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Gowon, Jonathan, Sanwo-Olu, others laud Shonekan at funeral in Lagos

By BENJAMIN OMOIKE

Vice President Yemi Osinbajo; former President Goodluck Jonathan; ex-Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon; Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Mr. Boss Mustapha; Governors Babajide Sanwo-Olu (Lagos State), Dapo Abiodun (Ogun) and Godwin Obaseki (Edo) as well as other eminent Nigerians on Friday attended the funeral service of former Head of Interim National Government, Chief Ernest Shonekan.

The service held at the Cathedral Church Of Christ, Marina, in Lagos and presided over by the Primate and Metropolitan of the Anglican Communion (Church of Nigeria), Most Revd (Dr.) Henry Ndukuba, was also attended by Ministers of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed; Trade and Industry, Otunba Niya Adebayo; Mines and Steel Development, Arc Olamilekan Adegbite; State for Health, Senator Olorunnimbe Mamora; State for Works and Housing, Alhaji Mu'Azu Jaji Sambo; former Ogun State Governors, Senator Ibikunle Amosun and Otunba Gbenga Daniel as well as erstwhile Kano State Governor, Senator Rabi'u Kwankwaso, among others.

Speaking at the event, attended by hundreds of Anglican Bishops and priests, religious leaders, politicians, captains of industry, entrepreneurs, as well

as family, friends and associates of the deceased, Osinbajo said Shonekan lived an extraordinary life.

Osinbajo, who described Shonekan as a man of destiny, just like Nigeria is a nation of destiny, said the late elderstatesman had respect for all and there was a way he carried himself through life.

The Vice President also praised Shonekan's contributions to Nigeria, first as a business guru and later as Head of the Federal Government. He noted that the deceased believed that national development was achievable if there was a deep collaboration between the public and private sector.

In his sermon, former Primate and Archbishop of Abuja Diocese, Anglican Communion (Church of Nigeria), Most. Revd Peter Akinola, said Shonekan put his life on the line for the sake of Nigeria by serving as the Head of the Interim National Government during a turbulent time in the country's political history.

The clergyman said Shonekan had done that which God enabled him to do for himself, his family, the church and Nigeria.

The Bishop said that many people advised Shonekan not to take up the job of heading the interim government because of the risk of a coup, but the late business titan considered Nigeria to be more important.

The Bishop noted that even the church refused to give the late Shonekan the benefit of the doubt

while some political opportunists demonised him and called him unprintable names.

"He put his life on the line for the sake of this country. Perhaps, we would like to know that Chief Shonekan was not completely unaware that the coup would take place.

"Shonekan not being a typical ambitious Nigerian politician, he refused to do many things to preserve himself in office. A typical Nigerian politician will do everything possible to continue in office, come rain come fire."

Governor Sanwo-Olu also paid glowing tributes to him, saying generations of Nigerians will remain appreciative of Shonekan's courage, sacrifice and stabilising influence on the polity.

He said Shonekan in his calm and unflappable manner, steered the course of the country, during his tenure as Head of the Interim National Government until the military intervention that followed, noting that it was a courageous thing for him to do, at such a turbulent time in Nigeria's history.

Speaking on Thursday at the Wake Service and Night of Tributes for Ernest Shonekan held at Victoria Island in Lagos, Sanwo-Olu described the former Chairman and Managing Director of the United Africa Company of Nigeria (UACN) as a foremost, highly respected industrialist and corporate administrator as well as a first-class boardroom guru with an enviable track record.



The late Shonekan

The governor said whether in the boardroom or in the Council Chamber, Shonekan could be counted on as a wise, calm and mature statesman.

He said Shonekan heading UACN in his early 40s made him a leading source of inspiration and a role model to generations of high-flying Nigerians behind him.

"Nigeria has lost a truly great man, a true leader and visionary, a man whose immense success in life did not alter his essential

humility and goodness.

"The flood of tributes in the wake of Chief Shonekan's passing attest to the kind of human being he was. You can also look around at the caliber of persons who have gathered here this evening, in his honour," he said.

On the legacy of the deceased, he told the widow, Mrs Margaret Shonekan, his children, grandchildren, and the entire family, to know that "his place in our hearts will never be diminished."

ECOWAS demands ousted Burkinabe president's release, keeps sanctions

By EDWARD ADAMIDENYO,
Regional Editor

The Authority of Heads of State of the Economic Community of West Africa States, ECOWAS, has demanded the unconditional release of President Roch Marc Christian KABORE of Burkina Faso held after a military putsch by the country's military.

The heads of government of ECOWAS made the call in a communique issued at the end of its extraordinary summit to address the political situations in Burkina Faso, Guinea and Mali with a view to ensuring the restoration of constitutional order in these countries.

The communique said "The Authority reiterates its absolute condemnation of the coup d'Etat of 24 January 2022 and expresses concern over the continuous detention of President Roch Marc Christian KABORE. In this regard, and subject to sanctions,

the Authority demands the unconditional release of President Roch Marc Christian Kabore."

The bloc decided to uphold the suspension of Burkina Faso from all ECOWAS Institutions until the restoration of constitutional order, called on the military authorities to establish the transition institutions and adopt a transition calendar and facilitate the return to constitutional order within the shortest time.

Other resolutions are to direct the Commission to ensure continuous engagement with the new authorities through the establishment of a monitoring mechanism, including African Union and United Nations, with a view to accomplishing the transition process.

Also, the Authority expressed concern over the unavailability of the required transition calendar five months after the coup d'Etat in Guinea, as requested by the



Kabore

extraordinary session of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of States and Government held on 16th September 2021.

Consequently, the Authority decides to: uphold all the sanctions already imposed on Guinea, request the transition authority to provide to ECOWAS

an acceptable timetable for restoring constitutional order.

The bloc reaffirmed its readiness to lead Guinea towards a return to constitutional order within the shortest time.

On the political situation in the Republic of Mali, the Authority said it endorsed all the ECOWAS decisions and sanctions on Mali and expressed regret about the unavailability of a new timetable in line with the decisions of the Heads of States.

It therefore decided to uphold all the sanctions imposed on Mali in line with its decision of 9 January 2022. It urged the Malian authorities to urgently propose an acceptable electoral timetable to ECOWAS with a view to enabling the progressive lifting of the sanctions while it remain seized of the situation in the country.

Other resolutions are as follows: ECOWAS reaffirms its readiness to work in conjunction with the African Union and the United Nations to provide the

necessary technical support to the authorities in Burkina Faso, Guinea and Mali in implementing the approved time table.

The Authority raises concern over the breach of constitutional order in the region notably with the recent military coup d'Etat and attempted coup d'etat in some Member States.

The Authority reaffirms its commitment to strengthening democracy, freedom and good governance in the region and instructs the Commission to expedite the review of the 2001 Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance and the related legal instruments."

The Heads of State and Government expressed their deep gratitude to H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa AKUFO-ADDO, President of the Republic of Ghana and Chairperson of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, for his leadership in ensuring the success of the Summit.

2023: Buhari greets Amaechi on Daura chieftaincy title

One of the major frontrunners in the 2023 presidential race got a boost from the President yesterday.

President Muhammadu Buhari congratulated the Minister of Transportation, Rotimi Amaechi, on the conferment of the title of "Dan Amana," (the trusted one) on him by the Daura Emirate Council.

The president's congratulatory message is contained in a statement issued by one of his media aides, Malam Garba Shehu, on Friday in Abuja.

He described the conferment of the title on Amaechi as a clear commitment to the harmonious relationship between the nation's diverse cultures.

He commended the Minister "for working with enormous energy to make the CHANGE we

promised Nigerians a reality," noting that "the change we are witnessing in the transport sector is an extraordinary legacy."

He also congratulated a chieftain of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and two-time Director-General of his election campaigns, Malam Nasiru Danu, on the conferment of a chieftaincy title on him by the Daura Emirate Council.

Danu is being turbaned as Tafida Babba of Daura on Saturday.

The statement said the President had designated a delegation of three, made up of the Ministers of Water Resources, Sulaiman Adamu, Aviation, Sen. Hadi Sirika and the Senior Special Assistant (Media and Publicity) Garba Shehu to represent him at the event. (NAN) (www.nannews.ng)



Amaechi

Zamfara Dep Gov faces impeachment

The Zamfara House of Assembly has commenced impeachment process against the Deputy Governor of the state, Alhaji Mahadi Aliyu.

This is contained in a statement issued in Gusau on Friday by the Director General, Press Affairs and Public Relations to the legislature, Malam Mustafa Jafaru-Kaura.

According to the statement, the move followed a presentation of impeachment notice by the Deputy Speaker of the house, Mr Nasiru Magarya.

"As part of the provision of Section 188 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria that empowers legislatures to commence impeachment move of a governor or his deputy on allegations of constitutional breaches, wrong doing or abuse of office.

"Therefore, today the Deputy Speaker and Chairman House Committee on Public Accounts presented a formal request notifying the speaker of the House move to impeach Barr. Mahdi Aliyu Muhammad Gusau as the Deputy Governor of the state," Jafaru-Kaura said.

"The Deputy Speaker accused the Deputy Governor, Mahdi Aliyu-Gusau, for alleged constitutional breaches, abuse of office and financial misappropriation, which are all impeachable offences, and added that Section 188 of the 1999 Constitution empowered them to commence impeachment process against the Deputy Governor without further delay."

Responding, the Speaker promised that the assembly would look into the allegations against the deputy governor and act appropriately according to the provisions of the constitution. (NAN) (www.nannews.ng)

Wike tasks traditional rulers on illegal oil bunkering

Rivers State Governor, Nyesom Wike has charged traditional rulers in the state not to allow illegal oil bunkering and artisanal refinery activities in their domains.

Wike gave the charge when he presented Staff of Office and Certificates of Recognition to Chief Chidi Awuse, the Nne-Nwe-Eli Emohua XIII (OLO IV), Ohna, and Chief Ozuowuwu Amos, the Nye Nwe Ali Akpor, Orlu Orieb, as first class chiefs on Monday in Port Harcourt.

Wike, who reiterated his resolve to sustain the war against illegal oil bunkering and artisanal refining activities, urged the King of Akpor in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area and the King of Omerelu in Ikwerre council not to allow such activities to thrive anymore in their respective domains.

Wike said the state government will not hesitate to depose the King of Akpor Kingdom if illegal oil bunkering in Rumuokparali and Ogbogoro communities persisted.

He also frowned at the king of Omerelu community in Ikwerre Local Government Area where illegal oil bunkering activities is thriving.

"Aside the soot problem and economic sabotage associated with the criminal activities, the internal roads being reconstructed by my administration in Omerelu had been damaged.

"We are doing internal roads in Omerelu. This is a community that has been crying for roads and we have given them not less than 11/12 kilometers of internal roads.

"And now they are spoiling them because of the conveying of the products. We can't continue to accept that.

"I can't understand why you just want to collect the chieftaincy title and do nothing," the governor said.

Wike told the two kings to come to terms with the responsibilities associated with their new statuses and discharge them effectively.

He also enjoined them to ensure that peace prevailed in their domains by

attending to all shades of conflicts so that they do not snowball into crises.

Besides, he charged them to steer clear from partisan politics, but "be willing always to work in synergy with the government, in order to promote governance at the grassroots".

Wike explained that the demolition of shanties in the state would continue, "because hoodlums use such places as hideouts to perpetrate their criminal activities including those found in the government residential areas in the state". (NAN) (www.nannews.ng)



Wike

Okowa tasks Nigerians on humility, honesty in nation-building

Delta State Governor Ifeanyi Okowa has urged Nigerians to imbibe the virtues of humility, honesty, diligence and integrity in the discharge of their duties.

Okowa gave the charge on Friday at the funeral service for late Chief Isaac Jemide, an ex Lawmaker and Commissioner in the defunct Bendel.

The ceremony was held at St. Cyprian Catholic Church, in Warri South Local Government Area of the state.

Okowa said that imbibing the virtues of humility, honesty, diligence and integrity would help to enhance productivity and strengthened nation-building.

He described the late Jemide, an octogenarian, as a courageous man who spoke truth to power at all times.

Okowa added that his type was the kind of people who could re-shape the community and the nation.

The governor urged the children of the deceased and Nigerians to emulate the

virtues of humility, courage and integrity which the elder statesman exhibited.

"He was a man I didn't meet so frequently. But the few times I met him, I truly fell in love with him because he was a man of strength on the inside.

"Though very humble, he was a man that was very courageous and spoke truth to power at all times and those are the kind of people that can shape a nation and a community.

"I do know that he has impacted very strongly on our society, the Itsekiri nation and Delta as a whole, because he was truly a leader.

"In the church, he played his role and rose to become a Papal Knight.

"Not so many people get to that level and I know that he was a very strong voice for the Itsekiri nation that we must continue to appreciate.

"He was a godly man, with godly integrity. Not the integrity now that appears to be on the face, his own was from the inside and it is something I believe and pray that many



Okowa

of our leaders should try to emulate.

"His role in the community was enormous. He served in various capacities, both as employment and appointment. But more importantly, as an elected legislator," Okowa said.

Earlier, Rev. Fr. Peter Medugu in his sermon admonished Christians not to be afraid of death if they live a righteous life, describing death as the gateway to eternity.

"Man should learn to live right and see life as a preparation for eternity.

"Late Jemide was a great community leader and an epitome of humility," he said.

The cleric commended the deceased for his humility and commitment to humanity and urged the children to emulate and sustain the legacies of their late father.

The News Agency of Nigeria reports that Jemide was a lawyer and former member of House of Assembly in the defunct Bendel State. He was also prominent Itsekiri leader of thought.

He was also a former Commissioner in the defunct Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC), representing Delta.

The deceased passed away on Sunday, Dec. 12, 2021 in Warri, at 88.

Among the dignitaries who came to the ceremony included the Deputy Governor of Delta, Kingsley Otuaro; former Governors James Ibori and Emmanuel Uduaghan, former Minister of Information, Prof. Sam Oyovbaire and others. (NAN)(www.nannews.ng)

Army dismisses allegation of delay in payment of salary

The Nigerian Army (NA) has dismissed a report by an online medium alleging that personnel of the Nigerian army lamented delay in payment of their January salary and that many soldiers were paid peanuts.

The Director, Army Public Relations, Brig.-Gen. Onyema Nwachukwu, in a statement on Friday, said the report was not only misleading, but a grandiose attempt to incite personnel against established

precept of discipline in the army.

Nwachukwu said the Chief of Army Staff, Lt.-Gen. Faruk Yahaya, had since assumption of command prioritised the welfare of officers, soldiers and their families, including ensuring prompt payment of salaries, allowances and all statutory entitlements.

He said an allegation suggesting delay and non-implementation of new salary increase was a reckless

falsehood in all its intent and purposes.

According to him, it must be emphasised, that the Nigerian Army has over the years built a reputation and unbroken record of prompt payment of salaries and allowances.

Nwachukwu said that officers and soldiers had always got their monthly salaries and allowances as and when due, adding that any envisaged delay is usually communicated to

the troops through internal communication mechanism.

"It is therefore instructive to state that for the month of January, all salaries and allowances have been paid.

"The attempt to stir up discontent and whip up sentiment with regards to the unsubstantiated and baseless report that Generals feed fat is an outrageous frivolity.

"It is an attempt to incite personnel against the institution and cause disaffection in the

ranks and should therefore be discountenanced.

"The NA wishes to call on all credible media to distance themselves from the apparent unprofessional and disgraceful yellow journalism practiced by some media channels and purveyors of fake of news.

