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APRIL 23-24, 2022
VOL. 1 NO. 035

N250 **Weekend**

Jonathan opens door to 2023

■ Consultations ongoing, he confirms

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Goodluck Jonathan



"Glasgow is the latest city to restitute Benin Bronzes to Nigeria. Glasgow City Council in Scotland voted to return 17 of the looted treasures from the Glasgow Museums collection. The move is part of the largest repatriation of cultural artifacts in Scottish history..." — @artnet

Kenya's ex-President Mwai Kibaki dies at 90 → 2

Jonathan opens door to 2023

Former President Goodluck Jonathan has again spoken on the 2023 presidential race.

Acknowledging that he has been receiving calls to throw his hat into the ring, he, however, declared that consultations are ongoing.

The former president made the clarification on Friday morning when reacting to a call by a coalition of youth groups that stormed his Maitama, Abuja residence to urge him to run 2023 presidential

race.

Dr. Jonathan, speaking to journalists after a brief meeting with the youth delegation, said: "yes, they are calling me to come and contest for next election.

"The key role we must play is to pray that Nigeria gets somebody that carries the young people along. Somebody that can also work very hard to see that some of the problems you raised are dealt with by the government.

"And I believe collectively, we will work together."

Charging the supporters after the meeting, Jonathan said the youths should keep getting involved in the political process for a better Nigeria.

Earlier, the leader of the group, Jonathan Azunobi, lamented the hardship being faced by Nigerians while stressing that the country needs the former president back to rescue Nigeria.

He said the youth coalition believed that President Jonathan has the template to restore the country's pride and give all Nigerians a sense of belonging.



Jonathan

Kenya's ex-President Mwai Kibaki dies at 90

By **OROWO VICTORIA**
Ojieh with agency report

Former President Mwai Kibaki of Kenya has died at 90. He was the country's third president

Kibaki's death was confirmed in a statement issued by Kenyatta, who said the country would observe a period of national mourning from Friday until his burial.

His political career spanned decades, including serving as vice president to Daniel arap Moi, the man he replaced as president in 2002.

Kibaki, an economist and passionate golf player, left behind a complicated legacy when he stepped down after his second presidential term ended in 2013. He not only oversaw a new constitution that brought hope for change, he led Kenya during a period of robust economic growth and major infrastructure developments.

But he was also in command during the most violent election in the country's history, when more than 1,200 people died in bloody ethnic battles after disputed 2007 polls.

Kibaki served as president from 2002 to 2013, winning elections against Kenyatta and ending four decades of one-party rule.

He came to power promising to fight corruption and transform Kenya's economy, while he ushered in economic reforms, corruption continued.

Kibaki was also hailed in 2010 for shaping a new constitution for Kenya and improving social services.

Kenyatta paid tribute to Kibaki as "the gentleman of Kenyan politics" and recalled "his dignity, his diligence, candor, and concern for the well-being of all Kenyans."

"Kibaki was a quintessential patriot whose legacy of civic responsibility will continue to inspire generations of Kenyans long into our future," Kenyatta said.

Kenyatta also praised the late president for transforming the country.

"The late former president's administration conceptualized and spearheaded a transformation in crucial sectors such as education through the globally lauded free primary education program, infrastructure developments in transport and energy and the increasing the availability and the access to health care for his fellow Kenyans," Kenyatta said.

At the end of two terms, Kibaki handed power to Kenyatta, who was elected in 2013, and retired from politics.

I'll speak at appropriate time on presidential race, says Akpabio

By **TUNDE JOSHUA**, Abuja

Minister, Niger Delta Affairs Ministry, Senator Godswill Akpabio, has told those urging him to contest the 2023 presidential election that he would speak at the appropriate time.

Akpabio stated this while receiving the leadership of Arewa Concerned Citizens For Development and members of the Presidential Support Committee (PSC), who came to formally call on him to run for the office of the president in 2023.

He said "let me move on the basis of my records. Everybody is consulting and people are coming and asking me, when are you taking the giant step? I am telling them, just relax God is in control and at the right time, God will direct."

The group, according to its National Vice Chairman, Hon Huseni Ladan, said, "apart from coming to call on our leader in the Presidential Support Committee (PSC), to run for the presidency, we are also here to present him this award for his outstanding contributions to the developing country and peace in the Niger Delta Region."

A statement Friday signed by Akpabio's

Chief Press Secretary, Jackson Udom, quoted the former governor of Akwa Ibom State as saying "When God finally directs, I am not in doubt, I have you as my foot-soldiers. You are not just anybody. When people like you speak, God listens. He will continue to honour you all as you have honoured me today. I receive this award with gladness and I dedicate it to President Muhammadu Buhari, who gave me the opportunity to serve Nigerians in a difficult time like this."

Commenting on calls for his declaration of interest in the presidential contest, the former Senate Minority Leader said, "I will say that the time is ripe and your move is also apt. I am also consulting. I know we are in dire need of steps to put the country together.

"I am a bit shocked. I wasn't expecting this honour. It only shows that yes, indeed, our efforts at building bridges across Nigeria and across different religious and ethnic divides then, are working. We will continue to work together.

"As a governor of Akwa Ibom State, I was lucky to have Muslim brothers from the North as my CSO,

ADC, and Orderly. We worked together, we didn't even recognize who was a Muslim or not. As a Christian governor, I sponsored several Muslims to the Holy Land, among numerous interventions across the country.

"I tell people, don't talk about the unity of this country with your mouth, put it into practice like I did. Don't talk about development with your mouth, put it into practice."

Akpabio noted that what the president needed most at this time was prayers from Nigerians to enable him achieve more for the people, stressing that no matter the antics and machinations of enemies, the current leadership of the country will berth the ship of governance at a very enviable place.

"We have to work together, to nip a lot of things in the bud. There are so many enemies around. They are conspiring to see how they can bring the present government down. I am very convinced that God will not allow them. What we are facing today is what I call challenges. Every country does face challenges. With God's grace, we will survive as a nation.

"We are facing banditry, organised and sponsored insurgencies taking different forms, Train attack and economic sabotage in the Niger Delta Region, (where I understand there is a lot of oil theft and we have not been able to take advantage of the current oil price) are all challenges. All hands must be on deck with the cooperation of all Nigerians to bring it under control.

"Above all, God has already signalled that there is an end in sight and that is why the Ramadan and Lent coincided, and at the end of this Ramadan fast, I expect the resurgence of progressive actions in Nigeria," he declared.

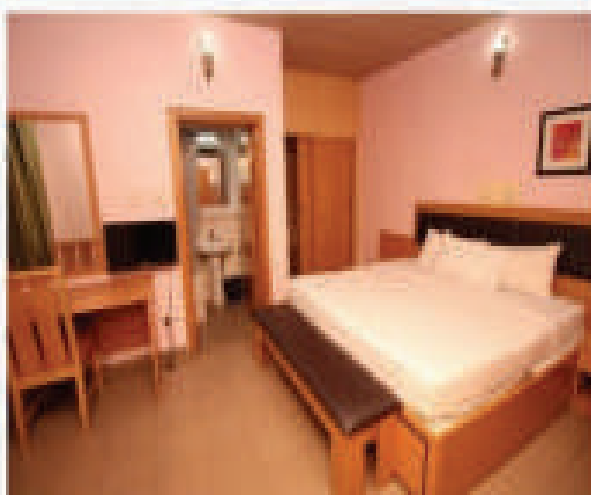
Akpabio thanked the president for his resilience in the face of all these, saying, "I must thank Mr President for his resilience. The Holy Books enjoin us to pray for our leaders. We will continue to pray for him. He should not be deterred by what he is seeing today, because the enemies you see today, you will not see them tomorrow."

Earlier in his opening remarks, Hon Huseni Ladan, who is also the North West Coordinator of the PSC lauded

the Minister for his sterling national qualities which has continued to endear him to Nigerians, home and abroad, and that is the major reason why Nigerians are calling and waiting for him to declare for the presidency.

According to him, "we are all proud of your leadership, because it was under you as the National coordinator of the PSC that this government was voted back to office in 2019. This is a structure we have maintained all over the country till this moment. We are waiting for the right direction and we will stand and support you because we have confidence and trust in you."

Speaking further, Ladan stressed that, "because we believe in you and your achievements in public office, we are here today, under the auspices of the Royal Fathers from the North, to present to you this award for Excellence in Service and to formally call on you to throw your hat into the presidential race. As a Minister, you have brought so much peace into the Niger Delta Region and we are proud of you and that is why we have come to endorse you for the office of the president in 2023."



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Delta to terminate Mosogar electricity contract

Governor Ifeanyi Okowa has said that his Delta State government may terminate the contract of electricity supply project in Mosogar, Ethiopia West Local Government Area over contractor's non-performance.

Okowa gave the hint at the final passage rites of the Ovie of Mosogar, Samson Okirhiobo Imoyin-Omene, Udurhie I, at the Palace Ground in Mosogar.

He expressed dissatisfaction with the performance of the contract, saying that he was disturbed to hear that the project had continued to suffer unnecessary delay on account of the ineptitude of the contractor.

He said that the state government would take steps to terminate and re-award the electricity project to a more competent contractor.

The governor assured the community people of government's support towards rehabilitation of its

internal roads.

"Let me say that I am dissatisfied to hear that the project has continued to suffer delay after my approval.

"If after one year plus and the project is still not delivered then it truly deserves to be terminated.

"Let me assure you that we will deal with the issue," he said.

Okowa paid glowing tribute to the late monarch, describing him as humble leader who cared for the growth and development of his Kingdom.

"The late Udurhie was truly a very humble man who was so much concerned about the development of his kingdom.

"Truly, his humility was such that attracted everyone who came close to him and that's what is expected of us, especially when we find ourselves in positions of power.

"On behalf of my family, the government and people of Delta, we condole with the family and the entire kingdom on the passing



Delta Governor, Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa (2nd left), discussing with former Governors of the State, Chief James Ibori (2nd right), and Dr. Emmanuel Uduaghan (right). With them on the left is Chief Ighoyota Amori at the funeral of the late Ovie of Mosogar, His Royal Majesty, Samson Okirhiobo Imoyin-Omene, Odurhie I, the Ovie of Mosogar Kingdom in Ethiopia West Local Government Area of Delta State on Friday. Pix: JIBUNOR SAMUEL

of their beloved father and king.

"From what I have seen here today, the people of Mosogar truly loved their king and it is our prayer that his soul will continue to rest in peace," Okowa stated.

In his welcome address, the traditional prime minister and Otota of Mosogar Kingdom, Chief

Ighoyota Amori said the funeral symbolises the end and beginning of a new era in the kingdom as preparation into the future for the enthronement of a new king.

He said the kingdom was founded in 2006 with Udurhie I, the first ever king presented with staff of office in 2007.

He urged the state

government to terminate and re-award the contract for the 2.5MVA Transformer to energize the Mosogar electricity network.

The funeral was attended by former governors of the state, Chief James Ibori, Dr Emmanuel Uduaghan, members of the National and State House of Assembly, among other dignitaries.

Nigerians face long weekend, labour, Islamic holidays

Nigerians are about to experience one of the longest weekends ever.

Weekend starts on Friday, April 29th, which will continue on Monday, May 2nd as a public holiday has been declared to celebrate May 1st as workers day.

The weekend will also continue into Tuesday May 3rd and Wednesday May 4th as the federal government has declared both days as public holidays to celebrate Sallah.

Work resumes on Thursday, May 5th, 2022.

Poly imposes curfew, denies rape allegation during robbery

By OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH

Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, Ogun State has imposed curfew within the institution from 11pm to 4.00am over robbery attacks.

It also denied any case of rape during a robbery that recently happened at the off-campus residence of its students.

A statement by the institution's Deputy Registrar, Public Relations, Sola Abiala, explained that an increase in cases of armed robbery in the town was observed but not in the extent of how it was being portrayed.

The statement explained that the Rector and Deputy Rector of the institution had a meeting with some stakeholders on the issue. It was established at the meeting that students had disrespect for the rules, regulations, and customs of the polytechnic and that of the host community.

According to the statement: "The involvement of disgruntled students, especially some rusticated or withdrawn students who neither live in Ilaro nor surrender their identity cards, was prominently noticeable.

"Students are in the habits of night crawling, display of affluence through expensive phones and gadgets, engaging in advance fee fraud practices, otherwise known as yahoo-yahoo, and use of generators for almost 24 hours daily.

"The restriction of movement between 11 pm and 4 am, especially by students, is put in place with immediate effect. Students should always have their identity cards with them at all times.

"There is an increase in armed robbery cases in the town, but not as escalated as it's being reported. There are no established cases of rapes being widely reported in the media, especially the social media platforms.

"That all generators should be switched off latest by 11 pm. That institution's management should not only publish the names of rusticated, dismissed or withdrawn students, but their pictures should be widely publicised."

Police declare 12 wanted over murder of two in Anambra

By PAUL MICHAEL, Defence Editor, Abuja

Nigeria Police Force (NPF) has declared 12 persons wanted over the murder of two persons, Ifeanyi Anazoba and Chukwuebuka Amodo, at a burial function in Umuzuocha Town Hall, Awka South of Anambra State.

The Trumpet gathered that the wanted suspects in the incident that happened on 19th January 2019, beheaded the two victims and burnt their bodies beyond recognition. They were alleged to have also kidnapped two others and vandalized two properties valued at over 1.2 billion Naira.

Declaring the suspects

wanted, Force Public Relations Officer, CSP Olumuyiwa Adejobi, in a press statement said that all the suspects are male of Igbo extraction with ages ranging from 25 years to 55 years old. Adding that they are all natives of Isu-Aniocha, Awka North LGA of Anambra State with heights between 1.5m to 1.7m.

He called on the public to provide useful information that can lead to their apprehension by calling 08036012082.

"The Nigeria Police Force hereby declare wanted the following twelve (12) persons in connection with a case of conspiracy, murder, armed

robbery, act of terrorism, kidnapping, cultism and unlawful possession of firearms, housebreaking, burglary, malicious damage, and conduct likely to cause breach of public peace in Isu-Aniocha, Awka North LGA of Anambra State, Nigeria."

Those declared wanted are; Edward Okoye (aka Stone), Donatus Okeke, Onyemazi Ngini, Onyebuchi Nwekeizu Okoye, Nonso Eboh and Chukwuka Onyibor.

Others are; Chukwujekwu Anaekokwu, Chuka Ilodigwe, Chinedu Nwoye Okoye, Nonso Awusionwu Obinna, Cosmos Okonkwo, and Chukwujekwu Okoye.

"The Police had earlier

secured a court order to declare wanted the suspects, all male of Igbo extraction with ages ranging from 25 years to 55 years old, natives of Isu-Aniocha, Awka North LGA of Anambra State with heights between 1.5m to 1.7m.

"Edward Okoye (aka Stone), had in conjunction with others shot two men dead - one Ifeanyi Anazoba (aka Ichafu) and one Chukwuebuka Amodo (aka Mutum) at a burial function in Umuzuocha Town Hall, Awka South of Anambra State on 19th January 2019, beheaded them and burnt their bodies beyond recognition; kidnapped two others, and vandalized two properties valued at

over 1.2 billion Naira. The suspects equally attacked and brutalized some mobile police officers detailed to restore calm to the community.

"The Nigeria Police Force, therefore, urges all well-meaning members of the general public to assist the police with useful information which would facilitate their arrest and ensure they are brought to justice. This can be done through 08036012082. It further assures that justice would not just be done in the matter, but would be seen by all parties in the matter, to have been done as the police will leave no stone unturned in unravelling the ugly and criminal incident."

Duport refinery to boost petrol, kerosene, CNG production in Edo

By ISAAC OLAMIKAN

Managing Director of Duport Midstream Company Limited, Dr Akintoye Akindele, has said its energy park would boost the production of naphtha, diesel, kerosene, CNG, LPG and LNG in Edo in furtherance of the state government's industrialization drive.

Akindele said this during a visit of the Executive Secretary of the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB), Engr. Simbi Kesiye Wabote, to the energy park complex in

Egbokor, in Edo State.

The Duport Energy Park is the second refinery project in Edo State after the Edo Modular Refinery in Ologbo, which is a 6600bpd facility established through a joint venture between the Edo Refinery and Petrochemical Limited and AIPCC Energy Limited.

Akindele said: "NCDMB has been a big part of Duport's success story. It takes more than finance but also advice, technical and commercial, to build a novel and unique project. Duport Energy Park will refine



crude oil into naphtha, AGO, otherwise known as diesel, Heavy Fuel Oil and DPK, known popularly as

kerosene as well as process gas to CNG, LPG and LNG."

He added that the

facility is the second firm in Nigeria to acquire a tier-4 data centre license.

Engr. Wabote, on his part, said Duport Energy Park was the first integrated energy park in Nigeria, with a 2,500 barrels refinery, CNG Gas processing plant, 10 megawatts power plant, and a data centre.

A member of the Board of Directors of the Duport Energy Park, Dr Olatutu Sholeye, expressed delight at the work done, adding that it had created employment opportunities and built capacities among the youths in the state.

OAU not foot-dragging on sexual abuse scandal'

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH**

Obafermi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile Ife has denied an allegation that it is foot dragging in sanctioning a professor alleged to have sexually assaulted a female student in his office.

This is contained in a statement by Abiodun Olarewaju, the Public Relations Officer of the University.

Olarewaju revealed that in the unwholesome incident that happened on March 18, 2022, Boluwatife Bababunmi of the

Department of Linguistics and African Languages, wrote a petition to the University Management against a Professor of Yoruba Incantations and Stylistics, Prof Joseph Opefeyitimi, of the same department, on the 21st of March, 2022.

A female student of Obafemi Awolowo University, Boluwatife Hannah Bababunmi had in a letter addressed to the Department of Linguistics and African Languages of the university, titled: "Report of sexual assault and molestation against Professor

Ayo Opefeyitimi".

According to her, the lecturer who is taking Yoruba incantations, and stylistics, sexually molested her during a visit to his office on March 18, 2022. She said the professor invited her to his office and as she was leaving, he grabbed her from behind and continued to grope her after which he exposed his already erect penis to rub her buttocks.

The Public Relations Officer of the institution affirmed that for the avoidance of doubt, the Management of Obafemi

Awolowo University has never shielded and will not shield any staff or student found to have committed any sexual misconduct.

According to him, previous cases of this nature have not escaped the disciplinary measures of the University management.

In the statement, "Procedurally, after the receipt of the formal complaints, the first step was that the departmental committee sat on the matter and, after thorough investigation, Professor Opefeyitimi was found prima facie liable.

"Second stage was the Faculty level and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Professor Niyi Okunoye referred the matter to the anti-sexual harassment committee of the university. The committee, which also sat and clinically deliberated on this same matter, recommended appropriate disciplinary actions against Professor Ayo Opefeyitimi to the university management.

"Of course, the university administration would have to present its recommendations to the Governing Council which has the final say on the matter, considering the status of the staff involved.

"We want the general public to be rest assured and be reassured that the present university management does not condone sexual rascality of any form, under any guise

against any member of the university community from anybody. We also pledge to continue to protect our students, particularly the female ones, against any sexual predator, no matter how highly placed.

"As a mark of its zero-tolerance for sexual harassment, the present university management had summarily dismissed three lecturers who had committed similar sexual offences.

"The first lecturer to be dismissed was from the Department of Management and Accounting while the second one was from the Department of English Language. The third one, who was given his letter of dismissal last month, was teaching in the Department of International Relations." Olarewaju mentioned.



Israeli Ambassador to Nigeria, Michael Freeman; Chairman, Nigeria Governors' Forum/Ekiti State Governor, Dr Kayode Fayemi; former NGF Chairman, Abubakar Yari; and Group Managing Director, NNPC, Mele Kyari; during a courtesy visit by the Ambassador to the NGF Secretariat, in Abuja.

Tambuwal appoints Senator Ogbeha, Chairman Presidential Campaign

By **TUNDE JOSHUA**, Abuja

The Governor of Sokoto State and presidential aspirant of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Rt. Hon Aminu Waziri



Aminu Waziri Tambuwal

Tambuwal has appointed Senator Tunde Ogbeha as the Chairman of his Presidential Campaign.

