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STAR FEATURE

The hasty
world of
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A congregation of Muslim faithfuls observing the Eid-el-Fitr prayers at the Central Eid Praying Ground, Airport Road, Abuja, to mark the end of the Ramadan fasting... Saturday.
Pix: Felix Onigbinde

SALLAH MESSAGE

Sultan Maccido decries Sharia
crises, says it is sabotage

The Sultan of Sokoto, His Eminence, Alhaji Muhammad Maccido, has described the crises that engulfed the nation following the adoption of the Sharia legal system as "sabotage" even as the first Executive President of Nigeria, Alhaji Shehu Shagari, has called for greater cooperation among Nigerians irrespective of political, tribal and religious persuasions.

Sultan Maccido, who said this at the weekend in Sokoto in his Sallah message to the country's Muslim Ummah stated that

From Kabir Dogon-Daji, in Sokoto, Umar Musa Kazaure, in Kano; Kashim Sule, in Minna, Shehu Abubakar, in Benin and Abdulfattah Olajide, in Lagos

the upheavals, which claimed many lives and property worth millions of naira in different parts of the country, were deliberate plans to thwart the implementation of the Islamic legal system in the country.

"But thanks to Allah's infinite mercies and protection, the Sharia legal system is still on course in various parts of the country," he added.

Alhaji Maccido,

Contd. on Pg 2

FAILED CONTRACT

PTF drags Senator, bank to court

The Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF) may soon begin legal proceedings against a Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Citizens Bank to recover about N24.7 million being outstanding payments for a water supply contract in Ondo State.

The PTF said the court

By Uwem Umo

action is to recover "all outstanding advance payments not fully utilized" paid out through the bank for a contract project.

The PTF averred that the company, Alsteg and

Midlands of No. 1, Commercial Avenue, Akure, Ondo State, owned by Senator Daniel Gbenga Aluko, was awarded a contract under its National Rural Water Supply Programme to drill some boreholes in certain communities while an advance payment of N21,689,738.30k was paid out to the company.

According to the PTF, Citizens Bank had acted as guarantor to the company via a bankbond dated June 25, 1998, but "for whatever reasons, the contractor has not fully utilized or

exhausted the advance payment on the project."

The PTF said "additional payments were subsequently made to the contractor, bringing the total sum paid out to N24,790,152.76k.

However, according to

the PTF, "the total amount of work executed by the contractor in respect of the project is valued at N0.00" and in "view of government's mandate to wind up operations, it has become necessary to recover all outstanding advance

Contd. on Pg 2

Shagari condemns

lavish govt ceremonies

Second Republic President, Alhaji Shehu Aliyu Shagari, has condemned lavish ceremonies at various levels of government, saying it is

From Sani Umar, in Sokoto the bane of development in the country.

Alhaji Shehu Shagari who spoke in an interview with *Daily Trust* in Sokoto, confessed that his administration was also caught up with the culture of lavish spending on

Contd. on Pg 2



Senator Gbenga Aluko

Tora Bora, al-Qaeda position captured

Tribal fighters said they took the last al-Qaeda positions yesterday, killing more than 200 fighters and capturing 25 but finding no sign of Osama bin Laden. In the south, three U.S. Marines were injured in an explosion at Kandahar's airport.

Also yesterday, Defence Secretary, Donald H. Rumsfeld, landed at Bagram airfield in the first visit by a top U.S. government official to Afghanistan since the U.S.-led campaign began. Rumsfeld was to meet the new interim Prime Minister of Afghanistan, Hamid Karzai.

Ojukwu said at the South-East Development Initiative (SEDI) lecture at Owerri at the weekend that he did not specifically said that the

After weeks of fighting and relentless U.S. bombing in the White Mountains of eastern Afghanistan, commanders declared victory in an all-out assault on the al-Qaeda fighters loyal to bin Laden.

"This is the last day of

Contd. on Pg 2

Secession threat: Ojukwu back-pedals

By Reuben Yunana with Agency Reports

Igbos would opt out of Nigeria but that he was only asking for the rights of the Igbos in Nigeria.


"I did not say that the

Ndi-Igbo will practically secede. I did not say that Nigeria should not be united. I said that what we need is our due right and share," Ojukwu said at the meeting

Contd. on Pg 2



Alhaji Shehu Shagari



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NEWS

Shagari *Contd from Pg 1*

ceremonies.

He said while his administration was trapped in the lavish spending on ceremonies, they never envisaged the enormous damage it was doing to the collective psyche of the country.

Looking back at his administration, the former president said if properly harnessed, the colossal amount expended on such ceremonies would have provided the needed infrastructure and succour to the impoverished citizenry.

"This thing has been worrying me of recent. When I was in government I couldn't see the folly of the whole thing. When you are outside looking at it from a distance, you have a different view of these ceremonies which go on in the country.

"One starts to wonder whether we have stopped to estimate how much time these ceremonies take and how much they cost," the former president pondered.

Alhaji Shehu Shagari, who flayed the unwholesome development said if anybody makes some kind of research into the phenomenon, he would be staggered to see the amount of time, money and energy we dissipate on ceremonies.

He said the media reports are full of the ceremonies

showing the president, the governors and other executives in various ceremonies to showcase their activities.

The former president observed that looking at it from a distance constitutes an eyesore and a bore.

Asked if he does not think Nigerians love ceremonies and that is why those in power organize such to bring them closer in order

to see how they perform, Alhaji Shehu Shagari vehemently opposed this view, saying that in cases where the government wants to be closer to the governed and bring them together to talk or explain things to them, "it is only fair and effective during political campaigns and now is not the time because we are not campaigning everyday."

Ojukwu *Contd from Pg 1*

attended by the top leadership of the Igbos in the country.

The retraction may be due to the flurry of criticisms against him by his colleagues in the Igbo leadership who rejected his calls for secession.

The Igbo leaders, who gathered at the Imo State capital at the weekend to deliberate on issues relating to their land, told the ex-secessionist leader, who was also at the meeting that, under no circumstance would the Igbos secede from Nigeria again.

Spokesman of the meeting, which was attended by all Igbo ministers, governors and members of the National and State Houses of Assembly, Senate President, Anyim Pius Anyim, said rather than contemplate secession, the

Igbos are committed to the continued existence of Nigeria as one entity.

President Olusegun Obasanjo had last week also condemned Ojukwu's call for secession describing it as "irresponsible rascality."

The president said people who agitate for secession 31 years after the Nigerian civil war, "need to have their heads examined."

"I believe the rascality must have a limit and we will put a limit to irresponsible rascality," President Obasanjo said in response to Ojukwu's call.

However, according to the ex-Biafran leader, who said he was putting the records straight, the Igbos have invested much in the unity of the country and should therefore, stay to enjoy it.

PTF *Contd from Pg 1*

payments which have not been fully amortized."

In view of this, the PTF has instructed an Abuja-based legal firm, Nathaniel Opopu and Co. of Banex Plaza, Abuja, to institute a legal action against the bank in order to recover its money from the company.

Meanwhile, the matter which has been slated before the Federal High Court, Abuja, is fully endorsed and embarked upon by Mr. Bulus Sagada Lawenji, the Deputy Director, legal, of the PTF vide a letter dated October 3, 2001, to the law firm.

However, Senator Aluko, son of renowned economist, Professor Sam Aluko who is representing Ekiti Central in the National Assembly has denied the allegation.

In his defence, the senator had in a letter dated October 16, 2001, signed by him as chairman of Alstec and Midlands Limited, complained bitterly about the stance taken by the PTF in respect of the boreholes contract.

According to him, PTF's letter of October 3, 2001 signed by Bulus S. Lawenji authorizing solicitors to recover N24.7 million from him and his company is

embarrassing because "we have been put in bad light in the eyes of our bankers, as the claim indicates that our company is engaged in advance payment fraud."

He, however, explained that the Ondo State Water Project involved the drilling of 19 new boreholes and the rehabilitation of 21 others in five local government areas of the state.

He said prior to the announcement of PTF's disband by the present government, out of 19 boreholes, 15 were drilled, installed, operational and commissioned while 19 boreholes out of the 21 earmarked for rehabilitation were carried out.

According to him, "this was verified and documented by the supervising consultants" to the PTF, some of whom, he said, "were actually resident with our drilling crew and went from site to site with our staff in line with their duties."

The Senator is claiming that from available records "we have performed the contract to the value of roughly N26 million and would have in fact completed the project but for the problems associated with

communal conflicts in the Ilaje area and the sudden winding up of the organization."

The Senator also denied the additional payments, maintaining that the total amount received was N20,605,251.39k only and expressed dismay about the additional payment of N4,184,901.37k.

He, however, suggested that a detailed "investigation be carried out to check the possibility or otherwise of illegal payments to parties other than our company using documents related to us," adding that "we will like to see the payment voucher and who signed and received the cheque."

He said he was willing to undertake a second site by site inspection in Ondo State with PTF officials for verification.

He added that a PTF deputy director had previously inspected the project in the first quarter of 1999, all in a bid to clear himself and his company but all that seem to have fallen on deaf ears as the PTF has already given their solicitors the instructions to go to court.

Tora Bora *Contd from Pg 1*

al-Qaeda in Afghanistan," said Mohammed Zaman, the eastern alliance defense chief. "There is no more need for American bombing. Our men have the situation under control."

The Tora Bora region was the last major pocket of al-Qaeda resistance in the country. Gen. Tommy Franks, the U.S. commander of the war, said on Friday that other holdouts include the Shindand area in Western Afghanistan, Helmand province northwest of Kandahar, and the Kandahar vicinity itself.

Zaman said he had no information on the whereabouts of bin Laden, who many in these forested mountains believe was with the fighters. U.S. officials said they picked up his voice last week on short-range radio in the area.

A cave where alliance commanders had thought bin

Laden might be hiding was the last al-Qaeda holdout.

"There were only six people. One was killed by our forces and the others were captured," said another alliance commander, Hazrat Ali. A few days before today (i.e. yesterday) I had information he was here, but now I don't know where he is."

Zaman said several hundred routed al-Qaeda men might be on the run towards the border with Pakistan, only miles south of the caves and tunnels of Tora Bora. He and Ali said their forces were pursuing the fleeing fighters.

"Anyone who paves the way for al-Qaeda forces to live in the White Mountains will be given capital punishment," Ali said, adding that his fighters were searching the area "meter by meter."

The defeat of al-Qaeda

has, however, done nothing to resolve the mystery of Osama bin Laden's whereabouts. "Osama bin Laden is not here," tribal commander Haji Zaman said.

An unconfirmed report from Washington said bin Laden had been heard giving orders over a short-range radio in the Tora Bora Mountains over the past week.

A U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said it was confirmed "with reasonable certainty" that the voice on the radio was bin Laden's, after it was compared with several video tapes.

The U.S. blames bin Laden for the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

Sallah message *Contd from Pg 1*

therefore, enjoined all Muslims to stand firm and support *Sharia* implementation wherever they are even as he prayed the Almighty Allah to grant all those that fought and died during the crises *Ajjannah-Firdausi* (eternal bliss).

While observing that the crises have exposed the unpreparedness of our security operatives to emergency situations, he called on government at all levels to take appropriate security measures to check future occurrence.

The Sultan equally called on the Federal Government to combat the rising wave of armed banditry to safeguard the lives and property of Nigerians.

Important dignitaries that attended the *sallah* celebrations at the Sultan's palace included Nigeria's first Executive President and *Turakin* Sokoto, Alhaji Shehu Aliyu Shagari; the state acting governor, Alhaji Aliyu Magatakarda Wamako; the Minister of Water Resources, Alhaji Muktar Aliyu Shagari and the *Sarkin Malamai* Sokoto, Alhaji Ibrahim Gusau amongst others.

Alhaji Shehu Shagari, who spoke in Sokoto when the people of Shagari Local Government Area paid him a *sallah* homage at his residence in Sama Road, GRA, Sokoto, said it is only through such cooperation that Nigeria would prosper."

He, therefore, advised the delegation, which included the Shagari Local Government Chairman, Alhaji Galadima Horo and the new

District Head of Shagari, Alhaji Abdulrahman Shehu Shagari, to strive for unity as "without unity and harmony, there can be no development," he added.

Meanwhile, reports reaching *Daily Trust* indicate that the *Sallah* celebrations in Sokoto were peaceful, with the traditional drummers entertaining people in various parts of the town.

From Minna, the Niger State Capital and its environs, *Daily Trust* gathered that thousands of Muslim faithfuls thronged the Minna praying ground on Saturday to celebrate the *Idel-Fitr*, marking the end of the Ramadan.

The Chief Imam of Minna town, Alhaji Halilu Maiyamakaranta, who led the two *Zakat* prayers, urged Muslims all over the country to unite and lift up the banner of Islam.

In his goodwill message, the Niger State Governor, Engr. Abdulkadir Kure, urged the people to live in harmony with one another irrespective of language and religious differences.

He enjoined Muslims to live by the injunctions of the *Sharia* as it was Allah's will concerning them.

At the praying ground were two former heads of the state, Generals Ibrahim Babangida and Abubakar Abdulsalami (rtd).

And in Benin City, the Edo State capital, the State Chairman of the Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), Alhaji Jimoh E. Abubakar, called on Muslims in the country to shun all acts of violence and

toe the path of peace.

Speaking in Benin on Saturday at the central *Eid-El-Fitri* praying ground at Ikpoba Hill, Alhaji Abubakar also called on President Olusegun Obasanjo and the National Assembly to review the controversial electoral law with a view to expanding the political space and strengthening democracy in the country.

Special prayers for peace, unity and progress of the nation were offered at all the five *eid* praying ground in the city.

From Lagos State, *Daily Trust* learnt that Governor Bola Ahmed Tinubu enjoined religious leaders in the country to preach peace, love and tolerance.

The governor, who performed the *Eid* prayer with other Muslims at the Obalende *Eid* ground, counseled religious leaders to note that "any recourse to violence through intolerance is a direct punishment for the poor."

On the political situation in the country, the governor condemned the controversial Electoral Act, saying "bad legislations will do this country no good, rather, they will lead us into crisis."



Sultan Maccido

NEWS

Gov supports 4-year LG tenure

From Buhari Bello, in Jos

Governor Joshua Dariye of Plateau State has broken ranks with his colleagues and backed the provision of the Electoral Law which extends the tenure of council chairmen in the country from three to four years.

Addressing a gathering of PDP supporters at the Government House, Rayfield, Jos, the state capital, at the weekend, the governor noted that the new law is good for the advancement of democracy.

He said "the passing of the electoral bill itself is commendable and extending the tenure of the local government chairmen to four years is okay because all of us have stake; we are partners in progress."

According to him, anything that could derail the nascent democracy should be condemned "because what is good for the goose is also good for the gander."

He called on all the state governors to give desired encouragement to the council chairmen to facilitate development at the grassroots level.

The governor pledged that his government and the state House of Assembly would do everything possible to ensure that the 17 council chairmen in the state have a successful four-year tenure as other elected officials under the current political structure.

He pointed out that what is important is for all elected officials to support the decision of the National Assembly "so that we will remain governors, senators and president," he said.

Governor Dariye described those not in support of the moves as enemies of democracy and prayed for them to have a change of mind.



Gov Joshua Dariye

The World Bank-assisted dry season farming programme, tagged "Fadama II Project," is expected to gulp about \$360 million in Nigeria.

The Director, Project Coordinating Unit (PCU) of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Dr. Salisu Ahmed Ingawa, disclosed this in an interview with *Daily Trust* in Abuja.

He said that World Bank was disposed towards providing the necessary grants for the project because of the successes of the

World Bank Agric project gulps \$360m

By Musa Badamasi

pioneer "Fadama I project." According to him, the National Fadama I project, carried out by PCU and various states Agricultural Development Projects (ADP), improved the income of farmers and exposed them

to new farming skills.

He said that the Fadama II project has been scheduled for 2002 as the PCU and the World Bank are satisfied with



Dr. Salisu Ahmed Ingawa.

Detained inspector insults commissioner

A detained armed robbery suspect, Inspector Olufemi Ajisafe, who until his arrest was serving with the Shomolu division of the Lagos State Police Command, has allegedly insulted the Ogun State Commissioner of Police, Prince Udom Ekpoundum, and his assistant, Ebenezer Owoeye, who were on routine visit to detainees in police custody.

Inspector Ajisafe, who was arrested by the monitoring unit of Ogun State Police Command along the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway where he was allegedly operating with other suspects who specialise in robbing trailers, was said to have insulted Ekpoundum and Owoeye.

"He even tried to assault them physically before he was overpowered by aides of the two top cops.

"As a routine, the commissioner and assistant commissioner do go round where suspects are kept to see for themselves how they (suspects) are living. It was when they got to Ajisafe that the man started raining insults and abuse on them. He even tried to assault them physically, using all manner of unprintable words," a police source told our correspondent in Abeokuta.

Confirming the incident, Assistant Commissioner in charge of the State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID), Mr. Owoeye said: "We were on a routine on-the-spot assessment to interview suspects when he broke loose and started raining abusive and insulting words on the CP and myself."

Mr. Owoeye disclosed that the suspect has been demoted to the rank of sergeant after he was investigated and found guilty by the monitoring unit in an in-house room trial.

According to him, "the suspect was tried internally because a serving member of the force could not be charged to court, except after his dismissal from the

From Olumide Bajulaiye, in Abeokuta

police." He said: "If we are flushing out undesirable elements in the civil society, we should be able to do same amongst ourselves."

Nurses' strike paralyses hospitals

The strike embarked upon by the National Association of Nigerian Nurses and Midwives (NANNM) has paralysed activities in government hospitals in Abuja and some states of the federation.

Daily Trust gathered that the strike has brought hardship to patients in Abeokuta, Katsina, Abuja and other areas.

Daily Trust correspondent, who visited Wuse and Garki General Hospitals in Abuja, observed that the hospitals were a shadow of themselves.

At the Wuse General Hospital, patients in critical conditions were directed to private hospitals by a senior doctor on call duty.

"There is nothing we can do. We cannot admit you without the nurses because there will be nobody to take care of you," the doctor told two men who brought a lady in labour pains.

The two men who came in Toyota car with registration number BD 867 ABJ were thrown off balance by the doctor's refusal to admit the woman.

"What kind of stupid doctors and nurses do we have in this country; how can they go on strike?" one of the men screamed as our reporter sought to speak with him and sped off in his car to locate a private hospital.

Investigations carried out by *Daily Trust* revealed that most of the patients had been taken to private hospitals. Only a single patient was spotted in the male ward.

The relations of the patient explained that they had no other alternative than to leave the patient in the hospital, even though the nurses have refused to stay beyond the conventional

By Ikenna Emeka Okpani in Abuja and Olumide Bajulaiye, in Abeokuta

schedule.

The story was the same at the Garki General Hospital as patients were clearly directed to seek medical attention at private hospitals or to come the next day.

Daily Trust correspondent in Abeokuta, the Ogun State capital, also reported that patients were left in hard condition due to the health workers' strike.

Similarly, doctors' strike in Katsina had earlier caused serious disruption of health services in the state.

A non-governmental organisation, Friends of Hospital, was reported to have taken initiatives to offer assistance to patients to reduce their suffering.

The National Association of Nigerian Nurses and Midwives embarked on a strike action on December 3 over allegations that the Federal Government has reneged on agreement reached with the association in July this year.

Prostitution persists in Sokoto

Despite the adoption of the Islamic legal code in Sokoto State by the state government, prostitution still thrives in some strategic locations in the state, *Daily Trust* investigation reveals.

The investigation shows that some strategic areas of the metropolis are still hiding under the pretext of maintaining and running a guest house for "lodging and accommodation" to harbour prostitutes in large numbers.

When *Daily Trust* correspondent visited Kanawa and Old Airport areas in the night, some hotels and guest houses were seen operating in full force with heavy presence of call girls. A resident of the area, who would not want his name in print, told *Daily Trust* that the

preparations so far made.

He disclosed that there are studies now being carried out, such as economic study, environmental study, socio-cultural study and financial procurement study intended to be used for the project implementation.

"We are still talking with financial institutions, private consultants, NGOs, including water management companies, and other professionals because it will be a big project cutting across many sectors," he said.

Dr. Ingawa noted that farmers will be empowered to source funds directly for

investable projects that can be funded and be paid for through procedure to be secured by PCU.

Out of the projected cost of \$360 million for the project, \$150 would be in terms of technical assistance because the money would be provided on special concession basis.

While explaining that the World Bank has a high and soft interest rates lending facilities, the director said that, "for the Fadama I project, Nigeria has been granted the privilege of drawing from the soft interest rate facility."

School of Basic Studies underway in Katsina

From Abdu Labaran, in Katsina

Worried by the poor state of education in Katsina and other northern states, the Katsina State government, in collaboration with the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, is to establish a School of Basic and Remedial Studies (SBRS) in Funtua next year.

Governor Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, who disclosed this yesterday in Katsina when the Emir of Katsina, Alhaji (Dr.) Kabir Usman, paid him sallah homage, said that the new school would be modelled after the now defunct School of Basic Studies (SBS), operated by the A.B.U. in the '70s and '80s.

He stated that the government had held fruitful discussions with the Vice-Chancellor of ABU, Professor Mahdi, and a team of experts on the project for which the government has already donated a site as well as pledged the sum of N200 million for the commencement of work early next year.

To ensure the successful take off of the project and the participations of the other northern states, the vice-chancellor would be a guest

at the next Northern Governors' meeting next month where the SBRS project is expected to top the agenda, the governor further disclosed.

According to him, when established, the school will draw its students from all the northern states with Katsina State contributing the largest number of students just as it is expected to give the biggest contribution for the project.

The governor also disclosed that studies have been conducted on the Katsina Airport by a team of experts from the Federal Government with a view to expanding it for use in future Hajj airlifts.

While calling on the people to offer regular prayers for peace and live peacefully with one another, Governor Yar'Adua also disclosed that his government intended to rehabilitate 30 earth dams as well as all grazing reserves across the state next year in its effort to find lasting solution to the perennial and often fatal clashes between farmers and herdsmen in the state.

In his address earlier, the Emir of Katsina, Alhaji (Dr.) Muhammadu Kabir Usman, who delivered a sermon, urged those in authority to always subordinate themselves to the people and serve them diligently without fear or favour, noting that exemplary leadership is a catalyst for peace in the society.

The emir also called on the people in the state to be their brothers' keepers regardless of ethnic or religious backgrounds, assuring non-indigenes that they have nothing to fear as their safety and that of their property are guaranteed, noting that no society can achieve greatness if its people are constantly on the throat of one another.

NEWS

Ministers' absence stalls anti-AIDS launching

The planned commencement of administration of anti-retroviral drugs to AIDS patients in 18 tertiary institutions in the country by the Ministry of Health could not take off due to the absence of both health minister and the minister of state, *Daily Trust* has gathered.

The Minister of Health, Professor Alphonsus Nwosu, was said to be away to Burkina Faso where he was attending a related occasion, the African summit on HIV in Ouagadougou.

The minister returned to the country in the middle of the week, just in time to defend the budget proposal of the ministry at the National Assembly.

The Minister of State for Health, Dr. (Mrs.) Amina Ndololo, was said to have proceeded on her annual leave shortly after the World AIDS Day Campaign.

The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry, Alhaji Sani Suleiman, was also out of the country.

Daily Trust also gathered that due to the minister's dedication to the project, he would want to witness the official take off of the programme.

"You know the minister is keen on this project to help Nigerians living with HIV/AIDS. So he would want to be present on the official take off of the programme," a source at the ministry said.

The anti-retroviral drugs which were brought into the country two months ago were planned to be administered on a limited number of AIDS patients in the first three months in order to allow the

From Ikenna Emeka Okpani

implementers acquire enough skills in handling the drugs.

The minister of state had said that the scheme would later be expanded gradually to 100 centres and to cover a total of 10,000 adults in the first year.

The anti-retroviral drugs project of the Ministry of Health in Nigeria had, before these hitches, been described as an ambitious anti-AIDS project in Africa where an estimated 28.1 million people are said to be living with HIV/AIDS.

Apparently unsure of their fate over the determination of the Ogun State Governor, Chief Olusegun Osoba, to go ahead with council polls next year, local government office holders in the state have now resorted to visiting spiritualists (babalawos) for help to keep them in office.

Investigation by *Daily Trust* revealed that the move was taken by some local government chairmen and councillors after it was discovered that Osoba was tinkering with the idea of dissolving their councils.

Our sources said that the chairmen and councillors became jittery when they heard that the governor may dissolve the councils before the end of this month.

One of the Alliance for Democracy ward's chairmen

LG office holders take case to 'babalawos'



Governor Osoba of Ogun State, who confided in *Daily Trust* explained that the uncertainty over whether

Governor Osoba will send them packing in December or not prompted the concerned political office holders to seek spiritual assistance to keep their jobs.

He said: "They don't want to take chances, hence they have been visiting spiritualists' and herbalists' homes for assistance to keep them in office beyond 2002.

"Some of them engaged in joint spiritual war to

dissuade Governor Osoba from dissolving the local councils. Despite the signing of the electoral bill into law by President Olusegun Obasanjo, they don't want to take chances," he added.

The chairman further said that with the seriousness attached to the elongation of their tenure, the council officials will stop at nothing to dissuade Governor Osoba from dissolving the councils.

Police warn fuel dealers

From Abdulfatai Abdulsalami, in Sokoto

The Sokoto State Police Command has warned that it will prosecute any fuel dealer caught diverting the commodity meant for the state.

The State Commissioner of Police, Alhaji Abubakar Audu, disclosed this while briefing newsmen in the state capital, Sokoto, at the weekend.

He said the ban on street hawking of petroleum commodity and the use of surface tanks is still in force, adding that the dealers involved in this shady deal should desist from the act to avoid the wrath of the law enforcement agencies.

Alhaji Abubakar said that the activities of the surface tankers and hawkers causing the scarcity of the commodity could no longer be tolerated.

He urged fuel dealers in the state to abide by the

government's guidelines and carry out their business in a legitimate way.

He also assured the public of the readiness of the police to protect the lives and property of any law abiding citizen.



Gaus-Obaseki, NNPC Boss.

Convicted thief escapes amputation

A 23-year-old convicted thief, who renounced Islam to escape amputation in a Sokoto Sharia Court, has been sentenced by the same court to nine-month imprisonment and 30 lashes of the cane.