"Our troops are in high spirit and would not be distracted by any mischievous submission by agent provocateurs," he said. (NAN) (www.nannews.ng)

NAWOJ calls on women to go for monthly breast screening for early detection of cancer

The Nigerian Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ), Rivers State Chapter, on Friday called on women to go to hospital for monthly screening of their breast for early detection of breast cancer.

Mrs Susan Serekara-Nwikhana, the Chairperson of NAWOJ, made the call during a sensitisation programme organised by Engracedlife Foundation (Aka save a breast) in partnership with NAWOJ and the Rivers State Ministry of Health in commemoration of the World Breast Cancer Day.

The programme with the theme "Close the Care Gap", was held at Rumuokwuta Government Girls Secondary

School in Port Harcourt.

Serekara-Nwikhana said that the aim of the awareness is to have a cancer-free society in the state and the world at large.

She stated that with the new drive and partnership with the state health ministry, Engracedlife Foundation, women in the state will be more aware of what to do to be free from breast cancer disease.

Mrs Ethel Olomu, a stage four breast cancer survivor, who is also the Founder of Engracedlife Foundation, called on women to always go for breast screening for early detection of cancer if any.

Olomu urged women who are screened of breast

cancer not to be afraid of chemotherapy, saying that breast cancer is not a death sentence.

"Yes, we have the habit of going to our pastors to pray for us, while your pastor prays for you, please still go to hospital for treatment and for women who have not detected any lumps, please go for your monthly check," she stated.

Dr. Sandra Abolo, a Medical Doctor working with the State Ministry of Health, said that breast cancer is one of the second commonest cause of mortality, but early detection of it could be prevented and treated.

"This is why we advocate on a day like the world cancer

day that people should go and get screened for breast cancer, because cervical cancer, prostate cancer are preventable if people go to hospital," she said.

Abolo mentioned some of the risks factors of cancer as unhealthy diets, sedentary lifestyle without exercise, obesity, smoking and excessive alcohol consumption.

Mrs Sylvaline Ogwuzuo, the Principal of the secondary school, commended the organisers for their wide sensitisation programme, and called on the students and teenage girls to inform their parents when they notice any abnormality on their breasts. (NAN) (www.nannews.ng)



Serekara-Nwikhana

NEWS



USAID launches education opportunities in North east

BY EDWARD ADAMIDENYO
(ABUJA BUREAU CHIEF)
AND OROWO VICTORIA
OJIEH (FOREIGN AFFAIRS
CORRESPONDENT), LAGOS.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has launched its Opportunities to Learn Activity in Borno and Yobe states to ensure that out-of-school children and youth in the northeast of Nigeria are safely able to gain foundational literacy, numeracy, and social and emotional learning skills.

The skills will enable children and youth affected by crisis and conflict to progress to higher levels of education, training, or engagement in the workforce.

A statement by the US Mission in Nigeria disclosed the USAID awarded \$25 million activity to the International Rescue Committee, leading a consortium comprising Plan International, the American University in Nigeria, Inclusive Development Partners, and Restoration of Hope Initiative.

In her remarks at the launch of the event, Katie Donohoe, USAID Acting Mission Director said, "The program will strengthen the ability of education authorities in Borno and Yobe states to meet the challenge of rebuilding a ravaged school system and provide learners with a chance for a quality future."

USAID noted that education crisis in northeast Nigeria remains an obstacle to strengthening resilience, development, and peace in the region. Children and youth in Borno and Yobe face protracted conflict, forced displacement, economic uncertainty, food insecurity, and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. These factors contribute to widespread poverty, lost livelihoods, and years of education loss.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics, the vast majority of the 10 million out-of-school children live in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states. More than half of them have not received any formal education.

Security agencies battle kidnappers on Benin - Auchi road

BY EDWARD ADAMIDENYO,
ABUJA BUREAU CHIEF

The military and vigilance groups on Wednesday morning said they engaged in a gun battle with kidnappers on the Benin-Auchi road in Edo State.

The shoot-out affected movement on the busy road as vehicles halted their trip.

Kidnapping on the Benin-Auchi road has taken a worrying turn in the last two years.

Last month, five kidnap victims were rescued by security

Court orders Malami to pay IPOB chief Nnamdi Kanu's co-defendants N200,000



Malami

Apparently piqued by the manner in which the federal government is prosecuting the alleged terrorism trial of four co-defendants of the leader of the proscribed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Mr Nnamdi Kanu, a Federal High Court in Abuja, had imposed a fine of N200,000 on the Attorney General of the Federation (AGF), Abubakar Malami.

The judge, Justice Binta Nyako, in a short ruling ordered that each of the defendant be paid N50,000 by the AGF for the inconveniences they suffered as a result of the absence of the lead counsel to the federal government, Mr Shuaib Labaran.

According to the ruling, the fine must be paid to the defendants before the next adjourned date of March 17, 2022.

The four defendants are Bright Chimezie, Chidiebere Onwudike, Benjamin Maduagwu and David Nwaurusi.

They had through their lawyers complained bitterly over the hardships suffered to raise funds for their transportation to Abuja.

When the matter came up on Wednesday, there was no legal representation for the federal government.

However, as the Judge was about to take adjournment, one Mrs Adewumi Aluko from the Federal Ministry of Justice,

came in and apologized that the federal government's lead counsel was out of the country.

She announced that two witnesses were in court but will not want to proceed in the absence of the lead counsel and sought for an adjournment.

Her apology did not go down well with the Judge who counseled the federal government to be more serious in the trial of the defendants.

The Judge also extended similar counselling to the defense lawyers to stop using frivolous applications to delay the trial which was started since 2015.

Meanwhile, Justice Nyako has fixed March 17 for resumption of the trial.

Sanwo-Olu signs bills for establishment of two universities in Lagos

BENJAMIN OMOIKE (METRO
EDITOR) AND OROWO
VICTORIA OJIEH (EDUCATION
CORRESPONDENT)

Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu has signed bills for establishment of additional two universities in Lagos State. They are Lagos State University of Education (LASUED) and Lagos State University of Science and Technology.

He assented to the bills transmitting Lagos State Polytechnic in Ikorodu, Isolo and Surulere campuses to the University of Science and Technology as well as Adeniran Ogunsanya Colleges of Education, Ijanikin and Michael Otedola College of Primary Education, Epe to Lagos State University of Education.

The signing ceremony, which took place at the Lagos House, Marina, was witnessed by the Special Adviser to the

Governor on Education, Mr. Tokunbo Wahab, Commissioner for Justice and Attorney-General, Mr. Moyosore Onigbanjo (SAN), members of the Governing Councils and management staff of the tertiary institutions, among others.

Speaking after signing the bills, Governor Sanwo-Olu, said Lagos and its indigenes are now blessed with two additional universities to the existing Lagos State University (LASU), established in 1982 by the first Executive Governor of Lagos State, the late Alhaji Lateef Jakande.

He said: "We are doing

this very quickly because we need to take this law to the National Universities Commission (NUC), that will do their due diligence and we are believing they will give us a timely approval when all of us will go and receive the certificates for the establishment of the two universities.

"We believe that the transmission would be smooth. We believe that the process would be without any hindrance. We believe that we will do a good job at ensuring that what is best is the only thing that we do for Lagos. I feel so delighted and proud of all of us creating history today

and I believe that indeed generations coming after us will remember this very bold, audacious decision that we have taken.

"The two institutions that have now been transmitted into universities are institutions that have produced professionals, students, lecturers among others notable men and women in our society. I feel what we have done is a proper thing for the existing staff, both academic and non-academic and more importantly for the students today and the future students that would be coming in to be able to recreate their future and be in a position

that we are turning out the leaders of tomorrow."

Speaking earlier, Wahab said the establishment of the Lagos State University of Education (LASUED) and Lagos State University of Science and Technology, will solve issues relating to admission for Lagos State citizens.

Wahab also commended Sanwo-Olu for putting his full weight behind the establishment of the two additional universities. He also appreciated the Lagos State House of Assembly led by Rt. Hon. Mudashiru Obasa for believing in the process.



Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu

operatives at Okwo Ogbemudia farm, Uhumwonde local government of the state, on the Benin-Auchi road while six others were rescued at Ekpoma, in Esan West local government of the state respectively.

It was learnt that one of the kidnappers was killed in a gun battle with the police during the rescue operation at the Okwo Ogbemudia farm.

Data from Nextier SPD Violent Conflict Database shows that in the twelve months to September 2021, Nigeria recorded 20 kidnap-for-ransom incidents resulting in 2,542 kidnap victims.

Best Western Plus Elomaz Hotel, Asaba.

Address: Plot 22 A/B -27 Core Area, DBS Road,
GRA, Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria.



NEWS



Abdulsalami, others honoured at Minna varsity

BY OROWO VICTORIA
OJIEH, EDUCATION
CORRESPONDENT

Federal University of Technology (FUT), Minna, Niger State has

graduated 3,892 students. Of the figure, 58 bagged first class degree, 948 Second Class Upper Division, 2,049 Second Class Lower Division and 801 Third Class. It was at the university's

30th convocation and 38th founders day celebration where 200 students were awarded Postgraduate Diplomas, 836 Masters degrees, 121 Doctorate degrees.

Four eminent Nigerians were also bestowed honorary degrees. They include General Abdulsalami Abubakar, GCFR, a former Head of State; Alhaji Abdul Samad Rabi, founder and

Chairman, BUA Group; Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, President, African Development Bank and Malam Mele Kolo Kyari, Group Managing Director of the Nigerian National Company Ltd.



Whoopi Goldberg

Whoopi Goldberg suspended from 'The View'

BY OROWO VICTORIA
OJIEH, TOURISM CORRESPONDENT

Oscar-winning actress and comedian Whoopi Goldberg has faced a backlash for comments she made about the Holocaust during a recent episode of The View talk-show.

During a discussion with co-hosts on the show, Goldberg claimed the Holocaust, which involved the murder of about six million Jews and other victims, was not "about race."

News of the suspension came just a day after Goldberg said that the Holocaust was "not about race" during a discussion about a Tennessee school board's recent decision to remove Maus, a graphic novel about the atrocity, from an eighth-grade language arts curriculum.

Her comments drew a quick response on Twitter and social media platforms. Anti-Defamation League CEO Jonathan Greenblatt was one of the users who corrected the host on Twitter. According

to Greenblatt, "The Nazis dehumanized them and used this racist propaganda to justify slaughtering 6 million Jews." He added: "Holocaust distortion is dangerous."

StandWithUs, an organization dedicated to education about Israel and fighting anti-Semitism, tweeted that the Holocaust "was driven by multiple factors, and there is no doubt that one of them was Nazi racism against Jews."

In her on-air apology, Goldberg stated that the

Holocaust "is indeed about race, because [Adolf] Hitler and the Nazis considered Jews to be an inferior race."

Goldberg apologized for her comments and said that the situation has been a learning experience. She shared: "I regret my comments, as I said, and I stand corrected. I also stand with the Jewish people, as they know and y'all know, because I've always done that."

"I said something that I feel a responsibility for not leaving unexamined because

my words upset so many people, which was never my intention. And I understand why now and for that I am deeply, deeply grateful because the information I got was really helpful and helped me understand some different things."

Despite the apology, ABC News President Kim Godwin suspended the host for two weeks "for her wrong and hurtful comments," according to a statement posted on the TV channel's public relations Twitter account.

Tourism institute to host Gastronomy Day

BY OROWO VICTORIA
OJIEH, TOURISM CORRESPONDENT

The National Institute for Hospitality and Tourism (NIHOTOUR) is preparing for a successful hosting of the United Nations World Sustainable Gastronomy Day 2022. This is the second edition in the country and it is scheduled for Saturday, 18th June, 2022 at the Abuja International Conference Centre, Abuja.

Director-General of NIHOTOUR Nigeria, Alhaji Nura Sani Kangiwa, disclosed this to the press at the Abuja headquarters of the Institute.

The 2022 edition of the event will be educative and entertaining with a series of culinary activities to justify the purpose of the day, and pursue the art of food preparation and consumption by different cultures in a sustainable manner.

Gastronomy is a cultural expression of a nation through their food, the art of preparing and serving rich delicacy.

The event is expected to attract thousands of visitors and participation by various catering schools, food vendors, eateries, beverage brands, secondary schools offering Tourism subjects and exhibitions by NIHOTOUR Hospitality Department as well as culinary displays by embassies and diplomatic missions in Nigeria.

The concept of Sustainable Gastronomy seeks to promote cultural cuisines and diets, compels hospitality service providers and food tourists to focus on the variety and benefits of native ingredients in local cuisines as well as enhance sustainable production, consumption and to also highlight various societies' food systems.

A number of activities are lined up for the celebration of the 2022 edition of the event, including cooking competition among catering schools in FCT, essay writing competition for secondary schools offering Tourism as well as spotlight on leading hospitality brands and tourism business operators in Nigeria.

The event also offers an opportunity for embassies and diplomatic missions in Nigeria to exhibit the traditional cuisines of their respective countries by showcasing, sharing, educating and informing the world of their rich diversity in food and beverages. Activities of the observance day will be rounded off in the evening with a live musical performance by leading Nigerian artists. Prizes will be presented to winners of the cooking and essay writing competitions.



FG woos ICT investors to boost digital economy

• Pantami tasks Nigerians on development, Mandela seeks collaboration

BY SHARON ONYEKA
ISAALAH, HEAD, SCIENCE,
TECHNOLOGY AND
HEALTH DESK

The Federal Government has hinted of efforts to woo foreign investors, especially technology behemoths, to the country at the maiden LEAP 2022 technology conference and exhibition, organised by the

Ministry of Communications and Technology, Saudi Arabia.

Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Prof. Isa Pantami, made the assertion on the sidelines of the event in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Pantami's delegation includes Executive Vice Chairman, Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), Prof. Umar Danbatta, and Director-General, National Information and Technology Development Agency (NITDA), Inuwa Kashiifu Abdullahi, among others.

He encouraged Nigerians to have a positive mindset towards everything, especially development, stressing that apart from opportunity to woo investors, the major take away from the event would be the need for optimism in transforming the country whenever the chance arises.

"Whoever comes to Saudi Arabia after about four visits would see the power of positive thinking and transformation that has taken place here, especially in the digital economy sector. Their institutions are no more obsolete. They have become proactive in everything," he said.

He revealed that the delegation met with investors and

potential investors, after series of meetings, on how they can come to Nigeria and invest.

"There are signings already. Also, there are promises that they are coming to invest their manufacturing plants in the country. We were able to sell the advantages we have in the country to them, which include

being the biggest economy in Africa, most populous in the region, and an economy that is doing well now, especially looking at the way the country exited recession, leaving behind many developed countries.

"So, these are some of the encouraging statistics that we have sold to investors. These are indices investors want to hear. Though, there could be some one or two observations and reservations about the

country, we are taking those ones back and we will work on them. We will ensure that we make the Nigerian system more flexible and friendly so that we can have a win-win situation," he stated.

Pantami said some countries also indicated interest to come and see how Nigeria's digital economy is working.

According to him, "Nigeria's has become a model today in Africa. The first meeting I had, they were surprised that we have six unicorns from

Nigeria, with others still coming. The fastest growing sector of the Nigerian economy, today, is the digital economy sub-sector.

"The President has said many times that the sector contributed to Nigeria's exit from recession on several occasions. These are some



Pantami

of the encouraging statistics we shared with them and we equally picked one

or two things from them. We learnt that there are over 100 countries here for the event. There are several tech giants too."

