commission". He said the events that transpired at the commission's sittings in Lagos created prospects of indignities and rowdy prejudicial conducts, which he

noted, "will inevitably render justice prostrate at the expense of Babangida".

Wali claimed that on the day Babangida was asked to appear before the commission during its sitting in Lagos, the venue was besieged by over 50 people who were carrying the petitioner, Chief Gani Fawehinmi.

"He, in turn, was carrying life-size, blown-up

contd. on pg 2

FG to count teachers

The Federal Government has tied the review of the zero allocation currently given to local government councils in the country to a comprehensive census of primary school teachers nationwide.

The head count has become necessary to enable government know the exact number of teachers in

By Osborne Adi Jnr.

the primary schools in the country.

The head count, according to Vice-President Atiku Abubakar, was inevitable in view of the fact that some local governments made returns where the number of teachers in

contd. on pg 2

2003 Elections

APP, AD condemn use of ID card

Opposition to the use of the national I.D. card for future elections in the country has continued to grow as two of the three political parties have also condemned the proposal.

Chairmen of the two political parties, the All People's Party (APP) and the Alliance for Democracy (AD), Alhaji Yusuf Ali and Alhaji Abdulkadir Ahmed respectively stated the positions of their parties in separate interviews in a programme on the Hausa Service of the Voice of America (VOA) monitored in Abuja yesterday.

The two parties which are acting as oppositions to the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) mentioned the unconstitutional-

ity of the use of the ID card for voting in elections.

The AD chairman who had earlier spoken exclusively to *Daily Trust* on the issue specifically warned of his party's decision to boycott the 2003 elections if the I.D. card is to be used even though the *Afenifere* leader, Chief Abraham Adesanya is a strong supporter of the ID card proposal.

They stated that the issue

Detractors can't stop us

— Obasanjo

President Olusegun Obasanjo yesterday declared that his administration would not succumb to detractors in its determination to reform the country.

The president declared, "it wouldn't be easy, but we are going to keep doing what is best for the country no matter the odds and how rough the road is until we get to the promised land."

Speaking when a delegation of Igbo Women Forum paid him a solidarity visit accompanied by the Aviation Minister, Mrs. Kema Chikwe yesterday, President Obasanjo said his administration would continue to put the country on a pedestal of becoming a leading nation in Africa.

of I.D. card will not solve the problem of election malpractices as the country is full of foreigners from neighbouring Niger, Ghana, Cameroon among others, who could not be identified, therefore they could also be issued with the card.

According to the party leaders, the federal government should allow (INEC) to have full responsibility for the issuance of voters' cards.

contd. on pg 2

By Suleiman Muhammed

He said since Nigerians entrusted the mantle of leadership on him and others, it behove on the government to do what is best for the country, no matter the amount of criticism by opponents.

President Obasanjo, while acknowledging the support by the Igbo women, noted that the adage that be

contd. on pg 2

Reps unveil dev plan for Nigeria

More than one year after the launching of the "Contract with Nigeria" by the House of Representatives, the House is set to unveil yet another vision plan for the people through a legislation tagged: "Minimum Infrastructure Development Bill."



Special Adviser to the President on Petroleum and Energy, Dr. Rilwanu Lukman (left) Speaker of the House of Representatives, Alhaji Ghali Umar Na'Abba (middle) and Minister of Environment, Alhaji Muhammadu Kabir Sa'id at the 1st International Conference on Oil Pollution and Environmental Management in Abuja ... yesterday.

Pix: Felix Onigbinde

Govt to check oil spillage

To check the incessant oil spillage in the Niger-Delta region, the Federal Government has directed all oil and Gas companies to submit a detailed

By Tashikalmah Hallah

inventory of their pipelines and their life span to the Ministry of Environment. Vice-President Atiku Abubakar gave the directive yesterday while declaring open the first international conference and symposium on "Oil Pollution and Environmental Management" organised by the House of Representatives' Committee on Environment. According to the Vice-President, the issue of coastal, land and marine pollution which has accompa-

nied oil exploration, production and transportation in the Niger-Delta has been largely responsible for the restiveness," in the area.

While lamenting the crises in the region which predates the Obasanjo administration, the Vice-President explained that after critical analysis the administration created the Ministry of Environment and the Niger-Delta Development Commission (NDDC) respectively to redress the issues.

He explained further that

contd. on pg 2



Dr. Abel Goubadia, INEC Chairman

NEWS

APP

Contd. from pg 1

The party leaders further maintained that the use of I.D. card would create crisis, because according to them, who ever loses an election would resort to court action claiming that the use of I.D. is unconstitutional.

They also declared that the contract awarded for the provision of the I.D. card was a waste of money when compared with the amount needed by INEC.

They said that INEC requested for N7 billion for the contract to be completed within six months while, the foreign contracting firm requested for N27 billion which would be completed within one and a half year.

In an earlier interview with the *Daily Trust* the AD chairman had declared, "The Federal Executive Council has no right to take that decision. It is not within their jurisdiction to determine how elections are to be conducted in this country. This is an issue that should be addressed by INEC."

He advised the federal

government to hands off all matters concerning elections warning that the opposition would not allow PDP to hijack the job of INEC.

"The federal government led by the PDP today must not teleguide INEC. The National Assembly is about to pass the bill that will empower INEC to determine design how the next elections would be conducted, not the federal executive council.

"We in the opposition will never ever succumb to this kind of intimidation, INEC should determine how the next election is to be conducted. We are aware that INEC requested for N7 billion to prepare grounds for the local government election and the general elections.

"Without this money INEC is handicapped. But this does not mean government should take over and determine how the election is to be conducted. It is the responsibility of INEC," he stated.

Government

Contd. from pg 1

Oil and Gas Pollution Control Unit (OGPCU) of the Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) was transferred to the Ministry of Environment to avoid overlap of activities.

The Vice-President, who was represented by the Minister of Environment, Alhaji Muhammed Kabir Sa'id, also explained that the government is bent on ensuring that the oil and gas industry operators adopt good oil field practices and comply with environmental standards that obtain in other parts of the world.

"In achieving these, approvals and permits are issued to oil companies on all major activities that have potentials of impacting the environment such as waste disposal at drilling sites, the

management of oil spills and the containment of gas flaring."

The operators in the oil and gas industry are encouraged to ascertain the environmental and structural strength of their pipelines and associated facilities."

Also in a key-note address, the Speaker of the House of Representative, Alhaji Ghali Umar Na'Abba, called on youths in the region to shun violence against oil companies operating in the region and embrace dialogue in conflict resolution.

The House of Representative, he said, is trying to pass a law on the protection of the environment as this would reduced the problem of environmental degradation, especially in the Niger-Delta region.

F.G.

Contd. from pg 1

number of teachers in allocation formula to President Olusegun Obasanjo tomorrow.

Atiku, who spoke at the opening of a seminar on "New Strategies for Revenue Mobilisation at State and Local Government levels" in Abuja yesterday, said 'zero allocation' was one of the major concerns in the nation's fiscal arrangement today as certain local governments received next to nothing after primary school teachers' salaries and allowances were deducted from the source.

He attributed the situation to the incorrect data submitted by some area councils to the commission, and who consequently use the information to effect appropriate deductions that turn out to erode their allocations.

The commission's chairman, Alhaji Hamman Tukur, told newsmen yesterday that the new allocation formula, scheduled to be presented to the president tomorrow, is people-oriented and will redress all areas of conflict.

Hamman Tukur said the problem of 'zero allocation' will also be addressed by the

Reps

Contd. from pg 1

A statement by the Chief of Staff to the Speaker, Mr. S.I. Agbinda, indicated that the bill sponsored by members of the House of Representatives across the three political parties is a vision plan or people's charter from the House and aimed at focusing attention on the infrastructural problems in the country.

"The bill is based on the earlier unveiled 'Contract with Nigeria' and targets the infrastructure's challenges of our nation in the areas of electricity, telecommunications, water, gas, railways and prisons, roads, agriculture, health and education," the statement said.

It added: "The cost implication for making the infrastructure available to Nigerians in the estimated 10 to 20 years time-frame, has been put at about \$287 billion."

The statement further said that the bill, when passed, would re-define roles for the public and private sectors in Nigeria as well as attract foreign investors.

It is also proposes minimum levels of infrastructure at state and local government levels nationwide and the removal of monopolies or liberalisation of infrastructure areas like electricity, telecommunications and railways.

The enthronement of independent regulatory bodies and the provision of level investment playing ground for competition is part of the high points of the proposed bill.

According to the statement, the House decided to enact a legislation that would make it mandatory for the executive to implement the new legislative initiative following the non-release of funds for the implementation of "Contract with Nigeria."

The bill was aimed at ensuring the dualisation of major roads in the country.

"The project cannot be financed by government alone and so we are calling on the private sector to participate," said a legislative aide in the Speaker's office.

Detractors

Contd. from pg 1

every successful man, there is a woman, can be best if such a woman render positive assistance to her husband.

He urged women to actively participate in politics because according to him, politics encompass all aspect of life, particularly as regards socio-economic and cultural aspect. The President also challenged the womenfolk to redress the high rate of immorality among the youths -

IBB

Contd. from pg 1

colour pictures of Dele Giwa, showing what he looked like before the bomb explosion and his mangled body following the explosion. He was accompanied by hordes of men chanting war songs as the cameras clicked away," Wali said.

The counsel said that at

draft new formula, which will turn the fulcrum of a draft bill to be sent to the National Assembly by the president.

While enunciating the positive aspects of the draft formula, he said, however, that it has nothing to do with resource control, which some southern governors are promoting.

He also confirmed the Vice-President's statement on teachers head count saying the census was intended to obtain data on the actual number of teachers and even

"This is an indication that the women are being challenged to play their roles of mothers."

"As mothers, if you are not good wives we will not likely be good husbands, and if you are not good mothers, your children may likely not be good," he declared, as the women donated N1000 to him for the first lady to prepare him "good meal."

Earlier, the women forum National President, Mrs.

the Abuja sitting of the commission, Fawehinmi created the same scenario, when he distributed leaflets of Dele Giwa's picture to the people at the gallery and that the action made a member of the commission advise Fawehinmi to refrain from doing so.

He stressed that fair hearing and protection of the dignity of his client, which were inseparable from his physical person, was of utmost importance both to him as counsel and to the commission that summoned him.

Wali cited an incident of July 11, where policemen had to fire warning shots, when it appeared that a witness was to be lynched.

He said that he had informed the commission that Babangida would respond to the petition as required, but within the confines of orderly proceedings, as well as the spirit of the law and rule of law.

Meanwhile, chairman of

Gov Lawal debunks OPC threat
*warns Saraki against incitement

From Abdul Laro, in Ilorin with agency reports

Gov. Mohammed Lawal has declared that there is no threat to peace from the Odua People's Congress (OPC) in Kwara, contrary to a recent newspaper report.

Lawal made the declaration on Monday in Ilorin, while receiving a three-man delegation of the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF), led by retired Maj.-Gen. Abdullahi Shelleng. Stressing that the proscribed Odua Peoples Congress (OPC) was no threat to peace in the state, the governor said: "I want to say once again unequivocally, that there is no threat whatsoever from the OPC in Kwara State."

Earlier, Shelleng had said that the mission of his team to Kwara State was to meet with the governor and traditional rulers, to brief them on the activities of the ACF.

Lawal assured the delegation that Kwara State was 100 per cent behind the ACF, and that the state would ensure that it contributed its

quota to the forum.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the OPC has been clamouring for the installation of an Oba for the Yoruba-speaking section of Ilorin.

At present, Ilorin has an Emir, Sulu Gambari, a retired justice of the Court of Appeal.

His words: "I am the only authority to ascertain any threat to peace in Kwara State, by virtue of my position as given by the Almighty God and I want to say once again unequivocally that there is no threat whatsoever from the OPC in the emirate or Kwara State."

He observed that the anti-OPC campaign was capable of sending wrong signals to the two major ethnic groups and creating unnecessary friction.

Governor Lawal noted that his political godfather will not condescend to the level of knocking two major ethnic groups, heads against each other in the pursuit of any ambition.

Alh. Lawal affirmed the Northernness of Kwara and emphasised that the people of the state were proud "being part and parcel of the North and we will remain so."

Earlier, Gen. Shelleng has stated that the forum was formed on March 8, 2000 in Kaduna with the purpose of providing a united front for the North.

Juliet Olejeme said the programmes so far put in place by the government was enough for Nigerians to support the president for re-election in 2003.

"In the last two years, what government has done was a lot particularly the anti-corruption and human rights panel," she declared and called on the president to do more so that "by the time you are re-elected in 2003, it will be your third time to be a Nigerian leader."

the Human Rights Violations Investigation Commission (HRVIC), Justice Chukwu-difu Oputa yesterday paid an unscheduled visit to Aso Rock where he conferred with President Olusegun Obasanjo and the Chief of Staff, Major-General Abdullahi Muhammed.

Justice Oputa who arrived the State House at about 1 p.m was accompanied by two other members of the commission as well as the media coordinator, Mallam Ujudud Sheriff. He however, declined comment and insisted that he was in Aso Rock on a private visit.

On arrival, Justice Oputa immediately conferred with President Obasanjo in his office, after which he met the Chief of Staff, Major-General Mohammed.

The meeting was the first since Justice Oputa and his Commission members returned from a foreign trip last week.

Fortnight ago, former President Ibrahim Babangida met with President

Obasanjo at the State House 72 hours after the president's directive to the Oputa Commission to formally write the Chief of Staff, requesting his assistance in reaching three former Heads of State who have so far declined to appear before the Commission.

Though Justice Oputa shunned the media, the visit, was said to be a follow-up to the Commission's earlier complaints against some retired who were mentioned in the testimonies of witnesses before the Commission.

It was learnt that at least two former Heads of State, General Babangida and General Abdulsalami Abubakar have indicated their interest to appear before the commission in September 3, when it resumes sitting in Abuja.

General Ibrahim Babangida and Muhammadu Buhari have in separate interviews granted the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and the Voice of America (VOA) spoken on the Commission, and why they declined appearance.

NEWS

Balarabe Musa warns INEC against non-registration of parties

As the formation of new political associations seeking registration as political parties is increasing, the former Kaduna State Executive Governor and the Chairman of the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP), Alhaji Balarabe Musa, has warned that if the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) refuse to register the new political parties, it may result to crisis that could affect the country's unity and cooperation.

Balarabe Musa who was speaking on a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Hausa programme monitored in Abuja,

maintained that the three political parties, represents minority ethnic groups and that they are full of crisis which has force 80 percent of their members to decamp and form other political associations now seeking registration.

As such it was impossible for these parties, he said to be the only ones contesting

the 2003 elections.

Speaking on the recent federal government's decision to use the national identity card in casting votes during election, the PRP boss said the idea violated the rights of Nigerians and that if the Federal Government insisted on this, it would regret the consequences.

Two commissions may clash over right on judges

A fresh crisis may soon occur between the Zamfara State Anti-corruption Committee and the State Judicial Service Commission on who has the constitutional right of sacking judges when they commit any offence.

By Mustapha Isah Kwaru

According to a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Hausa Service programme monitored in Abuja, the crisis started when the anti-corruption committee instituted by the Zamfara State government to investigate the alleged corrupt practices against some judges in the state, completed its assignment and directed the state government to dismiss all the judges found guilty to the offence.

Due to this directive, the

judicial service commission argued that the anti-



Gov Ahmed Sani

corruption committee has no constitutional rights to give such a directive.

Barrister Lasko Moyi, who is one of the JSC members stated that even the anti-corruption committee instituted by the Zamfara State government is unconstitutional.

According to him, the Nigerian constitution allow only the federal government to set up such a panel.

He added that constitutionally, even the state government has no right to sack any judge who was employed by the JSC.

Education to get 26% of 2002 budget

Beginning next year, the educational sector would be allocated no less than 26 percent of the national budget with a view to jump starting education in Nigeria, the Chairman, Education Committee of the House of Representatives, Dr. Shehu Garba Matazu has said.

Speaking to newsmen in Katsina Monday, Dr. Matazu revealed that members of his committee, having arrived at the conclusion that the basic problem of the educational sector in the country was lack of adequate funding, had successfully convinced President Obasanjo on the imperative of adopting the UNESCO's prescription of setting aside 26 percent of the national budget for education.

He described the development as "a tonic the educational sector has for long required." The amount will represent and increase of 18 percent over the eight percent allocated to education in the current budget. Hon. Matazu stressed that both chambers of the National

From Abdul Labaran, in Katsina

Assembly are fully implemented in the 2002 budget is expected to be presented to the National Assembly by the president next month.

The former Ahmadu Bello University don expressed the belief that with proper funding, the problems of education in Nigeria will be overcome. "Once the problems of education are surmounted, all other problems in the other sectors will also give way since education is undoubtedly the heart from which the pulse of development beats," he added.

The legislator, who represents the Musawa/Federal Constituency in Katsina State, also disclosed that the passing of the National Examination Council (NECON) bill into law by the House of Representatives was done in good faith, adding, "we did it out of patriotism, with the spirit of nationalism and the determination to ensure that Nigeria is not left behind educationally."

Otobo calls for scrapping of toll plazas

Chairman of the engineering team monitoring federal roads, Mr. Guy Otobo, has called for a halt in the collection of tolls from motorists along federal highways.

Otobo, a retired Permanent Secretary in the Federal Ministry of Works, said his position was informed by the fact that the amount realized as tolls was far less than what was required to maintain the roads.

Speaking with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) last weekend in Tafawa-Balewa, Bauchi State, shortly after inspecting federal road projects in the state, Otobo suggested that the payment of tolls be replaced with what he called "a road user charge."

According to him, "for the Federal Government to realize enough money that



Chief Tony Anenih

it would use to maintain roads, an amount should be added on the price of every litre of fuel sold, to be known as the road user charge".

He explained that through that way, the government would be able to raise enough money for road repair, noting that the road user charge had been used successfully in the US and other countries.

"The amount collected presently as tolls on federal roads is insignificant, and it is nowhere near what is required to repair or maintain the roads," he stated.

Otobo, who was for several years a director of highways in the Federal

Ministry of Works, also called for the establishment of "weigh-bridges" on all federal highways. He said it was true that most federal highways failed shortly after their completion, because over-loaded trucks were allowed to ply them.

Otobo also said that if the government expected the roads it was currently rehabilitating to last, it should immediately put in place a policy to encourage the use of rail for bulk movement of goods.

On the performance of indigenous road construction companies handling jobs for the Federal Government, Otobo said that while some of them were doing well, "the performance of most of them is far below expectations." He said, however, that with adequate motivation, they would be able to compete with foreign firms.

Otobo explained that the role of the monitoring team was purely advisory and that it had no power to enforce its decisions.

"At the end of every inspection, we write comprehensive reports which we send to the minister of works," he added.

Pro-Sharia group burns two beer-carrying trailers

law, which prohibits the sale and consumption of alcohol in the state, is not violated. He added that the action would be a lesson to whoever intends to violate the law in any way.

When asked, why the Hisba group did not hand over the trailers to security agents for prosecution, Malam Gagarau said, "the last time we arrested such trailers and handed them over to police for prosecution,

both the trailers and the drivers vanished without trace; this is why this time around we decided to take a different measure. Sharia is a part of our Islamic heritage and we would not allow any body to violate it with impunity," he said.



Gov Musa Kwankwaso

ACF to establish own media outfit

The Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF), an umbrella organization for states in the Northern part of the country, has announced plans to set up its own media outfit. It says it needed such an outfit to help propagate its programmes and activities worldwide.

An ACF member, Lt.-Gen. Jeremiah Useni (rtd), said during a courtesy visit to the Bauchi State Deputy Governor, Abdullahi Mahmoud, that a media fund committee had been set up to work out modalities for establishing the media - (newspaper, magazine and a radio station).

Useni, a one-time Minister of the FCT, said the outfit would take off as soon as the committee concludes its assignment, stressing that it would provide a platform to counter negative reports about the region by other rival organizations.

He said the forum had also commenced data collections for presentation at Oputa panel in September when it is expected to resume sitting from its break in response to allegation made against the North by the Ohaneze, an Igbo umbrella organization.

Useni said although ACF was able to respond immediately to some of the accusations, the presentations were not elaborate enough, because they were hastily done and added that for the sake of posterity, records have to be straightened.



Outgoing NCWS President, Mrs. Zainab Maina (right), exchanging some points with incoming President, Hon. (Dr.) Bolere Elizabeth Kebebe-Nwokefor during the introduction of newly elected members of National Council for Women Societies of Nigeria in Abuja .. recently Pix: Felix Onigbinde

NEWS

FG moves to reposition the police force

The Federal Government has made a renewed resolution to reposition the police force in order to equip it with the needed impetus to contain the recent upsurge of crime in the country.

To this end, government has recently purchased large quantities of arms and ammunition from Bulgaria for use by the police to improve their firepower.

Speaking at a national seminar organised jointly by the office of the Special Assistant to President Obasanjo on National Orientation, the Ministry of Police Affairs and the Nigeria Police Force for non-commissioned officers and inspectors in Abuja on Monday, the Minister of

By Ikenna Emeka Okpani

Police Affairs, Mr. Steven Ibn Akiga, said "government was bent on giving serious attention to the welfare of the police."

Mr. Akiga said renovation of barracks would begin in earnest through the presidential



Mr. Smith, IGP

committee on the renovation of military and police barracks under the chairmanship of the minister of defence.

Commission to monitor satellite campuses underway

The bickering between university satellite campuses and the Federal Government will soon be a thing of the past as plans are currently going on to establish a commission to undertake the approval, licensing and monitoring of distant learning institutions in the country.

The commission, to be known as National Open and Distance Education Commission (NODEC), is part of the recommendations of the planning committee set up by the Minister of Education, Prof. Babalola Borisade last

Rev. Kayode Williams, founder of the Prison Rehabilitation Ministry, has blamed the society for the plight of ex-convicts who are now being stigmatized, the News Agency of

Cleric makes case for ex-convicts

Nigeria (NAN) reports.

Speaking at the commissioning of the first phase of the prison rehabilitation assisted

transport scheme at Alausa, Ikeja, Williams, himself an ex-convict, called on the society to accept convicts and help their reintegration into the society having served their punishment.

He said the scheme being launched was to assist ex-convicts toward total rehabilitation, saying "nobody was born a prisoner, it is the society that creates the situation in so many instances."

He said a vocation and training center and farm settlement have been established in Oyo State for the rehabilitation of ex-convicts.

"Our agenda is to settle ex-convicts by engaging them so as to make crime less attractive," he added. Three commuter buses to be maintained and managed by ex-convicts were commissioned.

Also speaking, Mrs. Emily Abbot, Chairman, National Human Rights Commission, South-West zone, called for support for prison reforms.

"Not all persons who went to prison are armed robbers, some people may have been sent to prison just because they were at the wrong place at the wrong time," she contended. She appealed to the public, including family members of ex-convicts, to stop stigmatizing them as such attitude would not help the integration process.