Mohammed Ali was convicted by the Sokoto



Governor Bafarawa of Sokoto State.

From kabir Ogun Daji, in Sokoto

Sharia Court II for stealing plastic bowls worth N700 and escaping from prison custody.

Earlier, when he was brought before the court, he renounced Islam for Christianity. But when his father, Malam Ali Yusuf, learnt about the incident, he rushed to the court and told the judge that his son was lying.

Malam Ali stunned the court when he openly declared that the accused was his eighth son from his Sierra Leonean wife, and that he was indeed a Muslim.

"I want reaffirm to the court that Mohammed is a Muslim and should be tried under the provision of the Holy Qur'an, and face justice in conformity with the divine law," Malam Ali said amid an uproar from the crowd that filled the court room.

The judge, Malam Bawa Tambawal, commended the courage and frankness of Malam Ali and assured him that the court would temper justice with mercy on his son.

He then asked the accused if he had any objection on what his father told the court, to which he said no.

"All that he said is true. I only claimed to be a Christian because I don't want my hand to be amputated," the accused said.

The court then sentenced him to nine-month imprisonment and 30 lashes of the cane, pointing out that the offence did not reach the scale that attracts amputation.

Daily Trust gathered that Mohammed Ali had earlier been jailed for two years by a Sokoto magistrate court in February for theft, but he escaped from jail and committed another offence later in the year.

It was when he was re-arrested that he was brought to the Sharia court and charged with stealing and escaping from prison, the charges on which he is now convicted.

Speaking to *Daily Trust* after the sentence was passed on him, the convict said that his attempt to renounce his faith was just to escape amputation.

He also revealed that he had once served under the Sierra Leonean army when his family were residing in that country.

He told *Daily Trust* that he was brought back home along with many other Nigerians when the Nigerian government sent a ship and picked them from Sierra Leone.

Mohammed Ali said his ambition now is to join the Nigerian Army after serving his jail term.

Police arrest six over arms possession

Police in Katsina State have arrested six persons, including a Niger national, over illegal possession of arms, even as a wave of armed robberies caused fear of insecurity in some parts of the state.



Governor Umar Yar'Adua of Katsina State.

From Abba Mohammed Katsina, in Katsina

Daily Trust gathered that the suspects were arrested with locally-made guns and other dangerous weapons in Faskari Local Government Area of the state.

They were arrested when two of them allegedly tried to compel, at gunpoint, a local farmer to pay them for a farm work he had hired them to do in his farm, police sources said.

Five of the suspects claimed to have hailed from Sokoto and Zamfara States while the sixth person, a black smith suspected to be the manufacturer of the guns, claimed to have come from the neighbouring Niger Republic.

The state police command said that it is still investigating the matter, even as it admitted that it has not yet arrested the killers of

a local businessman, Alhaji Sule A. D. Saude, who was murdered earlier this month by suspected armed robbers.

Late Alhaji Sule was stabbed to death at his residence in Katsina Metropolis by a gang of armed robbers who also fled with his money.

Earlier attacks in his shops had deprived him of valuable items, sources told *Daily Trust* in Katsina.

Late Alhaji Sule was an uncle to Alhaji Miqadad Dahiru Saude, a member of the State House of Assembly.

The Secretary to the State Government, Alhaji Isa Katsina, who consoled the deceased's family, expressed shock over the murder of the businessman.

Many people in the state capital and its environs expressed fear of insecurity over the activities of armed robbers in the state.

FRSC vows to punish erring motorists

From Olumide Bajulaiye, in Abeokuta

The Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) in Ogun State has vowed to punish erring motorists in the state who boycotted the flag-off ceremony of the end-of-the-year ECOWAS road safety campaign.

Handing down the threat while flagging off the campaign organised by the Command in Abeokuta over the weekend, the commander Mr. Kehinde Adeniyi, warned that the Command would not condone "recklessness engaged by motorists on our highways during this festival period."

Mr. Adeniyi lamented over the absence of executives of both Road Transport Employers Association of Nigeria (RTEAN) and National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) at the campaign.

The FRSC boss said that the command had observed some new dangerous dimensions which had caused to many mishaps on the highways.

His words: "We have observed that many people drive without valid, current

driver's and vehicle licences. Also learner drivers are seen plying the highways without being accompanied by qualified drivers, even at times with fully loaded vehicles.

"There is also an unusually more cases of minors or underaged drivers, who are supposed to be under the care of their parents, but are seen behind wheels," he added.

This trend, according to him, "has led the Inspector General of Police to order for immediate clampdown on motorists found engaged in such violations."



Musiliu Smith, Police Boss.

News Focus

Of bulldozers and refugees

Nyanya, an Abuja suburb, is not an illegal settlement. Residents of the area therefore do not experience any apprehension as a result of threats and rumours of demolition of illegal settlements that have pervaded the Federal Capital Territory in recent times.

By Austine Odo and Emmanuel Ande

A resident, Mr. Vincent Okoro, whose six-room family house was affected and was paid N170,000 as compensation, told *Daily Trust* that the money was not even enough to pay for a room.

This relative peace was, however, shattered in some parts of the town on Wednesday last week by the arrival of bulldozers from Setraco, the company contracted for the dualisation of the Nyanya-Keffi road. Setraco, an indigenous construction firm, was contracted by the Federal Government this year to dualise the road. The work

Another resident, Alhaji Usman Maina, whose four-room apartment was affected, and received N98,517.60, said he had been turned into a refugee with his family as the amount paid would not even meet the two years' upfront payment of rented accommodation in Abuja.

John Mmokwe, another resident who spoke to *Daily Trust* on Friday, said: "It ap-

Nyanya, Mr. Danladi Iyan, who told *Daily Trust* that his palace had been inundated with reports from affected residents who expressed dissatisfaction with the amounts paid and the manner of payment.

Chief Danladi Iyan said apart from being underpaid, recipients were not allowed to see how much was meant for them.

"They would call you to just come and sign for your cheque, but they would not allow you to know how much is on paper for you", he said.

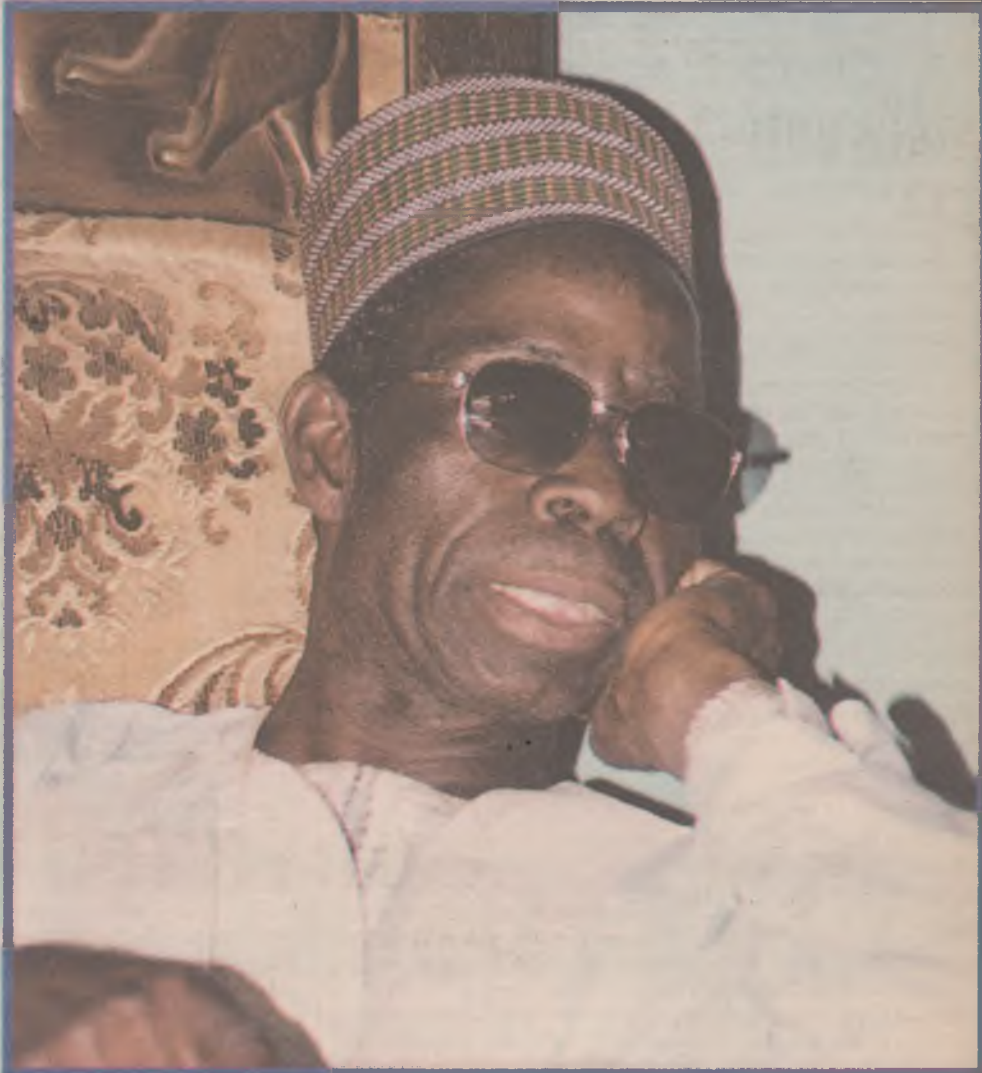
Before the exercise began, the Ministry of Works and Housing had in a letter signed by the Permanent Secretary in the ministry, Alhaji Musa Abubakar, directed those whose structures were affected to vacate such places to pave way for demolition, adding that all structures for which compensation had been paid should be demolished in the public interest.

The permanent secretary said compensation was not guided by the evaluation done by the speculative estate valuers who, he said, intentionally over-valued the property to enhance their fees.

Reacting to complaints of under valuation, the estate valuer representing those affected by the demolition exercise, Mr. Chika Okafor, told *Daily Trust* that the compensation was not based on his report.

He noted that government approved the report by its consultants, Lechez, who presented a different report from his.

"My report was to provide a guide for the victims' present value of their prop-



Danladi Iyan, Chief of Nyanya...

told *Daily Trust* that his church, apart from being grossly undervalued, lost property worth N100,000 to thieves and damages as a result of the sudden approach of the bulldozers. "We are shocked by the maltreatment they meted out to us. We were not adequately informed. Our property got badly damaged or stolen. Besides, we've not got a new land to build our church, we don't even know where to worship now. We pleaded to be allowed some time to arrange our things, but who are we to stand before the heavily armed mobile policemen?" he complained.

Many affected residents have now taken refuge in Mararaba, Karu and other places. Among the tenants affected are motorcycle dealers in the area, whose chairman, Mr. Collins Onyia,

said the sudden demolition had brought them frustration, leaving them with no place to do their business. "They took us unawares, there was no warning, we lost a lot of things, many things got damaged. One of my members, Nnamdi Nwankwo, lost three wheelbarrow loads of spare parts. We want government to give us a site to sell our things", he said.

When *Daily Trust* contacted the Managing Director, Setraco Construction Company, Mr. Said Khalaf, for comments, he said his company had no hand in the payment of compensation and could not speak on the valuation. He said early commencement of the demolition exercise would enable his company to complete the project on schedule.

had started ever since, but the company complained that its work was hampered by non-payment of compensation to owners of property in the affected areas. Following the payment of compensation last month, demolition started on Wednesday.

But several complaints have been made by residents on the valuation of their property, resulting in what they called under payment, and inadequate time to prepare for relocation. According to them, the compensation paid for their property is grossly inadequate, and enough time was not given to them to move to new places before the

appears the compensation was not paid according to the valuation of property. It seems they just paid what they liked. The problem we are facing in this country is that the poor have no say in anything. They have no access to government to air their views, and things just happen anyhow".

Mr. Mmokwe cited examples of other residents, including Simon Nnaburu and Sebastian Nnodi, who were paid N85,000 and N160,000 for their six-and five-room apartments respectively.

The residents' claim of under valuation was supported by the Chief of



Demolished structures along the Nyanya-Keffi road.



Children search through the rubble of their demolished homes in Nyanya..Friday

Opinion

Films and our values

By A'isha Idris

At the turn of the 20th century the cinema was invented bringing about more enlightenment and entertainment to the world. People came to be aware of the things happening around them and abroad. It thus brought about more understanding of people's cultures, traditions and religions, among other things. These were some of the merits of the cinema.

During the colonial era, Africa came to experience such cinematographic developments followed by the television. It was not until in the 1950s that the first television station was established in Nigeria. Many indigenous programmes were introduced gradually and by the 1980s virtually all the existing states, had their own television stations. The cinema, however, continued to be patronised by the youths in particular - and for those who had no opportunity to have a television set or for sheer habit. I remember then, that most youths eagerly awaited the late night movies shown on television, which were mostly either western or Indian films. In the North, Indian films were very popular. Because of the colonial legacy and of course the influence of their cultures, Africans came to regard their own cultures and traditional values as inferior to that of their colonisers. However, there were among those Nigerians who tried in their various artistic fields to counter this cultural imperialism by promoting the African culture and traditions, thus defying the threats of our ebbing traditions and moral values.

Among such were the late Abubakar Imam, Sa'adu Zungur, Ali Akilu, Hafilu, Brendan Shehu and Chief Ogunde. Some of these distinguished persons, particularly the last three mentioned above strove a lot to revolutionise the Nigerian film industry. The impact of which is still being felt today. My concern here is not to delve into the technical or financial problems of this institution, but to focus on the quality of the soap operas and video films (home video) that are being produced nowadays. The video which became very popular from the early eighties has immensely brought the world nearer to the doorsteps of the average Nigerian. You do not need to possess a video set to be able to watch a cassette. In the towns and even some villages today, it has become a source of income generation to some owners of the video set who operate it as a sort of cinema and that all one needs to do is to pay a certain fee and be admitted into a parlour or an open space (depending on where the owner deems it fit) to watch a film.

In the recent past, films that dominated the Nigerian market were western cowboy films, Indian films and Chinese (Kung fu/Karate films). Although quite enlightening to the viewer's perspective about life and the world in general, these movies often times influenced their moral attitudes which is not encouraging. In fact violence became more rampant amongst youths not to talk of the moral degradation that came along with them. It is pertinent to note that, cries of some concerned citizens, particularly parents, educationists and religious leaders partly encouraged some producers to start creating and producing films in the country especially from the 1990's. This has steadily increased and in the last few years Nigerian home videos (in English, Hausa and in other major languages) have dominated the market. From a point of view, this is quite a welcome development and is a great leap forward for the film industry in Nigeria. The home videos have exceeded the Nigerian market to West African countries and even beyond.

I read a foreign magazine the other day and was surprised to learn that quite a number of Americans and Britons patronise the Nigerian films. Thus, as they are carving a niche for themselves, the producers should be made aware of the actual needs of the Nigerian society - parents, leaders, educationists and every other person who has the interest of the country at heart. A cross section of those interviewed, expressed concern over the wanton immorality exhibited by the actors and actresses in these films. This according to them, is very much detrimental to our youths. In addition they say, most of these films are either not depicting the true values, cultures and major religions of our society or are emphasising the negative aspects of them. Moreover, they are always putting more emphasis on going abroad - to America and Europe - as the prime or ultimate level of personal achievement. The youths certainly do not need such images. What they need is something more educative psychologically and morally wise. Even Andrew came back after "checking out" because he realised that there is no place like home and we need to salvage it together. How can the nation progress when the ultimate aim of every youth is to escape and seek for greener pastures abroad? It simply does not make any sense.

All societies in the world develop due to interaction with one another, Nigeria is no exception but there is a limit to imitation and emulation. Therefore, the producers should take note of this when doing their jobs. We do not need so much emphasis on cultism, violence and other weird evil things which the filmmakers have taken a fancy to. It has even become the order of the day for some of these producers to associate some evil acts with a certain ethnic group in the country, hence, promoting ethnic bias and resentment.

Enough of such immorality, violence and ethnic sentiments, please. Let there be something more positive and reasonable. Something emphasising scientific and technological development of our great nation. The status of Nigeria as a giant of Africa should be reflected in the minds of the producers. They should endeavour to lead the rest of the continent towards the revolutionising the International film industry which will not only be financially beneficial to them but will also go a long way in forging an understanding of the African cultures and moral values.

The new millennium should be a challenge to the filmmakers and television stations both private and public to pioneer the promotion of our positive values and traditions not forgetting our science and technological attainments.

Let there be that African finesse so that our youths would be prepared to focus more on the development of our dear nation. *A'isha Idris (Mrs.) is of the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi.*

The tears of pensioners

By Salisu Na'inna Dambatta

Dr. Habibu Angulu Sani, an administrator, author and expert on the civil service the other day wrote very touchingly in a reputed national daily about the poor plight of pensioners in Nigeria. He listed more than 20 newspaper stories, all of them about pensioners, their sad plight and suggested solutions to their problem.

It is quite true that there is a serious problem and some difficulties in pensions administration in this country. Elderly retired public servants, be they from the civil service, federal parastatals or the armed forces and paramilitary organizations, suffer untold hardship and shed drums of tears to get what by constitutional provisions, is their right.

Although critics and some pensioners perceive the government as not showing deep concern and taking strong action to ameliorate the plight of government pensioners in Nigeria, the tact of the matter is that, the pension issue is being treated at the appropriate quarters seriously and with all the dedication required to make a difference in the lives of pensioners and in pensions administration in this country.

Readers should remember that President Olusegun Obasanjo is a military pensioner; Atiku Abubakar, the Vice President, a customs pensioner; Obong J. Ekaette, the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, is a pensioner having retired from the Federal Civil Service, so also is Alhaji Musa Gwadabe, the Minister for Labour and Productivity: the list can be longer if more of the pensioners in the heart of the

government are to be enumerated. This fact implies that the key government officials who give general direction on policy matters are pensioners and it will be proper to assume that they know where it pinches the pensioners most. Even if they appear to be well-off materially, being responsible leaders, there is enough evidence to confirm that they believe pensioners should be paid adequate amount as and when due.

For instance, in his inaugural speech, President Obasanjo told Nigerians on May 29, 1999, "I assure you all that it is the policy of this government to ensure fair remuneration in service and in retirement to public servants who include legislators, civil servants, the police and members of the armed forces, parastatals and public owned educational institutions".

The President is also on record giving more assurances to those who devoted their time and contributed to the development of this country. On June 4, 1999, at the inaugural session of the National Assembly, he said "All those who have served their time will be honourably retired and adequately compensated to permit them speedy and comfortable resettlement".

Some readers may then ask, but what has the government done in practical terms to turn the Presidential promises into concrete action with positive impact on the lives of pensioners in the country?

First, the government,

through the office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation, studied the depth, dimension and scope of the lapses arid weakness in the system, which cause or contribute to the delay in the processing and eventual payment of pension entitlements to retired public servants.

The government has paid unpaid harmonised pension rates and the increases of 150 per cent and 30 per cent. Then came the 142 per cent increase in pension benefits with effect from 1st May, 2000. This has been paid to fall in line with the reviews of salaries and wages for those in employment. By fully paying all the arrears of 150 per cent, 30 per cent and the new 142 per cent increase, it is certain that more money has been put in the pockets of retired federal civil servants.

But it is also true that many retired public servants are yet to benefit from the payments. Some worked in the military, others retired from the Nigerian Railways, the Nigerian Television Authority, the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria and even the Lagos University Teaching Hospital. This situation is not due to lack of an umbrella pension policy on the part of the government, it is more of a problem in the individual affected institutions and parastatals.

The office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation has improved the process of paying retiring civil servants. In the new more efficient system, the retiring civil servant is paid a huge chunk of his benefits on his last day in service. Over 3,000 retired civil servants who

enjoyed it literally retired with smiles on their faces.

Another measure restored by the government is the invocation of the provisions of the Pensions Act No. 102 of 1979 that made funding pensions a first charge on the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the country. The application of this law will ensure timely funding of pensions scheme and would eventually wipe out all the pension arrears. Indeed, President Obasanjo has directed the office of the Head of the Service to prepare a comprehensive arrears profile of pension and gratuities of all public servants for his consideration.

The President said while opening a workshop on pensions reforms in Nigeria on 11th September, 2001 that "So far, our administration has released a total sum of nearly N100 billion for the payment of arrear of pensions and gratuities", but he also acknowledged that more money is required to pay all retired officers of the military and of all government parastatals.

The sustainability of any pension scheme is as important as funding it. This was why a pensions reform workshop was organised to find lasting solutions in the payment of pension to deserving Nigerians. And this is a clear evidence that the tears of Nigerian pensioners and their demand for timely payment of their entitlement as it is due are not in vain. The government has listened to pensioners and is acting to ensure a better deal for them.

Salisu Na'inna Dambatta is a Chief Information Officer in the Presidency

How not to advise elders

By Abdullahi Lawal Lere

The beauty of Nigeria's nascent democracy is that people now have unfettered access to the media. They go to the media (print and broadcast) to say whatever they like notwithstanding the consequences of their utterances. This is more exemplified at the local level where people make irrelevant outburst capable of instigating serious tension.

Perhaps, these types of unguarded statements and utterances accounts for the larger percentage of civil unrest and religious uprising recorded throughout the new democratic dispensation. We have gory tales to tell. The Kaduna religious crisis, Shagamu mayhem, OPC wanton killings in Lagos, the Tiv/Jukun tribal war, the Kano destruction of lives and property, Jos religious tragedy and lots more. These entire crises were avertable but for impatience and intolerance. cursory look at the remote causes will equally show that the crisis brewed from unguarded utterances.

It is in this light that I felt compelling to call one Alhaji Musa Mudi, the secretary of Lere Local Government Council to a recent interview he granted a weekly newspaper where he made allusions that former Kaduna State Governor, Dabo Mohammed Lere and his younger brother and former military governor of Sokoto State, Brigadier General Garba Mohammed are causing confusion in Lere local government. The three were also insinuated by Alhaji Mudi to have been inciting the masses against the chairman of Lere local government.

In writing this piece, I was inspired by the high sense of duty to emphasise the need for us to be our brother's keeper and try to resist the temptation of being a ready made instrument for causing disaffection and disunity. We should also defy efforts by political neophytes to use us to achieve political targets at the overwhelming expense of the poverty-ridden masses of our area.

But for the severity of the allegations raised by the, Alhaji Musa Mudi, which I consider spurious, I would not have joined issues with him considering his public status as, the Secretary of my Local Government Council whose actions or inactions in office will affect me, my family, and indeed the peace loving people of Lere. More so, I consider Alhaji Mudi to be an educated personality that can at all times, draw a line between a mere political sentiment and a serious matter. Additionally, I hold Alhaji Mudi with high respect as an assertive person who can rise above the time honoured dictum that portrays a person who bites the fingers that once fed him as villain.

The duo of Dabo Mohammed Lere and Brig. Gen. Garba Mohammed (rt) are, and will continue to be humbled and respected as elders and statesmen in not only Lere Local

Government or Kaduna State but in the entire country. They have served diligently and honestly in various capacities across the country over time. I am pretty sure they will be willing to submit themselves for probe at all the places they served. Their track records are unparallel.

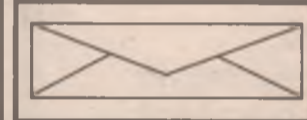
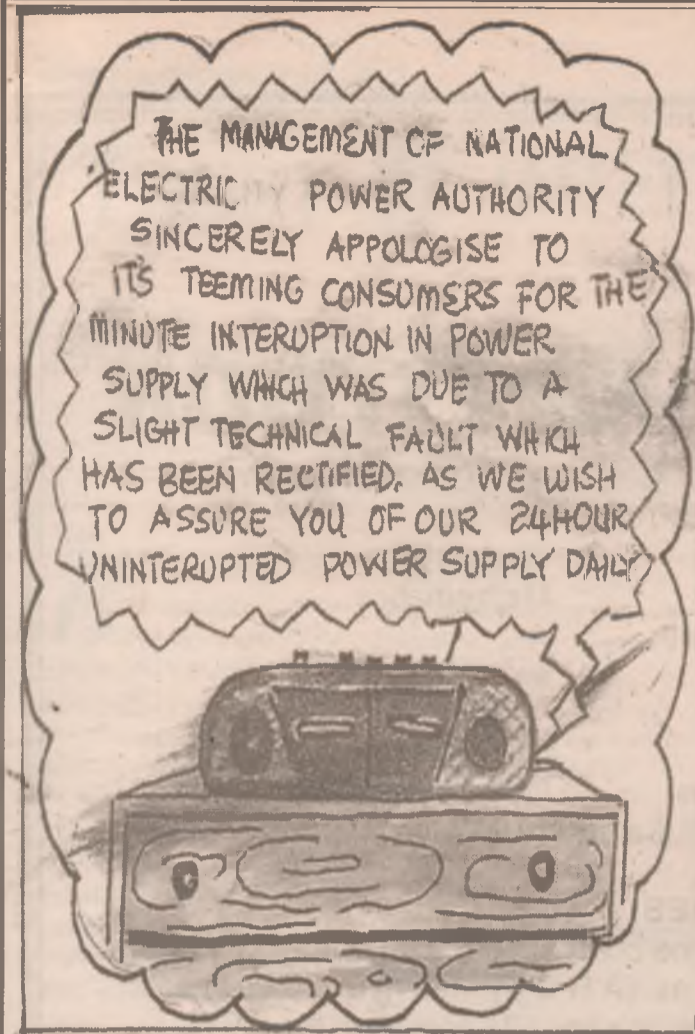
What I found laughable about Alhaji Mudi's outburst in that interview was his blind disposition towards protecting his boss, and perhaps, political mentor and benefactor (Honourable Aliyu Sale Ramin Kura), the 'revered and prudent' Chairman of Lere Local Government Council. The simple reason that these former governors have lent their support to a patriotic attempt of some concerned indigenes to contest the sincerity, accountability, honesty J transparency and sense of responsibility of Lere council officials does not in any way diminish their reputation and integrity in the face of any right thinking member of this society.

It is my considered opinion that people like this should be praised and not condemned; they should be encouraged and not discouraged and they should be assisted not maligned. Their perceived crime according to Alhaji Mudi is their "call to probe the Chairman" by the highly respected Anti-Corruption Commission. In case Alhaji Mudi and his ilk do not know, I am pleased to inform them that Justice Mustapha Akanbi who is heading the Commission is widely acknowledged to be a free-minded and eminent jurist, who cannot be influenced or cajoled into passing an unfair judgment against Honourable Aliyu Ramin Kura.

