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ABUJA TRUST MARKET INFERNO

Minister pledges relief materials for victims

Page 21

RAMADAN TIMING FOR ABUJA

Magrib - 6:13 p.m.
Alfijir - 5:21 a.m.

For other places see details on Page 18

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U.S. is a bully, says Emir

The Emir of Kano, Alhaji Ado Bayero, has condemned what he described as "the bullying attitude" of the U.S. towards weaker nations.

In a chat with American journalists who paid him a courtesy call in Kano on Monday, Bayero said the

By Simon Imobo-Tswam
with Agency Reports

current U.S. attacks on Afghanistan is unfortunate.

The Emir said that the Americans had not convinced the world that Osama bin Laden was behind the September 11 attacks on

the U.S.

Bayero pointed out that "Islam always preaches peace and cordial relations among all races and followers of different religions."

He also expressed

concern over what he called the hostile attitude of the American embassy towards Nigerians seeking U.S. visas.

The Emir's condemnation is coming against the backdrop of United States' subtly coercive relations on the international arena which international analysts have termed "gun-boat diplomacy." Under this diplomacy, the U.S. government uses persuasion, material assistance, loans, financial aid and

intimidation to manipulate weak countries or coerce them into toeing America's lines on international issues.

Many Nigerians are suspicious of the Nigeria-U.S. defence pact under which American soldiers are currently involved in the training of Nigerian soldiers on combat readiness and peace-keeping operations.

Critics of the Nigeria-U.S. Defence Pact have alleged

Contd. on Pg 2



Alhaji Ado Bayero



President Olusegun Obasanjo receiving copies of the Policy Formulation Fund Document for Agricultural Development and Launching of Rural Development Strategy from the Minister of State for Agriculture, Chief Chris Agbobu (r) during his audience with members of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) at the State House, Abuja ... yesterday.

Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje

MURDER OF 7 IN KADUNA

Soldier faces court martial

The trial at a court martial of the soldier with the 1st Mechanized Division of the Nigerian

From Ibrahim Dan-Halilu,
in Kaduna

Army, Kaduna, who allegedly shot and killed an Islamic preacher and six other civilians, opened in Kaduna yesterday with the suspect pleading not guilty to the charge.

Corporal Bawa Michael appeared before an eight-man military court presided over by Colonel H.A. Agbabiaka at the officers mess of the 1st Division along Kanta Road, Kaduna, yesterday.

Section 106 (a) (1) of the Armed Forces Decree 10 of

1993 as amended prescribes death sentence for the offence.

The Court Martial President, Col. Agbabiaka read out the charges thus:

Contd. on Pg 2

Moroccan arraigned over September 11

US Attorney General, John Ashcroft, announced yesterday the first indictment of a key figure in the September 11 attacks - six conspiracy charges against Zacarias Moussaoui, who has been held as a material witness.

Moussaoui, a French citizen of Moroccan descent,

faced the death penalty on four of the charges. He will be tried in a federal court and not in a military tribunal as established by President George W. Bush.

Ashcroft said a grand jury in Virginia returned the indictment against Moussaoui on charges of "conspiring with Osama bin

By Reuben Yunana and Ahmed Shekarau

and N10 billion for the National Identity Card project.

This has generated a lot

Abacha admitted for 'kidney

stones' - Doctors

Muhammed Abacha, the detained son of the late Gen. Sani Abacha, is now confirmed to have "kidney stones," a medical term indicating the presence of deposits of calcium in the kidney, medical sources at the National Hospital in Abuja, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)

Laden and al Qaeda to murder thousands of innocent people in New York, Virginia and Pennsylvania on September 11".

"Al Qaeda will now meet the justice it abhors and the judgment it fears," Ashcroft said.

Contd. on Pg 2

of public outcry particularly because agriculture employs over 70 per cent of the nation's labour force and contributes about 90 per cent of its Gross National Product

Contd. on Pg 2

Abacha was brought to the hospital on Monday, following complaints of failing health since his detention in October 1999, following his alleged complicity in the murder of Kudirat Abiola.

He went through a series

Contd. on Pg 2



Lt. Gen. Ogomudia, COAS



Muhammed Abacha

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

NEWS

Soldier

"That you are being court-martialed under the Armed Force Act 105 (1996), section 143 and that you are charged with:

murder which is a punishable offence under section 106 sub-section a.1 of the Armed Forces Decree 10 of 1993 as amended.

that at Kawo, Kaduna, on Sunday, November 11 or thereabout, you used an AK 147 rifle with 7.6 mm ammunition to open fire on a preacher, killing him and five others named as Idris, Dauda, Musa, Nuhu, Fatima Bello and one unidentified person.

The suspect, however, pleaded not guilty to the charge, and his counsels, Yakubu Abbas and Musa Ahmed, Esq, sought for adjournment on the grounds that they were not given the mandatory 48 hours to prepare their defence.

"I wish to inform this honourable court that we cannot participate further with the case today because we received the notice of sermon just yesterday. And in view of the late sermon notice and in the interest of justice and fairness as enshrined in Section 6 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, we feel the case has to be adjourned to give us time to peruse documents relating to the case and prepare defence for our client," Yakubu Abbas pleaded.

The counsels then sought adjournment to January 8 next year following a request from the president of the court that a specific date be agreed on for commencement of the case.

An observer counsel from the Nigerian Army objected to the January 8 date and cautioned counsels to the suspect to exercise the right to seek adjournment with a sense of responsibility

U.S.

that the involvement of U.S. troops in our military establishment encroaches on our sovereignty, as the soldiers may be on spying missions.

The former protem chairman of Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) and Emir of Ilorin, Alhaji Sulu Gambari was among prominent Nigerians including pro-democracy activists who spoke against the pact.

The immediate past Chief of Army Staff, Lt. Gen. Samuel Victor Leo Malu's trenchant criticism of the Nigeria-U.S. pact is believed to have been responsible for his unceremonial sack earlier this year.

Contd from Pg 1

in view of the sensitivity of the trial.

The counsels to the suspect, therefore, suggested that the court should fix a convenient date and both sides later settled for December 19, this year for continuation of hearing on the case.

Speaking to newsmen after the adjournment, the leading counsel to the suspect, Yakubu Abbas, said they were satisfied with the composition and procedure of the court, stressing: "I am sure justice will be done to the case."

He told *Daily Trust* that the penalty for the charges levelled against the suspect is death and that the court is an equivalent of the conventional High Court, whose judgment could only be reviewed by a Court of Appeal.

Daily Trust correspondent who was at the opening session of the court martial, observed that in accordance with military practice, no civilian witness was at the sitting. The only witness presented was the military officer who investigated the case.

Agric Contd from Pg 1 (GNP).

In what may appear to be its response to the increasing criticism over the low allocation to the agriculture ministry, the Federal Government yesterday reviewed its decision on the allocation.

President Olusegun Obasanjo said that the ministry will enjoy increased budgetary allocations to enable it tackle the rising trend of poverty, especially in the rural areas of the country.

Launching three programmes aimed at eradicating poverty and enhancing national development, President Obasanjo said all ministries and government agencies which intervene in rural development are also to be empowered through increased budgetary allocation.

Launching the National Policy on Intergrated Rural Development, the rural development sector strategy for Nigeria Agricultural and Rural Development Consultative Group, President Obasanjo said the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development is to play a central coordinating role on the new policies.

"The Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development is to play a central coordinating role. Consequently, its department of rural development and other technical departments and units within the ministry as well as other ministries and

MFCT sets up committee on burnt market

The Ministry of Federal Capital Territory has set up a 13-member committee to look into the problems facing traders at the Wuse New Market in Abuja, which was gutted by fire on Monday.

The Permanent Secretary in the ministry, Alhaji Babangida Aliyu, gave the information yesterday while addressing representatives of the traders, who marched to the ministry to protest against what they called government's insensitivity to their plight.

He said that the committee, which would be headed by the Director of Public Buildings in the ministry, Alhaji Kabir Maina, would also address the issue of moving the traders to other districts in Abuja in phases.

He said that the traders would be given the right to build their shops themselves in accordance with the standard set by government.

The committee would also authenticate the list of those affected by the fire incident, and recommend measures to give them some relief.

The committee is made

By Emmanuel Ande with Agency Reports

up of representatives of the traders, FCT officials, traditional rulers, representatives of the media, and the security agencies.

Aliyu also said that a modern market would be built at the new market site, after

the traders had been relocated. The committee is expected to submit its report within five weeks.

Earlier, the leader of the traders, Alhaji Ibrahim Kanti, said that goods valued at billions of naira were lost because the market was constructed with wooden planks, which had the tendency of spreading fire

quickly.

He pleaded with government to allow the traders build the shops themselves, adding that they would not want a repeat of what happened at the old market, where traders were asked to vacate and the stalls were reallocated to other persons.

FG refutes allegations of non-implementation of constituency projects

By Tashikalmah Hallah

The Federal Government has refuted the accusation by the National Assembly that it had not implemented the constituency development projects as contained in the year 2001 Appropriation Act.

The Federal Government made this known yesterday at a press briefing by the Minister of Water Resources, Alhaji Mukhtar Shehu Shagari.

Alhaji Mukhtar, while disclaiming the National Assembly on the issue, explained that the Federal Government had actually spent the sum of N9,282,664,126 on the sinking of boreholes across the country.

According to him, his ministry shares the bulk of the responsibilities of improving the lot of the people through the

provision of potable water as contained in the contentious act, adding that it is unfair for anybody to accuse the Federal Government of not keeping to the act.

Said he: "Go to the National Assembly; go to any Senator and ask him whether the Federal Government has not been undertaking any project in his senatorial district."

"Just a few minutes ago, a Senator just left here, he came complaining that we (the ministry of water resources) are not doing anything for his senatorial district, and I gave him these documents, and ask him to go back and verify whether my claims are right or wrong."

Although the minister did not give the graphic manifest of the projects being undertaken

by the ministry, a breakdown of the expenditure as released by him revealed that South-West geo-political zone got the highest allocation of funds N2,307,877,900, followed by the South-South with N1,815,690,855.

The North-Central was allocated the sum of N1,793,654,757; the North-West, N1,569,566,854; the South-East N1,232,900,000 and the North-East got a paltry sum of N562,973,760.

Moroccan

contd from pg 1

Ashcroft said bin Laden and other leaders of his al Qaeda organisation were cited as unindicted co-conspirators in the indictment.

The Attorney General would not say where Moussaoui was being held, only that it was in the United States.

The charges were announced exactly three months after hijacked planes attacked the Pentagon just outside Washington and the World Trade Centre in New York. Another hijacked jet crashed in Pennsylvania before it could attack any other American landmark. Nearly 3,300 people were killed.

Specifically, the indictment carried charges of conspiracy to commit acts of terrorism, to commit aircraft piracy, to destroy aircraft, to use weapons of mass destruction, conspiracy to murder US government employees and conspiracy to destroy US government property.

The charges said Moussaoui trained in an al Qaeda camp in Afghanistan and received funds from sources in the Middle East and Germany.

Moussaoui initially was arrested in Minnesota on August 16 on immigration violations after he aroused suspicion by trying to buy time on a jumbo jet flight simulator at a flying school.

After the September 11 attacks, Moussaoui was arrested as a material witness and sent to New York for questioning.

FBI Director, Robert Mueller said. "In February 2001 Moussaoui arrived in the United States, opened a bank account with \$32,000 in cash and immediately enrolled in a flight school".

Mueller said Moussaoui has not been cooperating with law enforcement officials and they have gotten no information from him since his arrest. REUTERS

Abacha

Contd from Pg 1

of tests and medical examinations on Monday, and returned yesterday for the outcome of the tests, which confirmed he had the "kidney stones."

Consequently, doctors decided that the detainee should be kept for close observation at a special ward in the hospital until Friday, when a final decision would be taken on his admission.

Meanwhile, a number of prominent friends and rela-

tions of the Abachas have been trooping into the hospital, following his reported admission there.

Daniel Kanu, of the infamous "one million man march," some of his friends, and close associates of the Abachas, were seen trooping in to see the young Abacha.

His mother and former first lady, Maryam Sani Abacha also met with him yesterday at the National Hospital.

FG raises 12-man privatisation team for NEPA

By Osborne Adi Jnr

In a move to achieve the presidential deadline for the sale of NEPA and NPA, the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) has raised a 12-man committee to prepare the privatisation of the parastatal.

President Olusegun Obasanjo has given the BPE between now and December 2002 within which it must privatise NEPA and NPA, even if other public companies slated for sale within the same period are suspended.

The 12-man committee has Eyo Ekpo as team leader, Lanre Babalola as member, Abdulrazak Oniyangi, Abdulkareem Adesokan, Yakubu Lai Yahaya and Ijeoma Nwogwugwu as members.

Others include Kayode Ayeni, Yomi Ope-Agbe, Sanusi Ibrahim Sule, Adamu Damji, Rahila Onyia and Albert Mould-Shalom.

Already, the committee, according to BPE Director-General, Malam Nasir el-Rufai, in conjunction with the World Bank has commenced

the review of a comprehensive project plan that will determine among other things the number of advisers that will be required to advise the NCP on the sale of NEPA.

Specifically, the committee will study whether it would be more viable or not to sell NEPA in its entirety or in units, the composition of the advising consortia, their schedule of duty and sub-tasks, among others.



Malam Nasir el-Rufai

NEWS

Students send "anthrax" to teachers

The anthrax scare in the country has taken a new dimension with students sending parcels containing a powdery substance suspected to be anthrax to their teachers to prevent the conduct of examinations.

The Director of National Veterinary Research Institute (NVRI), Vom, Plateau State, Dr. Lami Lombin, told the



Prof. A.B.C. Nwosu, Health Minister.

News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Monday that 12 of such parcels had been received from the Institute of Medical Research, Yaba, for verification.

The director, who said she was not in a position to know the institutions the parcels originated from, however, said that a test conducted on one of them showed that it was not anthrax.

"We hear students now scare their teachers with powder. We are handling a number of such cases. We have a number of parcels that have been sent to us, about 122 of them, to be tested. Some were sent by students to their teachers to scare them so that they won't sit for exams," she explained.

The director said anthrax, which is an animal disease, is not new and that vaccines for its cure had been produced at NVRI before the country attained

independence.

"What is new to Nigerians is the use of anthrax to cause disease in humans, thus availing some people the opportunity to deliberately instil fear into others," she said.

Lombin said the alarm being raised over anthrax was uncalled for since the disease could easily be cured by common anti-biotics.

Since distinguishing

anthrax from ordinary powder is difficult, she advised people to handle suspected parcels carefully and forward them to the institute for test.

She said such persons should endeavour to contact a medical doctor as soon as possible for first aid treatment, after which appropriate anti-biotics would be prescribed, if their parcels proved anthrax-positive.

Nigeria's unemployment rate worries U.S.

The United States of America has expressed concern over the rate of unemployment in Nigeria, even as it disclosed that it has planned to establish Information Technology centres to provide greater employment opportunities in the country.

The US Ambassador to Nigeria, Mr. Howard Jetter, who paid a courtesy call on the Minister of Information and National Orientation, Prof. Jerry Gana, said his home government was interested in reducing the level of unemployment in Nigeria through the establishment of companies in the country.

To this end, he said, a US-based company will soon open office in Kano and give employment to youths of the city.

He assured Prof. Gana that the United States would do everything possible to ensure the sustenance of democracy in Nigeria.

On the recent publication in *The Economist* of London that Nigeria was not a democracy, the envoy described the development as unacceptable, pointing out that failures in the

By Ikenna Emeka Okpani

economy should not be equated with failure of democracy.

According to him, the damage done to the country's economy by long years of military rule required more time to be redressed.

"It took a long time to create those problems and it will take time to solve them," he said.

In his reaction, Prof. Gana expressed optimism at the improved level of US investment in Nigeria.

Customs to revoke agents' licences

The Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) has threatened to revoke the licences of any licensed clearing agents whose conduct is found to hinder smooth clearance of goods at the ports.

The warning followed a protest by the clearing agents over an increase in the revenue and operating fees at the Lagos ports, which paralysed activities at the ports on Monday.

In a statement issued yesterday in Abuja, the Deputy Comptroller-General of the Nigeria Customs Service, Dr. John Nwaiwu, said it is an act of economic sabotage to prevent legitimate persons from clearing their goods at the ports.

Dr. Nwaiwu said that the increase in fees was to sanitize and professionalise the operation of customs licensed agents nationwide in the interest of all stakeholders.

He maintained that the minister of finance reserved the constitutional right to determine, vary and review fees to be charged.

The deputy comptroller-general pointed out that the obstructive behaviour of the protesting agents was illegal and punishable as it is contrary to the provisions of section II of Customs and Excise Management Act (CEMA) and section 1(c) of Ports (related offences) amendment decree No. 61 of 1999.

He said that the NCS "does not licence associations, but individuals and corporate bodies which implies that one does not have to belong to ANCLA to

By Austine Odo and Shakirat Abdulmajeed, in Lagos

clear his goods." Dr. Nwaiwu urged importers to clear their goods themselves and not necessarily through agents.

The protest on Monday followed the increase in fees from N10,000 to N20,000 and N50,000 to N500,000, a decision which the chairman of the Association of Customs Licensed Agents, Mr. Richard Olalere, said was not communicated to them before being implemented.

"There was no circular towards that, they just woke up and unilaterally increased it," he said.

High interest rate worries Obasanjo

President Olusegun Obasanjo yesterday in Abuja expressed concern over high interest rates charged by banks in the country even as he stated plans by his administration to bring the rate down.

Speaking when a delegation of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) visited him, the president said his commitment towards bringing down the rate was informed by the fact that it was counter productive.

"As long as the rate of interest is that high, we cannot have a productive economy. It is a problem I will continue to fight until we get a solution. It is one thing we must get right," he said.

The president debunked the claim of commercial banks that they charged high interest rates as a result of inflation, saying, it was a wrong solution

By Reuben Yunana

"Today, if we have any inflation at all, it is very small, the price of gari, yam and beans have come down. Those of rice, petrol and diesel are stable. So where does the inflation come from?" he asked.

the president then directed that an immediate action be taken to ascertain the true rate of inflation in the country.

He explained that a more correct choice of the item and weighting used by the Federal Office of Statistics to determine the rate of inflation would result in a downward review of the rate currently put at 19 per cent.

"There are many things we have to do to the economy. If all other things are right, we will not have violent fluctuations in the exchange rate," he said.

He warned that

Taliban prisoners suffocate to death

Dozens of Taliban fighters, captured in the northern city of Konduz, suffocated to death, packed inside shipping containers used to transport them to prison, *The New York Times* reported yesterday, quoting eyewitness.

Victorious Northern Alliance forces packed their captives into shipping containers, used to transport

Former Chief of Army Staff, Lt. Gen. Ishaya Bamaiyi, who is standing trial along with others on attempted murder charges, has accused the judge of demanding bribe from accused persons.

His allegation came on the heels of a similar one made last week by a fellow accused person, Major Hamza Al-Mustapha, Chief Security Officer to former Head of State, late General Sani Abacha.

Al-Mustapha's allegation and sharp exchanges in the court at last week's session forced an unscheduled adjournment of the case.

But at the resumed hearing yesterday, Gen. Bamaiyi told the court that the judge, Justice Ađe Alabi, had sent some people to collect money from accused persons.

He said that a situation where a judge sent individuals to collect money from accused persons did not provide a ground for fair trial.

"We are not afraid of trial in any court of law in this country as far as we are sure of (getting) fair trial. My Lord, there is a development in this matter in this court, which

goods by truck or ship, for the two to three-day journey to prison in Shibarghan. Many of the captives were foreigners, especially Pakistanis who volunteered to help the Taliban fight U.S. forces.

The Northern Alliance commander of the prison, Gen. Jurabek, said 43 prisoners had died of asphyxiation or injuries during transport and three others died of their wounds after arrival at Shibarghan, the hometown of Uzbek General Abdulrashid Dostum.

But accounts from survivors of the journey suggested that more than 100 might have perished, the *Times* said.

Survivors spoke of trapped prisoners taking turns breathing through a small hole in the metal container. One captive said all but seven people of more than 100 in his car died en route to the prison.

The prisoners were transported from Konduz during the deadly prison uprising near Mazar-e-Sharif, the paper said. The Mazar uprising gave added urgency to the effort to move the prisoners.

The *Times* report credited Jurabek for maintaining order at the Shibarghan prison, feeding the captives and providing them with re-

Bamaiyi accuses judge of demanding bribe

From Bamgboye Adelanwa, in Lagos

has made us to entertain doubts as regards to fair hearing," he said.

A situation where a judge sent individuals to collect money from accused persons is unfortunate, he said: "We thought of a civilised way out of the situation, and asked our counsels to make an application to the court to disqualify itself."

As he spoke, another rowdy session became imminent in the court.

But the judge said that the issue of Al-Mustapha's allegations had already been referred to another judge.

Then, Mr. Mike Okoye, counsel to Ex-Police Commissioner, James Danbaba, another accused, announced his intention to withdraw from the case.

He said that since last week's rowdy session, "I have been authorised to withdraw. I formally apply to discharge myself from the case."

But the judge held that the counsel should formally file an application to that effect.

On the prosecution side, Professor Yemi Osibajo, the Lagos State Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice told the court that two of the female state counsels were intimidated by the accused persons.

Justice Alabi, however, adjourned the case to Thursday for further hearing.

Gen. Bamaiyi, Ex-Police Commissioner Danbaba, Major Al Mustapha, Col. Jibril Bala Yakubu and Chief Superintendent of Police, Rabo Lawal, are standing trial over an attempt to murder the publisher of *The Guardian* newspaper, Chief Alex Ibru, who was also a minister in late General Abacha's regime.



Joseph Sanusi, CBN Governor

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NEWS

2,500 barrels of oil spilled in 7 days

No fewer than 18 oil spillage incidents, involving 2,516 barrels of crude oil, occurred between November 26 and December 2, 2001 in this country.

Records released by the Department of Petroleum Resources show that 16 of the incidents, involving about 2,500 barrels of crude oil, occurred in the eastern part of the Niger Delta.

The other two oil spillage incidents, involving 16 barrels of crude oil, were recorded in the western zone.

From Rakiya Muhammad, in Lagos

According to the department, 57 product samples have been collected from Warri Refinery and some petrol stations for analysis.

Meanwhile, in its ongoing surveillance activities, the department has sealed up a total of 37 dispensing pumps in different parts of Lagos, Ogun, Delta and Edo States for under-delivery.

It closed down two retail outlets in Kano and Sokoto states for selling petrol above

approved price.

In Benue and Nasarawa states, five stations were under investigation for diversion, the department said.

The department also monitored refineries, depots and petrol stations in other states of the federation to forestall hoarding, selling into jerry cans, products' diversion and selling above

approved pump-prices, even as it has been directed to increase its surveillance activities as the Christmas approaches to curb scarcity during the period.

Worried by incessant cases of corruption at the local government level, the Nigeria Union of Local Government Employees (NULGE) has vowed to rid the third tier of government of the menace.