Arewa forum is non-partisan - Saraki

The resolve of the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) to remain non-partisan in the nation's democratic dispensation has again been stressed.

The hint was dropped yesterday by a member, board of trustees of the forum and leader of a delegation touring North-West, Dr. Olusola Saraki, while on a courtesy call to Zamfara

State Governor, Alhaji Ahmad Sani (*Yariman Bakura/Sardaunan Zamfara*) at Government House, Gusau.

He further re-affirmed that, "the forum is non-ethnic, non-political and non-religious. It is after moving the North forward in the areas of education, healthcare and rural transformation."

Dr. Saraki averred that leaders in the North have set up machinery for regular dialogue to ensure issues threatening the unity of the country are resolved.

He said the forum is determined to liaise and seek co-operation with other relevant national and international agencies aimed at promoting the interest of the recent civil unrest at the North-Central, wondering why a brother should kill his brother.

Responding, the State

Executive Governor, Alhaji Ahmad Sani, expressed delight over the formation of the association, which he noted would go a long way in championing the cause of the North.

Apparently referring to separatists from some quarters of the country, the governor warned that without the North there would be no entity called Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Alhaji Ahmad Sani assured the preparedness of his administration to support the forum in all ramifications.

On the delegation were

the former Inspector-General of Police, Alhaji Ibrahim Coomasie; a former Governor of Sokoto State, Dr. Garba Nadama, former Military Administrator of Katsina State, Col. Joseph Akaagerger and Dr. Abubakar Moh'd Sokoto.

Others were Malam Yahaya Gusau, the Kayan Sardauna Alhaji Abubakar Tunau, the Sarkin Sudan of Wurno, Alhaji Malami; Comrade Pascal Bafyau, Alhaji Idris Koko and Alhaji Inuwa Abdulkadir, the Deputy Secretary-General of the forum.

commission will create and harness three main institutions: The National Open University, which will provide university education; the National Open Polytechnic which will look after polytechnics and the National Open Schools which will look after young people who have not been able to go to school or who have dropped out," he said.

Prof. Dorayi expressed happiness that international organizations like UNESCO, World Bank, United Nations and UNICEF were all interested in open distant learning in the world, especially in Nigeria, which, he said has the potential of launching the programme in West Africa.



Prof. Borisade

Abdullahi calls for community participation in education

The Special Adviser on Food Security to the President, Prof. Ango Abdullahi, has called for community involvement in the formulation and implementation of various educational programmes and policies to boost the nation's educational sector.

Abdullahi, who spoke at the speech and prize giving day of Zaria Academy held at the premises of the college at Shika, Zaria, last weekend, said the call has become imperative in view of the importance of education in the development of any nation.

He frowned at the level of community participation in the implementation of educational policies and programmes in the Northern part of the country.

He called on the elites in the area to reverse the situation by encouraging parents and guardians to send their wards not only to government-owned schools but privately-owned colleges

also in order to boost enrolment of students in the country.

Abdullahi assured that the Federal Government, on its part, would continue to invest heavily in the nation's educational sector with the hope of advancing the socio-economic position of the country.

Speaking earlier, the Principal of the college, Mr. Reuben Nyikwagh, had announced that the college recorded 96.5 percent pass in the Junior Secondary School, 2001, result of the National Examination Council (NECO).

He attributed the excellent result to hardwork, discipline and patience, saying that the school would continue to use those virtues to assist students.

He commended the parents and guardians of the students for their "endless sacrificial visits,

and urged them not to withdraw their "continual understanding and co-operation" to the management of the school.

He commended the parents and guardians of the students for their "endless sacrificial visits, donations and patient monitoring of the students,"

and urged them not to withdraw their "continual understanding and co-operation" to the management of the school.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as MISS SA'ADATU UMAR ZANDAM, now wish to be called MRS SA'ADATU MOHAMMED MUSTAPHA. All former documents remain valid. Buk, Law School Bwari Abuja, and NYSC to note.



Dr. Olusola Saraki

Christian society presents gifts to child care home

Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Ikate, Surulere's Busy Bees Society on Sunday donated food and household items to Modupe Cole Memorial Child Care Centre for handicapped children to stem the suffering of the inmates, the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports.

The centre, with a population of 130 students in the boarding house and 250 day students, NAN learnt, has been surviving on donations from charity.

NAN learnt that apart from such donations, which are far apart in coming, the

inmates have been kept on subsistence living from credits and at times support from the school principal's monthly salary.

While presenting the gifts, the President of the society, Mrs. Ronke Grillo, commended late Mrs. Modupe Cole, founder of the child centre.

Grillo explained that the founder's vision in establishing the centre showed her commitment and interest in the welfare and survival of the less-privileged children in the Nigerian society.

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DAILY TRUST
EDITORIAL

Fairness to pensioners

Perhaps, of all neglected Nigerians, the tribe of pensioners captures our imagination more than any other. This is no thanks to an admixture of poverty, beggarliness and misery visited upon it by the Nigerian state via a notoriously inefficient system of pensions administration.

The painful reality is common knowledge, but the Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Establishment and Pensions, Dr. Aboki Zhawa, aptly put it when he declared at the July 10, 2001 meeting with heads of parastatals in Abuja that: "the cumulative effects of non-payment of retirement benefits as and when due to retirees are legion".

He further acknowledged that "some have died on queues while waiting to collect their pensions, and others have lost confidence in government's ability to take care of its elderly."

It must be stated that, like almost all social problems plaguing Nigeria, the problem bedevilling pensioners across the country are perennial and predate this administration. It is refreshing, however, that the government, perhaps because it derives its mandate directly from the people, is making spirited efforts to solve the problem once and for all.

For instance, in the long term, the federal government has forwarded a bill to the National Assembly seeking to establish a National Pensions Board (NPB) that will, hopefully, relieve the hardship of pensioners by radically reforming pensions administration in Nigeria.

In the short-run, government has set up two task forces to ensure that by this December, all arrears of retirement benefits are cleared. These are positive steps in the right direction and they are highly commendable.

If government dutifully takes care of pensioners, it has even a weightier responsibility of ensuring the welfare of its senior citizens. Pensioners should have no cause, whatsoever, to regret their service to the nation on account of preventable financial and psychological humiliations which an inhuman pensions scheme sentences them to. Retirement needs not be a time of apprehension or nightmares, but an exciting time of restful retreat from active life. Anything short of this is a disservice to our elders.

Recently, the Head of Service of the Federation, Alhaji Yayale Ahmed told pensions administrators in Abuja that "no responsible government would fold its arms and watch its senior citizens being subjected to inhuman treatment, abject poverty and misery."

We agree with this in totality. It is hoped government would match these pronouncements with results. It is also hoped the pensions scheme would be fully automated and its administrators re-oriented to modernise and standardise pensions administration in Nigeria as obtains elsewhere in the civilised world.



WEDNESDAY COLUMN

Adverse effects of bank interest

By Kabiru Jinjiri

The world's leading religions - Islam, Christianity and Judaism - have explicitly and emphatically forbidden interest. The phraseology of verses in the Holy Qur'an and Holy Bible leave no doubt in one's mind that the institution of interest is wholly repugnant to the spirit of those religions.

In the Bible, verses prohibiting interest can be found in Deuteronomy 23:19-20; Leviticus 25:35-37; Ezekiel 18:8-9; Ezekiel 18:13; Luke 6: 34-35; Jeremiah 15:10; Exodus 22: 25; Nehemiah 5:11 and Psalm 15:5. In the Qur'an, interest is forbidden in the surah *Albaqarah*, 275-81; *Al-Rum*, verse 39; *Al-Nisa*, verse 161; and *Al-Imran*, verse 130-3.

Islam considers interest unfair and capable of encouraging laziness on the part of owners of capital and creates a class of idle loafers - the capitalists who only put in money and reap from the pain and sweat of others. This shows that interest-based loans have a persistent tendency in favour of the rich and against the interests of the common people.

Likewise if we look at the conditions of African countries, of acute poverty, high mortality rate of small children, as a result of repayment of interest based loans to the capitalist countries, we would see the real oppression that results from these transactions. In Nigeria, people are wondering why the naira is always falling in value. Some say it was due to the introduction of high denominations of the currency i.e. N100, N200 and N500 notes, while others say, this is so because of high demand for hard currencies at the currency market. It is time we understand that nothing has caused the devaluation of the naira more than foreign debt based on interest, because the naira had higher value before such debts accumulated. It is known that before 1983, the naira was valued higher than the US dollar. But Nigeria's accumulated debt caused the value of the currency to fall in 1985 and the Nigerian government, in its myopic thinking, introduced the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and the Second Tier Foreign Exchange Market (SFEM) and later the Autonomous Market (AFEM). It is here that I want to call the attention of the people who can reason to what Allah (S.W.T) said: "Allah will deprive usury of all blessing, but will give increase for deeds of charity; for He loveth not creatures ungrateful and wicked"... 2:276

This is the reason why the value of the naira has fallen, and it is the reason for the devaluation of the currencies of the countries that have taken this type of debt. This is the reason also for the devaluation of even the US dollar itself sometimes.

In addition, any country where banks and other financial institutions that advance loans based on interest are many in number cannot be devoid of inflation on essential commodities, more especially if the country takes loans from outside (foreign debt). Somebody may ask, "How has the loan based on interest caused inflation?" The an-

swers to this are two:

Firstly an investor whose capital is based on interest will calculate his capital as principal plus the interest on the loan before thinking of his profit; which will make his goods so dear. Take for example a farmer who takes a loan of N2,000 under this type of agreement to produce rice with condition that he will pay back N2,700. Does he start looking for profit after N2,000 or after N2,700? Everybody knows that he will add his profit after the higher amount and rice will thereby become that much more expensive? And who is responsible for paying the interest man who buys the rice?

Secondly because Allah has deprived this transaction of his blessing, and the Holy prophet (P.B.U.H.) has cursed it, everybody remotely related to it is made to pay the price.

Similarly citizens of any country, whose economy is dependent on debt based on interest will never have peace or tranquillity. The more interest based banks are established, the more the rate of unemployment. What will happen is that, the rich will prefer to take their money to the banks because of the interest rather than investment in the real productive sectors, which will cause many to lose their jobs. If the numbers of unemployed are many there will be no more security because burglars, armed robbers and many types of dupers will be on the increase. Maybe the government under this condition would create employment opportunities; but we should be certain that if loans based on interest are those to be advanced, there would never be any success.

Moreover if the country depends on external borrowing to boost its economy the citizens will be in difficulty. In the first place poverty will be on the increase, at the same time masses will always be demonstrating against leaders. What will make the masses to demonstrate is that the government will be busy renegotiating and servicing foreign debts which will cause perennial budget deficit from where hunger will engulf the people, drugs will not be available in the hospitals and also the educational sector will collapse. Please tell me what would prevent the masses that have found themselves under these situations from demonstrating against the government. And more so if the government increases prices or withdraws subsidy from basic essential goods being sold to them, like fuel, fertilizers and others.

These are the reasons why we need Islamic banks, so that we can be free from the venom of interest of the so-called conventional banks.

Lastly I challenge all Muslims, particularly the enlightened ones, the wealthy and not so wealthy, to take the first step towards the establishment of an islamically approved banking system. Section 9(2) sub section (1) of the Banks and Other Financial Institutions Act No. 25 of 1991 gives the necessary legal framework for establishment of profit and loss sharing banks in Nigeria.

Kabiru is of Gwarinpa Estate, Abuja.
kabirajinjiri@hotmail.com



FEDERAL MINISTRY OF COMMERCE.

AREA. 1 SECRETARIAT, GARKI-ABUJA

INAUGURATION OF THE NEW EXPANDED NATIONAL FOCAL POINT (NFP) ON MULTILATERAL TRADE MATTERS

The Honourable Minister of Commerce, Engr. Mustafa Bello, FNSE, will on Thursday, 16th August, 2001 inaugurate the reconstituted and expanded National Focal Point (NFP) on Multilateral Trade Matters
Venue: Nicon Hilton, Abuja
Time: 1:00pm

Invited guests and members should be seated at 12:30p.m.

2. The purpose of the new NFP process, as approved by the Federal Executive Council, is to ensure the effective coordination and formulation of trade policies and negotiating positions in Nigeria. The NFP therefore comprises three Main Committees, namely, Trade in Goods; Trade in Services; and Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). These main Committee further have sectoral Sub-Committees.

3. The following members of the NFP, its Main Committees and sectoral sub-committees are by this notice invited to attend the scheduled inauguration ceremony.

- | | | | |
|----|---|---|-------------|
| 1. | Ammuna Lawan Ali | - | Chairperson |
| | Permanent Secretary, Commerce | | |
| 2. | Prof. Uka Ezenwe | - | Alternate |
| | Dept. of Economics, ABU., Zaria | | |
| 3. | Prof. A.L. Mabogunje | - | Member NFP |
| | Chairman, Committee
On Trade in Goods | | |
| 4. | Mr. Bunmi Oni | - | Member |
| | Alternate Chairman, Committee
On Trade in Goods | | |
| 5. | Mal. S.A. Ndanusa | - | Member |
| | Chairman, Committee in Trade
In Services | | |
| 6. | Mr. Fola Adeola | - | Member |
| | Alternative Chairman,
Committee on Trade in Services | | |
| 7. | Prof. J.A. Ekpere | - | Member |
| | Chairman, Committee
On TRIPS | | |
| 8. | Mr. Y.F. Agah | - | Secretary |

4. The following Chairmen and alternate Chairmen of the Sectoral Sub-Committees are also invited to attend the inauguration ceremony for recognition.

1. SUB-COMMITTEE ON MARKET ACCESS

- | | | | |
|-----|--|---|--------------------|
| (a) | Alhaji Yuguda Usman | - | Chairman |
| | Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC)
Kumba Street,
Wuse Zone 2
Abuja. | | |
| (b) | Dr. Pat Utomi | - | Alternate Chairman |
| | Lagos Business School,
2 Ahmed Onibudo Street
Victoria Island
Lagos. | | |

2. SUB-COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

- | | | | |
|-----|--|---|--------------------|
| (a) | Mr. O. A. Edache | - | Chairman |
| | Federal Department of Agriculture (FDA)
Federal Ministry of Agriculture,
Federal Secretariat,
Area 11, Garki,
Abuja. | | |
| (b) | Professor Ango Abdullahi | - | (Co-chairman) |
| (c) | Dr. S. Olowude | - | Alternate Chairman |
| | Group Director of Operation /Country Manager,
ACE-Audit Control and, Expertise (Nig) Ltd,
10A Fabac close, off Ljgali Ayorinde Street,
P.O. Box 72194, Victoria Island,
Lagos. | | |

3. SUB-COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS

- | | | | |
|-----|--|---|--------------------|
| (a) | Director-General | - | Chairman |
| | Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON)
Plot 1687 Lome Street
Wuse zone 7,
Abuja. | | |
| (b) | Professor Mike Kwanashie | - | Alternate Chairman |
| | Institute for Development Studies,
Ahmadu Bello University
Zaria. | | |

4. SUB-COMMITTEE ON TRIMS

- | | | | |
|-----|---|---|--------------------|
| (a) | Chief Kola Daisi | - | Chairman |
| | Executive Chairman,
Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NICP)
Plot 1181, Aguiyi Oronsi Street
Maitama Abuja. | | |
| (b) | Alhaji Haruna Sambo | - | Alternate Chairman |
| | Empire Group,
Wuse, II, Abuja. | | |

(5) SUB-COMMITTEE ON CUSTOMS PROCEDURES

- | | | | |
|-----|--|---|--------------------|
| (a) | Dr. J. Nwaiwu | - | Chairman |
| | Deputy Comptroller-General
Nigeria Customs Service,
Headquarters
Wuse 3, Abuja. | | |
| (b) | Mr. Lucky E. Amiwero | - | Alternate Chairman |

6. SUB-COMMITTEE ON TRADE DEFENSE MEASURES

- | | | | |
|-----|--|---|--------------------|
| (a) | Ms Stella Aburime | - | Chairperson |
| | Federal Ministry of Justice,
New Secretariat Complex,
Shehu Shagari Way, Abuja | | |
| (b) | Mr. Paul Usoro | - | Alternate Chairman |

7. SUB-COMMITTEE ON TEXTILES/PLURILATERALS/NEW ISSUES

- | | | | |
|-----|--|---|--------------------|
| (a) | The Director. | - | Chairman |
| | Trade and Exchange Department,
Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN)
Garki II,
Abuja. | | |
| (b) | Mr. Victor Eburajolo, | - | Alternate Chairman |

Afprint (Nig) Ltd,
P.O.Box 3623
Lagos.

8. SUB-COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT SERVICES

- | | | | |
|-----|--|---|--------------------|
| (a) | Representative of Honourable Minister | - | Chairman |
| | Federal Ministry of Transport,
Central Business District,
Abuja. | | |
| (b) | Captain Muhammed Joji | - | Alternate Chairman |
| (c) | Captain Edward Boyo (LANDOVER) | - | Co-Chairman |

9. SUB-COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES

- | | | | |
|-----|--|---|-----------------------|
| (a) | Permanent Secretary, (F) | - | Chairman |
| | Federal Ministry of Finance
Central Business District
Abuja. | | |
| (b) | Miss Mabel Ndagi | - | Alternate Chairperson |

10. SUB-COMMITTEE ON TRADE IN PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

- | | | | |
|-----|------------------------------|---|--------------------|
| (a) | Professor Suleyman Adeyemi | - | Chairman |
| (b) | Engr. H. Gumel, President | - | Alternate Chairman |
| | Nigeria Society of Engineers | | |

11. SUB-COMMITTEE ON MOVEMENT OF NATURAL PERSONS

- | | | | |
|-----|---|---|--------------------|
| (a) | Deputy Comptroller-General | - | Chairman |
| | Nigerian Immigration Services (NIS)
Federal Secretariat-I
Block E
Garki, Abuja | | |
| (b) | Mr. V.C. Duru | - | Alternate Chairman |
| | Managing Director,
VITAMO (Nig) Ltd
Wuse Zone 6, Abuja. | | |

12. SUB-COMMITTEE ON BASIC TELECOMMUNICATIONS

- | | | | |
|-----|--|---|--------------------|
| (a) | ED (Basic Telecommunications) | - | Chairman |
| | Federal Ministry of Communications,
New Federal Secretariat
Shehu Shagari Way,
Maitama-Abuja. | | |
| (b) | Mallam Bashir Ahmed el-Rufai | - | Alternate Chairman |
| | Inter Cellular (Nig) Ltd. | | |

13. SUB-COMMITTEE ON INDUSTRIAL DESIGNS AND OTHER RIGHTS

- | | | | |
|-----|---|---|--------------------|
| (a) | Director-General | - | Chairman |
| | National Office for Technology Acquisition
And Promotion (NOTAP)
6. Cotonou Crescent
Wuse Zone 6
Abuja. | | |
| (b) | Dr. Abdulmuyasir Ladan | - | Alternate Chairman |

14. SUB-COMMITTEE ON PATENTS AND TRADE MARKS

- | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------|---|--------------------|
| (a) | Mr. Shafiu Adamu Yauri | - | Chairman |
| (b) | Professor Egerton E. Uvieghana | - | Alternate Chairman |

15. SUB-COMMITTEE ON COPY RIGHTS

- | | | | |
|-----|--|---|-----------------------|
| (a) | Director-General | - | Chairman |
| | Nigeria Copy Rights Commission
New Federal Secretariat
Shehu Shagari Way,
Maitama-Abuja | | |
| (b) | Madam Fatima Agasi | - | Alternate Chairperson |

Signed:

AMMUNALAWANALI Mni
Permanent Secretary

Opinion

The ranting bees

By Joshua Kisabo

The question millions of Nigerians are asking the Oputa panel is whether it has started drifting from its duties of investigating human rights abuses perpetuated by past regimes to creating conducive platform for settling personal scores. Notable personalities like Adams Oshiomhole, labour president, reaffirmed this belief when he spoke to a reporter of *Thisday* newspaper on July 27, 2001.

He stated that the drift in duties and obligations of the Oputa panel has transformed it into a medium for disgruntled elements to stain the image of highly placed individuals most especially that of the former head of state, General Abdulsalami Abubakar who made it possible for Nigerians to be breathing the air of democracy. Oputa panel has no doubt created the enabling environment for the smear campaign against respected personalities like Abdulsalami Abubakar.

The faceless individuals who have been teleguiding the likes of Sabo and Mustapha are those who lost out in the present political dispensation. There are those who benefited immensely from military regimes, and since General Abdulsalami Abubakar refused to bow to their wish not to hand over to an elected civilian government, the only way to hit him is to cook up damaging allegations by using men like Sabo and Mustapha to actualise their objective.

But Nigerians are no fools because they know that General Abdulsalami Abubakar cannot perpetuate such financial fraud Sabo and Mustapha levelled against the internationally respected general. Let us pick these allegations and subject them to scrutiny. Chief security officer to the late dictator, Major Mustapha claimed that he handed over \$500 million to General Abdulsalami Abubakar. Is the money in cash, or cheque? If it is the latter, which bank?

Again was it in the presence of the then Provisional Ruling Council? How did Mustapha come about such huge amount of money? If it was from security votes which date was it released from the Central Bank so that we can crosscheck to ascertain the truth.

Let us consider the \$40 million said to have been contributed by multinational oil companies to enable the late Gen. Abacha transform to a civilian president which was allegedly shared by Abdulsalami Abubakar and top officers of his government. Can Mustapha give details about the contributions? Which oil company made what contribution and when? In which bank was this money deposited so that Nigerians can go and verify it? Up till now, no multinational oil company has come out to support these claims made by these ranting bees who should be cooling their heels in prison for acts of murder they committed during the dark days of this great country.

He also spoke of financial deal made from the peacekeeping troops in some West African countries. But the commanders of these peace missions have said that they were not aware of these financial deals.

Many Nigerians have started wondering about what has become of the military noted for discipline. It is sad that junior officers like Mustapha could have the audacity to insult their commander-in-chief, because he ordered for their interrogation for acts of murder they perpetrated against their fellow Nigerians.

It does appear that in this country, we do not allow reasoning to control our judgement, we are quickly swayed by a few who want cheap popularity. Sabo and Mustapha want to use these cooked up allegations to draw sympathy from the public to get away with murder case hanging over their heads.

They further said that the general has not said all he knew about the death of M. K. O. Abiola, but do they think that Nigerians are fools to buy that cooked up story? Let them give graphic details, on how he killed Abiola, was he the one who ordered the procurement of the poisonous substance that sent the late chief to his untimely death?

When the death generated heat that nearly blew up Nigeria's unity, why did Sabo and co. refuse to come out and become heroes by telling Nigerians who actually killed Abiola?