The minister didn't name these companies. At the event, however, were technology firms including IBM, Huawei, Nokia, Microsoft, Ericsson, Cisco, Mobily, Zoom, SAP among others.

Earlier, Director, House of Mandela Family Foundation, Dr. Makaziwe Mandela, appealed to technology giants to make Africa a destination, stressing that huge opportunities lie in South Africa, Kenya, Rwanda, Nigeria and other sub-Saharan countries.

Mandela was, however, quick to say that collaboration and governments' resolve would play critical roles in bringing technology giants

to Africa.

Speaking on 'The importance of tech in developing countries,' she stressed the fact that though the continent is still faced with so many challenges, there are "immense opportunities for growth, expansion and profitability."

According to her, access and affordability gaps in the region provide opportunities for improved Internet access, which can be delivered by technology companies through collaborations with indigenous players.

She said only about 40 per cent of the entire African population has access, "meaning that about 60 per cent are still without basic telephony services. This is a huge market that can be latched on by technology companies. The global community can make use of technology to get Africa to the world stage of development."

Govt prints, transmits 1.3m passport leaflets

MINISTER of Interior, Rauf Aregbesola, has said 1,350,000 passport booklets were printed and distributed by the Federal Government in 2021, almost double of what was achieved the preceding year.

He spoke at a Lagos Business School (LBS)

forum themed, "Nigeria in Challenging Times: The Contributions of the Ministry of Interior and Opportunities for Private Sector Participation."

The virtual event was part of LBS Public Sector Engagement designed to promote more public-private sector dialogue and partnership to enhance Nigeria's inclusive

and sustainable economic growth and development.

Providing an update on passports issued till date, Aregbesola said: "1,350,000 passport booklets were produced and distributed worldwide as at December 31, 2021, against 764,293 booklets in 2020."

The Osun State ex-

governor admitted the increasing demand for passports, "which is mounting pressure on processing structure and resources."

"The current experience will soon be a thing of the past. We are working very hard to reform the passport application and issuance process," he promised.

Aviation workers warm up for strike over welfare, other issues

A coalition of aviation workers' unions has notified airlines and the public of complete withdrawal of air travel services from February 8 in protest against alleged poor welfare and non-release of the agreed Conditions of Service (CoS).

The industrial action will ground both local and international flight services nationwide.

The coalition, made up of members of National Union of Air Transport Employees (NUATE), Air Transport Services Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (ATSSSAN) and Association of Nigeria Aviation Professionals (ANAP), drew attention to government's failure to release the negotiated CoS of the six aviation agencies since 2013 and non-implementation of minimum wage and consequential adjustment since 2019.

In a statement jointly signed by the unions' Secretaries General, the coalition said it had no other choice than to strike, stating: "After all, our efforts to resolve the issue amicably have failed."

The unions had variously issued ultimatums to the Federal Ministry of Aviation and the six aviation agencies

over the issues, with the latest ultimatum expiring January 31 this year, without the demands being met in any form.

General Secretary of NUATE, Ocheme Aba, said in the circumstance, the unions were left with no option.

"In this regard, all aviation workers are hereby directed to commence total withdrawal of services from midnight of Tuesday, February 8, 2022 unless, and until, otherwise directed in this same manner.

"Accordingly, all branches and state councils of the undersigned unions are to commence joint and individual mobilisation of aviation workers nationwide and ensure total compliance with this directive in all stations of operations of the six aviation agencies without fail.

"By this notice, all airlines, ground handling, aviation security/logistics, inflight catering and other aviation-related businesses as well as the travelling and general public are hereby notified that aviation services will be unavailable as from the given time until the issues are fully resolved," he stated.

The coalition advised the managements of Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA),

Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), Accident Investigation Bureau (AIB), Nigerian College of Aviation Technology (NCAT), Zaria, Nigerian Airspace Management Agency (NAMA) and the Nigerian Meteorology Agency

(NiMet), in conjunction with the Federal Ministry of Aviation, to utilise the one week window to avert the impending crisis by prevailing on the relevant government agencies to act jointly to ensure that the twin demands are met.



Sirika

FG approves N115.4 billion, \$328.87 million for Katsina highway, railway

The Federal Executive Council (FEC), presided over by President Muhammadu Buhari, has approved N115.4 billion for the expansion of the proposed Kano-Kazure-Kongolam highway in Katsina State from single carriageway to a dual carriageway.

Minister of Works and Housing, Babatunde Fashola, who briefed newsmen after the council's meeting yesterday in Abuja, explained that the project, which covers 131.4 kilometres, is to be completed within 48 months.

His Transportation counterpart, Rotimi Amaechi, said he presented two memos, which had to do with the contract for sundry consultancy services for the supervision of the various railway projects in the country.

"Remember that we have about three railway projects that are yet to start construction and they include the Port Harcourt-Maiduguri, Kano-Maradi and the Abuja-Warri," he noted.

Continuing, the minister said the consultancy services were approved at the cost of \$183.7 million for the Abuja-Warri railway.

"For the consultancy services for supervision of Port Harcourt-

Maiduguri Railway, with branch lines to Bonny Deep Seaport and Port Harcourt Industrial Park and then to Owerri. We have Kyari Consults SDBMDH/Jamood Global Services Limited at \$97.5 million. The first one is \$38.4 million.

"Consultancy services for the supervision of the Kano-Katsina-Jibia-Maradi Rail-line to TEAM (Technics Engineering Architecture Marketing Nigeria Limited) for \$47.6 million, all for a 36-month timeline.

"The second one is that the cabinet approved a concessionaire agreement for the Ministry of Transportation to concession the Onitsha River Port to a company called Inversal Elysium Consortium. They are to manage the river port for 30 years," Amaechi added.

Minister of State for Environment, Sharon Ikeazor, who briefed journalists, pointed out that the meeting equally sanctioned an energy transition plan for the country.

"This memo was presented as a plan for Nigeria to achieve net zero carbon emission, she explained, noting: "This will clearly set out the pathway for Nigeria in achieving this," she said.



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METRO WATCH



Ecobank drags ex-MD's husband to court over alleged N8.7b debt

BY BENJAMIN OMOIKE

A Federal High Court in Lagos has adjourned till March 17 to begin hearing of Ecobank Nigeria Limited's N8,701,770,328.83 dispute with a businessman, Victor Osibodu and his firm, Vigeo Limited.

Victor is the husband of Funke Osibodu, a former Managing Director of Ecobank Nigeria, a former top Group Executive of the Ecobank Group and Union Bank of Nigeria.

Ecobank is seeking to recover the sum from the duo, alleging that it was a debt, but Osibodu and Vigeo deny being indebted.

Justice Yellin Bogoro fixed the date after parties prayed for time to reconcile the exhibits sought to be tendered by the bank.

At the commencement of proceedings, Ecobank's counsel Mr. Dapo Akinosun SAN, leading six others, informed the judge that the matter was slated for hearing, adding that he had 111 exhibits attached to the process and two witnesses to call.

Akinosun said he and defence counsel Mr. Oyetola Oshobi SAN had reasoned on the need for harmonisation of the exhibits to save the court's time.

When Oshobi aligned himself with Akinosun's submission, Justice

Bogoro granted both counsel's prayers for adjournment and fixed March 17 and 30 for commencement of trial.

In its statement of claim, Ecobank is praying the court to declare that the defendants are indebted to it in the sum of \$16,886,665.04 and N862, 061, 492.63 being the sum outstanding as of December 1, 2016, with interest accruing at the agreed interest rate.

It is also seeking an order awarding post-judgment interest on the sum, at the rate of 20 per cent per annum until the final liquidation of the debt.

The bank also wants, among others, an order for the forfeiture of Vigeo house, 6 Osborne Road, Ikoyi Lagos valued at N800 million as of August 2007, an order of forfeiture of 16A Milverton Road, Ikoyi worth N700 million.

An order of Court for payment of the outstanding sum plus interest at the rate agreed by the parties until final liquidation, Post judgment interest on the outstanding debt at the rate of 20 per cent until final liquidation

An order granting Ecobank ownership, control, lien and disposition of all shares held in any companies by the 1st and 2nd defendants with the Federal Republic of Nigeria, cash at hand and held in Bank or any financial

institution in Nigeria, all financial investments standing to the Credits of the 1st and 2nd defendants whether held in shares, bonds, treasury bills or other financial instruments, amongst others.

General and exemplary damages in favour of the Bank in the sum

of N100,000,000.00 for loss of business expectation and lack of good faith by the 1st and 2nd defendants. But Osibodu and Vigeo resisted the bank's claims in their statement of defence.

They stated that they were not indebted to the Plaintiff in the

sum of N8,701,770,328.83 or any sum at all.

They added that the bank was not entitled to any of the reliefs claimed in the suit as the same were frivolous, baseless, unmeritorious and should be dismissed with substantial costs.



Victor Osibodu

Police arrest land grabber in Lagos

BY ALEX OLISE

Operatives of the Lagos State Task force have arrested a suspected land grabber occupying a vast expanse of land at Oluwasimi Estate Maryland.

The chairman of Lagos State Taskforce, Shola Jejeloye a Chief Superintendent of Police (CSP), disclosed this to The Trumpet in his office.

According to him, the move was in furtherance of the state government's resolve to rid the metropolis of land grabbers and criminal elements looking for properties of unsuspecting individuals to acquire illegally.

He gave the name of the suspect arrested simply as Mr. Isaac who had been occupying the expanse of land situated at Oluwasimi Estate, Kane Village, Maryland Lagos.

He explained that his operatives acted after series of petitions were submitted by the complainant lieutenant Commander Asasi Adebambo addressed to his office as Chairman of the Lagos State Taskforce to act over the alleged encroachment by the suspect.

In swift response to the petition operatives were mobilised to the location where the suspect was invited and brought to office for questioning.

During interrogation the suspect claimed he bought the land from one Mr. Urobo, he said he would contest the legitimacy of his ownership when the Police charge him to court.

The taskforce chairman further told The Trumpet that cases like this have become rampant in the state and that is why a sister agency, Lagos State Taskforce on Land Grabbing, has continually partnered with them to nip the problem in the bud.

"The era of land grabbers having their way is over. We won't condone any illegality or forceful occupation of land any longer in Lagos State" he reiterated.



Baba, Inspector General of Police

Committee pardons 31 inmates in Adamawa

Adamawa Jail Delivery Committee says it has pardoned 31 inmates of the Mubi and Maiha Correctional Centres in Mubi and Maiha Local Government Areas of the state.

Justice Musa Nathan, Chief Judge of the State, told newsmen in Yola that the inmates included six females.

Nathan said the committee had so far visited custodial facilities in Yola, Hong and Dumne in Song LGAs.

"The purpose of the visit is to reach out to the inmates and to identify with them on how to ease the challenges being faced in the correctional centres. It is also aimed at finding out the condition of sanitation, hygiene

and provision of amenities, among others," he said.

He said that the judicial arm in the state was set to establish more courts, including a new High Court II in Mubi South LGA. Nathan further said that the development followed significant rise in the demand of justice service delivery in the state.

He said the judiciary had concluded plans to establish additional courts before the end of 2022, to fast track justice delivery to the common man in the society. The Chief Judge also assured prompt training for magistrates to boost their professional capacities and enhance justice delivery in the state. (NAN)



Justice Musa Nathan

Court remands man, 63, for alleged defilement of 7-year-old daughter

An FCT High Court in Kubwa, has remanded a 63 year-old man, Alhaji Danladi Sule, in a correctional centre for allegedly defiling his seven-year-old foster daughter.

The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in persons (NAPTIP), charged the defendant of Kubwa, Abuja, on three counts bordering on incest.

The defendant pleaded not

guilty.

Justice Kezziah Ogonnaya gave the order pending when the court delivers ruling on the defendant's bail application made by his defence counsel, Usman Nuhu.

Ogonnaya however, adjourned the matter until February 3 for trial.

Earlier, Nuhu told the court that he filed a motion for bail,

dated June 2021 and brought pursuant to Section 162 of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA) and 36(5) of the 1999 constitution, seeking an order of the court admitting the defendant to bail.

The defence counsel also told the court that the seven-year-old girl, was in the defendant's custody following an interim order of foster parenting granted to him

by an Abuja Magistrates' Court in November, 2020.

The prosecution counsel, Rose Ibekwe, told the court that the defence counsel served her with the bail application on Jan.25, 2022 whereas the case filed in June 2021.

Ibekwe added that she filed a five paragraph counter affidavit dated Feb.1 and urged the court to discountenance the application for

bail, pending when the defendant produced the key witness (the victim).

The prosecution counsel had alleged that the defendant intentionally penetrated the vagina of his 7-year-old foster daughter with his tongue, sometime in 2020.

The offence, she said, is punishable under Section 1(2), 5 (1) of the Violence Against Persons Prohibitions Act, 2015. (NAN)

Kidnappers demand N70m ransom for Zamfara family



Abdulrahman Adamu

Kidnappers of family members of a lecturer in Zamfara State have demanded a ransom of N70 million to release their victims.

This comes barely a day after five persons were abducted by bandits who stormed the residence of Abdulrahman Adamu on Wednesday at Damba Quarters, a community in the outskirts of Gusau.

Adamu is the chairman of the Academic Staff Union of

Universities (ASUU), at the Federal University, Gusau (FUGUS), in the state capital.

Hours after the incident, a family source who pleaded anonymity, confirmed to newsmen that the kidnappers have contacted them.

According to him, they demanded N70 million as ransom before their family members would regain their freedom.

Sources say that the gunmen

carried out the attack in the early hours of the day, during which one other person said to be an official of the institution was forcefully taken.

Those abducted were identified as the ASUU chairman's younger brother, niece, nephew, and two of his wife's younger sisters.

"Five of them and one Abbas Umar, who is his (Adamu's) neighbour and also a staff member of the Bursary De-

partment, Federal University Gusau," an eyewitness stated as those abducted.

Adamu, on his part, had also confirmed that the entire house was ransacked by the bandits, who left the premises with several valuables.

While the police authorities have yet to make an official comment, the lecturer said a team of policemen arrived at his home and asked a few questions before leaving.

METRO WATCH



Maid docked for allegedly stealing jewellery worth N1.5m

A 27-year-old maid, Nana Garba, has been arraigned in a Kaduna Chief Magistrates' Court for allegedly stealing jewellery worth N1.5 million from her employer.

The police charged the defendant, who resides in Kaduna, with conspiracy and theft.

The Prosecution Counsel, Insp Chidi Leo, told the court that Zainab Abubakar, who lives in Ungwan Rimi, Kaduna, reported the matter at the Gabasawa Police Station on January 15.

Leo also said that the defendant stole a laptop worth

N250,000 and N750,000 cash.

The offence, he said, are punishable under sections 57 and 271 of the Penal Code of Kaduna State, 2017.

However, the defendant pleaded not guilty to the charge.

Magistrate Ibrahim Emmanuel admitted the defendant to bail in the sum of N200,000, with two sureties in like sum.

He ordered that one of the sureties must be a blood relation, show evidence of tax payment and ordered that their addresses must be verified.

The matter was adjourned the matter until February 28 for mention.

Lagos car dealer kills self over missing exotic cars worth N80m

BY ALEX OLISE

A businessman and car dealer has committed suicide in Kilo, Surulere area of Lagos State, following his inability to recover eight exotic cars which were sent to him for sale.

The victim, simply identified as Chris, resided in Olaitan-Kilo, Surulere area of Lagos, where he committed the act and was reported to have been in car sale business for over a decade.