According to Muhammad Bello, Special Adviser Media and Publicity to the Governor, the appointment takes immediate effect.

"Senator Ogbeha is expected to deploy his vast experience in administration, public policy and politics to the Campaign and will chair meetings of the Tambuwal Campaign Council. He will help set up priorities and give direction to the Campaign.

"Senator Tunde Ogbeha is a retired general from

Kogi State Nigeria who was administrator of Akwa Ibom State and then of Bendel State during the military rule of General Ibrahim Babangida. After the return to democracy in 1999 he was the elected senator representing Kogi West constituency of Kogi State from May 1999 to May 2007.

"Tunde Ogbeha who had earlier served as an Ambassador is an alumnus of the National Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies in Kuru.

"After leaving the Senate in 2007, Ogbeha became Chairman of the

Confluence Cable Network, Kogi State's first private broadcasting station. He also became a member of the board of Falcon Securities, a stock brokerage firm and was appointed in 2009 by President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua to the Board of the Niger Delta Development Commission, representing the non-oil-producing North Central region," the statement read.

HENRIETTA

I, formerly known and called: **ETIM HENRIETTA OFFIONG**, henceforth wish to be known and called: **HENRIETTA ETIM ONUH**. Former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and general public to take note

Emetenena Elizabeth Atiwewe, nee Eto for burial

The Atiwewe and Eto families of Umolo-Olomu and Iyede in Ughelli South and Isoko North local government areas of Delta State have announced the programme for the burial of their wife, daughter, mother, sister, aunt and cousin, Mrs. Emetenena Elizabeth Akosua Atiwewe (nee Eto).

She is the elder sister of *The Trumpet's* Editor-in-Chief Omokioja Julius Eto.

Funeral obsequies begin with a service of songs at

Christ Missionaries Crusaders Church, Ujevuwu, Udu LGA, Delta State on Tuesday April 25th, 2022.

Body leaves Olomoro General Hospital mortuary for lying-in-state at Uruabe Quarters, Olomoro, Isoko South LGA on Friday April 29th, followed by interment, church service and entertainment.

Thanksgiving/Outing Service holds at Christ Missionaries Crusaders Church, Ujevuwu on Sunday May 1st.



Late Mrs. Emetenena Elizabeth

Lagos gov approves N750m for health insurance premiums of 10,000 vulnerable residents

● All public servants now enrolled on Ilera Eko health scheme

By BENJAMIN OMOIKE, METRO
EDITOR/LAGOS BUREAU CHIEF

Lagos State Governor, Mr Babajide Sanwo-Olu, has so far approved N750 Million from the equity fund for the payment of health insurance premiums for 100,000 vulnerable and indigent residents of the state, in line with the goal of ensuring universal health coverage for all.

The First Lady, Dr Ibijoke Sanwo-Olu, disclosed this while flagging off a Town Hall meeting with the beneficiaries of the health insurance equity fund organised by the Lagos State Health Management Agency (LASHMA), which

is the agency saddled with the responsibility of ensuring that all residents have access to quality and affordable healthcare services through health insurance.

She said the equity fund, which is funded through the one percent set aside from the state's Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF), was to ensure that a sizeable proportion of the population who could not afford health insurance premiums, due to several factors, including economic status and physical disabilities, was not left behind in accessing healthcare services as part of government's social protection plan.

Represented by the wife of the state's Commissioner

for Information and Strategy, Mrs Funmi Omotoso, the First Lady said the plan of the state government to promote the health of Lagosians had been anchored on health insurance, adding that huge investment had been expended in health insurance since the inception of the present administration.

"Through this effort, the government provides financial protection to the poor when they seek healthcare services, to boost their purchasing capacities and stimulate economic growth. The Ilera Eko Equity Fund is part of the effort by the state government to provide social protection to the poor.

"Similar initiatives have also been launched, includ-



ing Maternal Infant Child Development and the Social Welfare Integrated Program Initiative (SWIPI). Most recently, Mr Governor also launched an integrated social protection policy for the state government.

"Since the inception of this administration, Mr. Governor has approved the payment of over N750,000,000, which

has been used to pay the health insurance premiums of 100,000 residents of the state. In the short term, this has facilitated access to healthcare by a group of people who cannot afford to go to the hospital, and, in the long term, will improve the health outcomes in the state," the First Lady said.

She also said it was gratifying that all public servants in Lagos have been successfully onboarded on the Ilera Eko health scheme, while Lagos became the first state in Nigeria to commence health insurance regulations.

She said the town hall meeting - with the beneficiaries - which will take place across the five administrative divisions of the state, namely; Ikeja, Badagry, Ikorodu, Lagos Island and Epe, was designed to get feedback and seek ways to improve access to health care by every resident of the state.

She, therefore, urged all beneficiaries to spread the good news of Ilera Eko equity fund to all and sundry, and most importantly take the full benefit of the laudable scheme.

In his welcome remarks, the Commissioner for Health, Professor Akin Abayomi, commended the attention devoted to the health and wellbeing of residents by the governor, saying it was on record that the present administration had deployed numerous health initiatives to improve the standard of living and quality of life of

the people. He commended LASHMA for the great efforts to improve access to healthcare services, just as he revealed that the agency was on the verge of rolling out an innovative health financing initiative to raise funds from philanthropists, organisations and donors, to crowdfund health insurance premiums and adoption of indigents and the vulnerable on the scheme.

Also speaking, Permanent Secretary, Lagos State Ministry of Information and Strategy, Mr Olusina Thorpe, who represented the Commissioner, Mr Gbenga Omotoso, said sound health remained the foundation of everything in life, without which life would be meaningless.

According to him, "health is everything. All over the world, no government can adequately fund health services. This is why the health insurance program put in place by the Lagos State Government is the way to go and we must encourage more people to enroll," Thorpe said.

Responding to questions at the event, LASHMA's General Manager, Dr Emmanuel Zamba, said the agency was working in partnership with the Primary Healthcare Board to continuously increase the number of Primary Healthcare Centres (PHCs) offering insurance healthcare services gradually, while the government was firming up actions to ensure that all PHCs in the state are fully functional.

She said the Ilera Eko plan also has provisions for the care of senior citizens, as well as cancer treatment to some extent, just as she said that with an increased number of enrollees, LASHMA would be able to drop the cost and expand the services.

Commercial tricyclist wins N3m case against police

A commercial tricycle rider, otherwise called Keke rider, Dayyabu Anwalu, has won a case against some police officers as the court awarded him N3 million. In a photo shared by Lawyer Abba Hakima, the Keke rider held up his cheque for the sum as he maintained a smile.

Many Nigerians who reacted to the video appreciated the lawyer for working hard to ensure justice was served.

Anwalu thus became a millionaire overnight. This was after the Federal High Court fined the Police Service Commission on his behalf.

The sum of N3m was awarded to the driver as the court ordered an immediate payment from the Force's account.

The development was shared by a lawyer, Abba Hakima, on his Facebook page. The officers who were found guilty of maltreating

Dayyabu are Abdullahi Duara, Khalifa, and former DPO of Kuntau Police Station, CSP Abdullahi.

The lawyer said he hopes that the justice the Keke rider got, would serve as a big lesson to other police officers. At the time of writing this report, the post had gathered over 1,000 comments with more than 500 shares. Aliyu Bala Aliyu said: "Well done Barrister. More power to your elbow. May the fire that burnt in you continue to flame. We need many more of your type."

Abdullateef Abubakar from Jos said: "May Almighty Allah reward you abundantly for these efforts." Auwalu Khalil said: "Thank God. Well done Bar. May God continue to help and uplift you." Comr Nura Ado Tudun Wada said: "Masha Allah, may Allah make this thing a source of wealth. And you Barrister, may God continue to guide



you."

Abul Aytam said: "May God continue to bless your life and grant all your heart desires. God has willed it."

Muhammad Adamu Salihu said: "Praise be to God. May God continue to establish truth and justice."

LAWMA boss tasks health officers on responsibility, dedication

By BENJAMIN OMOIKE

The Managing Director/CEO of the Lagos Waste Management Authority, (LAWMA), Mr Ibrahim Odumboni, has canvassed radical attitude change among Lagos residents, towards waste management and environmental practices.

He also charged health officers to take responsibility by rededicating themselves to duty, to restore the old glory of that profession, when they commanded both fear and respect among residents.

Odumboni made the observations at a one-day

stakeholders' meeting on Public Health Law 2015 and Environmental Management Protection Law 2017, organised by the Association of Waste Managers of Nigeria (AWAMN), in collaboration with LAWMA, in Ikeja.

He maintained that a key determinant of the success of waste management operations in the state was enforcement, hence the need for synergy among the various stakeholders, to work with a law that would enable seamless PSP operations for excellent results.

Odumboni said: "After what we do, even if we

deploy the biggest resources, the biggest brain, the biggest mind into our day to day job, and we don't have enforcement, definitely, there would be a lot of room for disorderliness".

"Now, our major challenge in this sector is the nonchalant attitude of our people, who are not ready to do what is right. We all know what the right thing is. It encompasses patronage of PSPs for proper disposal of waste, prompt payment of waste bills and separating waste at source, among others", he stressed.

Odumboni further stressed,

that all government agencies and officials saddled with enforcing the law, must work together to achieve a common purpose.

Speaking earlier, the permanent secretary of the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources, Dr Omobolaji Gaji, reiterated that environmental infractions would now be prosecuted at designated magistrate's courts, urging all stakeholders to work in synergy to transform the environment.

In his contribution, the chairman of Lagos State House of Assembly Committee on Environment, Hon.

Desmond Eliot noted that the various environmental laws of the state have been collapsed into one document, adding that the Assembly would continue to strengthen the legal framework for issues of environment.

The President of AWAMN, Mr David Oriyomi, in his keynote address, thanked the state government for dedicating many magistrates' courts to the prosecution of environmental offences, promising that drawing on the government's support, the PSP operators would work harder to deliver good service to Lagosians.

The external solicitor to AWAMN, Barr. David Fadile, who x-rayed both laws, noted that there were areas of contradictions, urging the State's House of Assembly, to consider urgent amendments to such sections, to achieve desired objectives.

On the panel discussion, were the Chief Technical Officer of LAWMA, Dr Olorunwa Tijani and the head of Legal Unit of LAWMA, Barr. Rilwan Uthman, among others; with

LAWMA's Executive Director of Finance, Mr Kunle Adebisi, was also in attendance at the event.

We sealed off Diplomatic Hotel to stop launch of new psychoactive drink, cannabis party - NDLEA

By BENJAMIN OMOIKE

A joint team of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) and Department of State Services (DSS) have raided and sealed off Diplomatic Suite Hotel, Asokoro, Abuja.

A statement by the spokesman of the NDLEA, Femi Babafemi, said the hotel was sealed off to stop a cannabis party and the launch of a new psychoactive drink.

The statement read: "Operatives of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, NDLEA, have raided and sealed Diplomatic Suite Hotel, Asokoro, Abuja, in a joint operation with men of the Department of State Services, DSS, to stop a cannabis party and the launch of a suspected new psychoactive drink."

Babafemi disclosed that about 200 attendees, including three young ladies who organised the hemp party,

are currently being profiled and interviewed, while bottles of the new drink have been taken for lab analysis.

He said the hotel was raided at about 8:18 pm on Wednesday, following actionable intelligence that some youths were planning to hold a hemp party at the hotel.

He revealed that quantities of cannabis Sativa were recovered from the pockets and bags of those arrested

at the hemp party.

He said: "The audacious party, no doubt, is part of attempts by some elements to create a drug subculture in the Nigerian social space," insisting that: "The NDLEA will, however, continue to work with other security agencies and relevant stakeholders to ensure abuse of illicit substances is not allowed to get entrenched in the country under any guise."



Second term: Sanwo-Olu to focus on projects - Omotoso

By BENJAMIN OMOIKE

Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, will focus on more projects, Commissioner for Information and Strategy Gbenga Omotoso has said.

"The Governance Advisory Council (GAC), the highest decision-making body of the All Progressives Congress (APC), in Lagos, endorsed Sanwo-Olu for re-election, but this will not make the Governor shift his focus away from the State's numerous projects," Omotoso said.

The Commissioner, who spoke on "Lagos State in Focus", an MITV programme, averred that the endorsement was based on Sanwo-Olu's remarkable achievements in projects execution. It was not unexpected, because the Governor "has done well," he said.

His words: "The GAC must have based their decision to endorse Sanwo-Olu on the future of Lagos, as the Governor has been building on what his predecessors have done. The Governor is a man of vision, good character and a good party man. The decision to let Sanwo-Olu contest for another term is not about personal glorification; the aim is to deliver for the people



of Lagos."

Omotoso, who also described Sanwo-Olu as a man of integrity, stated that the Governor's response during the COVID-19 pandemic, his infrastructural strides in road construction and transportation management, improvement in schools' infrastructure and massive renovation of hospitals, are some of the projects and programmes responsible for the GAC's decision.

Asked if the push for another term would not cause a shift in focus, the Commissioner said no such

thing will happen. He spoke about the projects that Sanwo-Olu needs to complete, such as the Blue Line and Red Line rail projects, Lekki-Epe Expressway, General Hospital, Ojo and the many roads in Ikorodu, such as Oba Sekumade Road, Agric-Ishawo Road, Bola Tinubu-Igbogbo Road, and the Regional Road.

"The Fourth Mainland Bridge is also in the works," Omotoso said.

He reiterated that the religious community, traders, artisans and other stakeholders are all in support of Sanwo-Olu's endorsement.

Asked for comments on the planned resumption of tolling by the Lekki Concession Company (LCC), at the Ikoyi Link Bridge Toll Gate, Omotoso said consultations with the stakeholders were still ongoing.

"The consultation is to seek the understanding of stakeholders and all those involved. A list of concessions the stakeholders requested has been tabled. The Company has financial obligations, which must be discharged so that future opportunities for investments in the State, will not be affected," he said.

He explained why the government set up a Parks Management Committee, saying it was all to ensure peace.

Omotoso was asked to comment on the Chrisland School incident, which he described as "a monumental family and societal tragedy". He said it was all emotionally disturbing for parents, the school and the government.

The Commissioner said the Government's swift response to the matter was to stop its escalation, with the warning against spreading the video. He declined further comments "because the matter is still under investigation".

Drama as victim identifies kidnapper in public after paying ransom

By ALEX OLISE

There was a mild drama in the Idi-Ori area of Abeokuta, in Abeokuta North Local Government of Ogun State when a suspected kidnapper was identified by a victim that had allegedly paid him a ransom after his abduction.

The kidnapper luckily escaped being killed after he was apprehended by an angry mob.

It was reliably gathered that the suspect was walking around the area when he was reportedly recognised by one of his victims.

It was further gathered that the victim, who raised the alarm, insisted that the suspect had received ransom from him and others in the area.

An eyewitness, who simply identified herself as Olubukola, said that irate youths at Idi-Ori descended on the young man and beat him blue and black.

She said: "They tied his hands and legs. They beat him and gave him a 'bloody nose'. He might have been lynched if not for the quick arrival of policemen from the Lafenwa Division in Abeokuta.

"At first, the irate youths did not want to release him to the police. They said they didn't trust the police. They feared

that he might be released on bail. They insisted that they're very sure he was a kidnapper."

When contacted, the Ogun State Police Public Relations Officer, Abimbola Oyeyemi, confirmed the incident.

He said the man remains a suspect, as investigation is still ongoing about the allegations levelled against him.

He condemned the attempt to lynch the suspect, saying the law does not permit anybody to take part in jungle justice.

According to Oyeyemi, if the man is a kidnapper as being said, the police investigation would unravel his accomplices, saying he could not have been the only one in the act.

"I am aware of the incident. The man is still a suspect until the investigation is concluded. That is why it is not good for people to be taking laws into their hands. You cannot just carry somebody and make attempts to kill the person. They should let us investigate his culpability.

"And even if we are able to find out that he is a kidnapper, he cannot be alone. Our investigation will lead us to the arrest of others. So that in that axis, the syndicate will be dismantled once and for all. People should stop taking laws into their hands," Oyeyemi said.

Easter advert: CAN calls for sack of Sterling Bank CEO

By BENJAMIN OMOIKE

The Christian Association of Nigeria, CAN, has demanded the sack of Sterling Bank CEO, Abubakar Suleiman. This comes following a controversial Easter Advert by the bank.

The call for Suleiman's sack was made in a statement signed by its National Publicity Secretary, Joseph Bade Daramola.

The statement reads:

"The attention of the leadership of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), has been drawn to an ungodly, wicked, insensitive and deliberately provocative advertisement of the Sterling Bank comparing the Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ to

'Agee Bread' amidst the Easter celebration."

"In case the management of the Sterling Bank is not aware, the resurrection of Jesus witnesses to the immense power of God Himself. To believe in the resurrection is to believe in God. If God exists, and if He created the universe and has power over it, then He has the power to raise the dead. If He does not have such power, He is not worthy of our faith and worship."

"Only He who created life can resurrect it after death, only He can reverse the mystery that is death itself, and only He can remove the sting and gain the victory over the grave (1 Corinthians 15:54-55). In resurrecting Jesus from the

grave, God reminds us of His absolute sovereignty over life and death."

"The purported apology did not come from a penitent heart. How can someone in his right mind describe the risen Christ as a loaf of bread? That is insulting, ridiculous and a mockery of Jesus Christ. We advise Christians to be wary of the banks and other financial institutions they are patronising."

"We learnt that the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON), has reportedly intervened in the matter to impose some sanctions against Sterling Bank. The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), is waiting for the decision of the organisation."

Police, EFCC to synergise in tackling economic, financial crimes in Edo

The Edo State Commissioner of Police, Abutu Yaro, has assured the EFCC of the Nigeria Police's support in tackling corruption, economic and financial crimes in Edo State.

Yaro, who recently assumed office at the Edo State Police Command, stated this when he paid a courtesy visit to the Benin Zonal Command on the EFCC.

According to him, the visit was part of his familiarisation tour of the state, to enhance cooperation and partnership between the Nigeria Police and sister agencies. "This courtesy visit is to synergise, co-operate and seek for a greater working relationship to change the narrative of security in the state and create a peaceful society," he stated.

Responding, EFCC Zonal Commander, Usman Muktar, thanked CP Yaro for the visit. He said it would further deepen the relationship between the Commission

and the Nigeria Police Force.

"We appreciate the Nigeria Police Force for the support to the EFCC in discharging its duties over the years, we are grateful," he said.





'Nothing will stop 2023 general election'

Majority Leader, House of Representatives, **Alhaji Ado Doguwa** in an interface with journalists after the National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting of the party on Wednesday. He expresses confidence that with the new leadership in position, APC is overcoming all her problems and dismisses calls for postponement of the 2023 election. He insisted that nothing will stop the poll while he denies rumoured governorship ambition. Politics Editor, **TUNDE JOSHUA** brings excerpts.