General Abubakar is addressed as a hero today because his credentials no doubt originated substantially from the public perception that he was a man who did no evil. That his credentials have no bloodstain. This is a general who on assumption of office put a smile on the face of every Nigerian, our battered international image he rebuilt by visiting most country that broke relations with Nigeria. This was a general who announced a political timetable and kept to it. Here was a liberator who set captives under Abacha free, including President Olusegun Obasanjo. But the question men of conscience are asking is how does Nigeria reward Abdulsalami. Suppose the military bounces back again do we think that any military head of state will agree to relinquish power? Although we don't pray for it.

If Oputa panel cannot restrict itself to reconciliation, it should wind up and stop wasting our resources. The federal government that set up Oputa commission should ensure that it did not use such avenue to continue tarnishing the image of those that have been elevated as heroes not only in Africa but in the international community.

It is a well-known fact that the continued splashing of mud on the image of General Abdulsalami Abubakar by men who are supposed to be in prison for gruesome murders is only sending the wrong signal to the outside world about the image of both our past and present leaders; it has become a tradition in this country that when a regime is out of power, sycophants who even dined and wined with such regime would start casting aspersions on such regime.

One factor that we should hold to our chest is that there were so many weak structures on ground when General Abdulsalami Abubakar came, that would have made him resolve to stay longer than nine months. Some of these, as a reminder, are: the disenchantment of the Nigerian populace with the five political parties of the late General Sani Abacha, the issue of sole candidacy for the 1998 presidential election and the gross abuse of human rights which made Nigeria a pariah nation.

There is no doubt that some of these allegations are too tempting and convincing to be ignored, but Nigerians should not readily forget the case of Shagari, when he was put under trial; by the time the judicial process commenced there was no concrete evidence to prove all the damaging allegations levelled against him.

So, Nigerians should ignore these ranting bees who have murder cases hanging over their heads and think more of how to use the Oputa panel to achieve genuine reconciliation. This is what is needed to bolster our nascent democracy.

Mr. Kisabo is of Maitama, Abuja

Strides in cotton production

By Salisu Na'inna Dambatta

Nigeria is strenuously working to rehabilitate its cotton production. Farming of the commodity is an age-old tradition, and possibly the country may reclaim its position in the league of the top 15, if not ten cotton-producing nations of the world.

Being a very important industrial raw material, cotton or its products, are consumed or used by almost every human being on earth. Either one is dressed in cloth made from cotton or one enjoys a meal in which vegetable oil derived from cottonseed is part of the recipe. Additionally, some of its products are used in animal and poultry feeds.

The commodity is produced in large quantity in Zamfara, Yobe, Sokoto, Taraba, Niger, Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, Borno, Kebbi, Bauchi, Jigawa and Adamawa states. The marginal cotton producing states, where it is produced in small quantity are Plateau, Ondo, Benue, Kogi, Kwara and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

An important crop produced in all the northern states and the FCT, there is no doubt that its cultivation, harvesting, grading, transportation and ginning constitute sources of employment and livelihood for thousands, if not millions of Nigerians.

In its secondary form it could be used as lint in the health and sanitary sector; it is turned into yarn or industrial thread used in the manufacture of textile fabrics. The textile industry is a big employer of labour, meaning that the crop, which is multipurpose, is worthy of government attention.

Nigeria is lucky that our cotton production is increasing. Data from the Federal Department of Agriculture in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development confirmed this. After the Nigerian Cotton Board was abolished in 1986, the Cotton Development Fund Management Committee (CDFMC) played its catalyst role successfully, in that cotton production rose from a mere 55,000 tonnes in 1993 to 180,000 tonnes of cotton in 1996 and 1997 respectively. The figure for 1998, 1999, 2000 were 559,420 metric

tonnes and 580,700 metric tonnes respectively. With the support of the federal government, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture through the Cotton Revolving Fund Management Committee (RFMC) successfully launched a promotional and persuasive campaign to encourage more farmers into its production.

The campaign to encourage cotton production is timely. All facts and projections related to cotton production globally, released by the International Cotton Advisory Committee, indicate that shrinking world cotton stocks would keep its international price at an average of 71 cents a pound, up to or even beyond July 2002. By the July 2002 date, world cotton stocks would fall to under seven million tonnes. With a shortfall of about 800,000 tonnes in Chinese cotton production by July 2002, China alone must import some 300,000 tonnes to meet its huge domestic demand. In this scenario, Nigeria could gain by bolstering cotton production as an export crop.

The local price of cotton this year hit nearly N50,000 per tonne. This is partly an effect of the global shortfall in its production and increasing local demand by ginneries and the textile industry. In fact, reports indicate that the entire 2000 harvest was sold by March 2001, an unusual situation, but a sharp and firm evidence of its increasing value fuelled by rising demand.

However, there are some obstacles in cotton production. One of the factors impeding cotton production in the country "has been the mix up of seeds of recommended varieties of cotton at ginneries and farmers' level and quality control generally," said a report by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture.

A solution seems to be at hand. The Cotton Consultative Committee (CCC), a cotton stakeholders' body, "recommended the establishment of Cotton Seed Revolving Fund Scheme (CSRFS)," the main duties of which include the procurement and distribution

of plantable cotton seeds, the flushing out of mixed seeds in circulation to be replaced with improved seeds of pure varieties.

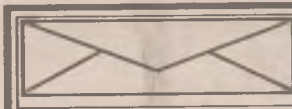
The government through the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and the major players in the cotton industry have so far produced some 1,060 metric tonnes of Certified Seeds (CS), while 10,000 metric tonnes of the recommended varieties pure cottonseeds were produced. These are just two of the seven top grade cottonseeds of genetically pure cotton varieties that were multiplied with the support of the CRFMC. Nigerian cotton farmers are already benefiting from the result of the effort.

The CRFMC has also procured and sold some cotton production inputs to farmers. For instance, the body made available to farmers 110 units of knapsack sprayers, sold 4,585 litres of karate 25EC agro-chemicals as well as 57,000 empty 20 kilogram-capacity poly bags to the farmers with CRFMC/Ministry of Agriculture logo embossed on them.

One evidence confirming rising interest in cotton production throughout the country is the combined request for 868 metric tonnes of pure cottonseeds received by the CRFMC from growers in the country in the 2001 farming year. Sadly, due to financial constraints, the organisation could supply only 488.45 metric tonnes to the growers, procured at N11,209,509.99 from two reputable ginners, AFCOTT Nigeria Plc of Yola and Cotton and Agricultural Processors of Zaria.

As a means of diversifying sources of foreign exchange, the sustenance of rural employment, poverty alleviation and improvement of capacity utilisation in the textile sub-sector, the campaign to persuade more Nigerians to join the prosperous cotton growers' fold, should be pursued with total commitment and vigour. Some stakeholders believe that this calls for additional government funding.

Salisu is a Chief Information Officer in the Presidency.



YOUR LETTERS

Although it became a more popular and widely known concept during the late General Sani Abacha era, from that moment on, Nigerians have always used it to press their leader (military or civilian) to continue their terms of office. *Tazarce* as a political phenomenon has always shaped and defined the attitude and disposition of most incumbent political office holder, especially in the third world and particularly in Nigeria.

Even in the advanced societies where democracy was propagated to the rest of

Drumbeat of Tazarce

the world like the United States of America and Great Britain, *tazarce* is not an unknown concept. Though the way it is expressed and pursued differs in the third world. For instance in the United States of America, most serving political office holders (president or governor) seek for second terms, but the expression of the desire to continue in office beyond the first four years is usually a backstage affair, especially when the first terms had not been completed. The leaders

meanwhile fully enmesh themselves in the execution of the mandate of the term they are currently serving.

In Nigeria, with two years in the first term of office of the democratic government, there appears to be the beating of the drum of *tazarce* with delusion to continue beyond 2003.

Therefore, the issue of *tazarce* is now taking centre stage in the minds of our political office holders, from the president, the governors down to the councillors, who are all desperately making

alliances and moves to ensure their positions beyond the next elections. The issue of *tazarce* has now endangered leadership selection in the forthcoming election, and with the abundant resources at the disposal of this undoubtedly greedy bunch, they will stop at nothing to ensure their continuity in office by election manipulations.

Let it be said that it is the right of all and sundry who satisfy the constitutionally prescribed conditions, to contest in any election, but in my opinion, those serving terms of office presently have a duty to discharge the responsibilities entrusted to them by the polity. The proper execution of these duties and responsibilities will be the benchmark for the people to decide whether or not they can be entrusted with the mandate beyond 2003.

Sa'ad Aliyu Yola, Mass Communication Department, Bayero University, Kano.

Keep it up Kogi State commissioner for health

When Kogi State governor, Prince Abubakar Audu appointed Alhaji Suleiman Baba Ali as commissioner for health, the entire people of Kogi State and Lokoja in particular heaved a sigh of relief.

Many considered the appointment was long overdue because of Alhaji Suleiman's contribution to the fight for the upliftment of Kogi State and its capital Lokoja. The commissioner has since proved that he is up to the task.

Alhaji Suleiman must be one of the best commissioners since the creation of the state and this choice of Prince Abubakar Audu has made many of the people of Lokoja the

governor's supporters. Many residents of Lokoja, due to the efforts of Alhaji Suleiman have now promised they would cast their votes for Prince Audu in the next election if ever he will contest.

The commissioner's efforts in seeing that the former Lokoja specialist hospital was upgraded to a full-fledged federal medical centre is well appreciated, and his impact has, since his appointment, been felt by the entire people of Lokoja who have now resolved to look up to Alhaji Suleiman for political direction in future.

Bala Nayashi Lokoja, No. 1, Edward Lane, Lokoja.

TRUST INTERNATIONAL

AFRICA & THE MIDDLE EAST

Redistribute world power system - Ali Mazrui

Power in the world system needs to be re-distributed to halt the increasing marginalisation of the African continent, says Prof. Ali Mazrui, the Kenyan academic, political thinker and Pan-Africanist.

Prof. Mazrui explains that greater African representation in global institutions like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the UN's Security Council will enable Africa to have a greater say in world affairs and thereby strengthen her position in the process of globalisation.

Power-sharing on the world stage, according to the Africanist scholar, should be one of the reparation demands by Africa from the West for her suffering during the periods of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and Colonisation.

Prof. Mazrui, who is one of 12 eminent persons appointed by the Organisation of African Unity Presidential Summit in 1992 to explore the issues of African reparations for enslavement and colonisation, said this last week to mark the

end of the three-day 8th DuBois-Padmore-Nkrumah Pan-African Lectures organised by the DuBois Memorial Centre.

Prof. Mazrui identified capital transfer similar to Europe's Marshall Plan and skills transfer in the form of an international effort to build capacity in Africa as the other two components of the demands for reparations.

Mazrui spoke on the general theme "Pan-Africanism in the Era of Globalisation" during the three-day lecture. According to him, globalisation may be a new word but the processes involved started centuries ago through religion, empire building, economy and technology.

Recently there is the economic sense of globalisation, which focuses on the triumph of capitalism and market forces, and human interdependence which has arisen out of it, he said. He also pointed out the prominence of technology, which he said is expanding access to information, and the 'villagising' of the world which is compressing distance, homogenising culture, accelerating mobility and reducing the relevance of political borders.

The Kenyan Professor opined that Africans helped to initiate globalisation but have been marginal in controlling it. "We have to look now at whether, because we are so marginal, issues that require, under an African renaissance, to transcend the marginality or an effort at draft regulation to compensate for the marginality", he noted.

Kagame, visiting French minister in talks on DRC

French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine has had talks in the Rwandan capital, Kigali, with President Paul Kagame.

Mr Vedrine is in the Great Lakes region on a four-day trip to promote the peace process in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where Rwanda supports an armed insurgency against government forces.

BBC correspondent in Kigali said that Mr Vedrine acknowledged Rwanda's concerns over its border security and urged neighbouring countries and other protagonists in the Lusaka peace accord to help resolve the problem.

It is the first time since 1978 that a French foreign minister is making an official visit to Rwanda.

Mr Vedrine's visit is also billed as an attempt to normalise bilateral relations with Rwanda after the 1994 genocide.

France gave critical backing to the former Rwandan regime of the late Juvenal Habyarimana, whose assassination sparked the genocide, before and during the



Flood survivors carry carpet from a military helicopter in Tangrah where flash floods and mudslides killed at least 140 people, 500 kilometers (310 miles) northeast of Tehran, Monday, August 13, 2001.

Death toll rises in Iran

The number of dead in flash floods which have swept across north-eastern Iran is reported to have risen to about 170.

Iranian state television says a further 135 people are still missing, the AFP news agency reports.

Ten thousand people have been evacuated to higher ground after three days of torrential rain in Golestan and Khorasan provinces, according to local officials.

The deputy governor of Golestan, the worst-hit province, said more than 2,000 homes were damaged in the heaviest flooding to hit the region for 200 years.

Gas pipelines, electricity and phone lines have been cut

and over 80km of roads have been destroyed, as well as thousands of hectares of farmland.

The cost of the damage has been put at over 200bn rials (\$25mn).

Iranian President Mohammad Khatami has described the floods as a huge disaster.

Iranian Interior Minister Abdolvahed Mousavi and an envoy of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei went to Golestan on Monday to supervise relief efforts, Iranian radio reported.

Army helicopters have been transporting food and medicine to villages cut off by mudslides and bulldozers are working to clear debris blocking roads.

It is feared the death toll could rise.

"Considering the number of bodies spotted but not yet retrieved from Golestan national park, the death toll could be more than 200," health department official Reza Honarvar told the Associated Press news agency.



Repatriation of Chadian refugees ends today

The United Nations High Commissioner (UNHCR) for Refugees in Cameroon is due to end its repatriation of 610 Chadian refugees today, an official told IRIN.

The return of this group, the second phase of a voluntary repatriation effort that began in July, has been delayed over a week by the investiture of Chadian President Idriss Deby, the UNHCR officer in charge of the operations, Marcellin Hepie, told IRIN on Monday.

He said refugees had been in a transit camp in Langui, 700 km north of Yaounde, since 6 August where they were being provided three meals a day. They also have access to basic health and sanitation facilities.

Israel raids Palestinian-controlled Jenin

As many as 70 Israeli tanks have carried out lightning raids on the West Bank town of Jenin early yesterday. Moving in the Palestinian-controlled town for three hours, they destroyed local police buildings and seized the governor's office.

Four Palestinian security officers were reported injured in gun battles with Israeli soldiers, but earlier reports of deaths remain unconfirmed.

Palestinians have been bracing themselves for Israeli reprisals for recent bomb attacks, and there is speculation that Jenin is being targeted because several suicide bombers have come from the town.

Last Thursday's suicide bomb in Jerusalem killed 15 people, and a second suicide bomber struck at a Haifa cafe on Sunday - both bombers came from near Jenin.

Witnesses said that Israeli helicopters were flying above the town, and that Palestinian gunmen opened fire at the tanks.

This is the first time since the present intifada or uprising began 10 months ago that Israeli forces have entered a Palestinian-controlled town.

Jenin was handed over to Palestinian control in 1995, under the interim peace accord agreed at the Oslo peace talks.

In the wake of the incursion, the Palestinian Authority demanded that the UN Security Council meet immediately to provide international protection for the Palestinians.

Commenting on events in Jenin, a senior Palestinian official, Saeb Erekat told the BBC's World Today programme that Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon "had opened hell's gate tonight."

"The endgame of Mr Sharon is to make sure that he closes every possible door for peace".

Palestinians on Monday staged a general strike in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to protest against Israel's seizure of Orient House, their unofficial headquarters in mainly Arab East Jerusalem.

Most Palestinian shops and businesses were closed, while Palestinian demonstrators and Israeli police again scuffled outside Orient House itself.

Ten protesters were arrested, as they struggled to raise Palestinian flags.

Leading Palestinian politician Hanan Ashwari said that the demonstrations would continue.

"There will be mass protests, demonstrations and all types of activity until Israel gets the message," she said.

United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan demanded an immediate ceasefire and called for an end to the occupation of Orient House.

His appeal was echoed by US President George Bush, who said his administration was striving "to convince the parties". But he added that "the people in the area must make the conscious decision to stop terrorism".

The Israel Government has declared that Orient House will never be handed back.

But doves in the Israeli cabinet, led by Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, believe that the hawks led by Mr Sharon may have committed

TRUST INTERNATIONAL

World Report

Philippines autonomy poll begins

Voting has begun in the southern Philippines on a plebiscite to decide whether to extend Muslim self-rule.

Filipinos from 11 provinces and 14 cities on the islands of Mindanao and Palawan are being asked if they want to join the four-province Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), set up in 1996.

But most of the 4.9m eligible voters are Roman Catholics and are expected to vote no.

Initial reports after polls opened on Tuesday morning said that torrential rain and a boycott called by some Muslim groups had kept turnout low.

Analysts said perhaps only one province and two cities would vote to join the ARMM, whose inhabitants are among the poorest in the country.

The vote is the result of a peace agreement signed by the government and the largest separatist group, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), in 1996.

The agreement was intended to end more than three decades of secessionist rebellion by militant Muslims.

It failed to do so mainly because it did not include another guerrilla group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

The MILF has since begun peace talks and there is now a ceasefire.

Even so, thousands of police and troops are being deployed for this plebiscite in case of attempts to disrupt the voting by either the MILF, by disgruntled members of the MNLF or by a third guerrilla group, the Abu Sayyaf.

The government refuses to talk peace with the Abu Sayyaf which it regards as gang carrying out kidnappings for ransom.



Macedonian President Boris Trajkovski (left), talks to EU Foreign Policy Chief, Javier Solana, (centre) and Belgian Foreign Minister, Lousi Michel (right), in Skopje, Monday, August 13, 2001.

NATO in Macedonia to underpin peace deal

An advance guard of NATO planners has arrived in Macedonia yesterday as part of efforts to underpin the peace deal signed just hours earlier.

A team of 15 NATO experts is due to begin work on getting the warring Macedonian and ethnic Albanian rebels to withdraw to the lines of ceasefire agreed in July.

NATO Secretary-General George Robertson said there were hopes of having a sustainable ceasefire in place "in the next few days".

A ceasefire and rebel agreement to hand over their weapons are prerequisites for the larger NATO mission, when up to 3,500 troops could be sent to the country to collect the surrendered weaponry.

EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana told the BBC that NATO could be ready to announce a decision to deploy as early as this Friday.

It would then take about two weeks for the troops to be moved in.

Both men were talking after Macedonian and ethnic Albanian political leaders signed an internationally negotiated peace deal on Monday.

But in the run-up to the signing of the accord there were heavy overnight clashes between government forces and armed ethnic Albanian rebels north-west of the capital Skopje.

Calm was reported to have been restored across the country on Monday.

Western mediators say the next, urgent step is to negotiate a ceasefire on the ground - a

process which Lord Robertson said would begin on Monday evening.

About 30 people died last week in the fiercest fighting seen since ethnic Albanian guerrillas launched their insurgency in February. About 100 people in total have died since the fighting began.

The rebels, who have not been directly involved in the political negotiations, indicated they would respect the deal.

"The signature of the peace accord represents a victory against Macedonian repression. It's the result of international pressure," Commander Shpati told the French news agency, AFP, adding that the rebel National Liberation Army (NLA) would decide within 15 days whether to lay down its arms.

Police nab three Republicans in Colombia

Police in Colombia say three Irish Republicans arrested in the country may have been training rebels in the use of explosives.

Police named two of the men as James Monaghan and Martin McCauly, both of whom it is thought have been previously convicted in Britain of terrorist charges and membership of the Provisional IRA.

The identity of the third man has not been established, though he was travelling under the name of David Bracken.

It is not clear if the three men are being linked to either the Provisional IRA or the dissident Real IRA.

All three were said to be travelling on false passports.

They were presented to the media at a press conference in Colombia's capital of Bogota.

Security forces were unable to arrest the men for five weeks because they were in a safe haven agreed by the Columbian government and the revolutionary paramilitary group the Farc.

The men were detained as they left the area controlled by Farc.

Police said Mr Bracken is alleged to be the leader of the group, and was the only one of the three who spoke Spanish.

If it emerges that they are linked to the Provisional IRA, it could have implications for the Northern Ireland peace process and the lengthy negotiations about IRA arms decommissioning.

Sir Reg Empey, the senior Ulster Unionist negotiator and trade and enterprise minister in the powersharing executive, said if the men were members of the Provisional IRA then the republican commitment to the Belfast Agreement would be "seriously, if not fatally undermined".

The three men are being held for questioning in Bogota.

The arrests were made by a specialist investigative branch of the Colombian Police, known as the Fiscalia, at the weekend.

The Colombian military said they believed that the men had been instructing the Farc in explosives and terrorist tactics.

The Farc controls 40% of the countryside and is involved in drug-running.

It is feared that the Farc may want to take its fight, which has been mainly confined to the countryside, into the city.

BBC correspondent in Columbia said it was understood that forensic examination of the men's clothing and luggage had shown traces of explosives.

DIPLOMATIC Suite

India and Pakistan more talks please

By Abdulazeez Abdullahi

To many observers, it came as a surprise when the Indian and Pakistani leaders, Atal Behari Vajpayee and General Pervez Musharraf respectively, agreed for a summit in the Indian city of Agra back in July. Reasons for convening the summit included, among other things, finding an amicable way of resolving the Kashmir crisis, which has for decades strained relations between the two neighbours.

So much was expected from the meeting of the two leaders as world attention temporarily moved away from other troubled spots around the globe. That the two sworn enemies and nuclear powers have at last come back to their senses and decided to parley was seen by many as a positive sign and that perhaps the time has now come to finally put an end to the longstanding hostility between the two countries. Thereby paving the way for return to normalcy in that part of the world.

Despite the optimism, observers were not, however, deluded into thinking that a quick and easy resolution will be reached partly because of the understanding that the crisis is a deep-rooted one which cannot in any way be settled by the coming together of the two leaders at least not at the first instance. As a result of the ongoing and seemingly unending dispute, countless lives have been lost, among whom are prominent personalities like the late Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi. The economics of the two countries suffered



President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan



Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee of India

severely as a result of the war over Kashmir. The much needed capital that would have been utilised to kickstart the economy and effectively put them on the way to prosperity is, instead sunk into executing the senseless war. The two countries have needlessly thrown themselves into a nuclear arms race in the face of the abject poverty they are grappling with. The war has also necessitated the partitioning of the disputed region into two with Indian governing one end and Pakistan administering the other.

The summit ended in a deadlock, and with the two leaders taking hard line positions on key issues, any compromise was nowhere in sight. As disheartening as it turned out, the two leaders must, however, be commended for making a move towards peace and should be encouraged by all especially the United Nations and other world leaders to sustain dialogue at the highest level of government in the hope that in not too distant future an agreement would be reached and citizens of the two nations will live again as the brothers they historically were.

Odd World

Men cut off fingers in protest

Twenty South Korean men have chopped off their little fingers on Monday in a macabre public protest hours before Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi visited a Tokyo shrine to war dead.

Standing in pouring rain in front of the Independence Gate in Seoul, the men took it in turns to chop off their fingers with small guillotines laid on the ground after shouting slogans against Koizumi's plan to visit the Yasukuni Shrine.

