

# How Macron was re-elected

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH** with agency report

Far-right leader Marine Le Pen has lost France's presidential

elections with incumbent Emmanuel Macron clinching a second term, garnering 58.2% votes, according to an estimate from the

Ipsos polling institute. Le Pen got 41.8%.

The result is narrower than their second-round clash in 2017, when the same

two candidates met in the run-off and Macron polled over 66 percent of the vote.

Macron's victory prompted a wave of  
CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



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**EDITORIAL:**  
As Ramadan comes to a close

→ 12



Osinbajo, Okowa, others pay tributes to Keyamo's father

→ 5

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'Lagos Blue Line rail project at 90% completion'

→ 5

# Battles for delegates rage in APC, PDP → 2



Osinbajo



Atiku



Ameachi



Obi



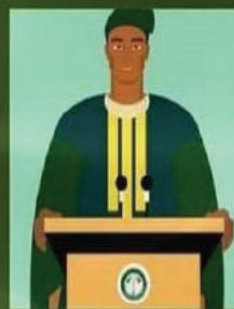
Tinubu



Wike

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**PDP**



PRESIDENTIAL  
**N40million**

GOVERNORSHIP  
**N21million**

SENATE  
**N3.5million**

HOUSE OF REPS  
**N2.5million**

STATE ASSEMBLIES  
**N600,000**

**SDP**



PRESIDENTIAL  
**N35million**

GOVERNORSHIP  
**N16million**

SENATE  
**N3million**

HOUSE OF REPS  
**N1.7million**

STATE ASSEMBLIES  
**N500,000**

**APC**



PRESIDENTIAL  
**N100million**

GOVERNORSHIP  
**N50million**

SENATE  
**N20million**

HOUSE OF REPS  
**N10million**

STATE ASSEMBLIES  
**N2million**



# Battles for delegates rage in APC, PDP, others



Saraki



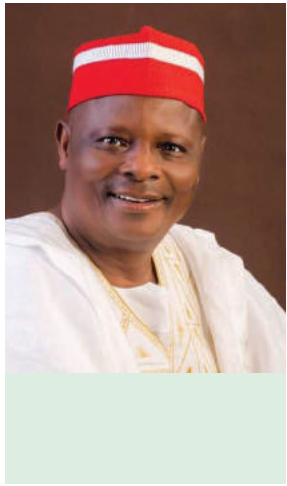
Fayose



Sowore



Abiola



Kwankwaso



Tambuwal



Anyim



Orji Kalu



Okorocha



Mohammed

**N**aira and hard currency rains are falling in the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), main opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and probably the other registered political groupings ahead of next year's General elections.

The beneficiaries of the other foreign currencies and the Naira downpour are delegates who will pick their parties candidates for the 2023 electoral jamboree. The foreign currencies are the dollar, pound and Euro.

Buying the souls and consciences of delegates is now part of the political practice in Nigeria which has thrown up some incompetent and questionable characters as leaders at all levels.

Fingers are pointed at others even by those perpetrating and perpetuating the vice.

The rains are heavier for the president-to-be primaries but fall at all levels. For example, in Abia, a gubernatorial hopeful is accusing the state government

of plotting to bribe the delegates to abort his bid, an allegation it denied.

Senate Minority Leader, Senator Enyinnaya Abaribe, alleged that the Abia State Government was planning to pay delegates to the governorship primary the sum of N2 million each for them vote for their 'anointed' candidate.

Abaribe, representing Abia South Senatorial district and a governorship aspirant on the platform of the PDP, made the allegations during his consultation tour to Bende Local Government Area.

"The Abia Government is planning to pay delegates N2 million each and there are 1,700 delegates, which makes it a total of N3.4 billion which they have budgeted for buying of the governorship ticket," he alleged.

The outspoken Senate minority leader passionately appealed to the delegates to the primary to vote according to their conscience and not be swayed by monetary inducement.

"If you delegates make a mistake in the choice of our governorship candidate, all of us have made a mistake. If you take the N2m and vote according to their dictates, then know now that once that person is elected, he will become a puppet in their hands - the first thing they will do is to demand repayment of the N3.4 billion they invested in his election.

"It's not any system that is going to decide our governorship candidate, it's not Abuja, it's you delegates, vote according to your conscience", he counseled them,

"It's time to rise up and save Abia. The era of imposition has ended, the era of system has ended, the era of Abuja has ended. We will not allow them to continue passing our fate from hand to hand.

"For PDP to win, let us not make the mistake of the past. You delegates must decide the way forward, you will vote in secret, vote according to your conscience, the power is in your hands, If they give you money, take it, it is your money

in the first place, it is the money they should have used for development of Abia, they have stockpiled to buy your conscience. Vote according to your conscience, do not be afraid whatever they have made you swear to, it will not work."

Abaribe who maintained that he has always stood for justice, argued that they planned to zone him out because of his stance. "I support zoning, but it is zoning to capability, it is zoning to capacity, it is zoning to integrity that I support", he affirmed.

He urged the delegates to vote for him as the PDP gubernatorial candidate and promised to work to restore Abia as number one state in the federation and the bride and pride of Igboland.

Presidential and other aspirants in the parishes have been meeting delegates to woo them, even ignoring efforts aimed at consensus candidacy. Most of the aspirants believe that they have enough financial and other muscles to get their parties' tickets, as well as considerations

such as ethnoreligious factors, presidential and other endorsements etc.

Some hired and paid analysts are also giving the tickets to various aspirants.

An example of a state where the delegate will be keenly fought for in the APC and PDP is Delta.

An observer of Delta 2023 stated: "To all governorship aspirants check the statistics below and do a simple mathematics before embarking on delegate consultations and before the ward congress to elect the 3- Adhoc delegates and the national delegates (1 per LGA )."

**TOTAL NUMBER OF STATUTORY DELEGATES PER LGA:**

**DELTA SOUTH**  
1. BOMADI =100  
2. BURUTU =109  
3. PATANI =99  
4. ISOKO SOUTH =104  
5. ISOKO NORTH =114  
6. WARRI SOUTH =106  
7. WARRI NORTH =97  
8. WARRI SOUTH WEST =101  
**TOTAL =830**

**DELTA CENTRAL**

1. UGHELLI SOUTH = 104  
2. UGHELLI NORTH =109  
3. ETHIOPE EAST =105  
4. ETHIOPE WEST =108  
5. OKPE =100  
6. SAPELE =101  
7. UVWIE =96  
8. UDU =98  
**TOTAL =821.**

**DELTA NORTH**  
1. ANIOCHA SOUTH =105  
2. ANIOCHA NORTH =100  
3. NDOKWA EAST =96  
4. NDOKWA WEST =116  
5. IKA NORTH EAST =116  
6. IKA SOUTH =105  
7. OSHIMILI NORTH =97  
8. OSHIMILI SOUTH =106  
9. UKUANI =100 **TOTAL =920**

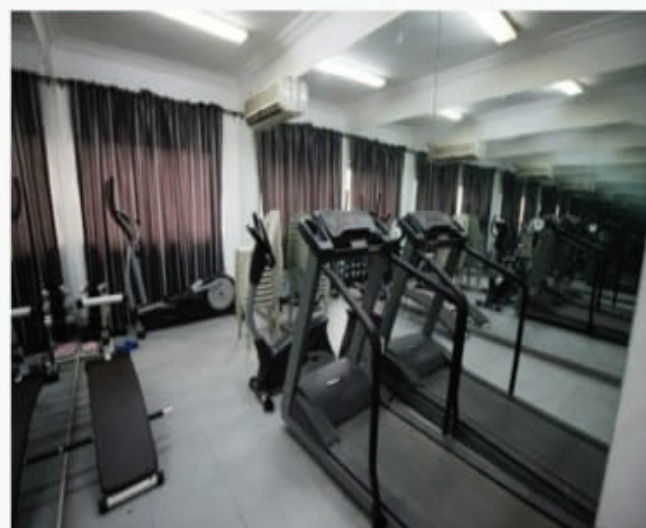
**SUMMARY**  
1. SOUTH =830  
2. CENTRAL =821  
3. NORTH =920  
**GRAND TOTAL =2,571.**

*\* Common sense dictates that all these endorsements jamborees of aspirants by political pressure groups will amount to nothing but fruitless and futile exercises if care is not taken, the observer added.*





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Ooni of Ile-Ife, Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi (left); Ekiti State Governor, Dr. Kayode Fayemi; Alawe of Ilawe, Oba Ajibade Alabi and his wife, Olórí Bolanle Alabi; during the 10th coronation anniversary and launch of a book titled, "Life of a Monarch," in Ilawe- Èkiti.

## How Macron was re-elected

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

relief in Europe that the far-right had been prevented from taking power. Europe fears a Le Pen presidency would leave the continent rudderless following Brexit.

Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi called Macron's victory "great news for all of Europe".

EU president Charles Michel said the bloc can now "count on France for five more years" while commission chief Ursula von der Leyen rapidly congratulated him saying she was "delighted to be able to continue our excellent cooperation".

But the president's victory is clouded by the fact that his rival an anti-immigration, nationalist candidate who advocates banning the Islamic headscarf in public, has courted Russian President Vladimir Putin and wants to turn the

European Union into an "alliance of European nations" won more votes than any far-right candidate in the history of the French Republic.

In a combative speech to supporters in Paris where she accepted the result but showed no sign of quitting politics, Le Pen, 53, said she would "never abandon" the French and was already preparing for June legislative elections.

"The result represents a brilliant victory," she said.

The relatively comfortable margin of victory gives Macron some confidence as he heads into a second five-year mandate, but the election also represents the closest the far-right has ever come to winning power in France.

Macron is the first French president to be re-elected in 20 years since Jacques Chirac

in 2002 after his predecessors Nicolas Sarkozy and Francois Hollande left office after only one term.

In a victory speech on the Champ de Mars in central Paris at the foot of the Eiffel Tower, Macron vowed to respond to the anger of voters who backed his far-right rival, saying his new term would not continue unchanged from the last five years.

"An answer must be found to the anger and disagreements that led many of our compatriots to vote for the extreme right. It will be my responsibility and that of those around me," he told thousands of cheering supporters.

The 44-year-old also pledged a renewed method to govern France, adding that this "new era" would not be one of continuity with the last term which is now ending.





# Lagos blue line rail project at 90% completion, says Sanwo-Olu

•says no going back on 2023 first quarter deadline

•LASG'll acquire additional two sets of four train coaches in September – Gov

By **BENJAMIN OMOIKE**

Lagos State Governor, Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu, on Sunday reassured residents that the State Government was on track in its efforts to complete works on both the Blue and Red Lines rail projects, which are intra-city, to strengthen the intermodal transportation system.

He said work on the Blue Line rail project was at 90 per cent completion, as contractors were working seven days a week so that Lagosians would ride a train on the rail by the first quarter of 2023.

The Governor gave the reassurance on Sunday while speaking to journalists at the Marina Train Station after about three hours of inspection of ongoing works on the Blue Line rail project and stations at the National Theatre Iganmu, Orile, Suru Alaba, Mile 2 and Marina axis of the state.

Governor Sanwo-Olu, who inspected the Blue line rail project alongside some of his cabinet members, top officials of Lagos Metropolitan Area Transport Authority (LAMATA) and contractors handling the project, moved from the National Arts Theatre rail station on a construction track to Orile Iganmu, Alaba and Mile 2 stations, to inspect the four train stations on the Blue Line rail.

He said the Blue Line rail would be running on electric tracks with Electric Motor Vehicle (EMV) and therefore warned citizens to keep off the train lines and ensure they don't walk on it.

The Governor, after riding back to the National Arts Theatre Station on a construction track, also inspected a new four-coach train, which according to him, is a typical train that will be used on the Blue Line.

He also disclosed the Lagos State Government's plan to bring additional two sets of four-train coaches from China between September and October, adding that adequate security would be put in place at every train station and platform with the use of CCTV.

"This is the first time I am taking you on the blue line to see where we are. The first phase of the Blue line rail project starts from Mile 2 and terminates at Marina. Marina Station is an elevated station and it stretches out to outer Marina and terminates where the Governor's residence is. At the end of the station, you could see that the track is broken into two bridges. The backtrack is for parking.

"We are happy that the contractors are working seven days a week. The major aspect apart from the Marina Station is a sea crossing from Eko Bridge to join the outer Marina. They would finish it in about three months. And by the time we will be coming back in July, the concrete construction should have been completed."

Governor Sanwo-Olu while condemning the level of vandalism along the rail corridors warned perpetrators to desist from such

evil acts. He said the government would go after companies that purchased vandalised rail tracks infrastructure, adding that culprits will be traced and made to face the wrath of the law.

Meanwhile, Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu on Sunday issued a three days ultimatum to traders

under the Apogbon Bridge in Lagos Island to vacate or risk demolition of the space by Wednesday this week.