The union, which just suspended a six-week strike action over its members' welfare, said the new drive towards transparency would be implemented by a new organ known as probity watch, through which the local government employees would carry out "internal cleansing" in the system.

Speaking with *Daily Trust* in Abuja, the NULGE National President, Dr. Deji Akinwalere, said that the union had realised that there were problems of accountability, transparency and performance within the local government system.

He said that there was no

NULGE vows to rid LGs of corruption

By Austine Odo

way of evolving a result-oriented government system without addressing such problems.

Comrade Akinwalere said it was the desire of NULGE to see a situation where people would have the opportunity to ask questions in their finances and administration.

"There is need to put a searchlight on the activities of the local government councils. We do not want the current situation where political functionaries behave as if they were not responsible to the people," he said.

According to him, "probity watch" would be preceded by public enlightenment, legislation

and internal checks on the system.

"Political office holders would, through this system, be made to give account of what they have done about the expectations of the community. If through frivolous ways, public money is siphoned, it would be a threat to us. We do not want a situation where we rise against government for their neglect. Then the community would come and rise against us for non performance," he said.



Dr. Deji Akinwalere, NULGE National President

AD chairman calls for Abacha, others' release

By Mustapha Isah Kwaru

The National Chairman of the Alliance for Democracy (AD), Alhaji Abdulkadir Ahmed, has called on the Federal Government to release Mohammed Abacha, the son of late General Sani Abacha, ex-Chief of Army Staff, Lt. Gen. Ishaya Bamaiyi (rtd), Major Hamza Al-Mustapha and others who are being detained over multiple murder charges.

The AD chairman, who spoke to the Voice of America (VOA) Hausa programme yesterday, disclosed that the charges against the accused persons are not as gracious as those against the Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC) leaders, who have now been released.

His words: "The charges against Mohammed Abacha and others are not up to those against Gani Adams, who was charged with various crimes, including murder. Despite all these, he gained his freedom.

"It is unfair to refuse to even grant a bail for Abacha and others who were just charged with attempted murder. The federal government should do the right thing and release them," he said.

"We should not create dichotomy. All citizens should be treated equally in our judicial system," he



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TIME: 9:00am

VENUE: 8A Udi Street, Off Aso Drive,

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News Focus

The Electoral Act: Proactive, retroactive or retrogressive?

By Reuben Yunana

To say that the Electoral Act, signed into law by President Olusegun Obasanjo at 4 a.m. last Thursday, is a controversial law is to make an understatement. Indeed, the most unpopular section of the bill is Section 80, which has attracted a barrage of criticisms across the country, sometimes in very foul language.

Needless to say, Section 80 seemed to have been smuggled into the Act via a letter from President Obasanjo, dated December 5, 2001.

However, objections to the Act did not begin today. Opposition started in earnest when Senate passed its own version of the bill based on the proposed bill earlier submitted to it by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

When Senate passed its own version of the bill, opposition from members of the public was loud. This opposition increased when the House of Representatives passed its own version, and finally reached a crescendo when the joint committee of the two Houses which harmonised the bill made its position known.

The Senate version, in its clause, provided that general elections shall be in three phases. That is, federal, state and local government elections, to be held on dates to be determined by INEC.

The House version, on the other hand, required in its clause 14 that elections to all public offices in Nigeria shall be held every four years on the same date as may be determined by the commission.

Another difference in the two versions is that clause 26 of the one passed by the Senate requires every political party to submit a list of its nominated candidates to the commission not later than 30 days before an election, with the screening of candidates to be done by INEC. However, clause 23 of the House version requires that the list must be submitted to INEC 90 days before the election.

Other issues contained in the two versions in which there were disagreements are the issues of presidential or governorship candidates

elected at any two previous elections, power of the commission to register political parties, participation of political parties in elections, elections into local government councils and the power of State Independent Electoral Commissions.

Since the bills passed by both Houses were essentially in agreement as regard all other matters, a joint conference committee made up of six members each from the two Houses was set up and given the task of harmonising the grey areas and to come up with a clean copy of the bill for President Olusegun Obasanjo's assent.

The committee was made up of Senator O. A. Osunbor, Chairman, Senators Tunde Ogbeha, Jonathan Zwingina, Adebayo Ogunlewe, Alex Kadiri and Ibok Essien.

From the House of Representatives came Reps. Mohammed Kumalia, Abdullahi Gumel, Ibrahim Zailani, N. C. Ughanze, Idris Abdullahi and Olley Odey.

As the committee chairman, O. A. Osunbor, told journalists after the reconciliation exercise, reconciliation of the differences between the Senate version and that of the House of Representatives proceeded harmoniously. Decisions were reached unanimously without any resort to a vote or division on any issue in consonance with the rules. The committee deliberated only on areas of disagreement while matters on which both Houses agreed were retained.

"In most of the clauses there was no disagreement as both versions of the bill were either the same, word for word or had a few minor differences in the marginal votes, typing, spelling or grammatical expressions," he added.

Rising from its sitting, the committee took far-reaching decision in harmonising the two versions and coming up with a bill that contained the following:

-A staggered general elections beginning with the presidential elections.

-That the registration of candidates for elections should be done by the politi-



President Olusegun Obasanjo

cal parties and not by INEC. -The constitutional provisions be used to decide the issues on presidential and governorship aspirants going for a third term.

-That at the close of nominations for the general elections, any political party that fails to sponsor at least 15 per cent of candidates for councillorship, council chairmanship, governorship and state House of Assembly, throughout the federation spread among two-third of the states of the federation and Abuja shall not participate in the general elections.

However, this provision which is contained in clause 80 of the bill has proved to be the most controversial.

It is instructive that the committee completed its assignment on December 4 and sent a copy of the bill to the president for his assent.

But the president in a letter the following day acknowledged receipt of the bill but intimated the joint committee of his intention to make some amendments to Section

80(1) of the bill.

"For the stability of the polity and the survival of our nascent democracy, it is imperative that only serious and credible political parties should be allowed to participate in general elections.

"This should be determined by the acceptability of the political parties by Nigerians by subjecting the parties to an initial electoral contest at the grassroots level.

Therefore, political parties should be able to establish acceptance by winning certain percentage of chairmanship and councillorship positions at the local government elections spread across the country," the president's letter argued.

The president, therefore, proposed that a registered political party must win at least 15 per cent of the chairmanship and councillorship positions in the federation, spread among two-third of the state and the Federal Capital Territory, to be eligible to participate in any general election.

Acting on the president's letter, the committee drastically altered clause 80(1) of the bill to read:

"At the close of nominations for the general elections, any political party which fails to sponsor at least 15 per cent of the candidates for councillorship, council chairmanship and state House of Assembly, respectively, throughout the federation and the Federal Capital Territory shall not participate in the general elections, provided that a newly registered political party shall first participate in the local government elections and win at least 10 per cent of the councillorship and chairmanship positions throughout the federation and the Federal Capital Territory to be eligible to participate in the federal and state elections."

This is what is contained in the clean copy of the bill signed into law by President Olusegun Obasanjo at 4 a.m. on December 12 before embarking on a presidential trip to Taraba State.

Needless to say, the new addition to the bill has ruffled many feathers as many Nigerians have voiced their opposition to it.

As if the president expected the reaction, he had recorded an address, which was broadcast to the nation while he was already in Jalingo.

In the broadcast, President Obasanjo agreed that the bill itself was controversial and pointed at the sequence of elections, which INEC had objected to, and tenure of council chairmen as the most controversial sections.

"While it is true that the contents of the bill, may not be ideal and most pleasing to all, myself included, I, however, appeal to all concerned, the governors and the members of the National Assembly to allow the basic aspects of the bill to stand," he said.

Stressing on the need for peace, the president advised all aggrieved parties to go to court for legal interpretation of the bill.

"Our constitution anticipated this type of situation and the prescribed recourse would be to go for a declaration by the Supreme Court. This is the reasonable and

democratic alternative rather than unnecessary agitation," the president noted.

Many have been the oppositions to the bill since it was signed. State governors have since vowed to go ahead with council elections despite spirited efforts by the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to woo its governors to support the bill.

Human rights activist, Gani Fewehinmi, has threatened legal actions while new parties have been vociferous in the condemnation of what they see as an attempt to screen them out of the 2003 general elections. Protem national chairman of the United Nigerian Democratic Party (UNDP), Alhaji Saleh Jambo, described the process of amending Section 80 of the bill as an act of corruption. According to him, the party has no option than to resort to the law court to seek the overturning of the controversial Section 80.

As the controversy rages, it is imperative to ask some salient questions:

-Where did the joint committee get its power to approve the presidential amendments without referring to both Houses?

-How did the president convince the 12 members of the committee to toe his line?

These questions are pertinent because a member of the committee, Rep. Ibrahim Zailani, has since distanced himself from the controversial Section 80. So also are other members of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

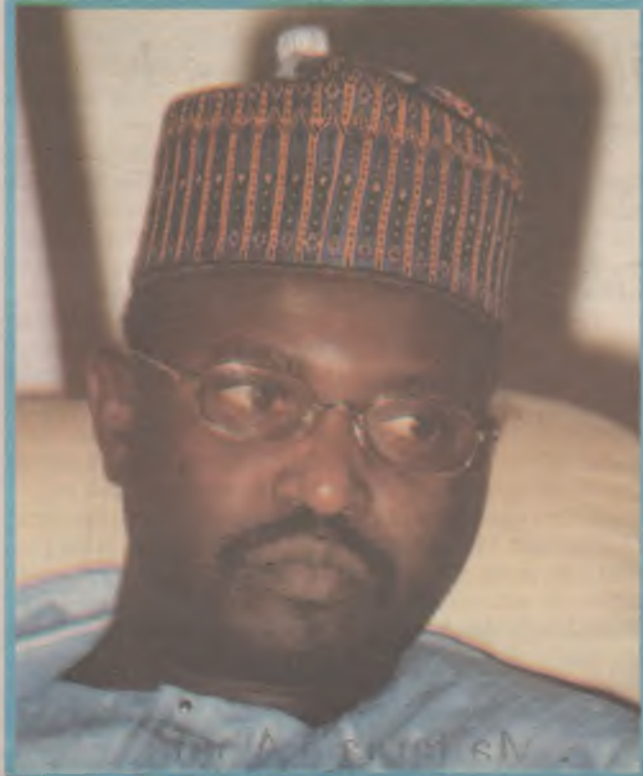
It seems the president exploited the loopholes in Section 88 of Senate rules and 83 of the House rules to push through his amendment to the electoral bill.

According to the provisions of the two sections, "if the joint conference committee accepts the president's amendments to the House of Representatives and Senate, then the bill shall again be sent to the president for his assent."

Nigerians eagerly await the decision of the court on this controversial issue on which hinges not only the success of our nascent democracy, but also the future of our country.



Senator Pius Anyim, Senate President



Alhaji Ghali Na'Abba, Speaker, House of Reps.



Dr. Abel Guobadia, INEC Chairman

Opinion

The North in conflict with itself

By Saleh Ibrahim Bature

Before the emergence of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo as the Executive President of Nigeria in May 1999, it would only be a hypothesis to imagine that the North would lose grip in the political power equation of Nigeria within so a short period to the level we are witnessing today.

What we considered as a mere speculation two years ago has now turned out to be a reality. The monolithic, powerful and once politically united North is not in harmony with itself. This conflict has so much eaten deep into the fabric of our body politic and has done so much damage to our political fortune.

As evidenced in the series of violent and successive clashes which took place in the recent past, coupled also with the latent tension buried in most parts of the North, it is increasingly becoming clear now more than ever before that the North must put its acts together if its current efforts aimed at restoring its past political glory is anything to go by.

What however appears to be a stumbling block to this difficult but worthy effort is the wide chasm, acrimony, selfishness and arrogance that have now become the popular trade of politicians in this part of the country. Even though politics in the Eastern and Western parts is not void of similar problems facing the North, but the situation in the North is particularly worrisome because it has the potential to spawn political doom to the area.

Prominent among the factors that have led to this unwholesome political situation are partly ours and partly the scheming of some aggrieved people from the other parts who feel that the North has been given more than it deserves and must therefore accept to relinquish power if Nigeria is to survive as a single entity. The North had to succumb to the pressure and gave power to the South-West in order to keep Nigeria together. There is no gain saying the fact that the North is today being run void of shepherd not withstanding the key role the Arewa consultative forum (ACF) plays as the only outspoken, serious and dependable voice that is wholeheartedly out to protect Northern interest.

Unlike the Afenifere and Ohaneze, the ACF has strong contending forces and dissenting voices from within who are working against it. These groups have proven difficult to be appeased or carried along in the somewhat hazy Nigeria's political ambience.

Apart from the IBB strong political machinery, there are other power blocks within the North whose focus and *raison de tre* is entirely different from the ACF. Cheep among these is the group which has Atiku Abubakar, the vice president, as its vanguard. There is also shadowy and less prominent splinter group which hides under the guise of the middle belt to mischievously create confusion in the North. This group is very dangerous because it operates surreptitiously and is assiduous in its effort to destabilise the North.

With due respect to the vice president, I personally view Mr Atiku Abubakar's estrangement with the North, specially the North West, as illogical, ill advised and inimical to his future political ambition. The V.P has compounded his problems by planting a seed of discord between him, IBB and ACF by publicly chastising and lambasting Northern elders and politicians of Northern extraction. The V.P has created a no love lost relationship with the power blocks within his constituency. More worrisome however is the way and manner these political heavy weights apportion blames and the hard-line position they take on opposition. They lack the spirit of give and take. And this has impacted negatively on the entire North.

The Nigerian Political playing field as I observe, has given an edge to the South West and South East while it relegated the North to the background. This perhaps explains why the North appears to be jittery, confused and directionless in the current dispensation.

Besides the plethora of problems which the North has to contend with from within, it also has to face from outside a sinister and more devastating campaign from an assemblage of men and women in the media, politicians and intellectuals from the South, especially the South-West.

There has been a well-planned and orchestrated campaign from this part of the country, which is aimed at forestalling the North from having political power in the future. Machinery has already been set in motion to achieve this purpose. The recent retirements in the Military and appointments in government agencies, the unprovoked but unchecked violent massacre of non Yoruba on the streets of Lagos by OPC militants, the provocative and unguarded utterances on the North, Its people and cherished values by prominent personalities of Yoruba stock and the Obasanjo led government selective justice have not only confirmed our fears but have also sent a dangerous signal that may shake the very foundation of the structures which our beloved Nigeria was built upon.

Viewed against the backdrop of the unwholesome back-room politics as it is being practised in the North vis-à-vis the current democratic tidal wave moving across the country, it is in deed foolhardy for anybody to assume that the North, as it is today, could play a dominant and key role position in Nigeria of tomorrow.

This, no doubt has underscored the urgent need for all the contending forces in the North to sheath swords and face head on the multifarious problems that are militating against their political fortune.

Procrastination, they say is a thief of time. So further delay in realizing this worthy effort will be a political suicide. It is high time therefore we wake up from this deep slumber and contribute to the unity, progress and development of the North, which by extension, is a step forward towards building a new Nigerian Nation, a project which all of us will be proud to be stake holders in its execution.

Saleh Ibrahim Bature is of P. M. B. 456, Garki - Abuja

AIDS @ ABUJA-DOT-COM

By Hussaini Sani Kagara

As Obasanjo was busy commissioning two gigantic hospitals in Abuja, Amina Ndalolo, Nigeria's Minister of State for Health was also at a World Aids Day making an appalling and fear-provoking disclosure that the dreaded HIV/AIDS disease has apparently invaded Abuja the nations capital city with an alarming proportion. According to her "from a very low level of infection early in the epidemic, today Abuja is recording a very high prevalence of 10.2 percent, which is unacceptable for our Federal Capital Territory."

According to the survey, Nyanya, one of the satellite towns in the FCT, recorded the highest prevalence rate of 14.3 percent while Garki recorded 11 percent. Gwagwalada recorded the least with 5.3 percent prevalence. In other parts of the country, Benue topped with the highest rate of 13.5 percent, as Ighu, a town in the state recorded 15 percent in the zone. Nasarawa recorded 8.1 percent, Niger 4.5 percent, Plateau 8.5 percent, Kogi 5.7 percent and Kwara State recorded the least prevalence rate of 4.3 percent. The report indicated also that southeast zone recorded 5.8 percent; Southwest 4.0 percent, Northwest 3.3 percent; Northeast 5.4 percent and South-South zone 7.7 percent

This disquieting and upsetting revelation was not unconnected with greater than ever growing level of prostitution in the city. Every night, lining on the streets, is a bunch of smooth finishing and shining on the surface girls of easy virtue -they are cheaper than

pure-water sold in a motor park- awaiting for an unknown man from nowhere.

There is evidence of lack of accommodation and with corresponding flood of people in the city, has exposed people to behaviours with high-risk infection with HIV. The resultant effects led to the over increasing number of marriage of convenience (*Auren leda*) and has become plain and of recurring decimal phenomena.

The escalating influx of people with matching palliative approach in the improvement of health facilities to meet the demands of growing population and the absence of indispensable social facilities, which often result to congestion, contributed immensely to this development. Our hospitals have remain to be what Abacha in 1985 described as "mere consulting clinics". Today, they are not only that but a mere edifice constructed only to be called "hospitals".

An inescapable reason for the scourge is the failure of the government in the area of research development through improving and motivating interest in the search for cure of the dreaded disease. People with keen interest to build up cure for HIV/AIDS are often subjected to unwarranted and superfluous criticisms. The case of Abalaka is a recent example to decipher.

Likewise, the letdown of the govt to make available sufficient shelter for its citizenry is another causative dynamic that further aggravates the inflammation of the

disease. It is obvious that government at the moment demonstrates too little curiosity in the provision of housing. A part from Abacha's effort towards providing housing units for the developing capital city which was eventually stalemated by his death, Obasanjo rendered perfunctory desire in completing the Gwarimpa Housing Estate which started some years back. It will not be wrong to say if Abacha is to be alive, the Gwarimpa Housing unit could have been a thing of the past.

While public enlightenment relics to be toothsome, a refocus of the government health policy trust is equivalently of overriding application. The sensitisation must go beyond the national level down to the grassroots where the menace is becoming incommensurate. Government must also show keen snooping in the development of research for the cure of AIDS. Of equal importance also is that government must improve all the spectres of human development, which includes health care, accommodation and other related social services especially employment opportunities so as to reduce the number street prostitution.

While that is going on, good conduct rather than condom should be of imperative concerned. Teaching and gosselling of ethical moral values and its ramifications where good sexual habit will be admonished should be the order of the day.

Hussaini Sani Kagara is of No. 21, Yedserem Street, Maitama, Abuja.

Either with Allah or with America

By S. A. Muhd. Kaura

Since the incidence of September 11th, 2001 in the United States of America and the subsequent retaliatory events against the perceived culprits and their protectors, a lot has happened. Of particular interest is the speech by President George Bush who was telling the world that you either support them in their war against 'terrorists' or you would also be considered as accomplice of the 'terrorists' and therefore an enemy of the United States.

This attitude of the American administration including the past ones draws the battle line between America and its allies on one hand, and God and true Muslims on the other hand.

The attitude of America and its behaviour since the collapse of the former Communist Soviet Union has shown that it wants to assume certain attributes reserved for the Almighty God only.

The fundamental attributes of Allah which the American Administrations want to take over are: 1. Only God gives law and order that is sacrosanct. 2. That only the system governing human existence ordained by Allah must be implemented without question by true Muslims. 3. Only God has supreme and absolute power on earth. 4. Only God is invincible and, not any of His creations no matter how powerful or economically prosperous.

The reader, especially a non-Muslim would want to know how America has tried to assume the above-mentioned attributes of God.

To a true Muslim, who critically examines and analyses the behaviour of the United States government, a lot of instances or examples could be cited. Let me take these four attributes one after the other.

Law and order should be from God: To a true Muslim, one thing which he must accept is that only the law and order sent by God through the holy Prophet (pbuh), as contained in the Qur'an and explained and put into practice by the holy Prophet and his rightly guided companions, should be obeyed without question irrespective of how we perceive such laws.

To the contrary, America and its allies in the name of civilisation, individual freedom and liberty, feel otherwise. They are of the view that such laws are retrogressive and should be abandoned. They do all sorts of things, open and hidden, to subvert Islamic laws through intimidation, propaganda and even the use of instruments of the United Nations such as declarations on human rights, women's rights, freedom of religion, etc.

Only a system established by Allah should be supreme: God has told Muslims in the holy Qur'an that He is the One that sent down the religion of Islam (Islamic system) to supersede and overcome any other religion (way of life) even if non-Muslims resist or detest that. The religion of Islam, being the final message to govern humanity is a complete way of life. That is, it embodies economic, socio-cultural, moral and other aspects of life. For example, Islam forbids such things as usury, homosexuality, and the like. It also on the hand encourages fair and equitable business practices, high moral standards and the like.

On the contrary, America and the West promote and enforce

these vices such as celebrating sodomy and usury, and consider any people opposed to such as being backward and not fit to live in the 21st century.

Only Allah is Supreme: To a true Muslim, supreme and absolute power belongs to God alone. This belief is being challenged by America. They consider themselves as having absolute power to bulldoze their ideas and wishes on humanity unchallenged. They have given themselves the power to turn white into black or black into white, a freedom fighter into a "terrorist" and a terrorist occupying peoples' land and killing defenceless people into a man fighting in self defence.

They believe they have the power to go anywhere in the world and attack weaker nations without challenge but if any other small nation does the same, such is regarded as posing a threat to international security, and thus a coalition of powerful nations is assembled to teach that small nation a lesson. The case of Iraq, Libya and now Afghanistan (all Muslim nations) are good examples.

This kind of behaviour and double standard is revolting to true Muslims and unacceptable in accordance with Islamic teachings.

Invincibility is only to God: By amassing weapons of mass destruction, sophisticated and electronically controlled war apparatus, that could be put to use from the comfort of their bedrooms or offices, the Americans have created a false sense of invincibility for themselves. They have politically and economically destroyed the former Soviet Union. They have intimidated and put fear in the rest of Western countries that without its support they are doomed.

This has made the other Western nations to sheepishly always toe the American thinking and action even if such are morally wrong and not acceptable to their nations.

These achievements recorded by the United States against the Soviet Union and Western Nations is what gives them this feeling of invincibility and superiority over the World. They believe that they have the right to change the World order, Police the World and enrich the world.

To the true Muslims the United States perception is misplaced and reflects a sense of arrogance.

A nation that could not protect itself from hurricanes, floods, poverty in the midst of plenty, insecurity, September 11, 2001 destruction of the World Trade Centre, and could not determine what awaits them the next minute should not create the impression of invincibility.

In conclusion, one would like to stress to both America and her allies, and those Muslim nations that have been trooping to Washington to give assurance of their continued loyalty and subservience to American interests at the expense of their people and belief, all with the aim of remaining in power, let all know that power and protection is only guaranteed by Allah.