The burly men, wearing black tee-shirts and headbands declaring they were "prepared to die to save the country," laid their severed fingers in a South Korean flag which was wrapped and then tied in a knot.

Their maimed hands tended to and bandaged — each man cut off one finger — the men again shouted slogans without showing any sign of pain.

A reporter for South Korea YTN Television said the men identified themselves as members of a martial arts group.

But Korean martial arts authorities said they had not heard of the group and local news photographers who witnessed the incident told Reuters that the men appeared to be gangsters, identifiable by their short-cropped hair and language.

Cutting off a little finger is a method Japan's "yakuza" mobsters use to atone for mistakes.

The protest, triggered by Japan's war-time atrocities in occupied Korea, failed to stop Koizumi from paying homage at Yasukuni. The shrine honors Japanese war dead, including convicted war criminals from World War Two.

BUSINESS DAY

N13b insurance agency for launch next week

An African insurance facility amounting to \$105 million (about N13.6 billion) for investors against political risks including losses caused by war or civil disturbance will be launched in Kampala, Uganda, next week, the East African weekly reported.

Known as the African Trade Insurance Agency (ATI), which will be fully operational in September this year, the facility will cover risks which include embargoes, expropriation, government interference with entities owning insured obligations, inability to convert or transfer currency, seizure of goods in war or civil strife, among others.

ATI is headquartered in

Kenya's capital Nairobi, where the Kenyan government has already provided a rent-free office for two years.

It is reported that 14 African heads of state are expected at the launch of the facility. They include the president of Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Sudan, South Africa and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Addressing reporters in Nairobi, Secretary-General Eratus Mwencha for the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), who is also acting managing director of ATI, said: "We expect to generate \$5 billion (about N650 billion) worth of new

trade in Africa in seven years."

He said that seven countries, including Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, Rwanda and Kenya, were ATI shareholders, but other COMESA states are keen to join once the facility becomes fully operational.



Yoweri Museveni, Ugandan President

Hadejia farmers get N2m credit facility

The French Embassy in Nigeria has granted an interest free revolving loan of over N2 million to farmers associations of Hadejia valley irrigation project under collaborative programme on the promotion of participatory irrigation management.

The programme, which

From Jamilah Musa, in Kano

is being implemented by Hadejia-Jama'are River Basin Authority, National Agricultural Research and Liaison Services, ABU, Zaria and Centre for Co-operation in Agronomic Research of France, is to benefit eight farmers associations and water users association.

The beneficiaries include Gamsarka Ganuwar Kaka, Ayana, Marina Adaha and Auyo all in Auyo Local Government Area of Jigawa State.

Forty percent of the loan which amounted to over N800,000.00 was distributed to farmers to enable them source and provide support services for their members.

Materials to be provided include fertilizer, seeds, agrochemical tractor hiring services, provision of storage facilities and rice processing machines.

Speaking during the presentation ceremony of the cheque at Hadejia, the Managing Director of Hadejia-Jama'are River Basin Authority, Alhaji Shehu D. Abdulkadir, said that the French embassy through the Centre for Cooperation in Agronomic Research of France has been providing the technical support needed to enhance the sustainable operation and the maintenance of the Hadejia Valley Irrigation Project.

Alhaji Abdulkadir also announced that his authority has awarded contract for the desalting of main drain of the Hadejia Valley Irrigation Project to facilitate the drawing of excess water from the farmers' fields.

In his own remarks, the Deputy Chancellor, Scientific, Technical and Cultural Affairs of the French Embassy in Nigeria, Mr. Guy Christophe, highlighted the importance of agriculture in the economic development of the northern states and urged the farmers to re-double their efforts in the maintenance and operation of the Hadejia Valley project.



Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso, Kano State Governor

Leadway Assurance assets hit N2b

Leadway Assurance Company Limited has declared a total asset of to N2 billion in the year ended December 31, 2000.

The company's chairman, Alhaji Mohammed Faruku, who made this known at the company's 29th Annual General Meeting, said this is an improvement on its N1.2 billion achieved in 1999.

According to Faruku, who addressed the shareholders in the AGM held in Kaduna "the account shows that shareholders funds also grew from N265 million to N314 million, while underwriting profit rose from N227 million in 1999 to N255 million in the year under review."

He said that Leadway Assurance paid claim totalling about N348 million.

The company's premium income, according to him, in the year under review stood at N1.32

From Bright Ewulu, in Lagos

billion, but this did not stop it from recording a drop in its profit after tax.

However, Leadway's net profit fell from its 1999 record of N86 million to N73 million in 2000. Alhaji Faruku, expressed joy and satisfaction at the achievement of the

management and staff, saying that he's thrilled at the faith of Brokers, Agents and Loss adjusters in the company.

Leadway Assurance Limited was established in 1970 as a composite insurance company authorised to underwrite life and non-life insurance business.

Benue govt plans new bank

The Benue government is working towards establishing a new bank to replace the former Lobi Bank, "run aground under the military administrations in the state," the Commissioner for Information and Culture, Mr. Terhamba Shija, announced in Makurdi.

Conducting a team of senior journalists currently on a national media tour of projects round the headquarters of the new bank costing N54 million, Shija said the state governor, Mr. George Akume, had already travelled abroad to sign all necessary agreements with the foreign financial partners.

He said that the establishment of the new bank was part of measures aimed at financially repositioning the state and restoring some of its legacies that were destroyed by military rule.

Shija said the present administration had embarked on measures to complete the five-star hotel

project that was abandoned by past military administrations.

The government, he added, had completed its Abuja plaza, pointing out that the building would be leased out in line with its property development programme.

The commissioner said that the abandoned state investment company headquarters had also been completed at the cost of N30 million.

On infrastructural development, he said that the state government had embarked on the construction of township roads in Makurdi, Gboko, Otukpo and Katsina-Ala at the cost of N800 million.

The journalists were also conducted round the new N22 million international cattle market with such facilities as animal clinic and a slaughter slab, as well as a 60-bed general hospital at Makurdi's North Bank area that is nearing completion worth N51 million.

NIPC repositions to attract investors

The Chairman, Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC), Chief Kola Daisi, has said that the commission is being refocused to make Nigeria one of the most preferred destinations for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

Chief Daisi, who disclosed this on Monday, while declaring open the NIPC-UNIDO Training Programme on Investment Promotion, said that the New NIPC whose guiding principles are resourcefulness, handwork, creativity, result orientation and the pursuit of excellence is poised to become one of the most competitive investment agencies in the world. This, he added, is a great task which requires every staff of the commission to imbibe the new spirit and work hard to achieve set target.

He stated that the task of making Nigeria the preferred investment destination is enormous pointing out that he many diplomatic and economic shuttles of resident Olusegun Obasanjo has created the much needed goodwill amongst developed nations.



Chief Kola Daisi, NIPC Chairman

By Ahmed Shekarau

He said it is now left to NIPC to take full advantage of that by embarking on a programme of facilitation of foreign investment.

The NIPC boss disclosed that an Immigration Desk has been established in the commission to facilitate the approvals of expatriate quota and business permits to would be investors.

He, therefore enjoined the staff of the commission to change their old attitudes to work and perceptions of public service to a sense of ownership to enable Nigerians become major contributors to the transformation of the country.

He pointed out that investment promotion activities can no longer be taken for granted by any nation desiring economic development, as a result of growing intensity in the competition for global investment resources.

Chief Daisi noted that "Nigeria's current economic dispensation makes it mandatory for government agencies to acquire the requisite skills and commitment and to adopt the best strategies to generate, attract, retain and consolidate massive FID for the turn around of the national economy.

In his remarks, the UNIDO representative, Mr. Parmando Machado, stated that the three weeks training programmes will take the participants to the rudiments and strategies in attracting investments. He said that the programme which will include capacity building will cost UNIDO about \$1.5 million.



Adamu Ciroma, Finance Minister

Niger Insurance raises share capital

The paid-up share capital of Niger Insurance Plc will be raised to the sum total of N250 million if its shareholders sanction the move at its forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

Niger Insurance's Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Bala Zakaraya'u, who revealed this in a pre-AGM press conference, said the move was to strengthen the financial capacity of the firm and keep it in shape to take more investment opportunities in the financial sector.

Also, he said the increase of the paid up-share capital would be by means of right's issue and therefore, an

offer surely to existing shareholders

The advantage of this, according to him, is that "the buying public will be able to invest with more confidence in the company as they could see that its owners are doing the same.

He praised the achievement recorded in the year under review saying "I will dare to say that he company has done more than it has been doing. And I think it's due to our strategic thinking."

The Chief Executive hailed the shareholders for their support and maintained that his management has always ensured that they (shareholders) are rewarded with good dividend pay outs.

According to him, the net total asset of the company grew by 23 percent to stand at N1.5 billion from N2.2 billion, saying that the shareholders funds rose in the year 2000 from N738 million in 1999 to N770 million in the year under review.

Within the period under review, the paid up share capital increased from N100 million to N200 million while profit after taxation hit N100.7 million from N71.6 million posted in 1999.

Also, the Gross Premiums rose by 39 percent from N526 million to N732 in 2000. Even as net of reinsurance grew by a healthy 45 percent.

BUSINESS DAY

DPR reports more spillages, explosions

The Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) has reported the occurrence of more oil spillages, kerosene explosion, industrial accidents, and assault/disturbance in the oil and gas industry in the first week of August.

The oil spillage

From Rakiya A. Muhammad, in Lagos

incidents, according to a DPR's report made available to *Business Day* were eight in number involving about 3,000 barrels of crude oil.

Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) reported seven of the incidents while Elf



Gaius-Obaseki, NNPC Boss reported one.

The kerosene explosion recorded in Araohe, Isoko North, Delta State left five people injured.

Though investigation on the incidence is still in progress, initial samples of the product collected and tested confirmed that the kerosene was off-

specification.

On the assault/disturbance, it took place at the Port Harcourt depot where the Eleme youths attacked the secretariat of the Petroleum Tanker Drivers' Union at the depot.

According to the DPR report, the secretariat building and 15 trucks were burnt while about 20 others

were vandalised.

The assault was alleged to have emanated from a suspicion by the Eleme youths that the tanker drivers' union caused the death of their Kinsmen and Secretary to the tanker drivers' union who recently took ill and died. Investigation into this disturbance was in progress.

Also, tanker drivers stopped loading products from Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara States during the period due to the arrest and detention of the Zonal Chairman of the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas, (NUPENG) for allegedly defaming the characters of three state governors.

Gas Flaring: FG to study Shell's position

As Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) indicated lack of commitment to complying with the federal government's policy of stopping gas flaring in the country by 2004, the Minister of State for Environment, Alhaji Kabir Sai'd has said that government will do everything possible to enforce the law.

The minister, who disclosed this to newsmen in Kaduna, said the federal government is determined to stop gas flaring not just because of its environmental implications for the nation, but also because it is an economic waste.

Alhaji Kabir Sai'd said that though government is not unmindful of the enormity of the problem, Shell has to communicate its position to government for consideration to ascertain the reasons why the multinational oil company could not comply with 2004 target.

"The issue of gas flaring is something that has a lot of size to it. The position of Shell will have to be communicated to government and the reason why they have taken that stand would be looked into," Alhaji Kabir stressed.

While acknowledging the extent of damage that oil exploration activities do to the environment, the minister however, noted that the issue of environmental condition and resource utilisation has to be addressed by all Nigerians to achieve a safe and clean environment.

"The important issue really is for Nigerians to have a clean environment. It is for Nigerians to stop wasting their resources," he advised.

On industrial pollution, the minister said that the problem would be over soon as the ministry has taken bold steps to address the problem.

One of the steps, according to the minister, is the dispatching of a team of experts to industries in Kaduna, where the problem was more pronounced, to evaluate the problem, adding that an ultimatum had been given to some industries to clean up their mess before discharging it to their

From Ibrahim Dan Halilu, in Kaduna

surrounding. Also, a meeting has been scheduled with these industries this week in Abuja to discuss and verify the industrial pollution problems of each particular location with a view to addressing them.

Responding to a question from journalists on ecological problems, the minister said that the issue is so serious that the constitution has come out with a formula stipulating a certain percentage of the nation's income to go into ecological fund.

He explained further that though each state has its own share of the fund commensurate with its peculiar problems, the federal government intervenes where the problem is beyond the capacity of states.

Alhaji Kabir Sa'id who disclosed the disbursement of some fund to Benue, Katsina and Imo States as part of the federal government's intervention drive, maintained that states must comply with certain rules and regulations before they could access the fund.

Business Day recalls that late last month at the Oputa sitting in Abuja, the Managing Director of Shell Petroleum Development Company, Mr. Ron den V. Berg had refused to make any commitment to comply with the federal government's policy of eradicating gas flaring by 2004 when the council to Ogoni people, Femi Falana drew his attention to a Guardian front-page story highlighting the new policy pronouncement.



Kabir Sa'id, Environment Minister

Union, Foundation want autonomy for NDE

The Labour Writers Association of Nigeria (LAWAN) and the Friedrich Ebert Stifling Foundation have called on government to scrap all and accidents other job creation agencies and empower the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) to function as the sole agency for job creation in the country.

From Samson Ojo, in Lagos

LAWAN and Friedrich Ebert Stifling Foundation made this call in a communiqué issued at the end of its two days seminar on "Labour Policies and Job Creation" held in Ibadan, the Oyo State capital.

In a communiqué signed by Mrs. Junmo Komolofe, LAWAN Chairperson and Mr. Ige Ademola Taiwo, it argued that all other job creation agencies like the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPGP) are all political agencies, which are subject to manipulation by the government officials.

The communiqué stated that NDE has been able to pass the test of job-creation and if empowered with the needed funds, the agency will perform better.

The communiqué urged

the government to reevaluate the labour exchanges under the supervision of the federal ministry of labour in order to create a data bank for unemployed persons and to encourage recruitment based on merit to eliminate any form of favouritism.

The participants at the two-day seminar admonished all tiers of government in the country to emulate the efforts of the Lagos State Government in the creation of a data bank and the use of direct labour in areas such as construction, sanitation, traffic control etc.

Other measures suggested for job creation at the seminar are that "state government and private employers should desist from recruiting expatriates for jobs which Nigerians possess the required skills.

Rwanda to boost exports after privatisation

Rwanda expects to increase tea production significantly after the privatisation of nine state estates, Rwandan News Agency reported on Monday.

The news agency quoted officials in the privatisation secretariat as saying that currently only one of the country's 10 tea factories is privately owned. The state will divest its interests from the sector to allow private investors to rehabilitate the dilapidated estates and restore production to pre-1994 genocide levels, they said.

The first factories to be put out to public tender are Phunda and Mulindi in the northeast of the country. Mulindi tea factory, in Byumba Province, is the largest in Rwanda with an annual capacity of 3.5 million kg.

According to Rober Kayigamba, head of the privatisation department in the Ministry of Finance, the privatisation of the factories will start at the end of this year. "The factories and industrial blocs-plantations set up by the government whose management is linked to that of the factories," he said.

The two factories being initially divested cover 4,002 hectares, accounting for 31.9 percent of the total tea plantation. Other factories to be privatised are Mata and Kitabi in Gikongoro Province; Gisakura in Cyangugu; Rubaya and Nyabihu in Gisenyi as well as Gisovu in Kubuye Province.

Experts said with the use of fertilisers and the injection of more capital, most of the state-owned factories should be able to reach twice their current production. They said the privately-owned Sorwathé factory, while having only 10 percent of the national plantation area, produces between 17 and 20 percent of the country's black tea.



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 N15,000 million will be issued by auction-based system on Thursday, 23/08/2001.

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, 21/08/2001.

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 Authorized 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, 21/08/2001. The Bank reserves the right to reject any tender in part or in full.

Allotment letters will be issued to successful tenderers on Wednesday, 22/08/2001. 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 23/08/2001. 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 the purpose.

PUBLIC DEBT OFFICE
CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA
TINUBU SQUARE
LAGOS.

The Legend

Kuchi-Gwolo is a charming farming community within the FCT, Abuja. It has a stirring tradition of origin, and here typical Gbagyi values are pre-eminent, whether these relate to marriage or an institutions capacity to discipline an erring Etsu. Yakubu Ozohu-Suleiman was in Kuchi-Gwolo and wrote this account.

Kuchi-Gwolo is a satellite town of Abuja, the federal capital city. As one of the settlements existing before the founding of the FCT, Kuchi-Gwolo is inhabited by the Gbagyi, a people who are believed to be the original indigenes of Abuja. According to legend, the indigenes of Kuchi-Gwolo are descendants of a group of hunters and farmers of the Gbagyi tribe who migrated during pre-colonial days from their homes in Zaria through the thick Savanna, a distance of about 250km to resettle in a valley which came to be known as Kuchi-Gwolo. No wonder then that the major occupation of the people of Kuchi-Gwolo is hunting and farming.

The town is most

popularly known as Kuchi-Gworo. This indeed is the Hausa version of the name. The reason being that Hausa is the most widely spoken language in the northern part of the country. Going by the Hausa version, Kuchin-Gworo literally means, "Let's eat kolanut."

However, the original sons of Kuchi-Gwolo do not see it that

way. Ibrahim Wambi Kuchi Gwolo is the 10th Etsu of Kuchi Gwolo. He clarifies the matter thus: "We, the Gbagyi people, the original owners of this town do not call it Kuchin-Gworo. We call it Kuchi-Gwolo. Kuchin, in Gbagyi means "forest".

Gwolo means "forest bottom" which is better described as a valley. So, Kuchi Gwolo means the forested valley.

"As you can see, we are really surrounded by a hilly forest. A long time ago, from Kuchi



The town of Kuchi-Gwolo located in a valley

Gwolo here to Garki, to Durumi and to Kupaba and the rest, it was all forest. It was during the Nigerian civil war that the Gbagyi people who came to settle here named it Kuchi-Gwolo. Because by then, everyone was looking for where he/she can hide away from the enemy; a place which can be identified by name."

Many people, especially those from the southern part of the country seem to hold a belief that anybody from the northern part of the country is essentially Hausa. The Gbagyi people are northerners. They are not Hausas and they have a language of their own known as Gbagyi. Although the long period of historical co-existence with the Hausas have greatly impacted on the Gbagyi's ways of life.

The word "come" in Gbagyi is *bea* or *be* which in Hausa is rendered as *zo*. Although no historical link has been established be-

tween the Gbagyi and the Ibo, the word *bea* in Gbagyi is homonymous and indeed means the same as *bia* in Ibo language. In terms of modern religion, the indigenes of Kuchi-Gwolo are dominantly Christian.

Marriage system

Traditions in Kuchi-Gwolo stipulate that a girl would remain a virgin until she is married. It is an offence for a girl to be disvirgined before she is married. This rule does not seem to extend to the men. Although this tradition had long been lost to civilization, confirmation of virginity in olden times was done by parents who make a sincere report to the palace.

A man who wishes to marry is expected to reach an agreement at first with the girl. It is a great offence in the olden days for such a man to make sexual advances of any sort on the girl before the marriage. As a matter of fact, if a girl happens to be pregnant out of wedlock, herself and the man responsible for such pregnancy would be ostracised from the community until they have their baby, by which time they can regain their citizenship.

Once an agreement is reached between the man and the girl, he would at first organise his kinsmen who would convey his inter-



The major road in Kuchi-Gwolo



A typical residential building in Kuchi-Gwolo

Feature

of Kuchi-Gwolo



informally to the parents of the girl. This is the second phase of agreement, which once reached the process for payment of the traditional bride price would then begin.

At this point, the man is expected to commence a five-year farming period for his prospective in-laws.

Specifically, he would organise at least 10 of his friends who would escort him five or six times a year at determined intervals to farm for his prospective in-law. Each farming would last for five years.

It is obvious that a man who wants to marry would begin his framework for five years ahead of time. Traditional marriage among the people of Kuchi-Gwolo does not involve the physical use of legal tender. Once the five years farming period is concluded, the man would then be required to formally present his interest to the parents of the girl.

According to the *Etsu* of Kuchi-Gwolo, this third phase of agreement is just for formality sake. The risk of parental objection is covered in the first informal agreement reached before the man is committed to a five years farming period.

In modern times, however, this procedure of marriage between

man would not need to farm for the girl's father. But essentially, he must tender his request before the girl's parents, and just as obtains among the indigenes, he is not permitted to "touch" the girl before their marriage. It is essential that the Kuchi-Gwolo traditional marriage be done before any other type of marriage desired by the couple.

"in this case, the parents of the girl would assist in organising Kuchi-Gwolo traditional, marriage during which the foreigner is expected to present *burukutu* to the girl's

parents. After then, Christian or Muslim or court marriage whichever one desired by the couples can be done.

Laws

Today, Kuchi-Gwolo is a town that has witnessed a number of settlers who, do not holding same status as the indigenes. The Hausas, the Ibos, the Yorubas, the Birom and the Biu are the major settlers who coordinate their various tribal associations in the town. However, all associations including those of settlers are under the authority of the *Etsu* of Kuchi-Gwolo. A title, which is

presently held by Ibrahim Wambi Kuchi-Gwolo, a member of the ruling dynasty and a Christian of ECWA denomination.

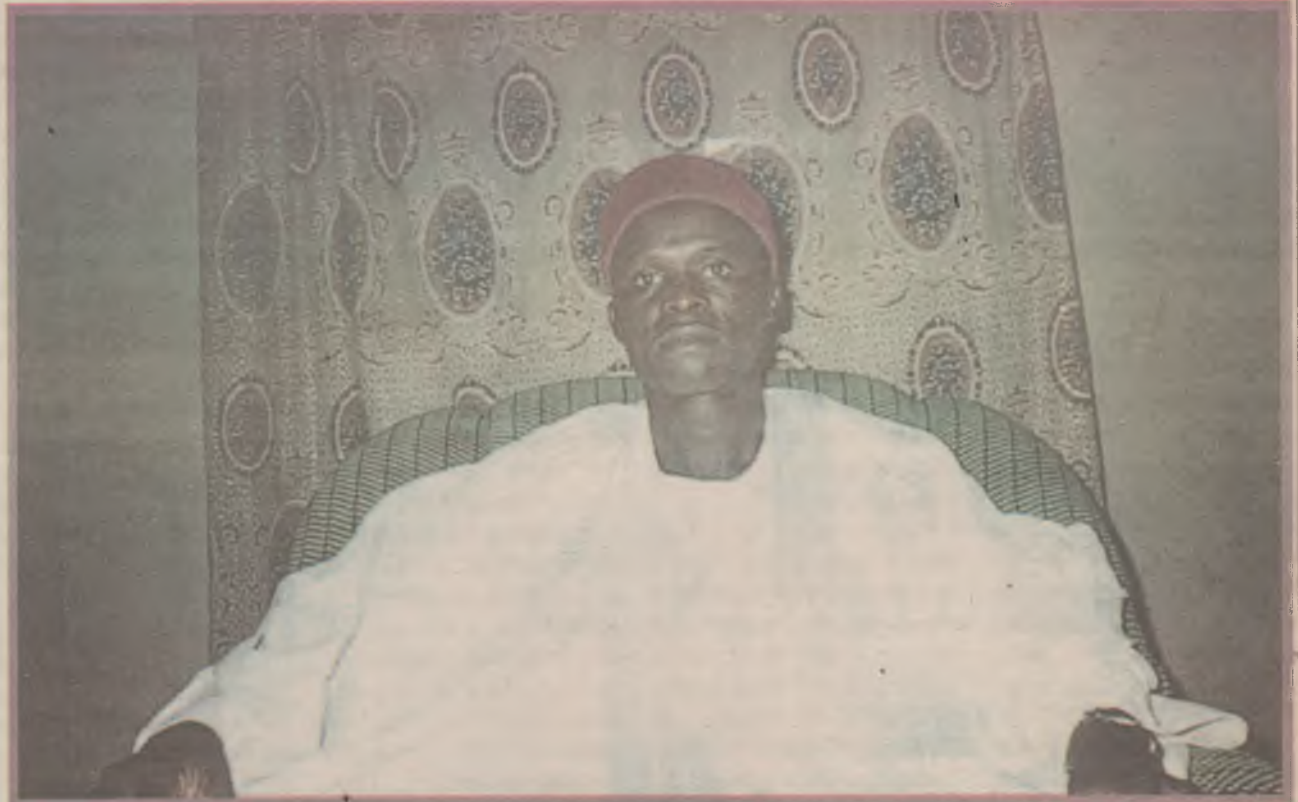
The palace constitution covers the entire community from dethronement of an *Etsu* to the successor to the late *Etsu* and further to the norms and values of the community. An *Etsu* is only replaced upon death. A major offence deserving the dethronement on an *Etsu* can be determined by his cabinet after due consultation with elders and youths of the community.