He gave the warning while driving on the bridge during his inspection of the blue line rail project and saw that traders were back under the bridge with their goods displayed after they were

driven away in the aftermath of the fire outbreak under the Apogbon bridge about six weeks ago.

Governor Sanwo-Olu who frowned at the unlawful return of the traders under Apogbon bridge said the enforcement team would be deployed to the bridge after the three days ultimatum issued.



Osinbajo



Okowa

## Osinbajo, Okowa, others pay tribute to Keyamo's father

Vice-President Yemi Osinbajo has urged Nigerians to imbibe the culture of celebrating individuals, notwithstanding their status, who distinguished themselves in public and private endeavours.

Osinbajo made the call at the funeral reception for Pa Matthias Keyamo, the father of Minister of State for Labour and Employment, Chief Festus Keyamo, which took place in Effurun, Uvwie Local Government area of Delta State.

The vice-president highlighted Pa Keyamo's contributions to national development as a foremost cooperative officer and urged the family to sustain his legacy.

He said that the deceased was a patriot, who sacrificed to support humanity and contributed to nation-building.

"We celebrate here today, a true Nigerian who was born in Delta State, raised in Kaduna and got married to a Yoruba woman, Mama Caroline Keyamo.

"It is important for us always to bear in mind that with the nature of our nation, we really must celebrate men and women like this; men who go completely outside their comfort zone and who make Nigeria happen in a very distinctive way.

"So, we celebrate this true Nigerian and we know that he was someone who has proved in public service that you can serve the public, serve society and distinguished yourself and still be a person who is highly regarded as a person of integrity and honesty.

"We celebrate this excellent Nigerian and I will want to say that just looking at his life and looking at all of the things that he managed to achieve; first he was one of the pioneers of cooperative

societies in Nigeria.

"He was also someone who by dint of hard work and honesty, became an auditor, one of the first internal auditors in the then Mid-Western Government.

"Even after that, he went into private life and worked as the Managing Director of Olori Group of Companies and distinguished himself there as well," he said.

Osinbajo added that the deceased must be celebrated in every possible way, saying "I think that as they say, the legacies of great people, the legacies of great men and great women do not need any elaboration.

"It is very evident from even their children and grandchildren as we have seen and heard today. We have heard from his children, we have heard from his grandchildren and we know that all of them in public and private lives have distinguished themselves.

"And, we know that he had always himself, all through his life, demonstrated exactly what he wants his family to be like after him and his children had proved that.

"Like you heard in previous tributes, this was a great man with large heart and a generous spirit and I think that it is now up to us and up to his children and grandchildren to ensure that we continue in the way that Pa Keyamo had demonstrated and to continue to live our lives in the certain examples that he had set.

"On behalf of the President, President Mohammedu Buhari and the government and the people of Nigeria, I will like to express my deep condolences to the Keyamo family, the governor and the people of Delta State over

the passage of Pa Keyamo, the father of my dear brother, Festus Keyamo, Minister of State for Labour and Employment and his siblings.

"May Pa Keyamo's memory also be blessed and may the good Lord comfort Mama Caroline Keyamo and all members of the family."

In his tribute, Governor Ifeanyi Okowa said that late Pa Keyamo left indelible footprints in the sands of time and urged the children to emulate the legacies of their late father.

"I thank God for the life of our departed father and it is my wish that many parents will continue to raise their families like the Keyamo family because when that happens we have a peaceful state and country.

"I am excited that papa brought up lovely children who have also brought forth other great children.

"On behalf of the government and people of Delta state, I express my condolences to the Keyamo family and I pray that God grant you all the fortitude to bear the passing of papa," Okowa said.

Deputy President Senate President Ovie Omo-Agege, said the late Keyamo lived a good and fulfilled life and urged the family not to mourn but to celebrate his life and times.

"On behalf of the people of Delta Central Senatorial District, I wish papa farewell and it is my prayer that God grant the family the fortitude to bear this loss," he stated.

Former governors - James Ibori of Delta and Adams Oshiomhole of Edo, as well as Minister of Women Affairs, Dr Pauline Tallen, were among dignitaries who attended the ceremony.

## Three years after, FG reopens land borders

By **ADAKU WALTER**

After over two years of shutting the land boundaries due to influx of smuggling, the Federal Government has approved the re-opening of Idiroko, Jibiya, Kamba and Ikom borders.

The borders were shut in October, 15, 2019, but in December 2020, the Federal Executive Council (FEC), announced the immediate re-opening of four out of the eight major land borders; Seme, Illela, Maigatari and Mfun leaving out Idiroko, Jibiya, Kamba and Ikom.

However, the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) in a circular obtained by The Trumpet and signed by Deputy Comptroller General, Enforcement and Inspection, DCG, E.I Edohe, titled, 're-opening of four additional Nigerian border Posts', directed the immediate re-opening of the other four land borders.

According to him, all Customs formations and Joint

Border Patrol Teams (JBPTs), should ensure proper manning in compliance with extant operational guidelines.

The circular reads, "Sequel to the presidential directive dated 16 December, 2020 granting approval for phased reopening of land borders namely, Mfum, Seme, Illela and Maigatari borders across the country, i am directed to inform you that four additional borders stated below have been approved for re-opening.

"The borders are, Idiroko border post, Ogun State (South-West Zone); Jibiya border post, Katsina State (North-West Zone); Kamba border post, Kebbi State (North-West Zone) and Ikom border post, Cross River State (South-South Zone).

"Consequently, all Customs formations and JBPTs are to take note and ensure that proper manning takes place in compliance with extant operational guidelines. 4. Above is forwarded for your information and compliance."



## Only God's will shall prevail in Delta guber race, says Okowa

Governor Ifeanyi Okowa of Delta State has said he was committed to allowing God's will prevail on the choice of who would succeed him in 2023.

He said that he was not willing to lord himself on the people but to allow the will of God to provide Deltans with a worthy successor as governor.

Dr. Okowa stated this on Sunday at the 70th birth anniversary thanksgiving service of Chief Oritsetimeyin Adams which held at Cathedral Church of St. Luke's Anglican Church, Sapele.

He commended the church and other leaders for their prayers and support, and urged them to pray that God should give the State a good successor to him.

According to him, the choice of a successor is not by wish of man but by the will of God.

"I thank the Church and our leaders for their consistent prayers for our dear state because it is not about us, men, but about what God wants.

"So, pray that whoever God wants will be governor, and may that person He wants emerge as governor for the good of Deltans.

"May God's will be done in Delta State and may it be well with us in Nigeria," he said.

The governor congratulated the celebrator for attaining the Biblical three scores and 10 and urged him to rededicate his life to the service of God and humanity.

"God is the source of life and therefore we must return all thanks to Him and that is

what you have done today.

"I knew Chief Adams way back in 1991 when we were Council chairmen together; he was in the NRC and I was in the SDP and we became friends since then.

"I thank God that today also he continued to remember the things that God had enabled him to do.

"He is now one of our elder statesman not because of his age but because of his contributions to the development of our state.

"The surgery you underwent is over and your health is healed not because of the successful surgery but because Jesus said you should be healed," he stated.

Earlier in his sermon, Bishop of Oleh Diocese (Anglican Communion), Rt. Rev'd John Aruakpor, had congratulated

Adams for using his positions to attract development to his people.

The bishop remarked that every celebration was a day to look back and give thanks to God for His grace upon our lives, adding that the grace of God had helped the celebrator all through his life.

Speaking on the theme "The value of man's life", he said that a man's worth did not consist in the abundance of his possessions but by the value of service he rendered to others.

He said God "does not measure man's worth by the number of years lived but by how much impact we make on the lives of others.

"When the Lord places man in a position of authority, it is not for the person in particular

but to better the lots of others.

"If you want to have value in the sight of God, put God first, obey His ways and He will not disappoint you," the cleric said.

Adams said he was not thanking God because he was 70 but because of His blessings upon his life and family.

"I am not just thanking God because I am 70, but because of what God did for me last year.

"Last year, I was diagnosed with prostate cancer which was supposed to be a death sentence but the Lord healed me after an operation in a United States hospital.

"I must thank God for our dear Governor, Senator Ifeanyi Okowa and my amiable king, His Majesty, Atuwatse III, for their support towards the surgery," he added.

## Obaseki mourns 'Dick' Kramer

Edo State Governor Godwin Obaseki has mourned renowned accountant and finance expert, Richard 'Dick' Kramer, noting that he contributed to laying the foundation for the growth of free enterprise in Nigeria.

The governor, in a statement, said: "I mourn the passing of renowned accountant and finance expert, Richard 'Dick' Kramer, a colossus in Nigeria's consulting and investment circles, who contributed to laying the foundation for the growth of free enterprise in Nigeria.

"Kramer, who arrived Nigeria as the Managing Partner of Arthur Andersen in 1994 to set up the firm's Nigerian practice, fell in love with Nigeria and its people and never looked back until his passing.

"He contributed immensely to the development of consulting business in Nigeria, grooming the talent that today dominate the financing and management sector of Nigeria's economy.

"Having a huge influence in Nigeria's economic life, he helped set up the Nigeria Economic Summit Group (NESG) and was Chairman of the Technical Team for the Vision 2010 Committee, geared towards opening up the Nigerian economy for private sector participation."

He noted that Kramer was a cerebral and ingenious thinker, who deployed his intelligence, insight and brilliance in shaping the economic policies that contributed to growing Nigeria into one of Africa's financial powerhouse.

"He was friendly and a good family man, amassing friends across different sectors of the Nigerian society, culminating in the conferral, in 2001, of the National Honour of Officer of the Order of the Federal Republic (OFR) on him for his illustrious contribution to the development of Nigeria.

"I commiserate with the Kramer family, friends and associates and pray that God grant all the fortitude to bear the painful loss," he added.



Use the caption: Officials and some members of Idumu-Ohanle Development Association during the AGM in Ubiaja, Edo State.

## Edo community Idumu-Ohanle's development association holds AGM

Idumu-Ohanlen Development Association (IDA) Worldwide has held its 3rd Annual General Meeting in Ubiaja, Edo State. The event takes place every year at Easter.

The president of IDA Worldwide, Elder Sylvester Ubiaza, commended all who attended the AGM and those who joined via zoom. He further appreciated the various groups in Idumu-Ohanlen and neighbouring communities present namely,

Egbama, Egbonurele, Edion, Eniwho, Ehuan, as well as non-members of the association and settlers. According to him, the association has empowered Idumhu-Ohanlen's old and young people since it was created in April 2019 and registered with Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) in Nigeria.

Under the year in review, the association has paid NECO and WAEC registration fees for students and reclaimed the

NITEL land from grabbers. The association also gave palatives to idumu-Ohanlen people and settlers during Covid-19 cost as well as scholarships to all of the community's students studying science courses anywhere in Nigeria.

Idumu-Ohanlen youths who learnt trade and are certified have been getting support for startup businesses as free loans. Idumu-Ohanle women have also been empowered for existing and new small businesses

without interest charges.

The association set up a conflict resolution committee to mediate between Idumu-Ohanlen indigenes in court and other places. The report was made available by the association's secretary Elder Akhere Imai in the company of Dr. Ralph Inyinbor and the youth leader, Mr. Patrick Abhagbamhen. The president commended the cooperation among the great Idumu-Ohanlen people worldwide.



## NDLEA arrests four traffickers in airports, seizes cocaine in teabags

### •Mops up 88,734 Tramadol caps, Cracks, others in Kano, Kaduna, Benue, Akwa Ibom, FCT raids

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

**N**ational Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has arrested four traffickers involved in attempts by Brazil-based cartels to smuggle substantial quantities of Cocaine into Nigeria through Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja and Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos.

The Class-A illicit substance, which were intercepted last week, were said to have been concealed in teabags.

A statement by the Spokesman of NDLEA, Femi Babafemi, on Sunday said the suspects are already in custody of the agency.

"One of them is 33-year-old Pascal Ekene Okolo, an indigene of Ihe in Ogwu Local Government Area of Enugu state, who was arrested during an inward clearance of Qatar Airways flight from Sao Paulo via Doha at the arrival hall of the NAIA on Sunday 17th April.

"Okolo who claimed to be into wine business in Brazil was arrested with a travelling bag containing different medicinal teabags, which were used to conceal 4.1 kilograms of cocaine.

"Same day, a Canada

based Nigerian, Anigo Christian Godspower was intercepted at the D-Arrival Hall of the MMIA, Ikeja, during an inward clearance of passengers on Qatar Airways from Sao Paolo via Doha to Lagos. When his luggage was searched, two blocks of Cocaine with a total weight of 2.10kg were discovered.

"The 52-year-old Anigo who hails from Udi local council area of Enugu state claimed he operated an unregistered Bureau De Change business before delving into the illicit drug trade.