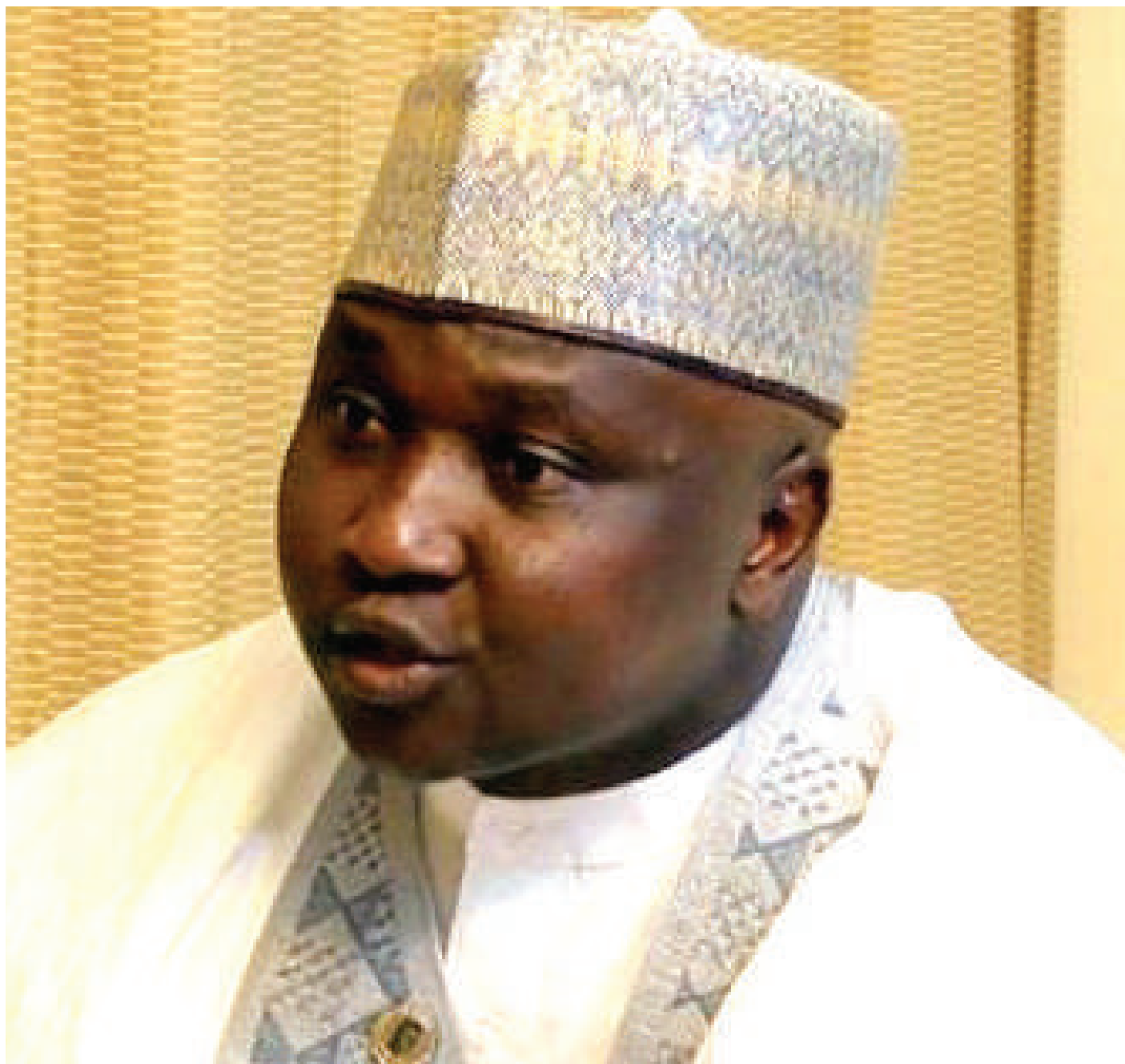
What is the takeaway from this NEC meeting?

Basically what we have had this morning is perhaps what one can call statutory, not only statutory but one of the constitutional exercises to be carried out by the party. So it was quite unprecedented because this is one NEC meeting that we have had with the new set of the National Working Committee members on board. If there is anything you can describe as take away, I want to believe is no more than the spirit of reconciliation which Mr President has anchored on his own remarks and presentation in the meeting and the new leader of the party, the head of the NWC, who is, of course, the chairman of the party, Senator Abdullahi Adamu has also taken the same direction. And those of us in other institutions like the legislature, have the same way with the directives and the guidance of Mr President who is the leader of the party. We cannot take away the fact that we have problems here and there within the party itself. In some states, we have issues to do with the elected executives of those states and these are issues we thoroughly discussed here and I believe the party is now willing to take it to the next step. The next step will mean setting up a very strong polity that will reach out to the states within this shortest period to be able to resolve and address some of these problems.

What effort is the party making to resolve the crisis, particularly at the state level to avoid implosion?

The fact is that the APC cannot afford under what circumstances to allow any of our top rank members to get out of this party. In Kano for instance where I come from, people will be surprised by the way we come with this crisis. We are all APC members and we cannot allow any one of us to get out of this party because we are united. The Governor of the state, Abdullahi Umar Ganduje is one person that is known for patience, is known for tolerance, he is known for accommodation and I want to believe even those who are making noise here and there grumbling will come to a stage where they will all understand that we are better off in the APC than elsewhere.

I want to believe that the APC has come out of its slumber, APC has come out of many basic problems we are facing before. With this new national executive committee, I want to believe the national working committee has now been given the impetus, the necessary parameters for them to go into action and work for the success of this party and on our own end as the legislative arm of government, we will continue to of course not only to identify but also to be able to support the President, to be able to deliver on a lot of other



Doguwa

promises that he promised people during the elections.

Some of the challenges we are facing are very much endemic, not only endemic, but they are also globally inclined and Mr President will definitely do the best he could with the support of the parliament to be able to have a safe and united Nigeria.

Some public analysts have scored the APC administration low based on security and socio-economic challenges facing the nation. What is the way out?

Insinuations from the opposition are baseless; baseless because they don't even have the numbers and facts, baseless because some of the problems are not on ground, they are not pragmatic. These are artificial problems they are raising for the system. For instance, when someone said suspend general elections until we have security, we have enough and significant security. There is nothing that will stop the general

election come 2023. The INEC is set and the security agencies are also set. We believe they can afford the minimum level of security to go for elections.

No one should insinuate suspending elections because this is democracy, we have rules of the game and the rules of the game have also set aside how to go about it in terms of timeline and times frame. So this government cannot afford to make this mistake and we will not make it. We will have our general elections conducted because all other institutions that are involved in the election procedures; nobody has raised alarms, Nigerians are set, the time has come and we will go ahead doing the best we can and by 2023 I want to beat my chest to tell you that the APC remains the party to beat and we will produce the next president to take over from President Muhammadu Buhari.

There is this rumour that you are warning up to contest the Kano State governorship election. Can you confirm

this?

These reports are going on everywhere, they are very fine but for now, I cannot comment on this question. I believe everyone will want to progress but as far as I'm concerned, I want to tell you for the record that as of today, I have no intention whatsoever to run for the governorship of my state. But if God in his infinite mercy allows me and gives me the chance, I will ask you to clap for me and give me the chance. Fine, I will join the race but for now, I want to run for the House of Representatives of my federal constituency back in the house and see what God will bless me with come 2023.

They call me a repeater in the House of Representatives and I accepted to be a repeater but in the course of repeating the same class, I've now become a class monitor and I hope if God gives me a chance I want to be a head boy when the time comes. There are no two ways about that.

No credible primaries without membership register, INEC warns parties

● *Only one party has complied - Yakubu*

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has warned political parties that they stand the risk of invalidating primary elections conducted without submitting a credible membership register.

Chairman of the commission, Prof Mahmood Yakubu said "there can be no credible primary or general election without a credible register of voters."

He sounded this note of warning on Friday at the second regular quarterly meeting for the year 2022 with Residents Electoral Commissioners from the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

Yakubu disclosed that only one political party has so far complied with the constitutional provisions that requested political parties to submit to INEC credible membership registered at least 30 days before the conduct of either general or primary election.

"Let me also seize this opportunity to remind political parties that by the provision of Sec. 77 of the Electoral Act 2022, each party is required to maintain a membership register in hard and soft copy and to make such register available to the Commission not later than 30 days before the date fixed for primaries, congresses and conventions.

"So far, only one political party has complied. It is a mandatory requirement

of the law and all parties are required to comply. Doing otherwise is like going into an election without the register of voters."

Speaking on the Timetable and Schedule of Activities for the 2023 General Election released by the Commission, the chairman said so far, 14 parties have submitted their notices and schedule of primaries to the Commission.

He said "as required by law, the Commission shall monitor the primaries in the constituencies where the parties intend to field candidates. This means that the State offices will be heavily involved in the exercise."

Yakubu urged Resident Electoral Commissioners to exercise their monitoring responsibility with absolute neutrality. "There are sanctions for violation of the law and you should know this and warn our staff accordingly," he warned.

He further charged the RECs to be conversant with provisions of the Electoral Act 2022.

"I urge you to thoroughly study the new law. A credible election is anchored on the law. As you are aware, the Electoral Act, together with the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) and our Regulations and Guidelines for the Conduct of Elections, constitute the electoral legal framework for elections. As election managers, it is incumbent upon us to familiarise ourselves with the legal framework," he said.



Prof Yakubu

Govs to admit NDLEA into State Security Council, provide lands for barracks

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

State governors in the country have agreed to admit the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) into the Security Council in the 36 states of the federation. The governor will also provide



Fayemi

land for the anti-drugs agency to build barracks for its personnel in each state.

This was part of the decisions reached at the meeting of Nigeria's Governors Forum (NGF) on Wednesday night.

Ekiti State Governor, Dr Kayode Fayemi who is the Chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum disclosed this in a communique he signed and released to the media Thursday night.

He said the Forum expressed concern over the connection between drug use and rising insecurity across parts of the country following a briefing on Drug Abuse and Insecurity – Relationship and New Perspectives by the Chairman/Chief Executive of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) Brig. Gen. Mohamed Buba Marwa (Rtd).

Fayemi in the communique said, "in furtherance to its March 2021 commitment to the agency when the NDLEA Chief Executive first presented to the Forum, Governors reiterated their commitment to maintaining logistical support to the

agency, and committed to providing additional opportunities for operational synergy, including bringing the agency into the State's Security Council meetings, and providing land for barrack operations."

Health issues, according to the communique, dominated discussions at the meeting as the Forum received a presentation on Improving Health Financing and Universal Health Coverage from Eduardo Gonzalez-Pier, Senior Technical Advisor for Palladium, an implementing partner for USAID's Integrated Health Programme, where it shared its vision to achieve Universal Health Coverage by 2030 (SDG3).

"Among the set of actions pushed forward and adopted, was the continued release of equity funds to cover the vulnerable population in all states of the federation, onboarding of civil servants not yet covered under any health insurance scheme and preserving health sector spending amidst the current contraction

in fiscal space for governments.

"The Forum believes these changes will help stem the country's declining labour productivity caused by illness.

"Finally, a health briefing from the Forum's Senior Health Advisor, Dr Ahmad Abdulwahab, highlighted actions taken by State Governors over the last month, including participation at the PHC Summit where the NGF committed to intensifying collaboration with the National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA) to implement the Primary Health Care Leadership Challenge Fund for the actualization of the Seattle Declaration.

"He also gave updates on health security issues highlighting outbreaks of Lassa fever, measles, and cases of meningitis in some parts of the country and the ongoing immunization campaigns by the NPHCDA against these diseases and the need for the States to release the requisite counterpart fund and strengthen their respective Epidemic Preparedness and Response," the communique read.

Devolution of Powers: No ambiguity over NEC powers vested in NWC - APC spokesperson

By TUNDE OPALANA, ABUJA

The National Publicity Secretary of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Mr Felix Morka has cleared the air over power devolution among two organs of the party.

The party's National Executive Committee (NEC) at its 11th meeting in Abuja on Wednesday had vested its powers in the National Working Committee (NWC) for a specified period of 90 days.

To avoid misinterpretation of the power devolution, the spokesperson made certain clarifications, stressing that the decision of

NEC aligned with the provisions of the APC Constitution.

According to him, it was resolved to devolve the powers of NEC under Article 13 paragraphs three, two, and three, and four, and five and six respectively, of the APC Constitution.

Specifically, Morka said "but those powers of NEC in those provisions will now be vested, or are now vested in the National Working Committee of the party. So in other words, the NWC of a party is authorized for the period specified to have 90 days to exercise the authority that is constitutionally assigned

to the NEC on behalf of the party.

"The NEC, also dissolves its authority, as enshrined in article 13 paragraph three subparagraph two of the APC constitution to discharge all functions of the national convention as constituted in between conventions. NEC also devolved its powers to NWC as enshrined in article 13 paragraph three sub-four of the APC constitution to consider reports from national, State and Local Government areas and area Council chapters of the party and to take such decisions as are necessary to protect, advance and consolidate the gains and interests of our party.

"NEC further devolved its powers to the NWC as enshrined in Article 13, paragraph three, five of the APC Constitution, to exercise control and take disciplinary actions on all organs, officers are members of the party and determine appeals brought before it by any member or organ of the party.

"Finally, that NEC has devolved its powers to the NWC as enshrined in article 13, paragraph three sub six of our Constitution to create, elect and appoint any committee it may deem necessary, desirable or expedient and assigned to them such powers and functions as it may deem fit and proper.

Christ's resurrection and its power

The Psalmist wrote, "O Lord, You brought my soul up from the grave; You have kept me alive that I should not go down to the pit" (Psalm 30:3). The Psalmist asked: "What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise you? Will it declare Your truth? (Psalm 30:9). In his epistle Apostle Paul stated, "And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, 'I believe and therefore I speak, knowing that he who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you'" (2 Corinthians 4:14).

Consequently, a power made Christ's resurrection possible. There is also power in Christ's resurrection. Of course, raising the dead is not biblically novel with Christ Jesus. The widow of Zarephath's son (1 Kings 17:17-24), the Shunammite woman's son (2 Kings 4:18-37), the man raised out of Elisha's grave (2 Kings 13:20-21), the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11-17), Jairus' daughter (Luke 8:40-56), Lazarus of Bethany (John 11), the many saints in Jerusalem (Matthew 27:50-53), Tabitha (Acts 9:36-43), and Eutychus (Acts 20:7-12) are instances where the dead were revived.

The Bible is also replete with promises of resurrection. A well-known one is the promised in Ezekiel 37:6-7, "I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the Lord." The Old and New Testaments have instances of people that were raised from the dead. Jesus Christ did some of such Himself. Nevertheless, resurrection was a contentious issue in Judaism. The Bible recorded that, "The same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, saying ..." (Matthew 22:23). In all this, Jesus Christ proclaimed that "I am the resurrection and the life, he who believes in Me, though He may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

(John 11:25-26). Resurrection in Christianity has a dual application. It refers to individuals restored to life for their family members, and to the eschatological resurrection of the Saints triumphant (1 Thessalonians 5:9-11).

However, the resurrection of Christ is peculiar. Christ's death and resurrection all believers who are overcomers, dead or alive, are concomitantly given eternal life. In Christ we are raised from eternal death! "For we know that if this earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in heaven" (2 Corinthians 5:1). But what makes resurrection possible? From whom does the power of resurrection emanate?

It is from God. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). God has the ability to give and take all – both life and death. Man's finitude contrasts God's infinitude. Man's limitedness contrasts God's limitlessness. Paul expressed the power of God in all spheres of our human life in 2 Corinthians 4:14, "...knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you." The end of man's resources is not the end of God's. Paul demonstrated that human extremity was the best position in which to prove divine power. Peter's writes, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3).

The resurrection of Christ is significant in a believer's life in many ways. It shows that: (i) God's power is boundless. God prevails over the power of death; (ii) The death of a Christian is not going to be different from the death and raising up of Jesus Christ. Paul says, "The life of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh" (1 Corinthians 15:11, 15:53-58); (iii) We are united with Christ in dying and in living (Galatians 2:20); "I am crucified with Christ;



Dr. Karo Ogbinaka

nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."; (iv) The power that resurrected Christ shows the love of God for us (Galatians 2:20); (v) It calls us to a ministry of faith in Christ; (vi) "The death of Christ on the cross attests that there was no salvation by the law, I was crucified with Him and I live with Him. It is His life that I am a partaker of, the life I now live in the flesh is one of faith in Christ who love me, and made it possible for me to live by faith (Galatians 3:11; Romans 1:17; Hebrews 10:23-38); (vii) Our service to God, and our faith in Him and all He is capable to do and will do (Deuteronomy 11:1-15) is borne out of God's power to raise Christ from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:14-19); (viii) It attests to the power of God to put all things under Christ and to defeat death, the last enemy (1 Corinthians 15:26-28).

The resurrection of Christ from the dead means a lot to Christians. It is the Christian's deliverance from the past (Romans 6:4-11; Ephesians 2:1-7; Colossians 2:12-15); the Christian's power for the present (Romans

8:31-39) and the Christian's hope for the future (Colossians 1:18; 1 Corinthians 15:17-23; 50-57; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

Deliverance! Power! Hope! As deliverance from the past, the believer's old sinful life is put to death on the Cross with Jesus. It is buried with Him in the grave. When Jesus was raised to life again, believers were raised with Him as new beings – leaving behind the old life in Jesus' grave (Romans 6:4-11). As power for the present, because Jesus lives, believers now received the power of His Spirit to live a life of victory over sin as well as all the attacks of Satan against them (Romans 8:31-39). As hope for the future, in the resurrection, Jesus gives us great hope. Jesus is "the firstborn from the dead" and "you who once were estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, He has now reconciled in His body of flesh by His death, in order to present you, holy and blameless and irreproachable before Him, provided that you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel which you have heard, which has been preached to every creature under heaven..." (Colossians 1:18, 21-23).

In His resurrection, Christ opened the way for all who believe in, and follow Him – to be also raised from the dead. On one wonderful day, in the future, Jesus Christ will return to the earth again – not as a Saviour and Redeemer, but as a Righteous Judge and King. He would reveal to the whole world His very Being – the glorious God and ruler of all creation. Then, all who have died, and believed in Him, will be raised to life again! (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). This way, Apostle Paul says, "... that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection ..." (Philippians 3:10).

Be blessed and Shalom.

• **Rev'd Dr Karo Ogbinaka, an Anglican priest of the Diocese of Lagos West. He lectures at the Department of Philosophy, University of Lagos. He is a member of the Editorial Board of The Trumpet**

Beware! Fake pastors and prophets everywhere

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ said in one of His sermons in the Bible thus: "Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly they are ravening wolves". True to the admonition of Jesus Christ, there are many ravening wolves around these days claiming to be men and women of God.

Many innocent women and men have been defrauded in the name of God and now many are at loss of how to truly identify a true Church of God where Jesus Christ is the Lord.

These days, we see assemblies calling themselves Churches everywhere but some of their conducts have now made it pertinent to distinguish between a true Church of God and a fake assembly being called a Church, through the knowledge of the scriptures.

Somebody told me one day how he was invited to a Church in Lagos where everybody goes stark naked before their activities begin. Husbands, wives, singles and even the so-called Pastor pull off their clothes before they enter the worship centre and according to him, members of the Church share things together including their wives.

I was really surprised that a place like that existed in Nigeria and people were going there to worship what they don't know. I had to interrogate him further to know if the name of Jesus Christ was mentioned in the course of the activities in the so-called Church and he responded in the affirmative. He even said that the leader of the Church who was also naked with his wife preached a sermon tagged GRACE



Dr. Agbodo

TO PROSPER just like other Churches do during service days. He however said that members of the so-called Church were so rich in material things that if not for his upbringing, he was almost tempted to join them.

All around us today are some Churches that do not even bother to preach about the holiness and righteousness of God anymore but focus on prophecies and how to acquire material wealth. Some don't care about morals anymore and emphasise just getting miracles and breakthroughs and people are rushing there.

It is in order therefore to guide those who are truly seeking to worship Jehovah that this article is here. However, I want to sound a note of warning that if you want to make Heaven and meet Jesus

Christ on the last day, living a holy and righteous life is a must and do not allow any preacher to deceive you that nobody can live a holy life.

God said be ye holy for I am holy and God cannot lie. So, please note that anywhere the holiness and righteousness of God are not emphasized in sermons and all they talk about is prosperity in material things and killing perceived enemies through prayers, such places are not the true Churches of God. A true Church of God is where people are taught to fear God, stick to the commandments of God in the Bible and depart from sin. A true Church of God is where people are taught high morals and total surrender to the Will of God. It is unfortunate however these days because people are so lazy in prayers and studying the Word of God that they are busy running everywhere to consult one fake Prophet and Prophetess to solve their problems.

Yes, there are genuine Prophets and Prophetesses from God, but what any genuine man or woman of God will tell you is to have genuine repentance from sin and commitment to prayers to solve any problem. All problems emanated from sin and all problems are solved by separation from sin and asking God to have mercy in prayers.

God can reveal your problem to His servant but most times it is to strengthen your faith in God and to return you to the path of righteousness if you have derailed.

Jesus Christ came so that you can have direct access to God in prayers and also have the Grace to live a holy

and righteous life.