With civilisation and the expansion of the constitution to cover the interest of the settlers according to the *Etsu*, issues that cannot be

handled at the palace would be referred to the police and the law court.

"For instance, we have a sanitation day during which every community member including government workers must participate once the town crier makes the announcement.

"If for any reason someone cannot participate, he or she is expected to pay a certain amount of money to the palace authority. Those who refuse to pay would be brought to the palace and compelled to participate in the sanitation exercise or pay a higher sum of money, which progressively varies among the indigenes and the foreign settlers. That is how we live in Kuchi-Gwolo," the *Etsu* said.



Ibrahim Wambi Kuchi-Gwolo the Etsu of Kuchi-Gwolo



The palace of the Etsu of Kuchi-Gwolo

the Kuchi-Gwolo people have been given an alternative. In this alternative, marriage procedures among the people of Kuchi-Gwolo have something in common; once the formal agreement is concluded, the man is required to present a local wine known as *burukutu* to the girl's parents. The presentation would be accompanied with a band from the man's house to the residence of the girl's parents.

Thereafter, an agreement would be reached on the date for the traditional marriage during which the legitimacy of the relationship would be finalised with prayers and blessings by the parents and kinsmen of the bride and groom.

Given all these marriage procedures, the question that follows is: Are there provisions for non-indigenes of Kuchi-Gwolo who may wish to marry from there? The *Etsu* comments: "If a non-indigene desires to marry our daughter, the

Features

When white-collar farmers met in Sokoto

By Abdulganiyu Aminu & Bello Abubakar Kaoje

Sokoto, the acclaimed seat of the Caliphate played host to irrigation experts who met at a national seminar on "Sustainable Irrigation Development in Nigeria in the 21st Century" in July this year.

The choice of Sokoto for this important seminar is quite significant as it was in Sokoto that the first pilot test case for River Basins as a concept - The Sokoto Rima River Basin Authority - which was originally intended to boost irrigation development in Nigeria was born.

The seminar itself was an initiative of the Nigeria National Committee on Irrigation, the Sokoto Rima River Basin Development Authority and the Federal Ministry of Water Resources. Not surprisingly, the seminar drew to Sokoto, experts, technocrats and other stakeholders who brainstormed on how to ensure food security through sustainable irrigated agriculture in Nigeria.

Needless to say, this latest seminar was held against a background of the earlier one held early this year in Zaria on participatory irrigation management, organised by the ministry in collaboration with the National Agricultural Extension and Research Liaison Services (NAERLS), ABU Zaria.

The atmosphere at the meeting was expectantly agog: several critical issues, among which is the global recognition of the contribution of irrigated agriculture in poverty alleviation and the need for optimum use of water for irrigation which accounts for over 70 percent of all water withdrawals in most developing countries were discussed.

A total of 128 participants attended the seminar during which several papers on various issues pertaining to sustainable irrigation in Nigeria were presented and discussed. The themes range from policy, legal framework and institutional strengthening, low capacity utilisation, capacity development to private sector participation, as well as environmental sustainability and irrigation from basin perspective.

The Minister of Water Resources, Alhaji Muktar Shagari, in an inspiring speech, urged the participants to stimulate the needed impetus for more technical appraisal, effective stakeholder participation and the desired private sector participation for increased food production in Nigeria.

The minister took time to

unfold his plan of action with regards to the irrigation sector. He told the participants that as part of efforts to boost food production, the president has directed that all broken down

the ministry. This concept is aimed at enabling farming groups together with irrigation agencies to manage irrigation schemes. By this, farmers will become more responsive to the needs and care of irrigation schemes; collection of water rate fees

design and construction supervision.

Furthermore, he posited that continuous training in performance assessment methodologies is needed to strengthen the skills of operations and maintenance personnel.

operation as well as lack of gaging stations to determine data on rainfall, evaporation and water level in most dams in Nigeria. He stressed the need to among others, optimise operation of, dams and other water related projects over the entire basin

management from the RBDAs.

The forum further suggested a fund to be known as National Irrigation Development Fund (NIDF) which would be established solely for the funding of the irrigation sub-sector. The law establishing such fund should make it mandatory for all imported food and fibre items to be surcharged 25 percent of the cost including freight (CIF) as contribution to the fund. This fund will in no small measure complement the efforts of the government in the maintenance and sustainability of these irrigation facilities.

The seminar further recommended:

- The provision of credit for irrigated agriculture at low interest rates with less stringent collateral requirements.

- The urgent need of government to put in place stable, consistent and integrated water resources management policy.

- The need for integrated and holistic approach to water resources planning from the basin perspective.

- Qualified indigenous planners and designers should be involved in the planning and design of irrigation development. This way the peculiar socio-economic characteristics of the beneficiaries can be adequately taken into account during feasibility studies.

- The bottom-up approach involving all stakeholders with farmers as the nucleus should be encouraged.

- As a prerequisite for the involvement of farmers associations in sharing the responsibilities for irrigation management, existing irrigation infrastructure should be rehabilitated and farmers groups adequately empowered and trained.

- The transfer of irrigation management responsibilities from government to beneficiaries should be gradual and compatible with their absorptive capacity.

- A sound marketing policy should be created to ensure private sector participation.

In conclusion, we only hope that the recommendations of the seminar are not swept under the carpet or put in the shelf to gather dust but would be appropriately implemented to achieve the desired objective of food sufficiency in the country.

Abdulganiyu Aminu & Bello Abubakar Kaoje are with the Press Unit, Federal Ministry of Water Resources, Abuja.



President Olusegun Obasanjo

dams must be rehabilitated for smooth irrigation farming. The Federal Government, he further said, will soon buy irrigation equipment like tubewells and sprinklers as well as tractors to be distributed to farmers to boost their yields.

This inspiring speech set the tone for the seminar as several papers presented shared this sense of urgency for the need to practically relate irrigation to the needs of the people.

To be sure, irrigation development in Nigeria has been propelled by the need to overcome the vagaries of weather in agriculture, and to sustain growth in food supply.

Engr. I.K. Musa, the Chairman of Nigerian National Committee on Irrigation and Drainage, who is also the Director of Irrigation and Drainage in the Federal Ministry of Water Resources, delivered a thought provoking paper in which he bemoaned the failure of past irrigation schemes. According to I.K. Musa, past irrigation schemes were marred, *ab initio*, by wrong planning concepts, lack of operation, maintenance, management and non-involvement of farmers in the scheme of things. A way out of this scenario is to empower the RBDAs and use them as planning and development units to ensure a bottom-up planning approach.

This concept is partially exemplified in the farmers participatory, Irrigation Management Scheme recently introduced by the Department of Irrigation and Drainage of

increases; and the money saved could be used to maintain the schemes. This is a clear departure from the top-down development model, which has been the bane of development paradigms in the Third World. However, for sustainability, Engr. Musa canvassed the need for rehabilitation in a co-ordinated manner, of the entire irrigation infrastructure by the government. According to him, if the participatory irrigation management policy is effectively managed, it would be part of the dividends of democracy and would lead to the emergency of community organisations capable of making autonomous decisions. Engr. Musa concluded that without strong government support, even the best irrigation prospects have little chance of success. His panacea is that the government should ensure a stable legal and economic environment; take charge of basic infrastructural works, adopt a clear pricing policy, install effective macro-economic control measures and provide balanced national planning.

In his own paper, titled "operation and maintenance constraints to capacity utilisation for sustainable irrigation development in the 21st century Nigeria," Professor F.A. Adeniji of the University of Maiduguri called for, among others, greater involvement of farmers in all aspects of



Minister of water resources Muktar Shagari

Annual and routine major maintenance work for canals and other structures, Prof. Adeniji further advised, need to be contracted out to private sector, following competitive bidding as this is more cost-effective than the current practice where maintenance work is carried out directly by the project authority.

The Water Users Associations also need to be promoted and made to shoulder more responsibilities for efficient system of operation and maintenance.

Professor Adeniji stressed the need to provide farmers with reliable services and mechanism, devised for farmers to pay the water fees at the beginning of every season, adding that timely payment could be enhanced by providing some incentives such as cash discount attached to payment either to farmers or the collectors.

The Director of Water Supply and Quality Control, Engr. M.A.K. Abubakar, stressed the need for National Water Quality Monitoring to be a continuous process in order to be able to identify and check sources of water pollution. In addition, the source of domestic and industrial pollution should be addressed to reduce the amount of pollutants discharged into the water bodies.

In his own paper, the Director of Dams and Reservoir Operations, Engr. Marcus Gundiri, decried the poor inventory data for dam

to meet conflicting water demands.

The duo of Salihu Abubakar and Yusuf Abdullahi of ABU, Zaria called for greater commitment in terms of sound policies on incentives for private sector participation in input production, marketing and distribution. According to them, the private sector is better suited to handle the supply and distribution of production inputs. The government's role should be the provision of an enabling environment, the regulatory framework, funding and facilitating institutions that will make the private sector function efficiently. They also called for provision of supportive infrastructure like good roads, feeder roads, water pumps etc. to ameliorate the farmers' burden.

The participants debated and examined all the papers presented and finally reached a consensus on the way forward for sustainable irrigation development and food security in Nigeria.

In the end, the seminar came out with a well-articulated action programme and several problems militating against sustainable irrigation development in Nigeria were clearly identified.

The seminar called on the government to establish an appropriate legal and institutional framework that can create enabling environment for farmers and other stakeholders to actively participate in the eventual take-over of irrigation

NEWS

Sen Zang awards scholarship to 19 students

Senator Davou Zang representing Plateau North Senatorial district at the National Assembly, has awarded scholarship to 19 students of tertiary institutions in his senatorial district.

From Buhari Bello, in Jos

Research Institutions, called on the beneficiaries to use the money judiciously in the pursuit of their education.

According to him, the gesture was also aimed at lifting the financial burden on their parents. He therefore, urged them not to relent in their educational pursuits.

He disclosed that the award of the scholarship to the deserving students from the six local government areas of the district was a fulfilment of his promise

earlier made to the people in the Senatorial district.

Other programmes introduced by Senator D.B. Zang include the deworming of about 54,100 school children in the district.

The Senator said, "I will continue to work hard and lobby to bring home federal appointment and projects."

Meanwhile, the Senator has concluded arrangement to launch an "economic emancipation programme" for the people of the district next Saturday at the Plateau State conference hall, in Jos.

Presenting the cheques to the beneficiaries of the 2000-2001 scheme, Senator Zang said this was part of his contribution to the educational development of his people.

The Senator, who is also the Chairman, Senate Committee on Agricultural

NOA DG commends Sokoto Sharia judge

The Director-General of the National Orientation Agency, Dr. Ifeanyi Chukwuka, has commended the judge of a Sharia Court in Sokoto for exposing an alleged bribery attempt by the director of the agency in Sokoto State, Alhaji Isa Sudan, saying that the judge's conduct was in line with the Federal Government's stand on corruption.

accountant who attempted to bribe the judge of the Sharia Court in Sokoto acted on their own since they were on suspension and were not answerable to the agency at the time of the bribery allegation

The agency, the DG re-

affirmed is in the vanguard of championing the present administration's war against corruption and would not condone or tolerate any action that runs contrary to government's resolve to stamp out bribery and corruption.

The judge had alleged that the NOA state director in Sokoto had attempted to bribe him with the sum of N37,000 to influence a case of embezzlement of N85,555.54, being retirement entitlements of one Umaru Aliyu Durbawa

According to a press statement signed by the Press Secretary to the DG, Fidel Agu, the Sokoto State director of NOA had acted, in connivance with the state accountant of NOA both of whom were arraigned before the court sometime in June this year.

Commending the judge for refusing to be influenced to pervert justice, Dr. Chukwuka recalled that on assumption of office in June this year, he came across the case of the Sokoto NOA director and the state accountant of the agency, and ordered their immediate suspension from office.

Their suspension which was further ratified after a management meeting of the agency in Abuja recently was to give the court a free hand to adjudicate the matter since he is directly involved and that the decision to keep the director on his seat while the case goes on would not only impede the course of justice but serve as a bad precedence.

Already, a senior administrative officer and a senior accountant from Kebbi State were appointed on June 18, 2001 to replace the two officers involved in the fraud, pending the outcome of the case in the Sharia court.

The DG stated that the suspended director and

FG to spend N28b on 22 power sub-stations

The Federal Government is to expend about N28 billion on the ongoing construction and rehabilitation of 22 power sub-stations across the country this year, the

From Abdullahi Dutse, in Gombe

international power generation firms towards actualisation of the proposed Mambila hydroelectric power plant in Taraba State, capable of generating 3,900 megawatts with the potential of being the largest in the country.

The minister similarly said that his ministry is committing over N400 million towards the completion of the Dadin Kowa dam hydro electric station with a capacity generation of 35 megawatts to be executed in conjunction with a Russian firm for distribution locally and to neighbouring countries bordering the north-east sub-region.

In a related development, Alhaji Aliyu said the Federal Government has started negotiations with some

The Chairman of Niger State Primary Education Board, Alhaji Aliyu Garafini, has outlined the objectives of his administration during his term in office.

The objectives of his administration, he said, are two-pronged and would include prompt payment of staff salaries; especially the teachers and the provision of infrastructural materials to the primary schools in all the 25 local government areas in the state.

Primary Education Board chairman outlines objectives

From Kashim Sule, in Minna

Alhaji Garafini disclosed this while briefing journalists in his office last week, adding that apart from the prompt payment of salaries and provision of infrastructural materials, the board would spend N110.8 million on UBE primary schools in the state this year.

He said that already contracts for the jobs have

been awarded, adding that the board would not deviate from its good track records in job execution.

He, therefore, expressed happiness with the level of work in Mokwa local government and advised other contractors to follow suit.

He linked the upsurge in enrolment of pupils to the hard work of the secretaries all over the local government areas.

Commending the Federal Government's assistance to the state, he advised that there was the need to widen the level of communication with the states in order to avoid contradictions.

The director-general applauded the state government for the completion of 75 percent level of all the UBE projects.

NBC warns erring media outfit

The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) has said that it will not tolerate any broadcast media that engage in praise singing against journalistic ethics in the country.

The commission warned that any agency that engage in broadcasting should provide a levelled led playground that would enhance and promote the acquired democratic dividends for the

From Hassan A. Karofi, in Katsina

betterment of Nigeria.

The commission's co-ordinator, north-west zone, Mallam Mohammed Auwal, disclosed this in Katsina during a courtesy call on the state information commissioner.

Mallam Auwal added that the media as a channel of persuasion and development should engage in serving the people instead of selective propaganda.

Responding, the Commissioner for Information, Alhaji Suleiman Jibia, promised that the state government would do its best to ensure objectivity and fairness in the state media.



Gov. Kure

Katsina appoints new DG for education fund

A new Director-General for the Katsina State Education Trust Fund (ETF) has been appointed by the Katsina State Governor, Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua. He is Alhaji Umaru Ali Bindawa.

Until his new appointment, Alhaji Ali Bindawa was the pioneer secretary of the four-year-old Education Trust Fund. He replaced the pioneer Director-Genral, Alhaji Zaiyana Abdullahi who was moved to the Local Government Service Commission as Permanent Secretary

A 1981 political science graduate of the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, the new ETF helmsman has variously served as a lecturer at the Hassan Katsina Polytechnic, Executive Director of Katsina State Pilgrims Welfare Board and Director of Finance and Administration at the Katsina State Board for Science and Technical Education.

Meanwhile, the new Director-General of the Education Trust Fund has called on stakeholders in the educational sector and allied institutions not to relent in their co-operation with the Fund, assuring that his team is poised to improve on the remarkable performance recorded during the tenure of

From Abdu Labaran, in Katsina

his predecessor.

Alhaji Bindawa, who spoke to Daily Trust expressed confidence that with the unimpeachable commitment of Governor Umar's administration to uplift the standard of education in the state, a tremendous synergy would be achieved to make the dream of a thoroughly educated society a reality within the shortest possible time.

He particularly lauded the schools rehabilitation and refurbishment programme long embarked upon by the state government, believing that the combined efforts of the government and the Education Trust Fund would enable the state to regain its lost glory in the field of education.



Gov. Yar'Adua

Odili cautions on birthday messages

The Rivers State Governor, Dr. Peter Odili, last weekend advised any person planning birthday messages to congratulate him in the mass media to turn such financial resources toward fighting poverty in the state.

He stated this in a two-paragraph press statement titled "Government Special Announcement," and signed by his Chief Press Secretary, Mr. Augustine Nwokinaka.

It added that, "it has come to the notice of the state governor that some friends and well-wishers were planning a birthday party for him. But the governor would not subscribe to such a wasteful

From Wisdom-Uduak Patrick, in Port Harcourt

venture." The statement further added that the governor was aware that his well-wishers were out to buy pages of newspapers to congratulate him during his forthcoming birthday later this month but emphasised that such expenditure was not necessary at all.

Odili said while he appreciated such moves from his supporters and well-wishers, he would want such messages to come in birthday cards bought by the roadsides in Port Harcourt.

The statement regretted any inconveniences this step may "caused our friends, well-wishers and supporters."



Alh. Murtala Aliyu

Minister of State for Power and Steel, Alh. Murtala M. Aliyu, has disclosed

He made the disclosure on Sunday at a news conference shortly after a civic reception organised in his honour by the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Gombe State.

The minister said the completion of the project would enable the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) to achieve its target of 4,000 megawatts generation by the end of the year.

He said the Federal Government would thereafter pursue a vigorous power generation policy of 1,000 megawatts annually with the objective of reaching 5,000 megawatts generation by the year 2005.

Alhaji Murtala Aliyu also revealed that the enhanced power generation policy would include the use of Independent Power Providers (I.P.P.), in order to



NEPA

NATIONAL ELECTRIC POWER AUTHORITY

Invitation for Pre- Qualification

...For Operation & Maintenance Management of Delta and Egbin Thermal Power Stations.

NEPA, the Federal Government's utility responsible for electricity generation, transmission and distribution throughout Nigeria invites companies to pre-qualify to bid for the management of operation and maintenance of these two thermal power stations, with the objective of increasing operational efficiency, reversing the trend in deteriorating plant infrastructure and improving NEPA's financial performance.

The stations have the following characteristics:

	Delta	Egbin
Nominal output MW	(i) 2x36MW (scrapped) (ii) 12 x 20 MW (iii) 6 x 100MW (iv) 2 x 120MW planned	6 x 220MW
Commissioning date	(i) 1966 (ii) 1975/1978 (iii) 1989/90 (iv) 2001	1985/87
Summary description	Gas Turbines	Steam Turbines

Both stations are currently working below their installed capacity. NEPA has launched an Action Plan for generation rehabilitation which envisages re-commissioning of six 100MW units and six 25 MW units at Delta and two units at Egbin by December 2001.

The final concept for introducing private sector participation in the operation and management of the two thermal stations is currently under development and will be finalised over the coming weeks. The management contractor may be required to provide only management support and training and it may have some part of its remuneration linked to the performance of the stations.

documents will be issued to short-listed companies on 24 September with bids due by 19 November 2001. The shortlist of bidders will be selected from the responses to this advertisement through an evaluation process based on the following information provided by interested firms:

- (i) experience in operating and maintaining thermal power stations in the past 5 years
- (ii) experience in rehabilitation and upgrading of thermal power stations in the past 5 years
- (iii) relevant experience in developing countries, particularly in Nigeria
- (iv) audited financial statements of the last three years.
- (v) full details of consortium members, if applicable, including statements from each that the lead member is authorised to act on their behalf.

Pre-qualification submissions including full contact details of the firm's project manager, must be submitted on or before **10 September 2001** to:

Two Copies to:

National Electric Power Authority,
NEPA Headquarters
P.M.B.338, Plot 441 Zambezi Crescent,
Maitama - Abuja, FCT, Nigeria.
Tel: 09-234-9-413-5504
Fax: 09-234-9-413-5501
E-mail: euakpadiaha@yahoo.com

One Copy to NEPA's Adviser:

IPA Energy Consulting
41 Manor Place, Edinburgh, EH7 7EB Scotland
Tel: 09-44-131-240-0840
Fax: 09-44-131-220-6440
E-mail: tom.jardine@ipa.org

Submissions up to 0.5MB will be accepted by e-mail: firms



INSIDE POLITICS

2003: PDP chieftain foresees bleak future

Achieftain of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Plateau State, Alhaji Buhari Yusuf, says he foresees a bleak scenario in the 2003 elections.

Speaking exclusively to *Daily Trust* in Jos, the politician observed that such a scenario is possible because of the desperate moves by incumbents to continue in office.

He explained that this is because the existing political parties in the country are made up of strange bed fellows "who just came together for a common goal which was to get the military out of the political scene."

According to him, there would be confusion and uncertainty because there was no ideological belief that jointed the parties together and called for the registration of new political parties which will give wider choice to the electorate "and a level playing ground for all the politicians."

Alhaji Buhari Yusuf accused the PDP government of not doing anything tangible at the rural areas due to the fact that "both the government and the party, have lost focus" saying that "there should have been at least two or three viable programmes for the rural areas by now."

He expressed fear that the National Poverty Eradication Project (NAPEP) may after all be another wild goose chase like other programmes that



Gemade

had come before it. Said he," though NAPEP and other programmes are good initiatives, their managers use them as conduit pipes to siphon public money."