"The bid by another cartel to export 950grams of Heroin concealed in the soles of ladys footwears through the MMIA cargo shed was equally foiled by anti-narcotic officers who have so far arrested two suspects linked to the crime.

"Those arrested between 16th and 17th April in connection with attempt to export the drug to Monrovia, Liberia include: Idokoja Solomon Chukwurah and Patrick John Tochukwu," Babafemi said.

Meanwhile, NDLEA operatives in raids in Kano, Kaduna, Benue and Akwa Ibom state have seized no less than 88,734 doses of Tramadol, Pentazocine, Diazepam and Swinol.

According to Babafemi,

"In Kano, Aliyu Usman, 28, was arrested at Railway area of the state capital with 47,000 capsules of Tramadol and 2,000 ampules of pentazocine injection on Tuesday 19th April while Saminu Usman, 28, was nabbed with 24,710 Tramadol tablets at Gadar Tamburawa area of Kano two days earlier.

"In Benue, another dealer, Emeka Eze was arrested at an NDLEA checkpoint at Adikpo, Kwande Local Government area of the state with 10,000 Tramadol capsules and 900 tablets of swinol, while in Kaduna state, the duo of Raphael Daniel and David Musa were arrested at Mando park, Kaduna with 1kg of Cocaine on Thursday 21st April."

He further said that a week after one Muhammad Sani Ibrahim sent 12.1kg of cannabis from Lagos to Kaduna, adding that operatives were able to trace and arrest him last Thursday and brought him to Kaduna after his consignment was intercepted.

Also another dealer, "Kamilu Ibrahim was also arrested same day at Kargi village in Kubau LGA, Kaduna State with 10.6kg Cannabis Sativa, while Bashir Ibrahim was arrested on Friday 22nd April after his four consignments containing



Marwa

Cannabis Sativa weighing 44.6kg were intercepted three days earlier along Abuja-Kaduna express road," Babafemi added.

He continued, "In Akwa Ibom state, operatives arrested two female drug dealers: Eno-Obong Edet, 36, and Hossana Esema Ukpong, 28, with various quantities of Rohypnol, Diazepam, Tramadol and Cannabis, while a suspected fake security agent was arrested on Saturday 23rd April in Abuja while moving 23.8kg cannabis from Lagos to Maiduguri, Borno state."

According to him, Chairman/Chief Executive of NDLEA, Brig Gen Mohamed Buba Marwa (Rtd), who was pleased with the development commended the officers and men of the NAIA, MMIA, Kano, Kaduna, Akwa Ibom and FCT Commands of the Agency for sustaining the heat on drug cartels.

Marwa charged them and those in other commands across the country to remain vigilant and on the offensive until the last gram of illicit drugs is taken away from the streets.

## Cleric regains freedom after four days in kidnappers den

By **RISAAC JOB**, Uyo

Founder and President of Solid Rock Kingdom Church, Apostle Dr. John Okoriko, recently kidnapped by unknown gunmen in its premises has been released after spending four days in the kidnappers den.

Okoriko known for his revolutionary preaching against non-existence of Satan and notorious beliefs especially in witchcraft was whisked away by the hoodlums to an unknown destination.

The Trumpet gathered that the following day, the kidnappers used the cell phone of Okoriko's driver which was snatched during the operation and communicated with the family demanding N100m ransom to secure his freedom.

Investigation revealed that the ransom was reduced to N30m on Thursday and was later slashed to N10m on Friday afternoon.

However, it was not clear whether the amount was paid before he was released.

But when the tension was high as the family could not gathered the negotiated amount for the hoodlums, the man of God sauntered in amidst jubilation among the church and family members.

It was gathered the kidnappers were not comfortable with keeping the Church Founder in their custody because of social media and newspaper reports which made them to facilitate the pastor's freedom as it had drawn attention of government and security Agencies.

"Our Lion has come out stronger than before. He will continue to roar with the new strength" he said

The Police Public Relations Officer for AKwa Ibom State, Odiko Mcdon could not respond to text and Whatsapp messages on the release of the man of God

But he had assured AKwa Ibom residents that the commissioner of Police in the state Andrew Ammieghene had ordered investigation into the matter which had given serious concern to people in the state.

## IGP marks 2022 World Malaria Day, upgrades police health facilities

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

Inspector General of Police, IGP Usman Alkali Baba, as part of activities to mark this year's World Malaria Day has upgraded health facilities of the force across the

country by providing several medical equipments.

This was contained in a statement by the Force Public Relations Officer, CSP Olumuyiwa Adejobi, on Sunday, adding that 50 Oxygen Cylinders, 50 Oxygen Regulators,

52 Chemical Sprayers, 4 Electrocardiogram (ECG) machines, Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs), Anesthetic Machines and accessories, among others were distributed nationwide by the IGP.

CSP Adejobi further stated that the IGP urged police officers and the public to take advantage of the police health facilities to meet their basic health needs.

He said, "The Inspector-General of Police, IGP Usman Alkali Baba, psc(+), NPM, fdc, charges all personnel of the Force to take full advantage of the police health facilities in their respective commands and formations especially in light of the recent acquisition and distribution on the basis of need, of hospital equipment necessary for both basic and advanced health services

to police hospitals, clinics, and cottage health centres around the country.

"As part of events to mark this year's World Malaria Day, the IGP has ensured the distribution of the acquired medical facilities which include amongst others 50 Oxygen Cylinders, 50 Oxygen Regulators, 52 Chemical Sprayers, 4 Electrocardiogram (ECG) machines, Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs), Anesthetic Machines and accessories, Operating Tables, Hospital Beds/Matresses, Incubators, Autoclaves, Suction Machines, etc.

"The IGP notes that the services of Police Hospitals and Health Care Facilities are not restricted to Police personnel alone as well-meaning members of the public can equally access and benefit from the top-notch services

rendered at the Police Medical facilities across the country.

"The Inspector-General of Police equally admonishes police personnel to take advantage of these health facilities and engage in physical exercises, medical checks and good diet to improve their living conditions and reduce avoidable deaths while on duty, and subsequently advance their service delivery.

"Similarly, the IGP, in the spirit of the 2022 World Health Day, charges the general public to regularly imbibe good health conditions, environmental sanitation, reduction of activities responsible for the depletion of the ozone layer and all sorts of pollutions that are capable of damaging our ecosystem which in turn kills us silently on a regular basis."



Usman Alkali Baba



# Gunmen abduct herdsman, cows in Anambra

■ *Group threatens to kill any S'East politician who accepts VP slot*

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

Anxiety and tension continue to mount over insecurity in the southeast as gunmen have reportedly abducted 10 members of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) alongside 300 cows in Anambra State.

This is coming as a group, the Indigenous Biafra-Warriors Worldwide (IBWW) threatened to kill any member of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the southeast, especially the presidential aspirants and governors who accept vice president slot of the political grouping for the 2023 election.

The gunmen that kidnapped the herdsman and cows were said to have demanded N4m ransom and a gun from families of the victims.

The South East Chairman of MACBAN, Alhaji Gidado Siddiki while disclosing the abduction, said the incident took place at Obene Community settlement of herders in Ogbaru local government area around 1.30am on Saturday.

Siddiki alleged that the herders were attacked at their settlement while asleep and their animals forcefully taken away by the gunmen numbering about 40.

He said they invaded the area with sophisticated weapons, guns, cutlasses, sticks and charms.

He said, "As I speak to you now, I have reported the incident to the Police and DSS for prompt action."

He appealed to the kidnappers to release the victims and cows, stressing that the abductees were mere strugglers.

He condemned the politicisation of the herdsman and host communities conflict across the country while saying that herdsman were always accused of crime, even in situations where they were the victims of attack.

Siddiki blamed the face-off between herdsman, farmers and host communities on lack of accurate communication by the concern authorities.

He commended Governor Chukwuma Charles Soludo for initiating peace and reconciliation committee to address the

security challenges in the State and the South East region at large.

Spokesperson of Anambra Police Command, Ikenga Tochukwu, who confirmed the incident, urged the leadership of Miyetti Allah in the State to come up with more information that would enable the Police commence aggressive investigation into the matter.

He said, "Yes, we are aware of the incident, but we want the Miyetti Allah leadership to supply us with more information, since the kidnappers have established ransom contact with the victims families."

Tochukwu advised the Miyetti Allah leadership not to react while assuring them that the Commissioner of Police, Echeng Echeng and other security agencies would do everything possible to rescue the victims from their abductors.

Meanwhile, as the 2023 general elections draw close, IBWW has issued a stern warning to all presidential aspirants, governors and members of the PDP not to accept an offer of vice president slot, saying any one who does

risk losing his life.

IBWW Publicity Secretary, who identified himself as Lt Jack Warrior, gave the warning in a statement, saying that the group had established that politicians from the southeast region were set to sabotage Peter Obi, Anyim Pius Anyim and others.

The statement reads, "The Indigenous Biafra-Warriors Worldwide, independent militants in Biafra land, a military and civilian watchdog, has mounted its searchlight on PDP stakeholders in South-East and South-South. We're in all the countries of the earth, with no hiding place for our taoters

"We have noted with most interest a perceived conspiracy against South-East presidential aspirants in PDP especially on Mr Peter Obi whom Nigerians have seen as the most qualified aspirants that will genuinely fix Nigeria. The established politicians in the South-East are set to sabotage Mr Obi, Pius Anyim and others.

"We are closely watching the body language of Governor Okezie Ikpeazu and Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi as they are the leading 'sabo' against the South-East producing the next president of Nigeria in 2023.

## NDLEA arrests four traffickers in airports, seizes cocaine in teabags

■ *Mops up 88,734 Tramadol caps, Cracks, others in Kano, Kaduna, Benue, Akwa Ibom, FCT raids*

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

National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has arrested four traffickers involved in attempts by Brazil-based cartels to smuggle substantial quantities of Cocaine into Nigeria through Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja and Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos.

The Class-A illicit substance, which were intercepted last week, were said to have been concealed in teabags.

A statement by the Spokesman of NDLEA, Femi Babafemi, on Sunday said the suspects are already in custody of the agency.

"One of them is 33-year-old Pascal Ekene Okolo, an indigene of Ihe in Ogwu Local

Government Area of Enugu state, who was arrested during an inward clearance of Qatar Airways flight from Sao Paulo via Doha at the arrival hall of the NAIA on Sunday 17th April.

"Okolo who claimed to be into wine business in Brazil was arrested with a travelling bag containing different medicinal teabags, which were used to conceal 4.1 kilograms of cocaine.

"Same day, a Canada based Nigerian, Anigo Christian Godspower was intercepted at the D-Arrival Hall of the MMIA, Ikeja, during an inward clearance of passengers on Qatar Airways from Sao Paolo via Doha to Lagos. When his luggage was searched, two blocks of Cocaine with a total weight of 2.10kg were discovered.

"The 52-year-old Anigo who hails from Udi local council area of Enugu state claimed he

operated an unregistered Bureau De Change business before delving into the illicit drug trade.

"The bid by another cartel to export 950grams of Heroin concealed in the soles of ladys footwears through the MMIA cargo shed was equally foiled by anti-narcotic officers who have so far arrested two suspects linked to the crime.

"Those arrested between 16th and 17th April in connection with attempt to export the drug to Monrovia, Liberia include: Idokoja Solomon Chukwurah and Patrick John Tochukwu," Babafemi said.

Meanwhile, NDLEA operatives in raids in Kano, Kaduna, Benue and Akwa Ibom state have seized no less than 88,734 doses of Tramadol, Pentazocine, Diazepam and Swinol.

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

Inspector General of Police, IGP Usman Alkali Baba, as part of activities to mark this year's World Malaria Day has upgraded health facilities of the force across the country by providing several medical equipments.

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## Officers slain as police arrest kidnappers, foil abduction bid

Unknown gunmen have killed three police officers on duty during an attack launched at the Ogamina Police Station in Adavi local government area of Kogi State.

It was gathered that the attack was carried out in the wee hours of Saturday.

According to sources, the gunmen were said to have attacked the police station from different directions, thereby causing panic around the town.

The State Police Public Relation Officer (PPRO), SP William Aya, who confirmed the incident in a statement said the Command lost three of its officers during the duel, while the hoodlums fled with gunshot wounds as they

could not get access to the station.

"On Saturday the Command received report of the unfortunate incident at Adavi Police Division where some hoodlums attacked the station from the opposite direction shooting sporadically, but were repelled by the men on duty and operatives of the Quick Response Unit who were on special operations at the local government.

"The Commissioner of Police, Kogi Command, CP Edward Egbuka, immediately deployed team of tactical operatives to the area and restored normalcy while trailing the hoodlums with a view to apprehend and bring them to book.