Indeed, it is ridiculous and myopic for anyone to assume that Dabo Lere and his brother, Gen. Garba Mohammed will demote their God-bestowed status to incite the masses against not even a serving Governor talk less of a Local Chairman. With due respect to Alhaji Mudi and without prejudice to the style of leadership of Honourable Aliyu Ramin Kura, I beg to disagree with Alhaji Mudi that the two brothers "have been trying to translate their personal problems with the Chairman into the problem of the entire people of Lere. One will like to know what personal problems the two former governors have with the Local Chairman.

Alhaji Mudi should, in trying to protect or bootlick his boss, always remember that he is a young and promising civil servant and not a politician, hence should not allow himself to be used by self-serving politicians. Unprincipled politicians always use and dump their blind supporters.

Abdullahi Lere is of Plot 2096, Bunbuna Close, Zone 1, Wuse - Abuja



YOUR LETTERS

Haba Kure

The recent statement made by Governor Abdulkadir Kure of Niger State that councillors deserve higher pay than professors is unfortunate.

Moreover, it is also surprising for somebody like Governor Kure who is highly educated as an engineer to say that it is easier to be a professor than winning an election to become a councillor. Haba Kure, in fact, we never expect such a statement from you.

At this juncture, I want Governor Kure to understand that it is even easier in the Nigerian context to win any elective position with money, but it is not easy to become a professor with money. So, governor Kure, your statement is totally uncalled for, therefore, I wish to appeal to you to please as a matter of urgency withdraw that statement and apologise to Nigerian professors.

Jibrin I. Jibrin,
Minna,
Niger State.

Kano riots: An act of hoodlums

It is very unfortunate that riots under the guise of ethno-religious excuses are becoming rampant in almost every part of this country. The perpetrators of these acts always take advantage of whatever flimsy excuse they can get and inflict huge losses of lives and property on the nation. It happened in Jos, Lagos, Kaduna, Aba and recently in Kano.

Hoodlums and other criminal groups are believed to be the cause of most riots in this country. These groups of people have particular interest in this kind of mayhem because it gives

them opportunity to plunder wealth and property of innocent people. This is exactly what happened in Kano. The hoodlums have done incalculable damage to our image as a people.

There is also the problem of some strong media who share the same evil machinations against the populace. These media try to achieve their aims through sensational coverage and giving false account of incidents.

Another problem of these evil acts is the impression they create of people whenever they happen.

People tend to be more concerned about the perpetrators of the evils and forget or ignore the efforts of the peace lovers who make no less efforts to check and control them and minimise the extent of havoc it can have on victims. These people always spare no effort in containing the situations and bringing them under control. A practical example of the efforts of these people is the outright condemnation of the acts by both traditional and religious leaders and their persistent appeals to people to come to their senses and avoid getting involved in the acts. The religious leaders also explained and quoted various provisions of their religions on this kind of acts and how and why it is sinful. There had never been a time when the perpetrators of these acts had received sanction from any community leader.

The swift action of the Kano State government in deploying security officials, and in sealing up areas that could fall easy prey to the rioters should also be appreciated.

Ibrahim Ahmad Kadawa,
Ungogo Local Government
Education Authority,
Ungogo LGA
Kano State.

Day of reckoning

Permit me space in your widely read medium to tell the incumbent chairmen of local governments that the termination period of their tenure is fast approaching. Therefore, those already clamouring for re-election popularly known as *Tazarce* should look back and see how much value they have added to our prevailing circumstance.

Those who have already set a track record by delivering almost all essential dividends of democracy ranging from good roads, sound education, improved health system, potable water, curtailing erosion and so on have every right to seek for re-election so that they will be able to accomplish most of their leftovers.

However, as for those that failed woefully to deliver such dividends of democracy to their entire electorate, but instead resorted to siphoning public funds they should also note that the day of reckoning is just around the corner. However we are aware that these tyrannical leaders at the end of their tenure will begin to be making consultation with the so-called party caucus, with a view to masterminding and manoeuvring their return to their edifice so that they could continue with their looting.

Finally, I would like to call on the entire electorate to always make sure that they make a thorough assessment of the person before they elect him to climb the mantle of leadership.

Muktar Lawal Dutsin-Ma
Dutsin-Ma Local
Government
Peoples Progressive
Forum,
Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State.

Governor Audu deserves a second term

I have followed developments since the inception of this administration and I have come to respect Alhaji Abubakar Audu for his exceptional qualities. This was a man that nobody believed will make an impact during his first coming because of the powers that be, but Prince Abubakar Audu proved his critics wrong by his performance.

I have gone around Kogi State before the media tour and I was impressed with what I saw on the ground, there are real dividends of democracy in Kogi State. Prince Abubakar Audu, the executive governor of Kogi State deserves a second term in office. And come 2003 I will lead a campaign of the youths in all the senatorial districts for Audu's re-election. I am not the governor's apologist and am not on the payroll of the Kogi State government but let honour be given to those that deserves it. When Governor Abubakar Audu was elected

governor in the Third Republic, it was a different constitution that was in operation so the issue of a second term for Audu is a reality. Let nobody stay in Abuja and enact any law that will stop the will of the people because power belongs to the people.

It is the youths that are on the street today that feels the impact of Prince Abubakar Audu performance because today we have a state university, it has saved us the agony of going to another state for schooling. Today, there is a five star hotel in Lokoja that has provided jobs for our undergraduates from all the parts of the state. There is the opening up of roads and rural infrastructure in Kogi State and most of our rural areas have been opened up. Our light has been upgraded to national grid. Very soon a construction of cement factory is to start in Obajana in Kogi State that will also create jobs for a lot youths. I was in Kogi state and saw all these transformations with my

eyes and I hereby declare here that I will lead a crusade that says "Youths of Kogi want Audu for second term"; "YKWAS" that will be in Lokoja soon because Daniel Kalu did it for the late General Sani Abacha, an Ibo man standing up for a Hausa man talk less of me that is a son of the soil.

I will lead this crusade in the local government of the state because democracy is by the people, for the people, so it is what we want that matters not what some elites sit and deliberate in Abuja

that matters. Prince Abubakar Audu holds the ace of our generation because of the transformation policies of his dynamics administration. Prince Abubakar Audu, we the Kogi youths resident in Kaduna here are behind you. I want to use this medium to wish you many happy returns of this great birthday.

I wish you Allah's guidance and abundant blessing this holy month of Ramadan.
Usman Austine,
Box 4541,
Kaduna.

Chieftdom: From Mada to Akwanga

For the interest and proper recognition of Mada people, also considering the crisis surrounding claims of ownership of some areas in Nasarawa State and the country as a whole, the Mada chieftaincy tool should be moved to Akwanga with immediate effect.

Let's take our minds back to when Mada, Wamba and Eggon chieftdoms were all under Akwanga local government area of which there were series of problems on the ownership of the area.

Therefore, I'm of the good opinion that you should as elders team up jointly with the legislature and the executive council of

Akwanga local government area and as a matter of urgency do something about it before some people come from somewhere overnight to start claiming ownership of the area as happened in Azara, Zangon Kataf, Kachia and many other places.

Can you people just imagine the way things are happening? Look at what happened in Jos! No one expected such a thing in Jos because everybody was relaxed, saying after all we are the owners of the land in Jos, no one can just come from somewhere and take away our land.
Kado L. Mohammed,
138 Ibrahim Taiwo Road,
Kano.



NNPC NATIONAL QUIZ COMPETITION

The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation is organising a National Quiz Competition covering all states of the federation and FCT, from Tuesday 25th September to Thursday 20th December, 2001.

OBJECTIVES

- To Popularize and encourage the study of science amongst students
- Through the questions and answers on the sciences, assist students in their SSCE, GCE, NECO, JAMB and international qualifying exams.
- Through the questions and answers on the NNPC, enlighten students and the general public on the Corporation activities.
- As the programme will be well publicised nationally, to ensure that students and citizens nation wide benefit from the science quiz and know more about NNPC, respectively.
- Through the keen competitions, promote and encourage the competitive spirit amongst students.

PARTICIPANTS

Science students in Senior Secondary School classes.

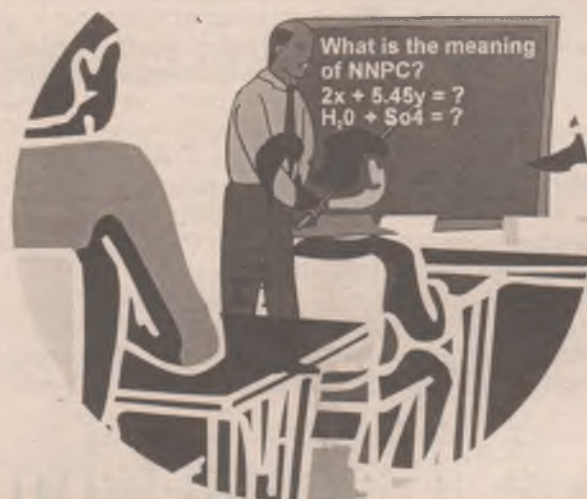
THE DETAILED FIXTURES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

ZONE A

STATES	DATES FOR INTRA-STATE COMPETITION	DATES FOR INTER STATE COMPETITION	ZONAL QUARTER FINALS SEMI FINALS & FINAL DATES
1. KEBBI STATE	25/9/2001	3/12/2001	AT MAIDUGURI DATE 6TH - 7TH DEC. 2001 ZONE A KNOCK-OUTS BETWEEN
2. SOKOTO STATE	26/9/2001		
3. ZAMFARA STATE	27/9/2001		
4. KATSINA STATE	28/9/2001	4/12/2001	3 SETS OF 3 STATES HOLD IN MAIDUGURI TO DETERMINE THE 3RD, 2ND AND 1ST PLACED POSITIONS IN THE ZONE
5. KANO STATE	29/9/2001		
6. JIGAWA STATE	2/10/2001	5/12/2001	
7. YOBE STATE	3/10/2001		
8. BORNO STATE	4/10/2001		
9. GOMBE STATE	5/10/2001		

ZONE B

STATES	DATES FOR INTRA-STATE COMPETITION	DATES FOR INTER STATE COMPETITION	ZONAL QUARTER FINALS SEMI FINALS & FINAL DATES
10. ADAMAWA STATE	8/10/2001	10/12/2001	AT LAFIA DATE 13TH - 14TH DEC. 2001 ZONE B KNOCK-OUTS BETWEEN
11. TARABA STATE	9/10/2001		
12. BAUCHI STATE	10/10/2001	11/12/2001	3 SETS OF 3 STATES HOLD IN LAFIA TO DETERMINE THE 3RD, 2ND AND 1ST PLACED POSITIONS IN THE ZONE
13. EBONYI STATE	11/10/2001		
14. ENUGU STATE	12/10/2001		
15. ANAMBRA STATE	13/10/2001	12/12/2001	
16. PLATEAU STATE	15/10/2001		
17. NASARAWA STATE	16/10/2001		
18. BENUE STATE	17/10/2001		
19. ABUJA (FCT)	18/10/2001		



AREAS OF THE QUIZ COMPETITION

I) Science subjects

- * Biology
- * Chemistry
- * Physics
- * Mathematics
- * English Language

II) NNPC

- * Historical Evolution
- * Subsidiaries and their activities
- * Products and Services
- * Products Distribution
- * Pipeline Vandalisation (Causes and Solutions) etc.

FORMAT & FIXTURES

For the purpose of the competition, the country has been divided into four zones, (A B C D), with nine states in each zone except zone B which has 10 because of the F.C.T.

Competitions will take place at four levels viz:

- * Intra State competition to choose State representatives:
- * Knock out competitions to choose states that proceed to zonal finals.
- * Zonal finals to choose the State representing each zone.
- * Grand finale in Abuja between the winners of the zonal finals.

ZONE C

STATES	DATES FOR INTRA-STATE COMPETITION	DATES FOR INTER STATE COMPETITION	ZONAL QUARTER FINALS SEMI FINALS & FINAL DATES
20. EDO STATE	22/10/2001	19/11/2001	AT BENIN CITY DATE 22nd -23rd NOV. 2001 ZONE C KNOCK-OUTS BETWEEN
21. ONDO STATE	23/10/2001		
22. DELTA STATE	24/10/2001	20/11/2001	3 SETS OF 3 STATES HOLD IN BENIN CITY TO DETERMINE THE 3RD, 2ND AND 1ST PLACED POSITIONS IN THE ZONE
23. RIVERS STATE	25/10/2001		
24. BAYELSA STATE	26/10/2001		
25. IMO STATE	27/10/2001	21/11/2001	
26. ABIA STATE	29/10/2001		
27. AKWA IBOM STATE	30/10/2001		
28. CROSS RIVER STATE	31/10/2001		

ZONE D

STATES	DATES FOR INTRA-STATE COMPETITION	DATES FOR INTER STATE COMPETITION	ZONAL QUARTER FINALS SEMI FINALS & FINAL DATES
29. LAGOS STATE	2/11/2001	26/11/2001	AT KADUNA DATE 29TH-30TH NOV. 2001 ZONE D KNOCK-OUTS BETWEEN
30. OYO STATE	3/11/2001		
31. OGUN STATE	5/11/2001	27/11/2001	3 SETS OF 3 STATES HOLD IN KADUNA TO DETERMINE THE 3RD, 2ND AND 1ST PLACED POSITIONS IN THE ZONE
32. EKITI STATE	6/11/2001		
33. OSUN STATE	7/11/2001		
34. KWARA STATE	8/11/2001	28/11/2001	
35. KOGI STATE	9/11/2001		
36. NIGER STATE	10/11/2001		
37. KADUNA STATE	12/11/2001		

FINALS:

ABUJA

- * Winner in Zone A Meets Winner in Zone B Date 17th DEC., 2001
- * Winner in Zone C Meets Winner in Zone D Date 18th DEC., 2001

DATE:

17th - 20th DECEMBER 2001

- * Loser's Final For 4th And 3rd Positions Date 19th DEC, 2001
- * Grand Finale For 2nd And 1st Positions Date 20th DEC, 2001

Closing /Prize Giving Ceremony for the Competition Holds On 20th Dec, 2001

TIME: 3:00PM.

NIGERIAN NATIONAL PETROLEUM CORPORATION



... We touch your lives in many positive ways

NDU UGHAMADU

General Manager, Group Public Affairs Division.

NNPC Towers, Herbert Macaulay Way, Central Business District, P.M.B. 190, Garki, Abuja. Telephone (09) 2348200 - 19

TRUST INTERNATIONAL

Foreign & Diplomatic

Zimbabwe has not lived up to its undertaking – British envoy

Britain's support of the United States in the campaign against terrorism, its involvement in the land redistribution problem in Zimbabwe, issuance of visas to foreigners and more have provoked questions in diplomatic circles. The British Deputy High Commissioner, Mr. Charles Bird, delves into these issues in this interview with Kevin Ebele Adinu and Musa Aliyu.

Before the September 11 attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Centre there has been a face-off, so to say, between the United States and its allies in Europe concerning such a thing as the Kyoto treaty that the US refused to sign, concerning the defence missile treaty which even cost the US its seat at the UN Human Rights Commission. But after the attacks its allies fell behind it immediately. What informed this sudden alliance after the lingering face-off, in support of the war against terrorism?

I think in a democratic system, you can have disagreement and you can have discussion. It's the same in every family. You can disagree with one another but no matter what, the family remains the same. On the one hand, if we the international community always agree with the United States, we would be accused of being stooges and not having the minds of our own. And now when we disagree, you ask what's wrong, why do we disagree? Well, it's healthy to disagree. And this is how we make progress. Through discussion, through the people having different view points on important issues such as the environment. And that's healthy.

When you said that on September 11 we fell in line behind the United States, again I think that's wrong choice of words. The world was opposed against what happened on September 11. The world was united in shock, horror and grief and the determination that it should never happen again.

From the onset, Britain was actively involved in mobilizing support for the US attacks on Afghanistan

Prime Minister Tony Blair's Eid message

I am delighted to send my very best wishes to the British Muslim community on the happy occasion of Eid al-Fitr. I know that Eid is a day of giving thanks and of joy. It is a great occasion for the Muslim community and there will be many celebrations taking place around Britain following the end of the holy month of Ramadan. As well as celebrating with their families, Muslims will be offering special prayers in Mosques up and down the country.

The Muslim community is an important part of a multicultural, multi-faith Britain. I particularly welcome the increased participation of British Muslims in public life and look forward to helping build on this in the future.

With best wishes.

through Prime Minister Tony Blair. But then why was Britain so carried away even though there was no convincing evidence indicting Osama bin Laden and the Taliban who are his host?

I will disagree with you and what I can do after this interview is to give you a

This was not just an act of war against the US but an act of war against the world.

The second thing is that there is a convincing evidence that Osama bin Laden was behind the September 11 attacks. There is no doubt that he and the al-Qaeda were behind the September 11 and other attacks. This was not



Mr. Charles Bird, Deputy High Commissioner, British High Commission

copy of the information that has been posted on the No. 10 Website which talked about, in an unclassified way, the information which leads us to the certainty that Osama bin Laden and the al-Qaeda network were behind the September 11 atrocities. The first thing to note is that this is the worst terrorist action on US. It was the worst terrorist incident involving British citizens and the citizens from a large number of countries around the world including Muslim nations were killed.

the first act that they carried out. Certainly the link between Osama bin Laden, al-Qaeda network and the Taliban in Afghanistan is absolutely clear. Both sides acknowledged it. The Taliban have been given every opportunity to hand over Osama bin Laden. They refused. It wasn't an offer that was made once, it was made on a number of occasions. And point blank they refused. It was made quite clear that if they were not going to help in the war against terrorism, then they were on the side of terrorists. And they would have to suffer the consequences.

What is your reaction to the high number of civilian casualties and increasing refugees arising from the ongoing war against terrorism?

I think as Prime Minister, Tony Blair, has said and other world leaders have said, that every civilian casualty is a matter of deep regret. We, the international coalition, have no quarrel with the Afghan people, quite on the reverse

the Taliban have exerted and, insidious malevolent grief on the Afghan people, have subjected them to the most primitive and barbaric system of government. That again has been recognized by the Afghan people. In fact, at the fall of Kabul there was rejoicing by the people that the Taliban have gone and there was hope to return to a system of government in which all Afghans of all ages, both male and female, would be able to participate.

only information we were getting was from al-Jazeera. And I don't remember any of the Islamic press saying to me, "even though it's a pity we are only hearing from the Taliban side, why can't we hear from the BBC or hear from the Western side?"

The belief is that the coalition against terrorism lacks credibility on the ground that even the US was involved in terrorism against some countries. People like Saddam Hussein would want to harp on this and the Middle East issue where the Israeli action is viewed by Arab countries as an act of terrorism. Don't you think that this should be properly addressed?

President Saddam Hussein is a man who for the past 20 years or so has kept the Iraqi people in subjugation. First of all he went to war with Iran for 10 years, an utterly wasteful war which did nothing other than result in a lot of Iraqis and Iranians being killed. He then invaded a brother Arab and a brother Islamic country, Kuwait, which so angered the rest of the Arab world that united in an international coalition to drive Saddam Hussein and his forces out of Kuwait to liberate Kuwait. He is a man who has used chemical weapons on his own people. He is a man who because of his repulsive policies has kept his people hungry. Under the oil for food programme, imposed by the UN to prevent the development of chemical, nuclear and biological weapons by his regime, lots of food and drugs have been imported into Iraq. We are aware that at one stage up to sixty percent of this was not distributed to the people. I don't think Saddam Hussein is a reliable witness or a man with any credibility in our democratic world.

But then Saddam Hussein, Osama bin Laden and many others considered as terrorists, are people watchers of events believe were made by the US and its Europe allies. The 10-year war you cited was, as some people posit, sponsored by the US in order to weaken Iran whose growing power as a Middle East country was becoming alarming. Don't you think that the fact that these people are baring their fangs against the US is like the "chicken coming home to roost"?

No I don't think so. Saddam Hussein is only baring his fang against his own people. Saddam Hussein is

interested in only one thing and that is himself. He is not interested in the welfare of the Iraqi people.

Recently President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe accused your country of sponsoring terrorism against his government. What is your reaction to this?

Well, it is certainly nonsense to say that the United Kingdom sponsors terrorism against Zimbabwe. The United Kingdom has a long relationship with Zimbabwe that goes back many years. We recognise that there is an urgent need for land redistribution in Zimbabwe and we are prepared to support it as we have said at the Abuja conference, under UNDP programme. We are also, concerned about a number of other issues in Zimbabwe. The economic situation is of deep concern to us. It has implication for the region not necessarily Zimbabwe alone. We are also concerned about human rights in Zimbabwe. It is unfortunate that the war veterans have invaded farms and have also driven out farmers. We are also concerned about the judiciary and the conduct of the forthcoming elections. So, there is no bilateral problem between the UK and Zimbabwe as President Robert Mugabe has tried to portray. Even SADC has recognised the land crisis in Zimbabwe and is involved in looking for solution and the Commonwealth, other African countries, the EU as well as the entire international community have all recognised the problems of Zimbabwe.

During the Lancaster conference before the independence of Zimbabwe, Britain undertook to provide fund to enable the country buy over land for redistribution. But after about two decades, Zimbabwe alleged that Britain has not honoured its pledge and that is at the root of the present crisis. So what do you say to that?

It is not at the root of the present crisis. It is one of the contributing factors of the crisis. Yes, Britain has said it is going to support the process of land redistribution. That has not changed. We still stand ready to support the process of land redistribution. That process has to be just and fair and we believe that it is best done under the UNDP programme. We made commitments at Abuja and we still stand by these commitments.

Continued on Page 10

TRUST INTERNATIONAL

AFRICA & THE MIDDLE EAST

Zimbabwe has not lived up to its undertaking – British envoy

Continued from Page 9

One thing about Abuja is that it is a two-way process. The government of Zimbabwe also made various undertakings on human rights, on good governance issues which it has failed to live up to. The commitments we made at Abuja depends on the progress the government of Zimbabwe makes on its undertaking at Abuja. But we stand ready to fulfill our commitments and we are committed to that process of land redistribution which is necessary.

Does your commitment have to wait for land invasion and things like that? Has your country been providing the fund to enable the land redistribution?

If the government of Zimbabwe thinks that the government of Britain will hand over large amount of cash for it to fund some sort of land redistribution programme then it is mistaking. We stand to support and contribute financially to an entire land redistribution process under UNDP programme. We stated that very clearly at Abuja.

I think there is a kind of misunderstanding. They are

“No. Not at all. I think I am listening to what my Muslim friends have told me. And also I think it is important to remember as I said that the Afghan people themselves have welcome the fall of the Taliban.”

arguing that the land was forcibly taken from them and that Britain should bear the bulk of the responsibility and buy them over.

There may well be grounds for the government of Zimbabwe claiming misunderstanding but the Abuja agreement is very clear. But there should be no such ground since our stand and the commitments of the government of Zimbabwe are very clear. After this interview I will give you a copy of the Abuja agreement and you will see very clearly the undertaking that the UK made at Abuja and also the undertaking the government of Zimbabwe made. The government of Zimbabwe has not lived up to its undertaking.

On some of the issues you raised, for instance, human rights, Britain is predicating honouring its commitments to the observance of some of these issues. And Zimbabwe is alleging that it is a

diversion. What do you say to this?

I say that the government of Zimbabwe made various commitments that it has not carried out. The government of UK made commitments and we still stand by it. But we have to see progress by the government of Zimbabwe on its commitments. We have not seen anything.

Taking you to the Middle East particularly the Israeli-Palestinian conflicts. How do you resolve it given the position of your country on the creation of the Palestinian state and the UN resolution that Israel returns to its pre-1967 position?

We do hope for a solution and this is one of the reasons why Prime Minister, Tony Blair recently undertook a tour of the region where he spoke to all the major participants including a historic visit to Syria. We sincerely hope for a solution including a cessation of violence on both sides. If we can get that then we will make progress. The American special envoy is in the region. There must be a solution. We have always urged both sides to avoid actions that would

escalate violence.

But then don't you think that unless Israel respects the US resolution and stops targeted killing of Hamas leaders, which is often followed by violent retaliations from the Palestinians, there won't be peace?

That is why we call on both sides to avoid any action that would exacerbate the situation.

But there is the need to move beyond sloganeering.

This is the reason why I said Prime Minister, Tony Blair undertook his trip around the Middle East, and remains in contact with the leaders of the region. It is a matter of deep concern to us and the rest of the world. This is a problem that needs solution.

Don't you think that in fighting terrorism there is the need to resolve the Middle East crisis because even Bin Laden tried to tie his war on the West to this crisis?

You keep quoting to me

people like Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein who have been responsible for barbaric acts. I am not sure that we should take their words very seriously.

We have to deal with the problem of terrorism and there is the determination in the international community. You have in your questions focused on the role of the United Kingdom and the United States, but don't forget that around the world including the Islamic world, there have been absolute condemnation of terrorism. So, it is an international problem that has generated an international response. This is why it requires coalition effort to fight.

Apart from that, there are other problems including the Middle East problem which has to be solved. Even before September 11, there was that recognition that the problem of the Middle East has to be solved.

Nigerians feel they go through bouts of humiliation trying to obtain British visa. An example was a young man who was given an interview appointment two months after the programme he was supposed to travel for. What explanation do you have for Nigerians?

The problem is that we are victims of an exercise in which many people wish to go to the UK. I was recently down in Lagos and I visited the visa section during the busy time of the year. We can issue well over a thousand visas a week. We will be issuing well over 120,000 visas this year. We are expanding our visa office. The majority of visas we issue in fact are within 24 hours. There are so many visa applicants when you could conduct an interview and if you have a lot of people waiting for interview, it is inevitable that the queue goes up. Everybody believes that his is a special case that should be brought forward. What do we do?

What we are doing is that we are improving the working practices. We are expanding the number of staff. We are well aware that there have been deficiencies in the system in the past. But we are working very, very hard to overcome these difficulties.

You make a lot of revenue from visa issuance fee?

No, we don't. If you consider the process that has to be gone through in issuing visa, it is time and labour intensive process. The visa fees are to cover the cost. It is a self-financing operation.