A close associate, who spoke to The Trumpet regarding the tragic incident, said the late car dealer took his life after dropping a last voice message that a close friend of his had approached him two weeks ago to release the eight cars to him to sell and bring the proceeds.

Hence, based on trust, the late Chris released the eight cars valued at N10 million each to his close friend with the hope that a deal had been struck.

Unfortunately, the late Chris waited for one week without hearing anything and could no longer get in touch, even on phone with his friend.

According to him, those cars were sent to him from outside the country, which

meant he wasn't the real owner of the vehicles. Following disturbance from the owners, it dawned on the late Chris that he would not be able to withstand the pressure and couldn't explain the disappearance of the vehicles.

The businessman decided to drink a poisonous substance, suspected to be sniper, which cut off all his intestines.

He died leaving behind his wife and three children to mourn him.

The case has been reported at Force Criminal Investigation Department (FCID), Alagbon, Lagos annex, who are now on the trail of the suspect, who took the cars away from late Chris's shop.

"Police are trying to track the suspect based on the last voice message the late car dealer dropped before he took his life," said the associate.

According to him, the late Chris, who hails from Akenegbode area of Edo State, will be buried this Saturday in Lagos. He described the late car dealer as a gentleman but wondered why he took such a decision to kill himself over loss of cars, instead of reporting the disappearance of the cars and his friend to the police to carry out investigation.

Five arrested for allegedly selling, buying Covid green card in Bauchi

Five persons have been arrested in Bauchi State for selling and buying COVID-19 green cards. The cards are given to persons after receiving the COVID19 jabs.

Disclosing this to newsmen, the Executive Chairman of Bauchi State Primary Health Care Development Agency, BASPHCA, Dr. Rilwanu Mohammed, decried the fraudulent activities of medical personnel in the state who are hampering the government's efforts to ensure vaccination of residents of the state against COVID19.

"It is setting back the success of the exercise. In collaboration with the Police, Army and Independent Corrupt Practices Commission, ICPC,

we have been able to arrest some people, who were buying the vaccine cards without taking the injection. They are now with the security agencies undergoing investigation.

"Many people who shunned the jab when flagged off by the governor, his deputy and House of Assembly speaker, later contracted the virus. Some people, who got vaccinated and felt the mild side effects of the vaccine, were giving others negative narratives. Some were placing metal and other objects on the spot of the jab to get people to reject it.

"We carried out a mass campaign on social media and moved to the rural areas for enlightenment," he said

Man docked for allegedly stealing N4m car seats

BY BENJAMIN OMOIKE

A 23-year-old employee, Sunday Utuma, has appeared before an Ikeja Magistrates' Court for allegedly stealing car seats valued at N4 million.

The police charged Utuma, whose residential address was not stated, with stealing.

The prosecution counsel,

ASP Clifford Ogu, said that the defendant committed the offence in June 2021 at Ladipo Market, Mushin, Lagos State.

Ogu noted that the defendant stole the car seats belonging to his employer, Okechukwu Chiwuba,

"The defendant, who was in care of one of the complainant's shops, stole 13 pieces of Sienna seats, two pieces of Highlander jeep seats and

two pieces of Toyota Avensis seats, all valued at N4 million.

"The defendant absconded to unknown destination but was eventually arrested," the prosecutor said.

According to him, the offence contravenes Section 287(7) of the Criminal Law of Lagos State, 2015.

The News Agency of Nigeria reports that the Section 287(7) prescribes seven years'

jail term for stealing.

Following his not guilty plea, the Magistrate, S.K. Matepo, granted the defendant N1 million bail with two sureties in like sum.

Matepo said that the sureties should be gainfully employed and must show evidence of two years' tax payment to the Lagos State Government.

She adjourned the case until March 8 for further hearing.

Man allegedly shot, robbed, denied police report

Operatives attached to the Ijanikin Division of the Police Force in Lagos State, allegedly refused to give a police report to a victim of robbery attack.

The victim, a young man, was reportedly attacked, robbed and shot in both legs by robbers on Wednesday morning at Alasia Bus Stop, Ijanikin, along Badagry Expressway.

According to an eyewitness, Segun, who spoke to newsmen at the scene, "when the victim was rushed to the station by some good Samaritans, the officers on duty refused to issue him a police report.

"Meanwhile, the victim was not bleeding profusely from the gunshots injuries."

It also learned that a private

hospital located at Cele Bus Stop, also refused to admit or treat the victim because he had no police report.

It took the effort of concerned passers-by to call the victim's relatives on phone.

When they eventually arrived, they carried him on a bike to Mowo.

In 2017, the Compulsory Treatment and Care for Victims of Gunshot Act, 2017, was passed by President Muhammadu Buhari, and is unarguably one of the most significant developments of 2017 in the Nigerian health sector.

It mandates compulsory treatment for victims of gunshot wounds brought in for emergency medical attention without police report.



Baba, Inspector General of Police

Cyclist reportedly kills colleague over plate of rice

BY BENJAMIN OMOIKE

Aba State Police Command has confirmed the killing of a cyclist by his colleague in Aba, allegedly, over a plate of rice.

Public Relations Officer (PRO), of the Command, SP Geoffrey Ogbonna, who made this known to newsmen, confirmed

that the suspect had surrendered to the police.

The incident happened at Uzompka Street in Amaiyi, Owerri-Aba, in Ugwuagbo LGA.

According to the source, the incident happened at a local eating spot, named Nwanyi - Mmoghon, when the two cyclists entered the local eatery to eat, alongside their other

colleagues.

While the cyclists were settling down, another cyclist, identified as Chinenye, also entered and demanded for food.

"However, not wanting to be upstaged, an already seated cyclist, named Oberagu, who had arrived before Chinenye came, and told him to wait for his turn, as they came before him.

"The owner of the eating spot, supported their position and went on to serve food to the other person that came before Chinenye.

"On noticing that, Chinenye started threatening the woman and the other cyclists, shouting that if the woman dared not to serve food to him and his group, he would scatter everywhere," the source said.

Continuing, the source added; "That was what caused the fight, in which other cyclists, joined

to beat up Chinenye, who left in humiliation.

"But, the other boys were still eating when he came back in company of another cyclist.

"With everyone running away, Chinenye drew closer and shot him in the stomach and disappeared with the same cyclist that brought him."

The injured cyclist was later rushed to a nearby hospital by concerned residents, where he was pronounced dead by doctors on duty.

It was learnt that the death of the young man, sparked crisis in the area, as angry youths, went to the suspect's family compound and that of the man who brought him back there, and set the buildings there on fire.

Meanwhile, Chinenye, who ran away, voluntarily submitted himself to the Ugwuagbo Police Division.



Four teens who murdered lady for money ritual sent to prison

BY BENJAMIN OMOIKE

A magistrate's court in Ogun on Thursday ordered that the four suspected teenage ritualists who killed a girl, Sofiat Okeowo, for money making be remanded in prison.

The Trumpet earlier reported that the Ogun State Police Command had arrested the four suspects, Balogun Mustakeem, 20; Majekodunmi Soliudeen, 18; Abdulgafa Luk-

man, 19 and Waris Oladeinde, 18; on Saturday, 29 January, 2022, while burning the head of Sofiat after she had been murdered in an uncompleted building in Kugbaarea of Abeokuta.

The suspects were charged on a two-count charge of conspiracy and murder.

Magistrate I. O. Abudu, who did not take the plea of the defendants, ordered that the suspects be remanded in prison.

Abudu ordered that the

defendants be remanded in Oba Correctional Centre, pending legal advice from Ogun State Director of Public Prosecution (DPP).

She however, adjourned the case till March 14 for mention.

The Prosecutor, Insp. Lawrence Balogun, told the court that the defendants committed the offence on January 28 at about 11:00pm at Kugba area in Abeokuta.

Balogun alleged that the defendants conspired among

themselves and murder one Sofiat Okeowo, who is a girlfriend to one of the defendants, Soliudeen.

He said the defendants killed her by cutting off her head with a cutlass.

According to the prosecutor, the defendants murdered Sofiat with the plan to use her for money ritual.

The prosecutor, said that the offence committed contravened sections 324, 316 of the Criminal Code Laws of Ogun 2006.



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By **GABRIEL
OMONHINMIN**

Bizarre girl-child experience in South Sudan

A 20-year-old South-Sudanese human rights activist and young entrepreneur, Miss Anna Maneno Michael Milla, has lamented the deteriorating political and economic fortunes of her country, after the sudden demise of their leader, John Garang de Mabior in the year 2005, in an helicopter crash. Garang was regarded as the founding father and symbol of unity in today's South-Sudan. He led the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) during the country's 22 years second civil war.

After the death of Garang, Sylva Kiir Mayardit, the Southern Sudanese rebel leader/politician, who became the civilian president of the country on 9th of July, 2011, is still occupying the position 11 years after.

Miss Maneno was in Nigeria as one of the ten winners and recipients of the 2021 edition of the Future Africa Leaders Awards funded by the President of LoveWorld Incorporation, the Christ Embassy Ministry, led by Pastor Chris Oyakhilome. She lamented in an interview in Lagos about the high rate of insecurity and arms proliferation in South Sudan.

This ugly situation (proliferations of light weapons in her country), she stressed, is due to the deliberate refusal of some leaders to adhere to Chapter 2 of the South-Sudanese Revitalized Peace Agreement on the resolution of the conflict was an historic opportunity to end it.

The first part of the agreement states that all parties to it must sincerely commit to reaching an agreement for a ceasefire. The second condition is for the international community to support the process. Sadly, the conflict in South-Sudan is continuing to cause terrible suffering for the people, particularly women and children, as more than half of this population is suffering from food insecurity while one third of South-Sudanese remain in displaced or refugee camps. Although the ceasefire is generally respected, intercommunal and sexual violence have not decreased. The issue of early girl-child marriage is another scourge, which requires international attention, according to her. She said the situation is getting to an epidemic proportion and gradually destroying the future of young girls in South-Sudan if it continues unchecked. The refugee problems in the country and the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in most camps in and outside Sudan is another kettle of fish all together alongside other vices such as sexual violence and prostitution among other issues, which require global attention. She spoke further: "I was just about 2 or 3 years old, when South-Sudanese people lost its founding father and symbol of unity, Dr. John Garang, who died in an helicopter accident. And as a young child then, I saw and could still recollect how people



Milla

all over the country, grieved over the sudden passage of our leader then in that unfortunate incident. I therefore grew up to know, one of my country's cardinal values to be one indivisible, peaceful and united South-Sudan.

"Painful as it is today, just some 11 years into the country's hard-fought and hard-earned independence, the core values and the South-Sudanese ethos, that were carefully built over the years, are now gradually being eroded by the internal political wrangling in my country. The continuous armed conflicts in some parts of the country, are not only unnecessary but uncalled for, not after the heavy price our people have paid for our independence as a country, especially at this particular stage of South-Sudan development.

Anna Maneno was however, quick to point out: "I must confess that the current President of South-Sudan, His Excellency President Sylva Kiir, is a very good man, who meant well for my country and the people. Unfortunately, the problems we have, as they affect governance today in South-Sudan, arise mainly from the people surrounding the President, who are trying to hold him hostage. These crops of politicians or advisers, constantly make things extremely difficult for the country to achieve good governance as they constantly express sentiments that push genuine and experienced South-Sudanese people away from the system or corridor of power. These people around the president often times express sentiments such as "where were they, the supposed intruders, when we were in our trenches up in arms as part of the country's independence arm struggle?" These types of sentiments often times force people, who genuinely meant well and are willing and ready to help the country to grow shying away or refusing to participate outright from serving the country to the best of their ability.

"Another issue which is of great concern to most South-Sudan people is the unfortunate issue of early girl-child marriage, which is almost getting to an epidemic proportion. The young rights activist and entrepreneur, who has just been

appointed into the National Parliament of South-Sudan, as an observer, further stressed: "The issue of South-Sudanese cultural values and practices, especially as it affects early girl-child marriage is honestly disturbing. These harmful cultural practices, which the average South-Sudan men and some elderly women do not see anything wrong with, have resulted in most 'uncles' whose traditional rights it is to negotiate and marry out their girls-child, taking undue advantage of the system to their own personal advantage. They are now in the habit of recklessly giving out these children in marriage, even before they get to their puberty period, in the process, leaving the innocent girl-child, who has no say or option in matters like this, to continue to look on hopelessly and helplessly while other people do whatever they please with their destiny. "Unfortunately, most of these uncles who negotiate the bride prices of these children on behalf of their families, end up collecting exorbitant fees as bride price. Anna explained further that the ridiculous bride price they collect at times in the process is as high as \$30 to \$50,000 dollars equivalents in South-Sudanese money. This excludes the large number of cattle, 300 to 700, they also demand and collect, during such marriage negotiations. Anna Maneno then emphatically said: "Although, I have had the opportunity to relocate to other developed countries of to seek greener pastures, I have resolved not to leave South-Sudan, but to stay in the country to help develop it to a position where it will be comparable to other developed countries of the world. She added: "In view of the ugly experiences of the past and the continuation of this practice, which persists as I am granting you this interview, I will struggle to fight, using the global platform this particular Future Africa Leaders Award has provided me as a base, once I get back to my country, especially now, that the South-Sudanese government is once again preparing to review its constitution. I will do my very best alongside other well-meaning people in ensuring the inclusion of the clause that will guarantee the Fundamental

Human Rights of these little girls. I will work very hard to sensitize other people who will join me in pushing for the inclusion of this clause in the new constitution that will be reviewed so that this monumental child abuse of our little girls will be stopped once and for all as this is the only way to halt these daily activities of these Uncles, who mindlessly sell their children into slavery in the name of marriages.

"I will continue to thank my mother who had stood firmly behind me in my drive to realize my dream as a young South-Sudanese lady. "According to South-Sudanese cultural practices, marriage is seen as a major achievement by ladies. As we speak, most of my relatives have continued to pester me to get married, and in the same breath, continue to caution me to abandon my advocacy for the girl-child rights, saying if "I continue the way and manner I am presently going, I might find it very difficult to get a husband to marry in South-Sudan."

Another interesting angle to girl child experiences in South-Sudan, is the issue of teenage pregnancy and the loss of hope of many little girls, who were caught in these dilemma in most refugee camps across South-Sudan and outside the country. Anna now decided to narrate her personal experiences in life and her experience in the refugee camp where she found herself in neighbouring Uganda in the year 2016, and how she finally managed to get out of the mess unscattered.

Hear her: "It is an honour and dream come true for me to be honoured with this year's edition of the Future Africa Leaders Award. What inspired me most in going for this award is the story of my life. It was while still in my mother's womb, was when my father rejected me. I love my mother so much, because she did not decide to abort me. Rather, she kept me and mentored me to be an asset to the African continent today. Now listening to the President of the LoveWorld, Dr. Chris Oyakhilome, has made me to realize a lot in my life. I have always had the passion to change communities, right from my childhood, from my primary school days to secondary schools, I have always tried to make a point and difference, especially in

places where girls and ladies are not visible or present.