"The Commissioner of Police use the medium to call on the people of Adavi and the adjoining communities to be on the lookout and report any body seen with bullet wounds to the Police or any other security agency nearest to them," the statement said.

This is coming as the Yobe State Police Command announced arrest of five suspected kidnappers and rescued one kidnapped victim in Fikpa, Potiskum, Gujba and Gulani local government areas of the State.

ASP Dungus Abdulkarim, the spokesman of the Command, who disclosed this on Saturday said the feat was reach following efforts of the Yobe Police Command to clamp

down on some criminal hideouts of hoodlums in the State.

He added that efforts are ongoing to apprehend four of the suspects who are currently at large while noting that one Idi Isa that was kidnapped on March 31, 2022, was rescued by the Police during the operations.

ASP Abdulkarim said, "In its continued efforts to ensure security and public safety in the State, Yobe State Police Command, has begun a massive clamp down on some criminal hideouts of hoodlums who specialize in kidnapping and related vices in the areas of Fika, Potiskum, Gujba and Gulani L.G.As.

"The operation led to the arrest of five (5) members of a syndicate that specialize in kidnapping and four (4) others still at large while efforts are ongoing to apprehend and bring them to justice soon.

"This development came after the police rescued one Idi Isa aged 56 yrs. of Karem Village of Fika who was kidnapped on 31st March, 2022. consequently, on 17th April, 2022 at about 0600hrs based on credible information, detectives from Fika Divisional Headquarters mobilized to a hideout of kidnappers at Nafada L.G.A; of Gombe State where the suspects were trailed to an isolated house used in safe keeping kidnapped victims until ransom is paid.



IGP, Baba



# Tracing the Ukraine - Russia quagmire and way out

By GODKNOWS IGALI, Abuja

After weeks of high-level diplomacy, looming thunder clouds and intense global hysteria, Russian troops have since entered deep into Ukraine, an independent, sovereign state. A dismal fait accompli and rather ominous decline for global peace and the progressive consolidation of international law. Day after day, Russia, a world power continues to bomb Ukrainian cities and other targets.

Indeed, from Friday, 24th February, 2022, after days of deafening military exercises around the 2,295 kilometres of shared border, Russian troops moved as far as 260 kilometres into the precincts of Kiev, the capital of Ukraine from all directions and other major towns, and have continued advancing. From the north to the east through Donetsk, Luhansk, Kharkiv, Mariupol, Sumy, and from Crimea in the south, they move, leaving in their trail, indescribable toll of loss of lives and wanton destruction of properties. Typical of military conflicts this nature, optics on not few counter accusations of war crimes have been rife.

## FROM EMPIRE TO COMMUNIST DICTAT

The story of Ukraine and Russia inter-relations goes back to the shared parsimony in the Russian Empire commonly referred to as Imperial Russia. This was a historical state that extended across much of Europe and Asia. It was the third most expansive political potentate in world history; surpassed in size only by Britannia which "ruled the waves" at a time and the Imperial Chinese empire of the Qing dynasty (1631-1912).

The Russian Empire which had a population of about 125.6 million people, as far back as the census of 1897, was known for its great economic, ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity. It comprised more than 100 different ethnic nationalities, of which the Russians were majority; i.e., over 40%, while Ukrainians were equally major stakeholders.

In political terms, the Russian Empire which was ruled by Kings known as Czars from the Romanov Dynasty (1613-1917), revelled in absolute and autocratic powers. They were also famously conservative, authoritarian and ultra-nationalistic.

In modern times, the successor state to the Russian Empire, that is the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) or Soviet Union, as it was more commonly called, its origin in, the "October Revolution of 1917". At that time, October, 24-25 on Russia's Julian Calendar, but actually November 6-7, in world history, the Bolsheviks, headed by a fiery ideologue and revolutionary, Vladimir Lenin, overthrew the Provisional Government and established the world's first constitutionally declared Socialist nation. Thereafter, a unification of the Russian and Slavic Republics of Ukrainians and Byelorussians as well as the Transcaucasians (Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia) took place. In 1944-1945, in the course of the 2nd World War, iron-fisted Soviet leader, Josef Stalin annexed the Balkan States (Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia) after liberating them from occupation by Nazi Germany.

The nation of Ukraine was therefore a critical part of the founding fabric which made up the erstwhile Soviet Union. Besides, it enjoyed very straddling demographic and linguistic cognancy with Russia. Indeed, after the Russian Federation, two other nations, being Ukraine and Belarus, came next in the line of "original" European stock that made up the Communist state and were part of the centre-point of doctrinaire socialist superstructure.



Vladimir Putin

Ukraine's privileged standing in the former USSR explains why three of the most prominent and long-serving Soviet leaders were all of its national stock. These are Nikita Khrushchev (1894-1971) protagonist of the Soviet Missile Crisis of 1962, Leonid Brezhnev (1906-1982) ruled for 18 years, and Konstantin Chernenko (1911-1985) remembered to have paved the way for Mikhail Gorbachev's emergence.

In recent history political reforms known as "perestroika" - openness and "glasnost" - economic reform, became embarked upon by the 8th and last Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev. By the way, this great man just turned 91 years on March 2, 2022 and lives peacefully in Moscow in the midst of the current war. Ukraine, just like the other 14 former Soviet Republics, therefore pronounced its independence on 24th August 1991. This marked Ukraine's formal cessation from the stranglehold of Russian over-lordship after several centuries.

## PUTIN'S MINDSET

Vladimir Putin, 69 years old, a one-time Soviet intelligence officer, bears many similarities in demeanour and psychological makeup with some of Russia's ferocious and oligarchic rulers of the past. Such historic personalities as Czar Ivan the Terrible (1530-1584), Emperor (Czar) Peter the Great (1672-1725) were responsible for the expansion of the erstwhile Russian Empire. Also, Putin's hard-line stance towards America and Western Europe, unlike his immediate past predecessors Gorbachev and Konstantin Chernenko is also a repeat of the mien of Josef Stalin, who ruled the USSR for a lengthy period of 31 years, from (1922 to 1953).

In his days, strongly-willed Stalin entered into an alliance with Western Allied Forces to defeat Nazi Germany during World War II. But then, he was mindful of drawing, very clearly, the easternmost boundaries between the East and the West. As a matter of fact, a town like Berlin, the German capital was divided into three and later two separate parts demarcated by a deafening wall.

More than Putin's mental state, is the factor that Ukraine's privileged standing and the seeming advantage of geographical contiguity occasioned the unrestrained citing of several critical economic and tactical defence assets of the former USSR in that country. As a matter, at the time of independence in 1991, about 3,000 of the Soviet Unions nuclear warheads were deployed on Ukrainian territory. Ukraine is also of great economic asset to the sub-region as it has among other things, some of Europe's highest endowment of agricultural and mineral resources covering its entire landmass of 603,548 square kilometres.

Putin will therefore want to keep away Western meddlesome in a place as Ukraine as much as possible. In a repeat of history, as 35th American President, John Kennedy (1917-1963) would not see Soviet missiles in



Volodymyr Zelenski

Cuba, about 145 kilometres from its borders, exactly sixty years ago, Putin and his Russian security hawks will not risk allowing Ukraine join NATO or enter some other deeper extraneous military alliances, unrestrainedly. As perceived by Putin and his ilk, the current invasion of their smaller neighbour, Ukraine, is essentially a fight for survival and an act in group self-preservation of its concentric sphere of influence. Indeed, Putin, as a young Communist Party official, perhaps grudgingly, saw his predecessors, Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin dismantle Soviet era structures and the creeping cobweb of western democracy and military structures all around Russia. However, from Georgia (2008), Chechen (1999-2008) Crimea (2014), now to Ukraine, he could not stomach such meddlesomeness directly inside his neighbours next door.

## CAN PUTIN WIN THIS WAR?

Although the current Ukraine war is, strictly speaking, not an ideological match of opposites, it bears historical traits to entrenched interests. The Cold War (1947-1991) has since ended, and the Warsaw Pact Military Alliance which since 1955 shielded countries of the Eastern Bloc, was dissolved in 1991. However, Russia and China and a coterie of smaller nations are practising ideological hybridization at present, i.e. economic openness in the midst of closed political rigidity. Notwithstanding, their antecedents rooted in socialist/communist credos, keeps the two great powers (China and Russia) orphaned together as scions of eastern ideological orthodoxy. They are somewhat perpetually on antagonistic and confrontational standing with western powers and vice versa. Although China's economic interests in the western world are overwhelming, its slow-footedness towards condemning Russia on all its adventurist policies, shows where its heart would lie, if things get worse.

Russia and some of its allies are equally obtuse and by their own rights, global leaders in fire power. As of now, China, for one, has the largest active men in uniform in the world totalling about 2 million. In terms of fighting force, India, North Korea and Russia count among the five largest armies respectively, each with over one million personnel. With respect to overall military capability and capacity on deployment of weapons, China and Russia only come next to the United States. Russia itself is the world's numbers one nuclear power with about 6,225 warheads.

Added to these, the exact size and strength of Moscow's maverick friend, North Korea's nuclear arsenals are unclear. Many believe that the pariah nation's testing of nuclear arsenals and show off ballistic capability during this period, keeps both America and its friends Japan and South Korea seriously on high alert.

On the flip side, from the days of its founding in 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty

Organisation (NATO), an American-led military alliance has increased its collective military power. Now boasting a capacity to deploy, in nominal terms, nearly 3.5 million personnel, NATO remains the world's greatest defence and tactical platform. In terms of individual standing in military ranking, some of its key members such as United States is the world's no. 1, Germany is number 4 in power rankings, while the United Kingdom is number 5 and France comes up as number six (6). This makes NATO a greatly formidable collective force to reckon with.

According to the leading global watch group, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) as of 2018, military expenditures was at a high mark of about US\$1,822 trillion. However, three years later, i.e. 2021, despite the rage of Covid-19, defence spending rose by almost 2.8%. In this, just the Americas alone expended in its aerospace and defence about US\$ 550.78 billion in 2021. Two years earlier, in aggregate terms, the military budget of the United States was US\$693 billion, the highest in the world. America itself is number two in nuclear capability, holding over 5,550 warheads.

What the above scenario depicts is the counter-balance of belligerent capacity if things generate. None can therefore risk a conjecture on the outcome of a head-on confrontation.

## SO, WILL NATO STAND UP TO RUSSIA?

NATO's hands are tied as it were, by its Article 5, which limits it to only initiate action if one of its 30 members is attacked. That Article has been invoked only once in NATO's 70 years history. On September 12, 2001, the alliance invoked the provision, barely 24 hours after the 9/11 Terror Attack on the United States. It remains tenuously optimistic if the alliance will invoke that article now, as Ukraine's quest for membership is still far from reality. Besides, NATO is wary of orchestrating a Third World War, with the rather precipitate prevalent conditions.

## THE RAIN OF SANCTIONS

As Russia continues, undeterred to pillage, quite pitifully targets in Ukraine, its 44 years old President, Volodymyr Zelensky mounts global rostrums virtually and digitally, canvassing support. America and Europe's response has been to extend to Ukraine unprecedented military and humanitarian support, short of plunging into direct belligerency. These include lethal weapons, advanced systems, attack battle systems, anti-tank weapons, etc. These have helped Ukraine maintained relatively appreciable level, though at a much higher cost.

Additionally, the US and the rest of Europe have imposed unprecedented sanctions of economic, political and diplomatic nature on Russia.

The sanctions which have been mounted cover almost all spheres of the country's national life. Primarily, the sanctions have been political, which are focused on isolating Putin and top members of his government in their personal and collective capacities. Added to these are visa and emigration restrictions. Several European countries have also expelled hundreds of Russian diplomats. The intention here is to limit the country's ability to conduct diplomatic relations or enable its operatives carry out intelligence activities at a time when the EU considers itself, to be at war with Russia. Actually, since Russia annexed Crimea, a

Continued online @ [www.thetrumpet.ng](http://www.thetrumpet.ng)



## 'Alaafin's 18 wives now free for suitors'

By BENJAMIN OMOIKE, METRO EDITOR/LAGOS BUREAU CHIEF

The 18 wives of Oba Lamidi Adeyemi III, the late 45th Alaafin of Oyo, may now be available to suitors without undergoing cleansing rituals after the demise of the renowned monarch. Oba Adeyemi, 83, passed on last Friday after receiving treatment at

Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti, and was buried according to Islamic rites on Saturday.

His queens, Abibat (first wife), Rahmat Adedayo, Mujidat, Rukayat, Fola-shade, Badirat Ajoke, Memunat Omowunmi, Omobolanle, Moji, Anuoluwapo, Damilola, Chioma and others, are now available for suitors. "They are not perform-

ing any cleansing; they are free to move on with their lives," he said. Nonetheless, he added, "The wives cannot get married to an indigene of Oyo.