You can pray for yourself and receive intervention from God. The work of a Pastor is just to guide you and encourage you and perhaps assist you in prayers, especially in the time of emergency. God is open to everyone through the name of Jesus Christ.

Please read Deuteronomy 28 which is the chronicle of the Prophecies of God for all humans where it is stated clearly that If you obey God you will be blessed and if you live in sin you will be cursed.

If you don't want to repent from sin and you keep on looking for Prophets and Visioners to save you, you will continue to be a victim of fake Prophets and Prophetesses.

If you want God to speak to you on any issue, ask God and He will direct you. Even if God doesn't speak to you personally, consult your Bible and find out what God said in a similar situation to what you may be passing through and hold on to the Word of God in prayers and perhaps fasting in stubborn conditions, and surely God will intervene and help you.

Stay away from sin, live a holy life and pray to God on any issue and God will answer you. Don't allow satanic prophets and visioners to confuse your life. Accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour and the Holy Spirit will be given to you to overcome all battles in life. God bless us in Jesus Name.

• **Pastor Esanero Trinity Agbodo is a Contributing Editor with The Trumpet Newspaper and he can be reached on eagbodo@gmail.com**

Toxic marriage: Islamic, Christian and traditional religions' perspectives

By GABRIEL OMONHINMIN, Culture and Religion Editor

The recent national outcry, over the yet to be substantiated manner of the passage of Nigeria's gospel singer, Mrs Osinachi Nwachukwu, has stirred up a great debate, which is 'whether or not it is scriptural for couples to remain in a toxic union or marriage.'

As the argument for and against continued, the Trumpet Religion desk decided to examine the topic for better understanding and benefit of our readers.

We shall, therefore, attempt to examine in detail the Islamic, Christian and Traditional religious positions on this matter.

Reports of the death of one or both partners in domestic violence marriages are not new to our society. Domestic crises and death have been there as much as one can remember, but what is, however, not acceptable, is the alarming dimension this violence has assumed in modern society.

Oftentimes, women and men alike are killed in crises in marriage, depending on who is more physical or aggressive, among the partners. In extreme cases, children who never begged to be brought to life, also end up being killed in the process by either partner, in an apparent move to erase memories of such a bitter relationship.

Cases of domestic violence are on the increase and show no signs of reduction in Nigeria, regardless of age, tribe, religion or even social status.

Domestic violence takes many forms, which include physical, sexual, emotional, and mental. Available records show that a high percentage of eligible bachelors and spinsters are afraid, and not ready to go into marriage, because of these ugly sides of marriages. Present-day marriages unlike in the olden days are no longer sacrosanct.

In Nigeria, there are three types of marriage practised, Traditional/Customary marriage; Church/Islamic marriage and statutory marriage.

Although the under mentioned statistic is inapplicable in present-day Nigeria, in 2016, official statistics suggested that the dissolution of marriage in Nigeria was uncommon. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, just 0.2 percent of men and 0.3 percent of women had legally dissolved their marriage at that time. Two years later in the year 2018, it was reported that the rate of separation in the country, recorded a 14 percent increase. As the present statistics mirror a rather negative trend.

From the pictures painted above, is it religious for either party to continue to remain in a crisis filled marriage? What is the position of Islam, Christian and Traditional religions in matters like this?

Trumpet Religion spoke to a cross-section of clerics on this matter, and asked what should either of the parties in a toxic marriage do, especially, when the marriage is no longer tolerable?

First to speak is an Islamic cleric, Alhaji Tajudeen Adigun. He referred me to Holy Qur'an Chapter 4 'An-Nisa' and said the whole of that Chapter containing 176 verses is dedicated to women and how they should be loved and cared for.

He stressed, "Verse 1 of Chapter 4 says, 'O MEN, FEAR your Lord who created you from a single cell, and from



Mrs Osinachi Nwachukwu

it created its mate, and from the two of them dispersed men and women (male and female) in multitudes. So fear God in whose name you ask of one another (the bond of) relationships. God surely keeps watch over you." He added, this opening verse, is enough warning that marriage should be taken very seriously, if you are not ready don't ever go into it.

He continued, "What does Islam say about divorce and remarriage? Although it is not encouraged, most Muslims agree that divorce is permitted if a marriage has broken down, and generally Muslims are permitted to re-marry if they so wish.

However, there are differences among Muslims regarding the procedures for divorce and remarriage. A Sunni Muslim for example, do not require witnesses. The husband must express his desire for a divorce on three occasions with a waiting period of three months.

A Shi'ah Muslim in his own case, require two witnesses, followed by a waiting period before the marriage can end.

He added, "If a woman initiates a divorce it is called Khula. There must be a waiting period to ensure the woman is not pregnant.

He stressed further, "Although Shari'ah Law permits divorce, in the Hadith. Abdullah Ibn Umar reported that the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, 'The most detestable of lawful things before Allah is divorce.'" So although divorce is allowed, Muslims should try to avoid it, if possible.

This is an indication that many Muslims, who experience marital difficulties will try to resolve their issues instead of going their different ways. It is also because these couples made a contract before God, this is called Nikah, which is to remain together for life and divorce would mean breaking this vow.

He concluded, "Once couples are having crises in the marriage, they are expected to go to their mosque for advice and

support from the Imam. In this regard, extended families are also expected to play a role in the resolution of whatever crisis the couples might be having. But as a matter of last resort, a couple may feel divorce is their only option, this should therefore be granted to them. In all this process, the woman is never to be molested, harmed or shamed, no matter the situation."

Pastor Dr Paul Enenche, founder of Dunamis Gospel Center, Abuja, the church where the late singer was a choir member, in a press statement after her passage, expressed shock at what he was told about the way and manner the late singer was allegedly being assaulted by her husband. He said "Although, it is not scriptural to divorce, if any man feels he can no longer stand his marriage, instead of killing his or her partner, the man should take the woman back to her parents and say 'I can no longer continue with this marriage.'"

He said "As a person and as a Church, everyone who knows us knows that we have zero degree tolerance for domestic abuse and wife-battering of any sort. If you ever listen to any of our relationship messages, there is a principle, policy and a rule we have and that is, it is better to be alive without marriage than to die because of marriage. We've said that over and over.

Enenche added, "Now this kind of time is the time where people heap all manner of the blame on the Church and that is typical because whatever goes wrong, the first point of call is the Church. I have seen people ask questions, why should a wife abuser be a member of the church or how can somebody be so brutal and he is a member of the Church? That is not a question that people who know the scriptures should ask. You know the Ark of Noah, the same Ark that carried good animals also had evil beast inside the same Ark."

Apostle Johnson Suleiman of the Omega Church International Church, Auch, Edo State, in his reaction said, "When I said some years ago, that there are certain marriages that should break." There was nothing or abuse I did not receive. That was why I kept quiet when this very incident happened. He stressed, "You are in a marriage where a man is beating you on a daily basis, and you will not leave the man alone. Stay there now! You'll die and we will bury you. If I catch any man in my church beating his wife, I will take along with me some church members to go and beat the man up in his house."

Chief Shamsudeen Gbadamosi, the Baale of Paara Community in Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State said, "Traditional religion and customs do not encourage couples to continue to stay together in a violent union. Once they discover the marriage is no longer working, there are steps they must take in trying to redeem the marriage.

If adultery and infidelity are the cause of the disagreement, and once a woman is caught in the act of adultery, the marriage is automatically dissolved.

Couples, who are married under traditional religion, are first asked to seek the help of the elders of their husband's immediate family to arbitrate whatever disputes they have. If that fails, such a man or woman can seek the help of the elders of the village or town to again look into the course of their disagreement. If the dispute still can't be resolved, separation is therefore encouraged, instead of one of the two partners killing the other. There is no shame or force to continue to remain in an unworkable marriage.

Pastor Ikuforiji of Christ the King Global Ministry, said, "In everything we do, we should learn to say 'No To Other gods'. Quoting Exodus 20:1-4.

"In our modern times, we think idols and their offerings are obsolete, but that is not true! Today, the idols have taken on a disguise. From what is happening in the Christian world, we need to disrobe them and expose their danger. Idols are the things we worship instead of God. They are things to which one yields his strength. These things are nothing but false gods. How can one be in a marriage where she is daily being battered and she remains in such a marriage? An act like that is nothing but idol worshipping. Can one marry, if he or she is not alive? No!

The bible position on matters like this is very clear. When the woman accused of infidelity was marched before Jesus Christ, what did Jesus tell her accusers? He said, "Anyone without sins among the people shouting crucifer her should cast the first stone." What did the accusers all do? They all disappeared one after the other. And Jesus told the woman to go and sin no more.

Although divorce is not encouraged in the bible, a man or woman being battered in a marriage reserves the right to quit such marriage before he or she gets killed. These days, people take what people will say about them, more seriously than, their well-being and safety are gone. Such behaviour of staying put in an abusive relationship is not religious. The caveat, however, is that if a Christian quit his marriage, he or she might not be able to re-marry, until one of the partners dies."

The clergy and freedom of expression

The recent sacking of the Imam of Apo Legislative Quarters Mosque is a disturbing pointer to the morally deplorable state in which Nigeria currently is. That the pulpit, which is a space of and for truth telling no longer enjoys the sanctity it has hitherto been accorded is indicative of the impunity with which Nigerian leaders handle the affairs of this country. When a cleric ascends the pulpit in the mosque or the altar in the church, he is immediately conscious of his duty to God and his responsibility to the people who are gathered there to listen to him. Therefore, it will take an extremely careless cleric to stand within that space and allow himself to be governed by mere sentiments. When clerics speak in anger it is because they are moved by feeling for their people who are suffering in one way or another.

Nigerians are suffering. Sheikh Nuru Khalid, the embattled Imam in question had called on Nigerians to threaten a boycott on Election Day unless the authorities addressed the security situation in the country. His sermon had come in the aftermath of the recent Abuja-Kaduna train bombing. He lamented the way in which lives are lost on a daily basis while the authorities do not do enough to stop the bandits and terrorists responsible. For this, he was immediately removed as Imam by the Chair of the Apo Mosque Committee, Senator Sa'idu Dansadau of Zamfara State. The senator maintained that the task of clerics was to cool tempers and calm people down not incite them against government.

Now there are several implications to this disturbing incident. First of all, it shows clearly that politicians would want to appropriate religion to serve their own ends. Unless a cleric says the "right" things and makes all the "appropriate" noises, he will be at the

receiving end of the politicians' displeasure. Secondly, that clerics who wish to keep their jobs must kowtow to the authorities even when the incompetence of the authorities is clear for all to see. Also, that criticizing the government is a "punishable" offence in which case influencers such as imams, pastors, etc. must watch what they say for fear of antagonizing the powers-that-be. Clearly, our authorities are inordinately sensitive to criticism and, as everybody knows, only consciously or deliberately incompetent people are averse to criticism. Good leaders welcome criticism because they know it will motivate them to serve their people better.

Besides, what person in their right mind

would punish anyone for condemning the senseless killings that have become the order of the day in Nigeria? Clearly, freedom of speech is a threatened right in Nigeria. If clerics may not ascend the pulpit and speak the truth, of what use are they to Nigerians? What is the worth of a cleric who is afraid to call a spade a spade? What is the worth of a cleric whose position is more important to him than the people whom he is supposed to guide to the righteous path? Do clerics not have a significant role to play in the social and political development of the country? Or is it the case that our politicians are so drunk on power that they feel it is their right to say this is how clerics should preach?

Freedom of speech is as important to the individual as it is crucial to national development. It is a fundamental human right that reinforces all other human rights since change is not possible where people cannot express their opinion freely. Freedom of speech gives people access to truth from diverse perspectives and protects everyone, including those who criticize the government. Every Nigerian must be guaranteed the right to express their opinions without fear of "persecution", censorship, or "punishment". The very health of any democracy depends on the extent to which its citizens are free to speak or express their opinion.

Where this right is denied, what obtains is more a dictatorship than a democracy. No good may come of a government that is overly sensitive to criticism. The government must respect this fundamental human right if indeed they have the best interests of this country at heart. It is gratifying that the Imam stood by his sermon; and also that he received another appointment within twenty-four hours. At least we can be glad in the knowledge that there are still people who believe in the truth and are willing to stand by it.



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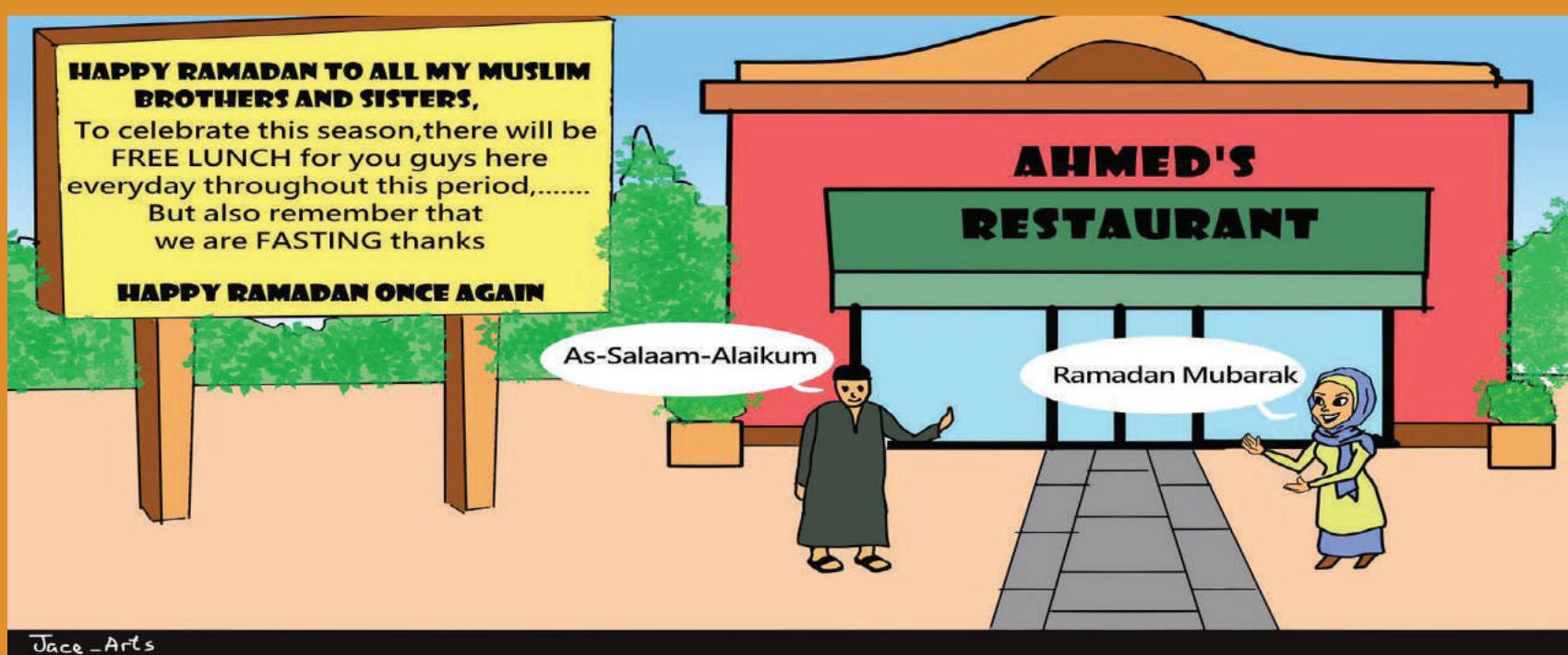
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Traditional, religious leaders should provide intelligence to tackle terrorists – Buhari

By **PAUL MICHAEL**, Defence Editor
and **BLESSING OZIWO**, Abuja

President Muhammadu Buhari has said traditional rulers and religious leaders ought to provide credible intelligence for security agencies to help in tackling insecurity in the country.

The President said this on Thursday while speaking at an Iftar dinner with religious and traditional rulers at the State House, Abuja. He added that his administration would continue to count on the invaluable advice and guidance of members of the revered institutions towards improving the current security challenges in the country.

Buhari noted that moving Nigeria forward remains a collective responsibility, thereby urging leaders at all levels to contribute meaningfully to making the country a better and safe place.

He said, "Today, insecurity is one of the greatest challenges facing Nigeria's existence. This administration has invested more resources than any other to tackle insecurity.

"We have acquired advanced equipment for our armed forces and the police to strengthen their capacity to confront terrorism and banditry. We have made adequate budgetary allocations for security.

"Whatever the security agencies request I make it available to them immediately.

"But insecurity is a worldwide phenomenon. The cure and the answer is for all sections of society to do their bit and confront the criminals head-on.

"The success of our armed and other security forces also depends on intelligence about the activities of bandits and terrorists.

"Those aiding and abetting terrorists are helping to destroy their own communities.

"Our traditional and religious leaders have a key role to play in terms of improving

intelligence gathering about the movement of and activities of criminals in their domain."

While noting that the challenges confronting the country are surmountable, the President recounted that when this administration came on board in 2015, the local governments occupied and controlled by terrorists were recovered through the determined efforts of government and the cooperation of local leadership.

"A similar effort is required now for all localities to work in full cooperation with security agents and Insha Allah. We shall see the back of this problem soon," he said.

In his response, Ooni of Ife, Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi, commended the timely response of the Buhari administration in curtailing the spread of COVID-19 pandemic, noting that it is symbolic that when the country looks inward it can surmount many of its challenges.

"Mr President, thank you for inviting us

for Iftar. I remember vividly that last year we couldn't meet to break the Ramadan fast because of the COVID-19 pandemic and we pray that such will never come our way again," he said.

The Ooni urged Nigerians to use the Holy month of Ramadan to always strive for unity, and celebrate the strength of Nigeria's diversity.

"We have so many positives to celebrate in our country. Yes, there are challenges but let us look more on our strengths than our weaknesses," he added.

Barr. Joseph Daramola, the General Secretary, Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), said he believed that "God is at work in Nigeria," noting that there were spiritual lessons to learn on nation-building from the Muslim Holy month of Ramadan and the Christian Lenten period that just ended with the Easter celebration.

"The power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead is able to bring our nation back to life, making every situation that looks impossible, possible," the CAN scribe said.

Police nab suspect for killing best man over N2m in Minna

■ *Rescues 13 victims during gun battle with terrorists in Munya LGA*

By **PAUL MICHAEL**,
Defence Editor, Abuja

The Niger State Police Command has arrested one Ibrahim Bashir and one other for allegedly killing his best man, Hassan Shehu, a businessman over N2 million in Minna, the State capital city.

A case of homicide had been reported to the Command on April 12, 2022, regarding the invitation of the 28years old businessman to Tudun-fulani area of Bosso by one Ibrahim Bashir for a purported business transaction. The businessman was later killed when he arrived at the venue by Bashir and his gang.

According to a statement by the Public Relations Officer of the Command, DSP Wasiu Abiodun, on Thursday, Police operatives attached to the Intelligence Unit of the Command acted on actionable intelligence on April 19, 2022, leading to the arrest of one Bashir Ibrahim aged 25 and one Aliyu Ibrahim aged 22.

DSP Abiodun said both culprits are brothers from Tundun-Fulani Area, Bosso while saying that one of the suspects, Suleiman Mahmud, is still at large. He added that the two suspects confessed to the crime during interrogation.

He said, "In a continued effort of the Niger State Police Command to rid the state of crime and criminality and ensure dispensation of justice, the Police Command arrested two (2) suspected killers of late Hassan Shehu.

"It would be recalled that on 12/04/2022 at about 1700hrs, a case of culpable homicide was reported at Bosso Division in which one late Hassan Shehu aged 28yrs, a businessman at Kure Market, Minna was invited to Tudun-

fulani area of Bosso by one Bashir Ibrahim for a purported business transaction.

"Unfortunately, the deceased was allegedly stabbed to death on arrival at the venue, in an apartment by the suspect who later escaped from the scene with the victim's Peugeot 206 vehicle and about two million naira there-in the vehicle.