Donors pledge to end river blindness

African governments, international organisations and business groups have pledged \$39 million to fund efforts to eliminate river blindness in 19 African countries by 2010.

The announcement came after a five-day meeting hosted by the World Bank and the US Agency for International Development in Washington.

The new Africa Programme for Onchocerciasis Control (APOC) builds on an existing initiative in West Africa, which consists in controlling the black fly that spreads the

disease and distributing the antidote ivermectin.

APOC comprises countries in central, eastern and southern Africa, where nearly 100 million people are at risk of contracting the disease.

The World Bank said 22 million people in this region are heavily infected.

River blindness is caused by a parasitic worm that develops in the human body, causing constant itchiness and eventually blindness.

Up to a third of those who contract the disease lose their sight.

The disease primarily affects African rural

communities, which represent about 80 per cent of Africa's population.

The west African programme, based in Burkina Faso, has been funded by donor contributions of \$560 million over a period of 27 years.

According to World Bank figures, it has protected 18 million children from ever contracting the disease, and freed 25 million hectares of arable land for resettlement and cultivation.

For the new initiative for eastern, central and southern Africa, the drug company, Merck, has pledged to donate the antidote commercially known as Mectizan in whatever quantity is needed, for as long as necessary.

Malawian student's death sparks clashes

Malawi's commercial capital, Blantyre, erupted in violence as students from the Polytechnic, ran riot following the death of a fellow student who was shot by police.

Salin Nyakuleya, administrator of Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital, told BBC News Online that the student, Fanikiso Phiri - a third-year Bachelor of Education student at Chancellor College - died early on Friday.

He said doctors had failed to dislodge a bullet that had ruptured his lung.

Students at the Polytechnic reacted violently when the news of Phiri's death broke. They mobilised

themselves into gangs and started chanting anti-government songs and throwing stones at vehicles.

Trouble began on Tuesday when the students joined street protests against increases in maize prices, the death in police custody of Malawi's reggae king Evison Matafale and the arrest of an opposition Nelson Shaba.

The main highway in the city, Chipembere Highway, was closed as the students used boulders and tree branches to block it.

Police, whose southern region headquarters borders the college, fired several rounds of teargas to disperse the students. They managed to secure the road but the students regrouped on the

campus.

Running battles between the two sides ensued as the students chanted anti-government songs and pelted police with stones and tree branches.

“This is our country but the police and Muluzi have destroyed it,” sang the students using a 1915 revolutionary song which natives composed during an uprising against British colonialists.

“Policemen, prepare to pay the bill for the blood you spill,” went another song.

Two students were briefly detained.

Themba Kalua, President of the University of Malawi Students Union, said students were angry with the death.

Arabs split on Bin Laden tape

America's key allies have said that a video tape of Osama bin Laden released by the United States vindicates the military campaign in Afghanistan, but many Arabs are not convinced.

The video shows Bin Laden joking and laughing with friends and associates about the suicide plane attacks on New York's World Trade Center, in which more than 3,000 people died.

The US says the tape provides compelling evidence that Bin Laden was behind the September 11 attacks.

But the BBC Middle East correspondent said that at street level in the Arab world, many believe the tape is a fake, a PR gimmick dreamed up by the US administration.

Some distrust the translation of Bin Laden's remarks, which was necessary as the recording is of both very poor audio and visual quality.

Pentagon officials asked four non-government Arabic speakers to listen to the remarks and agree on a uniform translation.

BBC Correspondent said some Saudis do not believe the man on the tape is really

Bin Laden.

In Jordan, political analyst, Labib Kamhawi, said that even if the video is genuine, Bin Laden's praise for the attacks “does not prove that Bin Laden was responsible” for them.

A leading Saudi dissident in London, who asked not to be named, said he was sure the recording was genuine because of the language used and topics discussed.

But he added that it would increase support for Bin Laden among anti-American Arabs, since it apparently proves he has the power to strike at the US.

The defence minister of the ousted Taliban regime in Afghanistan told the BBC that he was doubtful about the recording's authenticity, saying it was unlikely that Bin Laden would have been naive enough to say such things on a recording.

Pakistan's government, meanwhile, said the broadcast of Bin Laden praising the attacks proved that Islamabad had made “the right decision” in supporting Washington in its military campaign.

BBC's correspondent added that the tape is unlikely to win support from many

ordinary Arabs because it has been released as Israeli-Palestinian violence increases.

Many in the Arab world are angry at the US as a backer of Israel.

In the video, bin Laden, relaxing in green military jacket and white head-dress, claims to have known the attacks would take place five days in advance, and says the destruction of the twin towers exceeded his expectations.

American intelligence officers are said to have recovered the tape from a house in the eastern Afghan town of Jalalabad following the collapse of the ruling Taliban, who were harbouring Bin Laden.

Bin Laden identifies Mohamed Atta, suspected of hijacking the first plane, as the group's leader.

In one section of the video tape, the Saudi-born militant suggests that some of the hijackers did not know what their mission would be.

“The brothers who conducted the operation, all they knew was that they have a martyrdom operation and we asked each of them to go to America, but they didn't know anything about the operation, not even one letter,” he said.

TRUST INTERNATIONAL

World Report



Firemen remove an injured victim following a riot and subsequent blaze December 15, 2001 at a jail in Ciudad Del Este, Eastern Paraguay.

Paraguay jail blaze kills 25

At least 25 prisoners have been killed and 250 injured in a fire and riot in an overcrowded jail in eastern Paraguay. Police said prisoners started the riot in protest at the shooting of an inmate by a guard. The ensuing blaze engulfed two cellblocks at the prison in Ciudad del Este, 330 kilometres (205 miles) east of the capital Asuncion. The facility houses about 500 prisoners, but is designed to hold only 250. Fire services from Brazil and Argentina joined in the rescue effort and heavy machinery was used to punch holes in the prison walls. When firefighters finally controlled the blaze, they found only charred remains of some of the prisoners. Medical teams struggled to cope with the number of injured and 40 of the most serious cases were airlifted to hospital in Asuncion. Outside the prison, crowds of relatives gathered, some of them shouting out the names of prisoners to try to get news. Local media said that trouble started when a prisoner attacked a guard with a homemade knife in a bid to escape, and the guard shot and killed him. Prisoners seized control of part of the jail and set fire to mattresses. The fire spread rapidly, trapping many inmates with thick black smoke. Augusto Anibal Lima, a government official for the Alto Parana region, said: "The toll stands at 25 but that could rise as dozens of inmates suffered serious

US forces claim hearing Bin Laden

American forces said they have heard Osama bin Laden giving orders over a short-range radio in the Tora Bora mountains in eastern Afghanistan over the past week, a US official said. The intercepted radio messages helped persuade US army officials that bin Laden was probably in the area. The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said it was confirmed "with reasonable certainty" that the voice on the radio was bin Laden's, after it was compared with several videotapes. The US blames bin Laden for the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. The official would not specify what kind of radio transmission the forces had detected, but he did say it was short-range, indicating that bin Laden was in Tora Bora in the past week. US troops have several ways to listen in on such transmissions, including gear carried by special operations forces and instruments on aircraft and satellites. The Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press Agency reported that bin Laden left Tora Bora 10 days before the bombardment began. But US officials said the ferocity of the al-Qaeda resistance and reported sightings of bin Laden indicated his presence

Al-Qaeda Chechens fight to finish in Tora Bora

Chechen fighters loyal to Osama bin Laden fought to the death Saturday in the mountains of eastern Afghanistan in battles with U.S. special forces and their Afghan tribal allies. But an Afghan commander returning from the front among the caves, tunnels and valleys near Tora Bora said that while the Chechens fought on, 50 other members of bin Laden's al-Qaeda network had surrendered. The whereabouts of bin Laden himself, the man Washington accuses of masterminding the bloody September 11 suicide attacks on the United States, remained a mystery with U.S. officials saying he could still be with his cornered fighters. Others fled the blistering U.S. bombardment of the jagged Tora Bora peaks and canyons bordering Pakistan, where authorities arrested 31 Arab militants as they crossed the frontier into the Kurram tribal area. Four others, including a wounded French national, were captured a day earlier in the famed Khyber Pass. Mohammad Pahlawan, an Afghan tribal commander returning from the front line in the rugged White Mountains around Tora Bora, said the ground battle was relentless.

burns and may not survive."

The BBC's South America correspondent, Tom Gibb, says conditions at the Ciudad del Este jail were constantly denounced by human rights groups. A joint commission formed by the Paraguay government and non-governmental groups is currently looking at ways of reforming the penal system.

Pakistan threatens India

Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, Saturday, threatened to retaliate with force if arch-rival, India, took any "precipitous action" after accusing a Pakistan-based guerrilla group of being behind last week's attack on parliament in New Delhi. But he promised to take action against any Pakistan group if its involvement in this "terrorist act" was proved. India called on Pakistan on Saturday to respond within days to a demand it close down two Pakistan-based Kashmiri separatist groups it blamed for a string of attacks culminating in Thursday's assault on parliament in which 12 people, including the five attackers, were killed. General Musharraf complained of a "degree of rhetoric developing from India" over the issue and said "any adventure (against Pakistan) would be met with force." "I would like to condemn ... in the strongest terms this terrorist act against Indian parliament," he said on state television. "We are against any such terrorist acts anywhere in the world." Musharraf warned New Delhi against any "precipitous action by the Indian government against Pakistan. This would lead to very serious repercussions. It must not be done." India has singled out by the Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed groups in an ultimatum which, if rejected, could push the nuclear-powered neighbors that have fought three wars since independence in 1947 to renewed confrontation. Both these groups and an alliance of other guerrilla groups fighting Indian rule in Kashmir have denied any role in the attack. "India will wait for a few days to know what kind of reaction comes from Pakistan," Home (interior) Minister, L.K. Advani, told reporters in the western city of Ahmedabad before Musharraf made his comments. It was the first time India had given a timeframe for its demand that Pakistan close the groups, which have denied any part in the attack. Musharraf, who swept to power in a bloodless coup in 1999, said he would cooperate in trying to find out who was responsible for the attack as long as there was evidence against any individual or group in Pakistan.

ODD WORLD

Man defecates in water pot

A Dutchman has been arrested in Ghana after being caught with his trousers down defecating into a drinking water bucket used by his workers, police in the West African country said last Thursday. Police spokesman, Angwubutuge Awuni, told Reuters that 38-year-old construction site supervisor Kamaiel van Roussum had admitted the offence, but explained he was suffering from diarrhea and there was no toilet at the site. Workers had complained that van Roussum regularly defecated into their water buckets. One worker caught him sitting on a bucket a week ago with his trousers around his ankles and reported the matter to police, Awuni said. A police laboratory test showed traces of excreta in several buckets. Awuni said van Roussum would appear before a court next Monday on charges of causing a public nuisance and could face up to two years in prison if found guilty.

Nude photographs on Mandela's web site

Computer hackers broke into the official web site of the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund last Thursday and splashed pictures of a semi-naked teenage girl across the site, a spokesman for the fund said. Malebo Mahape said the hack was discovered on Thursday morning and technicians worked to block the pictures from public view and recover control of the site. This morning those clicking on the site <http://www.mandela-children.org/> were automatically redirected to a site displaying pictures of a 19-year-old girl removing her top. Mahape said the site linked to other webcams showing pictures of other naked or semi-naked girls. "This undermines our existence and our principles," she told Reuters. "We are strongly opposed to child prostitution and abuse and this falls under the areas we are working against."

Toy car bombs barracks

Corsican bombers have used a remote-controlled toy car to attack a riot police barracks on the French Mediterranean island, police said last Thursday. The assailants packed a small amount of explosives into the car and sent it to the gates of the barracks. The blast late on Wednesday damaged the gates and an entrance guard was sent to hospital to be treated for shock, they said. The attack took place in the northern Corsican town of Borgo, home to one of the main prisons on an island which has been marked for more than 20 years by separatist violence and Mafia-style vendetta killings.

Tower of Pisa reopens after 12 years

For the first time in almost 12 years, the Leaning Tower of Pisa's faded green doors were thrown open on Saturday and dozens of delighted tourists climbed the 293 time-worn marble steps to the top. Bells chimed and guards dressed in medieval pantaloons ushered the randomly chosen visitors into the tower at 11:30 a.m. (5:30 a.m. EST), more than a decade after the famous monument was closed for fear it was about to topple over. "I am so lucky, I was just here by chance and they invited me to be the first tourist to climb the Leaning Tower of Pisa," enthused Montse Vinardell, a 37-year-old Spanish fashion designer, as she looked out over the tiled rooftops of Pisa. Another visitor called friends from her cell phone after climbing the winding, narrow staircase. "I'm at the top of the Leaning Tower of Pisa! I can't believe it!" she cried. After closing the monument in 1990, a group of 14 archaeologists, architects and soil experts struggled to find a way to take some of the tilt out of the tower without completely straightening it — tourists like to see it leaning, and the top layers, built when the tower was already out of true, are at a slightly different angle from the base. A first attempt to reduce the lean almost sent the monument keeling over in 1994, but the committee finally decided to excavate under the higher end of the tower and remove soil through bore holes. They slowly straightened the monument by 40.6 centimeters — leaving it keeled over a mere four meters — and stopped it from increasing its tilt. "All the technical problems are solved, the tower has at least 300 years ahead," Michele Jamiolkowski, the president of the international commission of experts, declared at the reopening ceremony on Saturday.

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BUSINESS DAY

Crude oil production drops

Crude Oil Production in the country has dropped last week from over 15 million net barrels to about 13 million net barrels.

However, while there is a reduction in production, crude oil export increased from over 14 million net barrels the previous week to

From Rakiya A. Muhammad, in Lagos

over 17 million net barrels for the period November 26 to December 2, 2001.

According to sources in the Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR), 1,509,891 net barrels were supplied to the refineries during the

week. Condensate production stood at 637,983 against the export figure of 950,570 net barrels for the period under review.

This represents an increase of 141,910 on condensate production when viewed against the 493,073 net barrels the previous

week.

It will be recalled that in the previous week there was no condensate export.

A total of 29 RYS were in operation and an equal number of well drilling activities were in progress.

Eight Gas and Seven Water Injection Projects



Rilwanu Lukman, Adviser on Petroleum & Energy, were monitored by DPR in the Eastern Zone, two of which were down due to compressor failure and community problems whereas in the Western Zone of the Niger Delta, six gas plants and three water injection plants operated satisfactorily during the week under review.

PIPC boss urges economic liberalisation

The Managing Director of Plateau State Investment and Property Development Company (PIPC), Mr. Alexander Molwus has lamented the increased government participation in the nation's economy.

He made the remark in paper he delivered during a sensitisation workshop organised by the Bureau for Public Enterprises (BPE) in collaboration with Media Trust Limited held last week in Jos.

According to him, the failure of past governments to liberalise the nation's economy to create opportunity for private investors in the economy was responsible for its stagnation.

This, he said, also let to the prevailing inefficiency, lack of cooperation and growth of the economy for several years.

"The dominance of the public sector in the nation's economy since independence did not in any

way help the situation. Above all, government policies towards a sustainable rolling plan was lacking," he maintained.

According to the PIPC MD, the federal government had in 1970 adopted an economic strategy for the period of 10 years to end in 1980, "but because of frequent military interventions in politics, the programme was a colossal failure."

The Nigerian economy, he said, would have developed stronger but was neglected following by the discovery of oil in the 1970s.

He stressed further that the situation became worse in the mid-80s following the increased debt burden that further strangled the nation's economy.

To address this unfortunate development, Mr. Molwus said the ongoing privatisation programme of the federal government must be made to stimulate the economy through efficiency and competition.

Cross River budgets N17bn

The Cross River State government has announced a budget estimate of N17,720,010,270 (N17.7 billion) for the 2002 fiscal year.



Governor Donald Duke of Cross River State.

From Bassey Ita, in Calabar

Governor Donald Duke who announced this last in Calabar said the budget records an increase of N1,624,953,040 or 10.09 per cent over that of the 2001 budget.

According to the governor, N8,488,160,570 will be disbursed for capital projects representing 4.46 percent of the 2001 allocation of N378,879,710.

On the recurrent expenditure, Mr. Duke said the revenue estimated for the 2002 is put at N9,231,855,700 with the sum of N5,477,356,790 set aside for personal cost while N1,505,870,280 will be for overhead cost.

Commenting on the

internally generated revenue, Duke stated that a total N2,167,024,660 was generated compared with the project estimate of N885,782,370 for 2001 stressing that this reflects an increase of N1,281,242,290 or 144.6 per cent of the 2001 profile.

He further emphasised that a total N1,000,000,000 has been set aside for roads and bridges construction and repairs, while education takes N785,500,070 with the establishment of an Institute of Technology as well as improvement of primary and secondary education in the state as a point of departure.

Duke also announced that the provision of potable water in the state will continue to receive priority attention much as existing water schemes will be expanded and rehabilitated. He announced the allocation of N877,000,020.

On town and country planning, the state government plans to rehabilitate facilities in Calabar, Ikonu, Ojoja and Ugep towns with the sum of N2,035,000,030 allocation.

He also earmarked the sum of N329,460,030 for the agriculture sub-sector.

Tourist Coy to raise N2.6bn from capital market

The Tourist Company of Nigeria, owners of the Federal Palace Hotel in Lagos is to raise about N2.6 billion from the capital market through the sale of 650 million ordinary shares of the company.

The offer is being handled by NAL Bank and Triumph Merchant Bank as issuing houses on the authority of the National Council on Privatisation (NCP).

The offer opens on January 14 and closes on February 25.

According to a brochure on the offer issued by the issuing houses at the completion board meeting for the offer in Lagos last week, the purpose of the offer is to raise funds for a comprehensive refurbishment of the hotel.

The exercise will increase the revenue generating capacity of the hotel as it will make available additional rooms and banqueting facilities, it said.

The offer is also to allow the public acquire 40 per cent equity in the company in compliance with the terms of sale of the hotel to the company as required by the Bureau of Public Enterprises.

The brochure said that applications had already been made to the council of

the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) for the admission of the shares on the exchange's daily official list.

It said that 10 per cent of the shares on offer would be offered preferentially to the staff of the company, while the rest would be offered on equality basis to the 360 federal.

New MD for superphosphate fertilizer company

By Ahmed Shekarau

President Olusegun Obasanjo has approved the appointment of Engineer Abdu Mohammed Kanti as the new Managing Director of the Federal Superphosphate Fertiliser Company Limited (FSFC), Kaduna.

A statement made available to *Business Day* last week in Abuja said the letter conveying Mr. President's approval of Kanti's appointment was signed by the Minister of Industry, Chief Kola Jamodu.

According to the statement, the appointment of the new MD was in line with the government's commitment to a new, reinvigorated superphosphate fertilizer company that will produce adequate fertilizer for farmers in the country.

Kanti, whose

appointment takes effect from November 30, 2001 was until his new appointment the Director of Production in the company.

An indigene of Katsina State and graduate of Chemical Engineering from the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, the new MD has worked in the FSFC since 1980 when he joined as Process Engineer.

Meanwhile, the company which had been moribund for many years has begun production of the superphosphate brand of fertilizer (SSP) following the appointment of a new board of directors for it early in the year.

It targets to produce 4,000 metric tons of SSP by the end of this year, even as it continues to refurbish some of its ailing machines.

ABUBAKAR TAFAWA BALEWA UNIVERSITY, BAUCHI.

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The Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi hereby announces its twentieth Inaugural Lecture which will take place on Tuesday, December 18, 2001.

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Vice-Chancellor, ATBU, Bauchi

LECTURER: Prof. J.A. Audu, B.Sc (Biology, Oakwood College) M. Sc.(Biology, Atlanta University), PH.D (Biology, Atlanta University), MNFS, MNSP, BKCNSH.

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BUSINESS DAY

NAMA seeks N2.2bn for radar rehabilitation

The Nigerian Airspace Management Agency (NAMA) said it requires about N2.2 billion or \$90 million to rehabilitate all radar facilities in the country's airports.

The Managing Director of the agency, Alhaji Yusuf Muhammad disclosed this while conducting newsmen round the agency's navigational facilities at the Murtala Mohammed International Airport, (MMA), Lagos.

According to Alhaji Muhammad, the Lagos radar which has not been functioning for the past 10-11 years but now in good condition was rehabilitated by an indigenous company, Jalex Nigeria limited, at the

From Shakirat Abdulmajeed, in Lagos

cost of N79 million.

The contract, he said, was earlier quoted for \$4.3 million by a foreign contractor.

He explained that though he cannot guarantee the job, had however assured that the engineer has done well to ensure that the radar does not break down.

On calibration of the radar, he said the agency has no aircraft to carry on with the maintenance, while stressing that the agency has worked up to 70 per cent level of completion of the

Abuja Radar, which he said will be handed over early next year.

He lamented that foreign airlines operators that refused to pay US \$ 75 unit rate navigational charges to NAMA are mainly from eastern Europe, stressing that out of \$1.6 million projected by the agency, they were able to collect only \$422,000 which was paid by operators from western Europe.

He promised to make sure that all the operators owing NAMA pay, saying "it is a fight for survival, I will make sure I execute the programme to the fullest."

The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in proposing a cargo clearing house to be provided by the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) where every government agency involved in cargo examination will meet and deliberate.

The NDLEA Area Commander of Apapa Port, Mr. Joseph Obi, said in Lagos that officers of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), NDLEA, and others involved in cargo examination would meet at such a clearing house before a cargo is examined.

Obi said that the procedures would ensure that Customs itemise those containers to be examined and the volume for each day.

The News Agency of

NDLEA suggests cargo clearing house at ports

Nigeria (NAN), reports that the NDLEA, which was withdrawn from the ports two years ago, was directed by President Olusegun Obasanjo to immediately return to the ports and examination bays to check the nefarious importation of narcotic drugs through the ports.

Prior to the president's order, the agency was involved in a long-drawn battle with NPA and some licensed customs agents, who noted that its existence at the ports was illegal and contrary to the port reforms of 1999 which asked the agency, NAFDAC, SSS and

others to leave the ports.

Obi noted that the NDLEA would be more vigilant on both imports and exports and that cannabis was produced in the country and that some people might want to export the product through the ports, while hard drugs could be imported from Europe.

While pledging co-operation with other agencies at the ports, the NDLEA area commander said that for easy identification and avoidance of impersonation, the agency would henceforth ensure that its officers were always in uniforms whenever they were on duty.

Customs may back down on new license fees

By Ahmed Shekarau

The Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) may soon back down on its firm stand over the new fees for customs agency licences and operation fees.

The customs service had two months ago issued new guidelines on operations at the nation's ports including a proposed N25,000 as operation fee for all customs agents operating at the ports.

These have generated a lot of controversies as the agents complain that the charges are too exorbitant, while the Nigeria Customs Service said the new fees was proposed to sanitise the ports from touts.

This led to a two-day protest by the licenced agents, which hampered operations at the Lagos port last week.

But the officials of the Association Nigerian of Licensed Customs Agents (ANLCA) met with the management of the NCS last week in Lagos to resolve the lingering differences.

At the end of the meeting, the President of ANLCA, Alhaji Sani Shittu directed his members to suspend their protests, assuring them that the NCS would review the licence fees.

He explained that the call-off of the protests had become necessary in view of the resolutions reached at the meeting, urging his members to wait further directives on the reduction of the fees, especially the N25,000 operative fee.

Shittu disclosed that the NSS has also extended the expiring date of the licence till March next year, while new licences could now be used to operate in all ports and no more limited to one

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PEUGEOT

The hasty world of

Motorcycles serve as miniature taxis in many parts of the country today. They are popularly known as "okada", and virtually every city in the country has a significant population of these eager transporters. Yakubu Ozohu-Suleiman recently researched into this rather dangerous, but increasingly popular phenomenon.

In Kano, and most parts of the North, they are called "achaba". In Uyo, they are called "Akaoke". In Cross Rivers, Nasarawa and Kogi, they are called "going" or "Express". Okada, which is the popular name given to commercial motorcyclists originates from Edo State, and it is quite a recent phenomenon in the transport industry.

As a developing country with inadequate social infrastructures, the emergence of okada in commercial transportation in Nigeria was entirely a private sector initiative. Hitherto in both the urban and rural areas of the country, people encounter difficulties in boarding cars and commercial buses for journeys of a short duration, especially when it involves movement through smaller roads to remote areas. In some cases, one could board a taxi under what is popularly known as "drop" which attracts a higher charge. For this reason, the idea of a "drop" seemed to be restricted to high income earners, thus leaving the masses with the problem of limited access to affordable transport facilities.

Motorcycle owners began to take advantage of the situation, and gradually the idea of using motorcycles for commercial transportation became popular, and was embraced in every part of the country.

Over the years, the okada phenomenon has served very significant purposes in the transport sector.

Their coming brought a great deal of relief to the people as all nooks and crannies of the country, which cars and buses cannot reach, are easily accessed by the okada.

Initially, fare charges among okada riders were relatively low when compared with other means of commercial transportation. However, it appears as if the uniqueness of the service provided by the okada seemed to have overwhelmed the operators recently, and the public began to witness outrageous fare charges from them. In addition to this, and probably more disturbing, is the seemingly wild atmosphere in which the okada operate. There appears to be no strict rule guiding the operations of commercial motorcycles. For this reason perhaps, the operators of okada are most often found to take the law into their hands, such that their services are characterized by over speeding and over loading.

A few weeks ago

in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory, some okada operators stormed the premises of NTA headquarters to demonstrate against what they described as public assault on them. This was a reaction to an allegation made against them in respect of an accident that occurred in Wuse II in which a Toyota Corolla was burnt to ashes by an unidentified mob.

On the day of the accident, it was alleged that the Toyota Corolla injured somebody at NITEL junction in Wuse II. In his effort to escape, the driver attempted to beat the traffic light in the area. It was at that point he clashed with another person who was alleged to have died later.

What however generated tension be-

tween the police and the okada operators, was the fact that the Toyota car was later set ablaze. The okada operators were pointing fingers at the police, while the police held that the car was set ablaze by the okada operators.

Daily Trust called upon Usman Sule Gomna, the District Police Officer at the Wuse Police Station, on the matter. According to him "we do acknowledge that an accident occurred in Wuse II involving a car and a motor cyclist. The driver of the car came to the station here to report himself. But before some of our men could reach the accident scene with him, the car had already been set ablaze.