Alh. Buhari, therefore, advised that the programme should lay emphasise on skill acquisition programme so as to run away from the problems that has been associated with similar projects in the past.

On the new breed politician and the under 50 group the politician disclosed

that with the exception of few governors, "most of the new breed politicians have once again failed to live up to the expectation of the electorate."

He pointed out that despite their colossal failure, both the young and the old breed politicians should be allowed to come together as that is the only way the young will learn from the old.

Commenting on the issue of resource control he said the agitators are jokers and that they should not be taken seriously.

"In fact, I see this as another blackmail by the Southerners to hold on to power, if not so, why should someone want to control resources that belong to everybody," he said.

New political association emerges

A new political association, the Peoples' Salvation Party (PSP Sawaba), has completed all necessary arrangements for its registration as a political party.

The PSP, which will be formally launched soon originates from the NEPU ideology, Revival Committee which is an offshoot of the NEPU History Committee.

As such, it is an ideologically based political association, which derives its inspiration from the well-known philosophical and ideological foundations of NEPU.

At a press briefing held at the NUJ Press Centre in

From Jamilah Nuhu Musa, in Kano

Kano, Alhaji Tanko Yakasai supported by Alh. Suleimai Kumo and former NEPU stalwarts said that the People's Salvation Party (PSP) will be a people oriented socialist party which will attend to the plight of the common man (*talakawa*) and is determined to establish a socialist welfare state system throughout the country.

Giving reasons for the formation of the PSP Alh Tanko explained that the existing political parties have failed to satisfy the yearning of Nigerians and according to him is threatening the nation's nascent democracy.

He expressed the need to embark on an unrelenting struggle of economic emancipation and empowerment of the people with a view to making the producers, owners and user of the nation's wealth rather than beggars.

In his words "people are worse off now than they were under the previous military regimes and plans are afoot to emasculate them politically and economically through the deregulation and privatisation policies and through corrupt and larcenous practices in high places."

The motto of the party will be "Justice Unity and Progress with the Sloga (SAWABA), the flag consists of the following colour: black, red and green while the emblem shall be a big white star in the centre and six white stars surround.

Personalities present at the briefing including Alha Lilly Gabari, Shehu Shanono, Sule Bello, Professor Datt Abdulkadir, Alhaji Wac Nas, Hajiya Yel Maidantsuntsu from Jega, Hajiya Hauwa Bukar from Gusau and others.

Council boss disagrees with Obasanjo over spending

From Buhari Bello, in Jos

The chairman of Bokkos Local Government Council of Plateau State, Mrs. Rachel Adanchi, has condemned the statement credited to President Olusegun Obasanjo that all the council chairmen in the federation were recklessly spending their federation

allocations.

She said, it was morally wrong for the President to conclude that all of them were not performing since some of the chairmen had done their best in transforming their areas, despite the zero allocation situation some of them were faced with.

Mrs. Adanchi stated this recently at the council secretariat when the Deputy Senate President, Senator Ibrahim Mantu paid a visit to the area during his just concluded tour of his constituency.

If the president is not satisfied with the performance of the council chairmen in the country, she said the Anti-Corruption Commission should be directed to investigate them and punish those found to have misappropriated public funds.

She called on the president to guide his utterances at public functions saying that lack of

development at the local government councils was as a result of the inability of the federal government to pump money from the federation account to the local government councils who are now battling to settle salaries not to talk of developmental projects.

Responding, the Deputy Senate President, assured that the issue of zero allocation being given to the local governments would soon be a thing of the past as the federal government had concluded arrangements for a review in favour of the chairmen.



Obusanjo

Mantu chides Langtang mafia

The Deputy Senate President, Senator Ibrahim Nasiru Mantu, has chided the Langtang mafia for "wasting" the nation's billions of naira in the construction of a dam in Langtang which has never served the needs of the people.

Senator Mantu, who stated this during his just concluded constituency tour in Pankshin Local Government explained that the dam in Pankshin town is capable of serving the needs of the entire area, but they the Langtang mafia use their connection only to waste public funds.

He said, "the dam in Pankshin can feed Langtang, Shandam and other local governments around but when they were in power, they went and committed billions only for the dam to dry up."

Mantu, who is also the Senator representing Plateau central senatorial zone explained that days are gone when public money are being wasted on projects that are non viable.

"The days are gone where



Mantu

scarce public funds will be put to waste because money is difficult to come by and the scarce money we have should only be applied to make a change in the lives of the people.

"But the billions of naira wasted was because they have generals and yet that dam is supplying water with difficulties," he added.

To avoid repeating the mistake and the misfortune brought to the people of the area, the Deputy Senate President disclosed that a

feasibility studies have been concluded for the up grading of the Pankshin dam.

According to him the expansion of the water scheme when completed would cater for Kanke, Dengi and Wase including Langtang.

On electricity supply, which remained a major problem to the people in the Ssenatorial zone, Mantu, assured that a contract would soon be awarded for the purchase of a transformer in Danki, the headquarters of Kanam local government.

Obasanjo urged to avoid second term

From Bright Owulu, in Lagos

Elder states man, Chief M.C.K. Ajuluchukwu, has called on President Olusegun Obasanjo not to go for a second term in office.

Ajuluchukwu who made this call in an exclusive interview with *Daily Trust* in Lagos said it would be against the interest of the nation for the President to contest the 2003 presidential election given the spirit of rotational presidency on which the democratic regime was founded.

The *Ohaneze* kingpin said instead of angling for another tenure, the president should busy himself with the much needed infrastructural and economic development the nation ardently needs.

According to him, this call on the president is due to the fact that it would be better for the country and the survival of its democracy if power is allowed to reach every section of the country, saying that Obasanjo's second term in office will not encourage

this. Ajuluchukwu, however, had an axe to grind with some of the governors and chairmen who have their eyes on a second term, saying that governors who have performed creditably and have met the aspirations of their people should return to complete their good work.

His advise for the governors with poor records is that they should abandon their efforts for a second term since Nigerians are becoming more politically aware and cannot be fooled a second time.

He denounced the fear being expressed by many that 2003 may ultimately lead to the demise of the fourth republic, saying that Nigeria has advanced to such a level that the coming elections will not destroy our democracy.

However, he remarked that there could be violent eruptions if unpopular politicians were forced on the people.

Goje condemns Nyame's critics

Former Senator in the Third Republic, Senator Ibrahim Goje Gassol, has declared that the recent attacks on the Taraba State Governor, Jolly T. Nyame are done only to further selfish interests.

According to Senator Goje, who is currently commissioner one at the Taraba State Local Government Service Commission, said "those people hitting the governor below the belt on his style of leadership should have a rethink and change of heart, because the governor has performed creditably well."

He told then to engage only in constructive criticisms that would move the state

forward and not to embark on retrogressive criticisms that would not do the state any good.

Senator Goje noted that Taraba State required the support of all its indigenes within and outside the state to develop economically, politically and socially.

He, therefore advised the Tarabans wherever they may be to rise up to the challenges of development which he said "is quite obvious in Taraba State than any other state in the federation."

The politician pointed out that it was not an easy task transforming a rural state like Taraba within the period of two years in view of the damage done to the state by past regimes.

On the desire of Governor Jolly Nyame for re-election, championed by son indigenes of the state the commissioner opined that "what to do is for all the indigenes to join hands with state government so that the state can move forward."



Gov. Nyame

For the Records

Policy formulation: Obasanjo's formula

Obong U.J. Ekaette CFR, D.Sc. (Honoris Causa) mni, and secretary to the government of the federation presented this paper titled 'Concepts of Public Policy Formulation. This administration's experience,' recently at the National Institute for Policy and strategic studies, Kuru, near Jos.

By U.J. Ekaette

I should begin by once again extending my profound appreciation to the Director-General and Moderators of the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) for this annual opportunity to renew my invaluable association and credentials with this most distinguished institution. As I stated last year when I delivered a similar lecture to Senior Executive Course (SEC 22) these lectures are valuable to this Administration which has great respect for dialogue and widespread input from all citizens who are well placed to contribute towards the achievement of its goals of national re-birth, social regeneration and economic reconstruction.

I have been asked to present a lecture on "Concepts of Public Policy Formulation", which I think reflects a keen awareness on the part of this Institute that public policy constitutes its core concern. Additionally, we live in a world where changes have become both rapid and vital for social and national survival calling for effective and timely formulation and implementation of public policy. The topic is particularly relevant to this Administration which for the first half of its tenure, has painstakingly subjected past policies and strategies in governance to critical scrutiny, and has attempted to address fundamental structural and other weaknesses which have become manifest in the demonstrable decline of our economic fortunes, and in the alarming erosion of the social values which form the very foundations of our national existence.

Accordingly, I have modified the title of my paper slightly to now read: "Concepts Of Public Policy Formulation: This Administration's Experience".

The challenge of the leadership as the chief public policy formulator

The responsibility for public policy formulation in any country lies with the Head of Government to whom the entire executive and bureaucracy are responsible. A change in the political leadership of any country usually brings to the saddle of Head of Government an individual who, during the first few months of his tenure, is learning on the job and therefore heavily dependent on his array of official and non-official advisers, bureaucrats, informants, and other informal sources of information, etc. Since, for the most part during the early part of the tenure of an Administration, these groups of people have their way while the supporters of the new leadership continue to bask in the euphoria of their election/selection victory; the boat is not rocked. This setting is particularly true of a democratic change.

The emergence of Olusgun Obasanjo as president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on May 29, 1999 following the victory of the peoples' Democratic party in the February, 1999 elections was an exception to this usual pattern for several reasons. First, he was once the Head of State of Nigeria for 3 1/2 years from 1976 -1979. Second, after leaving office, he spent most of his time interacting with several distinguished leaders across the world, engaging in soul-searching discourse on important issues of national, regional and international development and the enhancement of humanity. He was a member of the Eminent Persons' Group; a Co-founder of Transparency International; Founder of the African Leadership

Forum, among several others. Thirdly, he was subjected to political maltreatment in the hands of a Military Dictator, in the course of which he had a spiritual renewal, which strengthened his commitment to the Nigerian nation for which he is ever prepared to put his life on the line.

Capacity building initiatives

Capacity building is one catalyst for improving both the process and quality of public policy formulation. It is an imperative where there is a gulf between the knowledge, experience and commitment of a visionary leader and those of his team. Capacity building helps to sharpen the tools of policy formulation and implementation and bridges the knowledge and communication gaps between the diverse initiators of public policy. Beginning at the very first week of the tenure of this Administration, the presidential Retreat, a weekend of intense interaction among top functionaries of Government was introduced to achieve this purpose.

So far four presidential Retreats have been held for Honourable Ministers and permanent Secretaries. Another series of presidential Retreat was initiated in October last year as a yearly forum for Chairmen of Boards and Chief Executives of Government parastatals/Agencies. Only last month, a 3-Day presidential Retreat on poverty Eradication Programme was held for State Governors and state Co-ordinators of the programme. The president has even met with the Local Government Chairmen. Several issue-centred Presidential Retreats are in the pipeline. In addition to the series of Retreats, there is also the presidential Saturday Fora, which are organised to have an in-depth discussion of a specific issue of national importance.

Structured Training Workshops have been organised for every civil servant in the Directorate Cadre, GL. 15 -17. The Middle Level manpower is also enjoying similar training programmes. In order to modernise the tools of bureaucracy in the civil service, government offices are being provided with computers while officials are trained to be computer-literate.

The above initiatives in capacity building are not only unique and highly positive; they are being introduced, the first time ever, in this country.

Increasing adoption of the bottom-up approach in consultation with stakeholders

Increasingly, Government is adopting the Bottom-up approach in consultation prior to the initiation of policy and we are achieving greater success in programme acceptance by the other tiers of Government. The National Youth policy launched very early this year epitomises the approach. From conception and initiation through zonal Consultations to the final National Youth Summit where the policy was eventually adopted and launched, the Youth in their number and diversity were in the driver's seat. The end result was that a group generally seen as difficult, restive and volatile in other circumstances became the architects of a Youth policy, which they fashioned out, adopted and presented to Mr. president for his assent and implementation by Government.

Like the Youth policy, the poverty Eradication programme went through various levels of consultations, culminating in the presidential Retreat with the state Governors who happily embraced and endorsed the Programme while suggesting ways of fine tuning its implementation strategies for greater effectiveness.

International initiatives as positive driving forces for public policy formulation

I referred earlier to the wealth of experience, international contact and goodwill of President Obasanjo, built out of his interactions with distinguished world leaders for over two and



President Olusegun Obasanjo

half decades. Mr. President has had to go out to mobilise his international contacts and goodwill to attract technical and financial assistance as well as bilateral co-operation on several topical issues in the areas of health, energy, environment, telecommunications, agriculture, defence, security, education, power, constitutional review and democratic governance, etc. These international efforts have been a positive driving force for the formulation of several public policies at the national level.

Linking policy Formulation with Implementation strategies

By itself after formulation, public policy is but a mere statement unless it is followed up with a Policy Implementation strategy. For it to deliver the dividends of good governance to the people there must be effective implementation. It is like a factory process chain. If the engine is turned off while the raw materials are fed in, they simply pile up, clog the process line and in extreme cases, damage the engine. Similarly, any slack or stoppage of implementation creates a bottleneck as policies pile up in the absence of implementation. It is for this reason that a Policy Implementation and Monitoring Unit has been set up in the Political Affairs Office of the secretary to the Government of the Federation, to monitor and follow-up on every policy and programme of Government approved by the Federal Executive Council. This Unit complements the efforts of existing Government Agencies such as National Planning Commission and National Economic Intelligence Committee (NEIO), whose focus is project monitoring.

Commitment to the principles of transparency, equity, justice and accountability as policy imperatives

At inception, this Administration adopted

transparency, equity, justice and accountability as its guiding principles and policy imperatives. Ever since, these principles have been the benchmarks assessing every action of Government and its agencies. It was the Isis of the Kolade panel and several other panels/Commissions established by this Administration including, of course, the Oputa Commission. The principles will ensure commitment to public policies and good governance.

2 Some sectoral policies which underscore the public policy formulation strategies of this administration

Four key issues towards which this Administration has directed



U.J. Ekaette secretary to the FG

tremendous energy, attention and resources present themselves as excellent examples to underscore the public policy formulation process and implementation strategies of this Administration.

They are:

(i) Economic Rehabilitation and Reconstruction and the Challenges of Globalisation;

(ii) Unemployment and Poverty; and (iii) Corruption.

(i) Economic Rehabilitation and Reconstruction and the Challenges of Globalisation

We are all aware of the unprecedented levels of collapse and degeneration of the basic economic structures in our country, which assumed alarming rates in the late 1980s and the 1990s. A combination of callous indifference on the part of the leadership, unspeakable levels of corruption and the total absence of policies to limit the decline were responsible for reducing our nation, which in the 1950s and 60s held the promise of being one of the greatest nations on earth by the year 2000, to the level of one of the most vilified nations in the world. It was the lot of this Administration to set into motion the process of reversal, through the careful selection of policies which will first stop the rot, then establish a strong basis for reversal of the trend of decline and self-destruction.

(a) Rehabilitation and regeneration of basic economic structures

This is being done with massive investments in power, communications, transportation, among others, and in vital social services. Policy here is informed by the twin concerns that it is the most hallowed responsibility of this Administration to ensure that government creates an enabling environment to attract and sustain external investment, and for citizens to pursue their economic well being. Indeed, the Administration predicates its success on the degree to which it can achieve its set target in these

areas.

(b) Reforming the economic environment

Policies which limit the destructive results arising from government monopoly of key economic activities and sectors, and which encourage liberalisation and the involvement of genuine players in key sectors have been diligently pursued as part of the strategy of re-engineering the economic environment. The Privatisation Programme of the Administration is only one of these policies. Others include legal reforms to remove inhibitors to investment, institutional and remuneration reforms to infuse higher levels of managerial competence and transparency, and the re-alignment of some of our laws to conform with the contemporary demands of the international environment in which our nation is poised as an effective player.

(c) adopting best practice strategies: Due process, transparency in government transactions and policy consistency

In the increasingly globalised economic environment, nations have to compete, sometimes, fiercely to remain afloat, and those nations that are best able to create the necessary environment to attract investment and retain the confidence of the international investor, are best guaranteed survival and development. This Administration has, however, been most careful in its approach and responses to stimuli and challenges from the international environment. Our basic policies have been to prepare and improve our own environment, principally, so that the Nigerian people and the economy will benefit and prosper from it. Some of the key requirements for this coincide also with the requirements of the international investor. These include the need to entrench rule of law and due process in all transactions, the requirements of openness and transparency in government business and predictability and consistency in basic policies.

(ii) Addressing unemployment and poverty issues

The current policy on poverty Eradication has been predicated partly on informed analyses of the failures of the past, and a realistic assessment of the contemporary structural weaknesses of the Nigerian economy which breeds such high levels of poverty and unemployment. Certainly, we have learnt that throwing money at rampant poverty in the form of cash handouts, or the establishment of institutions that merely serve to channel easy money to selected groups, does not solve the problem. The National poverty Eradication programme is a vital policy instrument, which has various components that together seek to channel resources and energy in key areas, and sectors that have direct relevance to the fight against poverty and unemployment. Its strategies are reinforced by the policy of massive rehabilitation and expansion of economic and social infrastructure, currently a top priority of the Administration.

(iii) Containing corruption

Our policies against corruption have also been shaped

by a thorough appreciation of its root causes, the factors that nurture it, the forces that support and benefit from it, as well as comparative analyses with other societies or nations which have had similar experiences like ours. The policy is an all-embracing one targeted at a number of key areas, which provide structural support for corruption. For example, it has been noted that one source or cause of corruption has been the propensity of past administrations to exercise more than healthy regulation and control over the nation's economic activities. This problem is being tackled through the policies of economic liberalisation, commercialisation and privatisation, as well as the key legal and institutional reforms introduced in the economic sector.

Finally, the weaknesses of regulatory and control mechanisms within both the public and private sector have also been major sources of corruption. policy in this direction has targeted the achievement of enhanced capacity of control mechanisms, as well as improving the integrity levels of key public service operatives. Above all, the enactment of the **Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act**, and the establishment of the **Independent corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission**, represent effective policy instruments which seek to eliminate corruption in both the private and public sectors.

4. Conclusion

Objectives and strategies. I wish to conclude by highlighting a number of key elements that will guarantee the success of public policies in governance:

(i) Public policy must be predicated on a realistic assessment of issues or problems, means and ends;

(ii) A Public Policy should be structured to evolve by the most widespread consultation from experts, stakeholders, including relevant groups adopting a mix of approaches, "top-down", "bottom-up", lateral, and even popular opinion, and should be given extensive publicity to secure for it maximum institutional and public support;

(iii) Public Policy must have an in-built capacity to be monitored, evaluated and reviewed without compromising its essential components;

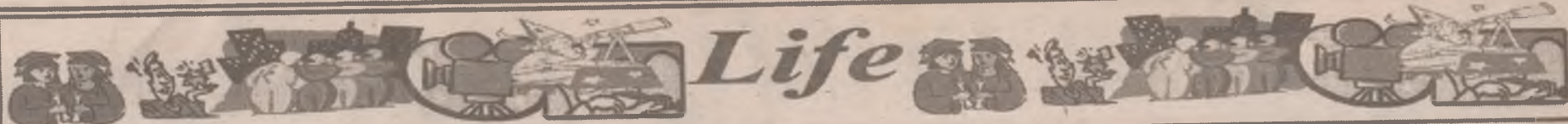
(iv) Public policy must be backed by a strong institutional commitment towards its faithful implementation; and finally

(v) Sustainability of any Public Policy relies on a strong political will and discipline to ensure that it is shielded from sabotage and subversion from unpatriotic elements.

Director-General, Moderators, Distinguished participants, I hope that I have stimulated your interest in the critical analyses of public policy. In particular, I hope that I have established some empirical linkages with some specific policy concerns of President Obasanjo's Administration, and in the process, enlisted this distinguished audience into playing active roles in the pursuit of our stated goals as a Nation.

I thank you once again for this opportunity to renew my valued acquaintance with this distinguished Institute, and to pay back in my own way, a little of the immense debt which I owe to it, arising from my nine months stay here as a participant in 1987. I wish you a most enjoyable and productive stay at Kuru.

Obong U.J. Ekaette CFR, D.Sc. (Honoris Causa) mni, Secretary to the government of the federation, the presidency, Abuja.



Saddam's romantic novel to hit the stage

The Iraqi national theater is preparing to turn a romantic novel apparently written by President Saddam Hussein (news-web sites) into a musical touted as the country's highest ever production.

Al-Mawed, a weekly state-run tabloid, said on Monday that Iraqi artists were rehearsing scenes from "Zabiba and the King," a patriotic parable depicting a ruler who falls in love with an unhappily married woman.

"It will be the largest production in the long history of Iraqi theater. This is an epic teaching to love one's homeland despite all danger," the paper said. It said the play would open before the end of the year.

Babil, a newspaper owned by Saddam's son

Uday, last month said the president was the most likely author of the 160-page "Zabiba," which went on sale several months ago and has been heavily promoted by the official press.

In the story, the king's lover Zabiba is raped on



President Saddam Hussain of Iraq

January 17 - the same day US-led forces launched the 1991 offensive that drove Iraq out of Kuwait, forcing subsequent Iraqi surrender and a sharp economic decline, which Iraq blames on the UN sanctions regime.

The king dies after capturing the rapists and

avenging Zabiba's honour.

Besides the love story, the novel is dominated by talk of how to succeed the king. It prompted speculation that 64-year-old Saddam, who has ruled Iraq since 1979, is preparing to hand over power to one of his sons.

Women to choose grooms in new TV show

An ancient Indian tradition of letting a woman choose her groom from a clutch of suitors is being packaged for contemporary audiences in the country's first matchmaking television show to be aired later this year.

The weekly programme "Swayamvar" (Own Groom) on state-owned broadcaster Doordarshan will be held before a live studio audience, in which suitors will compete for a girl's hand.

"The 5,000-year-old history of Indian weddings inspired me to make the programme," said Anil Gupta, Director-Promoter of Taal India Communication Private Ltd., which is

producing the show.

"Swayamvar" was a common practice in northern India's erstwhile kingdoms where princes vied to tie the knot with the most beautiful princesses.

The prerogative rested with the woman, who would garland the man of her choice from a gathering of suitors.

"I want to empower the woman. It should be her choice," Gupta said.

Gupta said he first thought of the idea four years ago, long before the US programme "Who wants to marry a millionaire" - in which dozens of women vied to marry a rich husband - made so called "reality matchmaking" fashionable.

Kidnapped groom makes it to the church on time

A Singapore groom made it to the church on time - just a day after being kidnapped.

Businessman Tay Teng Joo, 33, was snatched outside his home on Friday and kept on the move in two vehicles, the Straits Times said on Monday.