"Upon the receipt of this unfortunate incident, the Police Command swung into action and commenced an in-depth technical investigation, after a painstaking investigation and technical intelligence analysis upon the marching order of the Commissioner of Police, Niger State Command CP Monday Bala Kuryas, fsi to the operatives of the Command to ensure that the perpetrator(s) of this dastard act are brought to book.

"However, on 19/04/2022 at about 1500hrs, acting on technical intelligence, Police operatives attached to the Intelligence Unit of the Command arrested the following suspects: Bashir Ibrahim aged 25yrs, and Aliyu Ibrahim aged 22yrs both who are brothers and 'm' of Tundun-Fulani Area, Bosso

"During interrogation, the suspects confessed to the crime that both suspects conspired with one Suleiman Mahmud aged 29yrs 'm' of same address presently at large to tie the victim and dispossessed him of the money in his car, but on entering the house, the deceased struggled with the said Suleiman while Aliyu stabbed the victim on the chest and was abandoned till he bled to death.

"Bashir, whom the deceased was his best man during his wedding last year confessed further to have escaped from the scene with the victim's vehicle which contained about two million naira and later travelled to Kano to

purchase some chemical for washing of gold items from the deceased's money.

"The suspects were arrested in a hotel along Western Bye-Pass, Minna while one Abdullahi Garba aged 22yrs 'm' of Tunga-Mallam, Paikoro LGA was equally apprehended for purchasing the victim's phone from Aliyu at the rate of three thousand naira with an exchange of another phone.

"Meanwhile, a sum of five hundred and twenty four thousand naira was recovered from Bashir, two bottles of suspected chemical substances which he claimed to have purchased from Kano with seven hundred thousand naira and the said vehicle were also recovered.

"Case is under investigation as effort is ongoing to apprehend Suleiman Mahmud while suspects will be arraigned in court for criminal conspiracy, culpable homicide and receiving stolen property immediately after the investigation is concluded."

Meanwhile, Police tactical team attached to Sarkin-pawa Division in the State has rescued 13 victims of kidnapping while in a fierce gun battle with terrorists popularly known as bandits.

According to DSP Wasiu Abiodun, the terrorists had attacked Galiwi village and kidnapped about 13 farmers who were working on their farms. He said that the Police were, however, mobilised to the scene and in the process of gunfire exchange, the terrorists abandoned the victims.

He said, "On 20/04/2022 at about 1300hrs, armed bandits attacked Galiwi village, via Sarkin-pawa Munya LGA and kidnapped some farmers who were working on their farms numbering about thirteen



President Buhari

NDLEA, DSS raid, seal Abuja hotel over launch of psychoactive drink

Operatives of the National Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) and men of the Department of State Service (DSS) in a joint operation have raided and sealed Diplomatic Suite Hotel, Asokoro, Abuja, in a bid to stop a cannabis party and the launch of a suspected new psychoactive drink.

The Director of Media and Advocacy, Femi Babafemi, who disclosed this on Thursday, said the raid took place around 8:18 pm on Wednesday following intelligence. He added that about 200 attendees, which include three young ladies that organised the hemp party are being profiled.

He said, "About 200 attendees including three young ladies who organised the hemp party are currently being profiled and interviewed while bottles of the new drink have been taken for lab analysis.

"The hotel was raided at about 8:18 pm on Wednesday 20th April following actionable intelligence that some youths were planning to hold a hemp party at the hotel. Quantities of Cannabis Sativa were recovered from the pockets and bags of those arrested at the hemp party.

"The audacious party no doubt is part of attempts by some elements to create a drug subculture in the Nigerian social space.

"The NDLEA will however continue to work with other security agencies and relevant stakeholders to ensure abuse of illicit substances is not allowed to get entrenched in the country under any guise."

Katsina police neutralise two terrorists, rescues victims

Men of the Katsina Police Command have killed two terrorists while repelling an attack on Thursday, thereby rescuing two victims and recovering ammunition.

The State's Force Public Relations Officer, SP Gambo Isah made the disclosure in a statement on Friday, adding that the suspects were intercepted following a distress call received by the state command.

He said, "Today 21/04/2022, at about 0400hrs, a distress call was received that terrorists in their numbers, armed with AK 47 rifles, attacked Tsamiyar Gamzako village, Kafur LGA and kidnapped one Hama Sanusi,

'f', aged 30yrs and her little daughter, Aisha Sanusi, 'f', age 15 months.

"Consequently, a combined team of Police and vigilante groups were alerted. The team blocked and engaged the hoodlums in a fierce gun duel.

"The team successfully repelled the terrorists and neutralized two of them. The kidnapped victims were rescued alive unhurt.

"In the course of scanning the scene, one AK 47 rifle with four (4) rounds of 7.62mm ammunition and two locally fabricated pistols with six (6) rounds were recovered.

"Some of the terrorists escaped and fled

the scene as search parties are still combing the area with a view of arresting the fleeing terrorists.

"The Commissioner of Police, Katsina State Command, CP Idrisu Dabban Dauda, psc +, fdc, commended and appreciated the efforts of the police and vigilante in repelling the terrorists. "He assures members of the public that the police will continue to deal decisively with recalcitrant terrorists until they are all brought to book.

"He urged them to continue to cooperate with security agencies by giving out useful information on the criminals.

President Buhari and the APC are corrupting democracy

By **CHIEF MIKE OZEKHOME**, SAN,
OFR, FCI Arb, LL.M, Ph.D, LL.D

The staggering sum of #100 million fixed by the APC NEC for its presidential nomination form has rightly sent shock waves of righteous indignation across the country. The APC had fixed #30 million for the "expression of interest form" and #70 million for the "nomination form", making a total of #100 million. The party hopes to rake in #1.5 billion from the 15 aspirants that have so far declared interest in the presidential race. By this singular act, the APC has shown a shocking insatiable bacchanalian propensity to corrupt democracy, democratic ethos, and also scam the entire country.

The vulgarity of this exercise lies not just in the abominable fee prescribed, but more in the party's pretentious mantra of fighting corruption, using a well-orchestrated and carefully oiled Hitler's Goebel's propagandist machinery of dubious pedigree. It is the more abhorrent when we realize that this is miles apart from (indeed more than double) the price fixed by the party's whipping child, the opposition PDP, which has fixed it at #40million (#5 million) for the nomination of interest; and #35 million for the nomination form. The #100m is also over 100% of the #40 million fixed by the same APC for the 2018, presidential nomination form.

President Muhammed Buhari and the APC have, by this singular act, exhibited a very odious and unpleasant example of how not to fight corruption. They have managed to convince Nigerians that politics is indeed the art of grand deception, double-dealing, duplicity, beguilement, sham and self-contradiction. They have justified the cliché that diplomacy is the clever art of telling a person to go to hell in such a way that he actually eagerly looks forward to the journey.

Nigerians should recall that in the prelude to the 2015 presidential elections, president Buhari had trenchantly criticized the #27.5 million levy imposed on his party aspirants for presidential nomination form. He had pooh poohed it as exorbitant. He has now supported #100 million for the same exercise.

With the new amended Electoral Act of 2022 fixing #5 billion limits for presidential campaign as against the earlier #1billion under the 2010 Electoral Act, as amended, Nigeria's



Buhari

politics and democracy have been completely monetised with a swing towards anti-people capitalist merchantalism. It has been turned into a marketplace bazaar of bare-faced monetary banditry reserved only for state captors, who have cunningly cornered our collective commonwealth. It is so shameful and so disorientating that Nigeria can ever find herself in this despicable state of nadir.

Under the Buhari government, Nigeria has since become the poverty capital of the world, outstripping India. Nigeria ranks the number 149 most corrupt country in the world out of 180 countries surveyed, as adjudged by Transparency International, under its Anti-Corruption Perception Index. The macroeconomic environment has been badly fouled, leading to a free-for-all fall of the exchange rate of the naira which now exchanges between 580 naira to #700 to the dollar, as against #180-190- Buhari met it in 2015. Nigeria daily experiences an uncontrollable inflation rate that defies any economic sense, analysis and solutions.

To aspire to be a Governor under Buhari's "puritanic" APC, an aspirant must cough out #50 million; while aspirants to the Senate, House of Representatives and House of Assembly must vomit #20 million, #10 million and #2 million,

respectively.

With this circus of Baba Sallah's Alawada Kerikeri histrionics and sheer theatrics, President Buhari and the APC successfully completed their disdain for, mockery and demigration of Nigerians and our hard-earned democracy.

Buhari and the APC must tell us where they hope that Vice President Yemi Osibango, whose present annual salary is #12.126 million as recommended by the Revenue Mobilization, Allocation and Fiscal Commission set up under section 32(d) of part 1 of the third schedule to the 1999 Constitution, will Obtain 100 million form, when he would require 99 months (eight years and three months) to earn the 100 million price for the nomination form. It will take President Buhari himself whose salary is #14.05m 84 months (7 years) to get #100m. They must explain to Nigerians where aspirants like Dr Chris Ngige and Rotimi Amaechi who are ministers with an annual salary of #2, 026, 400 (#168,867 per month) will get 100 million for a presidential form, when it will take them nearly 50 years to earn 100 million. Let Buhari and the APC explain to Nigerians how Kayode Fayemi (Ondo State Governor), Yahaya Bello (Kogi State Governor), David Umahi (Ebonyi State Governor) and Rochas Okorocha (ex Imo State Governor),

whose salary per annum is #2, 223, 705, will cough out 100 million when it will take each of them 45 years to earn 100 million. Where will non-wealthy members of the APC, like Gbenga Hashim Olawepo get such money from?

This APC party and president Buhari must tell Nigerians where Senator Orji Uzor Kalu and former Senate president Dr Ken Nnamani would fetch #100m from, when their salary as Senators was and is #750,000 per month (aside humongous allowances). It would take Kalu and Nnamani 135 years to earn 100 million. In the final analysis, APC is probably zeroing in on Orji Uzor only few presidential candidates in the persons of billionaires like Kalu and Bola Tinubu. The Director-General of Tinubu's Support Organization (TSO), Kebbi-born Aminu Suleiman, has already signed a cheque for the #100 million. To them, it is "chicken change". Nigeria is hemorrhaging badly. It is just like the case when Rome was on fire while Nero fiddled away.

The price tag of 100 million has obviously conscripted the political space, marginalized, emasculated, and excluded the youths and women from the APC political space. Yet, this is the critical segment of the society that ought to enjoy inclusiveness and a liberalised political space to ensure their full participation in politics and engage in the national conversation.

Where is the place of the "Not-too-young-to-run" policy signed into an Act of Parliament by Buhari on May 31, 2018? The APC's mockery of democracy has certainly thrown up nothing but money-baggism, godfatherism and crass opportunism by those who have captured the State and our commonwealth.

I now frontally challenge any of the aspirants who will purchase these forms, to show us the source of the fund and also publicly display his tax returns in the last three years.

The APC's Shylock's "pound of flesh" extortionist #100 million levy is politically insensitive to the already vanquished Nigerians, having regard to the present grinding poverty, unending insecurity, unabated corruption, melancholy, disorientation, hunger, thirst, pains, pangs, blood, hopelessness and haplessness, with which the party has afflicted Nigeria and Nigerians in the last 7 years. Nigeria has never found herself in such battered and tattered doldrums since Lord Lugard forcefully amalgamated the disparate enclaves of Northern and Southern protectorates on January 1, 1914, to found the contraption called Nigeria.

The exorbitant sum of #100 million is a direct invitation to bare-faced thievery and political brigandage when these aspirants eventually win elections and emerge leaders. The price tag constitutes direct and brazen discrimination against other pauperized Nigerian members of the APC party, especially the youths and women, contrary to section 14(2)(b) of the 1999 Constitution, which provides that "participation by the people in their government shall be ensured in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution". It is also provided that "the Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be a State based on the principles of democracy and social justice" (section 14(1) of the Constitution).

While "the state social order is founded on ideals of freedom, equality and justice" (section 17(1) of the Constitution); section 42(1) prohibits a citizen of Nigeria being discriminated against on the basis of sex, community, ethnic group, place of origin, religion or opinion. This is precisely what the APC has done to the youths, women and disabled members of the party. This is more so because the Constitution does not permit independent candidacy. Members of the APC, except the select deep pockets, money bags and nouveau rich, are automatically cut off from the party's various elective offices.

Inability to block economic leakages, Nigeria's biggest challenge – ICPC

● *Restate commitment to tackle corruption at the ports*

By **PAUL MICHAEL**, Defence Editor, Abuja

The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) has said the inability of Nigeria to block economic leakages remains the country's biggest challenge towards having a robust economy.

The ICPC Chairman, Professor Bolaji Owasanoye, SAN said this while receiving the Executive Secretary and CEO of the Nigerian Shippers Council (NSC), Emmanuel Jime, at the Commission headquarters in Abuja.

Prof Owasanoye noted that while Nigeria had the capability to realize and sustain a robust economy, its biggest challenge was its inability to block economic leakages.

While restating the commitment of the Commission to tackle corruption at Nigerian Ports, he said that Nigeria's economy is bleeding from the high level of corruption and corrupt activities taking place in the ports.

He further stressed that the corruption at Nigerian Ports has led to reputational damage to the country, adding that foreign investors no longer have interest in investing

in the country but rather prefer investing in neighbouring countries.

The ICPC boss pledged the continued support of the Commission in fighting corruption at the ports through the joint efforts of the Ports Standing Task Team.

He, however, explained the inability to dedicate officers to be stationed at the ports full-time as the Commission does not have sufficient officers, noting that such may end up being counter-productive in the long run.

He explained that the Commission is also in partnership with other agencies of government such as FRSC, DSS, among others, to prevent corrupt activities and promote accountability and transparency in their processes.

"Statutorily, we should assist but realistically, we are not able to cope due to limited funding and staffing," Prof Owasanoye said.

He, therefore, maintained that the collaboration of both agencies would be in pragmatic ways and assured of the Commission's readiness to explore the best ways to curb corrupt practices at the Nigerian Ports and other agencies that would need the Commission's partnership.

Earlier in his address, the Executive Secretary/CEO of the Nigeria Shippers Council, Emmanuel Jime, expressed his gratitude to the ICPC for its collaborative support in the fight against corruption at the Ports which has improved the economic growth and development of the country.

Jime explained that since the adoption of the Nigerian Ports Process Manual (NPPM), a lot has been achieved in the regulation at the Ports including zero tolerance for gratification in cash and souvenirs, reduction of the average vessel demurrage and the average time for resolving complaints, savings of over \$6million for the country from reduced demurrage costs, among other achievements.

He added that all of these would lead to an improvement in the country's Ease of Doing Business and Corruption Perception Index rankings.

Jime, however, requested for direct attachment of ICPC personnel to the special intervention task force to carry out investigations and other operational activities that would enhance the enforcement drive against corruption at the ports.



Consumer protection, price hikes, poor service delivery and Nigerians' dilemma

*In some countries of the world, prices of goods and services are controlled by regulatory agencies charged with the regulation of prices of products. In such climes, buyers could return items to their sellers if the products do not deliver the value their makers promised. In some other countries, citizens could protest on the streets if the price of items like bread or some essential products are increased arbitrarily. In some other societies, buyers are at liberty to return products and get refunded or such products are replaced, no matter how long. Regularly, automobile producers ask buyers of their vehicles to return them in replacement for brand new ones even after several years of driving such cars. But sadly, Nigerians do not have such privileges, **JOHNMARK UKOKO** writes.*

In most countries of the world, brand makers think twice before they increase the prices of their products. In some countries, bakers do not increase the price of bread without having to contend with protests against such move.

In such climes, some politicians lost their positions because they supported and approved a slight increase in the price of bread. This scenario is common in the Arab world where the citizens could protest for several months against what they consider unjust government policies or actions.

Regularly, various automobile producers recall their brands to their factories whenever they perceive any form of defect in a particular car model. Surprisingly, when such actions are taken, Nigeria is usually not considered nor do Nigerians who bought such brands get compensated like their counterparts in other parts of the world.

In Europe and the United States of America, buyers of any brand are usually at liberty to return their vehicles if they feel such product fails its promise to the extent that makers of such brands introduce warranty in nearly all their vehicles, which give buyers guarantee for some years of such product.

If the buyers of such brands are not satisfied with the performance of such automobiles, they are expected to return such defective products to the seller and get brand new ones or even get a refund of their money usually without any fuss.

But such privileges are rare in Nigeria as Nigerians are sold defective products daily and when they return such products to their sellers, they are denied replacements or refund of their money.

Producers and sellers of wares increase the prices of their goods and services, a situation exacerbated by the absence of regulatory frameworks and institutions to regulate prices and maintain order.

For instance, telecommunications providers have ripped Nigerians off for over 20 years, as they continued to pay for dropped calls and other failed services, while telephone users are charged for Short Messages (SMS), which are never delivered to their recipients. In Nigeria, data or airtime could be wiped off without being used by the telephone user without an option of redress, as the country lacked effective consumer protection for citizens.

Local banks sent birthday and other celebration anniversary greetings to their customers unsolicited and charged them, without any institution to complain to for remedy.

Bank cases are also very challenging. Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) malfunction regularly and account holders are constantly debited without cash dispensed.

Despite the Central Bank of Nigeria's (CBN) efforts and promises that such transactions should be reversed within 24 hours, sometimes it takes several weeks or months for customers to get a reversal for such transactions.

Victims of such transactions are then asked to visit their banks where they are made to fill one several forms before the errors are ratified. In some cases, such failed transactions are never corrected, making bank customers out rightly lose their money.

Buyers of goods in the local market are most unfortunate in this situation, as they buy defective products daily and if they dare to return such products to the sellers, they are either beaten up or denied a refund of their money, just as some cases had led to police intervention. Some Nigerians have either been killed or maimed while fighting to get justice for buying defective products.

In the aviation sector, after selling tickets to Nigerians travelling on their routes, airline operators fail to keep to flight schedules as some keep their passengers waiting for hours and sometimes for days. The practice in most parts of the world is for the management of such airlines to keep their passengers in the hotel or compensate them and apologise for their inability to keep to their schedules.

But in Nigeria, most local airlines do not comply with the directives of the regulator- the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN). Even some foreign airlines that comply fully in their clime fail to do so when they come to Nigeria just as they collude with their local counterparts to mistreat Nigerians who fly their airlines.

Most private transport companies are also guilty of mistreating their passengers. In most cases when passengers board their vehicles and the vehicles develop a fault on the trip, most of the transport companies abandon their passengers to their fate.

In most cases, they do not refund their fares, and neither do the companies provide them alternative vehicles to take them to their various destinations.

The same applies to most media houses, which owe their workers several months of salaries and no institution seeks justice for such employees, while the few workers who know their rights and seek litigation to fight their case at the Industrial Court end up waiting endlessly to get justice, yet many others just resign to fate and seek divine intervention.

Students who are offered admissions in the nation's public universities pay their tuition fees and other levies, but several weeks or months later, members of the



Babatunde Irukera

academic or non-academic staff of such institutions embark on indefinite strikes to demand improved welfare and university system from the Federal Government.

They end up spending several months at home without being compensated and are forced to spend additional years in their schools for no fault of theirs without any form of remedy from either government or even their institutions.

Also, insurance companies all over the world promptly pay claims to their policyholders in the event of any eventuality. The reverse is the case in Nigeria, despite the efforts of the National Insurance Commission (NAICOM), most local insurance firms still renege on their obligations.

Only recently, the country experienced scarcity of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) popularly known as petrol caused by the importation of compromised products into the country due to the Russia and Ukraine war. To date, the Federal Government has not paid any compensation to the Nigerians whose vehicles were damaged, nor did it sanction the identified firms and the government agency that imported toxic fuel into the country.

Sadly, too, retirees, who served the country for years now have nothing to fall back on, as some corrupt government officials have looted their pensions. Some of the civil servants, including paramilitary and the military, now roam the streets daily, as they have nothing to show for the years they served their fatherland, while the corrupt

government officials smile to the banks.

After the pension reforms carried out under former President Olusegun Obasanjo, Nigerians thought the challenges of civil servants and military pensions had been permanently resolved, only to realise that several government agencies, paramilitary and military authorities were deducting pension contributions from their employees, but failed to remit the deductions to the Pension Fund Administrators (PFAs).