"In 2016, the war in South-Sudan specifically affected my country. People were pushed away to the refugee camps, and I happened to be one of the victims. But nevertheless, I became a victor in the whole process. In the camps, there were a lot of girls, who decided to go for marriage, there were cases of teenage child pregnancy epidemic, a lot of girls and ladies were messed up in the process, as most of them felt the world they were living in then has ended or shattered. It was hard reaching out to these girls then. But fortunately for me I was chosen as one of the little girls, who featured in a film that was celebrated in my country. In the process, most girls came to admired me, and they will always say to me, "I also want to be an actress I want to be like you." I took that, as an opportunity to reach out to these groups of girls, because I knew, when I speak to them, they will listen to my voice. I reached out to these girls, to their mothers and grandmothers, talking to them about education. Even to those girls, who dropped out of school, I use to tell them, after the birth of your child, you can still go back to school to further your education, you now being pregnant is not the end of your life or the end of the world or everything about you.

"I have always believed that South-Sudan needs elites and among those elites, we must have women. This also inspired me to go and talk to the young girls in my country. I even went a step further, to talk to the elderly, because I knew, it is not easy for one to be pushed to a foreign country where one is kept in the bush. It is usually very difficult to start life from such places. Some of these girls committed suicide, and there were lot of such cases. My team and I therefore, decided to adopt a two way approach to solving these problems. When I eventually returned to South-Sudan, I immediately realized, that my country needed a lot of help. It is true, as we speak now, that the political system in South-Sudan is not upright. But the situation there now, afforded me the opportunity to be the right citizen and attempt to make a change.

"To every young African listening to my voice and also read this interview, I say, it is not right for us to get ourselves guns and kill one another. It is not right for us to destroy our continent, by shooting at the government, but it is right for us to approach the nearest community to us, and try to do the change, we would want the government to do for us. I thank the Future Africa Leaders Award organizers so much, for this opportunity. Because I know, when I get back to my country, I will get the audience that will join me in my efforts to change my communities for the better. I will endeavour to practice agriculture and entrepreneurship, because a lot of my people in South-Sudan, need our voice to survive in these areas of the economy."



I'm not a stereotype actor – *Adedimeji Lateef*

■ Once played lead roles of 98 scenes for N4, 000

Presently one of the most sought after actors in the movie industry; Adedimeji Adetona Lateef has evolved over time from featuring in home videos and to the big screen where he said he is currently enjoying and living his dreams as a thespian. Adedimeji who joined Nigeria's film industry 15 years ago has featured in over 100 significant films including Ayinla amongst many others. Adedimeji understands the acting craft very well, his interpretations of roles is second to none. The Mass Communication graduate in this interview with **OMONIYI ALLI**, spoke about his career, how playing Ayinla impacted his life, his personality amongst other various issues



Lateef

For you, how did the journey begin?

It started so many years ago, in my JSS 2. Basically, I was trained by Non-Governmental Organisation, 'Community Life Project (CLP)' in Isolo, Lagos. In those days, there is limited accessibility to television for grassroots people so there is a need to sensitize people especially the youth about HIV/AIDs, STDs and other diseases. So, CLP goes to secondary schools to pick the best students and train them to be peer educators through

eighteen topics so that they can impart the knowledge to their fellow youths at the stage of puberty.

I was lucky to be part of the trainees which passed information to people via dance, music and acting. So, that was how my acting career started and I was with them for seven years. After that, instead of me studying Theatre Art at the university, I felt it's would be a total waste of another four years so I decided to opt for the Mass Communication department to study Public Relation and Broadcast at Olabisi Onabanjo

University, Ogun State. I came out of school and I became a presenter on TV for like five years with Nigezie. So, when my acting became demanding I had to drop my broadcast world for acting.

If not acting, what would have been come?

I always wanted to be a lawyer but I do a lot of silly things and people laugh. So it was when I joined the NGO I found out that acting is my line.

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Is it good to say Ayinla was your best movie?

I think Ayinla is. If you look at it, I've featured in a lot of amazing movies but Ayinla was on another level entirely, in a way apart from others.

How has playing the role of the legendary Ayinla Omowura impacted your real life as an individual?

The movie, Ayinla placed me on another level entirely. The story itself teaches me a whole lot. It shows that when you are famous in life, be rest assured that things that don't make sense will come to you. So, you must be prepared on how to attend to issues and learn how to react to every situation that comes your way. If Ayinla had taken caution at a time somebody upset him, he might probably still be alive because when you are somebody every dog can choose to bark at you. So, it teaches me that I need to be calm in every situation. It's not everything that people say to you that you must react to, just overlook it and move on with your life.

Do you think you've been stereotype since you're always given the same type of role?

Not at all, I'm not a stereotyped actor. At first, it

was me playing only romantic roles and crying (laughs). At a point in time, I realized that it could get me nailed to a particular role. So, I was like, 'people have never seen me in a comedy role' until I started the role of an Igbo man in a movie and people were surprised

Like every other filmmakers, have you also rejected scripts?

Yes, recently I turned down a lot of scripts because I felt like they do not convey a good or genuine message. Then what is the essence of doing it? I've realized we don't act in movies for the sake of it.

We need to be deliberate and intentional about the message we want to get across to people. Everybody wants to be an actor or a star, but the profession is beyond you just going to be there. You have to merge the talent with the right things so that you can have it well nurtured and well-tuned.

Do you think a better storyline is better than fantastic acting or directing?

You can have a good storyline but you don't have a good person to bring that vision to life. So I think all three go hand in hand.

There is believe that the female actors are more successful than male actors;

**Lateef**

do you agree that?

I don't believe in that because it depends on how you plan to live your life. Some people can buy a car today and choose to show it to the world while some may buy four cars and not even post one of them on social media. But a lot of people feel when you post stuff; it gives you a hype that maybe brands will come for you. You know, people with different orientations. I might post nothing, it doesn't mean brands will not come for you, you may post something, it doesn't mean brands will come for you. So, I believe everybody is successful in one way or the other, so, it depends on how you portray it to people.

I've been here for quite some time before my fame finally came. I've done movies for ten days for N1, 000, I played lead roles of 98 scenes for N4, 000 and

many others but today I can be paid millions for a consistent film.

What's your opinion of the Nigerian movie industry?

Good impression. In every industry, there will be right and wrong. What is important is where do you want to stand? You wanna go with the wrong or stand with the right? You can go with the wrong and have a lot of crowd following you but what does that teach you? And you can be with right and have limited people with you because negativity trends more than positivity, especially on social media. Many people picked negativity because they want to be noticed by fans, you can be noticed at some point but what happens afterwards? So, always stay on the positive path no matter how long you'll get to where you are going.

What is your take on the interpretation of roles by the real Theatre Art graduate and those tagged armatures?

Theater Art graduates, they know the rules, they are thespians because it goes beyond mere talent, it is the other thing to have a talent and it is another thing to go extra mile to actually upgrade that talent that it can actually stand out; so that is what takes a theater Art practitioner to be quite different from somebody that just have the talent decide to go into it and try to perfect it, so no matter the level of perfection when somebody knows about it knows the rules knows the duos and don'ts, plus the perfection; he stands out from the person that actually has the talent and he is perfect will always come out for a theatre art practitioner they know the rule and they are well grounded.





Ogbia/Oloibiri people of Bayelsa accuse FG of ill-treatment

By **GABRIEL OMONHINMIN**

The people of Oloibiri community in Ogbia LGA of Bayelsa State have accused the Nigerian government of not treating them well.

Ogbia in Bayelsa State is the birthplace of the former President of Nigeria, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, GCFR. Despite the fact, he ruled for six years, with little or nothing on ground, in Oloibiri or Ogbia Local Government Area of Bayelsa State to show that the place or Local Government Area once produced the country's President.

In view of the deplorable state of roads in the LGA and the general poor state of facilities in the area, there is this subdue anger among the people in and around the Local Government Area council.

His Royal Majesty King Owaba D. Charles Obhanoban of Ogbia Kingdom, who has been working round the clock to calm frail nerves, controlling the general anger of his people, who have been complaining about the inappropriate manner past and present governments in Nigeria, including the administration of their son, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, has treated them.

Palace Watch recently cornered His Majesty in his palace in Ogbia kingdom in Bayelsa State, after a lot of prodding and appeal, the hesitant king, finally opened up and told Palace Watch some of the reasons why his people are so bitter over the shabby manner past governments in the country have treated the Oloibiri/Ogbia people in the general scheme of things.

His Royal Majesty, King Owaba D. Charles Obhanoban of Ogbia Kingdom, explained the general happening in his kingdom in a subdued turn dripping with anger. He said, "Now that you are here please go round the town and the entire Local Government Area Council as a whole and come back to me here in the palace, to tell me what you have seen on ground as a meaningful infrastructures for a place where the first drop of crude oil was drilled in the early 50s. It is this same local government area council that produced one of the President that served Nigeria meritoriously for six years, who made history by calling the person who allegedly defeated him in an election to congratulate him, not because he believed he was truly defeated in that election, but just because he wanted to avoid a situation where his refusal to concede defeat will result in an unfortunate bloodshed and the disintegration of the country. If I may ask, are these not enough signs that we the Ogbia and Bayelsa people are committed to unity and general well-being of this great country, Nigeria?"

"Government at the center over the years is simply taking undue advantage of the quietness exhibited by the Oloibiri/Ogbia people and for our not being belligerent and militant in our approach to things as a liberty to do whatever pleases them to us. We are not cowards; it is generally our nature to keep the peace as people. And this we will continue to do. Tell me which other ethnic groups or tribes in Nigeria will tolerate what we have been tolerating over the years?"

"Oloibiri /Ogbia Local Government Area Council is a place where so much natural resources have been taken to develop other areas of the country, and yet very little has been done to improve this place. And yet we are still keeping quiet and maintaining the peace as we are still doing here today."

"From all indications, what the action of the Federal Government is telling my people is that, if a child does not cry, he is hungry or not, he needs not to be fed."

"If I may ask, must we pick up arms before the Federal Government will come

to the realization that Oloibiri people in particular and Ogbia Local Government Area Council of Bayelsa State in general need to be given a special attention in view of its past contributions to the nation's economic developments?"

"You have gone round and saw things for yourself, unlike so many people and places, which have not made the huge sacrifices we have been making; their places are more developed than this area. Is this good for national cohesion? Oloibiri and Ogbia is located in dry land, and the whole of this area is free of floods and erosion. The excuse that this place is swampy, inaccessible and difficult to develop, is not there."

"We have over the years realized that the Federal Government is not just interested in giving us a token as a kind of pay back. The attitude of the government at the center, as we see it here, is that we have taken all we required or needed from them, and as such we are done with them. This attitude and behavior, the truth must be told, is not good for national cohesion. The leadership of present day Bayelsa State and our local government here, are responsible, if they are given special funds or grant to develop this place they will deploy the money appropriately."

"Sadly, when we complain like this, so many promises will be made to us, especially by politicians when they are campaigning looking for our votes. But once they are elected they forget about us and the development of these areas until another election year. I must confess however, that the Bayelsa State Government and the present Ogbia Local Government Area Council Chairman are doing their very best, depending on the finances available to them to meet our needs here. Whatever happens, we are law abiding people, we will continue to air our views, and hope for the better."

He continued, "If Nigeria is a place where things are done properly, it is this very place the first Petroleum Institute or University of Petroleum was supposed to be sited, because it was here in Oloibiri, the first oil well was discovered in Nigeria. But sadly, this is not the case."

"Over the years we have been crying now for the establishment of an Industrial park here, as this will quicken the industrialization of these areas of the country, all we have held is a lot of noise, without any meaningful action from the Federal Government."

"We are not asking for too much from the Federal Government, we have over these years pleaded for the construction of a major road network, from Brass that will link Okpoma to Nembe. If this road is done, it will not only open up the entire Niger Delta Region, it will also help the developments of these areas. The ripple effects of all these, is that the majority of our youths will find something to do with their hands. And once our youths are fully engaged, they will never think of carrying arms or disturbing the peace of the society, as they will face their families squally."

"I must confess, once a good policy is implemented, everybody will know and feel it. The amnesty policy of the late President Yar'Adua was a very laudable one. It helped in no small measure to bring about lasting peace in the Niger Delta region."

"Just like the Yar'Adua administration who brought the amnesty programme, that helped to calm all the frail nerves of agitators in this region, we are again pleading with President Muhammadu Buhari's government to implement the Modular Refinery policy in Nigeria, as this will help bring about the full engagement of the majority of the youths in this region."

Palace Watch: Your Majesty, I have



HRM, King Owaba D. Charles Obhanoban

listened to all your grievances with rapt attention. Are you saying that for the six years one of your sons, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, was Nigeria's president, he never did any major project in Ogbia kingdom where he came from, that he will be remembered for?"

King Owaba D. Charles Obhanoban of Ogbia Kingdom: My dear friend, let us not personalized this discussion, when President Goodluck Jonathan was elected Nigeria's President that never made him an Ogbia President alone, although he is an indigene of Ogbia kingdom. His entire constituency as it were, while in office was Nigeria. We on our part here did not want to distract him, by putting unnecessary pressure on him."

"He did the little he could to improve the lot of our people, this we are very grateful about. But much as he is our son, we allowed him and his administration the liberty to use their discretion to do whatever pleases them for our people and the country."

If ex-President Goodluck Jonathan had concentrated his administration's development activities in this area of the country, people would have shouted blue murder, 'Saying, see this man oh, President Jonathan... is not looking at other areas of the country as he concentrated developmental activities in Ogbia land."

"As you'll agree with me, throughout his stay in office, no one saw any reason(s) to shout that their areas were neglected at the expense of the development of the Ogbia Kingdom. We liked it so, because it goes to show how broad minded we are as Bayelsans and our commitment to the oneness of this great country, Nigeria. We just decided then to allow ex-president Jonathan to be and concentrate in his job as Nigerian President."

"But from what we have seen since he left office as Nigeria's President, people from other parts of Nigeria are not as liberal as we Bayelsan people. If ex-president Jonathan was such a selfless president of Nigeria, who did so much, for example to enhance the welfare and the well-beings of the "Alimajarires" and the people of North while in office, we ordinarily would have expected that the President that assumed office after him, would have, without prompting extend similar gestures to our people here, sadly, that is not the case now."

"If ex-president Goodluck Jonathan for whatever reasons known to him failed to

do, all that we had expected from him for our people while in office, because of his nationalistic outlook of things, that did not make us angry nor bitter with him as a person or about his actions, because we know, good leaders are usually nationalistic in the way they do or see things. We just accept things the way they were."

"That is all gone now. There are, however, not enough reasons for us not to cry out for the development of our areas, if we are not getting what we expect from the government of the day. Especially now that he has long left office."

Palace Watch: Your Majesty, you have a sizable number of oil companies operating in this area of the country, how are these companies assisting your people in ameliorating the present suffering in the land?"

King Owaba D. Charles Obhanoban of Ogbia Kingdom: "They are trying in the areas of health care delivery for our people. I must confess that Shell Nigeria Company Limited and Agip are doing their very best in these areas, other than this, there is nothing to write home about, about their activities here."

"It is not greed when we ask, that as the people providing the economic mainstay of the country, we should equally be taken good care of. As we speak, the majority of our roads are not motorable, the economy here as you can see for yourself is not working, not to talk of being vibrant."

"Our youths, who are of employable ages, even when they are properly educated are not employed. The parents of these children are mostly fishermen and women and peasant farmers. They eke out their daily living through hard work. It is proceeds from this hard work they use to train their children, hoping with time, these children, when they are old, will in turn be in a position to assist them. This is no longer the case today. Everyone is expected to travel to Abuja, Lagos and Port Harcourt to be gainfully employed. This is not supposed to be the case in an ideal situation."

"Our people are deep thinkers, who are equally innovative if given the chance and the right environment. With the right and proper environment and incentives by government at the Federal, States and Local Government levels, our youths have the ability to be good business men and women as they are extremely creative. This is how great countries we have seen and know develop."