The kidnapers originally demanded a ransom of \$2.3 million but released Tay unhurt on Friday evening after settling for \$680,000, the paper said.

Tay's wedding reception for more than 700 guests

went ahead as planned on Saturday. Plasters on the groom's hands were the only tell-tale sign of his ordeal.

Two men and one woman were charged with the kidnapping on Sunday. It was not clear how they were found. They face a maximum penalty of the gallows or life in jail.

Kidnappings are rare in Singapore, but Singaporeans have been the target of kidnapers in the Philippines in recent months. Victims' families have generally been quick to pay ransoms.

Music 'cult' members face herbal dose

A Malaysian state will treat youths it says belong to a satanic

heavy metal music cult with a herbal remedy to improve their brains, an official said Monday.

"This herb is to stimulate the brain so that students can concentrate on their studies," Kedah state executive councillor Fadzil Hanafi told Reuters.

He said about 150 alleged "Black metal" members from 15 schools would begin the programme - which a private firm is said to have successfully used to treat drug addicts - on Tuesday.

Last month, the government said it had unearthed a cult whose members it said practiced animal sacrifice and destroyed religious texts.

A news conference chaired by Minister of National Unity and Social Development, Siti Zaharah Sulaiman, showed pictures of youths dressed in black leather, heavy-metal garb, some with faces painted black and white, reminiscent of the 1970s rock band Kiss.

Some school officials in Kedah have carried out strip searches on pupils in checks for tattoos, crucifixes worn upside-down and other symbols they said would identify students as cult members.

A smile can heal and inspire

By Joseph Aiyejoto

It is not uncommon to see people moving on the streets with gloomy faces. Enter some houses, or even some offices and what you will see are faces glaring at you without much welcome. Mere looking at some people reveals their state of mind. Some people really betray their emotional immaturity at the sight of anyone that comes their way.

It has been discovered that quite a few number of people cannot hide their emotional state moments or even days after some quarrels, or some peculiar experiences, hence there is always a transfer of such emotional instability on the next person that ventures to come across their way. On the other hand, there are some people who are so serious to the extent that they hardly have time to look at people's faces, as such they hardly consider whether the other fellow smiles at them so as to be able to smile back, neither will they deem it necessary to give somebody a smile, though it is reciprocal, if you give, it shall be given unto you.

In fact, some look sober on the inside to the extent

that it shows on their outside. Hence, many are friendly in disposition even at first sight while some are termed sadists as a result of their appearance, their posture and even their approach to the issue of life. The weather of life seemed to have beaten some people to the extent that to bark and shout at people and to scare them away by their look have become a part of their daily life.

But one may ask, why is it not possible for one to ease the internal tension by putting on a smile just to tell people that you are not the worst hit, after all, of the seeming uncertainties around?

A smile can extend a ray of hope and joy into the hearts of many. It is capable of lifting one to immeasurable heights of bliss. Smile is a non-verbal way of expressing one's feelings or communicating one's emotions to others. It tells others your state of mind, your mood, and even your feelings about them. It dissolves away the ice of suspicion and removes

layers of prejudice. It softens heart's and inspires a felling of relief and joy.

If these qualities are embedded in an ordinary smile, then why don't you smile when someone greets you or comes your way today? A smile is free and readily available. It can say, "I love you" with more meaning than an expensive gift. A smile tells others much more about your friendly disposition than words could express. Come to think of it, sighting a person or sitting in front of him without smiling at him, there is every tendency for the person to consider you as being unfriendly. Such may become discouraged and give up on whatever you may have to say. However, a smile gives assurance that you care. It tells the other fellow that whatever happens someone is there on whom he can rely. A smile can heal wounds, it can restore the broken heart with assurance that there are people around who can be trusted.

Why not, therefore, make your days with just a smile? It tells much about your personality.

LADIES' LINE

The Art of Listening

Listening is a serious business because it involves more than hearing words. It involves discernment, observing non-verbals (communication through all body responses and emotional expressions, manner of speech as well as voice intonations), eye contact, watching for underlying motives, asking the right questions, giving appropriate responses and sometimes being silent.

Therefore, though listening demands certain efforts, it will be worthwhile since the reward will be a sensible improvement in all our personal relationships.

Total body listening can be described as an activity in which you utilize every part of your body to show your partner you are listening. It makes the speaker feel special, valued and worthwhile.

Listen with Your Eyes: How would you like to be speaking to someone who all the while looked over your shoulder and rarely at you? This is a real turnoff and immediately breaks down the communication process.

Make sure your partner *senses* you are listening. Without staring, boring holes, zeroing in, or making your partner uncomfortable, make certain your eyes are not darting here and there or moving indiscriminately about the room when something important is being shared.

People feel distrust and suspicion toward those who do not look at them when communicating. **Distrust** is one of the biggest blocks to effective communication. When someone looks you directly in the eye, it conveys confidence and builds a trust in the relationship.

Listen with Your Head: A nod at the appropriate time says: "I understand," "I agree," "I'm with you."

Resting a forefinger on the side of your face, head in hand, indicates thoughtful listening. In contrast, perhaps one of the worst listening habits is to slouch backward in a chair, chin in palm, as if almost asleep or in a trance. A disinterested expression on the face completes the picture and indicate "I'm here, but I don't want to be. Let's get this over with."

Resting your chin on your fist as in the famous thinker fashion is perhaps one of the best head positions. Lean toward the speaker as though hanging on every word, but be sincere.

Listen with Your Hands: The hands are capable of many gestures which can communicate approved or disapproval.

Pointing your finger at your mate is accusatory, but turning your hand upward and curling the index finger toward you repeatedly indicates, "come here, I want you closer." Avoid doodling or drawing pictures while you are listening. Fidgeting with paper clips or pencils and clipping or cleaning fingernails are silent but often hurtful and frustrating nuisances which say, "you aren't as important to me as this."

So much more warmth could be communicated to a partner by taking hold of, stroking, or even pressing a partner's hand to your lips.

The **human touch is vital** to emotional health. Touching shows we are paying attention. Touch heals, lift up, affirms others, and conveys a message that can't be expressed in words.

Listen with Your Mouth: Mouth listening includes smiling, laughter, a low whistle, a light kiss and other ways the mouth can be used to show caring.

Verbally adding an occasional "Hmmm," "No kidding," "I see," and otherwise casual but genuine responses lets your partner know you are listening.

Listen with Your Body: We convey either openness or defensiveness through body posture. the gesture for defensiveness is arms folded across the chest. One who leans back in a chair with legs crossed, ankle on knee, hands clasped behind the head often conveys superiority or smugness. In contrast, arms outstretched, palms up indicates openness and sincerity; Leaning forward towards the speaker is a sign of interest and involvement.

Listen with Your Mind: In learning to listen, the ability to listen for feelings is frequently emphasised.

In marriage, we are continually giving and receiving information. As much as possible, you should try to profit from the facts presented; listen effectively for ideas. Guard against becoming so involved in analysing concepts that have been expressed that you miss the importance of the message given.

Your listening responses should match **your partner's behaviour**. While not mimicking your partner's behaviour, try to match your body language to his or hers.

This means that if your partner is sad, you should match your listening responses-head, eyes, hands and body-to respond to sadness. If your partner is really intent on sharing something with you, get in the spirit of it through your body responses. Assume many of the same body postures and facial expressions as your partner.

To be at your listening best, think of a place where and when you can listen with the fewest distractions for important listening occasions, select a place that is private, comfortable and one which allow maximum eye contact along with opportunity to observe your partner's non-verbals.

Culled from Hear to Heart by Nancy Van Pelt.

The media tour

A singular experience in Akwa-Ibom

By Garba Deen Muhammad

The three-day tour of Akwa-Ibom State will probably go down as one of the most revealing moments of the National Media Tour 2001.

From the very beginning the tour took off on a sour note. A scheduled courtesy call on the governor, Architect (Obong) Victor Attah was cancelled at the last minute for no apparent reason. But that was well taken by the visiting journalists. After all it was what the governor did and not the governor's physical appearance that the newsmen would assess.

As the assessment tour commenced, virtually every project site visited contained an intriguing paradox: either it was hurriedly started only a few weeks or a few days back, or else it looked like it was started many years ago and is to be completed many years hence. A common feature of most of the projects in Akwa-Ibom is the cost. Contracts in this oil rich state come not in tens but in hundreds of millions.

And the terrain is not nearly as bad as in Bayelsa. At a point after listening to a particularly stupefying explanation of how the state government used N17m to fence a "poultry farm" that was made up of a single room (50x100m) and a poultry comprising 1000 birds, the N.U.J. President advised the government of Akwa-Ibom to "please fear God." In answer, the tour guide, who is also the state commissioner for information, Mr. Chris-Abasi-Eyo said, with a straight face: "We give contracts to empower our people so that they will be able to live well."

Given the peculiar nature of Nigerians, nay African democracy and the subjective interpretation given to the otherwise audible concept of poverty alleviation, this logic, warped as it is, could be excusable if the job is done well. In Akwa-Ibom the job is hardly noticeable to say nothing of being done well.

And it was not only the visiting journalists who thought so. The people of Akwa-Ibom publicly and instantly disagreed with officials of the state government who tried to explain one dubiety after another with increasing difficulty. In one of the most telling episodes, the tour team was taken to the Ikot-Ikpene general hospital

which according to the state government had been in a state of serious disrepair until the present regime. While the state supervisor of works Mr. Essien Jim Essien churned out intoxicating figures about the N760m

journalists who normally refrain from getting involved in other states visited that led the attack against such blatant display of insensitivity by the Akwa-Ibom State government.

The situation is virtually the same everywhere else.

charge. The people of Akwa-Ibom are by nature quiet, friendly and a little timid. Although it was not easy to imagine, Uyo residents generally give their governor a pass' mark (i.e 45-50%) as far as roads within the state capital are concerned. They claim that

dangerous, that this particular effort must be commended although a local journalist alleged that the commissioner for rural utilities comes from this district which seemed to justify the extra effort. There was also the biggest house of assembly complex

programmes in their respective constituencies. Last year the lucky assemblymen received N10m each. But although the visiting journalists were not shown a single project executed by any assemblyman one of them actually wondered what the nosey journalists were doing in Akwa-Ibom State. This year the even luckier legislators were allotted N50m each for the same reason as last year! Another lucky group are members of FOVAN (Friends of Victor Attah of Nigeria). These according to locals are the real cabinets who determine who gets which appointment or what contract.

The oddities go on and on. But the most singularly disconcerting, event which even bordered on fraud was the sponsored FRCN network programme "in Focus," in which the secretary to the state government wrote an analysis saying that the media team that had just concluded an assessment tour of the state have testified to and endorsed the achievements of the state government. Nothing could have been farther from the truth. If anything it was the only state in which the team through its spokesperson virtually gave a negative verdict on the state government when the NUJ president declared in an interview with reporters that as far as development in Akwa-Ibom state is concerned "resource control is resource for the pocket."

Garba Deen Muhammad is presently on the National Media Tour.



The Hospital where over half a billion naira was allegedly spent

which the government has spent on health for the rehabilitation of some 20 hospitals, the hospital staff who had gathered defiantly nearby shouted "no" and "na lie" with an audacity not seen by citizens since the tour commenced on June 25th in Edo State.

Naturally the journalists invited those workers to speak up with the N.U.J President assuring them of protection against possible victimisation. After two of the staff had made their presentations, they challenged government to take the pressmen round the hospital. What the journalists saw was shameful.

Only one block of the hospital building and part of the maternity ward was roofed. Virtually every other part of the hospital leaked profusely whenever it rained. Walls were sagging and facilities were almost non-existent. The maternity ward was barely functioning, and in general the hospital had not achieved any new equipment in the last 10 years! Amazingly, this embarrassing incident did not prevent the rather tacky state officials from guiding the journalists to another of those money-guzzling hospitals that turned out to be a replacement albeit on a bigger scale of the first one. Here it was the local

Of particular interest was the site of the state housing project. The road leading to the site appeared to have been opened up only a few hours before the journalists arrived the place. At the site not a single one of the intended 235 housing units had been completed even though the state government is only partially financing the project and had received \$2.5m which represents nearly 50% of the total cost.

Within Uyo, the Akwa-Ibom State capital there is hardly any sign that a "Son of the Soil" is finally in

the roads within Uyo were so terrible that even though nothing spectacular has been done to transform their city they were grateful for "little mercies."

One area however, in which governor Attah will score more than a 'C' is in his efforts at rural electrification. One particular effort of the state government was in taking electricity to the far-flung mountainous *Ndan-Bat* (Sand & Mud) district. The district is so remote, the winding erosion threatened the road tarred by previous governments was so

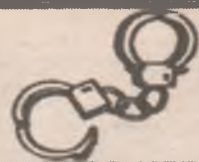
that was started and abandoned in 1991. It is now nearing completion after the state government had sunk about N670m!

Federal government presence is light and this is seen in the 100km road including the Ele-Abak road and the Uyo-Ikot-Ikpene highway.

Other aspects of Akwa-Ibom state politics however can only be maintained as explaining these will be very difficult. One of them is the curious practice of giving huge sums of money to the state legislators "to carry out developmental



Although the state receives a sizable share of the Ecological Fund there is no evidence on how the money is used



Crime & Punishment



Two arraigned for possessing Indian hemp

Two persons, Solomon Jude and Aliyu Jibril aged between 19 and 22-years have been arraigned before a Jos Chief Magistrate Court for allegedly being in possession of substances suspected to be Indian hemp.

The two suspects, who claimed to be school leavers and applicants were charged under section 319A of the penal code but denied the allegation made against them.

Following their denial, they were granted bail in the sum of N5,000 each with a surety each in like sum.

According to the stipulated conditions of bail given by the judge, pheobe Longhoom, "the sureties must swear to an affidavit of means and be residing within the jurisdiction of the

From Buhari Bello, in Jos

court.

While the case was adjourned to August 30, 2001 because Inspector Emmanuel, the prosecutor required that date to enable him assemble witness and commence prosecution.

The police First Information Report (FIR), read in the court alleged that on July 31, 2001, acting on a tip off that a gang of thieves were gathering at low case junction Rantya, Jos, smoking Indian hemp preparing for an operation, a team of detectives struck at the scene and arrested the two suspects.

According to the police FIR, the team of detectives led by sergeant Matthew Ayuba of the Rantya police station arrested the suspects, with three wraps of dried

substances beheaded to be Indian hemp.

The court was also informed that the case was transferred to the state CID, Jos for investigation during which they confessed to having purchased the hemp at the Federal Low Cost, Jos.



Mr. Musiliu Smith

School bursar missing three months after wedding

A 30-year-old bursar with the Police Children School II, in Port Harcourt, Mrs. Lucy Obi-Onyesom (Nee Nzeakor), has been declared missing since July 13, the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports.

The search for Onyesom, who resided with her sister at Obigbo, some 15 km from

Port Harcourt, started on July 14 when the sister she was staying with reported that she did not return the previous day.

Mr. Emmanuel Ajao, the head teacher of the school, said the state police command had been alerted.

When NAN contacted the Rivers State Police Public Relations Officer, Dr. Uche Chukwuma, an Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP), he confirmed that the police had been informed of the incident.

He added that efforts are being made to unravel the circumstances surrounding the disappearance of the bursar.

Meanwhile, the search for the woman by relatives and the concerned public continues.

Family petitions police over teacher's death

The family of a primary school teacher, Mrs. Elizabeth Achizie, who allegedly set herself ablaze on July 30, has urged the police to investigate the incident as they are suspecting foul play.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) recalls that the victim allegedly locked herself up in their No. 4 Ezinifite Street residence, Abakaliki and set the room ablaze.

The entire building was consumed by fire, while the victim, who taught at Nkaleke primary school died at the Ebonyi State University Hospital, Abakaliki as a result of burns.

The family of the deceased, in a petition to the Ebonyi State Police Commissioner, a copy of which was made available to NAN in Abakaliki at the weekend, urged the police "to investigate if her husband or some other persons killed her."

They in the petition, signed by Mr. Sunday Ugwu, expressed dismay over the nonchalant attitude of Mr. Achizie Okoro over his wife's death.

The family lamented that Okoro refused to follow those who conveyed his late wife to the hospital, only to complain loudly after, that the money he left somewhere in the house may have been burnt.

When contacted, Mr. Chinedu Ugwu, the Ebonyi state police command image

maker told NAN over the telephone that the police was investigating the matter.

AP loses N1.6m to fraudsters

From Adelanwa Bamgboye, in Lagos

The management of African Petroleum Nigeria Limited (AP) may have lost about N7.6 million to fraudsters.

According to Chris Owai an Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP), from Alagbon Close, Ikoyi, Lagos, the money was allegedly stolen by Lawrence Bisi Oyebamiji, 45 and Aderibigbe Abayomi, 34.

The duo who were dragged before a Lagos chief magistrate court were reported to have conspired with one Okafor Leslie now on the run between 1998 and 2000 in the Lagos magisterial district to commit felony to wit theft.

When the charge No. B/114/2001 was read out to the two accused persons, they pleaded not guilty.

Following an application made on their behalf for bail, the trial magistrate H.O.A. Amos admitted them to N1 million bail each.

According to the judge, each of the accused will also produce two reliable sureties each who should be land owners in Lagos.

The sureties are also to depose to an affidavit of means even as their addresses are to be verified by the police

Further hearing has been fixed for August 28, 2001.

The offence for which they are charged with is punishable under section 390 of the criminal code which states that "any one who steals anything capable of being stolen is guilty of a felony, and is liable if no other punishment is provided to imprisonment for three years,

In a similar development, 23 year-old Mrs. Toyin Adebayo and Esiola Adetona 38, were arraigned before the same court, charged with forging Gulf Bank of Nigeria Plc cheque No. 0541556010 dated August 5, 2001 for the sum of N550,000.

According to the prosecutor, Inspector S.O. Ogu, the offence is contrary to section 467 of the criminal code. The accused persons pleaded not guilty.

Further hearing has been fixed for Wednesday August 15, 2001. Meanwhile the accused are on N100,000 bail.

Robbers raid retired judge's residence

The residence of a retired judge from Ogun State judiciary, Mr. Justice Christian Abiodun Abimbola, has been raided by a gang of eight armed men who held everyone in the house including two of his visitors hostage last Friday.

According to police sources, the robbers having searched everyone carted away about N82,550 cash, removed the judge's port folio and then proceeded to his daughter's apartment.

Other items stolen include gift items, bundles of Guinea Brocade cutleries,

clocks, shirts, shoes, and expensive jewellers all estimated at about N611,000

Daily Trust also gathered that the robbers at about 18:45 hours later locked up the judge and his visitors in the bedroom at his No. 1 Bolarinwa Abimbola street, Government Reservation Area (G.R.A.), Ijebu-Ode before they escaped with a Mercedes benz station wagon saloon car with registration No. LA 9889 TG belonging to one of the visitor's to the judge.

Police Public Relations officer (PPRO), zone II command, Lagos, Mr.

Emmanuel Ajayi, confirmed the incident but said that no one was injured while no arrest has been made yet.

According to him, when the police received the report, a team of anti-crime police men visited the scene, adding that efforts have been intensified to apprehend the culprits.

Senator denies food poisoning

By Reuben Yunana

Chairman, Senate Committee on Public Accountant's, Senator Idris Abubakar has debunked media reports that he was a victim of food poisoning and might be flown abroad for treatment.

Speaking to journalists at the National Assembly yesterday, Idris Abubakar who however looked pale, described the reports as "mere speculations," adding that he was on admission at the National Hospital and was diagnosed as having peptic ulcer.

"I have read some speculations that may be it is because of my viens about national issues that I was poisoned or that it is because of my chairmanship of the public Account Committee as well as my ambition to contest in Gombe Sate that I was poisoned.

"I don't beleive I was poisoned I beleive it was a national thing, I don't have ambition to become governor of Gombe State. Among the five persons to visit me on my sick bed was the Governor of Gombe State. The relationship between us

is so good that idea is the last thing that will ever cross my mind," Abubakar said.

According to him, when he got the hospital doctors insisting on holding him over night in order to do a comprehensive test.

Narrating how the sickness began, the senator who has travelling to Kaduna for a meeting with the State House of Assembly committee on public account said;

"We were in the car when I suddenly felt uncomfortable and I was asking for water to drink. A friend who was with me ordered the driver to stop and they began to fan me and I felt a bit better. Then they took me to hospital."

He said preliminary investigations by doctors at the national hospital indicated that he has an ulcer problem that had resulted in eating disorders.

"The problem had been with me for some time but I have over looked it. Now I have to be more careful," he said.

LUTH under guard

From Samson Ojo, in Lagos

The Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH), Idi-Araba, Lagos was at the weekend put under tight security by a detachment of armed policemen to protect lives and property.

When Daily Trust visited the hospital on monday, armed policemen numbering about 40 took positions in strategic locations, including the administrative block accident and emergency wards where Daily Trust learnt last week was attacked by miscreants.

Sources at the hospital

complex disclosed that the hospital's management board invited police following an attack unleashed on it by miscreants on August 4, 2001 which led to the death of one of its senior nurses, Mrs. Racheal Akinpeside. When Daily Trust visited callers to the hospital, were subjected to through screening.

At the hospital's notice board, was a notice signed by Mr. Ayo Olagunju promising that management has taken necessary precautions to foresall another occurrence

of the attack.

When Daily Trust called at the office of the hospital's Public Relations Officer, Mr. Ayo Olagunju, he explained that a panel has been set-up by the hospital's management to probe the circumstances surrounding the death of one patient, whose relations were suspected to have sponsored the attack.

Said he; "the management has set up a committee to find out the circumstances surrounding the death of being both the patient and our staff, to see if there was any negligence somewhere along the line."



Assistant Inspector General of Police (AIG), in charge of Zone 4 with headquarters in Makurdi, Mr. Benson Otu (with microphone) introducing high ranking officers of the zone to the Minister of Police Affairs, Chief Steven Akiga who visited the zone recently.

Abuja News

FCT residents beat inflation with Belgium products

Due to the escalating cost of brand new electronics and electrical appliances in the country, there is a noticeable rise in the demand for second hand electronics in the Federal Capital Territory.

Daily Trust gathered that residents of the territory now prefer second hand electronics due to the high increase in prices of brand new appliances, a situation which has forced many first hand electronic shops to experience low sales.

Some residents of the FCT who spoke to Daily Trust said the rise in price of electronics and other things is a sign of bad policies formulated by the people at the helm of affairs.

Mr. Samson Emeka, an electrical appliance dealer in Wuse Old Market, told our reporter that the high cost of electronics in the country is due to the high Customs duties charged and other "senseless" taxes imposed on traders that import foreign goods.

He said second hand electronics were doing more harm than good to the economy of the country, adding that it affects revenue generation by government since tax is hardly paid on

By Emmanuel Ande

Alhaji Musa Idris, a second hand electronics dealer in Area 1 Shopping Centre, Garki maintained that the business of fairly used electronics is good, because it helps to checkmate the unreasonable rise in the prices of brand

new electronics and electrical appliances, and that it helps Nigerians to do business with neighbouring countries.