Attempts were made in the past to address consumer rights issues with the establishment of the Consumers Protection Council (CPC), which was mandated to tackle some of the complaints enumerated above, but it was changed to the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC).

The FCCPC was given wider functions and powers to perform the tasks assigned to it in the 1999 Constitution (as amended) in view of complaints by Nigerians about the lack of institutions to fight their cause. To that extent, some journalists engaged the Executive Vice Chairman of the FCCPC, Dr Babatunde Irukera recently on why the agency appeared helpless in the face of exploitation of Nigerians.

Irukera explained that the agency has no powers to regulate consumer prices because it is not a price regulator and that Nigeria operates a free market economy.

He argued that the laws establishing the commission made limited provisions on price regulation

which, if even it allows the Federal Government to get involved in price regulation, it would require the commission to conduct research and recommend a limited time of controlling prices in specific sectors to the president.

"Even when the president accepts and adopts the recommendation it will only be for a limited time. Other than that, we don't regulate prices," he added.

While stating that provisions of the FCCPC Act prohibit exploitative or unjust contract terms and prices, they do not give the commission authority to say that prices are too steep, adding: "Does that give us the authority to just say this thing is too high or this price is too high? No, it doesn't."

"Such considerations are based on objective standards. What is unjust and manifestly so is based on objective standards, not arbitrary. And it's not just a number. That something costs N100,000 doesn't make it unreasonable or unjust. Our regulatory approach must be methodical, transparent and clear."

Irukera mentioned how the commission prevented the exploitation of consumers at a supermarket selling hand sanitisers during the COVID-19 period, adding: "We investigated a popular supermarket and what they had done, a hand sanitiser that was sold for N490 in the morning was increased to N1,400 at noon and by 5:00 p.m it had risen to N3,400."

"We looked at their inventory and it was showing that they had 45 pieces left, but we couldn't find them on the shelf or in their store. They had hidden them for the next day when the prices would have further increased. It wasn't difficult to determine that the owners of the supermarket were exploitative, unjust and unreasonable, because there was no rational explanation for that progressive price increase."

From the above explanation, it will be safe to say that Nigerians lack protection from exploitation and service delivery failure. While the lawmakers who decided to change the CPC to FCCPC might have meant well, it could be easily concluded that Nigerians are left at the mercy of producers, marketers and service providers.

It is also clear that with the continued exploitation of Nigerians, the FCCPC Act remains a toothless bulldog. Could the realisation of the brand's owners, sellers and service providers that there are no laws and institutions to check their activities be responsible for the indiscriminate price increases in the country?

The question most Nigerians are asking is who will save them from shylocks and service providers? How long can Nigerians endure before they say enough is enough? Only time will tell.



Isa Ali Pantami

FG pledges support for Nigerian young entrepreneurs

The Federal Government has hinted that it will send a bill to the National Assembly aimed at enacting a law to support young entrepreneurs in the country, especially in the digital ecosystem to become successful.

Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Prof. Isa Ali Pantami, who stated this during an interactive session with the leadership of the House of Representatives recently in Abuja, said the bill will focus on the creation and development of the ministry's startup ecosystem.

The minister also said when passed, the bill will provide an enabling environment for young entrepreneurs in the digital ecosystem to be successful and urged the executive and legislative arms of government to work together to address the challenges facing young innovators and entrepreneurs in the country.

Pantami pointed out that young entrepreneurs in the country were faced with challenges that required government intervention, which needed no financial support to eliminate.

"These young entrepreneurs are not seeking government jobs. In fact, they are employers, not employees. So, by implication, if we support them, that will go a long way in creating many job opportunities for our citizens. Because all the startups are not in any way potential job employees, but rather potential job providers," he said.

The minister said the Federal Government had discovered that most countries had their own startup APPs, which was about bringing stakeholders to discuss the challenges being confronted by young innovators and entrepreneurs, adding that the government would do everything possible to ensure that they succeed.

Responding, Leader of the House of Representatives Ahasan Ado-Dogwuwa, said the interaction was part of the opportunity to explain the Intent and benefits of the legislative documents.

APCON vows to sanction Sterling Bank over provocative Easter advert

Stories by **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

The Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) has described a Sterling Bank Plc Easter advertisement in which it compared the resurrection of Jesus Christ with the rising of Agege Bread as "offensive and provocative" adding that the advert copy was not submitted for approval before it was exposed.

This was made known in a statement issued by its Registrar and Chief Executive Officer, Olalekan Fadolapo and made available to *The Trumpet*, insisting that the advert was distasteful and that Sterling Bank will be sanctioned for the action.

APCON explained that the bank had attracted criticisms in the social media post, as the same copy was sent to the email of the bank's customers, even as it had been deleted.

The copy had depicted a puffed, golden-brown, half Agege bread with the pay-off line: Like Agege Bread, It Rose Happy Easter.

It added that most social media users had decried Sterling Bank over the derogatory comparison and the bank had deleted the posts on its social media handles amid the swelling outrage mostly from Christians.

The bank later uploaded another copy of an open tomb significant to Christ's departure from the grave and added "Let the one who has never sinned throw the first stone."

But in its reaction, APCON condemned the bank's action, which it said was blasphemous.

The statement titled: Sterling Bank Agege Bread Easter Advertisement, read: "The Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria has observed with displeasure the insensitive, provocative Easter celebration advertisement by Sterling Bank Plc, which compared the resurrection of Jesus Christ with Agege Bread.

"The distasteful advertisement was neither submitted nor approved for exposure by the Advertising Standards Panel charged with the responsibility of ensuring that advertisements



Olalekan Fadolapo

conform with the prevailing laws of the federation, as well as the regulations and code of ethics of advertising in Nigeria.

"APCON will take necessary action to ensure that Sterling Bank is sanctioned for the

exposure of such offensive advertisement according to law and that no religious belief or faith is ridiculed or any blasphemous advertisement exposed in any guise," the statement added.

Bol inaugurates industrial energy efficiency committee

Bank of Industry (BoI) has inaugurated a six-member Project Investment Committee (PIC) aimed at improving Industrial Energy Efficiency (IEE), Resource Efficiency and Cleaner Production (RECP) through a pragmatic and innovative approach.

Members of the committee, which was inaugurated recently at BoI office in Lagos are the Bank of Industry, the Manufacturers

Association of Nigeria (MAN), the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) and the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria (CIBN), Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment (FMITI) and the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC).

Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (MD/CEO) of BoI, Olukayode Pitan, said the

establishment of the committee was to enable industries to align with energy management systems for a sustainable environment.

He said: "Climate change is getting harder yearly, while industrial pollution, including air pollution, noise and waste disposal, among others, have been a major concern around the globe. Industrial pollution contaminates drinking water, releases toxins into the air, reduces the quality of soil for agriculture and constitutes danger to human health, as well as animals and plants."

According to him, to achieve its development goals, the BoI knows that sustainability considerations must be incorporated into its businesses and professional activities.

Speaking further, he said: "This project will enable industries to align with energy management systems which will lead to reduced environmental pollution, lower industrial power level and reduced costs of production among others. Therefore, BoI's participation in this project demonstrates a strong commitment of the bank in contributing its quota towards achieving sustainable development."

Pitan stressed that the benefits of industrial energy efficiency, resource efficiency and cleaner production include reduced

cost of production, improved profitability, resourcefulness, competitiveness, improved health, stronger economy, improved brand image and reduction in the explosion of global rising energy cost.

He urged the committee to ensure that the goals of improving energy efficiency, for a sustainable environment were actualised.

Responding, a representative of UNIDO, Oluyomi Banjo, said the project would address questions of how industries can improve efficiency and increase profitability maintaining that with the project, industries would operate at international best standards, comply with regulations and maintain improved relationship with policymakers.

Banjo pointed out that the project hoped to support no fewer than 75 industries in food and beverage, steel and metals, petrochemicals, wood and furniture, textiles and garments sectors and beyond.

"UNIDO has implemented IEE in over 18 countries across the world and RECP in over 60 countries. This project will create an opportunity to develop IEE and RECP methodologies and human capacity building, which will see Nigerians being trained to global standards as energy assessors and RECP's experts," he said.



Olukayode Pitan



Multi-billion naira Ikotun hospitality real estate shrinks over T.B Joshua's death

•Investors put assets for sale, convert others into residential

Stories by **ONYEBUCHI SAMPSON**

The once thriving multi-billion Naira hospitality real estate market in Ikotun, a Lagos suburb and its environs shrunk just ten months after the demise of the founder of the Synagogue Church of All Nations (SCOAN), Prophet Temitope Balogun Joshua.

Investors are now putting assets near the church premises for sale to meet contractual obligations as the once lively city has gradually turned into a ghost community. Many have also capitalised on the huge housing deficits in the area to convert their hotels into residential apartments.

It was also learnt that many outlets including hotels, eateries, convenient stores and business centres have all closed shop for lack of patronage. Owners of hotels in Ikotun area of Lagos said they decided to put their assets on sale as businesses seem to have gone along with the founder of the Church.

For instance, the popular Victoria Continental Hotel has been sold, while Hymax Grace Hotel and Suites, Glorious Hotel and Suites have all retrenched over 100.

A former staff of Hymax Glorious said before his disengagement, that the company struggled to get two guests a night against over 100 guests that used to lodge in the facility a night.

Also, a former worker at the 100-room Hymax Grace hotel, said the management retrenched workers when they couldn't afford to pay salaries anymore.

"People were no longer lodging in the hotel. The main customers were people from the church," she said.

Confirming this development, an estate surveyor and valuer, Michael Ajie said two hotels are on sale in the area. He stressed that business owners are not only selling their properties but relocating, while resilient ones are converting their property for other uses.

Ajie said the owner of Sweet Saviour hotel just bought a piece of land behind the church to expand the business, but development activities have remained stagnant since the Prophet died.

He said: "Victoria Continental hotel and suites just sold their building because

no customer was coming, De Lodge will soon sell their hotel and Glorious hotel.

"I can confirm to you that since the death of T.B Joshua customers that enter those hotels are not up to 50. Many other chalets have converted their lodge back

to houses because they were expecting that the current pastor, Madam Evelyn Joshua would open the church for members and our businesses would be back. But it has not been like that."

Apart from hoteliers,

recreational activities have gone down too due to the decline in patronage. For instance, Mrs Comfort Omenks, who owns one of the biggest bars in the area, said businesses have gone down drastically as customers have declined

from 159 customers to ten daily. She regretted citing the business in that location, as she is unable to meet her financial obligations.

But few business owners are optimistic that normal activities will return after the first anniversary of

Prophet T.B Joshua's death. They, however, called for revamping of infrastructure in the area to boost real estate for those willing to convert their hotels to residential apartments, since the housing deficit in Lagos is still huge.



Some of the affected hotels

Lagos moves against building collapse, begins enforcement of infractions in Island

•Demands presence of professionals, pictures, information of workers on site

Poised to curb incessant construction failures in the state, Lagos State Government has read a riot act against building collapse. The state, through the State Building Control Agency (LABSCA), is now demanding that developers in the state, past names, pictures and addresses of all artisan workers on site.

The state also warned that any site without the presence of construction professionals like engineers, architects and builders will be sealed.

The General Manager of LABSCA, Architect Gbolahan Oki, disclosed this during a meeting with members of the Lagos

Island chapter of Real Estate Developers Association in his office. He decried the nonchalant attitude of members of the association despite several meetings on the need to build right and curb incessant building collapses in Lagos Island.

According to him, henceforth, the agency will seal any site without key professionals on-site, while the names, addresses and photographs of workers are to be pasted on sites by developers.

Oki regretted that members of the association have continued to short-change the system, despite several warnings, leading to the collapse of a building under

construction in Lagos Island.

The General Manager vowed to start enforcement in the Island by pulling down structures that do not comply with building regulations.

According to him, "We don't need to sleep with one of our eyes closed because we are not sure what the builders or contractors have put in place for us to sleep in. The life of an average Nigerian is more important than the money you want to make. All constructions must have key professionals on-site and materials must be well tested. Before you start any job on your site you should do insurance, if anything happens to the

people on-site, you don't need to worry. There are simple procedures that must be met, which also include having building plans and approval on-site, which 99 per cent of the developers don't have, that is why the Lagos state government decided to have building officers in the district.

"Take the recent building collapse, for example, the owner would have spent about N30 million, if 10 per cent of the cost is taken by a professional, the build would stand. Irrespective of the cost of construction, it is not equal to the life of a person. If people were living in that collapsed property what would be their fate?"

"When our officers come to your site, you will harass

them, because you do not have the necessary documents and it has to stop. On no occasion should any of our enforcement team be embarrassed, if not the site will have to come down alongside others on the street," he added.

Meanwhile, the chairman of the association, Chief Adeniyi Lawal, has pledged the association's willingness to cooperate with the government to ensure protection of life and property by abiding by all construction rules.

He thanked God that no life was lost in the recent collapse building in Lagos Island, stressing that the association will fish out the developer of the ill-fated construction.

Lagos residents lament looming disaster, lack of amenities

Ajegunle residents, a Lagos community of over 1.5 million people, are lamenting the looming disaster in the area due to long neglect and lack of amenities.

Located in Ajeromi/Ifelelodon Local Council, Ajegunle community has only one tarred street amid over 100 untarred ones. The streets and roads lack proper drainage, medians, walkways and street lights, unlike its neighbours, like Surulere, Lagos Mainland, Apapa and Lagos.

Apart from the only tarred street (Zion Street), other major roads are riddled with potholes, shallow drainage, lack of median, walkways and street lights.

The community is also one of Lagos flood-prone communities that suffered from the opening of Oyan Dam. A visit to the city revealed a sorry tale of the community, abandoned to its fate, due to years of neglect.

A resident, Kamal Adesiri, lamented that his property was damaged when his apartment was flooded during the last rain. Adesiri said he currently lives in fear of the unknown.

"Any time it rains, especially at night, we may just be swept away and that's death," he lamented.

Besides flooding, the community lacked portable water as residents still paddle canoes in search of water as it was in the 80s. Despite reports of starvation and health issues in the community, residents have been left to their fate as they constantly struggled for survival.

Chairman, Ajegunle Community Development Area (CDA), Mr Sunday Awobona, said the community has been existing without water for decades without any intervention from the authorities. According to him, the major

challenge in the community is water.

"We don't have water to drink and we wonder if we have a government. We only depend on vendors for potable water. How do we cope with that and this is a community that has government officials? This is Lagos State not anywhere else?" he asked.

Beyond the issue of water, access to healthcare has remained a challenge. According to the residents, the Ajegunle Health Centre, located on Omo West Close, Ajegunle, is the only health facility created to serve over 1.5 million residents.

A visit to the facility showed that only six medical personnel are stationed in the clinic and they work between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

The Baale of Ajegunle Community, Chief Moyosore Oladunjoye, lamented that the health centre is not equipped with drugs.

Also, a recent study by Lagos Urban Studies Group of the University of Lagos, in conjunction with the Nigerian Slum/Informal Settlement Federation and Shantytown Empowerment Foundation (SHEF), revealed that only 29.4 percent of residents visit healthcare centres when ill.

The research conducted with the support of COVID-19 African Rapid Grant Fund was carried out in Ajegunle and other communities in Lagos State.

The study reported malaria as the most common illness, while residents depend on self-medication. The research, titled: 'Giving Voice to Slums: Creating Digital Urban Platform for Community Self-Reporting Amid COVID-19', was carried out to understand the socio-economic conditions and health behaviours of these communities during COVID-19 in Ajegunle community.

Edo begins desilting of drains, warns against indiscriminate disposal of refuse

Edo State government has commenced desilting of drainages across the state, warning residents against indiscriminate disposal of refuse to prevent blocking of drains and avert flooding.

Speaking while monitoring the desilting, the Edo State Commissioner for Environment and Sustainability, Jonathan Lawani, said the exercise will be sustained. He noted that the desilting of drains and drainages must be done always to allow the free flow of floodwater to the right channel.

Lawani added that the flood and erosion challenges experienced in parts of the state are due to the indiscriminate disposal of waste

in unauthorised places. He further urged residents to desist from dumping refuse in unauthorised places as the state government will prosecute anyone caught in the act in line with extant environmental laws.

"Residents, traders and shop owners must ensure prompt and proper desilting of drains in front of their houses and business premises. They should notify the ministry so that the silts can be evacuated on time," he said.

The commissioner urged residents and corporate bodies in the state to collaborate with the state government to ensure that Edo is clean and healthy.

Brace for rainy season, Ogun residents told

Stoies by **ONYEBUCHI SAMPSON**

To prevent flooding and its associated calamities during the rainy season, Ogun State Government has told residents to prepare for the approaching wet period and support its efforts to keep the state flood free.

Giving the advice on behalf of the state government, Special Adviser to the Governor on Environment, Ola Oresanya, in a statement, said rainfall should not be seen as a curse but a blessing, hence, the need to be adequately prepared for the season and tap into its opportunities.

The advice followed a prediction by the Nigeria Meteorological Agency (NIMET) and the Hydrological Services Agency (NIHSA), that there would be two seasons of rainfall between April and December 2022.

The Federal agencies had predicted that Ogun, being a coastal state, will experience prolonged rainfall that

may be accompanied by flash floods in parts of the state, especially between June and July, while the coastal flooding may be compounded with the release of water from Oyan dam, which is always accompanied with high tide in the lagoon.

Oresanya urged farmers and inhabitants to be properly aware of the period. He also charged them to take advantage of the season and guide against any unfortunate occurrence.

He further advised those in the habit of dumping refuse on the road and in drainage channels to desist, while appealing to residents in the flood-prone areas to take adequate steps in safeguarding the vulnerable members of their communities, such as children, the elderly and the handicapped.

Oresanya encouraged Community Development Associations (CDA) to educate their members on the need to always and properly evacuate their drainages to remove properties constituting restrictions to drainage

channels.

"Following these predictions, there is a need for the public, especially residents of the state to prepare for the likely impact of this year's weather pattern. Consequently, residents in wetlands areas with low rainfall infiltration such as Isheri, Akute, Warewa, Oke-afa, Owa and Yemule Riverbanks in Ijebu-ode, Onihale in Ifo, Ogun Waterside, Ebute-Kimobi in Ijebu-East and those living near flood plains of Sokori, Arakanga and Onikoko-River in Abeokuta, Eruwuru in Sagamu, Ijamido, Isaka Owode-Yewa in Ado-Odo Ota Local Council are advised to take precautionary measures during this season.

While reiterating the commitment to the protection of life and property of residents through various activities, the State Government has taken measures to control the problem of flooding statewide.

"Farmers, especially along the coastal areas and riverbanks are implored to take advantage of the

weather outlook and plan the planting and harvest properly to prevent damages to their crop and livestock.

"Motorists and pedestrians are advised to be mindful of the peculiarities of the season and be safety conscious while commuting during this period. Furthermore, His Excellency, Prince Dapo Abiodun, has directed that the Flood Emergency Management Unit (FEMU) be decentralised into all the Local Councils for faster response to emergency calls during the rainy season.

"Ogun as an agrarian state looks forward delightfully to the season of rainfall to support our investment in agriculture, afforestation and climate change adaptation programmes. The need for effective collaboration with the government to prevent the devastation of improperly managed rainfall and the consequences of flooding is therefore compelling. The season of rainfall is not a curse but a blessing. Please support the government to keep our state free of flood," the statement added.



Managing Director/CEO, LAWMA, Mr. Ibrahim Odumboni (left); President, Association of Waste Managers of Nigeria (AWAMN), David Oriyomi; and chairman, LAHA House Committee on Environment, Hon. Desmond Elliott, at the Stakeholders meeting on Public Health Law 2015 & Environmental Management Protection Law 2017 at Ikeja, Lagos.

LAWMA boss canvasses attitudinal change to improve environment

Managing Director/ Chief Executive Officer of Lagos Waste Management Authority, (LAWMA), Mr Ibrahim Odumboni, has called for a radical change in attitude by Lagos residents, towards waste management and environmental practices.

He also charged health officers to take responsibility by rededicating themselves to duty, to restore the old glory of that profession, when they commanded both fear and respect among residents.