BUSINESS TODAY



Why 2022 economic outlook looks gloomy for Nigeria, by expert

STORIES BY JOHNMARK UKOKO

Contrary to the views of the Federal Government, Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and some government's agencies that the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and other economic indices will grow significantly in 2022, an economic expert has rubbished such thinking, describing it as "mere wishful thinking" not backed by economic parameters.

Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (MD/ CEO) of Cowry Assets Management, Johnson Chukwu, stated this yesterday, while addressing the Finance Correspondents on the theme: Foreign Direct Investment Outlook For 2021

And Its Implementation For 2022 in Lagos.

He disclosed that the government has failed to implement friendly policies that would have attracted foreign investors into the country, adding that those who came few years ago were all moving out of the country due to the harsh economic policies.

He stressed that foreign investors will go to a country with huge market and purchasing power, insisting that while Nigeria has a huge population it does not possess huge economic power.

"It is true that Nigeria is about the seventh most populated country in the world, but, when it comes to the purchasing power Nigeria is not in the top 30th economy. Most of our people don't have economic power to

purchase the needed goods, hence foreign investors will take their investment to the climes where the people have the purchasing power.

"A case in point is South Africa which is about a third of Nigeria population wise, but have more people than Nigeria in term of purchasing power.

That explains why all the car production companies have plants in South Africa where it produce for Africa countries and shipped it from there.

"Many Nigerians drive BMW car, but how many of us know that the car is produced in South Africa. Many of the South Africans can take car loans to buy brand new cars, but that can't be said of Nigeria," he stated.

He bemoaned the condition of the country's ports, adding that it is cheaper to shipped cargoes to the neighbouring countries ports and bring them to the country by roads than shipped such cargoes to our various ports due to the sharp malpractices in our ports, adding that the ports situation has also affected the foreign direct investment inflow into the country.

According to him, capital will flow to the country with good infrastructure, stable laws, good security situation and quick resolution of legal issues.

He lamented that the scarcity of Forex, high inflation and high interest rate have also left to the reasons why many foreign investors were in a haste to take their

funds out of the country, adding all these issues are reasons the country's economy will not grow much in the current year and that the country's leadership has not demonstrated capacity to turn things around in the new year.

"A wise investor will go to a country with low or modest inflation, stable foreign exchange, and easy access to forex. All these were lacking in Nigeria currently, so I don't see where the government, CBN and other government's agencies were getting their optimism.

"The way I see things currently, unless the government take some bold and sound economic decisions in the next few months, the country and its people were for another difficult long year," he said.

The Cowry Asset Management boss urged the government to learn from the experience of the country in the Telecom sector, adding that in all the years of NITEL the country didn't have up to one million lines, but in the past 21 years of the deregulation of the Telecom sector, nearly every Nigerian adults has at least a line, which is over 100 million of functional lines.



MD/ CEO of Cowry Assets Management, Johnson Chukwu

SON, NFIU partner on fight against fake products

The Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON) has brokered a partnership with Nigeria Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU) to tackle the menace of fake products in the country.

Director-General of SON, Mallam Farouk Salim, who stated this at a sensitisation programme in Lagos, yesterday, warned that it would no longer be business as usual for purveyors of fake and substandard products in the country.

The sensitisation programme with the theme: The Use Of Crime Record Information Management System, was targeted at checkmating the influx of fake and substandard products into the country.

The SON chief, who was represented by the Director of Inspectorate and Compliance, Omolara Okunola, said the partnership would greatly checkmate high incidence of financial-related crimes, especially influx of counterfeit products into the country.

He lauded the efforts of NFIU to support the standards body towards the effective discharge of the agency statutory mandate, adding that the agency would

get its staff properly trained on special application to fight crime and get rid of counterfeited, fake and substandard products coming into the country.

"Our core mandate is to ensure that products and services locally made or imported into Nigeria meet standards and quality benchmarks in line with global practices. You know before you can do anything either in production or services, you need to gather the necessary data.

"That is why this intervention with by NFIU comes in handy for us to do documentation, intelligence, reports in order to detect and track dubious importers and fraudsters," he stated.

Responding, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of NFIU, Modibo Hannah Tukur, disclosed that the influx of fake and substandard products into the country would be controlled through effective collaborative efforts and information sharing amongst the relevant government's agencies.

He said the agency was the central body in Nigeria responsible for receiving requests and analysing reports on money laundering, terrorist financing and other roles.

Tax drive: FIRS unveils new assignment regime to prove big firms

The Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) has unveiled a new assessment regime to determine the tax ranges of the companies before they file their returns, as the agency has been authorised to plug into big companies' database to access their performances.

The tech driven onsite assessment involve the attachment of FIRS' software to the companies' database.

This will allow the agency to a certain the right value of taxes to collect from such institutions before tax fillings.

Section 25 of the FIRS establishment Act (as amended) under the Finance Establishment Act 2021 gives power to the agency to deploy proprietary or third party technology for tax administration. This includes Tax assessment and information gathering from taxpayers.

Accordingly where the service desire for the purpose of assessment access to any taxpayers' database, it would give a 30 days notice to the taxpayer requesting that such access be granted.

Failure to grant access is considered an offence under the law and subject to an administrative penalty of N25, 000 for each day the failure continues.

The new assessment regime is a major highlight of an aggressive push for efficient tax assessment and collection as Nigeria races to increase its

tax income.

It would be recalled that the 2022 budget indicates deficit of 37 per cent with projected non-oil taxes such as Company Income Tax and Value Added Tax (VAT) of N1.22 trillion.

Olufemi Babem, Tax Regulatory and People Services partner at KPMG Nigeria confirmed the new FIRS initiative recently in Lagos.

He spoke during the Economic Impact of Government's tax Revenue drive at the virtual Nairametric 2022 Economic outlook in Lagos recently, saying the law requires companies to register for tax and file their audited accounts and tax computation with FIRS within six months after incorporation.

Babem disclosed that the implementation of the new tax plan is already taking place in key sectors such as manufacturing, banking, housing, oil and gas, insurance, Telecommunications, sectors among others.

He noted that the implementation of the Finance Act 2021 has made the new policy plan actionable by giving more powers to FIRS to collect taxes for the nation.

"It would be an on-site attachment of tax software to targeted companies database. The government is also looking at big digital companies with remittance Netflix has notified companies to add VAT to its payment," he stressed.



Olufemi Babem, Tax Regulatory and People Services partner at KPMG Nigeria



Director-General of SON, Mallam Farouk Salim



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Battle over Odogwu's Ikoyi property begins in Federal High Court, Lagos

Stories by **ONYEBUCHI
SAMPSON**

A battle over the Ikoyi property of the late Ide Ahaba of Asaba, Chief Sonny Odogwu, will commence today, February 4, at a Federal High Court, Lagos presided over by Justice David Osiagor.

The property located at 31-35, known as Le Meridien Grand Towers was promoted by Odogwu to create two 15-storeys, comprising a hotel and residential tower in Lagos. The complex is expected to provide luxury accommodation in the city.

Le Meridien Grand Towers was designed to accommodate 271 suites divided into five distinct size categories; the king suite, the twin suite, the suite, the diplomatic suite and visitors' guest rooms (attached to other suites).

Additionally, there are 46 smaller guest rooms forming part of the four suites flanking the two west wings of the hotel, thereby bringing the number of keys to 317.

The VIP floors and services will rival any world-class accommodation, hence positioning Le Meridien Grand Towers Hotel as the foremost accommodation in Lagos.

The late billionaire had engaged the bank through its subsidiary, Diamond Capital Limited, as lead arranger for the syndication of project finance for the project sponsor's seven-star hotel.

It was also learnt that the recourse for repayment of the loan is the project's cash flow on completion. The security, which all syndicate members share, is the project itself.

Consequently, Leadway Trustees was appointed the trustee to hold the title to 33/35 Ikoyi Crescent Ikoyi for all the syndicate members and no security was offered to Diamond now Access Bank because the project finance with the security was to be shared by syndicate members.

Unfortunately, the bank failed to arrange the syndication, and the contractors threatened to pull out of the site.

At this stage, the bank assured the project sponsor that it would put the syndication in place in 90 days and offered unsecured bridge finance to the project to be repaid from the syndication proceeds.

The objective was to avoid disruption of the project. The bridge finance came in two tranches of N3.5 billion and N1.5 billion, making a total of N5 billion paid directly to the contractors and not the project sponsor.

The project sponsor put into the project equity of over N5 billion apart from the land cost and preliminary works.

The bank again allegedly failed to arrange

the syndication of the project finance. The result of the bank's failure as lead arranger was that the project became stranded and the bridge finance was unresolved, leading to several disputes and litigation.

As a result, the bank obtained a judgment at the Federal High Court on November 3, 2015, over its unsecured bridge loan.

Consequently, parties signed a settlement agreement dated May 30, 2019, and addendum dated July 26, 2019.

Accordingly, the Odogwu family agreed to withdraw their appeal at the Court of Appeal, and the parties agreed to enter the settlement as a consent judgment.

The family is contending that the banks' actions of trespassing on their customer's property at 33/33 Ikoyi Crescent Ikoyi and unlawfully purporting to have sold it to one inactive company called Siete Trading Limited in apparent self-dealing amount to a flagrant breach of the rule of law in Nigeria.

Subsequently, Access bank filed a suit seeking to set aside the consent judgment delivered by Justice Aikawa in suit N0 FHC/L/CS/156/2017 between Robert Dyson & Dike Limited & 2 Ors v Diamond Bank Plc on October 11, 2019, and enforce the judgment of Justice Saidu delivered in Suit N): FHC/L/CS/1633/14 between parties.

The suit filed by Access Bank Plc and Siet Trading Limited has Robert Dyson & Diket Limited, SIO Properties Limited, Kenneth Odogwu (sued as beneficiary and in the representative capacity on behalf of all the administrators of the estate of late Chief Sonny Odogwu and the Registrar of Title Federal Land Registry for want of jurisdiction as respondents.

In the suit, the plaintiffs submitted that the judgment debtors have refused to hand over the Dubai property to the judgment creditors in line with the settlement agreement.

They also stated that the judgment debtor has refused to grant vacant possession to the properties at Kirikiri as well as the Dubai property to date in line with the consent judgment.

The judgment creditors are determined to protect depositors funds and realise the fruits of their judgment by recovering the judgment sum of N26 billion.

But Siet Trading Limited, (the second plaintiff in the suit) has filed a withdrawal notice, while Access Bank has also filed notice of withdrawal against Federal Registrar of Title (the 4th defendant).

In a motion of notice filed by its counsel at Federal High Court, Lagos, Siet Trading Limited is seeking to withdraw from the suit.

The notice for withdrawal was brought pursuant to order 50, Rule 2 of Federal High Court (Civil Procedure) Rules 2019 and under

the inherent jurisdiction of the court.

In the motion, the firm stated that it has withdrawn from all its claims as it relate to the originating summons of December 20, 2021 against the defendants in the suit.

Before the motion seeking to withdraw by the second defendant, Odogwu's family had in a motion on notice filed on December 31, 2021, urged the court to dismiss or in the alternative strike out the suit filed by Access Bank Plc and Siet Trading Limited.

The notice of preliminary objection was brought on the grounds that the suit constitutes an abuse of court process, that the plaintiffs (Access Bank and Siete Trading Limited), lack the locus standi to institute the suit as well as that the action as presently constituted did not disclose any reasonable cause of action against the defendants.

They also contended that the entire action is frivolous, vexatious, malicious, tantamount to abuse of the judicial process, that the action as presently constituted is an attempt to use the court to perfect fraud, as no leave of court was obtained before the filing of the suit seeking to set aside a consent judgment.

Why Senator Adeyemi pushes for monthly payment of rents in Abuja

There are indications that tenants in Abuja might soon start paying monthly as Nigerian Senate has passed for second reading, a bill seeking to regulate rent payments in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

The proposed legislation, sponsored by Senator Smart Adeyemi, seeks to stop yearly advance payment of rents and compel house owners to collect rent monthly in arrears.

Adeyemi, in his lead debate, said the bill was to cushion the effect of outrageous rents of property on residents in the nation's capital.

According to him, many property in Abuja are empty because of the outrageous rents placed on them.

Other Senators, who threw their weights behind the bill, described the proposed law as people-centred.

But Senator Chimaroke Nnamani, in his submission, noted that rents are determined by market forces, like the cost of acquiring land and building materials.

However, his position did not stop the passage of the bill for second reading.

After its passage for second reading, the bill was referred to the Senate Committee on Housing, which has four weeks to report back in plenary for further legislative inputs.

Police arrest suspected land grabber in Lagos

By **ALEX OLISE**

Operatives of the Lagos State Taskforce have arrested a suspected land grabber occupying a vast expanse of land at the Oluwasimi Estate, Maryland in Kosofe is a Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria.

The arrest followed series of petitions submitted by the complainant, Lieutenant Commander Asasi Adebambo to the office as Chairman of the Lagos State Taskforce over the alleged encroachment by the suspect.

The chairman of the State Taskforce, Shola Jejeloye, a Chief Superintendent of Police (CSP), disclosed this to The Trumpet in his office.

Jejeloye said the arrest was in furtherance of the state's resolve to rid the metropolis of land grabbers and criminal elements searching for property of unsuspecting individuals to acquire illegally.

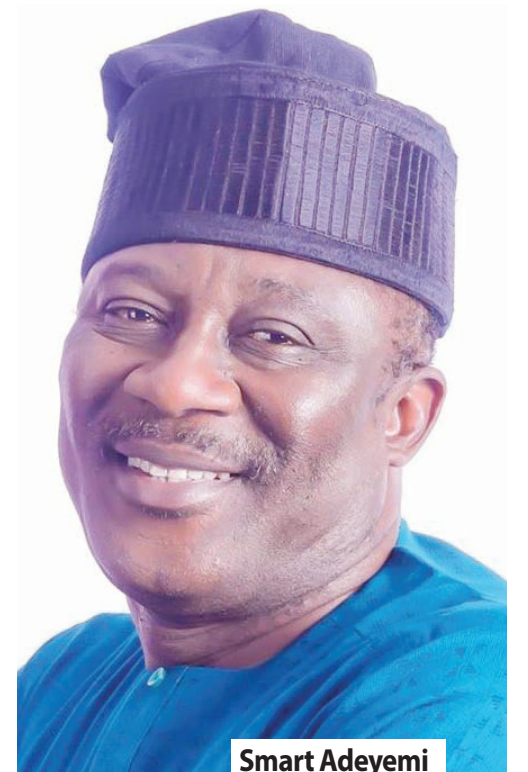
According to him, the suspect simply identified as Mr. Isaac had before his arrest been occupying the expanse of land situated at Oluwasimi Estate, Kane Village, Maryland, Lagos.

He said: "In swift response to the petition, operatives were mobilised to the location where the suspect was invited and brought to the office for questioning.

"During interrogation, the suspect claimed, he bought the land from one Mr. Urobo, and pledged to contest the legitimacy of the ownership when charged to court."

Regretting the incessant cases of land grabbing in the state, Jejeloye stressed that the Taskforce will continue to partner with sister agencies to nip the problem in the bud.

The Taskforce chairman further told The Trumpet that the era of land grabbers having their ways in the state is over. He said the agency would not condone any illegality or forceful occupation of land any longer in Lagos State.