We were informed that some aggrieved



Mr. Samson A. Atayero, Director Road Traffic Services FCT

okada operators who feel that their colleagues have always suffered the most accident cases went to the scene of the accident and got the car burnt. We, the police even set out to get the motor-cyclist involved in the accident, at least to settle the

matter amicably, but we could not save him. We were not informed of any case of death in the accident."

Tension has risen since then between the public and the okada operators. The attention of relevant ministries and authorities were drawn to the problem generated by okada as a means of commercial transportation.

Samson A. Atayero is the Director of Road Traffic Service for the Federal Capital. He comments thus: "The services of okada operators have not been very pleasing to the people, and even to us as the agencies directly concerned with road matters. We have had several complaints about them which include over speeding, use of motorcycles that are not road worthy, disobedience to traffic regulations, and a host of others. I must tell you that we of the road traffic services are not allowing the grass to grow beneath our feet on this matter. We have taken very crucial action to bring sanity and order into the sector. In fact, presently we have an edict awaiting the approval of the honourable minister.



Before the traffic lights indicates go, they are already on their way

Pix: Yakubu Ozohu-Suleiman

eature

okada riders

The Road Traffic Services (RTS) is a Federal Government agency directly responsible for ensuring that all vehicles (including *okada*) used on the roads are worthy of it, be it



private, goods or passenger vehicles. The only vehicles free from the monitoring activities of the VIO are those belonging to the Military, the Police and vehicles belonging to the diplomatic corp.

The road Traffic Director also told Daily Trust that the Road Safety Commission and the police, together with the VIO, work jointly to ensure

safety of the roads among users.

“What makes the VIO unique is that we also license vehicle operators, and test prospective drivers, apart from monitoring their activities on the highway.

In a discussion with some *okada* operators, *Daily Trust* gathered that majority of *okada* operators are inexperienced in driving. Mr. Jonas Okereke admits that “many of us do not understand how to ride machines. They only know that the *okada* business is lucrative. So, they jump into it without previous experience in motorcycle riding. These are the category of *okada* men who cause accidents all the time.”

Mr. Chukwudi Onyelu is into the *okada* business too. He confessed that the problems of most *okada* riders include lack of education. “Many of us are not educated. They do not

understand traffic laws and regulations.” Chukwudi added that the fundamental problem, which the *okada* riders seem to be facing, is the lack of a functional regulatory union. Taking the case of Abuja, Chukwudi said: “The people we have in our Abuja Union as leaders are not very concerned about us. They are not really working at all! If we have a functional union with sincere leaders, some of our members who are reckless in driving could be brought to order. There should have been a way by which every *okada* rider is motivated and disciplined.”

On the issue of over speeding, *Daily Trust* gathered that majority of *okada* riders are not the actual owners of the motorcycles they use for their business. The owners are either civil servants or businessmen who themselves are not permitted by

time or social status, to operate the motorcycles commercially. Such people contract out the motorcycles to some people who must make daily returns of N300.00 or thereabouts.

In an effort to make this money, and have as much as possible left for themselves, the *okada* operators often find they need to hurry to places, and at times, burden passengers with outrageous rates. They have to proceed at a very high speed and overtake cars, and even beat traffic regulations, so as to maximize returns on investment. The result



Chief Ojo Maduekwe, Minister of Transport

roads.

Under normal circumstances, if the red of the traffic light shows, it means that

the traffic command is carried out.

For *okada* riders, the amber (yellow light) means “go”.

In an effort to make this money, and have as much as possible left for themselves, the okada operators often find they need to hurry to places, and at times, burden passengers with outrageous rates. They have to proceed at a very high speed and overtake cars, and even beat traffic regulations, so as to maximize returns on investment. The result of all these are the frequent accidents on the road.

of all these are the frequent accidents on our

all vehicles approaching should stop. The yellow light (amber) signals, “get ready” while the green light indicates “go”.

At the point the amber shows, it is still expected that all vehicles should hold on till the green light finally shows. Even at the point the green light shows, vehicles are not expected to rush forward, because there might be a collision with vehicles coming from the opposite direction, which have not crossed over completely.

About 3-4 seconds should be spent before

Even before the light comes on, they are already on their way apart from frequent auto-clashes, the situation has often led to traffic congestion in places. About 10-15 cases of *okada* accidents are recorded every week in Abuja, for instance.

Whatever is responsible for the chaotic atmosphere in terms of the operations of *okada* in the country, the time has come indeed for a regulatory instrument to be devised to extend some level of sanity to this dynamic field in our transport sector.



People are drawn to them like insects to a light

NEWS

Enugu to address water scarcity in Nsukka

Enugu State government will urgently tackle the acute water scarcity in Nsukka Local Government Area of the state, Gov. Chimaroke Nnamani, has assured.

Nnamani made the promise in Nsukka while addressing the peoples' parliament in the area, in continuation of his tour of the 17 local government areas of the state.

In an apparent response to the people's visible displeasure during the interactive session, the governor said he would direct the state's water board to immediately seek ways of ending the scarcity, promising: "If it means our supplying water to the area by water

tankers, we shall do it." Nnamani also promised equitable distribution of appointments to the area, "especially the Ovoko community", which he regretted has not been fairly treated in the distribution of government appointments.

Also responding to a request for the creation of more local governments in Nsukka area, the governor said the area would receive



Gov Chimaroke Nnamani

priority attention when the state embarks on the exercise, adding that more autonomous communities would be created in areas that needed them.

Earlier, the chairman of the Nsukka local government, Dr. Dan Shere, had commended Nnamani for the extension of "democratic dividends", including the construction of the Opi-Nsukka road, the on going construction of Enugu State University of Technology (ESUT)

Teaching Hospital in the area and the provision of electricity.

Amidst ovation from the people, the chairman requested for urgent attention to the acute scarcity of water in the area.

The highlight of the occasion was the endorsement of Nnamani for a second term in office, which was moved by one of the traditional rulers in the area, Igwe R.O. Ikeoha.

SPEB boss gives recipe for poor enrolment

Enrolment and continuation of pupils in schools in the North-West zone can only be a reality through the proper integration of both Islamic and Western education.

This observation was made by the executive chairman, Sokoto State Primary Education Board, Alhaji Muhammadu Danrabi Muhammadu Tureta, at the weekend while chatting with newsmen in his office.

He disclosed that there has been great impact since the board introduced Islamic education along side western education, adding that "the gesture has

From Abdulfatai Abdulsalami, in Sokoto

assisted the board in restoring the confidence of parents and guardians in the school system."

Alhaji Danrabi, who explained that Sokoto State now boast of 2,088 primary schools besides the over 60 Nizamiya Islamiya model schools scattered across the state, said the feat was achieved by opening Quranic Nursery classes (QNC) in all primary schools in the state.

Goldmark limited and its chairman, Chief Obi Nwagbara, have been dragged before a Lagos High Court by African International Bank (AIB), over an outstanding debt of N2.9million.

In a 15-paragraph statement of claim filed by Nick Omeje, Esq., AIB stated that the defendants around 1995 requested for and were granted an overdraft facility, which was renewed in 1997.

The plaintiff claimed that when the debt became due for repayment, the defendants refused to liquidate the debt despite repeated demands.

AIB stated further that the defendants have no defence since they have acknowledged and admitted the debt, adding, "they have always pleaded with us not to take action to recover the

AIB sues customer over debt

From Bamgboye Adelanwa, in Lagos

debt. Counsel to Goldmark limited, Mr. Charles Ezeogu, at the resumed hearing of the matter, however, contended that no where in the exhibits tendered did Goldmark admit owing.

The bank is also asking for N2,95.47 being the amount owed and interest at the rate of 31 per cent from April 31, 2001.

Further hearing has been fixed for January 15, 2002 by Justice Kasali of the Lagos High Court.

We are denied use of PRTV - Muslim Community

The Muslim Community in Plateau State has told the Justice Niki Tobi Judicial Commission of Inquiry probing the recent sectarian crisis in the state that the state has denied them services of the state-owned Plateau State Radio/Television (PRTV) since the outbreak of the crisis last September.

Testifying before the commission sitting at the Azi Nyako Youth Centre recently, the spokesman of the community, Alhaji Sale Bayari, informed the commission that all Islamic programmes hitherto aired by the broadcast station have been banned.

"We have observed the denial of muslims of Plateau State of the services of the Plateau State Radio Television (PRTV) while exclusively giving a quarter of its air time to christians for their religious programmes on daily basis," he said.

Alhaji Sale, who also presented a memo on behalf of the Fulani Community in the state, expressed dismay that despite being a public property funded by both muslims and christians, "the PRTV has been operating like the station established and funded by the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN)."

From Buhari Bello, in Jos

According to him, even in Zamfara, Bauchi, Niger and Kaduna States where Sharia has been introduced, "christians there are not complaining of being denied their right to preach their faith on air.

AIDS claims over 17 million lives worldwide

The Nasarawa State Commissioner for Health, Mr. David Gimba, has disclosed that the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) has so far claimed the lives of about 16.7 million people worldwide.

Mr. Gimba, who made the disclosure at the weekend in Lafia, at a ceremony to mark the World's AIDS Day, said the result of the 1999 HIV survey in the state showed a 10.8 per cent HIV positive people in the state, noting that those affected were mainly young men and women between the ages of 15 and 49.

He noted with regret that HIV/AIDS had hit young people who are the nation's future generation and counselled that the root of any response to the

dreaded disease should be protecting young people and ensuring their rights to responsible sex life.

The commissioner urged men and women to shun immoral acts, and to be honest to their partners, saying: "There is the need to ensure greater involvement of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) in the campaign against the spread of the disease because the knowledge of the people infected or affected by AIDS will contribute to decision-making at all levels."

He called on PLWHA to form an association for intervention as is being done in some parts of the country, adding that the ministry was making efforts to assist PLWHA to have access to anti-retroviral drugs and medical care.


He said it was owing to



Professor Borisade

the success of the measure that there is a clamour for the reopening of previously shut schools by their various communities.

SPEB boss, who averred that the state SPEB was the first to introduce the integrated school system in the entire North, commended Governor Attahiru Bafarawa for establishing the Quranic Recitation and General Studies Institute to complement the work of the Islamiya primary schools.


FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA
FEDERAL MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES
UPPER NIGER RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
 P.M.B. 68, MINNA.

INVITATION TO TENDER

1.0 INTRODUCTION:
The Federal Government through the Upper Niger River Basin Development Authority is desirous of carrying out comprehensive rehabilitation of the collapsed Multipurpose Paki Earth Dam located in Makarfi Local Government Area of Kaduna State. The rehabilitation job envisages complete reconstruction of the Breached earthen embankment, spillway and other appurtenant structures. The project is intended to provide portable water to the communities and environs. Tenders are hereby invited from reputable and competent Civil Engineering contractors for the execution of the project.

2.0 PRE-QUALIFICATION FOR TENDERS
Prospective bidders are expected to provide the following information and details, among others.

- Evidence of Incorporation;
- Evidence of Registration with the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing in the appropriate category;
- Evidence of Registration with Upper Niger River Basin Development Authority;
- Receipt of non-refundable deposit of N100,000 paid in certified bank cheques, to the Upper Niger River Basin Development Authority;
- Current Tax Clearance Certificate and VAT Registration Certificate;
- Evidence of experience in similar jobs in Nigeria or elsewhere in the world;
- List of Technical Staff; including the curriculum Vitae of the key personnel and equipment returns.
- Cash flow projections and other financial data.

3.0 TENDER DOCUMENTS
Tender documents are obtainable from the office of the Executive Director (Operations) on the presentation of the receipt of payment of the non-refundable fee of N100,000.00 only in Bank Draft.

4.0 SUBMISSION OF TENDERS

4.1 Completed Tenders should be submitted along with the Pre-qualification documents in sealed envelope, clearly marked:
"TENDER FOR THE REHABILITATION OF COLLAPSED MULTI-PURPOSE PAKI EARTH DAM IN THE NORTHERN SENATORIAL DISTRICT OF KADUNA STATE."

4.2 THE TENDERS ARE TO BE ADDRESSED TO:
THE MANAGING DIRECTOR,
Upper Niger River Basin Development Authority,
KM 5, Minna - Zungeru Road,
P.M.B. 68, Minna.

4.3 All completed Tenders are to reach the above address not later than 4.00 p.m Monday, 24th December, 2001.

NOTE: Please, note that the Authority is not bound to accept the lowest or any particular tender.

Signed
ENGR. SUNDAY EZEKIEL
 Executive Director (Operations)
 For: MANAGING DIRECTOR.

NEWS

Briefs Abuja

The NNPC at the weekend announced a postponement of its national quiz competition for secondary schools earlier scheduled to hold in Abuja, from December 17 to 20, 2001.

NNPC General Manager for Public Affairs, Ndu Ughamadu, said in a statement in Abuja, that the finals have been re-scheduled to hold between January 28 and 31.

He said the change became necessary to enable students to return, from holidays and be ready for the finals.

The NNPC National Quiz, according to Ughamadu, aims at improving students' interest in the sciences and engenders a competitive spirit amongst them.

Lagos

The Association of Senior Civil Servants of Nigeria has called on the Federal Government to ensure the payment of rent allowances running into thousands of naira to civil servants before the end of this year.

This call was part of a communiqué issued at the end of the meeting of National Executive Council (NEC) of the Association of Senior Civil Servants of Nigeria at National Art Theatre, Lagos.

Though they said earlier in the year, President Obasanjo had embargoed the payment of the rent supplement pending outcome of a survey of occupying government quarters, the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation had since lifted the embargo.

Kano

The Strategic Powerful Information Network (SPIN) has called on the Federal Government to focus attention on the management of conflicts through dialogue instead of stifling free expression.

In a press statement signed by the organisation's Director-General, Prince Ajayi Memaiyetan and made available to *Daily Trust* at the weekend, SPIN said the doctoring of the Electoral Bill and the cancellation of Alhaji Abubakar Rimi's contract with the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) Kaduna was undemocratic.

Abuja

Relief materials worth N3 million would soon be distributed to displaced people in conflict-torn areas across the country by the National Council of Women's Societies (NCWS).

The National President of the society, Dr. Bolere Keteju-Nwokefor, who disclosed this during a press briefing held in Abuja at the weekend, said the relief materials would include food items and second hand clothings.

11 docked over N66m theft

The management of Levintis Motors and Technical Company located at No. 2 Wharf Road Apapa, Lagos, has

lost Mercedes Benz spare parts worth over N65.5 million to thieves.

Already 11 suspects arrested in connection with the theft have been arraigned before an Ebuta Metta Chief Magistrate Court on charges of

criminal conspiracy and stealing.

The accused persons, all of them ex-employees of Levintis are: Godwin Abaji (52); Egbuzi Richard Chidi (35); Emmanuel C. Arutu (44); Lawrence Kehinde Omokore (46); Christopher Nwoji 50 and 44 year-old Flowerence Nwabueze (female)

Others include John Unwigbe (30); Ogbeide Godwin (39); Adebayo Oduyebo (52), Uwagbore Samson Iyenawan (43) and Saturday Ehidiemen (37).

They were alleged to have conspired with others now on the run to commit the offence which is contrary to section 516 and 390 (6) of the criminal code (CC) which provides that "any person who steals anything capable of being stolen is guilty of felony, and is liable, if no other punishment is provided, to imprisonment for three years."

Specifically, section 390 (6) provides that "if the offender is a clerk or servant, and the thing stolen is the property of his employer, or came into the possession of the

offender on account of his employer, he is liable to imprisonment for seven years."

When the charge was read to the accused, they all pleaded not guilty. The trial magistrate, A.O. Awogboro while ruling on the bail application filed on behalf of the accused, admitted them to bail of N1 million each with two sureties.

Further hearing has now been fixed for January 14, 2002.

Industrialists urged to support economic recovery efforts

The President of the Calabar Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Chief Victor Ndoma-Egba, has called on industrialists to assist the Federal Government in reviving the country's economy.

Chief Ndoma-Egba, who made the call at the weekend during the official commissioning of Dukes Resort, an arm of the Mirage Group in Calabar, said the private sector has a great role to play in determining the recovery of the economy.

According to him "government needs organised private sector. Both the federal and state governments cannot do it alone. They need the support from private investors."

He, however, appealed to government to encourage and assist businessmen who are making input into the country's economic recovery efforts, noting, "it is the only way that others will be gingered into contributing their own quota in the overall development of the country."

Also speaking at the occasion, the Nigerian Ambassador to Japan, Chief Oseimiegha Otio, urged Nigerians to imbibe values that enhance peace in order to attract Japans'

investments.

He hinted that Japan was desirous of investing in Nigeria's oil and agricultural sectors and stressed that Nigerians stand to gain a lot from the Japanese if they eschew violence and pursue the path of peace, hospitality and harmonious co-existence.



Mr. Musiliu Smith, IGP

FG, UNESCO to establish energy institute in Sokoto

The Federal Government, in conjunction with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) is to establish an international energy institute in Sokoto.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) quotes the current edition of the News Bulletin of the Usman Danfodio University, Sokoto, as saying "the two parties are working towards setting up the institute."

According to the bulletin, the UNESCO representative in Nigeria, Mr. Hubert Charles, said "since energy is directly related to the basic needs of the poor, its dearth will limit growth in all its ramifications."

Charles said "poverty and energy do not necessarily

suggest inability of the poor to afford better energy sources," adding that poor people tend to spend more on each unit of energy consumed than the rich.

"UNESCO and other UN agencies started a global initiative in 1993 for the promotion of renewable energy sources which culminated in the setting up of world solar programme 1996-2005," he said.

The university's Vice Chancellor, Prof. Aminu Mika'ilu, was quoted as saying "the dispersed nature of population settlement in many parts of the country limits the supply of conventional electricity to rural dwellers."

"This poses a major challenge to energy researchers on how to combat the problems," he added.

Canada lauds security measures at airports

The Canadian government has lauded the security build-up at the Nigerian Airports, saying the Nigerian airports now compete favourably with other airports in the developed countries.

Canadian High Commissioner to Nigeria, Mr. Herman Oswald, stated this at the weekend when he visited the Minister of Aviation, Dr. Kema Chikwe.

According to High Commissioner, the sudden changes in the aviation industry in the country "were welcome developments," adding that "ever since the Montreal meeting, Nigeria has been in the vanguard of improving airport reforms with primary focus on security."

Mr. Oswald explained that Nigeria is a country with enormous potential for investors, noting that since the advent of the democratic governance in May 1999, Nigeria has witnessed positive changes in the socio-economic spheres.

He revealed that because of the positive changes recorded in Nigeria's aviation industry, the International

Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) at its recent General Assembly in Montreal Canada, voted Nigeria into category 2 of the aviation safety standards.

The Canadian diplomat further solicited for more co-operation between Nigeria and Canada in airspace development, meteorological services and airport maintenance among others.

Responding, the Minister of Aviation, Dr. Kema Chikwe, reiterated the Obasanjo administration's commitment to revitalising the country's aviation industry and thanked the Canadian government for its support to Nigeria.

UBE coordinator commends Niger SPEB

The National Coordinator of Universal Basic Education (UBE), Professor Gidado Tahir, has commended the Niger State Primary Education Board for its laudable achievements since the commencement of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme in the state.

Professor, Gidado made the commendation in Minna, the Niger State Capital, when he led the scheme's, monitoring team to Niger State Primary Education Board to assess the national data collection exercise for primary schools being undertaken

by the Universal Basic Education.

According to the National UBE's Coordinator, the tour was to enable his team to know the effectiveness of the campaign in the enrolment of children into primary schools and the availability of the teaching staff to enable the Federal Government plan better towards achieving the set objectives.

Earlier, the chairman of the State Education Primary Board, Alhaji Ahmed Garafini, had explained that the Board will not spare any effort in making every child literate in the state.

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PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

TIME	FRIDAY
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	Food Security
8.30-9.00	Movies, Music & More
9.00-9.30	News of the Hour(N)
9.30-10.00	Songs of Africa®
10.00-10.10	Oge®
10.10-10.30	Transtel Music Live
10.30-10.45	
10.45-11.00	
11.00-12.00	One on One
12.00-12.30	Golden Cage®
12.30-1.00	One Cube
1.00-1.30	Africa Today
1.30-2.00	
2.00-2.15	MMB (sp)
2.15-2.30	
2.30-3.00	The Leaders(sp)
3.00-3.30	News of the Hour/The Whys & Wherefores
3.30-4.00	Islam The Way of Life
4.00-4.30	News Update
4.30-5.00	Talking Finger(N) Live
5.00-5.30	DTD Beach Jam Show(sp)
5.30-6.00	Automobile Exclusive(sp)
6.00-6.30	Work it out(N)
6.30-7.00	Bounvita Brain Match(sp)
7.00-7.30	News at Seven
7.30-8.00	Portraits of Achievers(sp)
8.00-8.30	The Adventures of Waziri(N)
8.30-9.00	Eye Witness News(N)
9.00-10.00	Our Heroes(N)
10.00-10.30	Global View(N)
10.30-11.00	Global View(N)
11.00-11.30	Prime Time
11.30-12.00	Jamz(N)
12.00-12.30	Local Movies
12.30-1.00	Local Movies
1.00-1.30	NBA Action
1.30-2.00	
2.00-2.30	
2.30-3.30	Ramadan Diet Live
3.30-4.30	
4.30-5.00	
5.00-6.00	

INSIDE POLITICS

Electoral Law: NOA director calls for all-party conference

An executive director at the National Orientation Agency (NOA), Otunba Olusegun Runsewe has called for an all-party conference to resolve the raging controversy over the Electoral Law Act.

He told *Daily Trust* in Abuja that the controversial bickering over the law was an ill-wind that cannot ensure an amicable resolution of the crisis and urged all the parties involved to convene an all-party conference or head for the

supreme court for interpretation.

He said both the National Assembly and the Presidency meant well for the survival of our nascent democracy pointing out that there was no issue in the law that could not be resolved amicably.

On the promise by the executive to provide uninterrupted power supply this month, the executive director political mobilisation said it was impossible to provide uninterrupted power supply

but said the attainment of 4,000 megawatts would tremendously improve the situation.

He said South Africa with a population of about 48 million generates about 40,000 megawatts while it requires only 30,000 megawatts pointing out that Nigeria with a population of about 120,000 million could not expect optimal supply with only 4,000 megawatts.

"Nowhere in the world

can a government guarantee uninterrupted power supply not even in America which has the largest economy and technology," Otunba Olusegun declared.

He condemned the frequent strikes in the educational system pointing out that such strikes destroyed the system and urged dialogue.

Otunba Olusegun said Nigerians should clamour for

dividends of democracy, which is gradual rather than the cosmetic profits which do not endure. He said the provision of water; good roads, rural electricity and improved agricultural periodicity were the long-term dividends, which would require patience.

The NOA director also advised motorists to stop abusing the use of cell phones while driving

pointing out that it was to stop the use of such devices while driving that they have facilities for voice mail to be recalled when not driving.

He also commended the recently introduced youth quiz by the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), adding that such programme enhanced the knowledge and broadens the scope of Nigerian youths.

Resign after 3 years APP directs LG chairmen

The All Peoples Party (APP) has directed the chairmen and councillors elected on the platform of the party to resign after the expiration of their three years tenure in office.

The APP deputy national chairman, south, Chief Lanre Rasak, who gave the directive while inaugurating the caretaker committee of Oyo State wing of the party, equally appealed to political office holders across the 774 local government in the country to vacate their seats after three years to save the nation's democracy.

According to him, the chairmen and councillors across the country should be honourable and leave office after the expiration of their three years in order not to throw the country into another round of political instability.

The APP chieftain however stressed that the APP elected officials are God-fearing and morally disciplined, adding that

From Yinka Oladoyinbo, in Ibadan

they would therefore not do anything that could truncate the present democratic experiment.

While expatiating on his call that council elected officers should leave office, Rasak said, "those who manipulated things to extend their tenure do not love Nigeria."

Rasak added, "All chairmen in the 774 councils, not only APP, should resign from office to save democracy from an illegality and undemocratic attempt to perpetuate some people in power would not be condoned."

He said that the electoral law was a time bomb to be handled with care, "what happened is that they want to use them to destroy Nigeria if they know they are patriotic, they should reject the extension of their tenure."

The APP deputy chairman however added that the party would do everything possible to persuade its office holders to stay on the side of reason and save democracy.

He therefore cautioned President Obasanjo against listening to psychopants who were out to perpetrate themselves in power, saying "Obasanjo should know better having suffered before, he was jailed and later saved from the hangman's moose by the Almighty God and patriotic Nigerians".



Otunba Olusegun Runsewe

2003: Rimi can contest says Audu Ogbeh

The Peoples Democratic Party has no presidential candidate for 2003, the national chairman of the party, Chief Audu Ogbeh has said in Kaduna.

The PDP chairman told newsmen shortly after paying a courtesy call on the state Deputy Governor, Engr. Stephen Shekari that every bonafide member of the party was free to contest

From Ibrahim Dan Halili, in Kaduna

or indicate his or her interest in contesting the 2003 presidential election.

"Alhaji Abubakar Rimi is free to contest. Nobody will deny him the right to exercise his fundamental rights.

He explained that ongoing consultation between the new executive of the party and other political parties was aimed at creating smooth political environment for all the key players to play according to the rules, even as he denied any attempt by the PDP to submerge the two other parties.

"We are democratic, and as a democratic institution, PDP will not support a one party state in Nigeria," Ogbeh assured.

According to the national chairman, it would be in the best interest of the PDP for new parties to emerge, adding that without opposition the party would not be at its best to implement programmes for the people.

He appealed to those opposed to the party leadership's

new drive to carry rival political parties along in in whatever activities they are doing to exercise restraint in giving the overture a negative interpretation.

Ogbeh who was accompanied by some executive members of the party on his official visit to Kaduna State stated that the party has on stream, a poverty alleviation programme for women folk in the rural area, under which palm oil making machines would be purchased and distributed to women.



Audu Ogbeh

... not for the masses

A member of the National Assembly, Honourable Bode Mustapha, has said the Electoral Law is clearly against the interest of the Nigerian masses.

Hon. Mustapha, a member of the House of Representatives from Ogun State criticised the law in Ibadan while speaking at a symposium on the Electoral law, by the Heritage Group at the conference centre, University of Ibadan.