Odumboni spoke at a one-day stakeholders' meeting on Public Health Law 2015 and Environmental Management Protection Law 2017, organised by the Association of Waste Managers of Nigeria, (AWAMN), in collaboration with LAWMA, in Ikeja.

He maintained that a key

determinant of the success of waste management operations in the state was enforcement, hence the need for synergy among the various stakeholders, to work with a law that would enable seamless PSP operations for excellent results.

He said: "After what we do, even if we deploy the biggest resources, the biggest brain, the biggest mind into our day to day job, and we don't have enforcement there would be a lot of room for disorderliness.

"Now, our major challenge in this sector is the nonchalant attitude of our people, who are not ready to do what is right. We all know what the right thing is. It encompasses patronage of PSPs for proper disposal of waste, prompt payment of waste bills and

separating waste at source, among others."

Odumboni further stressed, that all government agencies and officials saddled with enforcing the law, must work together to achieve a common purpose.

Earlier, the permanent secretary of the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources, Dr Omobolaji Gaji, reiterated that environmental infractions would now be prosecuted at designated magistrate's courts, urging all stakeholders to work in synergy to transform the environment.

The Chairman of Lagos State House of Assembly Committee on Environment, Hon. Desmond Eliot noted that the various environmental laws of the state have been collapsed

into one document, adding that the Assembly would continue to strengthen the legal framework for issues of environment.

President of AWAMN, Mr David Oriyomi, in his keynote address, thanked the state government for dedicating many magistrates' courts to the prosecution of environmental offences, promising that drawing on the government's support, the PSP operators would work harder to deliver good service to Lagosians.

The external solicitor to AWAMN, Barr. David Fadile, who x-rayed both laws, noted that there were areas of contradictions, urging the State's House of Assembly to consider urgent amendments to such sections, to achieve desired objectives.

Elect president that will steer ship of state out of political woods – Olowo of Owo



Olowo of Owo, Oba Ojugbelu Arere

By **GABRIEL OMONHINMIN**

The Olowo of Owo is a paramount Yoruba king of Owo, a city in Ondo State, South-West Nigeria, which used to be the capital of Yoruba land between 1400 and 1600 AD.

Oba Ojugbelu Arere, was the first Olowo of Owo Kingdom. He was the direct descendant of Oduduwa, the progenitor of the Yoruba race. Oduduwa is known up till now, as the father of the Yoruba people.

The current Olowo of Owo Kingdom, His Imperial Majesty, Alayeluwa, Oba Ajibade Gbadegehin Ogunoye III, is the 32nd paramount ruler of Owo Kingdom.

The name Owo means 'Respect'. Owo was coined out of the tremendous respect the former British imperialists had for the first Olowo of Owo Kingdom, who was said to have carried and conducted himself with a lot of dignity to the admiration of the British Colonial Masters.

From the 29th Olowo of Owo, Oba Adekola Ogunoye II, who reigned from (1968 to 1993) it took the Ogunoye ruling house of Owo Kingdom 26 years to regain the exalted throne of the Olowo of Owo, with the ascension of the current Olowo of Owo on July 2019.

Before Olowo Gbadegehin Ogunoye III ascension to the throne, the Olowo stool used to be fiercely contested and highly acrimonious, occasionally resulting to a pocket of violence. Surprisingly for the very first time, in several centuries, Oba Gbadegehin Ogunoye III, selection and enthronement as the 32nd

Olowo of the ancient city of Owo, was peaceful and cordial to the admiration of Palace Watchers. For once the whole Kingdom was in harmony as to Oba Gbadegehin Ogunoye III enthronement.

For three years before Saturday, April 16, 2022, Palace Watch was on the trail of Oba Gbadegehin Ogunoye III, just to have a chat with him, on sundry issues, especially matters concerning his enthronement, and the day to day running of the Kingdom. Palace Watch interview with the highly respected Kabiyesi goes thus:-

Palace Watch: Kabiyesi, Congratulations once again over your rancour free selection and enthronement as the Olowo of Owo Kingdom. What would you say is the secret behind the whole ancient Kingdom of Owo queuing behind your selection and enthronement, especially when people of Owo Kingdom are not known to agree easily on the selection of a single individual as Olowo. But in your own case, the whole town queued behind you. What was the magic?

Olowo: This is not a fair question to ask me. I would suggest, you direct this question to the good people of Owo Kingdom, who graciously made me their King. They will be in a position to tell you, why they all agreed for the very first time in several centuries, to endorse my candidature and enthronement.

I must, however, confess that I am honoured and humbled by the love, trust and utmost good faith my people of Owo displayed during the processes that lead to my eventual enthronement as the 32nd Olowo of Owo Kingdom. I'm eternally grateful to all of them and I promised to continue to do my very best, to make Owo

Kingdom much better than I met it.

If you must know, I have never been distant from my people right from my formative years as a young man, up till this present moment that I occupy the throne of Owo Kingdom. I had my primary and secondary education in Owo town, even when I went to the University for further studies, I maintained regular contacts with my people and the town. When I began to work, I did not go too far from them, although I was based in Akure, I regularly frequented Owo. Hardly any week passes that I will not be in Owo. Although I was not a money bag, I had on several occasions genuinely intervened in the lives and well-being of my people. As the essence of life is to be able to do something meaningful to other people's lives.

Owo Kingdom is unique in its own way, whoever emerges as the Olowo of Owo, must be a Prince, who is a direct descendant of Olowo Elewuokun. Olowo is selected after the Ifa has been duly consulted. A sitting Olowo of Owo Kingdom is assisted by appointed Chiefs collectively known as Edibo Ologho and other Chiefs such as the Sashere, Ojumu Odo, Elerewe Ayida, Ajana Atelukuluko, the Ifa priest of Owo Kingdom and the Akowa Iyoja, who is the head of Chiefs in Iloro quarters of Owo, all have role to play in the processes that throw up an Olowo of Owo Kingdom.

According to Owo traditions, the Olowo is often appointed by king-makers, Omolowo's after which the Iloro Chiefs under the leadership of Akowa Iyoja played a significant role in the king installations. In my case, out of the 16 King-makers, Omolowos, 15 voted for me, while one voted against me. The reason why the one, who voted against me did so, was quite known and understandable. He was an in-law to the family of the immediate past Olowo of Owo, Olateru Olagbegi. We have long moved past all this. The Kingdom is now one united indivisible Kingdom, and we are all forging ahead for the general good of our people and the kingdom.

Palace Watch: Kabiyesi, before your ascension to the throne, Owo town and its environ had this peculiar problem where majority of its youths belong to different secret cults. This was like a scourge, as there were lots of killings almost every other day in Owo town and its surroundings. It was indeed a big problem then. How did you resolve this problem?

Olowo: Well, as you rightly pointed out, this secret cult thing among our youths then, was a major problem we needed to tackle frontally, and that is exactly what we did. Our approach, in solving this problem, was multi-dimensional. We began solving

this problem traditionally and adopted other methods and approaches. All cumulatively help to bring about the relative peace we are having today in the Kingdom. Although the daily killing of innocent souls, which was most unacceptable to us then had reduced drastically, we are not resting, we will continue to do our very best to ensure the safety of lives and properties in the Kingdom.

Sometime back, the youths involved in these secret cults came out in droves and renounced their membership of these cults, and surrendered their weapons, there were about 3,000 of them. This brought about the much needed peace in our kingdom. Although we are very happy that the children involved eventually heard our plea to renounce their cult membership, it wasn't just a tea party to get them to surrender their arms. We must thank the Ondo State Government who went into collaboration with us, to achieve this fit.

In a deliberate effort to engage these children after they have renounced their membership of these secret cults and keep them permanently busy, the Ondo State Government decided to establish the Jugbere farm settlements.

These children were in the process given plots of land and money to cultivate various crops. They were already doing very well, when the Fulani herdsmen nefarious activities came to upturn the enormous gains we have already made. These herdsmen went about kidnapping, rapping, killing and destroying the farms these children were giving huge sums of money to cultivate. This has led to most of them abandoning these farms as we speak. In spite of this very painful development, we are still appealing and pleading with some of them to be focused.

Let me therefore seize this opportunity to appeal to the Federal Government to do everything within its powers to halt for once the reckless adventure and menace of these Fulani herdsmen, who have made our immediate environment very unsafe. As the saying goes, the idle hand is the devil's workshop. The Fulani herdsmen have again succeeded in making our youths idle. Our youths need to be fully engaged for them to be productive and useful to themselves and the society where they live. A deliberate effort must be made by the Federal alongside state governments across the country to keep our children busy. The only way to achieve this, is through the establishment of cottage industries, small and medium scale industries across the country, as this is one of the ways to fast track the economic growth of the nation

at large. It is a known fact, that the government alone can't provide these industries, but the government at all levels need to provide the necessary incentives, policies that will attract and encourage the private sectors to queue into their programmes.

For these dreams to be actualized and flourished, we need to have regular power supply, good road network and drinkable water supply as these are the incentives that act as the bedrock for any economy to grow. Once these facilities are in place, especially regular and constant power supply, artisans and other small and medium enterprises in the country, will be able to function maximally to the benefit of our people and to the nation at large.

Above all other things, what is required for any nation to have direct foreign investment is security and regular power supply. Once these things are in place, they attract better direct foreign investment than portfolio investments.

Palace Watch: I am told that some gold deposits have been discovered in very large quantities in your Kingdom. What is happening to these gold deposits in your kingdom? Is the Federal Government now manning it?

Olowo: I can't say categorically, that the Federal Government is the one manning the gold deposit discovered in Jegbere areas of my kingdom. What is known is that, there are lots of illegal Miners at work in this area of the state. They are alleged to be Fulani men. We the indigenes can't go near the place, to see the level of activities there, because the people involved in this illegal mining are heavily armed and fortified. The illegal activities in these areas have gotten so bad, that, we are told that helicopters do occasionally land in these places in our forest to evacuate the gold they are manning illegally.

All the illegal activities are bastardized the nation's economy on daily basis and they are never accounted for. And the large majority of our people are suffering living in penury in the midst of plenty. Hence, we are pleading to the Federal Government to do something urgent to stop this assault on our natural resources before our people decide to take the laws into their hands to protect their lives, their properties and their God given natural resources.

Palace Watch: We are again approaching another election year in 2023. Politicians are known to move around Palaces making promises they do not fulfill to traditional rulers and their people. What are your

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I have desire to go to Hollywood – Linda Ejiofor-Suleiman

Linda Ejiofor Suleiman, is famed for her role in the popular TV soap, Tinsel. Bimpe, as she is fondly called by her fans, is currently one of Nollywood's delights. Since her debut movie role in 'The Meeting', she has been enjoying attention from all quarters. Linda got wedded to her co-star Ibrahim Suleiman. In this interview with OMONIYI ALLI, she bares it all.



You have always maintained a clean slate in the industry, with no controversy, how have you been able to maintain consistency?

I always remember the family that I come from. I think 'would they be proud of me if I do this?' So even if bad publicity is also publicity, I just don't want it attached to my name.

How were you able to keep your marriage plans from the media?

Did I? I am a private person and my marriage and relationships are my private life which I like to keep low. Thank God that I married my love and I have quit spinsterhood for good.

How did your journey into acting start?

Before I entered the University of Port-Harcourt, River State to study

Sociology, I had done a diploma course in Theatre Arts at the University of Ibadan, Oyo State. I think I was at the University of Ibadan for about three months. However, when I was getting into the groove and enjoying it, my father pulled me out. He said, 'No daughter of mine will go into acting'. You know, if God has a plan for you, His plan will always set the motion. So, here I am as an actress again with his full support and I have made him proud.

How did you come to play Bimpe in Tinsel?

At first, I hated the character, the role and everything about her because she was just dumb. When I read my script and saw all the stupid things she had to do and the stupid questions she asked, I just concluded that she was

dumb and sarcastic. She was supposed to know the answers to the questions, but she never got it. So, I was always complaining to the director. But the writer kept telling me to enjoy the character. He would say the only way to love the character is to enjoy the character; and before I knew it, I started enjoying the character. So, I had to go and watch a lot of dumb movies like Legally Blonde. At a point, I had to go and watch Devil Wears Prada because I had to be Brenda's P.A. I had to research how to be like these people.

What is the transition into many characters you portray in different movies?

The transition is always the same every time. Every time I am on a new set, it's the same feeling because I don't know the people I am going to be working with. I have never worked with the director or my fellow cast I am working with, so I would always be nervous whenever I start a new production with other people. I would always be nervous because it was a new character that I have never played. The roles are usually different from Ejiofor and The Meeting', Halima in 'soldier Story' or the role I played in 'Rumour Has It'. Every time I get on set, I am always shaking.

You acted alongside veterans in 'Chief Daddy' how were you able to fit into the role given?

It is hard. It is really hard. As actors, we would need a lot of time to fit into the character but we didn't have that much time. We had to go and watch movies with other people that have acted the character. Not watching American movies, we had to watch our local content. I play the role of a prostitute in a recent movie where a friend did a documentary on prostitution and that helped us as well. It was cool because we had to speak Pidgin English so it was good. I had done 'Out of luck' where I spoke Pidgin English, so it was so much fun having to speak it again.

So, what's your dream role now?

I've always wanted to try multi-personality disorder. In other words, I would like to act as two or three people at the same time. Yes, it is not easy, but it's something I will love to play because I think being good is overrated. Too many people are playing good roles; so, I want to do something else.

What is the best thing that acting has given you?

We hide behind a lot of characters. There are a lot of things that we would want to play out in person but we can't do. Acting has given me the opportunity to play different people whenever I want to, and the fact that I can interact and pass information to people watching in front of a camera.

What is the most embarrassing thing

a fan has done or said to you?

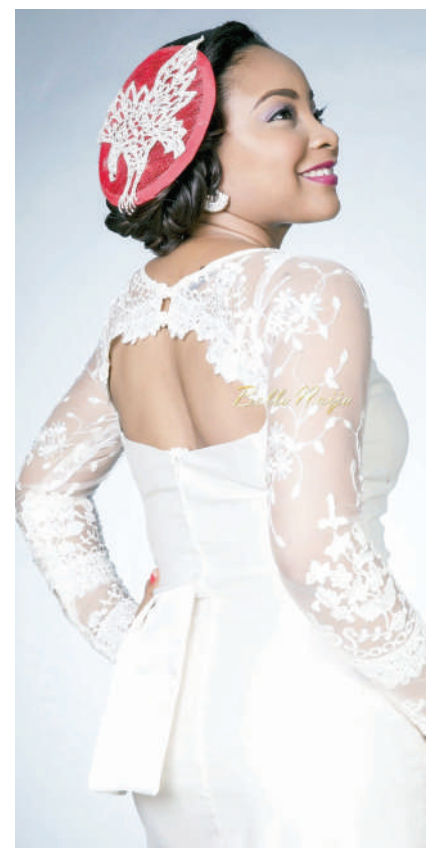
Someone saw me outside and she said, 'Hi Bimpe' and she goes 'you are actually small in person, and I just smiled. Another person, a guy who sometimes doesn't know how to hug and take pictures, he actually put his hand on my low waist. I had to tell him, 'guy, it's not there, please take your hand up'. You just have to set boundaries.

What memories of your childhood days do you love the most?

First, we are five, I had brothers and sisters who I could talk to and play with, I also had my father who tells us folk tales at night, you know all those things at night when you are sleeping or you are about to go to bed and there is no light and you just surround your father. My father told us stories, he said this is what we usually get when we are in the village with our parents and children will surround us, and we will gather around him and tell us stories. My father told us stories and we learnt a lot from the tortoise and the lion and monkeys and we sang some songs, some folk tale songs and it's not like what children get now, it's not the same thing, and I pray that my father sees his grandchildren because I will so love him to say those stories to them because I could not remember how to sing those songs but I will love for him to sing those songs for us.

Would you say at this point in your career you have arrived?

No, I haven't, and I have not learnt anything yet and am still learning, it's the same way they say life is a learning process, I am still learning, I haven't arrived and am nowhere arrived.



Nigeria's bartenders set to shake it up at World-class 2022

Recently, Guinness Nigeria announced the commencement of its foremost bartender competition, World Class. This official flag off for the World Class journey which began in Lagos will stop in key cities across Nigeria before ending with a bang down in Sydney, Australia.

World Class is the world's largest and most exclusive bartending competition, mixology education programme; curated to celebrate bartending creativity and innovative cocktail-making trends while

inspiring people to drink better and create unforgettable experiences in the process. World Class has supported, trained, and inspired over 400,000 bartenders, across 60 countries, for over twelve years, while partnering them with the world's finest spirits – the Diageo Reserve collection.

World Class 2022 will witness the unveiling of the 'Big 30' – top 30 mixologists/bartenders across Nigeria put through Masterclasses on the perfect serve for participating

Diageo premium spirits; Johnnie Walker and Ketel One.

Diageo through Guinness Nigeria is committed to promoting diversity and inclusion which will be brought to life in this year's competition. Thus, an intentional approach towards ensuring active participation from women has been adopted with hopes that it will encourage interest in the years to come and recruit more women into the bartending community by leveraging the Diageo Bar Academy program.

The 30-strong list will be shortlisted at Regional Finals in Lagos, Abuja and Port Harcourt, where four bartenders will be selected. The final 4 will dazzle a select crowd at a 3-day Cocktail Week showing off their winning recipes. The eventual winner will represent Nigeria at the Global Finals in Sydney, Australia later this year.

Sammy Okwandu, Head of Customer Marketing International Premium Spirits, Reserve Brands

and Modern Trade opined; 'World Class is a global platform that seeks to take consumers on a journey where fine drinking is seen the same way as fine dining. The bartender competition is also our way of giving back some of the value we derive from a sector of the value chain that is often overlooked; our on-trade partners. Ultimately, we look forward to an amazing 6 months with some of the best mixologists in the land and may the best bartender win'.

Davido keeps every member of his team on their toes, road manager, Dayo Umarudeen reveals



Music star, Davido has been described by his famous road

manager, Dayo Umarudeen as someone who doesn't entertain laxity and keeps every member of his team on their toes to achieve greatness.

With multiple hit songs and endorsement deals credited to Davido, Umarudeen who joined the award-winning singer's team about four years ago said despite the success recorded by the singer, he always wants to keep winning and never stops dreaming big.

Speaking about his job as his road manager and how much influence he draws from Davido, the US-born artiste manager said "Davido is cool and wants everybody to be better than what they are."

He added that "That's why he is pushing me to go further, he sees it and he is always there. I'm the kind of person that likes

to do things on my own. I only go to David when I encounter difficulties because I know he can help me fix them. He's always there to put me through. I do all the dirty work. I'm a roadrunner."

Umarudeen may be working closely with a superstar singer and hitmaker, he equally wants to build his own name and write his story in a way that inspires millions of youths struggling to find their calling.

Revealing his plans and what he hopes to achieve for himself and others who look up to him, he added that "I feel like at the end of the day God has a plan for everyone. At the end of the day, I want to open a music label-not like a money-based one. I just want to be able to put people on the map, people behind the scenes. Show people what people in the background are doing. For example, with someone like Drake, there are always 20 people behind him making things work. I want to be that person that shows that this is the person doing this or that," he said.



AMVCA's 'Design for the Stars': Lanre Da Silva Ajayi, Mai Atafo, Adebayo Oke-Lawal unveiled as Coaches

Africa Magic and MultiChoice have unveiled top Nigerian fashion designers, Lanre Da Silva Ajayi of Lanre Da Silva Ajayi, Mai Atafo of Orange Culture, as coaches for the AMVCAs 'Design For The Stars' competition.

They will work with the finalists of the competition, mentoring and sharing key pieces of advice with them as they prepare to showcase their designs at the first-ever AMVCAs Runway Show, scheduled to take place on Sunday, 8 May 2022.

Speaking on the competition as part of the activities for the eighth edition of the AMVCAs, Oke-Lawal said, "Fashion is a huge part of the

AMVCAs, and it's also a huge part of the mark that the AMVCA leaves even beyond the awards show. I think it's incredible that the AMVCA has seen that and is giving back to the fashion industry that has been an imprint for the show over the years."