He averred that the rise in the price of brand new electronics is not unconnected with the Customs and other security agents who over taxed importers for their personal needs, pointing out that the only way to arrest the situation is to reduce tax on

imported goods.

At the Wuse Old Market and Area 1 Shopping complex, Daily Trust discovered that the business of second hand electronics has taken over the market.

In Wuse, a medium sized refrigerator goes for N15,000 and the small size costs between N10,000 and N12,000. A standing fan goes for N1,500, while a double loader CD player goes for N18,500 to N20,000. The prices of brand new products of the same brands almost triple these.

Kubwa residents resist high rents

By Hameed Bello

Tenants in Kubwa, a satellite town in Abuja, not residing in government houses have vowed to resist the exploitative disposition of landlords in the area, who charge rents arbitrarily.

Daily Trust findings revealed that tenants in Kubwa who have formed an association known as "Solidarity for Kubwa Tenants," as a measure of

resisting "exploitative tendencies" of the landlords, said the best form of defence is "to resist attack."

A spokesman of the association who confided in Daily Trust, said the situation in which landlords wake up suddenly and increase rents without consultations with tenants would no longer be tolerated.

According to him, a central working committee of the association has been formed to meet with landlords, individually and collectively, to renegotiate any rent perceived to be unaffordable and outrageous.

Contacts by Daily Trust revealed that single rooms at phases one and two areas cost between N2,000 and N3,000 monthly and landlords always insist on a minimum of two years payment before giving out an apartment.

In the same area, a two bedroom self-contained flat goes for N150,000 or N200,000 per annum. As usual, the landlords request for a minimum of two years payment from a new tenant.

In Kubwa Village, a relocation settlement for the Gwaris, which happens to be the location of the largest market in the whole of Kubwa, the rent is not only on the increase due to the rush for houses, but a survey also revealed that 419 syndicates who parade as estate consultants have on several occasions, duped unsuspecting people in search of accommodation.

NCWS executive pledges purposeful leadership

By Habiba Adamu

The National Council of Women's Societies (NCWS) has pledged to strive to renew the hope of Nigerian women through purposeful leadership, service and accountability.

Speaking in her maiden media address in Abuja on Monday, the national president of the NCWS, Hon. Dr. Bolere Elizabeth Ketebu-Nwokefor (JP) said she would lead Nigerian women to join the national leadership in the war against illiteracy, ignorance, poverty, disease and corruption.

Dr. Nwokefor said state branches of the NCWS would be encouraged to establish micro-credit schemes and community banks from where soft loans would be made available to

vulnerable groups like widows, refugees and other victims of abuse.

She called for an urgent review of the situation whereby women constitute less than ten per cent in



Dr. Bolere Elizabeth Ketebu-Nwokefor (JP), NCWS National President

membership of the national committee, state and local government coordinators of the Poverty Eradication Programme of the Federal Government.

"There is no gainsaying that the effective and adequate participation of women at all levels is a *sine-qua-non*. For the success of the Poverty Eradication Programme, women deserve to be at 30 per cent of local government area and ward coordinators of the programme," she said.

According to Dr. Nwokefor, the NCWS would collaborate with other stakeholders to address the issue of street begging, child abuse, child hawking and women trafficking, which she said, had become major focus of international campaigns.

She pointed out that the council would continue to be an advocate for destitute, the disabled and the socially disadvantaged in the society, adding that the NCWS would also continue to campaign for safe motherhood, child immunisation and other health programmes to reduce maternal and infant mortality in the country.

"We hereby give assurance of our full participation in the UN sponsored global campaign against HIV/AIDS pandemic in Nigeria and Africa," she said.

The new national president of the Council who was elected at the 17th national convention of the NCWS on July 26, 2001, praised Nigerian women for "a great display of political focus and commitment," and promised to serve them and the nation to the best of her ability.

Vigilante groups check crime in Karmo

Vigilante groups in Karmo, Abuja have intensified their activities in an effort to check the crime wave in the area.

The groups, which move in tens and twenties, now patrol major streets in the town throughout the night in a renewed effort to curtail the activities of criminals.

Residents say there is improved security as a result of efforts of the groups.

Daily Trust gathered that the residents pay between N50 and N150 per room as remuneration for the groups. They however called on authorities within the FCT to ensure that there is an increased number of policemen in the area, as according to them, the vigilante groups are not as well armed as the police to match the firepower of the criminals. Residents who obliged responses to Daily Trust enquiries said there has been no report of armed robbery in the area in the past three months. They

By Austine Odo

called on the police to support the vigilante in the night patrols, which they said, was responsible for the



Mrs. Esther Adu, AMAC Chairman reduced crime wave.

A three-day national security retreat necessitated by the high incidence of armed banditry, arson, ethnic and religious upheavals was held in Abuja last week to devise measures of checking such trends.

The meeting, which was attended by President Olusegun Obasanjo, state

governors and security chiefs, including the Inspector General of Police and the National Security Adviser, provided a veritable forum for consensus on solutions and their implementation as regards security.

But NLC President, Adams Oshiomhole, who attended the retreat, said the country's leaders lacked ideas on how to solve security problems. He said at a workshop in Jos on

Monday, that his presence at the retreat enabled him to discover that Nigerian politicians have lost focus and were adopting military responses to a psychological problem.

Oshiomhole noted that the kind of solutions proffered by politicians to the nation's security problems at the retreat made him to conclude that "beyond the pathetic state of the nation's security are the regrettable responses from politicians."

... worry over refuse dumps

By Victor Akobundu

The spate of indiscriminate dumping of refuse along major roads and near residential houses in Kubwa, is giving residents cause for concern. A visit to residential areas in the satellite town like Phase 2, Site 1, FHA, PW and Gbazango showed that refuse heaps are fast taking over major roads in the town just as they constitute environmental hazards especially in the rainy season.

Daily Trust went round the town recently and found out that no provision has been made by the FCT authorities as to where

refuse can be dumped or frequent clearing of the heaps by the Abuja Environmental Protection Board, (AEPB).

Most residents Daily Trust spoke to, expressed disgust over the refuse heaps and the neglect of the area by government authorities. Casmir Eke, a civil servant said the AEPB had stopped its services to Kubwa for no reason.

"There is no where we can dump refuse, since no provision has been made for that, therefore with incessant dumping the refuse encroaches the roads, and often washed by rain on the roads and make them impassable both for people and commuters.

More worrisome is the environmental hazard which it poses," he said.

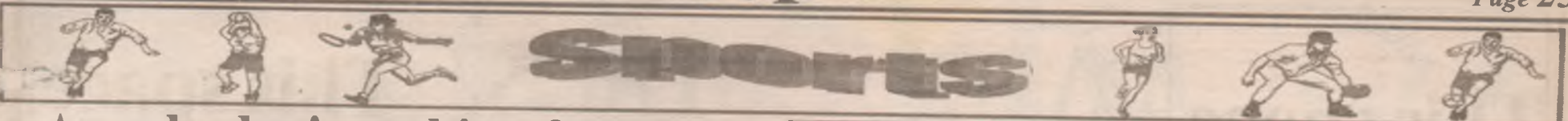
"Sometimes the refuse heaps smell badly as they are always close to residential places, which makes us feel uncomfortable. Apart from that, with the rainy season, these heaps turn to breeding grounds for mosquitoes," another resident lamented.

Femi Johnson, who resides in PW, implored the AEPB to once again extend their services to Kubwa as the environment is fast becoming deplorable. "The government should realise that Kubwa accommodates a very large percentage of civil servants in the FCT, it therefore wouldn't speak well of them if the place is turned into a heap of rubbish."



The DPO, Ministry of works and Housing, Alhaji Khalid K. Gaya (R) receives a pension cheque on behalf of his ministry's retirees from the Perm Sec., Office of Establishment and Pensions, Dr. Aboki Zhawa in Abuja...recently.

Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje.



Amodu denies asking for pay increase, blames mischief makers

Shuaibu Amodu, the Super Eagles Chief Coach has denied media reports that he was asking for a pay increase.

"I condemn in totality the report credited to me. It is not true. It is a fabrication and an attempt to pit me against my employers," Amodu told a News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) Sports Forum in Lagos on Monday.

"I hate to be plunged into unnecessary controversies. If I want a pay rise I know how to go about it. I have to write

to my employers to ask for that," he said.

The coach, who said that he was dismayed the way his employers reacted to media reports declared: "In fact if I were the NFA I would not have reacted but seek to hear from me."

Amodu, who planned Nigeria's qualification for Korea/Japan World Cup after Dutchman Johannes Bonfrere, wondered how he could be asking for a pay rise when he had not been given the mandate to lead the team

to either next January's African Nations Cup or World Cup.

"Whatever was achieved to qualify the team was done in an acting capacity and therefore, I will need a fresh mandate to carry on the job," he said.

"It will be stupid of me to initiate a pay rise issue when I have a subsisting contract. The contract spells out what my roles are," insisted Amodu, adding, "I am aware the NFA can invoke the contract to call me to order."

He said that he would soon hold meetings with the NFA in order to present them with "my World Cup programme" which it had asked for.



Hestrie Cloete of South Africa flies through the air during the women's high jump final at the 8th IAAF World Championships in Athletics, in Edmonton on Sunday. Cloete cleared a height of 2 meters to win gold.

Athletics coach sure of medal haul

John Ojelduma, Athletics Head Coach of Jigawa State Sports Council, who is accompanying the Nigerian team to the African Junior Athletics Championships in Mauritius, says he is hopeful that the team will return with a medal haul.

"We are only taking a team of 10 athletes to the Championships because of funding problems, but we have high hopes that the athletes we have selected will do well, since we will compete in only few events," he told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) today in Lagos.

Nigerian athletes are competing in the 4X400 metres relay, the 200m, the 400m Hurdles, 800m, Javelin and Discus.

Others are the Long Jump, High Jump, 5000 m and the 10,000m. The team includes Alice Nwosu, who had set a new national record in the 800 m at the Mobil Track and Field Trials in

Lagos last month.

The Championship, which begins on Thursday, ends on Sunday, Aug. 19.

Coaches want better funding

The Secretary-General of the Track and Field Coaches Association of Nigeria (TACAN) Mr. Lawrence Adegbehingbe has called for better funding to enable Nigeria athletes have a good, outing at the 2003 All Africa Games in Abuja.

Reacting to Nigeria's poor performance at the just-concluded World Athletics Championships in Edmonton, Canada, Mr. Adegbehingbe, blamed the performance of the athletes on poor funding.

"You cannot blame the athletes in any way because training facilities and competitions have been grossly inadequate in recent times and when we complain, we are told that the funds are just not

available."

He said that the lack of facilities stifled the creativity and the resourcefulness of the coaches.



Aku

Government should give adequate incentives and tax rebates to encourage the Organised Private Sector take up sports sponsorships as deliberate policy or increase the level of taxation to raise such funds," added Adegbehingbe.

He said his association met the Director of Sports Development in the Ministry of Sports and Social Development two months ago and made some suggestions to the government, "but we are still waiting to hear from them."

Also speaking on the issue, Mr. John Ojeaduma, Head Coach (Athletics) of Jigawa State Sports Council, observed that poor funding

had been the bane of sports in recent times in the country.

"If you are hungry now, for instance, your situation may become so bad such that even when you are eventually served you may develop some stomach problems just after the meal, adding that if training funds for championships were not released promptly, it would affect the scale of preparations.

On the Edmonton lesson, Ojeaduma said: "We should endeavour to provide for our athletes, particularly when they are prepaying for international meets as they would be competing against those with better facilities.

Government should give adequate incentives and tax rebates to encourage the Organised Private Sector take up sports sponsorships as deliberate policy or increase the level of taxation to raise such funds," added Adegbehingbe.

He said his association met the Director of Sports Development in the Ministry of Sports and Social Development two months ago and made some suggestions to the government, "but we are still waiting to hear from them."

Also speaking on the issue, Mr. John Ojeaduma, Head Coach (Athletics) of Jigawa State Sports Council, observed that poor funding

ITF men's circuit Jegade advances in Heineken tourney

Rotimi, Jegede, a wildcard on Monday recovered from a first set loss to cause a minor upset when he beat number 11 seed Sonny Kayombo of France, 4-6, 6-3, 7-5 to advance to the second round of the fifth leg of the International Tennis Federation (ITF) Men's satellite circuit tagged Heineken Nigeria Future 1.

Jegade's compatriot, Sunday Maku, however, lost to number-five seed Willem-Petrus Meyers of South Africa in the first round, 6-0, 7-5.

The Jegede/Kayombo match played at the centre court of the tennis section of the National Stadium, Lagos, drew a large crowd of tennis enthusiasts.

Many of the enthusiasts had left midway, probably believing that Jegede would lose, but he rallied to win the

From Babs Oyetoro, in Lagos
match in one hour 34 minutes.

U.S.-based Jegede, one of the three players invited for the second Governor Bola Tinubu Cup in Lagos, allowed Kayombo to break his serve three times in the first set ending it 4-6. Kayombo took control in the early round of the second set and was leading 3-0 in the set, when fans began to grumble and leave. One of such fans said angrily "no more game, Jegede don lose this one."

Undaunted, however, Jegede came back and broke Kayombo in the fourth and sixth games to draw level at 3-3. He broke him again in the eighth game to lead at 5-3 and later won the match at 6-3.

The third and final set dragged on with no service breaks. Kayombo was lead-

ing 5-4 in the set and nearly broke Jegede's serves in the 10th game but Jegede fought back and won to tie-break at 5-5. Kayombo got angry and slammed his racket on the court which earned him a court violation point.

Jegade, now more coordinated defeated the frustrated Kayombo to win the set and the match.

"I hope to get as far as the final in this leg," Jegede said after his victory, while a visibly angry Kayombo declined any interview.

Other second round qualifiers include number four seed Mohamed-Sel of France who beat American Andrew Irving 6-3, 6-1 and Israel's Eyal Erlich who beat South Africa's Ciaran Moore, 6-4, 6-0.

Three other Nigerians also got in the main draw of the 32-player chart. They are Ganiyu Adelekan, Sunday Jegede and Alfred Koripamo.

This segment, which ends on Saturday, would dove tail into the sixth-leg of the Heineken Nigeria Future 11, the final of the six-leg three nations Satellite Circuit.

Another African player from Mali, Samassa Tamba also had his ambition of playing in the second round punctured, as he was beaten by an Israeli, Suissa Tome via 7-6, 6-3.

Germany's Kolos Domitric thrashed Nigerian player, Alfred Koripamo, 6-2 to advance to the second round.

Nigeria, a great basketball nation - Canadian team

Nigeria is a great basketball nation," so says 'Athletes In Action', a Canadian Basketball team which under-took a 10-day playing and evangelical tour of Nigeria.

The team a select side from Canadian Universities is an arm of the Campus Crusade for Christ International (CCCI) and is being funded by the Great Commission Movement (GCM) played a total of six matches and won three.

The team's coach, Frank Thoutenhoofd thanked Nigerians for their hospitality, adding, "Nigerians know the

game and the athletes are very physical in it."

"I think the government should do all it can to popularise the game. It should invest more in it to see that the talents, which abound in this country are developed.

"If this is done, in a few years Nigeria is going to be a force to be reckoned with in the game," he said.

Captain of the team, Mamo Watsa, in his reaction to their sojourn said, "I have seen that basketball has a future here," while his teammate Rob Duffey added "there are a lot of skilful players in Nigeria and many

children love the game."

The co-ordinator of the tour, Bedimma Gonzwak of the GCM told NAN that the objective of the tour was to expose the Canadian students to Africa and use basketball to propagate the gospel.

"Since it is a christian mission agency, we use the game to propagate the gospel as well as promote basketball," he said.

The team held three basketball clinics in Jos, Zaria and Lagos, where over 200 children and lovers of the game were taught left for Ghana.

Babayaro returns to Super Eagles

Chelsea FC wing back defender, Celestine Babayaro, will rejoin the Super Eagles squad in the team's subsequent outings.

Chief Coach Amodu Shuaibu disclosed the news on the eve of the penultimate night in a television programme. Amodu said he has already sent his emissaries to boyish star Babayaro to consider his decision following his national assignment. Babayaro, who had been on a sabbatical, returned to the national fold after his Sydney Olympics return tickets. Besides, Babayaro one of

By Patrick Andrew

Jo Bonfrere's favourite said to have had a difference with the NFA leadership towards the development that sustains the team.

Coach Amodu said he sent Nwankwo Kanu and Stephen Keshi to talk to Babayaro into rescinding on his earlier decision. The talks he said has yielded positive results as the lad known for his backflip after scoring has given indications to return.

Babayaro last played for Nigeria against Sudan in Port Harcourt in the World Cup

He only came in as a substitute barely two minutes before the end of the match which the Eagles dubbed the Falcons 3-0.

Meanwhile, Amodu has regretted the lack of replacement for Emmanuel Amunike in the left wing of the Eagles. Amodu said at the moment there was no natural left wing attacker in the teams reputed of the use of wing play to dazzle others.

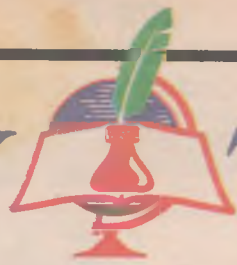
Amunike's last appearance was at the Nations Cup match last year where his nagging knee injury re-occurred and has since not been able to recuperate properly for competitive match.



No Mercy Akide - but the Falcons still won easily against Zimbabwe. Falcons won 6-0.

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400 journalists for Commonwealth Games

From Babu Ayetoro, in Lagos

There is a very strong indication that most journalists expecting to get accreditation for the forthcoming Commonwealth Games may have their hopes dashed, as the organisers only made provision for 300 journalists and 100 photo-journalists coming to Manchester City from the 72-member countries.

Speaking with Trustsports on this development, Nigeria Olympic Committee Secretary-General, Dr. William Boyd, said the organisers may not back down on this limited number of slots allocated to journalists coming to cover the Games in Manchester City.

Dr. Boyd hinted that African journalists may not get half of the slots, as journalist from other continents would share out the limited number of slots-allocated to the press.

The outgoing Secretary-General disclosed that a total of 5,000 athletes would be coming for the Games in Manchester City, from all the 72-member countries.

"Technical officials would have their games village separate from the journalist's games village. The event is going to be a carnival of sort," he revealed.

Commenting on the organisation for the Games sports host country, the coordinator hinted that accreditation of athletes would begin in March and end in March to enable the organisers focus on the preparations for the sports fiesta.

However, Nigeria has placed entries for the following sports in the Commonwealth Games: weightlifting, wrestling, swimming, athletics, boxing, badminton, cycling, gymnastics, hockey, judo, shooting, squash and table tennis.

NFA board meets over Amodu's World Cup programme

By Patrick Andrew

The NFA board will meet today to deliberate on the Super Eagles' World Cup programmes submitted yesterday by the Chief Coach Amodu Shuaibu.

The board which would discuss other sundry matter including the African Nations Cup will be meeting for the first time since Nigeria qualified for the Ja-

pan/Korea 2002. Early submission of the programmes is in response to the request from the sports ministry that believes the World Cup requires more than the NFA's technical and administrative inputs.

Though the details of the comprehensive programmes was sketchy, it

was, however, believed it embraced both the World Cup, Nations Cup and training programmes including proposed friendlies.

Amodu, it was learnt, specifically requested for friendly matches to enable him test some new players with a view to injecting them into the main squad.

The board last met when it took the decision

to dispense with the services of Jo Bonfrere. At the meeting, the board threw out Bonfrere and handed the reins to Amodu, Stephen Keshi and Joe Erico to steer the Eagles to the mundial.

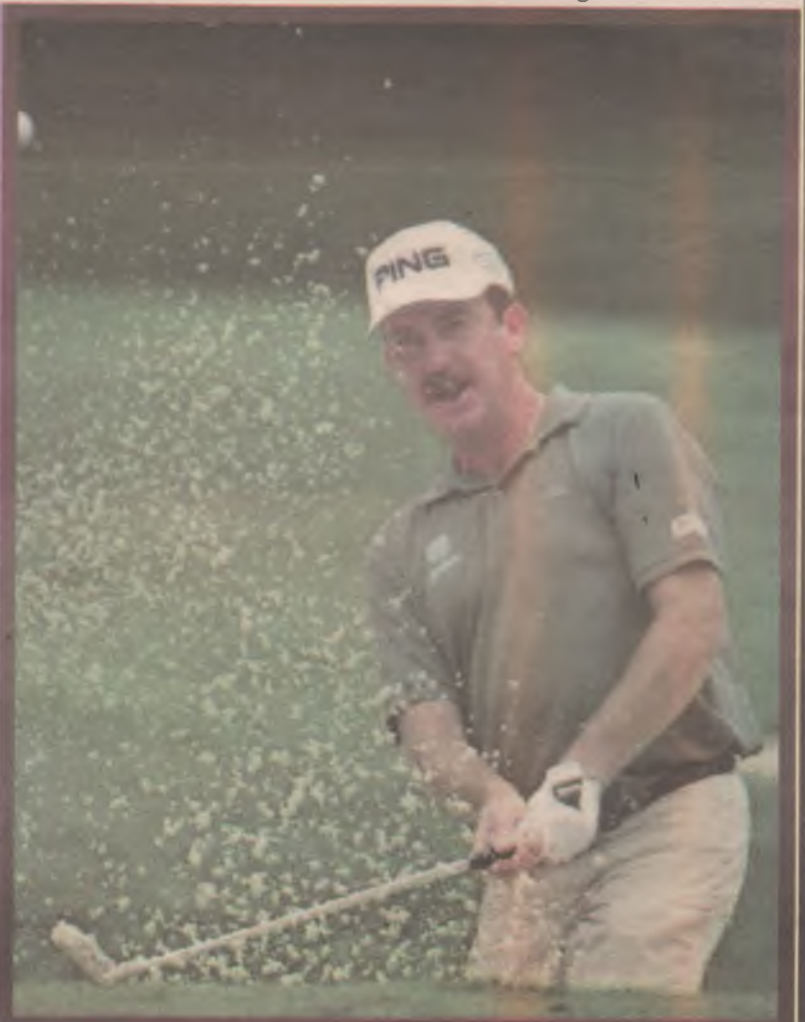
Aside from the World and Nations Cup campaigns, the board will equally deliver on the vixen contract signed a couple of months ago to provide the

financial lifeline to the Eagles.

The contract has generated hiccups because many have reservations over the terms and the fact that a real contract was yet to be signed even as some boards openly complained that they were not consulted before the memorandum of understanding backed with N30 million was signed.



Spain's Miguel Angel Jimenez watches the flight of his ball out of a trap on the second hole of the Atlanta Athletic club in Duluth, Ga., Monday, Aug. 13, 2001, as practice



AC Milan's Portuguese playmaker, Rui Costa, controls the ball during the match against Juventus in the TIM triangular tournament last week.

Strands of Fate: written & illustrated by Bulama Mustapha