S. A. Muhd. Kaura is of c/o Sabulur Rashad Islamic Centre, Hausawa Phase 1, Kano.



YOUR LETTERS

A case for Lokoja local government

Since the issue of zero allocation reared its ugly head during this political dispensation, some local governments in the country have cried their hearts out.

The case of Lokoja Local Government in Kogi State needs urgent attention to ameliorate its numerous problems.

When Kogi State was created, Lokoja thus got the singular opportunity of being saddle with 'State Capital, due to its historical past and its centrality to the entire State. With the issue of this monstrous zero allocation and its virus spreading throughout the country, Lokoja Local Government caught the disease and its cure refuse to come in term of development and General upliftment of the people that constitute the entire Local Government.

One needs to commend the Executive Governor of Kogi State Prince Abubakar Audu for his pragmatic approach in solving some of the developmental aspect of the local government through the provision of infrastructure to befit the ancient town as the state capital.

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

In support of human rights

The universal Declaration of human rights (UNDHR) which was adopted by member states of the United Nations in 1948 was the international community's response to the horrors - mass murder, genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and the holocaust of World War II. The declaration is seen as the single greatest step forward in the protection of global humanity. The UNDHR covers every aspect of human endeavour, economic, social, civil and political.

A common standard of achievement of all people and all nations, that keeping the declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education, promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance both among the peoples of members states themselves and among the people of territories under their jurisdiction. The UNDHR in itself has not ended human oppression but it is a beacon, a promise, a challenge. It behoves all peace loving people to protect, promote and uphold the right of every human being and community. The responsibility to expose and speak against human right abuses also rests on each human being. Together the human race can uphold its dignity and ensure a safe community. Endeavour therefore to contribute your quota.

**Nuraddeen Sales Tsigah,
C/o Hon. Abdulqadir Magaji Bamalli,
Kaduna State House of Assembly,
Kaduna.**

Re: Gombe Assembly probes provost

The Management of the Federal College of Education (Technical), Gombe read with surprise a *Daily Trust* report captioned "Gombe Assembly Probes Provost" published on Thursday 29th November, 2001 on some issues that have neither substance nor basis.

We were surprised because the State Assembly, in its letter dated 27th November, 2001 requested to have audience with the college management on 29th November, 2001 to discuss issues of educational interest to both the state and the institution.

At the meeting, the team from the State Assembly informed the management that they were on a facts findings mission on some academic policies of the institution particularly regarding admissions.

At the end of the meeting the Honourable Members appreciated the facts that:

For the College to increase the number of admissions into the college in order to get more candidates admitted from the North Eastern zone requires expansion and improvement of the existing facilities. These include classrooms and offices, workshops and laboratories, classrooms and office furniture, machines and equipment and their accessories and most importantly additional qualified lecturers and supporting staff;

At no time, since the college was established in 1977, has the institution admitted up to 2,500 candidates in a session, unless one is talking about the students population of the college;

The statistics of admission, which were made available to the Honourable Members from 1995/96 academic session to date did not show any time the college admitted up to 2,500 candidates. The statistics also indicated that most of the candidates that applied for the pre-NCE programmes are from Gombe State;

The 2001/2002 admission exercises are yet to be completed. The departments are still processing them.

Since the inception of the college it has always been a problem to find adequate number of candidates qualified for full admission into NCE programmes. The College has always sourced most of its candidates through pre-NCE programmes. Even at this level getting candidates with actual prerequisites is always difficult for the science and technical education programmes which are the main areas of specialisation of the college.

Although the Honourable Members at the meeting did not mention the issue of relocation of the college raised in your article, the management would like to point out categorically that relocation of the college is not within the powers of the management which has never contemplated doing so.

During the meeting the Honourable Members admired the efforts of the college in improving the admission needs of not only Gombe State but also other states in the catchment area. The Honourable Members noted the facts that the current leadership initiated steps on how to improve admission needs of the state, particularly Gombe State by:

Ambassador Zakari worthy of emulation

Please allow me a space in your widely read newspaper to express our gratitude to Amb. Zakari Ibrahim, mni, Talban Katsina for donating relief materials to Mashi Local Government and its enamouring villages.

The occasion was indeed a memorable day for the people of Mashi by one of their illustrious sons, as it marked a significant development in the history of Mashi Local Government in particular and Katsina State in general.

On that day Talba, demonstrated that he is a man of honour, integrity, loyalty and above all sympathetic to the plight of the weak and underprivileged members of the society, by extending his kind gesture through the donation of relief materials to his local government and other neighbouring villages worth millions of naira. In addition and most importantly on that day he instituted a scholarship scheme for young lads of the area to pursue higher education.

**Yusuf A Maikano Mashi,
Mashi Unguwar Gabas,
Mashi LGA,
Katsina State.**

Re: Sanusi and the Sokoto adulteress

I was amazed by the responses of some Muslim readers to Sanusi Lamido's article on the Sokoto adulteress, in the past two to three weeks. Some readers have really gone to extremes by calling this erudite and well-informed scholar names. This only reflects on the intellectual immaturity of some of your readers in this part of the world.

One could disagree with Sanusi, but one should also respect his views. He had presented cogent reasons for all his arguments. It was only in the use of certain terms and phrases, Sanusi should have reserved for Muslims who have an informed faith, not emotional ones.

Please, Sanusi, keep your intellectual discourse. There are many readers who benefit from your analysis and critique of Muslims' interpretation of Islam, for surely this is the only way any society or ideology can grow and stand the test of time.

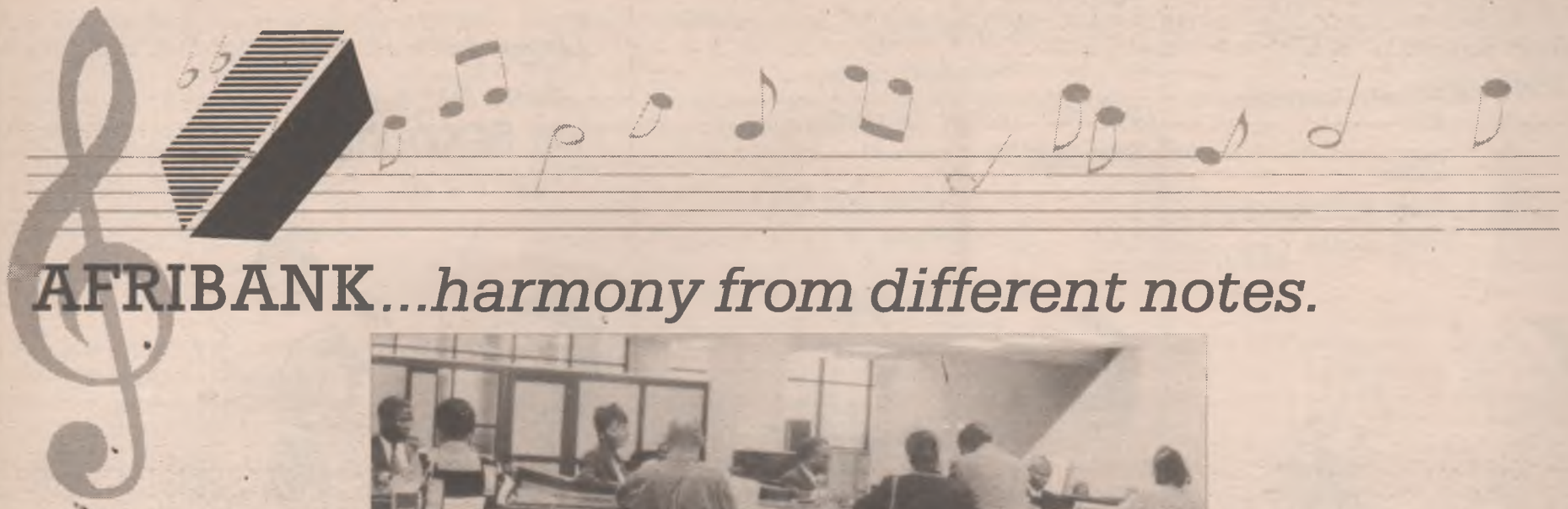
**Abu-Firdaus,
P. O. Box 535,
Zaria.**

Introducing remedial studies programme under the consultancy unit of the college to provide Gombe State indigenes and candidates from its environs, second chance for remedying ordinary level papers to improve their admission chances in institutions of their choice;

Introducing NCE programme in all science subjects so that the State and the others can increase production of Science teachers.

The management wishes to inform the general public or interested individuals that the doors of the college are always open to them and ready at any time to provide information for the purpose of knowledge or curiosity.

**Alhaji Tanko Girei,
Registrar,
Federal College of
Education (Technical)
Gombe.**



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TRUST INTERNATIONAL

AFRICA & THE MIDDLE EAST

Genocide convicts to serve sentence in Mali

The first six prisoners to have been convicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda have arrived in Mali, where they will be serving out their sentences.

Amongst the six former senior officials are Jean Kambanda, the former prime minister and head of the Rwandan Government and Jean-Paul Akayesu, former mayor of the Rwandan town of Taba.

All of the convicts lost their appeals and will serve their sentences in a specially modified jail in the Malian capital, Bamako.

The prisoners will complete their terms in the west African country and, while they will be held under Malian law, the International Criminal Tribunal will supervise the sentences.

According to Kingsley Moghalu, spokesman for the UN tribunal, the security situation and standards of jails in Rwanda meant that the convicted could not serve their

sentences in the country where the crimes were committed.

However, he did not rule out the possibility of future convicts being sent back to Rwanda.

The tribunal has been criticised in the past for its lengthy and costly system of trying those accused of crimes against humanity in Rwanda.

"However, Mr. Moghalu told me that this latest move represented a new phase that will see those that took part in

the 1994 genocide punished for their acts."

"Mr. Moghalu told me that he felt that this was a historic move in the creation of a culture of accountability amongst those in Africa that, up until now, had considered themselves untouchable."

Apart from increasing public attention and support for the trials, he feels that these convictions will act as strong deterrents

in the future.

The tribunal in Arusha made history in 1998 when it made the first judgement by an international court for the crime of genocide and Mr. Kabanda became the first head of government to be punished for genocide.

The process is indeed long and there are still some 20 accused at large but there is a sense that justice is at last, being done.

Muslim leaders meet on M/East crisis

Representatives of the world's estimated 1.2bn Muslims have condemned what they call Israel's repression of Palestinians.

An emergency meeting in Qatar of foreign ministers and representatives from 57 Islamic nations called on the United States to save what is left of the Middle East peace process.

In the Qatari capital, Doha, Muslim ministers and representatives have gathered once again in an atmosphere of crisis.

The Palestinian Authority

That attack, the fifth suicide bombing in 10 days, injured 10 Israelis in the port city of Haifa.

A total of 29 Israelis have died in the attacks.

Israel launched its campaign against the Palestinian territories more than a week ago with an assault on the presidential compound in Gaza City, which destroyed two of Mr. Arafat's helicopters.

It continued with the use of F-16 fighter jets to pound other security targets.

has been under attack from Israel, and the delegates have convened to show support for the Palestinians.

Yet the very man who called the meeting is not present.

The Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, is effectively confined to Ramallah on the West Bank.

The charred remains of his three burnt helicopters in Gaza are a pitiful reminder of his restricted ability to travel.

In Mr. Arafat's absence, the world's biggest Islamic body, the (OIC), Organisation of the Islamic Conference, is trying to support him.

The current head of the OIC, the Qatari ruler, called on the US and the rest of the world to restrain Israel, saying its policies would only

destroy peace in the region.

Qatar's ruling emir, Sheikh Hamad al-Thano, also proposed setting up a high profile Islamic panel to lobby Western capitals for an independent Palestinian state.

But this is not the first Islamic foreign ministers meeting in Qatar since the Palestinian intifada began 14 months ago and it probably will not be the last.

In his speech, the Qatari emir told delegates that the meeting should not just be a platform for speeches, but that is largely what the previous meetings have been.

So it will take a radical departure for this one to achieve any tangible success.

Saudi grants 12,000 prisoners amnesty

King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, has reportedly pardoned more than 12,000 prisoners - nearly half the population of the country's over-crowded jails.

The Saudi newspaper *Al-Waqan* quotes the director of the kingdom's prisons as saying the pardon of minor offenders is timed to coincide with the holy month of Ramadan, which ends this weekend.

The Director of Saudi prisons, Major General Ali al-Harethi, was quoted in a local paper as saying that the king had pardoned more than 12,000 of the country's 30,000 prisoners.

The mass pardon has

reportedly already begun, with all those pardoned expected to be out of prison by the time the Muslim Eid holiday begins this weekend.

But only those convicted of minor offences are being released. These include debtors and people caught brawling in public.

Serious criminals - such as those convicted of murder, drug smuggling and what Saudis call moral crimes such as adultery - are not expected to be released.

The move reveals official concern at the chronic overcrowding in Saudi jails.

But as an indication of impending reforms, the Saudi prison director has been quoted as saying that jail terms could soon be abolished for minor offences.

Instead, he said, offenders would pay a fine or do community service.

Saudi Arabia's justice system has come under fierce attack from international human rights organisations.

They have condemned the harsh punishments carried out under Islamic law or Sharia, such as flogging and beheading.

They have also criticised alleged miscarriages of justice, quoting numerous examples of individuals who they said have been arrested and imprisoned without trial or access to a lawyer.



Syrian Prime Minister, Mohammed Mustasa is photographed in his office in Damascus. Syria's government resigned on Monday in a long-awaited move analysts regard as a sign President Bashar al-Assad will try to push reform of the country's command economy.

Israel raids Gaza security post

Israeli helicopter gunships have launched a new attack on the Palestinian territories, destroying a security post in the northeastern Gaza Strip.

Two Apache helicopters fired as many as four missiles at the building in Beit Hanoun, eyewitnesses said. It was a local command post for Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's personal guard, Force 17.

There were no immediate reports of injuries. Israel has accused Force 17 of direct involvement in attacks on its people.

It is the fourth Force 17 post in Gaza to be destroyed by Israeli aerial attack in the past week.

On Monday two Palestinian children, aged three and 13, died when Israeli helicopters carried out a missile attack on the West Bank town of Hebron.

The latest violence coincided with a meeting of foreign ministers and representatives of Islamic countries in Qatar, who condemned what they described as Israel's repression of the Palestinians.

Earlier, the European Union had called on the Palestinian Authority to do more to rein in the militants.

The US special envoy to the Middle East, Anthony Zinni, is continuing efforts to achieve a ceasefire.

But he is reported to have warned that he will end his peace mission in 48 hours unless there is real progress towards ending the violence.

BBC Middle East analyst said the focus of United

States pressure is on what it sees as Mr. Arafat's inadequate actions against militant Islamist groups.

Israeli military sources told the BBC that the intended target of the Hebron strike was Mohammed Sidr, a prominent member of the militant Islamic Jihad, which, along with Hamas, has carried out a wave of suicide attacks.

He was injured in the strike, which destroyed a car

at a busy junction.

A spokesman for Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon said the government regretted the death of the two children.

Earlier reports said the Israeli security cabinet had decided to step up operations against Palestinian militants, after the latest suicide bombing on Sunday.

Strikes on Somalia 'unjustified'

Interim Prime Minister, Hassan Abshir Farah has strongly rejected American charges that the al-Qaeda network led by Osama Bin Laden has bases in Somalia.

He was responding in a BBC interview to a statement from a top United States official that Washington had evidence of definite links between al-Qaeda and the Somali Islamic group, al-Itihad.

Asked about reports that the US might carry out air strikes on Somalia, Mr. Hassan Abshir said there would be no justification for this.

He commented wryly that Somalis themselves had already wrought enough destruction on their country.

"We have sent to the Bush administration a letter of invitation to come here to see what is here... We are ready to fight against the terrorists," he said.

UN officials have said they have found no credible evidence to link Somalia to terrorist camps, but fears

persist within the country of some kind of US action.

Already a US warship has been stationed off the Somali coast and this weekend there were reports that surveillance flights had been carried out over the country.

Reports have also spoken of a meeting between US officers and opposition warlords in Somalia's second city of

Baidoa to identify potential "terrorist" targets, according to sources.

"They were discussing whether they (the warlords) know of any terrorist bases in south and south-west Somalia," *Reuters* quoted a source as saying.

The interim prime minister also said a new peace conference for Somalia would open later this week in Nairobi.

Israeli troops kill two Palestinians in West Bank

Israeli troops shot dead two Palestinians near the West Bank town of Tulkarm yesterday, Israeli military sources said.

The military sources said the soldiers shot at the men's car after they ignored warning shots and tried to drive through an army checkpoint. "In the end they (the soldiers) shot at the car and killed two Palestinians," one source said.

A Palestinian witness from a village close to the checkpoint gave a different account. Raila Khalil, a resident of the nearby

Jaroushiyen village, said she saw troops chase two men into an olive grove on foot and then heard gunshots.

"We left the house and saw two men running towards an olive grove and soldiers following them on foot. After a while we heard more shots and we saw the soldiers dragging one of the men and carrying the other man," she said.

The army closed the area and Palestinian medics said they did not have access to the bodies. Israel has encircled Palestinian cities and set up checkpoints across the West

Bank and Gaza Strip since the start of a Palestinian uprising against occupation in September shortly after peace talks stalled.



Prime Minister Ariel Sharon

TRUST INTERNATIONAL

World Report



Guatemalan President, Alfonso Portalla (right), gives a cheque to Felecia Romero (left), a representative of the Las Dos Erres village massacre victims' relatives, who were killed by security forces in 1982 during the height of the nation's 36 year civil war, in Guatemala City.

Anti-Taliban fighters claim capture of tunnel

Afghan anti-Taliban fighters said they have seized a key supply tunnel in the Tora Bora cave complex in eastern Afghanistan where they are fighting to dislodge Osama Bin Laden's forces.

Fierce fighting is under way in the region, which has long been a stronghold of the fugitive militant leader - the chief suspect in the 11 September attacks on America.

The anti-Taliban Northern Alliance said that its forces, backed by US B-52 bombers, had captured strategic heights.

According to the alliance, the al-Qaeda leader is still in the area. But Washington said it could not confirm Bin Laden's whereabouts.

A local anti-Taliban

commander, Mohammed Amin, said his forces had captured the supply tunnel and also two al-Qaeda command centres.

But as BBC correspondent reports from the scene, it could be weeks or even months before al-Qaeda is defeated in the rugged mountains.

US forces on Sunday targeted one of the caves with a giant "daisy cutter" bomb. The 6,800 kilogram (15,000-pound) weapon, which can destroy everything within a 600-metre radius, has been used only two or three times in the US campaign.

Elsewhere, a retired Afghan army general warned that only regular US or Afghan soldiers could drive out Bin Laden's fighters.

"They can hide there as

long as they want unless confronted," said General Shahnawaz Tanai, who served as an Afghan defence minister before fleeing to Pakistan in 1990.

Commander Amin also said his men had seized strategic heights in the region's White Mountains, discovering the bodies of four al-Qaeda fighters as they advanced.

US undecided on Bin Laden video 'proof'

President George W. Bush has said a new video of Osama Bin Laden proves that the al-Qaeda leader was behind the 11 September attacks on America.

But Mr. Bush has not yet decided whether the tape will be shown to the public.

Boy's murder sparks protest in London

Protesters have clashed with police outside an east London court where two youths appeared charged with the murder of a 15-year-old-boy.

Six people were arrested on Monday outside Stratford Youth Court.

The two youths - aged 16 and 15 - have been charged with the murder of Abdul Maye, who was found stabbed outside a youth centre in Manor Park.

There were angry clashes outside the court when people gathered to protest about the boy's death, and one police officer suffered a bite wound.

Three people were arrested for violent disorder, two for disorderly conduct and one for assault, police said.

Abdul Maye, who was of Somali origin, was found outside the Little Ilford Lane youth centre in Rectory Road last Friday.

He was treated by paramedics at the scene and taken to the Royal London Hospital, Whitechapel, where he was pronounced dead on arrival.

The two youths were remanded in custody to appear again at Stratford Youth Court on 20 December, police later confirmed.

ODD WORLD

Dog eats man's ear

A man in southern Sweden scared his neighbour's dog, which then tore off his ear and swallowed it, the Swedish daily newspaper *Expressen* reported on Monday.

The man was taken to hospital and the dog to the vet, who gave it an emetic to retrieve the neighbour's ear, but to no avail.

The dog's owner then agreed to let the vet perform stomach surgery.

The dog survived, but the ear didn't. When it finally reached the hospital four hours after being chewed off, it was no longer in any condition to be stitched back on.

Doctors said the dog's stomach acids had dissolved too much of it.

Teenager adopts child to escape military conscription

The reluctant, but resourceful, Russian conscript used this last day before military service to good effect.

When the teenager heard he still had 24 hours before the arrival of the train that was to take him to a military unit for two years, he went off, got married and adopted a small child.

By becoming a father the unnamed would-be recruit from the Siberian city of Yakutsk got an automatic two-year suspension of service, the daily *Izvestia* said on Monday.

And if he has a second child in the next two years, he will never serve at all.

Compulsory army service is widely unpopular with young Russians who often go to great lengths to dodge call-up.

Authorities ban private cars to combat pollution

Authorities in Milan, seeking to combat pollution, said Friday, they had prohibited the use of private cars for 12 hours Saturday, the first ban of the winter season when smog levels hit their peak.

The regional government of Lombardy in northern Italy ordered drivers to keep their cars off the roads in the country's financial capital and its surrounding suburbs between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m.

Doctors, priests and other workers would be given special permission to use their vehicles for professional purposes during the ban, officials said.

Illiterate passes university admission test

A 27-year-old illiterate man passed with honours the admissions test to study law at a renowned Brazilian university, reports said Monday.

Severino da Silva, a baker, finished ninth out of hundreds of applicants to Estacio de Sa, Brazil's largest private university.

Da Silva can neither read nor write and only answered the multiple-choice sections of the test.

Brazilian TV station *D Globo* signed up da Silva to take the test to demonstrate how poorly designed they are.

Experts in Brazil have for years criticised private universities, saying they are merely focusing on making profits. The number of private universities in Brazil has skyrocketed from 696 in 1990 to 1004 in 2000.

Estacio de Sa, Vice-Chancellor, Gilberto de Oliveira Castro, said da Silva is not eligible for admissions to the university, regardless of his test results, because he has not earned a high-school diploma.

Commenting on da Silva's scores, Castro said it is "a problem that arises when you have to deal with a large number of applicants."

Karzai asks US not to walk away

Afghanistan's interim leader, Hamid Karzai, set to assume power on December 22, warned the United States to never again "walk away from Afghanistan" and pledged his country will be a trusted ally and friend, the *Washington Post* reported yesterday.

Karzai issued the warning during an interview in Kandahar, also telling reporters he fully supports US efforts to capture or kill members of Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network.

"We must finish them all, completely burn them out," Karzai said.

The Pashtun commander labelled toppled Taliban leader, Mohammad Omar a "fugitive, a criminal" and

vowed to put him on trial, the newspaper reported.

"Omar has committed crimes, he's killed thousands of people, he's destroyed vineyards, he's butchered my country, he's brought terrorists here," Karzai said. "I want him tried."