"Now that Alaafin is dead, they all would be asked to exit the palace with their belongings. Although the properties of the late monarch would be shared among them."



## Minister tasks para-military agencies on duty, synergy, others

By ALEX OLISE

Minister of interior, Al-haji Rauf Aregbesola, has charged all para-military agencies under the ministry to ensure operational synergy with sister security agencies, for effective service delivery in the current fight against insecurity.

The Minister spoke during a meeting with the National Security and Civil Defense Corps operatives, Nigerian Immigration Services and the Nigerian Correctional Services Center, as well as Directors from the Ministry of Interior, during the weekend.

The meeting was

aimed at assessing the level of performance and achievement recorded by the Ministry in the third and fourth quarter of the year 2021. It was hosted by the Nigerian Security and Civil Defense Corps headquarters.

The Trumpet gathered that the meeting was to reposition all the paramilitary agencies to join other military commissions to curtail the ongoing security challenges in the country.

It was further gathered that the presidency has directed all the Ministers in charge of all the security agencies to be holding such meetings with the top management team for improved performance.

Aregbesola, at the meeting, lauded the NSCDC and other agencies for major breakthroughs recorded so far in their various formations across the country.

He commended the various transformative

programmes initiated so far by the sister agencies within the last one year, which has boosted the morale of personnel and changed the narratives for all the services.

In addition, he commended the visible improvement in the mode of dressing of officers and men of all the agencies.

Basically, he commended the Civil Defense for the recent introduction of new uniform for their personnel

and the establishment of a female special squad, whose priority is to protect school children from the clutches of kidnappers in all parts of the country.

In his remark, Dr. Shuaib Belgore, Permanent Secretary of the ministry emphasised that the take home of the meeting for all the agencies, is to put on a new toga of quality service and redouble efforts towards achieving the Ministry-set goals.



## Librarian remanded for allegedly raping physically-challenged girl

By ALEX OLISE

Librarian and senior staffer of Opebi Primary School, has been remanded in Kirikiri prison for defiling a physically-challenged girl under the school care.

The Family Magistrate Court, Ogba, Lagos State, remanded the librarian currently at the Kirikiri Prison. The Family Court

said the librarian, who had been abusing the girl in his office until he was caught by another teacher, will be in prison until the DPP result is out.

The assault of the under-aged has been on the rise and the state government has warned parents to report any case of assault to the Lagos State Police Command gender section

for appropriate action.

The Trumpet investigation carried out at the various courts in Lagos, revealed that many cases of defiling underage persons have been on the rise.

The State Commissioner of Police, (CP) Alabi Abiodun, has charged all Area Commanders and Divisional Police Officers to monitor their jurisdictions and

ensure culprits are brought to book.

Last year, it was reported that a cleric was accused of raping underage girls in his church. The said cleric tried to bribe one of the Divisional Police Officers to close the case but the officer refused the N500,000 offer and referred the case to the police headquarters for onward investigation.

## Bolt driver accused of 'disappearing' with customer's cash

By BENJAMIN OMOIKE

Oluwaseun Oti, an entrepreneur, has accused Saheed Olumegbon, a bolt driver, of capitalising on an erroneous cash transfer he made, while trying to pay for a ride.

Oti said he mistakenly transferred N130,000 to Olumegbon instead of N1,300, being the actual amount he was supposed to pay for the

ride, on Thursday.

The businessman said he immediately made several phone calls to Olumegbon, the moment he realised his error, but the driver would not respond.

"I got the ride because I needed to take a short trip from Olubunmi Owa Street to Ikate Maiyegun Road, all in Lekki Phase I. The trip, which lasted about five minutes was supposed to

cost N1,300," Oti said.

"Unfortunately, while making a cash transfer to him to pay for my fare, I erroneously added more zeroes than required to the amount I was supposed to pay.

"So, instead of transferring N1,300 to the driver, I ended up transferring N130,000 to him. It was after almost an hour, when I wanted to make another transfer, that

I realised the error I had committed. I then called the driver immediately but he refused to pick my calls. I called him for hours, but, he would not pick."

When Oti contacted Bolt to lodge a complaint on the incident, its customer complaint desk told him to provide a proof of payment.

"After sending Bolt the proof of payment they requested, I have not gotten

a response from them till this moment," Oti said.

After contacting Bolt, Oti also visited the nearest Guaranty Trust Bank branch, where Olajide operates an account, to make enquiries.

It was at the bank that Oti confirmed that Olajide had emptied his account upon receiving the N130,000.

"I was told he had emptied his account and had moved the money into another bank

account he also operates," he said.

"Though empty at the moment, the bank has placed a freeze on his account pending when it is eventually funded."

When Oti was contacted on Friday to ask if Bolt had reached out to him, he said the company was yet to.

"I haven't heard anything from them since yesterday. It is quite pathetic," he said.

## Akran of Badagry marks 45th coronation anniversary, Lagos gov lauds achievements

By BENJAMIN OMOIKE

Lagos State Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu has congratulated the Akran of Badagry Kingdom, His Royal Majesty, De Wheno Aholu Menu-Toyi I, on his 45th coronation anniversary.

Sanwo-Olu in a statement issued by his Chief Press Secretary, Mr. Gboyega Akosile, to celebrate 45 years of Oba

Menu-Toyi I on the throne of his forefathers, said the 85 years old monarch has used his wealth of experience and knowledge to contribute to the progress and development of Badagry and Lagos State as a whole.

Sanwo-Olu said the people of Badagry are lucky to have a renowned journalist, whose exploits in the pen profession

spread across several platforms in the 1960s and 1970s before ascending the throne of his forefathers in 1977 as the 15th paramount ruler of Badagry Kingdom.

"On behalf of my family and the good people of Lagos State, I heartily congratulate the Akran of Badagry Kingdom, De Wheno Aholu Menu-Toyi I, on the occasion of his 45th

coronation anniversary.

"Oba Aholu is an epitome of dedication and selflessness in private, public and community service. He has used his position as a seasoned journalist to uplift the standards of life of the people he worked assiduously to inform, as well as contributing to the growth and development of the ancient town of Badagry and Lagos

State.

"As a journalist, he discharged his duties with the utmost professionalism, competence and dedication. After a remarkable career in the media profession, which spread across several platforms such as the West African Pilot, Daily Sketch and New Nigeria, where he rose to the position of Acting News Editor, South;

he left the pen profession with impeccable records to become the 15th Akran of Badagry on April 23, 1977.

"Since ascending the throne of his forefathers, Oba Menu-Toyi I has displayed exemplary leadership and passion for Badagry and his commitment to the growth and development of the ancient town is commendable.



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# As Ramadan comes to a close

As Muslims mark the last days of Ramadan, it is apposite for us to reflect on the virtues emphasized during the holy month with a view to creating a society that is devoid of greed and avarice. Ramadan for Muslims is a time of reflection, abstinence, and nearness to Allah. It is a time of temperance, moderation, forgiveness and patience. There are several virtues that Muslims are enjoined to strengthen during Ramadan. The first of this is taqwa or obedience to Allah. Muslims are enjoined to avoid all acts of disobedience to Allah in an effort to strengthen their iman (faith). That is, all actions and practices must be done with the sole aim of seeking Allah's pleasure or avoiding His displeasure, not because it is one's habit or personal desire to do so, nor because one seeks fame or popularity.

Therefore, the virtues of constant prayer, supplication, abstinence and doing good deeds are emphasized. All of these require patience on the part of the believer, another important virtue. This is because fasting restrains the soul of the believer from its base desires. It teaches self-restraint and how to cope with the vicissitudes of life. It discourages Muslims from being quick to anger or hasty and impatient in judgment, from greed and stinginess. During Ramadan the believer is encouraged to give part of his wealth to the needy or less privileged.

Ramadan therefore is a time for good manners, kindness, and consideration towards others. The fasting person must speak only the truth. If provoked, they should walk away from conflict. Ramadan enjoins Muslims to shun oppression, shamelessness, back-biting, falsehood, slander and the like. The idea is to unite Muslims in kindness

and generosity towards one another and towards people of other faiths. Ramadan is the month when Muslims are expected to be at their most peaceful. They should be preoccupied only with prayers and supplication in the desire to get closer to Allah and earn His favour.

Islam teaches Muslims that all these virtues are not to be discarded when Ramadan ends. They are to be part of a Muslim's life. These virtues are not unique to Islam. They are virtues that are extolled by every religion in the world, be it Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, etc. It is obvious, therefore that the two major religions practiced in Nigeria preach love, good neighbourliness, kindness,

generosity, sacrifice for others, temperance, moderation, forgiveness, and peace. Sadly, Nigerians seem to ignore all these teachings. Killings on ethnic or religious grounds have continued.

Nigeria ranks near the top as one of the most religious countries in the world, but it is obvious that we emphasize ritual over spirituality. We are diligent in observing the rituals of going to the mosque or attending church. We recite all our prayers at the right times. We mouth verses from scripture after every sentence; yet ours is also one of the most corrupt countries in the world. We look for opportunities to steal from one another, to loot, to cheat. Inter-religious hatred is rife. Even while Ramadan is still on, banditry and kidnappings continue. Public officials continue to steal from the nation's coffers. Nigerians live in fear for their lives. These same people never miss their prayers in the mosque or in the church.

Ritual alone does not make a true believer because faith is a matter of the soul. Unless we follow the true teachings of our religions and purify our souls, unless we become true Muslims and true Christians Nigeria will never be free of corruption. The insecurity that is threatening to cripple our dear country will only get worse. As we head towards the general elections, let us reflect on the choices that we make. In keeping with the spirit of our faiths, let us fear God when we select the people that will lead us. Let us look to the tenets of Islam as enunciated by God. This way we can build one nation, strong in its unity, forging ahead in togetherness and love towards a better tomorrow. As we mark the end of Ramadan, is our prayer that Allah should protect our dear Nigeria and help us to choose God-fearing leaders who have a genuine desire to serve the people.



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If we don't cut down the tree of TERRORISM in the NORTH it will eventually take root in the south



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There is something akin to the paranoid about our reaction to aspirants to elective positions. I use 'our' rather loosely to refer to netizens who constitute the most vocal group of the polity. This is especially so with presidential and governorship ambitions of some politicians in some of the states. No doubt, there is some paranoia about the likes of Senator Orji Kalu, Professor Osinbajo, Alhaji Abubakar Atiku, Senator Bola Tinubu, former Imo State governor Rochas Okorocha, Alhaji Yahaya Bello and a few others declaring their interest to contest for president of the Federal Republic. The sub-text in the paranoid response is 'You too? In other words, by our estimation, such fellows should not attempt to exercise their fundamental right as enshrined in the Constitution of the land.

Perhaps there is a reason. There is the remote fear that given our political antecedents, the system could produce anybody, fit or unfit, that the cabal of clandestine rulers of the country favours. The narrative is that the people do not have a say in who becomes president or governor. For most aspirants therefore, the real fight is to get the party nomination. Else any unpopular or unfit candidate of any political party will meet their Waterloo at the polls. But deep down there is a vote of no confidence in the electoral system.

To be sure, anyone, that is any Nigerian who

is of age and is not an ex-convict has the right to signal interest in the presidency. It is left for the electorate to make the ultimate decision. This is how it works in a democracy. The party internal mechanism produces its candidate after going through a screening process. The party decision should be based on certain criteria that have been fully discussed. In preparing for the general elections in 2023, there is something to be said for the presidency moving south after eight years of power in the north in the spirit of power rotation. Yet, the PDP has thrown the contest open to all fit and proper persons, no matter their regional background. There is the feeling that the PDP took this decision to calm the nerves of one of the strong aspirants within the party. It is now left for the screening and elective processes to conclude the matter.

While all the jostling was ongoing, we hear such inane and anti-democratic statements from the incumbent rulers as 'I will not hand over power to Mr. or Mr. B! Is it the duty of an outgoing president or governor in a democracy to choose who to hand over power to? What if the people think differently? It shows the anti-democratic mindset of the practitioners of democracy who currently hold the reins of power. The APC under President Muhammadu has mismanaged the country, especially in relations between and among

## Much ado about Presidential ambitions

the ethnic groups. The most obvious failure is in security. In a normal country, the APC would be jittery about facing the electorate. The PDP would be drumming on the ineptitude of the ruling party as the country prepares for general elections. No party that has decimated the social and economic lives of the people ought to be returned to power in the next elections. No party that has kept all strategic political appointments in the north should return to power. All politicians who kept silent while an elected president whom they could hold accountable drove a knife into ethnic unity deserve to rule this country. No party that opposed any step to ward re-ordering the political structure of the country should return to power. But sadly, in Nigeria, there are primordial and extraneous factors that shape election matters.