He said the law was enacted to protect the interest of a small oligarchy who have dominated the political scene of the nation.

According to him, "the new electoral act is clearly against the Nigerian masses, and only protects the interest of a tiny minority of the powerful, rich, hegemonic ruling class."

The lawmaker however enjoined Nigerians to safeguard their hard earned democracy and resist the attempt by a few selfish individuals to scuttle the fledgling democracy, "with the imposition of anti-democratic laws."

"The controversial electoral bill was ab initio conceived with bad intent and was therefore a mere theatrical extension of the flagrant violation of an established

From Yinka Oladoyinbo, in Ibadan

order - indeed a clear departure from all known norms of democratic setting," he lamented.

On the extension of local government tenure, he argued that based on the federal system being practised in the country, the autonomous state of each tier should be respected and abide by the constitution and the law of our land.

He further said the concept of registering political parties ran contrary to the principle of equity, fairness and justice, "it is surprising that the new electoral act seeks to retain the military imposition of registering political parties, a requirement unheard of in most democratic societies.

Mustapha however stressed that the country would continue to slide into authoritarianism as long as the people refuse to heed the clarion call to restructure the polity.

Also speaking at the symposium, speaker of Oyo State House of Assembly, Chief Asimiyu Alarape said, the electoral law is a fraud considering the speed with which the president assented to the law a day after it was presented to him.

Impeachment moves against Benue Speaker flop

The second attempt by some members of the Benue State House of Assembly to impeach the Speaker, Mrs. Margaret Icheen suffered a set back last week.

Daily Trust gathered from an assembly source in Makurdi that the impeachment move came barely 24 hours after the reception in honour of former PDP chairman in Gboko, where the speaker openly declared her sympathy for Chief Gemade did not go down well the government.

Our source revealed that the government had not been comfortable of recent with warm relations between Chief Gemade and the

From Mike Elaugu, in Makurdi

Speaker. According to an aide of the Speaker who spoke to *Daily Trust* on condition of anonymity, the move to impeach the speaker was master-minded by the principal members of the assembly and sponsored from government house.

When contacted, the minority leader of the State House of Assembly, Mr. Mathew Egani Oyinu described the move by some members to impeach the speaker as a political miscalculation, as she has not done anything to call for that action.



Yusuf Ali, APP Chairman

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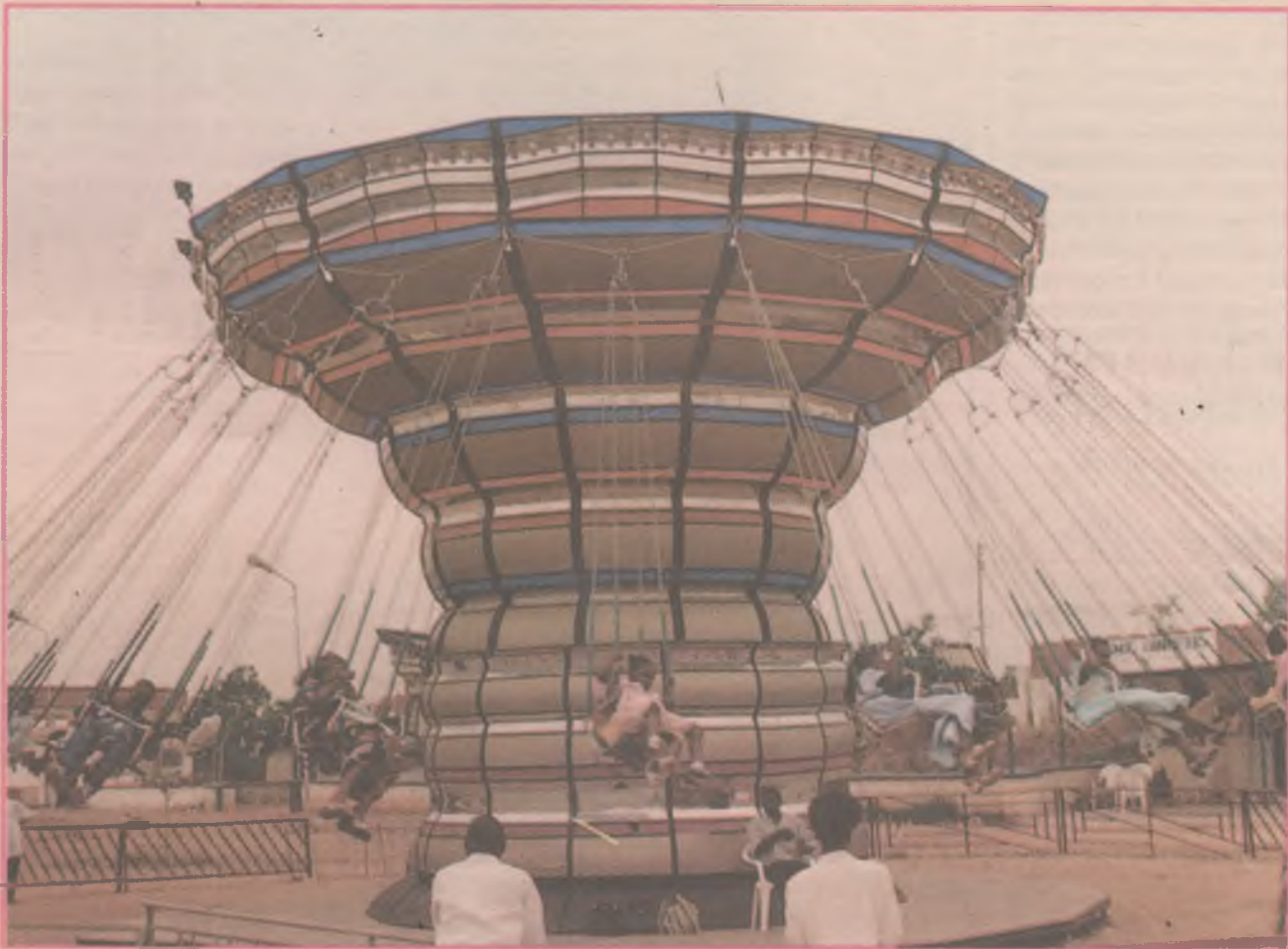
Edited by Kevin Ebele Adinnu

US builds N12m clinic in Bwari - Page 22

Health, education still under MFCT - Perm Sec - Page 22

Community leader wants govt to assist traders - Page 22

Police seek public cooperation - Bwala - Page 24



Children at the Amusement Park in Abuja on Sallah day.

Pix: Felix Onigbinde.

Thrills of Sallah in Abuja

By Godwin Tyonongo

This year's sallah celebration was marked in the city of Abuja with fanfare, thrills and glitz.

In Maitama, the maiden Fairwinds Sallah splash debuted Saturday night, with super DJs playing the latest music around.

As early as 11pm, the parking lot had filled up with cars and by 1.00am, the show had climaxed, with chart songs of the Dixie Chicks, Shaggy and Jennifer Lopez.

The initiator of the Fairwinds Sallah splash, Mr. Alex Adoge, disclosed that the event was packaged and strategically fixed to satisfy the youths.

He said that entertainment in Abuja generally was at the lowest ebb and there was the need to find ways of revolutionizing it.

In Asokoro, an Abuja-based artiste, Humphrey Ikpemini (De Duke), and the professional international, thrilled the people of Kwame Nkrumah Street, at 'Ravioli' with music and all-time classics, mixed with a sprinkling of Latin fever which created the perfect jazz jam on Saturday.

Manager, Sophia Bertocini, told *Abuja Trust* that this year's sallah celebration was one of the most lively in recent times.

Shun lawlessness, Abba-Gana tells FCT residents

By Emmanuel Ande

The Minister of Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Engr. Muhammed Abba-Gana, has called on residents of Federal Capital to shun activities that are capable of causing break down of law and order.

He said in his sallah message in Abuja at the weekend that FCT residents should use the opportunity of the Eid-el-Fitr to renew their relationship with God and contribute more to nation building.

Abba-Gana maintained that the challenge of building Abuja according to the master plan calls for redoubling of efforts in working towards the realization of the dream of the

founders of the territory.

He stated that Eid-el-Fitr is very important in the Islamic calendar, noting that the event emphasises the virtues of faith and trust in the will of Almighty Allah and that the occasion calls for deep religious and moral reflection on our part as one people.

"This year's celebration comes at a time when our nation is consolidating on the gains of our two and half years of democratic governance. It is therefore a great opportunity for us to renew our moral and physical resolve to contribute more to nation building," he said.

He further pointed out that President Olusegun Obasanjo, during his two days state visit in FCT challenged officials of the ministry to ensure that the Federal Capital was developed according to the master plan, so that it would be one of the most beautiful capital cities in the world.

"Abuja was conceived as a planned and orderly capital city. Therefore, all hands must be on deck to ensure that it remains so. We should always have it in our minds that Abuja is a special city, it is different from other

Nigerian cities, so the beauty and character of Abuja are hinged on its plan and systematic development," he said.

The minister also advised that FCT residents should work for the unity, peace and greatness of Nigeria, adding that mutual love and

patriotism should guide our relationship, irrespective of our religious, ethnic or geographical diversities.

"Our nation can only attain greatness in an atmosphere of tolerance, peace and harmony among all our people," he maintained.

Tiv community leader advises against prostitution

By Godwin Tyonongo

indigenes in the FCT.

According to him, the present democratic dispensation has opened up avenues for the citizens of the country and it was only ideal for eminent Tivs in the Federal Capital territory to avail their youths of the opportunities.

Mr. Wuhe noted that Tiv politicians in Abuja willing to contest elective positions at home must be assessed by Tiv Youth Organisation in Abuja before contesting at home.

"Till today, no Tiv youth has been considered for employment by the Tiv elders," he said.

The National President (TYO), Mr. Iorwuese D.

Ladies of Tiv origin in the Federal Capital Territory have been advised to shun prostitution.

The newly elected President of the Tiv Youth Organisation, FCT branch, Mr. Philip Wuhe, gave the advice in his inaugural speech after being elected president of the organisation at the weekend.

Mr Wuhe observed that for sometime now, Tiv ladies in the FCT had been portrayed in a bad light but with the advent of his administration, that would become a thing of the past.

He appealed to members of the organisation, especially well-placed members, to help in securing jobs for unemployed Tiv

Gernali, warned detractors to steer clear of the organisation's affairs, since the new TYO would not hesitate to use any means available, including the appropriate security agencies, to deal with those sabotaging its activities.

The election of Mr. Philip Wuhe as president laid to rest the long-standing power tussle in the FCT branch of the youth association.

Prior to the election, both Mr. John aNyitse and Mr. Wuhe had claimed to be leaders of the organisation.

Mr. John Azahan emerged the Deputy President of TYO at the election which took place at the Kestern Hiltop Restaurant, Abuja.



Engr. Abba-Gana.

Abuja Trust

News

Wuse market fire

Squatters move to satellite towns

Following the inferno at the recent Wuse New Market in Abuja, thousands of squatters at the market have moved to satellite towns like Karmo, Nyanya, Gwagawa, Idu and Dutse resulting in population explosion in these places.

The Wuse New Market which provides shelter for over ten thousand people, especially petty traders, hawkers and mendicants was completely ravaged by fire suspected to have originated from a faulty generator,

By Ikenna Emeka Okpani

rendering its inhabitants homeless.

Abuja Trust investigations revealed that such squatters who had friends in the satellite cities picked the remainder of their property and moved to squat with friends and relations.

One of such squatters who spoke to Abuja Trust at Karmo said he wanted to stay with his friend for sometime to enable him partake in the reconstruction of their former

shop which also served as shelter for over ten of them.

"What we do is come back here late in the night to lay our heads then move to the markets as early as possible" he explained.

Meanwhile, the residents of Old Karmo are beefing up security following the influx of people to the town as a result of the Wuse market tragedy.

A community leader in the town explained to Abuja

Trust that the move was necessary to forestall hoodlums catching in on the situation and the festive period to attack people's homes.

"You know a lot of people will be travelling for Christmas and there is need to ensure that their homes and property are protected when they are away," he said.

He explained that the influx of new faces in the city was adding tension to the security situation, as it would be difficult to find out who was who.

US builds N12m clinic in Bwari

The United States has built a medical clinic worth N12 million in Bwari.

Presenting the clinic to the Catholic Archdiocese of the Federal Capital Territory, the US Ambassador, Howard Jeter said the clinic would provide services to people in Bwari who could not afford any other health care.

By Kevin Ebele Adinnu

"In particular, the clinic serves the needs of expectant mothers - those carrying the future of Nigeria - and therefore fulfils a critical need within this community."

Ambassador Jeter said the US embassy spent about N12 million for the construction of the clinic, adding that it was working to provide furniture and medical equipment for the clinic, next year.

The construction of the clinic, according to him, is one of the Department of Defence's humanitarian assistance programmes managed through the Office of Defence Cooperation at the American Embassy in Abuja.

"Projects under this programme are usually done in cooperation with US military exercises, but exceptionally, as this clinic demonstrates, they can sometimes be done in a stand-alone capacity," Ambassador Jeter said.

Health, education still under MFCT - Perm Sec.

The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Federal Capital Territory (MFCT), Dr. Babangida Aliyu, has refuted allegations that the ministry was planning to return the health and education departments of the ministry to Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA).

Babangida told Abuja Trust in his office at the weekend that if such was done the aim of separating them would be defeated.

He said that the demerger of FCDA was done to enable it concentrate on its main duties which is to provide infrastructural development services in the Federal Capital Territory.

He said the new government which is concerned with the development of the federal capital has to reduce the workload on FCDA to enable it to meet its primary assignment.

"Departments like health and education has the highest number of staff in the ministry and these two departments are service providers, so it is unreasonable to allow FCDA to be spending money that can be used for infrastructural development on staff of the department as salaries.

"These two departments (health and education) consumed the highest amount of the ministry's budget. Because of the new salary scale of health workers and teachers the ministry spends more money on these two departments, so it is better for the ministry to pay them," he said.

Babangida who described those circulating such rumours on the demerger of the MFCT and FCDA as enemies of democracy and unpatriotic citizens bent on destroying the good plans of the government, said the FCDA was still paying the salaries of the two departments

By Emmanuel Ande

(health and education) because the de-merger exercise came after the budget for the year 2001 had been passed.

"As from year 2002, the ministry will take over the payment of salaries of the two departments," he said.

On the proposed salary scale for FCDA staff by the executive secretary of FCDA, Sir Charles Dorgu, he said that he had not seen any memo to that effect and that if such memo came the executive secretary had to convince the ministry on it.

The Permanent Secretary stressed that the ministry would not encourage anything that would create disunity among the staff of the ministry.

He advised officials of the ministry not to champion issues that would bring discrepancies and create rooms for some disgruntled elements to capitalise on it and cause confusion in the ministry for their personal interests.



Children celebrate sallah at Amusement Park, Abuja.

Pix: Felix Onigbinde.

Community leader wants govt to assist traders

An Igbo community leader and politician in Abuja, Mr. Jafet Okeke, has called on government to consider providing succour to victims of the New Wuse market fire.

According to him, government should not only consider monetary help but should quickly construct a befitting market for the

frustrated into joining bad gangs or getting involved in illegal business.

Federal Capital Territory where traders from all parts of the country will have shops.

Mr. Okeke warned the government to act swiftly to ensure that those traders affected by the fire are not

therefore advised politicians to pay more attention to the needs of the people.

Politicians in the country, he pointed out, should concentrate on providing infrastructure for the people instead of fighting one another in their bid to continue in office.

On the end of year celebrations and festive period, Mr. Okeke sought for improved security in the metropolis to ensure that the season is not marred by armed robbery and other crimes.

By Ikenna Emeka Okpani

Former minister harps on national unity

Former Minister of State for Health, Mr. Silas Iloh, has said that lack of citizenship consciousness in Nigeria explains why the country has remained a geographical expression rather than a nation.

He made the assertion



Silas Iloh.

while accepting the Bureau for Leadership and Citizenship Consciousness award in Abuja recently.

Mr. Iloh noted that part of Nigeria's problem was that "Nigerian citizenship has remained a right conferred on all Nigerians but denied to some, through state government and sometimes by fellow Nigerians."

This he said, explained why southerners born in the north have never enjoyed the same citizenship rights as Northerners and vice versa.

"The frequent religious and political crises in the north and other parts of the country often targeted non indigenes," he noted.

He also reiterated that most Nigerians who lived in states other than theirs do not enjoy the same socio-economic and political rights with people of their host

states, adding that the only safe place for most Nigerians now seemed to be their tribes or states of origin.

Mr. Iloh, who commended the organisation of the award, argued that "with such practice on ground, Nigeria can never be united and citizenship rights will continue to elude us."

He added that although Nigeria had democratic institutions in place, there is no openness in the polity. "We have a lot of work to do," he stated.

While presenting the award, the president of BLACCO, the organisers, Mr. Osita Nweke, noted that after due appraisal of Hon. Iloh's career as administrator, leader, politician and his contributions to the nation as minister of state for health, the award was conferred on him.

The purpose of government, he said, is to provide leadership and direction for the people. He

frustrated into joining bad gangs or getting involved in illegal business.

"The Federal Government should know what to do for them, to build a new market. The people affected cut across all tribes and even non-Nigerians. Let them do something fast to make sure the victims are not forced to join any bad group," he said.

The purpose of government, he said, is to provide leadership and direction for the people. He



Okeke.



**COMPUTER CENTRE/BUK UNIVERSITY
BAYERO UNIVERSITY, KANO**

COURSE ANNOUNCEMENT

Application forms for the following programmes are hereby available for sale at the computer center, Bayero University, Kano old campus.

1. HIGHER CERTIFICATE IN COMPUTER STUDIES (HCCS)

Entry Qualifications: Graduates (HND & above)
Duration: Six (6) Months
Form Fee: N1000.00
Tuition Fee: N23,000.00
Lectures: Fridays 4.00 – 6.00 p.m and
Saturdays 9.00 a.m – 6.00p.m

2. PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMA IN COMPUTER STUDIES (PDCS)

Entry Qualifications: SSCE (3 Credits), plus computer knowledge or OND
Duration: Two (2) Semesters (Eight Months)
Form Fee: N1000.00
Tuition Fee: N25,000.00
Lectures: Mondays – Thursdays (4.00 p.m – 7.00p.m)

3. CERTIFICATE IN COMPUTER STUDIES (CCS)

Entry Qualifications: SSCE (3 Credits)
Duration: Four (4) Months
Form Fee: N300.00
Tuition Fee: N12,000.00
Handout: N1000,00
Lectures: Mondays – Thursday (09.00 a.m – 1.00 p.m)

- * Sales of application forms is currently on
- * Completed application forms must be returned on or before 24th December 2001.
- * Lectures start first week of January 2002.

VACANCIES

The Embassy of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria request for immediate employment of the following staff:

Housekeeping:

The candidate should be female, 25 to 40 years old, good presentation, honest, experience of 3 - 5 years, knowledge of English & French and good health.

Driver

The candidate should be male, 25 to 45 years old, good presentation, honest, experience of 3 - 5 years, valid driving license, good knowledge of Abuja and suburbs, knowledge of English & French and good health.

The applicant should come to the Office for an interview and should present handwritten application with photocopies of references, C.V. and two (02) passport photographs. Within one week of this publication.

The Application should be addressed to:

**Embassy of the People's
Democratic Republic of Algeria,
Plot No. 1398,
Mamman Nasir Street, Asokoro,
Abuja.**

Capital City Classified

**This
Space is
for sale**

PUBLIC NOTICE
ASSOCIATION OF HOBA PROFESSIONALS
The general public is hereby notified that the above named association whose address is at No. 33, Sultan Bello Road, Unguwan Sarki, Kaduna has applied for registration with Corporate Affairs Commission under Part C of the Companies and Allied Matters Act, 1990.
The trustees are:-
1. Churchill W. Dunah - Chairman
2. William Joshua - Member
3. Bernard W. Emmanuel - Member
4. Nicholas W. Salu - Member
5. Rose Javan - Member
6. Nachana's D. Alahira - Member
7. Babangida Mua'azu - Member
8. Aji Yadima - Member
Any objection to the registration should be forwarded to the Registrar-General, Corporate Affairs Commission, Area II, Garki, Abuja within the 28 days of this publication
Signed
Barr. HDH Lawal
9b, Ogbadu Road
Kaduna

WHAT BUSINESS ASSETS DO YOU HAVE FOR SALE OR TO BUY?
(1) Plants/machines/machineries (new or second-handed)
(2) Factory, ware-houses, factory land etc.
(3) Chemicals or do you have any product(s) in which you would let us know to represent you here in Kano?

Mean while, our clients have Extruders & Cutting machines – (both new and second-handed) factory – ware-houses etc for sale at competitive prices.

For details contact us at:
EXCELLENT BUSINESS ASSETS LINK LTD.
No. 138A, Falat 3, Ibrahim Taiwo Road
Tel: 064-630-173, Kano.

This Space is for sale

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **Miss Francisca C. Okolo** now wish to be known and addressed as **Mrs. Francisca C.M. Igwilo** all former documents remain valid. State protocol and general public to note.

Elaigwu: Formerly known as **MISS JOSEPHINE ELAIGWU** now wishes to be known as **MRS. JOSEPHINE O. ULOKO**. All former documents remain valid. The Nigeria Police Force and general public to note.

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

PUBLIC NOTICE
IMAM NAFII ISLAMIC FOUNDATION (INIF)
The general public is hereby notified that the above named association with its headquarters in Gombe has applied for registration under the Companies and Allied Matters Decree Part C.
The trustees are:
1. Alh. Aliko Ibrahim Jalo (Wazirin Gombe) - Chairman
2. Alh. Ibrahim Mohammed Bello (Sarkin Yamaltu) -
3. Malam Abdul Ghaniy Muhammad Bello - Member
4. Engr. S.A. Abdullahi Majidadin Gombe - Member
5. Malam Ahmad Usman Nadani - Member
6. Malam Ibrahim Abba Doma - Secretary

Any objection to the registration of the association should be forwarded to the Registrar-General, Corporate Affairs Commission, Area II, Garki, P.M.B. 128, Abuja within 28 days of this publication.

Signed:
MUHAMMAD SAMBO UMAR (ESQ.)

Abuja Trust

Interview

Police needs public cooperation - Bwala

When you came to Abuja to take over the command, what were the things you met on the ground

Thank you very much, on assumption of office here, what I met on the ground wasn't encouraging, we had series of robberies, house breaking, and in fact the general crime situation was very bad and we had to sit down and plan our strategies, and that is exactly what we did.

Before you came, there was a very tough situation like robberies as you said, the first thing you did was to smash Kelvin's gang, how did you go about that?

In every situation you have to be able to read what is on the ground, plan your strategies, get information, and act fast, and we did that successfully. We also were able to get the confidence of our informants, plant them well, get our CID and CIB to go the extra mile in doing what is expected of them, and that is what led to the success we recorded.

But armed robberies are still rampant in the FCT, especially in the satellite towns, giving residents sleepless nights, what are you doing about it?

Unfortunately, you can hardly get a society that would be completely crime-free. What is happening in the satellite towns is that we have these local criminals, and they go to these houses with locally made arms, machetes, clubs, etc.

The only way we can succeed is to get good information. We are patrolling, and don't forget that the police are patrolling in uniform most of the times, and only a small percentage are in mufti, and it is easy for criminals to identify us, but it is not easy for us to identify them either, and because of that, once in a while, you have incidents of crime taking place, but we are doing all we can and I am very much aware that we have been able to eliminate so many of these gangs by getting them arrested, and taking them to court, and they've been put away for good, in the prisons.

The situation in the satellite towns, especially Karmo, is particularly worrisome, a lot of things go on, residents are highly

Mr. Dika Buba Bwala is the commissioner of police in charge of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). In this interview with Abuja Trust reporters, Uwem Umo and Austine Odo, he comments on rampant cases of criminal activities, inadequate equipment, the need for public to cooperate with police on crime prevention and more. Read on:



Mr. Dika Buba Bwala, FCT Police Commissioner.

disturbed.

What we will have to look at is this; do we need to be begged before we give the police information about our security? Karmo is a very densely populated place, and we would expect that responsible citizens would be able to come forward and give information, at the same time, most of the areas in Karmo are not motorable. We have been sending our men on patrol in the area and in the last few months we've made

some successes. I also discovered that most of the traders, especially those from the eastern parts, are always congregating there. This has also given us a lot of concern, because these people are attracting a lot of criminals. We have taken a lot of actions and steps that are positive. We've been able to get to talk with some traditional rulers, community leaders and they've been cooperating because we've been able to establish police public relations committees, and they have

helped a great deal. That is why we've put it to that level, as I've said before, you can hardly get a community that is crime-free. We need the cooperation of everyone in Karmo if we are to succeed the way we want.

Cooperation in what concrete terms?

In giving information to the police, in assisting the police to fight crime. Fighting crime is not a one-way traffic, and one has to be prepared to make some sacrifice to succeed.

What is the greatest problem of the command?

The greatest problem of the command, as at now, is logistics, to be honest we are having a lot of problems with logistics.

Can you quantify this logistics problem?

One can hardly quantify but I will attempt to, before then, let me attempt to tell you precisely what we have on ground. Now let us just look at the vehicular part of it. We have, may be, slightly above 70 vehicles, half of them need repairs, and at times, you can hardly give them enough fuel for their patrols. The other aspect is if you look at Karmo for example, is there any decent police station there? If you see the so-called police station we are using, is it conducive? So those are the things one can say are part of the problems. The communication aspect is also there. Though we are using them, but as the area grows, more demand is made on these items, and surely, except we continue to have them up dated, it is still a problem, so this is part of our problem when you look at it that way.

What of the manpower?

I am happy to say that on the staff strength, we are improving, as you are aware, the training of new recruits have been going on for sometime now, and they are being posted to us, and surely we are utilising them, so that has at least relieved us of the burden of extreme lack of manpower.

What would you describe as your greatest challenges and, if possible, greatest achievements in the war against crime since you assumed office in the FCT command?

My greatest challenges as the

commissioner of police in the FCT is the challenge of making sure that the residents of the FCT are safe, to get people to be on the side of the law, on the side of the police, to take the police as their brothers and sisters, and partners in progress with regard to fighting crime. What I can say is we are able to contain the crime rate in the FCT and get our citizens to have faith in the police. I think we have been able to bring that up at least, a bit.