Karzai, spoke to reporters at his new headquarters, formerly Omar's sprawling residence, the *Post* said.

Saying the international community recognises Afghanistan needs to be rebuilt, Karzai told the newspaper the United States must not repeat the mistake it made 12 years ago when it abandoned Afghanistan after helping rid the country of Soviet occupation.

"Things went wrong in Afghanistan because the United States walked away,"

Karzai said. "So don't walk away."

The newspaper said Karzai also revealed that he had written a thank-you letter to President George W. Bush for the assistance he has received this far.

"I thanked him for his help and for liberating us from this horrible force," he said, "and then I reassured him that we would very, very earnestly work to destroy terrorism in Afghanistan."

Karzai again pledged to disarm Afghan factions who have lived through more than 20 years of war. "The gun has to stop rulling the country" said Karzai, the son of a prominent Afghan politician assassinated two years ago.

BUSINESS DAY

Navigation charges

NAMA, AON resolve differences

A major crisis that would have erupted between the Nigeria Airspace Management Agency (NAMA) and Airlines Operators of Nigeria (AON) was averted following the signing of an agreement last week between the two parties on the payment of domestic Air Navigation charges in line with Act 48 of 1999 and ICAO convention.

As a result of the development, NAMA has commenced billing US \$55.00 unit rate from 1st December, 2001 on domestic route operations which was being contested by Airline Operations of Nigeria (AON).

AON and NAMA also agreed that a joint committee will be set-up on NAMA financial/resources and other relevant subjects.

According to a communique issued at the end of a meeting between

From Shakirat Abdulmajeed, in Lagos

representatives of the two organisations last week in Lagos, there will be regular meetings between the two parties to discuss the services and facilities of the agency.

The communique which as signed by the Managing Director of NAMA, Alhaji



Kema Chikwe, Aviation Minister.

Yusuf Muhammad and Chairman of AON, Dr. Steve Mahonwu also stated that the two parties have agreed to the use of stored/repetitive flight planning at the airports.

NAMA has also agreed to give voyage report forms to operators which will be completed and returned to NAMA for analysis and feedback given to the operators to encourage them to continue with the exercise.

NAMA has also threatened to withdraw Air Traffic Control (ATC) services from foreign airlines over N120 million (\$1.2m) debt.

The spokesman of the agency, Mr. Ben Gong told newsmen that 99 foreign

airlines were as at August, indebted to NAMA to the tune of \$1.2 million when \$55 was being charged per unit by the agency.

He lamented that the new rate charged by NAMA was the lowest collected by similar service providers in the West African sub-region.

He explained that the 109 foreign airlines plying Nigerian airspace which were supposed to pay an estimated \$1.2 million between September and November when the overfly charge was reviewed upward to \$75 from \$55 per unit, have declined to pay.

He added that several meetings were arranged by the agency to invite the affected operators to discuss the issue before the agency obliged its agent, the International Air Travel Agency (IATA) to start collecting the affected airlines attended the meetings.

'Maintenance culture, key to stable power supply'

As the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) prepares towards a stable power supply in the country, engineers from the power sector have observed that only a culture of protection and maintenance of installations can guarantee stable power supply.

They blamed the irregular power supply situation in Nigeria on lack of maintenance culture.

The engineers spoke at an annual energy seminar organised by pivot engineering limited in conjunction with its partner, Balfour Beatty of United Kingdom.

In a keynote address to the forum, the Managing Director of NEPA, Mr.

Joseph Makoju, who was represented by General Manager Transmission NEPA, Mr. A. Ugbabe said the authority has embarked on a systematic rehabilitation of its facilities to bring them to a state where regular maintenance will become effective.

He noted that the security of NEPA network which include 5000 kilometres of 330KV transmission lines, 6000 KM of distribution lines, relied solely on adequate protection, adding



Joseph Makoju, NEPA MD.

that the stability of NEPA's operation also lie on installed protection system.

While acknowledging lightning as the "greatest natural phenomenon that affects NEPA transmission lines, Makoju said the authority is currently standardising the lines and tower design which would make them easy and faster to maintain at reduced costs.

Stressing the threat of corrosion on transmission lines at the coastal and highly industrialised area, the NEPA boss said the authority has now adopted the use of Silicon Composite Insulators, "the corroded insulators are continuously being replaced as part of our maintenance programme at huge cost."

In a paper on "Lightning protection," Business Development Manager of Pivot Company, Mr. Wole Osinubebi decried the huge annual loss to lightning by power and telecommunications industries as a result of wrong approach to protection of installations.

According to him, the United States alone for instance lose between \$500 million to \$1.8 billion to lightning every year with damage of \$1 billion to telecommunications equipment.

While observing that lightning cannot be prevented, Mr. Osinubebi however note that its impact can be managed.

FG to generate power from coal plants

The Federal Government is to diversify its power generation base by establishing coal based plants in the country.

Currently, the major power generating plants in the country use hydro technology.

The Minister of Power and Steel, Dr. Olusegun Agagu, however, hinted at the commissioning of some units in the Egbin Thermal Station, in Lagos, that one of the sources of power generation, government plans to explore coal, as the resource is available in the country.

From Rakiya A. Muhammad, in Lagos

Dr. Agagu said talks are already on with some Israelis who are interested in building new coal fired plants in the eastern part of the country.

Coal power technology, he noted, has gone through a

lot revolution even as he observed that it is environmentally friendly.

Commenting on the Orji Power Station near Enugu, the minister said the over 60 year old plant cannot be rehabilitated as the equipment have become very obsolete.

...restructures shipping inspectorate

The Federal Government is to restructure the office of the Government Inspectorate of Shipping (GIS) to enable it take effective charge of maritime safety administration.

It is also the duty of government inspectorate of shipping to ensure safety of maritime transportation, prevention of marine pollution from ships and water crafts in Nigeria as well as the implementation of International Maritime Organisation conventions, codes and regulations relating to safety of navigation of which Nigeria is a party already.

Minister of Transport, Chief Ojo Maduekwe disclosed this at the official commissioning of the GIS office in Lagos.

Chief Maduekwe observed that the office of the GIS has remained underdeveloped for many years thereby making it difficult to implement the updated and reviewed international conventions relating to its functions under the Merchant Shipping Act.

"Owing to the inherent problem in the GIS, the maritime safety administration had decayed over the years and almost lost its focus as it could no longer function effectively as a viable maritime safety administration in Nigeria due to identified problems namely bureaucratic bottleneck, changes in

From Tokumbo Oloke, in Lagos

government policies and inadequate funding," he said.

The minister however stressed that total restructuring of GIS became inevitable adding that this cannot be effected without stepping on a lot of toes to achieve this goal in the interest of the country.

In his speech, the Director General of GIS, Engineer Olu Akinsoji said that henceforth ships and boats in our waters must be surveyed noting that ship operators must be guided to develop the necessary culture of preserve our environment.

According to him, "we want to join the rest of the world to influence and assist appropriate agencies to reduce cases of armed robbery against ships.



Ojo Maduekwe, Transport Minister.

Shell to invest \$550m in Afam power plant

Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) is to invest over \$550 million in refurbishing and operating Afam Power Project.

The company which was contracted for the refurbishment of Afam one to four power stations is expecting a similar arrangement from National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) for Afam five.

According to Director, New Business, Gas and Planning of the SPDC, Mr. Steve Ratcliffe when the final arrangements are concluded, SPDC joint venture will have the operating of the Afam stations for a contractual period of 15 years.

He added that the amount of power that will be delivered to NEPA will be approximately 400 megawatts by 2004.

Mr. Ratcliffe disclosed that SPDC is entering into an agreement with Eskom, a South African power-utility company to be the operations

From Rakiya Muhammad, in Lagos

and maintenance contractor for the Afam plant.

On crude oil reserves, the director expressed optimism that Shell will meet a target of about 370 million barrels this year. He however stressed the need to turn the barrels into production through development projects and production activities.

MTN explains SMS billing error

*Offers Honda CRV Jeep for bumper sticker

MTN Nigeria Communications Limited has apologised to some of its Pay-As-You-Go affected by the billing error in the use of the short message service (SMS), even as it offers a brand new Honda CRV Jeep for the winner of its three-week bumper sticker campaign.

The bumper sticker campaign involves decorating motor vehicles motorcycles and bicycles with MTN stickers in the four cities where the company is currently offering services which include Lagos, Abuja, Port Harcourt and Kaduna.

The stickers were being distributed through MTN friendship centres, dealer outlets, newspaper vendors, street corners, commercial motor cycles, buses, fuel stations. While vehicle owners will be encouraged to pick them up and stick on their vehicles.

According to the company, everyday, an MTN Yellow Bicycle Rider drives around Lagos picking at

random, different vehicles with the MTN stickers. The bicycle rider is expected to pick two plate numbers each day which will be announced at 3.00p.m. on Rhythm FM and 4.00p.m. on Cool FM.

Various prizes which the winners stand to win include MTN Pay-As-You-Go starter packs, airtime vouchers, booster cards, and other branded prizes. They will also qualify for the star prize draw for a star prize of Honda CRV Jeep.

On December 24, 2001 all vehicle owners who have won over the 21-day campaign period will be expected to assemble for the grand prize draw.

Meanwhile, the MTN's Chief Marketing and Strategy Officer, Mr. Afam Edozie has in a statement explained that since the launch of the company's Pay-As-You-Go product, especially during the period between mid-November and December 5, 2001, MTN has not billed its customers for use of the SMS service due to some operational difficulties occasioned by an error in the billing tables



Ron Van der Rivo, Shell Boss.

I would love to do business in Cotonou. If only you had a bank like **DIAMOND BANK...**

But now we do!
DIAMOND BANK S.A.
 at Rue 308 Révérend Pere
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If business takes you to Cotonou,
 it will be wise to look out for familiar names
 like Diamond Bank S.A. at
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The working relationship between Diamond Bank S.A. and Diamond Bank Nigeria will facilitate safer, more convenient business transactions for business people in both countries.

Now, if business takes you across the border to Cotonou, where to get quality banking service is one thing you shouldn't worry about.

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Privatisation UPDATE

Pay today or forfeit your winning right, BPE tells ILL

Investors International (London) Limited (ILL), the winner of 51 per cent equity stake in the privatised NITEL has been given up to 5pm. New York



Nasir el-Rufai, BPE DG time today to pay \$131.7 million being 10 per cent of the \$1.317 billion it offered for the national carrier or lose its winning right.

Consequently, the winning consortium will in the event that it fails to beat the deadline give way to Telnet, the company that emerged the reserved bidder to take over the management of NITEL.

Malam Nasir el-Rufai, the Director-General of BPE disclosed this at the weekly press briefing in Abuja, yesterday, while speaking on the latest development on

By Osborne Adi Jnr.

NITEL.

According to him, although ILL has sent word that it intends to pay the said amount before the stipulated time today, if for any reason it fails to do so, the NCP will be left without any option but to announce the second winner as provided for by the law.

As part of the efforts to ensure a smooth transaction, he said the bureau has directed the firm to pay the said amount into an extrude account in the New York branch of Standard Chartered Bank.

It would be recalled that during the financial bids opening held last month, ILL had pledged to pay \$1.317 billion for NITEL 51 per cent shares.

At the conclusion of negotiations and signing of the transaction document between the company, BPE, NITEL and the NCP, ILL was given till the close of business today in New York to pay the 10 per cent.

The balance of \$1.185 billion, representing 90 per cent of the total bid price will be paid within the next 90 days.

El-Rufai also said yesterday, that NCP has already forwarded a proposal

to the president for approval of a plan that would enable BPE manage the transition of NITEL between now and the period the new owners would take over.

The proposal entails plans that would ensure the

efficient and effective management of NITEL during the interim period, while at the same time facilitating the smooth handover of the company when the final payment was effected in February, 2002.

...denies N10bn budget for airways

The Bureau of Public Enterprises, (BPE) has denied reports that it proposed to the federal government a budgetary allocation of N10 billion for the Nigeria Airways Limited (NAL).

There were reports in a section of the media (Not Daily Trust) that as part of a deliberate policy to make the ailing national carrier attractive to potential buyers,



Kema Chikwe, Aviation Minister.

BPE had written to the president advising on the need to incorporate NAL into year 2002 budget.

But, el-Rufai said at a press briefing yesterday, in Abuja, that there had never been any proposal to that effect, adding that such insinuations were the handiwork of mischief makers who simply want to blackmail the government.

"BPE did not at any time request or make any recommendation that the sum of \$100 million be released to the airline, as it has consistently advised the federal government against

As the federal government prepares to privatise Nigeria Ports Authority (NPA), the President-General of Maritime Workers Union, Comrade Onikolease Irabor, has urged the workers to be ready to battle government over the proposed sale.

The President-General who met the NPA workers a day after he met with the Minister of Transport, Chief Ojo Maduekwe, said the government has concluded arrangements and insisted on

Maritime workers dare FG over sale of NPA

From Tokumbo Oloke, in Lagos

getting the authority privatised.

Irabor, therefore, implored the workers to face their duty squarely and make sure they do not engage in any other business aside their statutory business because, according to him, government has set up various machineries to use as a ploy to witchhunt workers of NPA using it as an excuse for their privatisation strategy.

"I told him (minister) that the security of the country is no longer guaranteed and that the hope of over 10,000 pensioners will be shattered and that 75 per cent of our workforce will be affected if the authority is privatised of which the minister declined to," he added.

"If the port is privatised, we will asked everybody to stay at home, all the government agencies will be sent out of the port while the port gates will be put under lock and key and anybody found in the port will be dealt with.

We are ready to be imprisoned and we are ready to sacrifice our lives for the sake of millions of Nigerians working in NPA," he added.



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 N24,333.013 million will be issued by an auction-based system on Thursday, 20/12/2001.

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, 18/12/2001.

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

Tenders for the Bills should be submitted on the prescribed printed forms in duplicate and in sealed envelopes clearly marked "TENDER FOR BILLS". The result of the tender will be announced before the close of business on Tuesday, 18/12/2001. The Bank reserves the right to reject any tender in part or in full.

Allotment letters will be issued to successful tenderers on Wednesday, 19/12/2001. 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 20/12/2001. This will normally be effected by direct debit to the accounts of the affected Authorized Dealers which should ensure that their accounts with the Bank are adequately funded for this purpose.

PUBLIC DEBT OFFICE
CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA
TINUBU SQUARE
LAGOS.

Ambassador Kwande cautions on privatisation

The Chairman, Board of Directors of National Insurance Corporation of Nigeria (NICON), Ambassador Yahaya Kwande, has advised the federal government against selling off all public utilities in the country to foreigners who may seize the opportunity to exploit the nation's populace.

Speaking in Jos, at a



Atiku Abubakar, NCP Chairman.

From Buhari Bello, in Jos

sensitisation workshop organised by the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) in collaboration with Media Trust Limited, the NICON boss, said that there are some "dubious" foreigners who are waiting to seize the advantage of the people's ignorance on the exercise.

"The federal government should be very careful on who is to be co-investor in these enterprises slated for privatisation in the ongoing exercise. The carefulness of who to choose as a partner in this exercise should be done systematically so that you do not fail," he said.

According to him, unless there are committed business partners from abroad, the running of such public enterprises earmarked for sale would fall into the wrong hands.

Said he, "they should possess the capability of turning around the fortunes

of such enterprises and the technical know-how in relation to their activities."

In addition, the PDP chieftain stressed that such foreign investors who are going to participate in the second phase of the exercise must have the financial muscle not only to pay competitive prices "but also to turn-round their fortunes using their own resources without relying on the government for funds."

Such strategic identification of foreign investors, Ambassador Kwande, stressed should be done to give direction, focus and competence in each management of the company privatised.

According to him, the ongoing privatisation is an opportunity created by the government and called on all people of Plateau State to participate in the exercise by investing in the enterprises slated for privatisation in the second phase.

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NEWS

Accident claims 14 lives

No fewer than 14 people lost their lives while six others sustained various degrees of injuries in a ghastly motor accident, which occurred near Kadauri village in Maru Local Government Area of Zamfara State.

An eyewitness said the

From Salsu Zakari Maradun, in Gusau

accident occurred at about 4.30 am on Saturday when the driver of the vehicle lost control and plunged the vehicle into the river.

The eyewitness also said 14 of the 20 passengers on board died instantly.

The Divisional Police

Officer (DPO) in charge of Maru Local Government, Mr. David Okudu, who confirmed this to *Daily Trust*, said most of the deceased were traders from Kanwar-Daji who were going to Illela market in Sokoto State for business purposes.

Mr. Okudu disclosed that while the survivors are receiving treatment at the Gusau Federal Medical Centre, the corpses of the dead have been deposited at the centre's mortuary.

The DPO further advised the general public to come to Gusau Medical Centre to identify the corpses of the deceased, as those not identified or claimed would be buried according to Islamic rites.

Afenifere condemns Obasanjo's assent of Electoral Bill

National Publicity Secretary of *Afenifere*, the pan Yoruba socio-political association, Prince Dayo Adeyeye, has condemned President Olusegun Obasanjo's approval of the controversial, electoral bill saying, "The president's action is injurious to the growth of the country's nascent democracy."

Prince Adeyeye told *Daily Trust* in an exclusive interview Monday in Lagos, that the National Assembly and presidency were, through the "obnoxious law," pushing the country towards a one party state.

"The electoral law, as

From Samson Ojo, in Lagos

passed by the National Assembly and assented to by the president, has made it impossible for the new political parties to make any appreciable impact in the 2003 polls by virtue of the order of the elections. And this is injurious to our democratic health," the Publicity Secretary said.

Prince Adeyeye disclosed that "the law would make it difficult for the Alliance for Democracy (AD) to participate beyond the 2003 general elections, by reason of its undemocratic clauses."

His words: "The whole thing is a fraud and a

calculated attempt by Obasanjo and his military apologists to circumvent the constitution. The president, through his action, appears not to be interested in democracy."

The *Afenifere* publicity scribe equally condemned President Obasanjo's directive that aggrieved governors should go to court saying, "he is making a mockery of the Nigerian people by asking them to go to court when he had deliberately decided to circumvent our constitution."

RAMADAN 27 1422H (Wed 12 Dec, 2001)

P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. A.M. A.M.
Ishai Magrib Asar Zuhur Fitar-rana Alfijir

7.04 6.09, 3.34, 12.29, 6.38, 5.23

The above represents the earliest times of the daily obligatory prayer for Kaduna. Below are the times variations in respect of named towns.

Zuhur variations can serve for Asar prayer while those in respect of Magrib could do well for Ishai.

TOWNS	المغرب Magrib Minutes	الظهر Zuhur Minutes	الاجرة Alfijir Minutes
Aba	+9	0	-9
Abakaliki	+10	+3	-4
Abeokuta	+23	+17	+11
Abuja	+4	+1	-1
Akure	+14	+9	+4
Argungu	+7	+11	+15
Ankpa	+4	-1	-8
Auchi	+11	+5	-1
Azare	-13	-11	-9
Bama	-27	-25	+23
Bauchi	-9	-9	-9
Benin	+15	+8	+1
Bichi	-6	-3	0
Bida	+9	+6	+4
Birnin Kebbi	+10	+13	+16
Biu	-19	19	-19
Calabar	+6	-3	-12
Damaturu	-21	-18	-16
Daura	-8	-4	0
Dutse	-10	-7	-5
Enugu	+7	0	-7
Funtua	-1	+1	+2
Gombe	-15	-15	-15
Gumi	+6	+9	+11
Gusau	-1	+2	+4
Gwadabawa	+4	+9	+13
Hadejia	-13	-10	-7
Ibadan	+19	+14	+9
Ife	+17	+12	+7
Ilorin	+15	+12	+9
Jalingo	-13	-16	-18
Jere	+1	-1	-2
Jos	-5	-6	-7
Kafanchan	-1	-3	-5
Kalama	+15	+13	+12
Kafin Maiyeki	-6	-3	-1
Kano	-7	-4	-2
Katsina	-4	0	+4
Kontogora	+8	+8	+8
Lafiya	-2	-5	-8
Lagos	+23	+16	+9
Lokoja	+7	+3	-1
Maiduguri	-26	-23	-21
Makurdi	+1	-4	-9
Minna	+6	+4	+2
Misau	-15	-13	-12
Mubi	-24	-24	-24
Nguru	-16	-12	-8
Okene	+10	+5	0
Ogbomoso	+17	+13	+9
Onitsha	+11	+3	-5
Oyo	+18	+14	+10
Port Harcourt	+11	+2	-7
Potiskum	-17	-15	-13
Segamu	+21	+15	+9
Saki	+19	+16	+13
Sokoto	+5	+9	+13
Umuahia	+9	0	-9
Wukari	-6	-9	-13
Wurno	+3	+8	+12
Warri	+16	+7	-2
Yola	-18	-20	-22
Zaria	-2	-1	0
Cotonou - Benin	+27	+20	+13
Ndjamena - Chad	-33	-30	-28
Niamey - Niger	+16	+21	+25
Zinder - Niger	-12	-8	-1
Yaounde - Cameroun	-5	-16	-26

Lawmaker tasks Gov Lawal on campus killings

Following the unconfirmed reports at the weekend that 10 students of Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin, were killed in rival cult fights at Elekoyangan Zango and Osun, all suburbs in the state capital, a lawmaker in the State House of Assembly, Engr. Olayiwola Ayinde, AD, (Molete/Ipaye constituency) in Moro Local Government, has asked Governor Lawal to wade into the matter.

"I want to appeal to the state government and all Kwarans to rise up and put a stop to the incessant cult activities in the state polytechnic because it is disrupting the socio-economic life of the people in the area.

"I went there the other day and found out that the whole of Elekoyangan which is in my constituency is virtually a ghost town," Engr. Ayinde said.

The lawmaker added that "anybody who saw the extent of destruction in last week's incident will certainly not feel too happy that our institution is turning into a place where people cannot obtain knowledge under a peaceful environment."



Gov. Mohammed Lawal.

From Abdul Laro, in Ilorin

Describing the situation as grave, Engr. Ayinde said he would raise the issue on the floor of the House in the hope that the assembly would come up with an effective solution to the

menace of cultism in the institution.

He appealed to the police command to put in place an effective monitoring team on the campus saying, a situation where students are allowed to carry guns freely within the institution was not good.



Pa Adesanya.

Mrs Tinubu commissions pioneer fertility clinic

The wife of the Lagos State Governor, Mrs. Oluremi Tinubu, will on December 19 commission OMNI Medical Centre and Advanced Fertility Clinic which now houses the pioneer fertility clinic in West Africa.

Other guests expected to declare the modern hospital open include the first ladies of Cross River, Edo, Delta, Ekiti, Ogun, Oyo, Ondo, Osun and Rivers States.

From Bright Ewulu, in Lagos

OMNI Medical Centre now houses the pioneer fertility clinic in West Africa, with the relocation of the Advanced Fertility Clinic from Surulere, Lagos to OMNI Medical Centre, Onikan, Lagos.