If truth be told, we need new hands in the saddle. Nigeria is too complicated to be left in the hands of persons who want to do business as usual. The old, grizzled politicians have led Nigeria into a mess. The future is uncertain. The economy is in a terrible shape. There is hunger in the land. There is anger in the land. The personal weaknesses of the incumbent president have affected the nation negatively. The narrative of the absentminded leader has finally taken a toll on all segments of the polity. It is tragic. In old age, there are certain things we should not embark upon. No old man should inflict himself on the electoral process in Nigeria.

Most of the aspirants have brought themselves forward as a way of negotiating their future. They know that they will not get the party nomination. They know that they do not stand in a chance before the electorate. But it inflates the ego of politicians to proclaim that they were once presidential or governorship candidates. No more. Some who

could not govern their tiny states effectively, some who do not remember the names of their wives, some who left jail on technical grounds, some who are facing corruption charges in the court of law are all in the field. We should lose no sleep about them. The system will reject them, I hope.

2023 will be a make-or-break election. The greatest threat which is facing the nation is that of insecurity. The Buhari administration rode to the sear of power with so much promise and hope. The APC promised to end the insurgency in the north. The APC promised to end darkness in the land by making electricity available to the people. The APC promised to restructure the country. The APC promised to fight corruption to a standstill. The APC promised employment for the youth. The APC promised to stabilize the naira and make it more powerful. The APC promised to end strikes in the universities. As we write, all the federal universities are paralysed by a strike by all the unions. What has been the experience of Nigerians under the APC-led Buhari administration? An abysmal performance. The level of despair in the country is palpable. All presidential aspirants should be held accountable, should address these issues.

Nigeria must take itself seriously. That is the only way Nigeria will be taken seriously. That is the only way serious things can emanate from Nigeria. That is the only way Nigeria can be respected in the comity of nations. To choose a presidential candidate for all the wrong reasons is a sign that we are not ready to leap out of the stranglehold of poverty, hunger, and disease!

*\*Professor Hope Eghagha is a member of the Editorial Board of The Trumpet Newspapers.*

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The only lesson we learn from history, the German philosopher G.W.F. Hegel stated, is that we don't learn from history. And George Santayana, in his 1905 *The Life of Reason*, writes, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." Through the back door, schools are being returned to religious-based organisations. After a few years of running schools, the Nigeria government has unsurprisingly failed. The public schools are ill-equipped, poorly funded, teachers are pauperised. In brief, the schools are "weaponised" to impoverish citizens. These are not the worse of the problems called Nigerian schools.

There is now the obvious disconnect between building morally sound citizens and creating persons that can truly develop the Nigerian state. The essence of education is totally lost. What is education without character? Why should parents be at the driver's seat and supervise cheating by their wards and still be "illusioned: into believing that such wards are "educated."?

The construct of private schools is only so-called. Education is purely the business of government. This statement is made without one being unaware of strong believers in the philosophy of government having no business in anything under the sun except in the highly profitable business of "governance"; which if we go by the Nigerian experience is "mis-governance." One point should be underscored. No government is doing any citizen any good if it embarks on a well-funded education project. It is society more than the individual that ultimately benefits

more from a good educational system. The level of progress a people enjoy is simultaneously proportionate with the seriousness they put into their educational sector. Not even the Colonial Government was unaware of this point. The problem with our educational system clearly started in the 70s when, borne of a myopia-in-thinking that oil money is eternal and inelastic, the then Federal Military Government acquired all educational institutions in Nigeria.

A consequence in this action was the withdrawal of grant-in-aids to privately owned schools. Grants in aids was given to the privately owned schools because of the simple belief that these bodies, especially the Missionaries, were doing the business of education on behalf of government. Since government was responsibly playing its own role in the education equation of the state, she was then morally armed to be the full regulator, supervisor and Leviathan on all matters of education.

The first attempt by the colonial government to control schools was between 1882 and 1887. The colonial government Education Ordinance of 6th May, 1882, and amended in 1888, set the ball rolling for government control of education. Essentially, the law required that a General Board of Education - empowered to appoint and dissolve the Local Board of Education - be set up as it might find necessary. The British Consul, resident in Accra and later in Lagos, was given the power to appoint this "General Board of Education. Under the colonial system, schools were classified into two categories. These were public schools that were fully owned and

## Private schools and the failure of governments

maintained entirely by government as well as run on public funds. And private schools that were financially assisted by government through grant-in-aid.

Invariable, the colonial government appointed School Inspectors. They were paid not more than £400 per annum. Their salaries were shared by the British Colonies of the Gold Coast (now Ghana) and Lagos in the ratio of 2:1. The private school were mandated to admit indigent pupils whose parents were adjudged as paupers. Financial grants were made available to Teacher Training Colleges. Conditions for grant-in-aid to private assisted schools were based on managerial control, attendance of pupils at school and examination results. Government went further to improve on her control of education in 1887. In the intervening period, government started investing directly in schools by building government schools through another Education Ordinance that regulated Certification of Teachers, Scholarship for students in secondary and technical institutions and also, empowered government to open and manage schools in any part of the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, the Colony and the Protectorate of Lagos.

From the hindsight of the history of education in Nigeria, today, we can clearly see that those who are in charge of governance lack any knowledge of the aim and purpose of education. It is simplistic for government and its agents to clamp down on schools whenever breaches are observed or flagged. But what is the quality of government regulation and control of the schools? Are the so-called private school not business ventures? Except clear answers are given to these questions, no gains can be made. Schools should not be business ventures. You do not send your wards to school and hope to make "gains" by so doing! It is not only the schools and its owners that should be punished. Those charged with supervision as Government Inspectors, employed in the Inspectorate Divisions of our Ministries of

Education, must be invited to answer questions.

In most cases these officers are compromised by the owners of these schools. Not even those who move around to accredit courses in our universities do their job with any high sense of morality. Whereas the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) usually cry out about the poor states of the universities, Professors who move from one institution to another for accreditation exercises would always score them as fully accredited. There is the belief that even members whose religious organisations own the private schools are alienated from the schools due to high fees charged by the proprietors. This is so because government - unlike in the past under colonization - does not give privately owned schools in Nigeria grant-in-aid. For government to have full control of the educational system, and this includes spelling out societal values government expects the owners to promote, she must put her money where she has her mouth.

Education is a common good. At least in principle and constitutionally this is what it is in today's Nigeria. "Government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels. Government shall promote science and technology. Government shall strive to eradicate illiteracy; and to this end Government shall as and when practicable provide free, compulsory and universal primary education, free university education, and free adult literacy programme." Those who publicly held up in their hands the Holy Bible and Holy Qur'an to swear under oath that God should help them do so, should work towards realising these goals as clearly expressed in Chapter 2, Section 18 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

*\*Dr Karo Ogbinaka is of the Department of Philosophy, University of Lagos and a member of The Trumpet Editorial Board.*



# Why northern PDP consensus for presidency bid collapsed, by Atiku, others

By TUNDE JOSHUA, POLITICS EDITOR, ABUJA

Efforts by a committee led by former Vice-Chancellor of the Ahmadu Bello University, Prof. Ango Abdullahi to select best out of four presidential aspirants of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) as consensus candidate of the north came under heavy knocks over the weekend as the consensus deal obviously crashed.

Recall that out of the 17 presidential aspirants of the party, Sokoto State governor, Aminu Tambuwal, Bauchi governor, Bala Mohammed, former Senate President, Bukola Saraki and business mogul, Mohammed Hayatu-Deen have been meeting to find a consensus candidate among themselves.

The committee had in a report tagged 'Report of Consensus Efforts Among Four Northern Aspirants in the Peoples Democratic Party' signed by Prof. Abdullahi on Friday in Minna, Niger State had recommended both Bauchi State governor, Bala Mohammed and former Senate President, Bukola Saraki as consensus candidates from the north.

In the report cited by The Trumpet, the Ango Abdullahi committee based its assessment on two major parameters; one of which is candidates personal assessment in which it scored, Bala Mohammed with 10 votes, Bukola Saraki with 10 votes, Aminu Tambuwal with 7 votes and Mohammed Hayatu-Deen with 5 votes.

On the Zonal assessment parameter, the committee rated the North Central high with 8 votes, North East with 7 votes and North West with 2 votes.

The committee went further to situate its assessment in PDP previous experiences and resolved that; "the North West has had the opportunity of contesting and even forming government in 2007; that in 2011, the North East got the slot but lost at the primaries while in 2019, the North East got the slot again, though the party could not form government.

"North Central has not had a single opportunity to get the PDP ticket since inception of the fourth republic."

In its recommendation, the



Abdullahi



Tambuwal



Atiku

committee therefore resolved that "a leading aspirant from the North Central and one from the North East are to be presented as northern presidential candidates.

"The two would be required to make further concessions so that in the end one of them would be presented as the consensus candidate.

"For the purpose of this exercise, it was resolved that Gov. Bala Mohammed from the North East and former Senate President, Bukola Saraki from the North Central be presented as Northern Consensus candidates for the moment".

But in a swift reaction to the report, two of the key actors in the consensus deal, Tambuwal and Hayatu-Deen denied being part of the report and consequently rejected the recommendation of the Ango Abdullahi committee.

In a statement titled 'Consensus Drive Failed, I'm Not Part of Any Agreement', late Friday night the Tambuwal Campaign Organization (TCO) declared that "a news item that former Senate President, Bukola Saraki and Gov. Bala Muhammad of Bauchi state have emerged as consensus candidates from amongst the four of us announced at a meeting in Minna, Niger state.

"This is, to be candid and forthright, not correct."

Issued by Nicholas Msheliza, Director Organization and Mobi-

lization for TCO, the statement narrated what it believed to be the correct situation saying "the correct situation is that the team met on Wednesday 20th April, 2022, at Bauchi Governor's lodge in Abuja and had a review meeting; and, unanimously agreed that the consensus arrangement was not working.

"The team further agreed that Sen. Saraki should come up with a draft statement on how to communicate this decision to the Nigerian public. This was the last time that members of the team sat and mutually agreed on anything. The proposed meeting to review and vet the statement scheduled for 10 pm of the same day was aborted unilaterally by Sen. Saraki via a WhatsApp message.

"However, on Thursday, 21st, 2022, same Sen Saraki circulated yet another WhatsApp message suggesting that members of the team should head to Minna for a meeting on Friday, Gov. Tambuwal reached other members of the team and informed them that he stands by the decision of the team that the initiative is not working.

"This is the reason Gov. Tambuwal was absent at today's (Friday) meeting in Minna. As a result therefore, the outcome of the Minna meeting has no consequence or any implication on the aspiration of Gov. Tambuwal,

who had earlier on informed his colleagues of maintaining their agreed position that the initiative has collapsed.

"Members of the public should be reminded that what was canvassed for was a consensus candidate and not consensus candidates.

"For the avoidance of doubt, Gov Tambuwal has submitted his Presidential nomination forms and now that the quest for a consensus candidate out of the four has clearly collapsed, will go ahead and face screening and indeed contest the PDP presidential primaries.

"This is in consonance with his acclaimed outlook as a pan-Nigerian candidate, with pedigree of national service as the Speaker of the Federal House of Representatives, life member of the Body of Benchers and now in his second and final term as Governor of Sokoto state."

Following suite, Mohammed Hayatu-Deen did not only reject the recommendation but described the Abdullahi committee as faceless while saying the criteria applied in reaching such recommendation was subjective.

A statement from the media office of Hayatu-Deen said "for the record, we would like to state that the process of arriving at a consensus candidate had collapsed. The candidates involved





Hayatu-Deen



Lamido



Saraki



Mohammed

could not reach a compromise amongst themselves, resulting in the decision of our principal, Mohammed Hayatu-Deen, and Governor Aminu Tambuwal to discontinue the process.

"The announcement we witnessed yesterday was not based on the principles of equity and transparency, which we believe should lead the country and the party into the future. The committee constituted by Prof. Ango Abdullahi is completely faceless and the evaluation criteria is totally subjective.

"It seems to us that this entire charade was designed to achieve a preconceived outcome."

Consensus is regional, ethno - religious gang up, says Atiku

Though not part of the PDP presidential aspirants consensus group, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar said since he did not subjected himself to the charade, he cannot be bound by recommendation of such committee.

The Technical Committee for the actualization of Atiku Abubakar's Presidency in 2023 (TEECOM), in a statement authored by its chairman, High Chief Raymond Dokpesi urged supporters of the Waziri Adamawa to remain focused and be united in their efforts at seeing Atiku clinching PDP presidential ticket.

The statement by TEECOM

read "Waziri Atiku Abubakar MA,GCON Vice President Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999-2007 was never a part of this purported consensus arrangement and did not subject himself to this process. Therefore,he is not bound by any of the recommendations and conclusions of the purported report.