The mobile unit barrack has been complaining of lack of facilities, how are you handling that?

When I assumed duties, I went on a tour of the PMF barracks, and what I saw was not a police barrack, in fact it has never been a police barrack but a transit camp. It was disheartening to know that they lacked water, so I made a representation to our office and some friends of the police and eventually I was able to get a borehole sunk in the place and pipe-borne water was made available. The IG was also able to go there and he has provided some facilities for the men.

What has been your greatest experience as a police commissioner?

If I look back at the years of service I've put in so far, I actually want to thank God that I've been able to make it to this level. Especially my last posting, which was in Bayelsa at the heart of the crises in the Niger-Delta, it has not been very easy at all. The level of criminal activities, the lawlessness, the threat to security agents was so high that I was almost in a nightmare. As you are aware, I lost about 12 officers, including an area commander, a DPO, and so many others, and through out my service there for the two years, it was very hectic. But I thank God that by the time I left, we were able to make peace reign and make security a watchword in all the communities in the state.

Can you advise young officers who are aspiring to greater heights in the profession?

My advice to young officers in the police is that as a police officer, you are a servant, you should be able to behave as a servant of the people. You are a counsellor, you should be able to counsel people properly, you are a guardian, you should be able to say look, I am for the law, and I will go by the law and make sure that people become your friends. A policeman should be everyone's friend, we need not be enemies to people or the public, that is the only way, I am sure, to succeed as a police officer.



A gang of suspected armed robbers paraded before newsmen at the FCT police command, Garki, Abuja... recently.

We've been able to get to talk with some traditional rulers, community leaders and they've been cooperating because we've been able to establish police public relations committees, and they have helped a great deal, and that is why we've put it to that level, as I've said before, you can hardly get a community that can be crime-free. We need the cooperation of everyone.

For the record

Electoral Law 2001 (IV)

CLAUSE 56: (1) The Presiding Officer shall regulate the admission of voters to the polling station and shall exclude all persons other than the candidates, polling agents, poll clerks and persons lawfully entitled to be admitted including accredited observers, and the Presiding Officer shall keep order and comply with the requirements of this Act at the polling station.

(2) The Presiding Officer may order a person to be removed from a polling unit who behaves in a disorderly manner or fails to obey a lawful order.

(3) A person removed from a polling station or unit under this section shall not, without the permission of the presiding officer, again enter the polling station or unit during the day of the election, and if charged with the commission of an offence in that polling station or unit, the person shall be deemed to be a person taken into custody by a Police Officer for an offence in respect of which he may be arrested without a warrant.

(4) The provisions of subsection (3) of this section shall not be enforced so as to prevent a voter who is otherwise entitled to vote at a polling station or unit from having an opportunity of voting.

(5) The Poll Clerk shall enjoy and exercise all the powers of the Presiding Officer in respect of a Polling Station or Unit except that he shall not order the arrest of a person or the exclusion or removal of a person from the Polling Station or Unit without the authority of the Presiding Officer.

CLAUSE 57: (1) At the prescribed hour for the close of poll, the Presiding Officer shall declare the poll closed and no more person(s) shall be admitted into the Polling Station and only those already inside the Polling Station shall be allowed to vote.

(2) After the declaration of the close of polls, no voter already inside the polling station shall be permitted to remain in the polling station unless otherwise authorized under this Act.

CLAUSE 58: (1) The Presiding Officer shall, after counting the votes at the polling station or unit, enter the votes scored by each candidate in a form to be prescribed by the Commission as the case may be.

(2) The Form shall be signed and stamped by the presiding Officer and counter signed by the candidates or their polling Agents where available at the Polling Station.

(3) The Presiding Officer shall give to the Polling Agents and the police officer where available a copy each of the completed Forms after it has been duly signed as provided in subsection (2) of this Section.

(4) The Presiding Officer shall count and announce the result at the Polling Station.

CLAUSE 59: A candidate or a Polling Agent may, where present at a Polling Station when counting of votes is completed by the Presiding Officer, demand to have the votes recounted, but the Presiding Officer shall cause the votes to be so recounted only once.

CLAUSE 60: After the recording of the result of the election, the Presiding Officer shall announce the result and deliver same and election materials under security to such

persons as may be prescribed by the Commission.

CLAUSE 61: (1) Subject to subsection (2) of this section, a ballot, which does not bear the official mark, shall not be counted.

(2) If the Returning Officer is satisfied that a ballot which does not bear the official mark was from a book of ballot papers which was furnished to the Presiding Officer of the polling station in which the vote was cast for use at the election in question, he shall, notwithstanding the absence of the official mark, count that ballot.

CLAUSE 62: (1) The Presiding Officer shall endorse the word "rejected" on the ballot rejected under Section 61 and for any other reason, and the ballot papers shall not be counted except otherwise allowed by the Returning Officer who may overrule the Presiding Officer.

(2) If an objection to the decision of a Presiding Officer to reject a ballot paper is raised by a candidate or a Polling Agent at the time the decision is made, the Presiding Officer shall add to the word "rejected", the phrase "but objected."

(3) The Presiding Officer shall prepare a statement on rejected ballot papers, stating the number rejected, the reason for rejection and their serial number, he shall on request allow a candidate or a Polling Agent to copy the statement.

CLAUSE 63: The decision of the Returning Officer on any question arising from or relating to (a) unmarked ballot; (b) rejected ballot; and (c) declaration of scores of candidates and the return of a candidate, shall be final subject to review by a tribunal or Court in election petition proceedings under this Act.

CLAUSE 64: In an election to the office of the President or Governor (whether or not contested) and in any contested election to any other elective office, the result shall be ascertained by counting the votes cast for each candidate and subject to the provisions of Section 133, 134 and 179 of the Constitution, the candidate that receives the highest number of votes shall be declared elected by the appropriate Returning Officer.

CLAUSE 65: - Where two or more candidates poll equal number or votes being the highest in an election, the Returning Officer shall not return any of the candidates and a fresh election shall be held for the candidates on a date to be appointed by the Commission.

CLAUSE 66: The Commission shall cause to be posted on its notice board a notice showing- (a) the candidates at the election and their scores; and

(b) the person declared as elected or returned at the election.

CLAUSE 67: The Chief National Electoral Commissioner or any officer authorized by him shall keep official custody of all the documents, including statement or results and ballot papers relating to the election, which are returned to the Commission by the Returning Officers.

CLAUSE 68: Subject to the

provisions of this Act, the Commission shall issue and publish in the Gazette, Guidelines for the elections, which shall make provisions, among other things, for the step by step recording of the poll in the electoral Forms as may be prescribed beginning from the polling station or unit to the last collation centre for the ward or constituency where the result of the election shall be declared.

CLAUSE 69: Every Result Form completed at the Ward, Local Government, State and National levels in accordance with the provisions of this Act or any Guidelines issued by the Commission shall be stamped, signed and countersigned by the relevant officers and Polling Agents at those levels and copies given to the police officers and the polling Agents, where available.

CLAUSE 70: A sealed Certificate of Return at an election in a prescribed form shall be issued to every candidate who has won an election under this Act.

CLAUSE 71: A member of a legislative house may be recalled as such a member if:

(a) there is presented to the Chairman of the Commission a petition in that regard signed by more than one-half of the persons registered to vote in that member's constituency alleging their loss of confidence in that member; and

(b) the petition is thereafter, in a referendum conducted by the Commission within 90 days of the date of receipt of the petition, approved by a simple majority of the votes of the persons registered to vote in that members Constituency.

CLAUSE 72: The Commission shall have power to issue guidelines regulating the conduct of recall.

CLAUSE 73: (1) The forms to be used for the conduct of elections to the offices mentioned in section 16 of this Act. election petitions arising therefrom and for recall of a member of a legislative house shall be substantially set out in Schedule 2 of this Act or as may be otherwise determined by the Commission from time to time.

(2) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (1) of this Section, the Commission shall have power to design any form deemed necessary for the discharge of its functions under this Act.

(3) The Polling Agents shall certify the election materials from the office to the polling booth.

Part III-Political Parties
CLAUSE 74: (1) The Commission shall have power to register political parties and regulate their activities from time to time.

(2) No association by whatever name called shall function as a political party unless: (a) the names and addresses of its national officers are registered with the Commission.

(b) The membership of the association is open to every citizen of Nigeria irrespective of his place of origin, circumstance of birth, sex,

religion or ethnic grouping.

(c) A copy of its Constitution is registered in the principal office of the Commission in such form as may be prescribed by the Commission

(d) Any alteration in its registered Constitution is also registered in the Principal Office of the Commission within 30 days of the making of such alteration.

(e) The name of the association, its symbol, or logo does not contain any ethnic or religious connotation or give the appearance that the activities of the association are confined only to a part of the geographical area of Nigeria, and

(f) The headquarters of the association is situated in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

(g) It produces evidence of payment of registration fee of N100,000 or as may be fixed from time to time by an Act of the National Assembly.

(h) It provides the addresses of the offices of the Political Association in at least two-third of the total number of the States of the Federation spread among the six geo-political zones.

(3) The Constitution referred to in subsection 2(c) above shall provide, among other things:

(a) for the Party's ideology, programme and method of zoning and rotating principal offices among different States of the Federation to ensure Federal Character

(b) for the periodical elections on a democratic basis at regular intervals not exceeding four years of the principal officers and numbers of the executive committees or other governing body of the political party;

(c) that the members of the executive committee of other governing body of the political party shall reflect the federal character of Nigeria by ensuring that they belong to different States not being less in number than two-third of all the States of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

(d) for the disciplinary procedure of the party indicating clearly the method of expelling an ordinary member of a party or political office holder, including a member of a legislative house;

(e) for the method of amendment or alteration of the Constitution.

(f) rules and procedures for nominating candidates to elective offices

(4) The Commission shall on receipt of the documents in fulfillment of the conditions stipulated in Section 74 (1)(a)(c)and(e), immediately issue the applicant with a letter of acknowledgement stating that all the necessary documents had been submitted to the Commission.

(5) The Commission shall after the inspection of all the offices referred to under this Section issue an acknowledgement to the Association indicating that the offices have been so inspected as required under this Act.

(6) any political Association that meets the conditions stipulated in subsections 1 and 2 of this Section shall be

registered by the Commission as a political party within 30 days upon payment of the sum of N100,000 administrative and processing fees, if after the 30 days the Association is not registered by the Commission it shall be deemed to be so registered.

(7) If the Association has not fulfilled all the conditions as aforementioned the Commission shall within 30 days notify the Association in writing stating the reasons.

(8) Any Association, which through the submission of false or misleading information pursuant to the provisions of this section procures a certificate of registration, shall have such certificate cancelled.

CLAUSE 75: The decision of the Commission to refuse to register any association as a Political Party may be challenged in a Court of Law. Provided that any legal action challenging the decision of the

Commission shall be commenced within 14 days from the date of the receipt of the letter of notification of non-registration from the Commission or the expiration of the 30 days referred to in subsection (9) above.

CLAUSE 76: Every Political Party registered under this Act shall be a body corporate with perpetual succession and a common seal and may sue and be sued in its corporate name.

CLAUSE 77: Without prejudice to the provisions of Section 74, once a particular association is granted registration as Political Party by the Commission, that Political Party shall further submit to the commission the following particulars:-

(a) The name of the Political Party, its emblem and logo which shall not contain any ethnic or religious connotation.

(b) A copy of the Party's Constitution drawn up in compliance with Chapter 11 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and with requirements of the relevant guidelines issued by the Commission.

CLAUSE 78: (1) The Constitution and Manifesto of the Political Party shall, among other things provided:

(a) for the periodic election on democratic basis of the principal officers and members of the Executive Committee or other governing body of the Political Party.

(b) A system which allows membership of the Executive Committee or other governing body of the Political Party to reflect at all times, the Federal Character of Nigeria.

(c) The disciplinary procedure of the Political Party stating clearly the method of expelling an ordinary member of a party or Political Office holder including a member of a legislative house.

(d) For the method of amendment or alteration of the Constitution or Manifesto of the Political Party.

(c) The Political Party's ideology, programme and method of zoning and rotating principal offices among the different zones of the federation.

(2) The Constitution and Manifesto produced pursuant to

subsection (1) of this section shall:-

(a) be deposited with the Commission not later than 30 days of the coming into effect of such Constitution or Manifesto.

(b) At all times be in compliance with the provisions of the Constitution, the electoral laws and guidelines made by the Commission.

(3) No amendment or alteration of the Constitution or manifesto of a Political Party shall be valid unless the Commission is notified within 30 days from the date of making the amendment or alteration.

(4) No Constitution of a political party or any amendment thereto shall be accepted by the Commission unless the National Convention of the Political Party has approved it.

(5) No amendment or alteration of the Constitution of a Political Party shall be valid unless the amendment or alteration has been registered with the Commission.

CLAUSE 79: (1) Membership of a Political Party shall be open to every citizen of Nigeria irrespective of his place of origin, circumstances of birth, sex, religion or ethnic grouping.

(2) Subject to subsection (1) of this section, a person shall not be eligible to be registered as a member of Political Party if he:-

(a) has not attained the age of 18 years;

(b) is a traditional ruler;

(c) is a member of the Public Service or Civil Service of the Federation, a State or Local Government Area Council as defined by the Constitution;

(d) is a member of the Armed Forces of the Federation, the Nigerian Police, Security Agencies or Paramilitary organs of the Government;

(e) is not a citizen of Nigeria,

CLAUSE 80: (1) At the close of nomination for the general elections, any Political Party that fails to sponsor at least 15% of the candidates for Councillorship, Council Chairmanship, and State Assembly, respectively, within the Federation, spread over two-third of the States, and the Federal Capital Territory, shall not be allowed to 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 spread among two-thirds of the States of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory to be eligible to participate in Federal and State Elections.*

(2) Every candidate intending to participate in an election shall pay a non-refundable deposit as specified hereunder:- for the position of Councillor: N10,000; for Local Government Chairmanship N25,000; for House of Assembly N30,000; for Governorship N100,000; for House of Representatives: N 120,000; for the Senate N150,000; for President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria: N500,000.

**This is part of the clause inserted on 6/12/2001 after the National Assembly passed the bill on 4/12/2001 - Editor*

to be continued



I.T. WORLD



Benak consolidated (Nigeria) Limited recently signed a partnership agreement with North Star incorporated of the United States of America. Picture shows from left to right: Raymond Akinfolarin, Executive Director, Foreign Logistics; Tom Quin, President of North Star Inc. USA; Counie Fall, North-Star's Company Secretary, and Mac-Isuua, chairman of Benak Consolidated limited at the signing ceremony of the partnership agreement in the USA.

NITDA to produce 500,000 IT professionals

As part of efforts to enhance an effective take-off of the nation's proposed Information Technology (IT) policy in Nigeria, the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) has planned to produce 500,000 IT professionals nationwide before the year 2005.

The Director-General of NITDA, Professor Gabriel O. Ajayi, stated this at the second National Tripartite Conference of Manpower Planners, Producers and Employers in Nigeria, last week in Abuja.

Professor Ajayi, who was a guest speaker at the occasion, maintained that in order to meet this target, NITDA is collaborating with universities, polytechnics and other educational institutions in the country.

According to the director general, other strategies towards the development of human resources in the IT sector include a proposal to make IT mandatory at all levels of educational institutions through the adequate funding of IT programmes, and procurement of IT equipment, and development of relevant IT curricula for primary, secondary and tertiary institutions.

He also cited the



Prof. Gabriel Ajayi, Director-General, NITDA

procurement facilities for electronic distance learning networks and ensuring effective Internet connectivity in both urban and rural communities, among others.

Professor Ajayi stated

that poor investments in human resources in IT-related programmes has been one of the factors that made it impossible for the rapid transformation of the nation's workforce in terms of IT-based knowledge.

Expert urges Nigerians to embrace Internet

An Information Technology (IT) expert and the Information Systems Manager of NICON HILTON Hotel, Henry Femowei, has called on Nigerians to exploit the worldwide web for fast and effective communications across the globe.

Mr. Femowei made this call last week in an interview with *IT World* in Abuja.

He observed that majority of Nigerians do not realise the vitality of using the Internet to make hotel reservations, buy and sell products and services as well as make payments through electronic banking.

According to Femowei, unless Nigerians avail themselves of the opportunities of electronic commerce and electronic banking, they may not find accommodation in this new era of cyber age and global digital competitiveness.

He highlighted the benefits of using the Internet to include easier, faster and effective communication at any time, anywhere and in different ways in the world.

This, he said, enhances business activities.

Femowei called on Nigerians to use the Internet as the excellent interactive

tool for global communication to enhance their business.

Normally, Nigerians communicate with HILTON through the telephone but now its new

African IT professionals to hold conference tomorrow

Stories by Hassan Idris

Brain Drain Brain Gain (BDBG) incorporated, an organisation of African Technocrats and Professionals in Diaspora has announced a four-day "First African Conference on Technology and Innovation (ACT 01).

The conference, which is scheduled to hold from tomorrow, in Abuja was organised in collaboration with the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) and the Ministry of Science and Technology (FMST).

A statement signed by the Director General of NITDA, Professor Gabriel Olalere Ajayi, said the theme of the conference is "Technology Innovation and Socio-Economic Development in Africa."

Email address is HiltonAbuja@hyperia.GM and its www.hilton.com would provide comprehensive information needed on the hotel, he said.

SITA debuts as aviation IT solution provider

A new Information Technology (IT) solution provider for the air transport industry has evolved with a portfolio value added (IT) solutions over a single seamless global voice and data network, which is the largest in the world.

According to *Airport News* report made available to *IT world*, last week, in Abuja, state SITA Incorporated is the world's leading provider of global information and telecommunication solution to the air transport industry.

This enables SITA to offer fully managed end-to-end or desktop-to-desktop solutions with global services provision backed with local support, the report said.

Again, the company employs local people with local knowledge, and its global reach neutrality and industry ownership are as well critical to its customers as its breadth of service, the

report said. The report added that support and industry ownership are as critical to its customers as its breadth of service, support and industry expertise, and SITA aimed at being the first choice partner for the provision of entire integrated IT and tele-communications infrastructure for air transport organisations world-wide.

The report mentioned that SITA was already a partner and service provider to almost all airlines, travel and global distribution companies and numerous airport authorities, as well as aerospace and air-freight companies and governmental organisations.

Its solutions, whether managed or outsource, cover the network applications and desktop adding that its business is based on two main application services and a wide portfolio of customer infrastructure and desktop services.

You and your computer

How to operate the File Manager in Windows

By Hassan Idris

This section discusses ways you can manage your computer files and directories. The file manager enables you to easily work with files' disks, either hard disk, compact disks or floppy disks.

Start by putting on your system, when the programme manager prompt appears on the computer screen, you should double click the main program group icon to open the window.

'File manager' will then appear. Then double click it to start operating the file manger when the file manager opens its window on-screen, you can work in the windows file manager by resizing or moving its window as you wish.

To exit 'file manager' just open the 'file' menu and click 'Exit' to quit from it.

Another quick exit is to double click the file manager's control menu box to be able to close the file manager.

How to view computer disk drives

Open the file manager "Disk" menu and then click the 'select drive.'

In the select drive dialog box, you can click the 'drive' holding the disk you need to view in the drives list.

Now click OK, press 'Enter' to close the 'Select Drive' box and display the contents of the drive you selected in the current directory window.

To display another disk in the current directory of windows, you may click another disk icon at the top of the directory window so that you can finish viewing.

Alternatively, you can press 'Tab' key or 'F6' to move to the disk icons by using an 'arrow' key to move it along the dotted outline to any other disk icon, then press the 'space bar'.

Selecting directories in the directory tree

In the C: drive, use the scroll bar to display the directory you need in the large directory tree.

Then click a directory to select it perfectly. Alternatively, use the keyboard to press 'Tab' to move the high lighted to the main directory tree, and then use the 'up' and 'down' arrow keys to select a directory.

Again, to display or hide any directory's subdirectory in the tree, you have to double-click that directory name using the keyboard. Select the sub-directory using the arrow keys and press the 'Enter' key.

You can as well move to the first sub-directory and click it or use the keyboard by pressing the 'right arrow' key.

Optionally, you can use the 'up' and 'down' arrow keys and click to move among the sub-directories.

Again, the 'left arrow' key will be useful to move through one directory level.

How to view the window 'free' only or the Directory' only

First of all click in the directory window, which you need to change.

Click and open the view menu, and click the 'Tree only' icon.

Now the file manager will display only the directory tree and it will not be displayed.

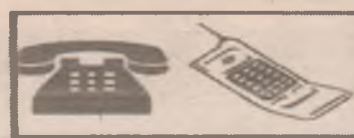
To display the 'Directory' only, without the tree click the 'directory' window you need to change.

It is now easier to open the 'view' menu, and click 'Directory only'.

This enables the 'file manger' to ignore displaying the directory tree but it will show only the directory contents list.



I.T. WORLD



Motorola repeats industrywide mobile phone outlook

Motorola Inc., the world's second-largest mobile phone maker, said it will expect 2001 global industry wide unit sales at the low end of its range of 380 million to 400 million.

This was consistent with the estimate of the world's largest mobile phone maker Nokia of 380 million units late last month at its analyst meeting.

Mike Zafirovski, president of Motorola's personal communications sector, which makes the phones, also told investors at a Lehman Brothers telecommunications conference in Florida he

continues to expect 2002 global handset sales of 420 million to 460 million units.

Nokia estimated 440 million to 450 million units.

Zafirovski also said Motorola completed previously announced large-scale cost and job cuts.

He said, his unit has reduced staff to 19,000 from 33,000 and cut its offices and facility locations by 40 percent. The cuts will yield annualized savings of more than \$1 billion.

Zafirovski expected growth in the wireless industry to resume in 2002 after a difficult 2001, when sales slowed due to the economy.

He said, inventory levels have normalized after oversupplies earlier this year, and he expects average selling prices of the phones to stabilize with newer phones offsetting deflation.

Motorola sees the U.S., Mexican and Brazilian markets as the best opportunities for growth, while Europe and Korea is seen as the best markets for replacement sales.



The Chairman of Microsoft, Bill Gates with Regis Philbin at the launching of "Who Wants to be Millionaire" using the new version of Windows XP software program recently, in New York.

Compaq PCs to include RealNetworks software

RealNetworks Inc. said last week that Compaq Computer Corp., the world's No. 2 PC maker, will include its software on new computers, giving the Internet media company an important outlet to consumers as it builds steam for its online subscription service.

New home PCs from Compaq will include RealOne software, which can be used for playing video and audio over the Internet as well as recording and storing music on a computer, RealNetwork's Chief Operating Officer Larry Jacobson said.

Compaq will also include icons and promotions for the RealOne online subscription service, which lets users get exclusive sports, entertainment and other content for a monthly fee, Jacobson said.

"It is certainly significant symbolically," said Rob Glaser, RealNetworks chief executive and chairman said in an interview at Internet World in New York.

He said the company has deals for some of the company's other products with Sony (6758.T) and Gateway Inc. and has had talks with other computer makers for RealOne.

RealOne will not be shipped on new Compaqs until next March, when a final version of the software is released. In the meantime, Compaq will ship the latest versions of the RealPlayer and RealJukebox programs, Jacobson said.

Deals with PC makers are key to get RealNetwork's software in the hands of consumers as it competes against cross-town rival Microsoft Corp. for dominance in the digital media industry. Microsoft's software, the Windows Media Player, is given a prominent place in its Windows XP operating system, which ships on virtually all new PCs.

Sun and IBM make computer security vulnerable

A security hole in software from Sun Microsystems Inc. and International Business Machines Corp. could allow malicious hackers to take control of powerful servers running in many corporations and universities, security experts said on Wednesday.

Internet Security Systems Inc. researchers have uncovered evidence in Internet chat rooms that hackers have already started developing tools to take advantage of the vulnerability, said Dan Ingevaldson, a team leader at ISS' X-Force research and development lab.

The vulnerability affects the latest release of Sun's operating system, Solaris 8, and earlier versions, as well as IBM's AIX versions 4.3 and 5.1, according to an advisory issued by the Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) at Carnegie Mellon University.

The hole is located in the "login" program that allows people to sign on to the operating system remotely by entering a

Sprint PCS to offer downloadable ring tones

Sprint PCS Group customers will soon be able to personalize their cell phones by downloading ring tones and graphics onto their phones.

The Europe's fourth-largest wireless firm said it was making available next week 200 ring tones and 200

graphics, which can be downloaded on its three newest cell phone models.

The company said it was unable to offer the feature on older phone models because the service requires special technology in the phones.

European research firm, the Arc Group, estimates that there will be 551 million global ring tone users by 2006. Industry trade publication *Wireless Reporter* estimates that the global market for ring tones is \$650 million to \$1 billion annually.

Sprint PCS said customers will be charged \$4 a month and can download up to eight ring tones and

graphics, which can be stored and accumulated over time. The ring tones and graphics can be downloaded from the wireless Web feature on the cell phones,

or by accessing the Sprint PCS Web site on PCs.

The company is offering the service free for the first three months.

Microsoft unveils Chinese pocket PC 2002

U.S. software giant Microsoft Corp. had unveiled a Chinese version of its new Pocket PC 2002 software for handheld computing, in a bid to tap into Greater China's corporate market.

"We need to build localized products so we can really do the things we want to do here," Dave Wright, general manager of Microsoft Asia's

Mobility Group, told *Reuters* in an interview.

Wright said the Chinese Pocket PC 2002 could achieve significant growth in terms of market share by working closely with local developers and manufacturers.

Wright said Microsoft will begin marketing the Pocket PC 2002 in China soon, and did not offer any sales forecasts for Taiwan or China.

But he cited market researcher International Data Corp's (IDC) projections that Microsoft would claim a market share of 31.4 percent in 2003 from 24.1 percent this year in the Asia area excluding Japan, compared with Palm's 31 percent in 2003 and 27.5 percent in 2001.

Acer Inc., Asustek Computer Inc., and Compal Electronics are among Microsoft's six Taiwan-based Original Equipment Manufacturing (OEM) partners that will incorporate Chinese Pocket PC 2002 into their handheld devices.

In total, 22 hardware vendors worldwide have signed on to support Pocket PC 2002, which Microsoft is touting for both its business functions and its multimedia applications, including a streaming audio and video player, which captures sounds and images directly from the Internet.