According to a statement by the Medical Director, Mrs B. Kayode, the clinic has "achieved 880 pregnancies from donor semen insemination and several babies from in-vitro

fertilization. The clinic has embryo-freezing facilities."

She disclosed that it is staffed with three gynaecologists, two paediatricians, four medical officers and visiting consultants in surgery, dietetics as well as a counsellor for its patients.

Speaking further, she stated that its back up facilities are excellent and includes ensuit facilities like telephone and intercom as well as generators to ensure constant power supply.

Council boss warn against bush burning

The Chairman of Rafi Local Government Area of Niger State, Alhaji Mohammed Ali, has warned the people of the area to desist from indiscriminate bush burning.

Alhaji Ali, who gave this warning in his office Sunday, advised people of the area to direct their energies toward productive ventures instead of burning bushes and in the process causing preventable damage to property and the environment.

According to him, frequent bush burning has led to soil infertility which has discouraged farming and encouraged the rural urban drift.

Alhaji Ali used the

From Kashim Sule, in Minna

occasion to condemn the attitude of some youths to hunting saying "hunting is a lazy route for a young man to take, the future is challenging and I'd rather they went to school to prepare themselves

better."

He accordingly warned that any body caught burning bushes or peoples' farms in the name of hunting for bush meat would be made to face the full wrath of the law.

Deputy Speaker to refund N1.2m

The embattled Deputy Speaker of the Zamfara State House of Assembly, Honourable Alhaji Abdulsalam Ahmed Asha, has been directed to refund N1.2 million to one Alhaji Hamisu Mohammed who bought the legislator's official car sometime last year.

The directive was part of the recommendation made by the committee that was set up by the House to investigate the scandal as well as retrieve the car.

Presenting the committee's report to the

From Salsu Zakari Maradun, in Gusau

House Committee, the chairman of the committee, Alhaji Garba M.T. Maradun, said that during the investigation, the committee found out that the first buyer of the car bought it at the cost of N2.1 million.

According to him, the first buyer later sold it to one Alhaji Mohammed Sani Ali at the cost of N2.2 million and later also disposed of the vehicle to a local government chairman in Jigawa State at the cost of N2.3 million.

NEWS

Briefs Cross River

More than five persons were reportedly killed and seven others wounded when the Oku Iboku militia allegedly attacked the Ikot Offiong refugee camp at Usung Esuk Odot in Odukpani local government area of Cross River State.

Zamfara

Governor Ahmad Sani of Zamfara State has appealed to the beneficiaries of the ZAPA loan Scheme Programme to fear Allah and settle the loan in time so that the state can forge ahead with its developmental projects.

The governor made the appeal at the occasion of the Friday Special Preaching which was organised by the state government in conjunction with the State Ministry for Religious Affairs, held at the Ali Akilu square, Gusau.

Katsina

The Faskari Local Council in Katsina State, has inaugurated a committee to mediate in the perennial clashes between farmers and herdsmen in the area.

The District Head of Mai Ruwa, Malam Sabo Sambo, was killed in a similar incident three years ago.

Alhaji Muhammad Umar, the council chairman, said the action was promoted by recent clashes between farmers and Fulani herdsmen at Kankia, Kusada and Matazu local government areas, during which seven people were killed and several others injured.

Jalingo

President Obasanjo has said the decision to establish stations of the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) in various parts of the country is to enhance distance learning.

Inaugurating the N358 million Taraba Television (TTV) in Jalingo at the weekend, Obasanjo reiterated government's desire to provide education to its citizens.

Kano

The Kano State Governor, Engineer Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso, has stated that his administration has not borrowed money from any financial institution to execute projects in the state.

Kwankwaso made the statement while briefing the gathering of journalists and labour leaders during Ramadan fasting break fast at Government House.

Chairman advises indigenes to be law-abiding

By Simon Imobo-Tswam

As political activities gathered momentum preparatory to 2003, indigenes of Keffi Local Government Area in Nassarawa State, have been advised to be law abiding and loyal to constituted authority.

The executive chairman, Keffi Local Government Area, Captain Ibrahim Abdullahi (rtd.) gave the advice at a special dinner with prominent indigenes of the local government under the auspices of Concerned Citizens Keffi (CCK), to mark the Ramadan fast.

"You should be loyal to the government, you should maintain law and order, you should join hands with government in the task of nation-building and you should be alert as 2003 approaches so that you will be able to check the activities of anti-social elements who may wish to disturb public peace." Captain Abdullahi said.

He thanked the CCK members for accepting his invitation for the dinner and urged them to sustain their support and cooperation for his administration.

Representing the CCK chairman, Alhaji Ibrahim Gangaren Tudu, condemned the local government boss for bringing the dividends of democracy to the people of Keffi since assumption of office more than two years ago.

His words: "We are thanking you for the job well done and may God give you long life to continue as chairman for the next six years".

Also speaking at the occasion, the Publicity Secretary, Alhaji Biliya Usman, described the chairman as "a good leader who should not be in a hurry to leave office."

"We are proud to be associated with your laudable achievements," the publicity secretary added.

Public officers urged to declare assets

From Abdulfatah Abdulsalami, in Sokoto

Public officers and civil servants in Sokoto State have been directed to declare their assets at the office of the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB).

This directive was given by the acting Governor of the state, Alhaji Aliyu Magatakarda Wamakko, while welcoming the National Chairman of Code of Conduct, Bureau (CCB) to his office at the weekend.

The acting governor also directed the Head of Service to, as a matter of urgency, ensure that officers in the state's civil service comply

with the directive by declaring their assets to the bureau with immediacy.

Alhaji Wamakko promised the chairman of the board and his team that the state government was willing to cooperate with the bureau for the actualisation of its objectives.

The acting governor commended the activities of the bureau, saying its fight "for transparency was a step in the right direction, most especially at this period when Nigeria is trying to fight corruption in its public life."

Speaking earlier, the leader of the team, Navy Captain E.E. Nsan explained that its nationwide tour was to acquaint themselves with the state of affairs and operational modalities of the bureau countrywide.

Captain Nsan accused some officials in the Sokoto State's civil service of not cooperating with the bureau's staff in the state and called on such officials to immediately declare their assets in line with the laid down rules and regulation of the bureau.

The chairman then appealed to the acting

governor to assist the bureau with a vehicle to enhance the performance of its activities in the state.



Gov. Bafarawa

Dress code triggers violent protest

Attempts by the Government Authorities of Girls Secondary School, Riyom, in Plateau, to enforce a dress code at the weekend resulted in a violent demonstration by the students, leading to the destruction of government and private property worth thousands of naira.

The rampage also led to some students sustaining injuries, while staff of the college had to flee to escape being lynched by the students.

School sources told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) that the Principal, Mrs. Oyal David, had warned the students the previous day against violating the dress code, as a result of which some of them decided to resist attempts by some teachers to enforce the code.

NAN learnt that some of the principal actors, mostly senior students, had been handed over to

the police.

The chairman of the school's Parent/Teacher Association, Mr. David

Sele, said the incident had set back efforts to raise the standard of education at the

institution.

He called on the state Ministry of Education to set up a committee to investigate the matter.

Fire wreaks havoc in Gwoza

From Abdullahi Bego, in Maiduguri

Property worth several millions of naira, including shops and five vehicles went up in flames in Gwoza town, Gwoza local government area of Borno State at the weekend when a loaded petroleum tanker hit a Peugeot 404 pick-up van and went up in flames.

The tanker was reportedly heading towards Maiduguri, the Borno State capital, from Yola, Adamawa State.

Daily Trust learnt that the Gwoza local government chairman, Alhaji Kamsulum Ibrahim, who arrived the scene of the accident, was nearly lynched when the people who gathered around the accident scene attacked him and his son inside his official car.

Our correspondent gathered that the mob

accused the chairman of non-performance and extravagance in the face of their object poverty.

It was gathered that while the chairman managed to

escape, it took the intervention of a detachment of mobile policemen undergoing training on the Gwoza Hills to rescue his son, who was beaten into a coma and as to bring the situation under control.

FRSC makes case for accident-free celebrations

From Yusha'u Adamu Ibrahim, in Kano

Drivers in Kano State have been advised to observe road safety regulations to reduce accidents in the state during the Sallah and Christmas festivities.

The Kano State Sector Commander, Federal Road Safety Commission, Mr. Bulus Darwang, who gave the advice while briefing newsmen during the public enlightenment campaign organised by the commission at Na'ibawa central motor part, that the programme is organised every year between the months of October and December all over the federation.

Mr. Darwang explained that the objective of conducting the campaign at this time of the year was to sensitise motorists on

safety measures during the Sallah and Christmas celebrations.

"My candid advice to motorists is that, they should avoid over-loading, dangerous driving and taking alcoholic drinks before driving, especially, at this chronic period of Sallah and Xmas" the sector commander said.

He also advised against driving at night, saying "driving at night is highly dangerous, because the drivers tend to sleep and loose control of their vehicles.

The accident which happened around Challawa bridge a few months ago is a good example."

Meanwhile the chairman of the National Union of

Road Transport Workers (NURTW), Kano State Chapter, Alhaji Isma'il Abdulkarim, praised the Federal Road Safety Commission for organising the campaign at this peak period and urged drivers to imbibe the culture of safe driving.



Musiliu Smith

NTA 2 CHANNEL 5 Victoria Island, Lagos Your reachout station PROGRAMME SCHEDULE	
TIME	WEDNESDAY
6.00-6.30	Aerobics
6.30-7.00	Peri. The Globe/ Cartoon
7.00-7.05	News
7.05-7.30	Reports
7.30-8.00	Traffic Watch
8.00-8.30	Humour on Ice
8.30-9.00	Crime Watch
9.00-9.30	Golden Cage(B)
9.30-10.00	Motor Magazine
10.00-10.10	
10.10-10.30	SNOOPS
10.30-10.45	SNOOPS
10.45-11.00	
11.00-12.00	One on One
12.00-12.30	Family Matters
12.30-1.00	Airborne(sp)
1.00-1.30	Super Story
1.30-2.00	(sp)
2.00-2.15	News of the Hour(N)
2.15-2.30	Expose®
2.30-3.00	SuperHighway®
3.00-3.30	SuperHighway®
3.30-4.00	Sledge Hammer
4.00-4.30	News Update
4.30-5.00	Talking Finger (N) Live
5.00-5.30	Talk French(N)
5.30-6.00	On Wheels(sp)
6.00-6.30	Business&National Events(sp)
6.30-7.00	IT Impact(sp)
7.00-7.30	News at Seven
7.30-8.00	Today's Woman(sp)
8.00-8.30	Maggi Family Menu(N)
8.30-9.00	Strides(N)
9.00-10.00	NetworkNews
10.00-10.30	Sport Stars(N)
10.30-11.00	Household of God®sp
11.00-11.30	Jazz House II
11.30-12.00	Energy Summit(N)
12.00-12.30	Newscape
12.30-1.00	
1.00-1.30	Super Movies
1.30-2.00	Hour
1.00-2.00	NBA Action
2.00-2.30	
2.30-3.30	Ramadan
3.30-4.30	Diet
4.30-5.00	Live
5.00-6.00	



INSIDE POLITICS

Briefs

Kogi

Strong indication emerged during the weekend that the incumbent Executive Governor of Kogi State, Prince Abubakar Audu, have a strong opponent to contest with should he want to stage a come back in the 2003 election.

The vice-chairman, Senate Committee on Science and Technology and also Cooperation Integration in Africa, member, Board of Trustee of the ruling party - PDP, Senator Ahmed T. Ahmed declared his intention in an exclusive press chat with our reporter at the weekend.

B/Kebbi

The Kebbi State Independent Electoral Commission (KESIEC) yesterday released the overall results of the referendum conducted in all the 12 proposed local government areas of the state.

The state Electoral Chairman, Alhaji Ja'afaru Muhammed Zagga, also disclosed that all referendum were conducted peacefully except in the proposed Ambursa/Kardi local government which is to be carved out of the present Birnin-Kebbi local government, where the people of Zauro staged a demonstration.



Vice-President Atiku Abubakar

Legislator challenges women on democracy

The only female legislator in the Adamawa House of Assembly, Mrs. Rhoda Bugi, has challenged women to ensure the sustenance of democracy in Nigeria. Presenting a paper on "harmful practices against women" in Yola at the weekend, Bugi said: "there would be gross reduction in corruption if women were given the leadership of this country."

She explained that the "get-rich-quick syndrome" was found mostly in men whose personal interests were always placed above the interest of the electorate.

The lawmaker pointed out that the active participation of women in politics would also give them

NULGE chairmen against reckless spending

In a 10-point communiqué issued at the end of its executive meeting in Gombe at the weekend, the chapter warned that "the union will no longer fold its arms and see public funds being wasted by a few individuals."

The communiqué, signed by the union's President, Baba Ahmed, cautioned the council chairmen to ensure that only projects that had direct

bearing on the people were executed. It said: "we will not condone any act that is capable of tarnishing the image of the local government system in the state."

"For the electorate and workers to fully enjoy the benefits of democracy, there must be absolute sanity in the spending habits of local government councils."

The union directed that all council chairmen who were yet to settle staff salaries and other outstanding benefits should

and all sorts of evil, they must fight it out at the political arena," she added.

Bugi urged women to shun ethnic and religious sentiments as they suffered most from the consequences of communal conflicts "which reduce them to widows with a lot of children to cater for."

do so before December 31.

The communiqué urged council chairmen, ministry of local government affairs, local government service commission and local government pensions board to "work hand-in-hand" to ensure the sustenance of the local government system through checks and balances.

The union urged the senate, minister of labour and productivity, minister of intra-local government affairs and others who had contributed to the suspension of the NULGE strike to reciprocate the gesture by persuading the Federal Government to address the union's demands.

Civilian elections: "Obasanjo's challenge"

Transition to another civilian government come year 2003 has been described as a litmus test for the President Olusegun Obasanjo-led administration.

Giving the observation is a chieftain of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Chief Niyi Adegbenro, in a chat with our correspondent in Abeokuta on Tuesday, observed that our problem has been transiting from civilian to civilian, saying "this will be another test for Obasanjo."

His words: "We have achieved much from transiting from military to civilian. But unfortunately it has been very difficult for us to transit from civilian to civilian. This will be another test for Obasanjo."

"When he (Obasanjo) was military head of state, he

From Olumide Bajulaiye, in Abcokuta

did perfectly. But with the situation on ground, one continues to pray that by 2003, God would have taken control, and touched the minds of the aggrieved ones especially in the PDP."

While suggesting the way out, the former finance commissioner in the Third Republic pointed out that if the president and that National Assembly could work firmly together, the transition programme would go on smoothly irrespective of whatever differences.

"But if the government and the parliamentarians are not in serious good time look at what is happening in America, the government is doing its job, the Senate is doing its job, but when it comes to national interest, they came together."

We have failed — Lawmaker

From Abdul Laro, in Ilorin

Member of the Kwara State House of Assembly, Hon. Jimoh Agboola, (AD) Ilorin South on Monday admitted that the House had failed in its constitutional duty on budget monitoring.

Contributing to deliberations on budget 2002 on the floor of the House, Agboola said "even some projects budgeted for the House were not executed," adding that they need to sit up because a lot is still required to be done.

In his contribution, Hon. Aboki Umar, (APP) from Banni/Adena constituency, alerted that "I don't know whether I and my colleagues will be allowed back to our community after our tenure because of the neglect of our areas arising from abandoned projects."

He mentioned among others some abandoned and uncompleted clinics and television viewing centers which would have been replaced with execution of good roads in the area.

Hon. Umar called on the executive to provide adequate information on the 2001 budget and the level of execution before deliberations on budget 2002 could begin.

In his comment, Hon. Bello Emmanuel, AD (Ejidongeri constituency) said projects that do not have any bearing on the people should be expunged from the 2002 budget and wondered why nothing had been done on the housing units built two years ago by the government.

Lagos IEC commends staggered elections

From Bose Musari, in Lagos

The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), Lagos, has commended the National Assembly for recommending a two-week interval between all categories of elections in the new electoral bill signed into law by President Olusegun Obasanjo last week.

INEC Public Relations Officer in Lagos State, Mr. Ayodele Folami, who gave the commendation in a chat with *Daily Trust* said the two weeks interval would minimize the serious electoral problems that would have emanated from the exercise if they are all conducted in a day.

Mr. Folami added that problems could arise due to the level of illiteracy in the country. According to him, some officers are not literate enough to handle seven ballot papers in a day.

"There could be a lot of void votes and crises resulting from mutual counting," he said.

He stated that with the interval, the exercise would be very smooth rather than when all the elections are conducted the same day.

Speaking on INEC's preparation for the 2003 election, Mr. Folami said the commission has made a major progress by making provision for the computerization of the next electoral register.

He added that series of workshops were being organised for officials in this line to ensure a hitch-free election.

Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria VACANCIES

Applications are invited from Nigerian candidates who possess the minimum qualifications specified below, for the following vacant positions in the service of the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria:

1. TRANSPORT OFFICER:

Qualifications: (a) WASSC or GCE "O" Level in a minimum of four (4) Subjects with Credit in English Language and at least a Pass in Mathematics; plus (b) a minimum of OND or Equivalent qualification in Transport Management or Mechanical Engineering; plus (c) a valid and current driving licence; plus (d) Not less than five (5) years cognate experience.

2. COMPUTER OPERATORS:

Qualifications: (a) WASSC or GCE "O" Level in a minimum of five (5) Subjects obtained in not more than two sittings with at least Credit in English Language and Mathematics; plus (b) OND or equivalent qualification in Computer Science or Computer Studies obtained from a Government-recognised Institution; Plus (c) Not less than three (3) years cognate experience in a reputable organisation.

3. STORE-KEEPER:

Qualifications: (a) WASSC or GCE "O" Level in a minimum of five (5) Subjects Obtain in not more than two sittings with at least Credit in English Language and Mathematics; plus (b) OND or equivalent qualification in Purchasing and Supplies from a Government-recognised Institution; plus (c) Not less than five (5) years cognate experience in a reputable organisation.

4. MOTOR DRIVERS:

Qualifications: (a) A minimum academic qualification of First School Leaving Certificate; plus (b) valid and current driving licence. (c) Trade Test Certificate will be an advantage. (d) Minimum of Five (5) years working experience and evidence of ability to drive long distances.

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Condition of service are as in the Federal Civil Service.

Application in candidates own handwriting, with all necessary supporting documents are to be sent to reach the Council not later than Twenty-one (21) days from the date of this publication to:



The Registrar,
Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria,
8th Floor, Federal Secretariat Phase I,
Ikoyi, P.M.B, 12611 Lagos.

REGISTRAR
MEDICAL & DENTAL COUNCIL OF NIGERIA



Gov Mohammed Lawal

This space is for sale

End of electricity problem in sight in satellite towns - Page 22

Archbishop urges respect for civil rights - Page 22

Senate to convene public hearing on housing - Page 23

FHA, bank offer 1,000 housing units at Gwarinpa - Page 23



Edited by Kevin Ebele Adinnu

Eight-year-old in court over N.1m theft

By Zakari Suleiman

An eight-year-old boy, Kelechi Goddy, and 27-year-old Mrs Charity Emmanuel Ogore, have been arraigned before the Abuja Magistrate Court for stealing one hundred thousand naira.

According to the police First Information Report (FIR), the two accused, all from Keffi town in Nasarawa State, conspired and forcefully damaged the door of a vehicle with registration number AR 91 NSR belonging to Mr. Tijani Muktar of O.A.U. quarters, Asokoro.

The vehicle was parked at the corner shop in Asokoro where the accused allegedly stole the sum of one hundred thousand naira and were caught with the money on the spot.

They were charged with conspiracy, mischief and theft, contrary to section 287 of the penal code. They pleaded guilty and were bailed in the sum of N100,000.



Meat sellers make brisk business while the market burns... Monday.

Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje.

WUSE NEW MARKET INFERNO

Minister pledges relief for victims

Minister of Federal Capital Territory, Engr. Muhammed Abba-Gana, has pledged relief materials to victims of the Abuja New Market fire

disaster. He disclosed this when he visited the market to assess the extent of damage done by the harmattan fire, which raged for several hours.

The minister who was moved by the extent of damage caused by the daytime inferno said that the FCT administration would get the number of affected traders.

Addressing the victims, he assured them that a modern market would soon be built in Abuja.

According to him, President Olusegun Obasanjo had already given a directive

to this effect.

Engr. Abba-Gana said the current fire disaster would only accelerate the implementation of that presidential directive which was given during the president's recent tour of the FCT.

The FCT minister described the fire incident as very unfortunate. Millions of

naira worth of goods were destroyed in the inferno.

Those who accompanied the minister during his visit to the market included the Permanent Secretary of MFCT, Dr. Babangida Aliyu, the Executive Secretary of Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA), Engr. Charles Dorgu, the Director of Land, Alhaji Sani Kalgo and the Director of Planning, Survey and Development Control, Mr. J.J. Sambo.

The fire, which started at about 10.30 am on Monday, according to unconfirmed accounts, was triggered by a faulty generator or a restaurant fire.

NEPA registers 9,000 new customers in Abuja

NEPA in Abuja has entered 9,000 new customers into its records since the authority began a nationwide census of consumers in August.

Among those registered were squatters in Gwarinpa and other settlements where consumers hooked onto power supply without informing NEPA, according to Mr. Edward Ikwu, General Manager for Distribution and Marketing for the Abuja zone.

Ikwu told newsmen in Abuja yesterday that anyone found to consume power illegally after the exercise would be prosecuted, and enjoined illegal consumers to take advantage of the census to save themselves from embarrassment.

The general manager explained that part of the duties of the registration officials was to educate customers on the fact that there was no way the

authority could continue to provide effective services if bills remained unpaid.

Ikwu said the registration of new customers had boosted revenue generation, pointing out that his office currently generated N200 million monthly, against N140 million before the census.

He assured Abuja residents that the power situation would continue to improve with new distribution transformers being installed, while the commissioning of two new power generation plants in Abuja was expected to boost power supply in the new capital.

The Aggreko power plant at Katampe and the geometric power plant at Sharp Corner, Garki, are expected to generate 30 megawatts.

The general manager dismissed fears that the Revenue Cycle Management (RCM) scheme, through which NEPA has concluded

plans to privatise its revenue generation, would retard progress.

"Sometimes we disconnect some big customers and they use their influence to force us to reconnect them, but with the RCM, they can't force such reconstructions as the companies' remuneration is a percentage of their generation," he said.

He cited the so-called "sensitive customers" as most guilty of such acts, saying that the RCM scheme would give no such recognition.

As part of efforts to carve a new image for the authority, Ikwu said that NEPA staff were being educated on ways to remain customer-friendly.

He warned the staff against unwholesome practices, and particularly cautioned officials in undertaking stations against extorting money, from customers on the pretext of supplying transformers.



Engr. Muhammed Abba-Gana, FCT Minister.

Abuja Trust

News

NEPA moves to address power problems in satellite towns

The problem of power failure in satellite towns of the Federal Capital Territory may soon be over as NEPA has taken steps to stabilise electricity supply to the affected settlements.