Atafo added: "The AMVCAs red carpet is the biggest red carpet on the continent. Giving young designers a chance to be a part of that is a huge opportunity."

Ajayi echoed a similar sentiment: "When you think of AMVCA, you think of spotlight, camera, light and action, so what better way to tell the fashion story? I think it's an amazing opportunity for young designers to showcase the best of what they have."

FG renames national theatre Iganmu: Lagos creative and entertainment centre



The Minister of Information and Culture disclosed this on Tuesday in Madrid, Spain while signing an agreement on Nigeria's hosting of the first Global Conference on Cultural Tourism and Creative Industry.

The National Theatre in Iganmu, Lagos State, which is under renovation, has now been renamed Lagos Creative and Entertainment Center, upon completion.

The Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, disclosed this on Tuesday in Madrid, Spain while signing an agreement on Nigeria's hosting of the first Global Conference on Cultural Tourism and Creative Industry.

The News Agency of Nigeria reports the bilateral agreement was signed between Nigeria and the United Nations World Tourism Organisation at the organization's headquarters.

Mohammed disclosed that the global conference, which would hold from November 14 to 17, would be the first event to be staged at the newly refurbished edifice.

"Nigeria will be hosting the event at the National Theatre in Lagos, which is currently being renovated at a cost of 100 million dollars under a partnership between the Federal Government of Nigeria and the Bankers' Committee/Central Bank of Nigeria."

"It is the first of such renovation of the iconic edifice in over four decades."

"In addition to the renovation, new hubs are being constructed, within the premises of the National Theatre, for fashion, information, technology, film and music."

"With that, the National

Theatre is now known as the Lagos Creative and Entertainment Centre.

"In addition, the Lagos surface rail system, to serve the National Theatre, will be commissioned ahead of the Global Conference," he said.

African men don't abuse women, children – Seun Kuti

Afrobeats singer and social activist, Seun Kuti has stated that ideal African men don't assault their wives and children citing that the African culture itself doesn't encourage violence against women and children.

According to Seun, persons who engage in such are those who claim African nationality just before they carry out the heinous acts.

The Egypt 80 band leader insisted those behind violence against women and children are those with European thoughts and possessions who are only African by location and the little African language they speak.

The post reads: "All these people that turn African just to beat their

wives and children.....There is no part of African culture that encourages violence against women and children.

"Spare the rod and spoil the child; a woman's place is in the kitchen" are European Abrahamic proverbs. What is the African version?"

Continuing in the post's caption, Kuti wrote: "What is the African equivalent of these proverbs?"

"Please tell me below, because una crase dey do press up! You aren't African except in location!"

"You don't practice anything African except the small language u speak!"

"Your holy land is Jerusalem and Mecca! Your most valuable possessions are your European

thoughts and things!"

"But as soon as u want to break your equally European wife and child, you claim African?"

"Come close I want to ask u something, Are you mad?"





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2 x 2	24,941.96	26,812.61	1 x 2	11,294.45	12,141.54	2 x 2	18,349.89	19,716.64	2 x 2	15,147.94	16,284.03
3 x 2	37,413.09	40,219.07	2 x 2	22,588.91	24,283.09	3 x 2	27,524.84	29,589.20	3 x 2	22,721.91	24,426.05
4 x 2	49,884.02	53,625.42	3 x 2	33,987.48	36,622.04	4 x 2	36,700.09	39,452.60	4 x 2	30,295.53	32,657.70
5 x 2	62,355.15	67,031.71	4 x 2	45,177.83	48,566.17	5 x 2	45,866.19	49,315.34	5 x 2	37,863.00	40,710.09
6 x 2	76,142.50	81,853.18	5 x 2	56,472.29	60,707.71	6 x 2	55,049.68	59,178.41	6 x 2	45,443.82	48,852.10
7 x 2	87,297.21	93,844.50	6 x 2	67,975.12	73,073.25	6 x 3	54,074.55	61,200.90	7 x 2	53,017.79	56,993.61
7 x 3	166,172.00	179,229.37	6 x 3	101,962.78	109,609.99	6.5 x 3	89,455.78	96,164.94	8 x 2	60,591.76	65,136.14
7 x 4	197,125.00	211,909.37	6.5 x 3	110,459.64	118,744.11	7 x 2	64,224.63	69,041.48	9 x 2	80,454.83	86,488.95
8 x 2	99,768.24	107,250.85	7 x 2	79,304.29	85,252.11	7 x 3	96,336.94	103,562.21	10 x 2	86,147.92	92,609.02
9 x 2	112,183.69	120,597.47	7 x 3	128,456.43	138,090.67	7 x 4	145,965.10	156,912.48	14.5 x 2	124,915.92	134,284.61
9 x 3	168,358.90	180,985.39	7 x 4	158,608.73	170,504.38	7 x 5	182,500.19	196,187.71	5 x 3	56,804.77	61,065.13
10 x 3	187,065.45	201,095.35	7 x 5	198,260.25	213,129.77	8 x 2	73,399.58	78,904.54	6 x 3	68,170.86	73,283.67
14.5 x 2	260,395.00	279,924.62	8 x 2	90,633.42	97,430.92	8 x 3	125,871.78	134,674.05	7 x 3	79,526.68	85,491.18
8 x 4	199,536.48	214,501.71	8 x 3	135,950.22	146,146.48	8 x 4	167,043.40	179,022.80	8 x 3	103,375.58	111,130.80
9 x 4	224,478.54	241,314.43	8 x 4	181,266.93	194,841.95	8 x 5	208,805.79	224,469.23	6 x 4	100,634.10	110,944.41
10 x 4	299,302.72	321,752.57	8 x 5	226,238.74	254,477.52	8 x 6	250,284.32	26,911.09	7 x 4	120,404.56	129,434.90
14.5 x 4	520,790.19	559,849.45	8 x 6	271,900.48	292,008.02	9 x 2	93,773.60	100,872.44	8 x 4	137,692.17	148,019.082
7 x 5	218,243.02	234,629.74	9 x 2	101,962.78	109,609.99	9 x 3	141,108.54	151,691.68	10 x 4	172,301.37	185,224.22
8 x 5	299,304.72	321,752.57	9 x 3	152,944.01	164,414.81	9 x 4	187,921.52	202,015.71	14.5 x 3	187,057.43	201,086.73
8 x 6	359,165.65	386,103.08	9 x 4	203,925.29	219,219.69	9 x 5	281,288.07	303,022.10	14.5 x 4	249,838.03	268,575.88
9 x 5	404,061.37	434,365.97	9 x 5	305,373.04	328,276.02	9 x 6	337,805.68	363,141.11	7 x 5	141,001.98	161,793.93
10 x 5	448,957.08	482,628.86	9 x 6	367,065.92	394,595.86	10 x 3	156,602.81	168,348.02	8 x 5	172,116.65	185,025.40
11 x 5	493,852.78	530,891.74	10 x 3	169,651.36	182,375.21	10 x 4	208,808.58	224,469.23	9 x 6	278,649.91	299,548.66
9 x 6	484,873.39	521,239.16	10 x 4	226,258.00	243,176.28	10 x 5	325,815.11	349,966.25	11 x 5	295,636.20	317,808.91
10 x 6	538,748.49	579,154.53	10 x 5	354,037.54	380,590.16	10 x 6	390,978.13	420,320.48	11 x 6	340,573.10	340,466.08
11 x 6	592,622.16	637,068.82	10 x 6	424,845.04	456,708.42	11 x 5	358,396.62	385,276.37	HP7.25 X 6	218,226.87	234,593.89
HP 7.25 x 6	317,178.40	340,337.5	11 x 5	389,441.887	418,650.01	11 x 6	412,916.45	443,885.19	FP14.5 X 6	379,943.00	408,438.72
FP 14.5 x 6	560,500.00	602,537.50	11 x 6	447,303.49	480,851.24	14.5 x 2	151,178.45	162,516.84			
			14.5 X 2	197,128.09	211,912.70	14.5 x 4	362,827.71	390,039.79			
			14.5 X 4	394,256.19	423,825.40	HP7.25 X 6	246,131.63	264,591.50			
			14.5 X 5	472,286.06	507,707.52	14.5 X 5	431,525.39	463,889.79			
			HP7.25 X 6	269,191.05	289,380.38	FP14.5 X 5	423,373.39	455,126.39			
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Does Ighalo still have stock in feet?

By **OVIRI KELVIN**, Sports Editor, Abuja

Odion Ighalo has continued to prove that in his thirties he still has a lot to offer in the game of football.

The Al-Hilal player on Tuesday against Istiklol in the AFC Champions League, netted a double in a three-nil-victory to help the Riyadh-based club proceed to the round of 16 in the competition.

Ighalo, who played in the English Premier League for Watford, making 90 appearances while netting 36 goals in the process, also featured on loan for Manchester United in the 2020/2021 season.

Before the Super Eagle signed for Al-Hilal at the beginning of 2022, he featured for Al Shabab in the Saudi Pro League where he scored 21 goals in 31 appearances.

This exploitation and performance in the Saudi Pro League earned him a surprising call up to the national team by Augustine Eguavoen despite retiring from international duty.

Though he featured in the game against Ghana as a late substitute in MKO Abuja National Stadium, he could not salvage the situation to help the country secure the ticket to Qatar 2022 World Cup ahead of Black Stars of Ghana which qualified on the away-goal rule.

Al-Hilal's next match in the AFC Champions League is against

Sharjah at the Prince Faisal Bin Fahd Stadium on April 23, 2022.

Ighalo in six appearances in Saudi Pro League has scored 7 goals with 2 assists.

French Open: Recuperated Rafael Nadal returns to training

Raphael Nadal has made a surprising return to training to compete in the French Open Championship taking place on May 22 after he sustained a stress-fractured rib in the Indian Wells final.

The Australian Open champion in a straight-sets loss to Taylor Fritz in Indian Wells final took to Twitter to announce his arrival on Monday.

"Today after 4 weeks without stepping on a tennis court, first soft training," Nadal tweeted with a picture depicting his training on a Clay Court.

The Spaniard holds a record of 21 Grand Slams titles and hopes to increase his 13 French Open titles to fourteen by next month.

However, Nadal won world number two Daniil Medvedev in the final of the Australian Open without the participation of world number one Novak Djokovic; the Serb stands against the covid19 vaccine. Nadal, probably, may feature in the ATP Masters 1000 events in Madrid and Rome which are slated from May 1-15, 2022, before participating in the French Open on May 22.

The 35 years old Nadal after enduring Fritz's defeat in Indian Wells final, revealed that he was unable to breathe in the course of the contest.

Following, he expressed that he felt excruciating pains in his ribs, making him uncomfortable during the game. Nadal said, "It's tough for me to breathe. When I try to breathe, it's painful and it's very uncomfortable."

MTN Nigeria, NPFL, other, partner to develop grassroots football



MTN Nigeria, the NPFL, and LaLiga have announced a partnership deal to support the development of grassroots football in Nigeria, through the establishment of the NPFL/La Liga U15 Youth League.

The partnership aims to showcase Nigerian youth football and provide capacity building for players and coaching talents,

which ultimately contribute to the advancement of developmental football in the country.

According to the League Management Company (LMC), there will be a one-week coaching seminar that will see seasoned LaLiga coaches interact with their local counterparts on modern youth coaching techniques ahead of the tournament.

Following, forty coaches in the Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL), national team coaches as well as other youth coaches across the country will benefit from the seminar.

LMC Chairman Shehu Dikko, in his statement, described MTN Nigeria's involvement as the major partner and sponsor of the U15 youth league as a welcome development.

He added that this is the fourth tournament since the league debuted in 2017.

Dikko said, "We are extremely delighted to have MTN as the Elite Partner & supporter of the NPFL/

LaLiga U15 youth league which has been going on since 2017. It is worthy to note that this year's (2022) edition is the fourth."

Meanwhile, MTN Nigeria, asserts that they are committed to helping identify and develop the country's young footballing talents by providing the needed platform for them to excel.

MTN Nigeria, in the statement by its Chief Marketing Officer(CMO) Adia Sowho, said, "We aim to provide & support avenues to identify & coach the best young footballing talents in Nigeria, ultimately promoting grassroots football in Nigeria."

WAFU U20: Flying Eagles play Ghana in opening game

The fixtures for this year's West African Football Union (WAFU) U20 games in Niger have been released with Nigeria playing Ghana on May 8, 2022, which is the country's first group B match.

The Flying Eagles of Nigeria, in their second game of the event on May 11, 2022, at Stade GSK, will see them take on Burkina Faso.

Completing the group B games for the three teams will see Ghana take on Burkina Faso on May 14, 2022.

However, Nigeria U20 Head Coach Ladan Bosso, who invited forty players for trials, is expected to submit the names of the squad before the team departs for Niamey on April 29, 2022.



Owerri Basketball Classic hosts 150 basketballers in second edition

Owerri Basketball Classic second edition is held at the Dan Anyanwu Stadium, Owerri, the Imo State capital.

The event which started yesterday, Thursday, hosted over 150 basketballers from the southeast and south-south regions of the country.

Slated from 21-24 April, the tournament has recorded a series of results among competing teams.

As the event proceeds accordingly, several teams' results on an opening day have been displayed by the Nigeria Basketball Federation (NBBF).

According to the NBBF, some of the results recorded on the first day of the event saw Team AFA Sports lose to team Orange Room 24-28 as team Kollect defeated Team Madu 27-22.

Team Rev FICO lost by one point to team Boulksquad 17-18 as Team Emegano lost to team Somtochukwu 10-12.

Other results include Team Chu 11-15 Eleonu; Kelechi Anunam 22-10 Okoye; Team Alpha 12-16 Kollect; and Iwu 20-17 Goldwise.

The tournament is expected to end on Sunday, April 24 as hostility continues.

2023 AFCON: Nigeria opens qualifiers with Sierra Leone

Super Eagles play Sierra Leone in Nigeria at the first qualifying Group A match in next year's 2023 Africa Cup of Nations hosted by Cote d'Ivoire.

The contest expected to take place between May 30 - June 14, 2022, will also see the Super Eagles fly to take on either Sao Tome and Principe or Mauritius in the same period.

Following, scheduled within 19-17 September, 2022, the Super Eagles in their third and fourth qualifying fixture play a doubleheader, with fellow West African country Guinea-Bissau. One of both matches will be played in Nigeria.

However, rounding up the AFCON 2023 qualifiers, Nigeria will fly to Freetown to take on Sierra Leone before hosting Sao Tome and Principe or Mauritius within March 20-28, 2023.

Meanwhile, the Confederation of African Football (CAF) will decide between Sao Tome & Principe and Mauritius who is qualified to compete in the group.

Sao Tome and Principe defeated Mauritius 4-3 on aggregate to qualify among the 42 countries for the preliminaries of the 2023 AFCON but the latter in a pending protest in CAF against São Tomé and Príncipe insists that one of São Tomé and Príncipe's player had tested positive for covid-19.



'WBC heavyweight: Tyson Fury will defeat Dillian Whyte, but...'

By **OVIRI KELVIN**, Sports Editor, Abuja

British professional boxer and sports promoter Ricky Hatton says Tyson Fury has all it takes to defeat Dillian Whyte in Saturday's WBC heavyweight boxing contest at Wembley Stadium.

Hatton, who recently returned to boxing after he retired and went into exile in 2012, opined that Fury is better in all departments to bring down Dillian.

According to him, the outcome of the bout between Fury and Dillian solely depends on the approach of the WBC heavyweight champion against the challenger.

However, Hatton, who returns to boxing after about 10 years of retirement to take on Marco Antonio Barrera at the Manchester Arena on July 2, revealed that the match may go in favour of Dillian if Fury decides to be like 'Rocky Marciano' in the early rounds.

The 43 years old boxer cautioned Fury to be tactical and not be overconfident in taking down Dillian recalling that Deontay

Wilder knocked him down and Dillian can do the same.

Hatton said on Gary Newbon Sports Show, "We have to be honest and say Tyson is better in every department.

"He has the height and reach, the speed, the ability. Everything says that Tyson should win.

"But what concerns me is that Tyson in his last few fights, although it has been entertaining, has turned into a six-foot 10 Rocky Marciano - he is having it out with everyone.

"Deontay has put him down and Dillian has the power to do the same. I think Tyson has to resort back to the old Tyson a little bit, let's just break down Dillian, let's not go to war or toe-to-toe from the opening bell.

"If he uses his height, reach, and movement, and chooses his time when to box at a distance and make him miss, choose a time when to put it on Dillian, it will break him down in the early rounds and he may get a stoppage.

"If he goes as he did in the last fight against Wilder, where he just went to absolute war, then Dillian has a good chance of clocking him.



"It all depends on, no disrespect to Dillian, what Tyson does rather than what Dillian does," he added.

Hatton, elated with Dillian's opportunity to fight the best, noted that the boxer has over the years searched for such privilege and has finally gotten what he wanted.

He continued, "I am delighted that Dillian has finally got his shot after being the number one contender for about three or four years, the poor thing.

"Dillian always said he wanted to fight the best and Tyson is the best. He has got his shot now," he added.

Tyson Fury and Dillian Whyte before this contest were supposed to compete with Oleksandr Usyk and Anthony Joshua but a reshuffling took place, with agreements among the parties involved, to allow Ukrainian Usyk and British Joshua to have a rematch.



Akwa United whitewash Nasarawa United

By **OVIRI KELVIN**, Sports Editor, Abuja

Akwa United humiliated Nasarawa United 6-1 in the Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL) on Thursday at the Godswill Akpabio Stadium in Uyo.

The host, which got on the scoresheet in 10 minutes doubled the goal margin seven minutes after through Midfielder Adamu Yakubu.

The ignited Akwa United continued its romp against the visitors and outplayed them in all areas.

Five minutes after Yakubu's, Wisdom Fernando scored and completed his brace to make it 4-0 before the end of the first half.

Though Nasarawa United responded through King Osanga's effort to reduce the margin to three, Bello Babatunde and Franklin Matib ensured they increased the goal margin to five (5) for Akwa United.

Coach Ayodeji Ayeni after the game praised his players for a job well done.

He said, "We are improving every day, and I'm happy that we have been able to change the mentality of

the players and hard work we put in during training is beginning to reflect in our matches and the boys are also very confident and determined.

"Our attention is now on the game against Lobi Stars this weekend. Our target is to give our very best in all our games while hoping for the best as we continue to move forward," he added.

Akwa United occupies the seventh position on the NPFL table, a point above Enyimba in the eighth position and the same point as Sunshine Stars which ended Rivers United 12 match unbeaten run in the sixth position.

Titanic clash: Manchester United or Arsenal, who wins?

By **ERIRIOMA GENESIS**

Having lost three games in a row and the race for a top-four finish this season entered the final and most interesting night, the injury-ravaged Arsenal side looked unlikely to do anything spectacular against Chelsea on Wednesday night.

The gloom of the defeat to Crystal Palace 3:0, Brighton 2-1 at home and Southampton 1-0 away, was not long as Arsenal bounced back to contention for a top-four finish with a dramatic and emphatic victory over the Blues at

their fort, the Stamford Bridge.

Arsenal's closest rivals after Tottenham in the race for top-four is Manchester United which over the weekend, lost to a rampaging and title-hungry Liverpool side 4-0 at Anfield. They were completely outplayed in the match after struggling to beat Norwich City 3-2 at Old Trafford.

Looking at Arsenal's last home game, the Gunners failed to put up a solid performance against Brighton where they created 11 shots with only 2 on target. They scored 1 as they let three important points slip away in a

2-1 loss.

On the other hand, Manchester United was completely outplayed by the relentless Liverpool's attack where they conceded four times, making it 9-0 this season home and away.

With home advantage and a few recoveries from injury, Arsenal has their noses ahead leading into this encounter.

Furthermore, with Mohammed Elneny back in the starting lineup alongside Emile Smith Rowe against Chelsea, it is expected that Mike

Arteta will not make any serious changes to the squad.

For Manchester United, only Mason Greenwood out of the lot that includes Edinson Cavani, Scott

McTominay, Luke Shaw, Raphael Varane, and talismanic Fred that missed the Liverpool game is likely to be available for selection against the Gunners.