Smart Adeyemi

Apapa residents tasked on dumping of refuse

Managing Director/CEO of the Lagos Waste Management Authority, (LAWMA), Mr. Ibrahim Odumboni, has tasked residents of Apapa and its environs, on pro-active steps towards ridding the environment of illegal dumpsites, as well as total eradication of reckless refuse disposal practices.

Odumboni, who also asked residents to shun indiscriminate dumping of refuse into canals and drainage channels, encouraged them to key into recycling, by separating their waste at source, to make additional income.

He gave the charge at Apapa Local Council Secretariat, Apapa, at an inaugural stakeholders' meeting and public sensitisation with residents and other stakeholders, scheduled to take place in all the 57 Local Governments and LCDAs of the state.

The LAWMA boss also urged them to raise a formidable waste policing team, to enforce that objective.

According to him, the time had come for the Authority to engage residents and all stakeholders to rid the council of filth and enthrone a new regime of cleanliness and sustainable environment.

He said: "The chairman of Apapa Local Council has been at the front burner of ensuring that this council gets rid of indiscriminate waste disposal. "We will start by ensuring that a transfer loading station is sited at Apapa, once the council boss can provide us with a land for easy evacuation of waste by PSP operators. This will increase the turn around time and improve the aesthetics of the council and its environs.

Lagos removes shanties on coastal road alignments

Lagos State Government has embarked on removal of all shanties along the Lekki Coastal road axis in a bid to protect the coastal road alignment.

General Manager, New Towns Development Authority (NTDA), Olakunle Aboyeji, who led the exercise, stated that the squatters and miscreants who had illegally converted the Lekki Coastal Road, Lekki Peninsula Scheme I, Maroko beach extension and the adjoining roads to their abode and commercial centre, posed a huge security risk to residents of the area and the adjoining communities.

He recalled that each time the stretch of land along the axis was cleared, the dislodged illegal squatters and miscreants, who occupied the roadside and constitute nuisance in the axis, would come back to rebuild their shanties because the construction of the coastal road was yet to commence.

According to him, government allowed temporary occupants, who put the land to good use, instead of squatters building shanties and embarking on illegal activities along the coastal road.

The General Manager dismissed allegations that the land along the coastal line has been sold with approval given to people to build permanent structures, maintaining that the position of the State Government had earlier been echoed by the Honourable Commissioner for Information and Strategy.

Lagos targets 7,000 new homes in 2022

Stories by ONYEBUCHI SAMPSON

Lagos State Government is raising more landlords this year going with its plan to unveil 7,000 new homes for low-income earners.

The new homes will complement the commissioned 744 housing units at Sangotedo, and another 660 housing units of LagosHoms to be commissioned within the year at Odo-Onosa Ayandelu in Ikosi-Ejirin Local Council Development Area.

It was learnt that the state has acquired 60 hectares of land in Okokomaiko, to ensure that more Lagosians actualise their dreams of becoming landlords this year.

Confirming this development, the state's Commissioner for Housing, Hon. Moruf Akinderu-Fatai, said, the plan was part of efforts by the Sanwo-Olu administration to address the housing deficit occasioned by the growing population.

He stressed that talks have reached an advanced stage and the state is almost set to start 3,600 one bedrooms and two bedrooms at the 60 hectares of land as the state is

hoping to build as many as possible houses in the land for the low income earners.

In addition to the ongoing housing projects, he added that the state government is also making progress in discussions with some international organisations that would soon embark on mass housing delivery in the state, assuring that more state housing schemes will be delivered to the people very soon. Akinderu-Fatai disclosed that the cited projects, which are being financed through direct budgetary allocations, are specifically for the benefit of low and middle-income earners.

The commissioner stressed that the present administration is engaging multinationals along with other MDAs to build and support in financing housing in the state, saying the option is viable given the fact that land is a limited resource in Lagos.

According to him, the government's various initiatives to bridge the state's housing deficit can only be achieved by maximizing scarce land through the construction of high-rise buildings.

The commissioner also said that all the LagosHoms have the same facilities irrespective of their

locations, adding that Igando homes have the same facilities as the ones located in Iponri and other areas in the state.

He said: "The state government is working tirelessly to deliver ongoing housing schemes so that the low and middle-class Lagosians can also come on the homeownership ladder.

"In an urban setting like ours and given the attendant challenges of uncontrolled immigration into the state, it behooves us, as your own government, to intervene in this sector so as to give succour to as many people as possible. "In utilising the THEMES agenda as a policy compass for achieving the Greater Lagos dream, the provision of decent homes is placed under the pillar of making Lagos a 21st Century Economy. This addresses our ultimate goal in housing development. We don't only build houses; we create homes in liveable communities. We provide supporting infrastructure within these environments to add value to the lives of our people. We promote a sense of togetherness that transcends our tribal, religious, and political differences.

"We will accomplish this through a convenient mortgage

system since a larger percentage of the homes will be allocated to the 'Rent-to-Home Scheme', whereby the tenure of payment will be spread over 120 months after the initial payment of five percent of the value of the homes by the allottees."

On the planned monthly tenancy scheme, the commissioner said the Sanwo-Olu-led government is determined to cater for others, who may not have plans or the ability to own homes, but have immediate needs for decent shelter

He said: "The state is at an advanced stage of enacting what we call the Lagos Monthly Tenancy Agreement Scheme.



Talent City targets tech community in Alaro City

Talent City, a revolutionary community founded by serial African techpreneurs, has berthed at Alaro City, Lagos' in the Lekki Free Zone.

Talent City is an innovative community designed and built for the future of work, where remote work-friendly policies, co-living, speedy internet and reliable infrastructure seamlessly integrate with an unrivalled digital experience.

Founded by Nigerian impact entrepreneur, Iyinoluwa Aboyeji, formerly of African unicorns Andela and Flutterwave, and Lugman Edu, Chief Visionary Officer and Managing Director of Filmo Real Estate, Talent City is set to transform the African tech landscape for good.

Talent City is built upon three pillars, a robust technology ecosystem, quality infrastructure and digital governance – and

strives to create an ideal work environment and community. Talent City is backed by Pronomos, Charter Cities Institute, Ventures Platform, and Lofty Inc and, following its inauguration at Alaro City, has the ambition to roll out additional model cities in Africa.

Founder, Talent City, Iyinoluwa Aboyeji, said: "We are thrilled to announce our first Talent City location in Lagos. Along with our partners, we have acquired a 72,000 sqm plot in Alaro City, Lagos' new city in the Lekki Free Zone. Our prototype city will be home to 1,000 residents and 2,500 remote workers, featuring a central co-working campus along with a variety of housing options designed for a flexible remote-friendly lifestyle of the future."

Managing Director, Alaro City, Yomi Ademola, said they are pleased to welcome the innovation and innovators of Talent City to

Alaro City, where they will find an equal partner in actualising Talent City's revolutionary ambitions in the technology ecosystem.

Alaro City is planned as a 2,000-hectare mixed-income, city-scale development with homes, offices, schools, healthcare facilities, hotels, entertainment and 150 hectares (370 acres) of parks and open spaces.

With more than 3.5 km of initial road networks and an eight-lane main boulevard with designated cycling lanes under construction, Alaro City provides world-class power, water and sewerage infrastructure.

Alaro City's benefits include zero corporate income tax on free zone income, zero withholding tax on dividends, zero VAT, no customs duties on imports as well as exemptions from FX controls. The new city is close to the Lekki Deep Sea Port and the planned

Lekki international airport, both of which will be critical drivers of growth in the Lekki Free Zone and Nigeria.

Alaro City is currently home to more than 50 companies, including Starium, a subsidiary of BUA Group, Mantrac (CAT) and Ariel Foods FZE, the largest Ready-To-Use Therapeutic Foods (RUTF) production facility in Africa, with an annual capacity of 18,000 metric tonnes.

Alaro City is a model for Public-Private-Partnerships, which are a key focus for the Lagos State Government, and is a joint venture between Rendeavour, Africa's largest new city builder, and Lagos State, the economic and financial nerve centre of Nigeria. Alaro City was awarded the "Best Industrial Development of the Year" distinction at the prestigious Real Estate Discussions and Awards (REDA) 2021.

Lagos raises drainage squads in LGs

To check flooding, Lagos State Government has approved the establishment of tertiary drainage maintenance squads (TDMS) for the clearing of tertiary drains in all its local government and council development areas.

The squads would be the first responders to flooding incidences in their councils for clearing of drainages.

Special Adviser on Drainage and Water Resources Engr. Joe Igbokwe, disclosed this on Wednesday at the second edition of stakeholders' meeting with Local Councils/LCDAs on cleaning and maintenance of tertiary drains in Lagos State.

Igbokwe said the squad will complement the Emergency Flood Abatement Gang already existing at the state level to ensure that tertiary drains properly discharge into primary and secondary drains.

While urging council authorities to think big but start small, he explained that with the employment of 50 drainage attendants, which would be paid

a minimum of N35,000 monthly, the councils would spend less, but achieve more, compared to what they presently spend to clean tertiary drains.

He said there is no straight jacketed approach to implementing the directives of Mr Governor, stressing that each council must adopt the strategy that suits it.

Igbokwe reiterated that the stakeholders meeting is one of the proactive measures put in place to have synergy between the State and Local Governments in terms of interdependence as it affects drainage channels

He declared that it's high time that Local councils /LCDAs take ownership of tertiary drains to reduce the pressure of desilting and cleaning of the secondary and primary channels where the State Government has continued to engage human and financial resources.

He said: "I am confident that this second forum will afford us the opportunity to agree on best practices to resolve all the

issues concerning the cleaning and maintenance of tertiary drains which are the drains that run across our tenements and how Local Councils should be at the forefront of monitoring and compelling residents to clean the tertiary drains across the state."

The meeting, he said, was consummated to sensitise Local Governments, its administrators as well as stakeholders to map out a new course on cleaning of tertiary drains and proffer solutions to foreseeable challenges.

He commended the efforts of the Emergency Flood Abatement Gangs (EFAG), employed by the State Government and deployed to undertake quick fix to free manholes or clogged up tertiary drains across the State.

In his remarks, Permanent Secretary, Office of Drainage Services and Water Resources, Engr. Olalekan Shodeinde said the time has come for Local Councils to take up their constitutional roles of tertiary drainage maintenance across the state stressing that

all hands must be on deck as the present administration is determined to ensure a flood free Lagos in line with the vision the State Government.

He explained that there should be no excuse of inhibitions from political leaders in the discharge of their duties as far as such projects and intentions are well laid out.

Shodeinde urged them to be bold to tackle challenges of having a cleaner environment, by always insisting on the right action in seeking continuous contributions of the Local Councils/LCDAs in ensuring the regular cleaning of the tertiary drains across the 57 councils towards ensuring regular maintenance and cleaning of the secondary and primary channels.

He further appealed to Lagosians to always report cases of drainage blockages, indiscriminate dumping of waste into canals and other unauthorised places to the state Government through the CITIMONITOR APP from Google play store and IStore across the state.

LEISURE/ENTERTAINMENT

Teens and social media

BY OMONIYI ALLI

Nowadays, social media are ubiquitous, offering many opportunities for people to share and access information, to create and distribute content, and to interact with more traditional media.

For almost two decades, the web has changed the world and revolutionized how information is stored, published, searched and consumed. The effect has spread so wide that it impacts not just businesses and industries but crosses over into politics, medicine, media and breaches

geographical locations, cultural boundaries and ultimately, affects people's day to day lives.

The great wave of web innovation since Google in 1998 has been in social media. Social media is about networking and communicating through text, video, blogs and pictures; status updates on sites such as Facebook, Myspace, LinkedIn or micro blogs such as Twitter.

Social media helps in communication and social interaction with quickly and efficiently. It bridges borders and other limitations; for instance you can be at Agidingbi, Lagos and communicate with someone in Otukpo, Benue State. You can as well be in Lagos, Nigeria and communicate with someone in London, United Kingdom.

Also, social media helps a great deal in information sharing. Many social networking sites incorporate an instant messaging feature, which lets people exchange information in real time via a chat. This is a great features for teachers to use to facilitate classroom discussions

because it lets them utilize the vast store information available on the Web. You can also use it to access news real time and also source for news. It can also be a great way to share tips and ideas. Sites like Pinterest have been very successful due to the ease in which a person

can learn and share information about hobbies, crafts, cooking, gardening and other do-it-yourself activities. By pinning and sharing, you can attract like-minded individuals into your circle.

A social media like LinkedIn is a good place to get connected professionally and get a job.

Social media aids public mobilization. It has given people, especially the new generation which is very computer savvy, a new and effective instrument to come together for issues they believe



in. Additionally, all social media relies on advanced information and communication

technologies that seamlessly work to build and support technological literacy. Simply put, one cannot be engaged in deep and meaningful uses of technology without developing the sorts of rich 21st Century skills such as information evaluation, troubleshooting,

mediated communication, and others that will enable connected learners to become valuable contributors to a connected global economy.

But on the side, Research has shown that social networking sites calls for addiction. People who use social networking sites for their daily communication are hooked to a point that they neglect health

responsibilities, especially their diet. The addictive nature of social media leads to eating disorders, obesity, heart problems, sleep disorders etc.

Also, constant exposure to the internet because of social networking addiction prevents a child or teen from from engaging in physical activities and socialization. The become so dependent on it that they

start to think making contact with other people outside the social network is not necessary. As such, they become socially and physically stagnant.

Related to this is the pressure to conform. One of the main reasons behind students or teens 24/7 connection or addiction is a fear of not keeping up with peers or appearing "like a loser in public".

The use of shorthand language is yet another negative effect of the social media on teens. Most users of social media use shorthand and abbreviations during communication, when not checked, it can become addictive and a disadvantage to students, especially during examinations.

Social media is the most popular use of the internet -surpassing email. In a survey, 89 percent of responders admitted to wasting time on social media while at work. This is also true of students as some of the time spent on social media occurs at school and for non-academic related activity.

Additionally, the use of social networks may expose students to inappropriate contact and content. Parents should diligently filter the Web content of their children. Besides, unleashing age-inappropriate content, the digital age also gave birth to a social phenomenon; cyber bullying. It is often levied more harshly against young females than males and, unlike traditional bullying; it is not limited to physical interaction. Cyber bullying can happen 24 hour a day, every day of the week. Cyber bullying is when someone is tormented, threatened, harassed,

humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another person using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones.



LEISURE/ENTERTAINMENT



Eniola Badmus' takes her 'Feeds the Needy' initiative to Living Fountain Orphanage at Oba Abiodun Oniru Road, Lagos

Rite Foods sponsors Nollywood celebrity, Eniola Badmus' 'Feeds the Needy' Initiative in Lagos

Rite Foods Limited, the leading manufacturer of carbonated soft drinks, sausages and energy drink in Nigeria, has restated its commitment to corporate philanthropy with its sponsorship of Eniola Badmus' 'feeds the needy' initiative held recently in Lagos.

The 'Feed the Needy' initiative is championed by Nollywood celebrity, Eniola Badmus with a clear objec-

tive of putting smiles on the faces of the less privileged in the state. The initiative, in its fourth edition witnessed the feeding of over fifty thousand needy people with Rite Foods providing an array of its fantastically refreshing beverages, Bigi drinks, complimented with Bigi premium table water as well as its spicy and tasty beef sausage rolls given out to refresh, revitalize

and recharge thousands of the needy across various centers in the state.

Boluwatife Adedugbe, Asst Brand Manager, Beverage and Bakery, Rite Foods Limited stated that the initiative is in line with her company's commitment to corporate philanthropy by making a meaningful difference in a refreshing way in the lives of people in various communities across the country. "As a company, we are

poised to strengthen global solidarity with focus on meeting the needs of the poor and vulnerable people in different communities across the country," she stated.