Its General Manager for distribution and marketing in the Abuja zone, Mr. Edward Ikwu, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abuja yesterday that special arrangements have been made to bring blackouts to an end in the areas.

A project to facilitate the end of blackouts in the areas would be inaugurated next Monday by Vice-President Atiku Abubakar, Ikwu said.

A similar project dedicated to major consumers like NICON and Sheraton Hotels, the NNPC, the Federal Secretariat and some emerging companies, was inaugurated in September.

Ikwu said Kubwa was receiving special attention in the distribution of electric power and added that a 132/33 KVA transformer has been installed at Dutse Alhaji, near Kubwa to transfer power to Kubwa, Bwari and Gwarinpa housing estates.

He said two major projects were currently being executed to provide relief substations and ensure that nothing was left to chance.

Ikwu also said NEPA was providing a separate feeder for Karu and Nyanya at the other end of the federal capital, saying a 2/15 MVA 33/11 KVA transformer was being installed as a relief distribution substation to augment the Karu injection station.

The General Manager assured that consumers from the said areas would "see a different NEPA" at the end of the year and called on consumers to ensure that their bills were promptly settled to give NEPA the financial muscle to meet the nation's power demands.

He blamed NEPA's current woes on "several decades of neglect," saying many areas lacked transmission lines, substations, distribution transformers and switch circuits, but assured that the problems were being tackled following the renewed attention to power supply by President Olusegun Obasanjo.

In October, Kubwa

residents had stormed NEPA's district office and threatened to "cause havoc" if the power situation in their area did not improve.

NEPA has a mandate to generate 4,000 MW and end power outage by December 31, 2001, a mandate the president has continued to insist would be met.

Star Paper Mills, one of the leading paper manufacturers and converters held its 2001 annual customers forum in Abuja last week. The event whose objectives, among others, was to enhance effective marketing communication and direct link between the company's management and customers, witnessed the award of various prizes to customers in the northern zone.

Speaking at the occasion, the company's Executive Director, Legal and Corporate Affairs, Mr. Robert Nnanna Kalu,

Star Paper Mills honours northern customers

By Yakubu Ozohu-Suleiman

expressed appreciation to the customers in the Northern zone for their patronage, adding that the company had made it a part of its duty to collect data on individual corporate customers' purchases. The customers in the north, he said, performed better than their south-western counterparts in terms of purchases of the company's

various products.

The director further spoke on the problems that confront the industrial sector in the country: "Running an industry in Nigeria has been a very difficult thing. We are faced with problems of lack of basic infrastructure, such as electricity and water. In most cases, companies have to procure power plants of their own which itself requires fuel. The fuel, on the other hand presents another problem because it is often scarce.

"We also face a problem of free movement of products across borders. From state to state, even local government borders, all manners of taxes are demanded from us, even when we have paid the same taxes earlier to the local government of your operation. This tends to contradict the law, which says that such taxes should be paid only to the local government where a company is based. So we would make nonsense of the law if we have to pay taxes to over 700 local government fees ranging from 10,000 to 15,000."

"But certain recalcitrant local government authorities set out things to block roads and seize tyres, jacks and other vehicle parts to detain them and force them to pay the taxes."

The company's marketing manager, Mr. Jerry Umennia who reviewed the trading activities of the company and appraised the performances of the distributors to improve on their purchases.

Prizes ranging from cookers, video players, colour television sets and one of the company's products, star toilet tissue, were given out including the star prize, a 20-inch sharp colour television to customers.



The Nigerian Navy Band, Abuja, entertain guests at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja to welcome the Miss World, Agbani Darego last week.

Wives of LG chairmen should help in peace building - Ezeoke

Wives of local government chairmen in the country have been urged to use their positions to preach peace at the grassroots.

By Habiba Adamu

affairs and Youth Development, Hajia Hajjo Sani.

The president of the Culture for Development Foundation, Chief (Mrs) Tina Ezeoke, made the call at the first annual summit of the wives of local government chairmen in Abuja.

She said the wives of the local government vice-chairmen and councillors being the pivot of the family within the community should use their positions as lawmakers at the grassroots level to preach peace among the people.

"The women at the grassroots are the real people that can touch the heart of our communities. As wives of local government chairmen, they should mobilise other women in propagating peace.

Mrs Ezeoke lamented the various communal crises taking place in different parts of the country, adding that women could play a great role in bringing peace to the nation through preaching at the grassroots.

Papers presented at the three-day summit included "Culture, Tradition and the Imperative of the Girl Child education" delivered by the former Minister of Women

Onaiyekan urges respect for civil rights

By Godwin Tyonongo

The Archbishop of Abuja Catholic Archdiocese, Most Rev. John Onaiyekan, has called on political leaders to imbibe the culture of respecting the socio-economic rights of the citizenry.

Archbishop Onaiyekan, who spoke at a holy mass to commemorate the silver jubilee of Rev. Fr. Matthew Kukah in Abuja recently, urged both the government and the private sector to wage serious war against poverty and unemployment.

The Silver Jubilee was later marked with the formal launching of 'project 1912' as initiated by Fr. Matthew Kukah at the National Universities Commission (NUC), Maitama, Abuja.

Project 1912 is a trust fund where scholarship could be awarded to brilliant but less privileged children.

The project inaugurated in 1996 in Lagos, has trained 18 students in different secondary schools.

Nigeria's former military leader, Gen. Ibrahim Babangida, who was

represented at the occasion, launched the 'project 1912' with the sum of N250,000 after extolling Kukah as being, courageous, generous and cerebral. IBB also urged Nigerians to assist the poor.

Speaking at the occasion, Rev. Fr. Kukah declared that on December 19 every year,

a mass would be celebrated to mark his ordination.

He, however, said "hopefully, we can shift the focus from this to the objective of the project itself which is to sensitise the beneficiaries on the need to share with other people and see them as God's children."

About N6 million was realised at the launching with

top government officials in attendance.

Dignitaries including Transport Minister, Chief Ojo Maduekwe, Mrs Kema Chikwe, Col. John Madaki (rtd.), Senator Durojaye, Ex. Police Affairs Minister, David Jimbewon were present at the occasion.

Abuja lacks befitting library - Omolayole

Authorities in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), have been urged to establish a befitting public library that would have enough space to accommodate the rising population of Abuja city.

Chief Executive of the National Library Board (NLB), Mrs. Olayemi Olubumi Omolayole, who spoke in an exclusive chat with *Abuja Trust* yesterday, complained about the small size of the only public library in Abuja, saying "it is most

inadequate."

"The library is small and over crowded as Abuja keeps growing everyday," she added.

She noted that with the increasing population of civil servants, businessmen and foreigners in the city, there was every need to expand.

According to her, the National Library in Abuja, was set up in 1964 as a reference centre to cater for the research purposes, hence, "it is not a proper library"

With the University of Abuja running external programmes, the Chief Executive expressed the belief that the opening up of more public libraries would enable the students take advantage to develop themselves.

On the promotion of reading culture in the city, Mrs. Olayemi appealed to government for information technology facilities like computer software and hardware in line with the new world information order.

She argued that without libraries, information would be lost."



Engr. Abba-Gana.

Abuja Trust

Habitat (Property and Environment Column)

Senate to convene public hearing on housing

— Committee Chairman

Senator Kura Mohammed is the Chairman, Senate Committee on Housing. In this interview with Nasir Imam of Abuja Trust, he comments on the challenges, the setbacks, disappointments and the focus of his committee.

Sir, could you highlight the activities of the Senate Committee on Housing?

Well, the Senate Committee on Housing is a body that supervises the general policy, governmental policy of the housing sector in Nigeria, particularly what the Federal Government is supposed to do in the housing sector by providing adequate shelter to the teeming Nigeria populace. Besides that, it is also the responsibility of the committee to ensure that whatever money that is allocated to the sector is judiciously used according to the laws of the land.

How effective is the work of your committee?

Well, to be honest, in as much as you say effectiveness, the committee is more or less a toothless bulldog. Toothless bulldog in the sense that, from the 1999 supplementary budget when we took over from the military till date, nothing substantial have been allocated to the sector, nothing that one could put his finger on. It was the National Assembly in its wisdom that lent N1 billion to the FHA for the year 2000, and out of that only about N500 million was given to them.

The Minister of State for

works recently complained that less than 30 per cent of their budget requirement for the year 2002 was provided for, do you think this is sufficient in addressing our housing needs?

Well, I don't know, which budget is he talking about. I don't have the breakdown of the 2002 budgetary allocation but I think that it was the housing sector of Federal Ministry of Works and Housing that was given 30 billion, we're yet to have the breakdown from the Federal Ministry of Finance i.e. sector by sector allocation, but I'm telling you to the best of my knowledge from 1999 till date, nothing have been put in the sector. Even when President Obasanjo came out with the supplementary budget for the FMWH of N20 billion, which was approved by the National Assembly, only N600 million was disbursed and this was meant for public buildings i.e. maintenance of public building i.e. property owned by the Federal Government all over the federation.

Not construction?

Not construction, what are you going to construct with N600 million, not N600 billion, its for maintenance of public building.

What efforts is your committee making, as a

matter of policy, to address this problem?

It is a major impediment, and there is very little the committee can do, because number one, it is the general policy of this administration, that is the Obasanjo administration, and we've agreed in principle that the budget is going to be a ceiling budget, such that whatever comes in, the committee don't have power to increase whatever proposal we receive.

There has been a lot of criticism on the Land Use Act of 1978, what is the position of your committee on that?

Well, the position of the committee is very clear. All I can say is that up till now we have not received one memo, one recommendation on the Land Use Act.

That is shocking...

I'm telling you, and if there's any association, I repeat, any association in the country that has sent us a memo, in respect of the Land Use Decree, I challenge that association, since I took over as the Chairman of the Senate Committee, which was last year, to come out and prove it.

We've heard of a proposal, by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, tagged Minimum Development

Infrastructure Bill. What is it all about?

You see, sincerely, before you provide houses, you should provide infrastructures, like roads,

problems in the mortgage industry?

Well, you see, this is where I want to educate members of the public, when we talk of what the Senate

you mentioned, which we have not received. If we had received memos from individuals, associations and stakeholders, that is where our committee would now try and see if we can make certain laws, like now we're still operating under that decree which we now call the Act of National Assembly.

Is the committee willing to accept memo from individuals too?

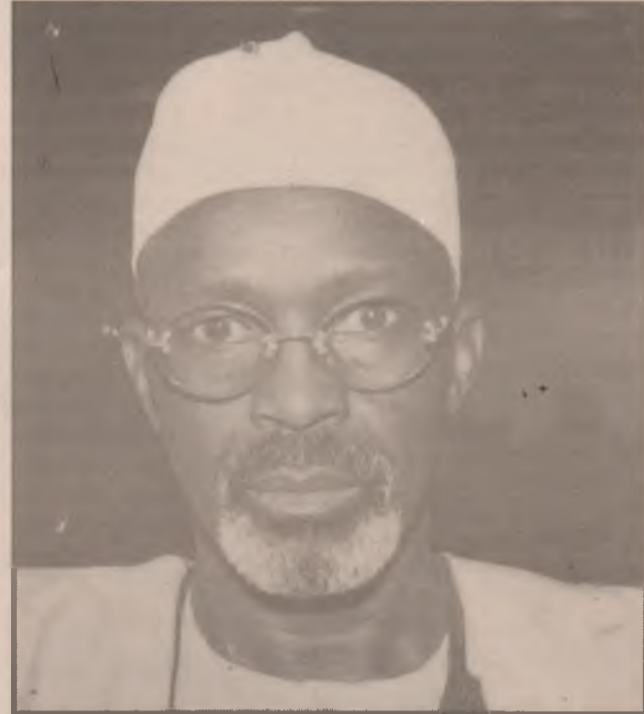
You have to receive an input from the outside, no matter what you have, why we are here is to listen to the cries and problems of Nigerians, irrespective of any sector, not only the housing sector, and that is why I'm called a Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. If you talk to me about power problem, I'll try to see what I can do, probably if the need arises for me to raise a motion on the floor of the senate, why not, I'll do it.

Any proposal in the pipeline?

Yes, the committee intends to call for a public hearing for the housing sector, where all the stakeholders would be invited, and it would be aired publicly.

How soon?

Well, I would not be in a position to tell you, but I know that we're now waiting for the Senate President's approval, the problem is logistics. By the time we put the whole package together and know how much it'll cost us then, we'll have a specific date.



Senator Kura Mohammed, Chairman, Senate Committee on Housing.

water, sewage, electricity, telephone, and all these are very essential, very, very important for the housing sector if you are going to provide houses. So we work, we co-ordinate on whatever the National Assembly proposes, at the end of the day, we have a joint meeting of the two committees would now sit down and harmonise whatever it is, if there are minor differences, we look into those differences and harmonise them.

What is your committee doing to address the

Committee is doing, the work of the legislature is to formulate laws, good laws, enabling laws that would govern the housing sector.

How many bills have been proposed in this regard?

You see, usually, 85 - 90 per cent of the bills come from the Federal Government, only maybe about 10 per cent come from private individuals, but as far as the SCH is concerned, we have not. It is of course our duty. Like now, the infrastructure bill or memo

Contract sewage lines to private firms

- Expert advises FG

By Tashikalmah Hallah

To curb the incessant collapse of sewage line in the city centre of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), the Federal Government has been advised to contract the maintenance of these sewage lines to reputable construction companies.

Mr. Festus Joshua, a chattered surveyor who gave the advise recently in an interview with *Abuja Trust*, opined that such action will save the sewage lines from breakages.

He explained that contracting private firms will assist in checkmating illegal development of properties as none of the construction companies contracted for the disposal of waste in the FCT would like to toil with their reputations.

Said he: "If they (government) contracted the waste disposal in the FCT, the contractor will now work out from a business orientation, and mindfully that he cannot over charge, the residents" because he has to base his data on the number of plots he has in that

neighbourhood. How much he can charge to recover his money, and the government should be aware of the prices being charged or constitute a regulatory agency," he added.

"And I am sure people like Berger (Julius Berger Nig. Plc), Setraco and people like all this big time contractors who are versed in construction would not object to it. They would be very pleased to be engaged in the disposal of waste in the city centre," Mr. Joshua stated.

He was optimistic that if the government implements this, Abuja would remain clean and free from the frequent cases of sewage breakages.

The master plan, he said, provides for central sewage schemes for the city and the satellite towns, which is aimed at ensuring that waste resulting from the usage of potable water is properly disposed without polluting

the environment.

To facilitate this sewage network, according to him, effort should be made to follow the natural drainage

and sub drainage basins designed to collect sewage from the neighbourhood through tertiary sewer lines, via secondary lines, to interceptor lines, and to the trunk lines for conveyance by gravity to the central treatment plant.

FHA, Prudent Bank offer 1,000 housing units at Gwarimpa

By Nasir Imam

The Federal Housing Authority (FHA), in partnership with Adkan Services Ltd. and Prudent Bank, are providing one thousand units of flats and duplexes at Gwarimpa II to the members of the public.

The Head, Corporate Affairs Prudent Bank, Mr. Ademola Akinlola, in a press release, stated that the estate has first class facilities constructed with care for the comfort and convenience of residents.

Facilities at the estate include covered concrete drains, tarred roads, potable water, steady electricity and an automated garage.

The properties include 3 bedroom flats tagged

(Bonny), 3 bedroom twin duplexes - (Badagry), 4 bedroom twin duplexes - (Masfa), 4 bedroom detached duplex (Maiwa) and 5 bedroom detached duplex (Abriba).

Mr. Akinlola said that prices of the houses range between N5 million to N20 million and application forms are obtainable from any branch of Prudent Bank.

Prudent Bank also offers specialised product called 'Home Ownership Scheme' in which 50 per cent of total cost is to be contributed by prospective owners while the balance is to be financed by the Bank.

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"	731	Shop @ Kubwa	N50,000.00
"	847	Mechanic shed @ Apo	N200,000.00
"	344	Land 2,500m ² @ CKK ext.	
"		Filling Station	N4million
"	F/27B	2 Hectre land at Shere farm and Bwai	N4million
"	F/27B	3,000.63m ² land at Kwali	N2million
"	EI	1,099.198m ² @ Asokoro	N5million
"	LD98	1,600 @ Guzaje district	N4million

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

Capital City Classified

Public Notice

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, GARKI, ABUJA

This is to inform the general public that the above named Organisation has applied for registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission under Part C of the Companies and Allied Matters Act of 1990.

The Trustees are:

1. Arc. Moses O. Kolajo (Chairman)
2. Pastor Israel A. Akanji
3. Rev. John A. Oguntona
4. Dr. James O. Daniel
5. Mr. Faluso K. Adeyefa
6. Mr. Samuel J. Tanko
7. Mr. Christopher S. Ajayi

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

Signed

C. S. Ajayi

Legal Adviser

*C.S. AJAYI LL.B (Hons) B.L. LL.H
Barrister & Solicitor*

Public Notice

The general public is hereby informed of missing document of Plot allocation belonging to **MADARASATUT TARBIYATU AL-ISLAMIYA OF KARU FCT ABUJA, with Plot Allocation No. 42 Karu Village Extension Layout Cadestral Zone 09-07 issued by FCDA Abuja.** Anybody who transact business with such document is doing it on his own risk.

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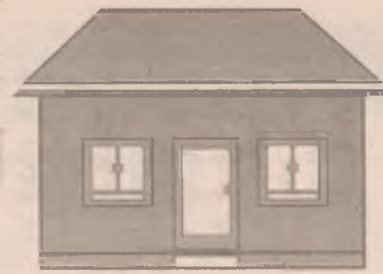
ATEMA - formerly known as **MISS EUNICE A. ATEMA**. Henceforth to be known and addressed as **MRS EUNICE A. ATOO-AKOH**. Former document remain valid. National Population Commission, Benue Polytechnic, Ugbokolo and the general public to please note.

I formerly **MISS JEMIMAH IVEREN IORUAM** wish to be known and addressd as **MRS JEMIMAH IVEREN BOMBO**. All former Documents remain valid. Staff of National Assembly and the General public to note.

I formerly called **MISS ESTHER DACHI AGBOR**, now to be called as **MRS ESTHER DACHI OMUNU**. All relevant documents remain valid. Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation and general public to note.

Formerly known as **BENITA UKEME ABIWANA** now wish to be known and called **EDIMA BENITA GEORGE-UFOT**, All previous document remain valid.

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UNDP

UNITED NIGERIA DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Motto: Equity, Peace and Prosperity

PRESS STATEMENT

7th December, 2001.

The attention of the UNDP has been drawn to the reports carried by major national dailies particularly the Tribune, the Guardian, the Comet and the Punch Newspapers, all of December 6th, 2001, confirming our fears that the Electoral Bill as passed by the Joint Committees of the Senate and House of Representatives have indeed been tempered with to deny the new political associations their constitutional right to participate in the 2003 general elections, even if they are registered as political parties. The worst fears were further confirmed by the unusual haste with which the President assented to the Bill barely within 24 hours of his receipt. The UNDP believes that the said section 80(2) of the doctored Bill is unconstitutional because it withdraws the rights of Nigerians as guaranteed in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, and therefore, not in the interest of order and good governance in Nigeria.

While we invite the attention of the patriotic members of the National Assembly and members of the general public to this regrettable and unconstitutional act, we call on all our teaming members and supporters nation-wide to remain calm and steadfast as all appropriate constitutional and legal measures are being pursued to ensure that our nascent democracy is not derailed on the altar of selfish interest.

All members and supporters of our great Party will be kept informed of developments at appropriate times.

Thank you.

Long Live the Federal Republic of Nigeria

Long Live Justice and Democracy

Long Live UNDP

Signed

MALLAM SALEH M. JAMBO

Protem National Chairman

United Nigeria Democratic Party (UNDP)

For the record

Electoral Law 2001 (II)

(f) by himself or any other person procures the registration of a fictitious person, commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding N100,000 or imprisonment not exceeding one year or both. (2) Any person who:

(a) by duress, including threat of any kind causes or induces any person or persons generally to refrain from registering as a voter or voters;

(b) in any way hinders a person from registering as a voter, commits an offence and is liable on conviction, to a fine not exceeding N200,000 or imprisonment not exceeding two years or both.

Part II: Procedure at election

CLAUSE 15: (1) Election-

(a) to the office of the President and vice-president and to the Senate and House of Representatives.

(b) to the office of Governor and Deputy Governor and House of Assembly of a State; and

(c) Chairman and Vice Chairman and members of a Local Government/Area Council; shall be held on the date appointed by the Commission.

(2) An election to the offices mentioned under sub-section (1)(a) of this Section shall be held on a date not earlier than 60 days and not later than 30 days before the expiration of the term of office of the last holder of that office.

(3) The date mentioned in sub-section (1) and (2) of this section shall not be earlier than 60 days before and not later than the date on which the House stands dissolved, or where the election is to fill a vacancy occurring more than three months before such date, not later than a month after the vacancy occurred.

(4) The dissolution of the Senate and the House of Representatives and the House of Assembly of a State shall be in accordance with the provisions of Sections 64 and 105, respectively of the Constitution and the dissolution of Local Government shall be in accordance with the provisions of Section 119 of this Act.

(5) The Commission shall not later than 150 days before the dates appointed in sub-section (1) and (2) of this section publish a notice stating the date of the election in each Constituency in respect of which an election is to be held.

(6) The elections to which this Act relates shall be held in the following order, namely:

(a) Federal Elections, that is to say, election to the office of president and vice-president, Senate and House of Representatives;

(b) State Elections to the office of Governor and Deputy-Governor and House of Assembly of a State and

(c) Local Government elections, that is to the office of Chairman, Vice-Chairman and members of a Local Government council to be appointed by the Commission

Provided that a period of not less than two weeks shall elapse between the Federal Elections and the State Elections and between State Elections and Local Government elections.

CLAUSE 16: (1) Where a date has been appointed for the holding of an election, and there is reason to believe that a serious



President Obasanjo

breach of the peace is likely, to occur if the election is proceeded with on that date or it is impossible to conduct the elections as a result of natural disasters or other emergencies, the Commission may postpone the election and shall in respect of the area, or areas concerned, appoint another date for the holding of the postponed election.

(2) Where an election is postponed under this Act on or after the last date for the delivery of nomination papers, and a poll has to be taken between the candidates then nominated the Electoral Officer shall on a new date being appointed for the election, proceed as if the date appointed were the date for the taking of the poll between the candidates,

(3) Where the Commission appoints a substituted date in accordance with Sub-sections (1) and (2) of this section, there shall be no return for the election until polling has taken place in the area or areas affected,

(4) Notwithstanding the provision of sub-section (3) of this section, the Commission may, if satisfied that the result of the election will not be affected by voting in the area or areas in respect of

which substituted dates have been appointed, direct that a return of the election be made.

(5) The decision of the Commission under subsection (4) above may be challenged by any of the contestants at a Court of Law or Tribunal of competent jurisdiction and on such challenge, the decision shall be suspended until the matter is determined.