The Pocket PC 2002 system is an attempt to win new customers in the business market by offering support for wireless networking and improved security - areas that Microsoft thinks industry-leader Palm Inc has neglected.

VeriSign offers branding, domain name services

It may be too late for the Bush administration to get back from a porn company, but new services announced by VeriSign Inc. could help others from losing out on valued domain names.

VeriSign, which sells Web addresses, is offering services to help companies maneuver often complicated rules to get Web addresses in other countries, keep track of and recover them, and search for trademark infringement online, said Sean Downey, director of VeriSign's new Digital Brand Management Services.

Mountain View, California-based VeriSign also is announcing two acquisitions and the addition of 10 new offices, including six outside the United States, to handle the branding services, Downey said.

The company has completed the acquisition of

1 GlobalPlace Inc. of El Segundo, California, and has entered into an agreement to acquire NameEngine Inc. of New York.

The combined price for the companies, which help companies establish Web identities and protect domain names internationally, is \$11 million in cash and stock, a company spokesman said.

A typical large business owns between 200 and 500 domain names and spends an average of \$100,000 a year to acquire and maintain them, according to a study by market research firm Gartner Group.

Establishing a Web presence used to be simple when there were just a few domains, but seven new ones have been added and more are coming, in addition to the existing 243 country-specific domains.



Eid Mubarak

MTN wishes all our Muslim brethren a happy Eid.
May the Almighty grant your wishes, as you strive to be what you want to be.
Barka de sallah!

NETWORK OF CHOICE



YOUR BEST CONNECTION

The Nigerian Society of Engineers



KANO BRANCH

CONGRATULATIONS FOR A WELL-DESERVED HONOUR

The Chairman of the Nigerian Society of Engineers, Kano Branch

On behalf of

The entire membership of Kano Branch,
Heartly Congratulates



Engr. Rabi Musa Kwankwaso, Executive Governor, Kano State



Engr. Mustapha Balarabe Shehu, Chairman, NSE, Kano Branch

**HIS EXCELLENCY
THE EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF
KANO STATE**

Engr. Rabi Musa Kwankwaso

On the Prestigious Award of the
FELLOWSHIP OF THE NIGERIAN
SOCIETY OF ENGINEERS

We are very proud to be associated with the numerous Engineering Projects being executed by His Excellency.

We wish His Excellency ALLAH'S Guidance and more years of service to the people of Kano State and Nigeria in general.

Signed

Engr. Mustapha Balarabe Shehu
Chairman, NSE, Kano Branch



NEPA

NATIONAL ELECTRIC POWER AUTHORITY

PUBLIC NOTICE

COMMISSIONING OF ABUJA POWER STATION POSTPONED

The management of the National Electric Power Authority wishes to inform all invited guests to the Commissioning Ceremony of the 15 Megawatts Abuja Emergency Power Station earlier scheduled for Monday 17th December 2001 by the Vice-President.

This is due to the declaration of that day as public holiday in celebration of the Eid-El-Fitri Festivity.

We regret any inconvenience to all invited guests.

A new date will be communicated to them.

SIGNED:
MANAGEMENT

FIRST CITY MONUMENT BANK (FCMB)/CITY SECURITIES LIMITED (CSL)

SILENCE IS GOLDEN

We find it necessary to issue this statement particularly to express our profound gratitude for the deluge of messages of solidarity and prayers that have continued to pour into our offices and homes, as well as some suggestions made to our Chairman and Chief Executive, Otunba Michael O. Balogun (CON), to make some statements with a view to clearing himself of all the allegations levelled against his person as well as his institutions.

Otunba Balogun, for now, is not prepared to talk to anyone on this issue; but he believes very strongly that "Truth, however suppressed, will emerge and triumph in due course". Otunba Balogun is a man of God, and repeatedly, he has expressed his strong belief that "Through the love of God, our Saviour, all will be well".

He has also never stopped to state it loud and clear that both himself in person and his Group of institutions will never be confrontational or combative to either the regulatory authorities in particular or the establishment in general. It is also important to state that at no time did FCMB or our Chairman & Chief Executive squeal to the CBN about any bank activities, talk less of mentioning 48 or 77 banks. This is just a mischievous lie being spread about to tarnish our image. It is also a blatant lie that he went to meet the President in Beijing on this matter, and was rebuffed by Mr. President.

We, in the Research and Corporate Affairs Department of FCMB, will however like to make some matters very clear to all our customers, friends and well-wishers. In the last eleven years, Otunba Balogun's role in the operations of City Securities Limited (CSL) has been limited to that of a non-Executive Chairman of the company and has not been involved in the day-to-day management or any transactions of that company. It is also common knowledge that in all those years too, he has not had time to attend personally any Board Meeting of this company. This can be verified from anyone who either works in the organization, or has ever had any relationship with the company.

Even in FCMB where he is Chairman and Chief Executive, his involvement in the day-to-day management of the bank is limited to the setting down of policy guidelines, strategy direction and general marketing. Since his 65th birthday, about three years ago, Otunba Balogun has literally handed over the day-to-day management of the bank to a team of bright professionals. This fact is also public knowledge.

This is why the entire Group of Companies is shocked by the unwarranted direct attack on the person of Otunba Balogun, as well- as several adverse reports and aspersions on the integrity and good name of both himself and his institutions. In the last 40 years which Otunba Balogun had spent in the banking and financial industry, he has had to his credit an impeccable and inspirational track record, which has earned him immeasurable respect and recognition within the Nigerian banking and financial industry.

The Group of Companies which Otunba Balogun, through the grace of the Almighty God, has singularly established, are today not just pioneering role models, reference points, or beacons of hope, but have also operated for more than 25 years without any blemish, nor has the integrity of these institutions and himself been ever questioned, and all these have earned both Otunba Balogun and institutions recognition locally and internationally to the admiration of even his peers.

The question every rational observer should ask is: if Otunba Balogun has earned such an impeccable and enviable record with his good reputation and good name unblemished during the 40 years he had given services to the financial industry, how could he now in the twilight of his active banking career be associated with an impropriety that can wipe out all he has built up all the years? Moreover, we cannot understand what anyone stands to gain either in pulling down or disparaging one of Nigeria's finest legacies in the banking and financial industry. Our only fall back position can be found in what has also become some of Otunba's words on the marble: "Only God is the final Arbiter of the face, fortune or destiny of every human being".

Lastly, our Chairman/Chief Executive would, at this moment, like to be left severely alone. He will talk when it becomes auspicious to do so. For now, and to those who believe in prayers, this is our advice: pray for Otunba Balogun and his institutions, which with all due modesty, have become a reference point in private entrepreneurship in the Nigerian banking and financial industry. You may also sing along with Otunba, one of his most favorite songs - "Through the love of Christ our Saviour, all will be well".

Research and Corporate Affairs
FIRST CITY MONUMENT BANK (FCMB)



Kwankwaso gives Pillars continental target

The Kano State government has charged the state's flag-bearers in the elite pro-league to ensure they capture the prestigious league shield and eventually the Champions League ticket.

Governor Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso handed down the tall order while approving the release of N16 million for the club's pro-league campaigns this season.

The governor said Kano people expect nothing but the prestigious league cup at the end of this season which kicked off last Saturday. He said the club would have no excuse if it failed to win since the finance needed to prosecute the league had been provided.

Sole Administrator of the club, Alhaji Kabir Baita confirmed to *Trust Sports* that the government has honoured its obligation to the club with the release of the N16 million which is only a part payment of the amount budgeted for the club.

Following this release, Alhaji Kabir said, 70 percent of the sign-on fees for new and old players have been paid, noting that the rest would be paid at the end of the first phase of the league.

The sole administrator said the club has taken up the challenge of the governor and was therefore determined to wrest the league shield from defending champions

Enyimba FC and every other contender.

Consequently, he said, he had effected 50 percent and N1000 naira increment in salary and allowances respectively of players, to boost their morale and set them focus for the league shield.

Already, 40 players are in the arsenal for the prosecution of the campaign, Alhaji Kabir said, and no debt was owed any of the old players, a development he said has endeared the state government to the players who would now pursue the league shield with minimum worries.

Some of the new recruits for Pillars are Celestine Baba, Abba Abdullahi, Benedict Atule and Arthur Bassey, all from NEPA Abuja. Others are Rabiu Baita, Sanusi Umar from Katsina United, Adamawa United released no fewer than three players to Pillars.



Coach Amodu

NEPA begin with barren draw

NEPA FC began the season in a barren draw against visiting Mighty Jets of Jos, last Saturday.

The electricians who were seriously depleted at the end of last season were generally uncoordinated and without definite pattern, a situation that allowed the Jos-based Jets to dictate the pace of play.

The match was barely 10 minutes when the hosts in one memorable move dislodged the defence quartet of the Jets but Saleh Al-Hassan's blast was blocked and scrambled to safety.

Then followed a burst of daring moves and goal-scoring chances which were frittered away with Saleh and Theophilus Ekpoh taking turns to waste the begging chances.

On resumption of the

second half, the Jets stepped up performance, bombarding their opponents' vital area for the opener which refused to come.

However, NEPA regrouped and successfully absorbed the fierce pressure before taking the challenge into Jet's area where the battle remained but the wall of defence refused to crack.

Jets' Ayuba Choji and Mohammad Danazumi marshalled their defence such that few of NEPA's forays passed the 18 metres box. Even then, Idonor Benson in goal for Jets was like a rock and adopted a no-nonsense approach to goalkeeping.

At the end of the match, Coach Abubakar Garba of Jets praised his lads for keeping a clean slate noting that in the course of the league, Jets would mature to pose serious challenges to other seekers of elite promotion ticket.



Samuel Ossei Kuffour in warm embrace with Scholl in one of their memorable matches. Kuffour tops the list of nominees for the African Footballer of the Year award.

Kuffour set to win

Ghanaian International Samuel Ossei Kuffour, who plies his trade in Germany, may clinch the African Footballer of the Year award.

The decision the rich list in which the Bayern Munich ace defender remains the favourite would be taken this week in Cairo, Egypt.

CAF had listed some players who had been consistent throughout the year coupled with their form and performance.

Among the rich list, Kuffour's name along Cameroun's Eto Ofils and El Hadji Diouf of Senegal, have continued to remain consistently on the lips of soccer enthusiasts with keen record and knowledge of players performance during the year.

However, Kuffour's victory in the German-league, UEFA champions league stood out of the pack especially his brilliant strike against Boca Juniors which gave Bayern Munich the world club champions cup for weeks ago.

Kuffour, recently slammed by Ghanaian FA for accusing them of want of seriousness in the preparation for the Nations Cup in Mali, may be another Ghanaian after Abedi Pele, to win the African Footballer of the Year award.

NCAA shines

The Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority recorded impressive performances in its maiden appearance at the Federal Civil Service Games which ended last weekend in Abuja.

The contingent of 10 athletes and three

officials won one gold, two silver and a bronze in the Games in which the soccer trophy was won by the Ministry of Sports and Social Development

The NCAA team won medals in lawn and table tennis but failed to click in *ayo* and draughts.

The gold was won in the men's double in lawn tennis, while the silver medals came from men's single and women's doubles. The only bronze was won in the women's single. The NCAA was also named the best behaved among the lot.

The NCAA performance which the organising committee of the games could not fail to note and commend was led by the Technical Director, Elder Bunmi Akanbi-Awotoku.

The sports ministry humbled highly rated Ministry of Justice 1-0 to clinch the soccer trophy in the game that was highly contested.

Aku blasts coaches

● you are a lazy lot

Sports minister, Ishaya Mark Aku, has lambasted Nigerian coaches for being 'lazy' and for their dearth of imagination.

The minister resorted to verbal recrimination of coaches following what he described as coaches unimaginative and lackadaisical attitude to work.

Aku said nothing but laziness could best explain coaches' perpetual dependence on few established stars in the face of abundant talents in the nooks and crannies of the country.

The minister said such manifest laziness explains why Nigerian coaches would rather depend on established stars most of whom are past their peaks than employ the services of younger and more willing talents found within the local scene.

The minister accused coaches of giving foreign-based players undue air, a situation that induced them to hold the nation to ransom while neglecting younger and willing players who would take delight in national service than cheap lucre.

Aku said there were more than 1,200 foreign-based players, which would be enough for any hard working coach to select needed players from noting that where coaches were willing to work, players beg to don the national colours and not the country begging and paying through its nose to secure their services.

The minister who was speaking at the ministerial press conference in Abuja, said manifest laziness could also be seen in the resort to use of athletes with known drug cases.

In apparent reference to some weight lifters recently banned for alleged use of prohibited drugs thus bringing

shame to Nigeria, Aku blamed coaches for failing to take note of those athletes and accordingly dropping them.

The minister who had come under fire for attempting to extend his surgical restructuring of administrative and personnel exercise beyond the NFA observed that most coaches would then use legitimate players within required brackets to prosecute age grades championships.

He wondered why any coach could employ the services of over-aged players in age-grade fiestas unless such a coach was lazy and overly concerned with winning at all cost.

Nigeria had been under global focus squealed to the alleged impersonation and age-cheat saga levelled against the Golden Eaglets



Sports Minister Aku

who won silver in the world U-17 championship in Trinidad and Tobago, last September.

Besides, several Nigerian athletes including Clement Chukwu, Daniel Philip, Chioma Ajunwa, and many others have in recent time been banned by International Agencies for alleged use of banned drugs.



Athletes sprinting away in the Bauchi 2000 National Sports Festival. States are gearing up for the 13th edition of the fiesta scheduled for Edo, next year.

ANYIM'S CUP FINAL RESULTS

Enugu 1 Niger 0

LEAGUE RESULTS

Plateau Utd.	3	Yobe Stars	1
Wikki Tourists	2	NPA	0
El Kanemi	1	Insurance	0
3SC	0	Air Safety	0
Jigawa Stars	1	Sunshine	1

FLATS TO LET

30 Single and 2-room flats are being let out in Garki District, Abuja at reasonable prices. Interested tenants should call us on mobile Telephone No. 08044180876 and ask for Mr. Bakabe.

Corporate bodies that may wish to rent the entire block of flats may be preferred.

Management

EDITORIAL**Al-Mustapha's tirade and the judiciary**

Gentlemen of the bar are up in arms to build a protective rampart for the rule of law following the reported tirades against a trial judge, Mr. Justice Ade Alabi, last week by Major Hamza Al-Mustapha who is standing trial with four others in his court on charges of attempted murder and arson.

According to newspaper reports, Al-Mustapha accused Justice Alabi of taking bribes to jail them. The judge had asked Al-Mustapha and the other accused persons to sit down but they allegedly refused to obey him: "We won't sit down, we won't obey your order any longer. You are being paid to convict us. I know how much you have been paid and I know who is paying. I know all your discussions pertaining to this transaction. In due time I will expose you," Al-Mustapha reportedly told the judge.

"We have been watching the way you have been handling this our case since inception. The way you abuse our lawyers and call them names whenever they want to prove our case. Is that fair? Is that how a judge should behave?" the report quoted Al-Mustapha as saying.

Mr. Justice Alabi had earlier had this to say while ruling on an application filed by counsel to former Chief of Army Staff, Lt. Gen Ishaya Rizi Bamaiyi, Mr. Emmanuel Toro (SAN): "Having regard to the ruling I delivered on a similar application on November 23, 2001, Toro insisted on moving his application. This attitude of Mr. Toro amounts to an abuse of due process. It is a shame that a lawyer who is a Senior Advocate of Nigeria should condescend to this low level of practice. What Toro did is nothing short of gangsterism in the practice of law..."

The Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) has pitched its tent with the trial judge saying, "nobody can intimidate or should intimidate a trial judge."

The NBA president, Mr. O. C. J. Okocha (SAN) has also called on the Lagos State Attorney General, Prof. Yemi Osibanjo, whom Al-Mustapha also accused of bribery to take appropriate steps in dealing with the matter, saying: "Ordinarily, the trial judge should have committed Al-Mustapha for contempt".

There is no doubt that these verbal tirades in an open court have further removed more cubits from the dwindling image of our judiciary as an unbiased arbiter in civil and criminal proceedings.

While not holding brief for Major Hamza Al-Mustapha, *Daily Trust* maintains that as unprecedented as his tirades against the judge in an open court are, the trial judge's umbrage during which he described a Senior Advocate of Nigeria as a gangster leaves much to be desired.

Beyond Al-Mustapha and the other four accused, it is becoming clearer by the day that the Nigerian judiciary is on trial in the protracted legal battle involving former aides of the former head of state.

It would be recalled that at the beginning of this case in 1999, a trial judge had described the accused as criminals even before the hearing started. The said judge was withdrawn from the case and another judge appointed to handle it.

It will be only apt if that precedent is upheld in this present face-off if the judiciary means well for Nigeria and Nigerians.

DAILY TRUST

Trust Is A Burden

Visit us at: <http://www.mtrustonline.com/dailytrust>**MONDAY COLUMN****Electoral Act - Beginning of the end?**

By Sam Nda-Isaiah

Dr. Ibrahim Tahir, a prominent Nigerian politician once said, "he who outrigs you, outpolitics you." In other words, rigging is a legitimate means to an election victory. In Nigeria, that is. The second republic NPN stalwart had the opportunity to test his concept as the NPN election coordinator in the East in the 1983 general elections. There, he put his hypothesis to praxis where he deployed his magic wand, using the "Ikemba" factor as a basis for the NPN's defeat of the highly favoured NPP candidates. Paradoxically, the Ikemba himself lost a senatorial election to an unknown quantity. The NPN went ahead to "outpolitic" every other party by outrigging them and emerged by far the winner. In the process it even "over-rigged" in safe states like Sokoto where it garnered over 12million votes. The current entire population of Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara States which constituted Sokoto state of that time is still less than 12million, assuming everybody including the under-aged voted. The NPN also "outpolitic" the UPN in Oyo and Ondo States. The victory which was qualified by all sorts of choice adjectives like landslide and "moonslide" ended up being a pyrrhic one for the NPN and a great cost to the nation's democratic development. The "gunslide" that followed barely six months later brought the second republic to an abrupt end and the nation was deprived of democracy for another 15 years.

It seems President Obasanjo has taken Ibrahim Tahir too seriously and has taken to heart his prescriptions. One also hopes he has also taken note of the stark prognosis of such schemes. He even appears to be improving on the concept by initiating his own rigging from the source. That, in plain language is what the signing of the Electoral Act is all about.

It is quite remarkable that it is President Obasanjo whom many Nigerians and international well-wishers had depended on to clear the pufrefaction and reform the political space with integrity and superior political pedigree that is now becoming one of the problems. There is even a new dimension to it that reeks of desperation. Because if members of the National Assembly are to be believed, the President has been involved in a case of forgery. It is embarrassing and worrisome that such should emanate from the highest level of government. But the more disturbing should be the tacit connivance of the principal officers of the National Assembly (who seem to have sold their birthright for a mess of porridge) in this enterprise. We even heard Dr. Jonathan Zwingina, the chief information officer of the Senate the other day, playing on our intelligence by his apologia, explaining away that the President is the chief lawmaker of the nation. This only goes to show how far our self-seeking politicians are willing to go to risk the security of our hard-earned democracy.

The president has done a grave disservice to himself by signing the bill in its current form because this singular act has dealt a crushing blow to the foundation of his uprightness and honesty of purpose. His action is actually counterfeiting because what he signed is not the pristine bill that was sent to him by the majority of the National Assembly members. The President's action is also an act of corruption because it depraves and perverts the political space that was handed over to him in trust to watch over. The action is cheap and infradig the status of the president and the lofty office he occupies. It smacks of desperation and dangerous frantiness by the occupant of the highest office of the land. It would seem that whatever is left of the president's integrity will go down with this spectacular act of unwisdom.

As I have said earlier, the president has rigged the 2003 election at source. That is taking the Ibrahim Tahir idea a little too far. This is yet the greatest threat to our inchoate democracy, which was earned at great cost with some blood. It is a pity that when it comes to appropriating power, Nigeria's elected civilian leaders have shown scant aptitude or willingness to learn from the experiences of our recent past. It is also inexplicable that Obasanjo cannot learn from his own past experience with power. The reason the president's profile was so high both nationally and internationally before his election in 1999 was because of his antecedents. He showed in 1979 that he was different from other African despots and sit-tight leaders by handing over power voluntarily to a democratically elected leader in an election that was widely adjudged to be aboveboard. In this, he shares company with leaders like Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar and the inimitable Nelson Mandela.

Many had thought and hoped that Obasanjo would be the Nigerian version of Nelson Mandela, our own gift of an African statesman to the world. There were good reasons to think so. Both Mandela and Obasanjo share a kind of kinship. Both spent time in gaol for the principles they held. Both were pressured by their people to contest for the presidency of their respective nations at very crucial stages of their nation's development. But these are the only similarities because while Mandela maintained the statesman and fatherly posture throughout his tenure as his country's leader as he still does, Obasanjo in office picks up petty fights with small boys and girls. Imagine a Mandela scheming to remove the Senate President or Speaker of the House of Representatives, his son's age. Or imagine a Mandela sending people from Abuja to design the removal of state governors more by subterfuge than democratic processes. And, whereas Nelson Mandela in confirming his role as a statesman refused to seek re-election after stabilising the polity, our own Obasanjo is manipulating the system and the rules to personal advantage and for his eventual emergence as the sole candidate. In all these, he looks more like a prototypical African sit-tight despot and is clearly a far cry from Nelson Mandela. If he has any semblance to Mandela at all, then he must be a Mandela typed on the eighth carbon.

But why does Obasanjo want to be re-elected? What is it he wants to achieve for the country that he cannot achieve in four years (1999-2003)? The last time he was in power (1976-79), he spent barely three years and achieved what so many could not achieve in a lifetime. Or as he himself has told others before, what is it that he has forgotten in Aso Rock that he is still looking for? Unless of course he desires the presidency of this country as his gratuity. And in fact there is nothing he is doing now or has done in the last two years that should earn him a second term. We are glad he came in any case because apart from making the nation's power shift efforts a smooth sail, he also eventually showed us that he is just like any other Nigerian politician. In the last two years, the real major achievement of the president has been the increase in the poverty and insecurity levels of the people of this country. And as if things are not hard enough, he has told us with coldblooded bluntness that things are going to be worse in the coming year because he has concluded plans to remove subsidy on petroleum, electricity, water, agriculture and all other social services. That means that the cost of everything as we know today, foodstuff, transportation, school fees etc will double, if not triple in the

coming year. Even before the privatisation of NITEL, the tariffs were increased, in some cases as much as threefold (as in local calls), under dubious circumstances. The president does not even know that the fashion these days all over the civilised world is to make local calls free because that gives unlimited access to information technology, which is now the catalyst for social and economic growth.

The president has not done any single thing that shows he even gives a passing thought to the plight of the poor suffering masses of this country, many of whom sleep without a single meal. The only things that occupy his mind these days are how he can successfully remove all the subsidies on our lives. When not doing that, he is busy thinking and scheming his re-election. Even the half-hearted poverty alleviation programme that he seems to be pursuing under duress has now been overshadowed by ego-boosting, money guzzling needless projects like the N5billion purchase of a new presidential aircraft and the N53billion (up from N38billion) construction of a white elephant Abuja Stadium that even the World Bank has condemned as wasteful and too expensive. The president presides over a government that seems only interested in awarding contracts and sharing money and just talking without caring if the contracts are being implemented. As I write this, all the borehole projects initiated under this administration and over 300 road projects in which advance payments of several hundred billions of Naira have been disbursed are in limbo and almost abandoned. Recently, we were told by the Lagos State government that it has spent about N2.5billion of its own money to rehabilitate federal roads out of which only N78million has been refunded by the federal government. Also, Governor Osoba of Ogun State was heard complaining a few weeks ago that a road he constructed for N308million and almost completed has now been awarded by the federal government for N640million. The federal government cannot even spell the word A-N-T-I-C-O-R-R-U-P-T-I-O-N properly.

No Nigerian sleeps anymore with his two eyes closed because the armed robber might come visiting. The bandits operate as if there is no government in place. Even Abuja that used to be the safest place to be before Obasanjo came to power is now one of the most dangerous. In fact the armed robbers in Abuja operate with style and are predictable. They are on duty only between 7.00pm and 10pm, as if to dare anyone to stop them. Any kind of leader who presides over the Nigeria of today and sleeps comfortably when his people are not sleeping, and spots rosy cheeks when the majority of his countrymen cannot afford one meal a day, should not be the kind of leader to be re-elected into office unless of course one has no choice.

It is that choice which is the most attractive appeal of democracy that President Obasanjo is trying to deny the people by his signing of the Electoral Bill. This Electoral Bill should be appropriately renamed "Electoral Decree" because it is a relic of the nation's military autocratic rule. It should bother Nigerians that this government is treading a painfully familiar path. The path that has been well beaten by the nation's past democratically elected leaders whose actions provided the alibi for the re-entry of anti-democratic elements into the body politic of the nation. If our leaders choose president Kennedy's hackneyed but never failing words that "those who make peaceful change impossible make violent change inevitable" instead of Dr. Tahir's, Nigeria would be better for it. Without being unduly fatalistic, it would seem that the hobgoblin of 1963, 1983 and 1993 is staring at 2003. But since history is not necessarily destiny, I hope all Nigerians will resolve to call the bluff of our undemocratic politicians and insist that we practice democracy according to the accepted rules of the game. We must practice democracy in a way that not only guarantees its survival for us, but also for our progenies and coming generation.

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THE NIGERIAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS**ABUJA CHAPTER****PRESS RELEASE**

A new Executive has been elected to run the affairs of the Nigerian Institute of Architects, Abuja Chapter, for the next two years. The Executive, which emerged following general elections held on the 4th December 2001, is constituted as follows:

Arch. A.S. Abubakar	Chairman
Arch. M.J. Ibrahim	Vice Chairman
Arch. Stanley Kolo	Secretary
Arch. (Mrs.) Aisha Soso	Asst. Secretary
Arch. (Mrs.) Ramatu Habu-Fari	Financial Secretary
Arch. Tunde Oyekola	Treasurer
Arch. N.U. Anyaorie	Social Secretary
Arch. R.T. Unde	P.R.O.
Arch. L.A. Dan Musa	Ex-Officio
Arch. M.O. Onoba	Ex-Officio

Signed

ARCH. ROBERT UNDE, PRO