"Waziri Atiku Abubakar as a nationalist strongly believes that Nigeria has never been so divided as it is today,and any regional,zonal,ethno-religious gang up or consensus driven in this manner will further deepen and widen the wounds that urgently require to be healed. He is anxious to implement plans, policies and programmes that will rescue and rebuild Nigeria

"Finally, we urge our supporters to continue with consultations and townhall meetings with delegates across the country as the party prepares for the presidential primaries scheduled for Saturday/ Sunday May 28 and 29, 2022.

Also concerned PDP stakeholders in the North reacted to the Ango Abdullahi committee report.

Former governor of Jigawa State, Sule Lamido said "the position of the Northern Elders is not only injurious to the North but equally injurious to the Northern Aspirants".

Lamido in a statement in

Saturday said "the attention of key stakeholders of the PDP in the Northern States is drawn to reports in the media that some Northern Elders have shortlisted two of our prominent and deserving aspirants as consensus PDP presidential candidates.

"Having widely consulted party leaders across the 19 northern states and FCT, it is hereby stated to our teeming party members and the general public that what is reported in the media is only the personal opinion of those who issued the statement and not the position of the PDP members in the north!

"Discussions are ongoing with all the aspirants in our party with a view to having a national consensus if possible or a least working towards having a smooth acrimony free National Convention."

However, the selected consensus candidates commended the Ango Abdullahi committee for striving to minimize contest in the party.

Speaking for the former Senate President,Bukola Saraki, his media adviser, Yusuph Olaniyonu said the recommendation is a welcome development.

In a statement Sunday, he said "the process that eventually led to this decision cannot be faulted. It was pain-staking, thorough and transparent. One needs to

commend and appreciate the elders who worked to actualise the process. May Allah bless them all.

"Their decision was based on equity, justice, and need for inclusion of all. Yes, one consensus candidate has not emerged but they have initiated a process which can help the party later on. The process is a work-in-progress. One person will still emerge from the ongoing process here in the North.

"The South also has an example to emulate in deciding on the aspirants that should proceed to the primaries considering the zones that have not produced a President before like the South East.

"A nation like Nigeria with all the current problems needs consensus building as a way of healing the nation and enlarging grounds of co-operation, unity and understanding."

The Bala Mohammed Presidential Campaign Organization expressed eternal gratitude to former President Ibrahim Babangida, and the entirety of Northern Elders who assisted him in reaching the decision for their labour of thankless patriotic duty and uncommon leadership in attempting to bring order and coherence to bear in a condition of acute political uncertainty and fractured political process.



## Jack Dorsey is now Block's Head, drops CEO title

By SHARON O. ISAALAH, Head, Science, Technology and Health Desk

Jack Dorsey is no longer the chief executive officer (CEO) of financial services firm Block. Instead, now, the executive is choosing to call himself "Block Head."

Dorsey co-founded Square in 2009, and the company changed its name to Block in December.

According to The Verge, the company filed an 8-K with the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) announcing the change, and of course, the new title came into effect on 4/20.

Despite the new title, the Twitter cofounder's job at Block will ultimately remain the same: there will be "no changes in Dorsey's roles and responsibilities, and he will continue to serve as principal executive officer of the Company".

Block's bylaws also no longer require that the company have an officer with the title of chief executive officer (CEO) and president, which seems to mean that anyone who succeeds Dorsey in his role could also be called Block Head, the report said.

According to the filing, the change happened at Dorsey's request. While replying to Dorsey on microblogging site Twitter, tech billionaire Elon Musk called Dorsey's new title 'fire'.



Jack Dorsey

## Ola recalling 1,441 units of electric two-wheelers

Ola Electric is recalling 1,441 units of its electric two-wheelers in the wake of incidents of vehicles catching fire, according to a company statement.

The company said its investigation into the fire incident on March 26, in Pune, is ongoing and preliminary assessment found that it was an isolated one.

However, it said, "As a pre-emptive measure we will be conducting a detailed diagnostic and health check of the scooters in that specific batch and therefore are issuing a voluntary recall of 1,441 vehicles."

Ola Electric further said, "These scooters will be inspected by our service engineers and will go through a thorough diagnostics across all battery systems, thermal systems as

well as the safety systems."

Ola Electric said its battery systems already complies with and is tested for AIS 156, the latest proposed standard for India, in addition to being compliant with the European standard ECE 136.

Recently, there have been widespread incidents of electric two-wheelers catching fire in various parts of the country forcing manufacturers to recall their vehicles.

Okinawa Autotech had recalled over 3,000 units, while PureEV did a similar exercise for around 2,000 units.

The fire incidents had prompted the government to form a panel to examine and had warned companies of penalties if they were found to be negligent.

## FG urges Nigerians to join anti-cybercrime revolution

The Federal Government has urged Nigerians to join the revolution against cybercrime by supporting local technology innovations.

The government also called on citizens to fight against security threats ravaging particularly financial institutions in the country.

The Managing Director of Galaxy Backbone (GBB), Prof. Mohammed Abubakar, made the appeal at a news briefing in Abuja organised by UNICCON Group of Companies on Cybersecurity.

Abubakar, represented by the Head Of Human Resources, GBB, Mr. Gbenga Omoniyi, lauded the company, on its role in tackling cybersecurity in the country.

"I commend the company for taking this great step in tackling cybersecurity in the country.

"This initiative is apt and can also assist in proffering solutions to the current fight on multiple financial crimes in the country," he said.

Also speaking, the Deputy Director, ICT, Mr Adebayo Adeyemi, who represented the Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation, endorsed the initiative.

Adeyemi said that the government was scouting for people with patriotic abilities to promote sanity and upscale employment rate in the country.

"Over the years, the contribution of ICT to the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has increased and this is one of them.

"Businesses today are faced with several threats and this is one of the bespoke solutions that can address such.

"We are a government company that understands exactly this kind of innovation," he said.

Earlier, the Chairman of UNICCON, Mr Chucks Ekwueme, said that the effort put in was to complement the government's efforts at combating cyberattacks responsible for setbacks in the Nigerian economic sector.

Ekwueme said the incessant cyberattacks in Nigeria and globally had prompted the organisation's effort to conduct rigorous research, which had so far yielded positive results.

He said that it had provided a risk-based approach to monitoring transactions for risk assessment and handling financial related crimes mitigation needs.

## Minister urges states to promote local content

Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI), Dr. Ogbonnaya Onu, has enjoined states and the FCT to emulate Anambra government in promoting local content and indigenous technologies.

The Minister who said this at the quarterly meeting with Directors-General, Permanent Secretary and Directors of the ministry in Abuja, stressed the importance of promoting local content, local technologies and industrialisation of the nation as being products of the Presidential Executive Order 5.

He mentioned that the University of Transportation in Daura, Katsina, was also a product of Executive Order 5.

Onu, who gave a breakdown of the achievements and policies developed by his ministry since the inception of his tenure in 2015, reiterated the role of STI in national development.

"We must remember that by 2015 we had only one policy which wasn't fully

implemented, the National Science Technology and Innovation policy, which was approved by the Federal Executive Council in 1986.

"The lead organ, the National Research and Innovation Council that has the President as Chairman with as many as 16 ministers, and the private sector never met for a single day.

"We must thank the President because as soon as I brought this to his attention, by Jan. 7, 2016, that council met for the first time in 30 years.

"Since then we have held nine meetings and we have had five additional policies and all the policies are doing so well," Onu said.

The minister said the National Strategy for Competitiveness in Raw Materials and Product Development has been very helpful.

He said that the policy helped to improve Nigeria's ranking on the world stage so that in 2014 and 2015, according to the World Economic Forum assessment, Nigeria was ranked 127 out of 144 countries.

Onu disclosed that Nigeria's ranking by the same forum had improved significantly in 2018 and 2019 to 115 out of 140 countries.

"As of Friday, at the Cabinet Affairs Office, we have four memos, policy memos on Nanotechnology, welding and welding-related fields, policy on biosafety and revised energy policy.

"It's not a matter of sending because we already have them there and we are working on artificial intelligence," the minister said.

According to him, STI holds the key to the development of the nation for the benefit of all sectors of the economy.

He said there was no single ministry, be it infrastructural development, transportation, housing, education, environment, defence among others that STI would not have a direct impact on its performance.



Onu

## Robotaxi startup Pony.ai gets licence in China city



Self-driving tech company Pony.ai, backed by Toyota Motor Corp, said on Sunday it has obtained a taxi licence in China, which will allow some of its driverless vehicles to start charging fares.

The company said it was the first autonomous driving company in the country to do so.

The startup said it was awarded the license to operate 100 driverless vehicles in the Guangzhou city district of Nansha.

Pony.ai last year also won approval to launch paid driverless robotaxi services in Beijing and has since begun offering rides.

In Beijing, however, rides are being offered in a much smaller, industrial zone on a trial basis, a Pony.ai spokesperson said.

According to the company's statement, in Nansha, it will start charging fares in the entire 800 square km of the district with driverless cars.

Passengers can hail and pay for rides with Pony.ai's own app. Pony.ai will initially deploy those cars with safety drivers

but expects to remove them "over the short to intermediate time frame," it said.

The announcement comes at a time when a host of startups are pouring billions of dollars into autonomous technology, aiming to take an early lead in the future of mobility.

Pony.ai has been active in the United States and China, testing its driverless technology on public roads in California's Fremont and Milpitas, as well as the Chinese cities of Guangzhou and Beijing.

In China, a host of local startups are competing. In recent months, Momenta and automaker SAIC gained official approval for a trial for their robotaxi service in Shanghai's Jiading district, a move that followed a similar move in Guangzhou by Nissan-backed Weride.

In Shenzhen, Alibaba-backed AutoX is also testing robotaxis - observed by safety drivers - in a highly congested urban area with lots of pedestrian and moped traffic.



## ICPC organises retreat for new board members

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) has held a one-day retreat for its newly inaugurated board members to enlighten them on the challenges and expectations of their new assignment.

The retreat, which featured presentations on the Code of Conduct for Public Officers, ICPC Structure, Mandate and Performance Scorecard, was held at the Commission's boardroom.

The following persons were recently inaugurated as new Board Members of the ICPC after the Senate confirmed their appointment by President Muhammadu Buhari: Senator Anthony Agbo from Ebonyi State (South-East), Anne Otelafu Odey from Cross River State

(South-South) and Alhaji Goni Ali Gujba from Yobe state (North-East).

Others are Dr Louis Solomon Mandama from Adamawa State (North-East) and retired Assistant Inspector General of Police, Olugbenga Adeyanju from Ekiti State (South-West).

ICPC Chairman, Prof Bolaji Owasanoye SAN, while speaking said the retreat was a tradition of the Commission, adding that previous Board Members also went through same process.

Prof Owasanoye explained that the aim of the retreat was to re-orient the minds of the Board Members on the tasks, challenges and expectations of their office, adding that the discussions were necessary and would be beneficial to them especially in carrying out their official responsibilities.

Delivering a paper titled "ICPC Mandate – The Role of the Chairman and Board Members," the Chairman, National Salaries, Income and Wages Commission (NSIWC), Ekpo Nta, highlighted some of the reasons Boards are set up in organisations to include setting out road maps and ensuring that the right personnel are hired to achieve the road maps.

According to him, others are providing resources to achieve goals, constantly monitoring implementation performance and timelines and making adjustments where necessary to ensure that cooperate standard are met as well as justifying stakeholders confidence amongst others.

Nta, who is the immediate past chairman of ICPC, stated that the essence of bringing the Chairman and Board

members from different organisations and backgrounds was for them to bring their varied wealth of experiences to bear in achieving the mandate of the Commission.

He urged Board Members to strive to uphold the integrity and trust reposed on them by the President by serving the nation with the highest sense of responsibility and integrity.

"You are here is to sell and affirm your integrity," Nta said.

He finally reminded the new Board Members that they were not in the Commission to represent only their geo-political zones or constituencies but the interest of the entire country. He urged them to work closely with the chairman and staff of ICPC to stamp out corruption in Nigeria.

## Reps berate Sylva, Kyari over refineries probe



Gbajabiamila



Johnson



Sylva



Kyari

House of Representatives has accused the Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Timipre Sylva and the Group Managing Director of the Nigeria National Petroleum Company (NNPC) Limited, Mele Kyari, of sabotaging investigation of funds expended on repair and maintenance of refineries.

Chairman of the House adhoc committee investigating rehabilitation of the refineries, Hon Ganiyu Johnson, affirmed that Sylva and Kyari were frustrating efforts by the parliament to unravel why Nigeria's refineries are not working despite billions of dollars spent on their rehabilitation.

He made this known last week during a press briefing in Abuja, stressing that the Minister, the Group Managing Director and Managing Director of Kaduna, Port Harcourt and Warri refineries have refused to appear before the committee on three different occasions.