CLAUSE 17: Whenever a vacancy occurs in any Legislative House, the President of the Senate (in the case of a vacancy occurring in the Senate) or the Speaker of the House of Representatives or of the House of Assembly of a State (in the case of a vacancy occurring in that House) shall within 14 days of that vacancy occurring, cause the Clerk of such House to send a notice in writing to the Commission for an election to fill the vacancy.

Provided them, if after 14 days of that vacancy occurring, no notice is sent to the Commission according to the provisions of this Section, the Resident Electoral Commissioner of the State or Federal Capital Territory, of the Constituency, or Senatorial District within which the vacancy, occurs, shall notify the Commission in writing of that vacancy occurring. This shall serve as a valid notice to the Commission or, that vacancy in that Constituency or Senatorial District

CLAUSE 18: (1) A person shall be entitled to vote at a polling station where he is registered as a voter,

(2) Persons awaiting trial shall be entitled to vote when appropriate arrangements have been made therefore by the Commission.

CLAUSE 19: (1) For the purpose of directing and supervising all elections under this Act, the Chairman of the Commission (hereinafter referred to as the "Chairman") shall be the Chief National Electoral Officer of the Federation, subject to the control of the Commission.

(2) Subject to the control and direction of the Commission and the provisions of this Act, a Resident Electoral Commissioner shall perform the functions of the Chief Electoral Officer in a State including the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

(3) The Chairman of the Commission shall act as the returning officer for the election into the office of the President, and vice-president of the Federation.

(4)(a) The President Electoral Commissioner of a State or his representative in a Constituency shall act as the Returning Officer for election into the office of State

Governors, and Members of the National and State Assemblies.

(b) The Local Government Electoral Officer shall act as Returning Officer for election to the office of Local Government Chairman and Councillor.

(c) Results of all the elections shall be announced at the polling station (i) by the Presiding Officer at the Polling Station

(ii) By the Ward Returning Officer at the Ward Collation Centre

(iii) by the Returning Officer, at the Local Government Area Collation Centre:

(iv) at the Federal Constituency by the Returning Officer(s) at federal Constituency Collation Centre(s) and

(v) by the Returning Officer at the Senatorial District Collation Centre(s) (vi) at the Governorship elections by the Resident Electoral Officer.

(5) No person who is a member of a political party or who has openly expressed support for any candidate shall be appointed into any position for the purposes of registration of voters or election under this Act.

CLAUSE 20: (1) For each election held under Section 15 of this Act, the Commission shall appoint Presiding Officers and Returning Officers.

(2) The Chairman shall act as the returning officer for the election into the office of the President, and Vice-President of the Federation.

(3) No person who is a member of a political party or who has openly expressed support for a candidate shall be appointed a returning officer.

(4) The Commission shall, for the purpose of election under Section 15 of this Act appoint a presiding officer, a poll clerk for each polling station and such other officers as may be required by the Commission, provided that such officers shall not be registered members of any political party or persons who have publicly expressed support for a political party or candidate.

(5) Not less than 30 days prior to the date of the election, the Commission shall publish in at least three National Newspapers, the names, addresses and professions of returning officers, appointed under this Act. (6) Within five days of the publication or the notice required by sub-section (7) of this section, a person may be notified in writing, addressed to the Resident Electoral Commissioner in his State subject to appointment of the person as Returning Officer or Presiding Officer.

(7) The notice provided for in sub-section (5) shall state concisely the grounds for which the person should be disqualified for appointment as a Returning Officer or a Presiding Officer. The grounds or such objection must comply with sub-sections (4) and (5) of this section.

(8) Where the Commission finds that the objector has presented sufficient evidence in support of the objection, the appointment shall be cancelled.

CLAUSE 21: (1) For the purpose of the elections under the provisions of Section 15 of this Act, the Commission shall appoint all Electoral Officers for



Dr. Abel Guobadia INEC Chairman

each Local Government Area.

(2) All Electoral Officers, Presiding Officers, and Returning Officers shall affirm or swear an Oath of Loyalty and Neutrality indicating that they would not accept bribe or gratification from any person, and shall perform their functions and duties impartially and in the interests of the Federal Republic of Nigeria without fear of favour.

CLAUSE 22: The Commission shall for the purpose of all elections under this Act appoint such other officers as may be required provided that they shall not be registered members of any Political Party.

CLAUSE 23: (1) Not less than 90 days before the date appointed for holding of an election under this Act, the Commission shall publish a notice in each State of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory:

(a) stating the date of the election; and

(b) appointing the place at which nomination papers are to be delivered.

(2) The notice shall be published in each constituency in respect of which an election is to be held

Provided that in the case

of a by-election, the commission shall, not later than 14 days before the date appointed for the election, publish a notice stating the date of the election.

CLAUSE 24: (1) The Commission may designate such public buildings or places to be used as Polling Stations or units as it deems appropriate.

(2) The residences and palaces of traditional rulers, places of worship and clubhouses shall not be designated as polling stations or units.

CLAUSE 25: (1) Every political party shall not later than 90 days before the date appointed for a general election under the provisions of this Act, submit to the Commission in the prescribed forms the list of the candidates the Party proposes to sponsor at the election.

The list shall be accompanied by an Affidavit sworn to by each of the candidate at the High Court of a State, indicating that he:

a) is a citizen of Nigeria and has attained the age of 35 years for election into the Senate and 30-years for election to the House of Representatives; and State House of Assembly:

b) is a registered voter; (c) has been educated up to at least School Certificate level or its equivalent;

d) is a member of a political party and is sponsored by that party; (e) has produced evidence of payment of tax or Tax clearance as and when due or tax clearance exception for a period of three years preceding the year of the election:

f) has not voluntarily acquired the citizenship of a country other than Nigeria, and has not made a declaration of allegiance to such country;

g) has not been adjudged to be a lunatic or otherwise declared to be of unsound mind under any law in force in any part or Nigeria;

h) is not under a sentence of death imposed on him by any competent court of law or tribunal in Nigeria or a sentence or imprisonment or fine for an offence involving dishonesty or fraud (by whatever name called) or any other offence imposed on him by such a court or tribunal or submitted by a competent authority for any other sentence imposed on him by such a court;

i) within a period or less than ten years before the date of the election concerned, he has not been convicted or sentenced for an offence involving dishonesty or he has not been found guilty of a contravention of the Code of Conduct;

j) is not an undischarged bankrupt and has not been adjudged or otherwise declared bankrupt under any law in force in any part of Nigeria. (to be continued)



JUSTICE AND HONESTY

The Nigeria Customs Service

VACANCIES

1. Applications are invited from suitably qualified candidates to fill the following vacancies in the Medical, Aviation and Communication cadres of the Nigeria Custom Service:

- (a) Comptroller (Medical), HPPSS 15;
- (b) Chief Superintendent (Medical), HPPSS 12;
- (c) Superintendent (Medical), HPPSS 11
- (d) Superintendent (Pharmacist), HPPSS 11;
- (e) Chief Inspector (Nursing), HPPSS 12;
- (f) Deputy Chief Inspector (Nursing), HPPSS 11;
- (g) Assistant Chief Inspector (Nursing), HPPSS 10;
- (h) Principal Inspector (Nursing), HPPSS 09;
- (i) Senior Inspector (Nursing), HPPSS 08;
- (j) Inspector (Nursing), HPPSS 07;
- (k) Principal Inspector (Lab Tech), HPPSS 09;
- (l) Inspector (Lab Tech.), HPPSS 07;
- (m) Assistant Inspector (Lab Tech.), HPPSS 06
- (n) Assistant (Ward Attendant) Grade I, HPPSS 05;
- (o) Assistant (Ward Attendant) Grade II, HPPSS 04;
- (p) Assistant (Ward Attendant) Grade III, HPPSS 03;
- (q) Comptroller (Pilot), HPPSS 15;
- (r) Deputy Comptroller (Pilot) HPPSS 14
- (s) Chief Superintendent (Pilot), HPPSS 12;
- (t) Superintendent (Pilot), HPPSS 11;
- (u) Deputy Superintendent, (Pilot), HPPSS 10
- (v) Senior Assistant (Air Hostess), HPPSS 06;
- (w) Assistant Comptroller (Communication), HPPSS 13
- (x) Assistant Superintendent (Communication), Grade I, HPPSS 09 &
- (y) Assistant Superintendent (Communication), Grade II HPPSS 08;

2. Qualification and Experience:

(Any applicant interested in the underlisted posts must in addition to the indicated qualification and experience:

- (i) be a Nigerian Citizen by birth or descent;
- (ii) not be less than 18 years;
- (iii) not less than 1.7 metres in height for male and 1.64 metres for female;
- (iv) have fully expanded chest measurement of at least 0.87 metres (in the case of male applicants);
- (v) be certified by a Government medical officer to be physically and mentally fit for appointment in the Service;
- (vi) not be suffering from any form of mental or physical disability; (vii) be free from any financial embarrassment; and
- (viii) be of good character and must not have been found guilty of any criminal offence.)

(a) Comptroller (Medical), HPPSS 15

Candidates must possess a degree in Medicine (MBBS); registration with the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (MDCA); and successful completion of NYSC programme or obtained NYSC exemption certificate, plus at least 17 years post registration experience; and not be more than 51 years of age.

(b) Chief Superintendent (Medical), HPPSS 12

Candidates must possess the qualification specified in sub-paragraph (a) above plus at least seven (7) years' post-registration cognate experience; and not more than 41 years of age.

(c) Superintendent (Medical), HPPSS 11

Candidates must possess the qualification specified in sub-paragraph (a) above plus at least four years' post-registration cognate experience; and not be more than 38 years of age.

(d) Superintendent (Pharmacist), HPPSS 11

Candidates must possess a Bachelor's degree in pharmacy from a recognized University; be registered with the Pharmacists' Board of Council Nigeria; have successfully completed the NYSC or obtained a Certificate of Exemption; have at least six (6) years' post-NYSC cognate experience; and not be more than 38 years of age.

(e) Chief Inspector (Nursing), HPPSS 12

Candidates must possess the (dual qualification of) Nigeria Registered Nurse and Nigerian Registered Midwife certificates, plus at least 12 years' post-qualification cognate experience.

(f) Deputy Chief Inspector (Nursing), HPPSS 11

Candidate must fulfil the conditions at sub-paragraph 2(e) above, plus at least nine (9) years' post qualification cognate experience.

(g) Assistant Chief Inspector (Nursing), HPPSS 10

Candidates must fulfil the conditions at sub-paragraph 2(e) above, plus at least six (6) years' post-qualification cognate experience.

(h) Principal Inspector (Nursing), HPPSS 09

Candidates must fulfil the conditions at sub-paragraph 2(e) above, plus at least three (3) years post-qualification cognate experience.

(i) Senior Inspector (Nursing), HPPSS 08

Candidates must possess the (dual qualification of) Nigeria Registered Nurse and Nigerian Registered Midwife certificates.

(j) Inspector (Nursing), HPPSS 07

Candidates must possess either the Nigerian Registered Nurse (NRN) or Nigerian Registered Midwife (NRM) certificate.

(k) Principal Inspector (Laboratory Technology), HPPSS 09

Candidate must possess a Degree in Medical Laboratory Sciences plus registration with the Institute of Medical Laboratory Technology of Nigeria or its equivalent with at least two years fellowship professional experience.

(l) Inspector (Laboratory Technology), HPPSS 07

Candidates must possess WASC or GCE plus the National Diploma of the Institute of Medical Laboratory Technology and registration with the Medical Laboratory Council of Nigeria for health technologists, plus at least three (3) years post-registration cognate experience.

(m) Assistant Inspector (Laboratory Technologist), HPPSS 06

Candidates must possess WASC or GCE plus the National Diploma of the Institute of Medical Laboratory Technology and registration with the Medical Laboratory Council of Nigeria for health technologists.

(n) Assistant (Ward Attendant) Grade I, HPPSS 05

Candidates must possess any of the following qualifications:

- (i) evidence of completion of a full course in a Government approved Secondary School or S.75;
- (ii) Junior Secondary School certificate;
- (iii) General Certificate of Education ('O' Level) with passes in three subjects at one sitting or four subjects at two sittings; plus
- (iv) a successful completion of a two-year training programme in the School of Health Technology or any other approved health institution, plus at least 2 years' post qualification cognate experience.

(o) Assistant (Ward Attendant) Grade II, HPPSS 04

Candidates must fulfil all the conditions in sub-paragraph 2 (n) above,

(p) Assistant (Ward Attendant) Grade III, HPPSS 03

Candidates must possess any of the following qualifications:

- (i) evidence of completion of a full course in a Government approved Secondary School or S.75;
- (ii) Junior Secondary School certificate;
- (iii) General Certificate of Education ('O' Level) with passes in three subjects at one sitting or four subjects at two sittings; plus
- (iv) a successful completion of a two-year training programme in the School of Health Technology or any other approved health institution

(q) Comptroller (Pilot), HPPSS 15

Candidates should possess any of the following qualifications:

- (i) Commercial Pilot Licence with Instrument & Multi-Engine Rating;
- (ii) Must have logged a minimum of 250 hours flight time;
- (iii) Must have graduated from a recognised Aviation Academy, and have at least 17 years' post-qualification experience.

(r) Deputy Comptroller (Pilot) HPPSS 14

(i) Candidates should satisfy the conditions listed in sub-paragraph 2 (q) above and have at least 15 years post-qualification experience.

(ii) Must be a sound Administrator. A Degree in Management or Transport Studies will be an advantage.

(s) Chief Superintendent Customs (Pilot), HPPSS 12

Candidates should possess any of the following qualifications:

- (i) Airline Transport Pilot Licence;
- (ii) Minimum of 1500 Hours;
- (iii) 10 years Post Qualification experience;
- (iii) Administrative experience in Flight Operations Duty.

(t) Superintendent Customs (Pilot), HPPSS 11

(i) Must have an Airline Transport Pilot Licence (ATPC) or have logged over 1500 Hours of Flight Time with experience in flying Turbine Engine Aircraft,

(u) Deputy Superintendent Customs (Pilot), HPPSS 10

Candidates should possess any of the following qualifications:

- (i) Commercial Pilot Licence with Instrument & Multi-Engine Rating;
- (ii) Must have logged a minimum of 250 hours flight time;
- (iii) Must have graduated from a recognised Aviation Academy.

(v) Senior Assistant (Air Hostess), HPPSS 06

Candidates should possess any of the following qualification:

- (i) GCE 'O' Level in for subjects obtained at one sitting or five subjects at two settings;
- (ii) Evidence of completion of a full course in a government approved Secondary School or S.75, plus Certificate in Catering Studies obtained on completion of one year course in a recognized institution;
- (iii) WASC or Senior Secondary School Certificate, plus at least six years post-qualification cognate experience.

(w) Assistant Comptroller (Communication), HPPSS 13

Candidates should possess a degree in Telecommunications or Electrical/Electronic Engineering from a recognized University with one-year post-qualification of NYSC, plus at least 12 years post-NYSC cognate experience.

(x) Assistant Superintendent (Communication) Grade I, HPPSS 09

Candidates should satisfy the conditions at sub-paragraph 2 (w) above, plus four years post-NYSC cognate experience.

(y) Assistant Superintendent Communication Grade II HPPSS 08

Candidate should satisfy the conditions at sub-paragraph 2 (w) above.

3 Training

All successful applicants may be required to first undergo a three-month compulsory basic training/course at the Customs training institutions in either Kano or Lagos; before assuming the responsibilities in their respective, ranks and cadres.

4. Conditions of Service

Appointments are permanent and pensionable, although the initial three years will be on probation. Successful applicants will be subject to the conditions of service in the Nigeria Customs Service.

5. Method of Application

Application shall be in applicants' handwriting and be accompanied by curriculum vitae, photocopies of credentials, etc, addressed to The Secretary, Nigeria Customs Service Board, NCS Headquarters.

Wuse Zone 3, Abuja. Those who may have applied earlier are please advised to apply again.

6. Closing Date

All applications should reach the Secretary, NCSB not later than four weeks from the date of this advertisement.

Signed Secretary Nigeria Customs Service Board
November 29, 2001



ALBARKA AIR SERVICES

TAO 502/S.672/1/128

PUBLIC NOTICE

Hello! This is good news for the people of Oyo State and other Western States. Beginning from Thursday, December 13th, 2001, your favourite Airline, Albarka would commence flight operations from ABUJA to IBADAN and IBADAN to ABUJA respectively.

Now, you don't need to go all the way to Lagos before you catch your flight. The People's airline, Albarka is there for you, Mondays to Fridays every week to fly you in comfort and safety to Abuja and back.

Our daily flight schedule are, as follows:-

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Departs ABUJA for IBADAN	-	8:30am
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This is an opportunity you can't afford to miss.

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PLATEAU STATE GOVERNMENT



A RE-ENGINEERED PLATEAU: THE DARIYE LEGACY

INTRODUCTION

One of the enduring lessons of history is that leadership plays a critical role in changing the circumstances of a people. A society which has a leader that is visionary, focused, bold and selfless can overcome all forms of challenges and master its destiny. Where the leader lacks these attributes, the society is lost. The Executive Governor of Plateau State, Chief Joshua Dariye, belongs to the category of leaders who are able to lead their people out of wilderness to the promised land of prosperity, relevance and unity.

On assuming power on May 29, 1999, the Executive Governor inherited a state burdened by huge debts, collapsed infrastructure, dwindling returns from agricultural production, and a health care delivery system in a sorry state. Owing to this state of affairs, he had to contend with a people filled with rising frustration having been worsened by the long years of military rule.

Faced with this situation, Chief Dariye felt challenged to make a difference and give meaning to the life of the people. The mechanism for this process of renewal has been the "Re-engineering Programme" he instituted to reverse the crippling poverty and economic stagnation in the state.

Two and half years after the Re-engineering agenda announced its presence, Chief Dariye has brought about positive changes in Plateau state. The result of his stewardship to the people who elected him by an overwhelming vote, chronicled below, testify to the arrival of a general who, like the Biblical Joshua, is

leading his people to resounding successes on several battle fronts.

EDUCATION:

One area where Chief Joshua Dariye distinguished himself as a leader with a clear vision is the educational sector. Conscious of the liberating qualities of education, his administration pursued a deliberate policy of strengthening primary, secondary and tertiary institutions to be effective fountains where people can quench their thirst for knowledge.

Historians will take note of the fact that Chief Joshua Dariye established the Plateau State College of Arts, Science and Remedial Studies, Kurgwi, and released N50 million to ensure its smooth take-off. To his eternal credit, over 1000 primary school classrooms have been rehabilitated, dual desks provided, nine new schools were also established, while new classroom and office blocks were constructed in 10 other schools. Again, over N170 million has been in-



His Excellency Joshua Dariye Executive Governor Plateau State

vested in tertiary institutions, the rise in the number of beneficiaries, and the reintroduction of scholarship awards for further studies abroad.

INFRASTRUCTURE/SERVICES

The administration has also left indelible marks on the sand of time through the provision of basic infrastructure and essential services without which the Pla-

road network. In addition, extensive drainage covering about 120 kilometres have been constructed. The strategic Zai Bridge Dengi abandoned by successive administrations has been completed at the cost of N49 million, linking 2 LGAs to the rest of the world. About 300 kilometres of roads in all parts of the state are being executed. One of those completed is the multi-mil-

a thing of the past, more areas now enjoy pipe-borne water, while the Greater Jos Water scheme which defied successive administration, has been completed with the expansion of the Yakubu Gowon Dam Shen to supply N20 million gallons/day from 10 million gallons/day.

AGRICULTURE:

Agriculture has received priority attention since Chief Dariye assumed power. Assorted fertilizers worth about N500 million were purchased and sold at subsidized rates to farmers between 2000 - 2001. The Veterinary Clinic Jos and the Butura Cattle Ranch were rehabilitated and restocked, while development of tree crops was elevated to a cardinal objective. The most decisive intervention in this sector, however, is the establishment of the N340 million Fertilizer Blending Plant in Bokkos, with a capacity of 60 metric tones per hour. No doubt agricultural production will receive a big boost in the months, and



Longvel (Pankshin) Rural Electricity Scheme Commissioned

vested in the accreditation of academic programmes and rehabilitation of facilities in two tertiary institutions, while the UBE programme has occupied the front burner. Other measures that have received public acclamation include, the 100 percent increase in scholarship awards to stu-

teau Project cannot stand the test of time. Over 14 Jos township roads with a combined length of about 60 kilometres have been constructed or rehabilitated at the cost of N 1.8 billion. These include the Zarmaganda-Rayfield road, and the State Low Cost Housing Estate internal



Ta-hoss-Rim Bachit rural road project.

lion naira Barkin -Ladi - Bokkos road. Since "Water is Life" as the Plateau person would quickly remind any other person, the Dariye administration overhauled and strengthened the Plateau State Water Board to meet the challenges of our time. Persistent water scarcity is

years ahead, thanks to a focused Dariye administration.

HEALTH

Facts on the ground point to a deliberate attempt by the administration to meet the needs of the disadvantaged and needy groups in health care delivery. For about 20

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A RE-ENGINEERED PLATEAU: THE DARIYE LEGACY

years successive administrations did not see the need for even one new hospital, yet in just two years, the Dariye administration has constructed three General Hospitals at Dengi, Tunkus and Angware at the cost of N60 million each. Each of them has a standby generator, borehole and an ambulance while N28 million has been provided for furnishing and equipping purposes.

At the premier Plateau Specialist Hospital, Jos, a new ward was constructed at the cost of N31 million, while general renovation and restoration of old structures and equipment has been pursued to allow the hospital perform its leading role.

Furthermore, drugs have not only been purchased and distributed, the State also recorded 130 per cent success in the National Immunization Programme.

SPORTS/SPORTING FACILITIES

In sports and sporting facilities, Chief Dariye's achievements are unrivaled. Through his personal interest and inspiration, Plateau State clinched the elusive Challenge Cup in 1999, ending half a century 'jinx'. The state also emerged third best state at the Bauchi 2000 National Sports Festival, leaving 34 other competing states trailing behind it.

Again, in line with its re-engineering agenda, the administration began work on the New Zaria Road Stadium, abandoned since 1988, to provide world class sporting facility in Jos. Billed for completion in June, 2002 with a seating capacity of 30,000, it will cost N 1.2 billion.

INFORMATION:

The information sector also benefitted from the Re-engineering programme of the Chief Dariye led administration. **THE NIGERIA STANDARD**, experienced a long awaited rebirth by joining the global information highway, now has more circulation vehicles and com-

puters, all which have resulted in increased circulation. The major turning point for the newspaper began on May 28, 2000 when it began colour production, the first by any State-owned newspaper, on a daily basis. PR TVC has also benefitted from investments worth hundreds of millions of naira. Equipment/systems have been upgraded, structures constructed, and its reach extended.

Again, television viewing centres have been established or restocked to bring the world to communities in the State.

In doing all these, government has kept the populace informed, educated and entertained and has benefitted from the feed back it gets through its media institutions.