Some of the locations visited during the initiative include the Living Fountain Orphanage, Heart of Gold Children Hospice, Nigerian Red Cross Society Motherless Babies Home, Heritage Homes Orphanage, Bab es Salaam Orphanage Home and Temidire Primary School, Shogunle Lagos.

Eniola Badmus, the convener of

the initiative commended Rite Foods Company for supporting the initiative and poured her heartfelt gratitude to the company for always showing up to supporting causes that make an enduring impact in the lives of people in the country. "Rite Foods has been wonderful in ensuring that smiles come to the faces of people in various communities across the state and Nigeria, and I appreciate them for helping me achieve the objective consecutively for four years; this noble initiative of feeding the needy in Lagos," she said.

Entertainment biz more of strategy, content, Emperor Geezy declares

Renowned entertainment guru and creative power house, Festus Ehimare, better known as Emperor Geezy, has revealed that the business is driven first by the right content regardless of its sector in the creative industry, be it music, movie, advert or promotional content.

He said: "You have to get the right content out then create the best strategy to capture your target Demography. I have dealt with different brands, people and also played a lot advisory role in different above the line product place in different campaigns. Entertainment is not cheap business and not for the weak. You invest a lot with no market pointers so all you have is your strategy and your team."

It is pertinent to note that Emperor Geezy needs no introduction within the pan African entertainment business circuit as he is one the many few label bosses that gave prominence to Kizz Daniel, DJ Shabsy, SugarBoy to mention but few.



'Date my Family Nigeria,' 'Unmarried', 'My Siblings and I' premiere on Africa Magic

Africa Magic, the continent's leading provider of premium continental entertainment, in January 2022 premiered the third season of the hit drama series, *Unmarried* and reality TV series, *Date my Family Nigeria*, while popular comedy series, *My Siblings and I*, returns for a fourth season.

After bringing together 13 beautiful couples in season 2, the most immersive dating experience, *Date My Family*, is back with a bang for a third season. Lovers of this reality TV series can look forward to seeing 13 new couples meet each other, go on a first date and possibly catch the love bug.

Season four of *My siblings and I* premiered Monday, 10 January on Africa Magic Urban; This family sitcom follows the Aberuagba family whose family mantra is - *An Aberuagba's business is every Aberuagba's business!* The last season ended on an exciting note as Aunt Blessing's 'boo' asked her to marry him but then misplaced the engagement ring.

The biggest question fans have to ask this season is - "will we be planning a wedding?"

Unmarried, which follows the lives of three single women, premiered Wednesday, 12 January on Africa Magic Showcase.

In keeping with its commitment, MultiChoice continues to create local content that keeps viewers engaged and entertained. Executive Head, Content and West Africa Channels, MultiChoice Nigeria, Dr Busola Tejumola, said: "Local content is at the heart of our production at Africa Magic. We continue to tell authentic Nigerian stories whilst showcasing the best entertainment content the continent has to offer. These returning Africa Magic series will tell the inclusive stories of Nigerian families with *My Siblings and I*, the current realities of unmarried women 30 years and older with *Unmarried*, and the competitive nature of dating in Nigeria through *Date My Family*. Fans of these series will be in for great entertainment."



Tactics deployed against Tunisia were right – Eguavoen

Stories by OVIRI KELVIN

The head of the technical crew of the Super Eagles of Nigeria, Augustine Eguavoen, has refuted claims by Nigerians that his tactics were easily predictable for the Tunisians to send the team packing from the AFCON 2021 tournament.

Eguavoen, whose team's performances in the group stage were excellent, recording a maximum of 9 points from three matches, crashed out in the round of 16.

He said the Super Eagles have a history with the Tunisia national team adding that the game could have gone either way.

According to the head of the Super Eagles technical crew, the tactics he deployed in the match against the Tunisians were right but it was unfortunate the team was unlucky not to get a win.

Disagreeing with the formation adopted, Eguavoen who won the continental trophy in 1994 stated that the successes of a team have a lot to do with teamwork.

While commending his approach to the knockout round of 16, he acknowledged that

the red card issued to Alex Iwobi affected his tactical change to get an equaliser.

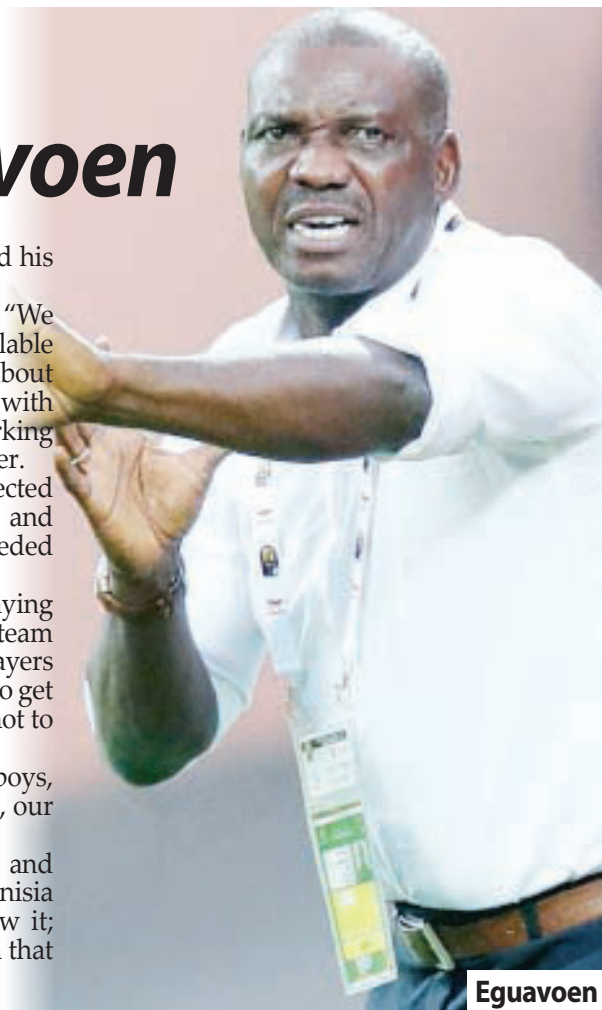
Eguavoen, according to brila.net, said: "We approach games with the personnel available and the reaction of the opponent. It's not about 442 or 433, it doesn't always have to do with the system; it's having 11 players working together; defending and attacking together.

"I think the red card we got also affected us, but we managed to respond, and unfortunately we couldn't get the needed goal," he added.

However, Eguavoen, while downplaying the effect of his tactics deployed when the team was down to 10 men, commended the players for the determination and zeal exhibited to get a goal. He added the team was unlucky not to get a goal despite coming close.

"It also brought the best out of the boys, in fact when we were reduced to 10 men, our boys operated more.

"So it wasn't always about tactics and overtime games between Nigeria and Tunisia are very close and the records will show it; that game could have gone either way on that day we were just unlucky," he said.



Eguavoen

Olympics unites humankind in all our diversity – IOC

...Winter Olympic squadron lit to herald opening ceremony

The President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Thomas Bach, has stressed that the Olympics games are to unite humankind in all our diversity.

Bach said this in the restricted opening ceremony of the 24th edition of the Winter Olympics in Beijing when the Olympic cauldron was lit to herald the event.

The IOC, which has come under fierce criticism for taking the Olympics to China that has been accused of human rights abuses, disregarded the calls noting that the mission of the Olympic games is to breed peace and mutual respect amid fierce rivalry, divisions, conflicts, and mistrust.

Noteworthy, Beijing is the first city to host the Summer and Winter Olympics edition of the Olympic games.

According to the BBC Sport Africa, the Olympic torch was placed into the centre of a giant snowflake, which was then illuminated to become the cauldron.

The snowflake is made up of placards with the names of the 91 nations competing in Beijing.

The IOC President during his address to political authorities around the globe, appealed to them to give peace a chance.

Bach in his address, said: "all political authorities across the globe should give peace a chance.

"In our fragile world, where division, conflict, and mistrust are on the rise, we show the world: yes, it is possible to be fierce rivals, while at the same time living peacefully and respectfully together," he added.

The IOC President, in his address to the participating athletes in the Olympics, told them to be role models to the world as they would live to respect and obey the same rules and each other.

While the athletes will live harmoniously under one roof in the Olympic Village, Bach reminded them that they are in the games to compete for the highest prize.

However, he assured the athletes that there will be no form of discrimination whatsoever.

He said, "You will show how the world would look if we all respected the same rules and each other.

"Over the next two weeks, you will compete with each other for the highest prize. At the same time, you will live peacefully together under one roof in the Olympic Village.

"There, there will be no discrimination for any reason whatsoever," he concluded.

CAF approves venue for Nigeria's second leg FIFA World Cup Qualifiers Playoff against Ghana

...Rejects Ghana's request for venue change

The Confederation of African Football (CAF) has approved the Moshood Abiola National Stadium, Abuja, for the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar as the venue for the second leg play-off between Nigeria and arch-rivals, Ghana.

CAF, in a letter, addressed to the Secretary General of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF), Mr. Mohammed Sanusi, stated that the stadium meets its criteria after conducting a proper assessment and inspection of its facilities.

Furthermore, CAF affirmed that the FIFA World Cup qualifiers playoff will be taking place from Match 21 to Match 29.

CAF said: "Reference to the participation of the national team of Nigeria in the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 African qualifiers play-off rounds which will take place from Match 21 to March 29, following the stadium assessment and inspection process conducted by CAF, kindly find below the decision on the venue selected by our association.

"Moshood Abiola National Stadium, Abuja, approved.

"Please note that the approved stadium will be set as the venue to host the match Nigeria versus Ghana related to the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 African qualifiers playoff round.

"Nonetheless, please find attached in Annex A the inspection comments and remarks addressed in the coming period by your association, in order to guarantee that the stadium is maintained in the list of CAF-approved stadiums for senior competitions.

"Among other aspects mentioned in the report, the stadium management is requested to ensure that the playing surface area, floodlights, and the dressing room are brought to the required level to host this important match," CAF added.

Meanwhile, CAF has disapproved of Ghana's request to move the first leg of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 African qualifiers playoff round from Accra Sports Stadium to Baba Yara Stadium, Kumasi.

CAF statement reads: "The FIFA World Cup 2022 preliminary competition regulations in its article 21 venues, kick-off times and training sessions stipulate that the venues of matches shall be set by the host association

and/or by the confederation, as applicable, and the matches may only be played in stadiums that have been inspected and approved by the confederation concerned.

"The opponents and the FIFA general secretariat shall be notified by the host association and/or by the confederation, as applicable, at least three months before the match in question is due to be played.

"24th of December 2021 was the deadline set by CAF for the participating national associations to select and communicate to CAF their preferred venue for the play-off round of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 African qualifiers.

"On the 23rd of December 2021, GFA informed CAF that Cape Coast Stadium was the venue selected for the play-off

round of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 African qualifiers.

"Based on the venue selection received from each of the participating national associations, CAF has timely concluded the assessment of the selected stadium(s) and communicated to FIFA the venue decisions for the upcoming FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 African qualifiers play-off round.

"Considering that matchday is in less than 30 days, CAF is not in a position to delay any further confirmation of the match venue. As you are aware, the selection of the venue, respective date, and time of the match, has to be set well in advance having a direct impact on the preparation of match logistics and operations by all the concerned parties.

"Besides, please note that Kumasi Sports



Motsepe



IOC president to meet embattled tennis star Peng at Beijing Olympics close-loop

Stories By **OVIRI KELVIN**

International Olympic Committee (IOC) President, Thomas Bach, has stated that he will be having a meeting with Peng Shuai inside a closed-loop in Beijing to discuss her well-being.

Peng Shuai had in November, taken to social media to accuse former Chinese Vice Premier, Zhang Gaoli, of sexually assaulting her.

Bach, Thursday, noted that a former world number one tennis doubles player's well-being and safety are of utmost priority.

Penultimate February, Peng said her post on social media was misconstrued that she never accused anyone of sexually assaulting her.

In all these melodramas, Zhang who she alleged to have sexually assaulted her is yet to comment on the issue.

According to the IOC President, several videos and phone calls have been made with Peng after the incident and he has opted to

see her inside the close-loop in the Beijing Olympics starting on February 4 to 20th. The close-loop is a restricted zone for participants to avoid the spread of covid19 in Beijing.

In a new conference, Bach said: "We know from her explanations that she is living in Beijing, that she can move freely, spending time with family and friends."

"Now we will be able to do the next step in a personal meeting to convince us in person of her well-being and state of mind."

"If she wants to have an inquiry we would also support her in this. But it's her life, it's her allegations."

"We will know more about her physical integrity and mental state when we meet her in person," he added.

Bach assured of the IOC's continuous support to Peng during this travail noting that the support will not diminish in any guise.

According to reports, a tennis tournament slated to take place in China has been suspended by the Women Tennis Association (WTA) in solidarity with Peng.



Bach

Mane, Mendy want to win AFCON trophy for Senegal, coach

By **OVIRI KELVIN**

Captain of the Teranga Lions of Senegal, Sadio Mane, has said that they are in the final of the Total Energies Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) to win the trophy for their coach, Aliou Cisse.

Mane stated that Cisse is the most criticised coach in the tournament and he deserves to win the trophy this year.

Senegal, which is yet to win the trophy, came close to their maiden continental title in 2019 when the Teranga Lions played Algeria in the final but lost by a lone goal.

The Liverpool player, who will be playing against his fellow club's teammate, Mohamed Salah, on Sunday, to slug it out for the AFCON 2021 title, noted that the highly-spirited Senegal national team wants to win the

trophy for the country and their coach.

According to BBC Sport Africa, Mane said: "I believe this man, Aliou Cisse, deserves everything because he's the most criticised coach I've ever seen in my life, but he never gives up."

"He trusts himself, he trusts the group. He has critics outside, but right here he is doing his job."

"Most importantly, we would like to win this for him and our country because he deserves it after everything he went through as a player for Senegal and now as the coach."

"It will be a great reward for everything he has given to his country."

Aliou Cisse who won 35 caps for his country, captained the Teranga Lions in World Cup 2002 where they defeated France in the opening games and proceeded to reach the quarter-finals of the

competition.

Mane assured that the Senegal national team will not be distracted by the aura associated with the final of the competition but are working hard to ensure the team wins it to avoid a repeat of its AFCON 2019 ordeal.

"All the players know that we are very close to it now."

"Being close again to the trophy doesn't matter. We still have to work hard to win because we've been in the final years ago and this time we must do everything not to let it slip. We have to win," Mane added.

Also, the Senegal goalkeeper and winner of the FIFA best goalkeeper 2021, Edouard Mendy, lauded the coach, saying he possesses the right qualities to lead the team to AFCON 2021 success.

According to Mendy, Aliou is an indigenous coach who has worked hard to build the team and

communicates with a native dialect that everyone easily understands.

He acknowledged that they have been in the final of the AFCON competition before but do not want to take that route and as such, are prepared to win this time around.

"We've been here before, but the manager has what it takes to lead us to success," he told BBC Sport Africa.

"What makes Senegal special under his guidance, I think, is the team spirit and the team effort."

"The coach is Senegalese like us. When he speaks he knows what he's saying and that's a big advantage for us. Someone who has been on this same path and football journey."

"We have one more important step to take and we hope we can do it for Senegal, the coach, and of course ourselves," he added.



Mane