TOURISM

Plateau State is Nigeria's tourism capital given its favourable weather, unique physical features and hospitable people. The Dariye administration has left no stone unturned to maintain this leadership position. The Solomon Lar Amusement Park which has been completed will be an irresistible destination. The Rayfield Resort which has been a major tourist destination in Nigeria was purchased by government while refurbishment of chalets, restaurant and other facilities at the unique Pandam Wild Life Park has been undertaken at the cost of N57 million, and with the upgrading of access road to the park, it will be a crowd-puller.

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE

While the fashion in other places is for leaders to use public funds to execute projects which are promptly made to bear the names of such leaders, the Dariye administration has chosen to celebrate the lives of other people who have distinguished themselves in giving character, pride and sense of purpose to Plateau State.

Thus, J. D. Gowon, acknowledged as the path-

finder, has the first class State secretariat named after him, the multi-million naira Multi purpose Youth Centre, Dadin Kowa, Jos, bears the name of another illustrious son, AziNyako, while what is perhaps the first overhead bridge in Plateau State since indepen-



Completed Azi Nyalco Youth Centre

dence was named after the late Evangelist Paul Gindiri. Also, the multi million naira Amusement Park was named after Chief Solomon



Environmental Laboratory Block

Lar. Through this measure, Chief Dariye has made a profound statement: Serve your people conscientiously, selflessly and cou-



Inside the newly constructed Environmental Laboratory Building, Jos

A CARING GOVERNMENT:

There are clear testimonies that the Dariye administration cares for the well be-

ing of the entire citizenry. It purchased shares for civil servants worth N200 million in blue chip companies. It released N30 million to women groups under a micro-credit scheme, and also released a 30 seater bus to each tertiary institution in the state.



Again, workers got three 56 seater buses, JAMB and NECO offices in Jos were given Peugeot 505 vehicles each while voluntary agency schools got grants totalling



over N86 million.

CONCLUSION:

Given the fact that he inherited a State crippled by huge debts, a weak service-delivery mechanism, and a sceptical populace who have



watched administrations come and go without improvements in their living conditions, it is fitting that Chief Dariye has made a

positive impact on Plateau State and its people. True, on the day he took the oath of office as Executive Governor, Chief Dariye made a solemn pledge, to leave Plateau State better than he met it. In this country where such pledges are mouthed by leaders who promptly forget them, as soon as they assume power, Chief Dariye has however kept faith with the people of the State.

Through his Re-engineering Programme, he has transformed the educational sector revolutionised agriculture, and brought health care delivery to the doorsteps of more people. Thanks to the Re-engineering Agenda, critical infrastructure have been provided, marginalised communities given a sense of belonging, and sporting excellence pursued with vigour. By being focused, visionary and determined, the Executive Governor has demonstrated that democracy pays, and that people should be the target of development.

Having performed these feats in just two and half years, his achievements have been acknowledged by various groups and organizations. These include: Aminu Kano Foundation for Distinguished Leadership, Exemplary Leadership Award by the Nigerian Union of Journalists, Plateau State Correspondents Chapel and Justice of the Pen Award for Leadership. Others are the Nigerian Academy of Education Award and most recently, the PDP Convention committee Award for honesty and integrity.

It is therefore safe to conclude without fear of contradiction that Plateau State will never be the same again in the years ahead, with Dariye on the driver's seat.

Signed

HARRIS DAWURANG
Chief Press Secretary



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1	Full Page	14.5 X 6 Cols	71,486.42	77,535.30	83,769.45	119,189.45
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3	Half Page (Accross)	7.25 X 3 Cols	40,920.80	47,371.95	54,575.60	67,485.40
4	Quarter Page	7.25 X 3 Cols	19,911.33	22,438.80	28,296.90	51,620.00
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6	10" X 5 Cols	10" X 5 Cols	37,740.24	39,454.20		68,170.00
7	9" X 6 Cols	9" X 6 Cols	35,315.32	36,446.35		57,994.50
8	9" X 5 Cols	9" X 5 Cols	32,300.28	33,922.55		46,355.60
9	8" X 6 Cols	8" X 6 Cols	30,190.00	31,295.00		44,530.70
10	8" X 5 Cols	8" X 5 Cols	23,767.05	25,357.50		38,150.50
11	7" X 6 Cols	7" X 6 Cols	22,546.72	24,474.00		34,500.00
12	7" X 5 Cols		21,685.32	23,572.70		31,000.00
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SPORTS



Controversy rages as NOC insists on AGM/elections

The Nigeria Olympic Committee (NOC) has insisted that the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and elections scheduled for Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, tomorrow would still hold in spite of alleged constitutional hiccups.

The NOC first Vice-President, Brig. Gen. Fred Chijuka (rtd), said the approval had been sought and obtained from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to conduct election using a new constitution.

However, IOC member and Nigeria's representative, Major General Henry Adefope (rtd), had at a press conference held in Lagos, denounced the planned AGM and elections, describing it as "illegal" on the ground that the constitution to guide the elections was not approved by the IOC.

Nonetheless, Chijuka declared: "Anybody insisting that the AGM cannot hold

Stories by Patrick Andrew

based on alleged illegality is not right. We are going ahead to hold the AGM. Nothing is stopping us."

The vice-president said elections into offices would be conducted using the new NOC constitution as guide because the IOC had approved it.

Chijuka, who addressed the press in Lagos last Monday, said the IOC had written to convey their approval of the new document in a letter signed by its Director of Public Relations, Pero Miro.

"We are delighted to inform you that, in accordance with the Olympic Charter, (paragraph one, rule four), we approve the status that your NOC adopted in May 2001. The date of such approval is June 13, 2001.

"May we draw your attention that any change made to this text upon your own initiative or upon the IOC's request requires the approval of

the status of your NOC by the IOC," Chijuka read in a letter consigned to the NOC.

Chijuka added that in consonance with legal requirement, the new constitution has accordingly been registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) in



Aku, Sports Minister

Abuja.

Besides, Chijuka said, following the truce sought for the NOC by the Sports Ministry, permission to hold the AGM and conduct elections into offices was sought and obtained from the IOC through Gen. Adefope.

According to him, the meeting to reconcile the parties at loggerhead was presided over by the Sports Ministry's Director of Sports Development, Mr. Patrick Ekeji, adding that it would amount to insincerity for Adefope to claim ignorance of the approval.

The AGM was earlier scheduled for November 22, but would not hold because of wrangling over the legality of the new NOC constitution.



Bayern's Owen Hargreaves, left, and Nico Kovac jump for the ball against Wolfsburg's Tomislav Maric, center, during the match between FC Bayern Bayern Munich and VfL Wolfsburg at the Olympic stadium in Munich, Germany, on Saturday.

...elections illegal - Adefope

Nigeria's representative in the International Olympic committee (IOC), Maj. Gen. Henry Adefope (rtd), has insisted that any election conducted by the Nigeria Olympic Committee (NOC) would be "illegal".

Adefope said such elections into the offices of the NOC would be null and void because of illegality of the new document, which the NOC intends to use as guide to the elections.

Contesting the legality of the NOC constitution, Adefope said the new document was yet to be approved by the IOC and as such could not be used as guide in the conduct of the elections scheduled for Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, tomorrow.

"The NOC constitution, which will be used for the elec-

tion is yet to be ratified by the IOC," Adefope said in Lagos in a media chat on Monday.

The IOC member said he would not attend the Yenagoa AGM, adding that he would only send his apology to the state government.

Adefope also challenged the NOC to release the Adeagbo Report ahead of the AGM and election, tomorrow in Bayelsa.

He threatened to personally release the vexed report should the NOC executives failed to do so, stressing that the refusal to make public the submission of the panel was a minus for them.

"If they refuse to consider and release the report now, it implies that we may not be able to raise funds for the Olympics from the people and corporate sponsors for sometime," he said.

Pharaohs, Elephants confirm dates with Eagles

The Pharaohs of Egypt and the Elephants of Ivory Coast have confirmed their readiness to trade tackles with Super Eagles before the Nations Cup kick-off on January 19 in Bamako, Mali.

However, the Senegalese Lions, who were scheduled to

clash with the Eagles in Lagos on December 20, have turned down the invitation.

The Lions, who would make their maiden presence in the mundial at the Korea/Japan World Cup 2002, backed out of the deal following disagreement on actual date for the match.

Trustsports learnt that the Lions had requested January 15, 2002, barely four days to kick-off of the Nations Cup after rejecting the initial December 20 date. The NFA on the other hand had wanted December 30 but their Senegalese counterparts would not budge hence the decision to cancel the friendly.

Meanwhile, the Eagles may play Uruguay, Austria and the Orange Boys of Holland, between April and May 2002.

Besides, the Eagles would engage their Irish counterparts in April. The clash with the Dutch squad, which humiliated Nigeria 5-1 in one of the pre-France '98 World Cup, comes up in Port Harcourt.

Acting image-maker of the NFA, Bola Oyeyede said Costa Rica and Poland are stand-by in case Uruguay and Austria decided to turn down the grade A encounters.

Bola also said the earlier plan to resume camping on December 15 at the Gateway Hotel, Otta, could not materialise because of the cancellations of the December 20 friendly with Senegal.

Consequently, he said, the 33 Eagles pencilled down to slug it out for the 22 shirts available are to report to camp after the Xmas holiday.

"They would be in camp for 10 days before they fly to Cairo, Egypt, from the Aminu Kano International Airport to clash with the Pharaohs on January 8 and Elephants on January 12," he said.

Akwa Ibom FA protests to NFA

The Akwa Ibom State FA has protested the alleged manipulations against Akwa United, leading to the club's loss of position to play in the proleague division II.

The FA in a sternly written petition appealed to the NFA to correct the immorality perpetuated against Akwa United and Akwa Ibom State at large.

The petition contested the legality of the decision of the NFA emergency convention held in Kaduna where a controversial decision was taken to award three points to Athletico FC of Lagos, a development that catapulted the Lagos team to the top.

Trustsports recalls that the Kaduna convention had decided to hear a petition from Athletico that they be awarded three points and goals against Stores FC in a game played early February 2001.

FA scribe, Carmike Ukpabio, who signed the petition, wondered why the controversial petition should be considered 10 months after the match was decided and almost two months after the season ended.

Akwa Ibom people, he said, were hurt by the alleged immoral decision, which has ensured that Akwa United lost the promotion to proleague class not on the field of play but on a soapbox.

Trustsports learnt that following a heated argument which sharply decided the convention delegates, it was put to vote with most voting in favour of Athletico FC thus upturning the decision of the Organising and Disciplinary Committee which had thrown out the protest for lack of merit.

The FA also queried the morality in accepting the N50,000 protest fee paid by the Lagos State FA barely hours before the case was brought up for deliberation as against the stipulated time frame in the proleague law.

The NFA was yet to look into the petition and it was doubtful it would be of any effect.

The proleague has been scheduled to kick-off this weekend throughout the country.



Gov. Peter Odili (right) presents the MVP trophy of 2001 FA Cup to Joseph Cole of the Dolphin FC during a reception organised for the club which won the National Challenge Cup.



Julius Aghahowa, Rabiu Afolabi and Abubakar Masa celebrating a goal against Costa Rica during Nigeria '99. Julius and Rabiu are among the 33 Eagles expected to storm the Gateway, Otta camp to prepare for the Nations Cup fiesta, Mali, 2002.

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EDITORIAL

For an open telecom system

In spite of everything, one of the areas of tremendous achievement of the Obasanjo administration is the success recorded in the liberalization of the telecom sector. First, it was the highly rated auctioning of the GSM licences whose resounding success has been compared to the best of European auction. Then the activation of the MTS licence which was suspended under the Abacha administration. And then the recent successful sale of NITEL to a consortium of core investors in spite of initial hiccups. In addition, the telecommunication network of more major cities in the country has been digitalized. Clearly, things are beginning to look up for the country in this very important sector.

There is a dialectical nexus between development and the quality of telecommunication services available to a people. No nation has ever achieved growth with a telecommunication system as obsolescent as the one we parade. That is why we welcome this progress.

But before we start celebrating and claiming kinship with other nations that have decent communication systems, we will like to remind the government that there is still much more to be done. There is the need for the government to go the whole hog in its liberalization bid. We must accelerate the licensing of additional National Carriers to complement NITEL. And in doing this, it will not be plausible to limit ourselves to just one additional carrier as the government is currently hinting. There are no reasons why this nation (of over one hundred million people) cannot have three or more additional National Carriers as is the case in other countries with even lesser population density. The more the merrier and it is the nation and the Nigerian people that will be better for it. Limiting the nation to just two National Carriers will be to create the enabling ground for the formation of a cartel and the repugnant practice of price fixing as we might have already started witnessing with MTN and Econet, the new GSM service providers.

On the same reasoning, we also implore government to do a rethink of its rescission of the CIL GSM licence, not because the firm has made an extenuating point for the revalidation, but because the ultimate beneficiaries of such generosity will be the nation's economy and the Nigerian people.

The nation has already missed the great story of the new world communication order. It is shameful that less than 5 percent of Nigerians have access to telephone and almost all of these live in the urban areas. The language of international trade and commerce is now the Internet and the usage of the Internet itself is dependent on the availability and affordability of telephony. Nigeria must not be allowed to become the dinosaur of this millennium. The only way to avoid this is to make this vital tool of civilization available to as many people as possible. And the time to act is now.

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WEDNESDAY COLUMN

Ominous clouds over the political horizon

By Mohammed Haruna

Three things happened last week which leaves one with a distinct feeling of *de ja vu* concerning certain events of about 18 years ago that led eventually to the military coup against President Shehu Shagari in December 1983. At that time, as the faithful reader of this column may recall, I had written in the *New Nigerian* (February 4, 1983) warning about the dangers of what I said was "the creeping despotism" in the country. Mr. Audu Ogbe, lately the chairman of the ruling PDP, then a youthful go-getter Minister of Communications in Shagari's cabinet, had inveighed against the seeming helplessness of the police in dealing with criminals. He had told the Senate that "The constitution is a boon to criminals but a monumental handicap to society and government".

Ogbe was not the only important person then who saw our constitution as a monumental handicap to society. He was in the good company of, among others, the then Inspector-General of Police, Sunday Adewusi, Mr. Tunji Braithwaite, the presidential candidate of the National Advance Party, Justice Ovie-Whiskey, then chairman of FEDECO (the Federal Electoral Commission) and, of all institutions, the Kwara State *Herald* newspaper, then very much alive.

Adewusi's case was clearly one of kicking down the ladder one had used to climb to the top. The IGP and the press had been the best of friends all the way to his becoming the country's top cop. However, once he got there he began to despise the press. "Our constitutional guarantee of press freedom" he had told the Attorney General of the Federation, who had withdrawn a police case against the *Sunday Concord* "has ALWAYS been abused by journalists" (emphasis not original). Adewusi had been unhappy with the AG because he felt a successful prosecution of the case against *Sunday Concord* "would have gone a long way in instilling sanity into our press".

As for Ovie-Whiskey, he had threatened to bring in the army to supervise the expected elections if the politicians continued to bicker among themselves. Braithwaite had concurred. On its part, the *Herald*, which should have been out there fighting for free speech, was busy inciting Shagari to crackdown on his political opponents, an advice which he wisely ignored. "Mr. President", the paper (February 1, 1983) had said, "must know that a GENTLEMAN approach to ungentlemanly political opponents is potent with tragic consequences".

In the wake of all these, and more, I had written to warn that "The whole political atmosphere (was) being made inexorably conducive to dictatorship".

The faithful reader of this column may also recall that four months after expressing this concern, I had returned to the subject matter in the *New Nigerian* of June 10, 1983 to warn about clouds that were hanging over the expected general elections of that year. I had warned that the way the ruling NPN was trying to rig the electoral process to its own undue advantage, and the way the opposition was equally threatening to counter any such move with violence - Chief Awolowo, for example, was threatening to urge his supporters to take the law into their own hands if they smelled any rigging - the elections may not hold after all.

For expressing these views, my employers thought I was being a prophet of doom. Consequently, they removed me from the editorial department of the *New Nigerian* and sent me to the marketing department. It would seem at first glance that they were right, that I was indeed a prophet of doom. Contrary to my prediction, the general elections were held all right. Six months later, however, the army struck. They said their main grouse against the politicians, apart from corruption, was that the politicians rigged the elections.

What happened last week suggests that the events that eventually led to the coup of December 1983, seem to be repeating themselves. The unilateral cancellation by the FRCN of a 12 million naira political advertisement contract with Alhaji Mohammed Abubakar Rimi and the arrest of Malam Abdulkarim Al-Bashir, a Kaduna-based media consultant, on allegations of mailing a booklet in an envelope containing anthrax powder to someone in Jos, suggests that free speech is under attack two years after we all thought we had seen the last of any form of dictatorship.

Al-Bashir, along with two female staff of UPS, was picked up from his home last Wednesday and asked to report to the police in Jos the following day, which he did. All three have since been released, albeit on bail, on the discovery that the allegations against the three may, after all, have been a hoax. So far neither the complainant nor others to whom Al-Bashir's booklet had been posted, including the Plateau State governor, Chief Joshua Dariye, and other prominent Jos residents like Senator Wash Pam, have been infected with anthrax.

The chances then are that someone in authority is trying to embarrass Al-Bashir for the views he has expressed in the booklet itself about "The Ethnic politics of Borisade and Babalola against the Rule of Law and Progress in Ahmadu Bello University". In that booklet, which has been widely circulated, Al-Bashir, himself an alumnus of ABU, has accused the Minister of Education, Professor Borisade and the Special Adviser on Education to President Obasanjo, Chief Babalola, of attempting to re-inject ethnic politics into ABU in order to undo Major-General Mamman Kontagora's good work in sanitising the institution as its Sole Administrator during Abacha's regime.

Bad as Al-Bashir's case is, that of Rimi is even more ominous for free speech. In Rimi's case the authorities have not even bothered to hide their hands. Speaking to the BBC Hausa service recently in re-

sponse to the controversy generated by the cancellation of Rimi's political commercials, the Minister of Information and National Orientation, Professor Jerry Gana justified it by saying the FRCN Kaduna management were disrespectful of president Obasanjo by airing Rimi's phone-in programme simultaneously with a phone-in programme by the FRCN Abuja with Obasanjo.

"They know what is proper and right," said Gana, "but they refused to do it. WOULD IT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE DURING BABANGIDA, BUHARI OR EVEN SHAGARI'S TIME, TO AIR ANOTHER PROGRAMME WHILE THE HEAD OF STATE IS ON A NETWORK LIVE PROGRAMME? IF YOU DO THAT YOU WILL BE CLAMPED INTO JAIL", (emphasis not original).

The insinuation that the FRCN Kaduna did it to Obasanjo because he is from the South is obvious. So also is the inference that, compared to his current boss, Babangida, whom Gana once served as director of MAMSER, which was as good as being the minister of information, Buhari and even Shagari are tyrants. Apart from the fact that both the insinuation and the inference give the unfortunate impression that Gana is a gun-for-hire, it is also not true that the FRCN Kaduna put Rimi on the air simultaneously with Obasanjo's live programme. Either Gana was wrongly briefed or he saw the Rimi episode as an opportunity to clip the wings, so to say, of FRCN Kaduna, whose independence and nationwide reach has irked many a Northphobic public figure. Or both.

That Gana was wrongly briefed is certainly not in doubt. When the Director-General of FRCN, my good friend Eddie Iroh, first ordered the cancellation of the contract, he cited three reasons, one of which was that the FRCN Kaduna had carried the Rimi phone-in programme back to back with Obasanjo's and not simultaneously as Gana has alleged. And as the FRCN boss on the ground, Eddie should know. Even then, his claim too was not correct because there was a clear seven minutes of commercials between Obasanjo's phone-in programme and Rimi's. In any case, how was it disrespectful of Obasanjo for FRCN Kaduna to cater to its Hausa listeners most of whom have no knowledge of the English language - Rimi's phone-in programme was in Hausa - at the same time that President Obasanjo was speaking to his audience in English, assuming that Gana was correctly briefed?

Eddie's other excuses were that the contract was not cleared with him as the FRCN boss, and that the contract, in any case, violated Section 7.8.2 of the Broadcast Code of the NBC which states that any form of commercialisation of political news or coverage is forbidden in the interest of fairness and balance and to prevent the monetisation of political broadcast.

The answers to Eddie are simple and straightforward. First, until Rimi came along, the regional headquarters of FRCN - i.e. Kaduna, Enugu, and Ibadan - never cleared advertisement contracts with national headquarters because they had the autonomy to do their own thing, so to say. Second, in the run-up to the February 1999 elections - and indeed long before then - when Messrs Obasanjo, Ekwueme, Falae, Saraki, Rimi, the lot, when they all paid for phone-in programmes to sell themselves to the electorate, the NBC never complained about a breach of Section 7.8.2. Clearly for the NBC, there was a difference between, on the one hand, the coverage of political events for hard news where radio stations must be seen to be even-handed, and, on the other, self-promotion broadcasts by politicians which have to be paid for. Even now that Eddie has chosen to eliminate this distinction in his interpretation of Section 7.8.2, the NBC has not complained - at least not yet.

Both Gana and Eddie, obviously, have to tell us another one when they try to justify their attempt to muzzle Rimi and FRCN Kaduna by appealing to ethnic sentiments or to some legal sophistry.

However, ominous as the attempt to embarrass Al-Bashir and to muzzle Rimi and FRCN Kaduna are for free speech, they pale almost into insignificance compared to the ominous threat that the Electoral Bill which Obasanjo hastily signed into law last Wednesday poses to the country's political stability. Whereas Obasanjo believes the new law has only "minor imperfections" which people should not "split hairs about or continue to raise dust and threaten fire and brimstone", it is instructive that even leading members of the AD/*Afenifere*, for whom the president could hitherto do no wrong, are up in arms against the law.

"The Electoral Bill" said Senator Abraham Adesanya, the leader of *Afenifere*, the other day, "is a piece of bad legislation that could only have been motivated by ill-will and malice". The deputy chairman of AD, who is also an *Afenifere* chieftain, Chief Ayo Adebajo, has been even more scathing in his condemnation of the law. "There are several ways of rigging", he told the *Weekend Vanguard* of December 12. "You can begin to rig by electoral law, by electoral regulations, by anything. It is not only by printing fake ballot papers that you can rig. Holding presidential elections first is another way of rigging election. If you pass a law that is only to the advantage of the party in power, you will see the consequences".

The last time some of us said something similar about the ruling NPN some 18 years ago we were dismissed as prophets of doom. We were actually not prophets of anything, never mind of doom. What we did then was merely to paraphrase the political "law" of one smart political scientist who once said where there are no rules of the game, clubs - as in big sticks - become trumps. Bending or breaching the universal principle that the biggest masquerade always dances last, as the new electoral law has done by, among other things, reversing the sequence of elections, just like the NPN did in 1983, is as good as having no rules at all.

One can only hope and pray that as the authorities try to muzzle free speech, and as they try to manipulate the electoral process to their own advantage, the history of 1983 does not repeat itself.