Johnson while summoning them to appear before the House on Thursday, April 28, said if those concerned had nothing to hide from Nigerians, they would have honoured the invitation from the parliament, adding that failure on their part to honour the invitation is a sign of disrespect for the National Assembly.

The Committee was constituted by the Speaker of the House in January to investigate why the nation was still depending on the importation of petroleum products despite huge amount of money spent on the rehabilitation of the refineries.

He said the NNPC recently awarded contracts for the rehabilitation of the

refineries in Kaduna (1.3 billion dollars), Port Harcourt (1.5 billion dollars) and Warri (900 million dollars).

The Committee Chairman said, "You may all recall that the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Femi Gbajabiamila in January 2022 constituted this Committee to determine the actual cost of rehabilitating the refineries and what is needed to bring them back to maximum refining capacity."

"The Committee was mandated to determine the true state of the Refineries, ascertain the actual cost of rehabilitating the refineries and what is needed for the refineries to function at maximum refining capacity."

"The Committee therefore relying on relevant laws and pursuant to the provisions of sections 62, 88, and 89 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended), requested the GMD of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) to forward a Status Report on the Nation's Refineries and the actual cost of rehabilitating the refineries from 2012 to date."

"The Committee specifically requested the GMD to provide relevant information and documents that will help in the investigations."

"We are compelled to make this Press Statement because of the continued refusal and flagrant disregard of the GMD of the NNPC, the Hon. Minister of State for Petroleum Resources and the General Managers of Port Harcourt, Warri and Kaduna Refineries to the invitations to appear before the Committee."

"We consider this continued refusal and negligence to appear before the Committee as disrespect to the Leadership of the National Assembly of the Federal Republic of Nigeria."

"The Committee is worried that the Port Harcourt Refining Company (PHRC), Warri Refinery and Petrochemicals Company (WRPC) and Kaduna Refinery and Petrochemicals Company (KRPC) had all been operating at gross losses since 2010 before they were finally shut down in 2019."

"This Committee has the mandate of the House of Representatives and the Constitutional responsibility to demand accountability from those in positions of managing our resources."

"It is worrisome that the GMD of the NNPC, the Hon. Minister of State for Petroleum Resources and the General Managers of Port Harcourt, Warri and Kaduna Refineries have refused on three invitations to appear before the Committee to account for the Billions of Dollars spent on the rehabilitation of the refineries over the years."

"The Committee is aware that the NNPC recently awarded contracts for Rehabilitation of Refineries (WRPC \$900 Million, PHRC \$1.5 Billion and KRPC \$1.3 Billion)."

"As Chairman of this Honourable Committee, I hereby summon the GMD of the NNPC, the Hon. Minister of State for Petroleum Resources and the General Managers of Port Harcourt, Warri and Kaduna Refineries to appear before the Committee on Thursday 28 April, 2022 to

avoid legal, constitutional and parliamentary measures to be taken against them in order to compel them to appear."

"As members of the National Assembly and Representatives of the people, we have the constitutional duty to name and demand from those responsible; the Hon. Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, the GMD of NNPC and the Operators of the Refineries to let us know the problems besetting our refineries in order to proffer solutions for a sustainable future and for the benefit of all Nigerians."

"We represent the people and we own the people this responsibility and until they appear, they are stalling our investigation unless they have something to hide. Otherwise, by now, we should have made progress. So this should be the last time we are calling on them to appear."

The Committee also summoned the Accountant-General of the Federation, Auditor-General of the Federation, Director General, Budget Office of the Federation, the Governor, Central Bank of Nigeria, and the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission.

Also summoned are the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Authority, the Port Harcourt Refining Company Limited (PHRC), the Kaduna Refining and Petrochemical Company Limited (KRPC), the Warri Refining and Petrochemical Company Limited (WRPC), National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI).





## Stanbic IBTC tasks SMEs on digitisation of products, services

Stanbic IBTC Holdings Plc, a member of Standard Bank Group has urged Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria to digitise their products and services to drive business efficiency.

The call was made during the 2022 Enterprise Banking webinar organised by Stanbic IBTC Bank with the theme: *Your Business, Our Business, Accelerating Business Growth*, which featured Head Research, Stanbic IBTC bank, Muiyiwa Oni, Team Lead Enterprise banking, Stanbic IBTC Remilekun Ishola, Solutions Manager INQ Digital, Philip Egbtho and other resource persons.

Speaking on the need for SMEs to digitise their products and services, Chief Executive Officer of the bank, Wole Adeniyi, stated that the integration of digital technology into businesses would help SMEs to achieve greater business efficiency.

"The position of SMEs in the society has been identified as one of the most important catalysts in a nation's development. In fact, it is the major propeller of development in any nation.

"A country that needs fast and rapid development should not neglect the crucial role of small scale industries. However, to attain optimal business efficiency, digitisation of their products and services must be adopted immediately across all enterprise business sector," he said.

In his presentation, Oni noted that although Nigeria Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was gradually recovering and that 2022 comes with heightened political activities, increase in cash flow system and some uncertainties due to the 2023 general elections, which he said, was the pattern with electioneering in the country.

He charged promoters of SMEs to switch to digital platforms to conduct their businesses and look for innovative ways to serve their customers.

In his presentation, a Business Strategist, Steve Harris, stated that for SMEs to experience growth and expansion there must be emphasis on branding and packaging to effectively market their products and services.

He also stressed the need for branding strategies for businesses to apply to accelerate their growth alongside worst strategies that businesses should avoid in 2022, if such SMEs hope to survive in the competitive and harsh operating environment.



Wole Adeniyi

# Host communities, activists flay IOCs' divestments from N'Delta

By **EDU ABADE**, Business Editor

Oil and gas host communities in the Niger Delta region in collaboration with environmental activists, at the weekend, decried international oil companies (IOCs) for divesting from the region after years of fossil fuel exploration and severe pollution of their environment.

They expressed concern over the unease and confusion in the communities over their exclusion from the IOCs' ongoing divestment processes at a one-day dialogue on *Unmaking The Motives Of The IOCs For Divesting From The Niger Delta Region*, organised by the Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth Nigeria (ERA/FoEN) in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State.

Representatives of various communities, traditional rulers, leaders of thought, women, youths, academics, government officials and the media, among others, attended the consultation on Saturday April 23, 2022.

Traditional rulers, who attended the dialogue, are the Chairman, Bayelsa State Traditional Rulers Council, King Bubaraye Dakolo, as well as King W.D. Amakiri and King Francis T. Dodo of Oruma and Ikebiri kingdoms respectively.

Executive Director of ERA/FoEN, Chima Williams, who briefed participants about its engagements on unmasking IOC divestments and the fact that divestment has become a major issue, as oil majors flee their toxic onshore facilities and go offshore to evade monitoring, said the exclusion of communities and community concerns were crucial to discussions on how to address the underlying issues of environmental pollution, hence the decision to hold the dialogue in Bayelsa, being adjudged the most oil impacted state in Nigeria.

Prof. Sofiri Joab-Peterside of the Department of

Sociology, University of Port Harcourt and Vice Chancellor, Federal University Otuoke, Bayelsa State, Prof. Teddy Alias, whose intervention impacted Shell's activities in Otuagbagi in Oloibiri Kingdom, spoke to the issues.

Participants agreed that the global environmental justice community campaign for divestment of public finance, loans and subsidies from extractive industries had been replaced, abused and misrepresented by the IOCs divesting from the Niger Delta and the Nigerian government to the detriment of local communities.

"The oil and gas industry in Nigeria has only brought untold hardship on local communities through oil spills, gas flaring and other pollutions that have ruined lives, land, and livelihoods of indigenous people

In the divestment processes the IOCs deliberately ignore Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) and Global Memorandum of Understandings (GMOUs) agreed with oil-bearing communities

"Divesting IOCs abandon toxic assets and complex problematic relationships with communities that the

Domestic Oil Companies (DOCs) have inherited and continue to perpetrate. The Federal Government and the regulatory agencies are complicit due to their silence over the issues, as IOCs dictate the terms of divestments," they said.

They argued that in decision-making on the divestment processes and other matters relevant to communities in the Niger Delta, the IOCs and the Federal Government have excluded them and that the divestment processes pose grave threats to ongoing court cases instituted by the communities against the companies.

"The divestment processes have largely weakened local struggles for environmental justice. It has equally divided communities. Domestic oil companies have inherited and continue the tradition of impunity and lack of accountability to local communities.

"Although all community people of all classes have suffered exclusion in the divestment processes, women and children suffer profoundly because the ongoing processes further aggravate their non-inclusion at all levels

of engagement.

"Media spotlight on oil and gas matters has largely ignored divestment and other matters crucial to the communities of the Niger Delta," they added.

In a communiqué issued at the end of the dialogue, the Ikarama, Ikebiri, Otuagbagi, Sangana, Nembe, Egebekiri, Okoroma and Otuogidi communities submitted that there was the need for a better understanding and deeper community engagement on the global environment justice community definition of divestments with regard to the model of the IOCs in the Niger Delta.

They also stressed the need for communities to embrace the Leave The Oil In The Soil campaign and hold the oil and gas companies accountable for nearly six decades of ecocide in the Niger Delta as precursor to remedial actions and compensations.

"The cases instituted by the Niger Delta communities in The Hague and United Kingdom (UK) courts are models of litigation successes. The Federal Government should compel divesting IOCs to honour MOUs, GMOUs

and other agreements with communities

"The IOCs should decommission their toxic assets and carry out remedial actions monitored by independent bodies and civil society in the communities. They should integrate the communities and make them the central focus of ongoing divestment processes," the communiqué reads.

The communities also advocated strengthening of communities, civil society struggles and voices for environmental justice through capacity building and awareness creation trainings, stressing that this should include peaceful engagements, sharing of experiences and learning to engage the process.

"There is the need for demilitarisation of the Niger Delta communities that are legitimately agitating for a safer environment for their development, prioritisation of women and women concerns in ongoing divestment discussions and decision-making, as well as in-depth investigation and reportage of IOC divestments and other underreported issues of the country's oil and gas industry," they added.



Representatives of oil host communities and environmental activists during a one-day dialogue on the motives behind IOCs divestments from the Niger Delta in Yenagoa...at the weekend.

## SON's regulation of conformity assessment practice begins, unveils impartiality committee

By **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON) has commenced the regulation of Conformity Assessment Practice (CAP) in Nigeria in fulfillment of the provisions of its enabling Act No 14 of 2015 to establish registration for National Standards Marks Certification Systems and Licence.

Director General of SON, Mallam Farouk Salim, stated this in Abuja recently at the unveiling of its impartiality committee

to monitor and guide the activities of the National Registry of Conformity Assessment Practitioners (NRCAP) setup to ensure that activities in management systems standards implementation, product testing and certifications in the country complied with international standards.

Salim said the NRCAP practitioners will include assessment and registration of competencies of Management System Standards (MSS), auditors, quality inspectors, testing laboratories and quality

inspectors' groups.

He explained that the setting up of the NRCAP scheme was to establish a directory of Verified and Registered Conformity Assessment Practitioners in Nigeria for all laboratories management systems, auditors, trainers, consultants, inspectors as well as inspection and certification bodies.

He also disclosed that the inauguration of the impartiality committee was in line with international best practice to guarantee fairness and transparency in the activities at the NRCAP

unit, stressing that was central to the operational strategy of the scheme.

According to him, a date for training on the operational guidelines of the scheme shall soon be communicated to the committee members.

While congratulating the committee members for their nominations, he urged them to bring their wealth of experience and expertise to bear on the task to enhance the socio-economic benefits, national growth, as well as promote best global practices and national interest in all

sectors.

Members of the committee are SON's Director of Human Resources Management, Umaru Kawu; Director, Legal Services, Bashir Hamis; National Officer, Nigeria Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA), Emeka Udeze; Deputy Director, Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission, Dr. Nkechi Mba and Assistant Director, Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), Niran Ade-Onojobi.



## Emulate Dangote's entrepreneurial spirit, Buhari tells Nigerian businessmen

By **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

President Muhammadu Buhari has commended the entrepreneurial spirit and doggedness of the President of Dangote Group, Aliko Dangote, and urged Nigerian businessmen to emulate him to enable the country witness real economic growth and development.

The President, who stated this when Dangote visited him at the Presidential Villa, Abuja, commended the board and the management of Dangote Group for the courage and foresight in

embarking on mega investment projects, which will have enduring benefits to generations of Nigerians.

His words: "I have no doubt that such bold decisions can only be conceived by a mindset which transcends conventional commercial viability considerations. Entrepreneurs such as Aliko Dangote are unique gifts to their societies and institutions they build and they often become the pillars of stable, enduring prosperous economies."

"To this end, I, therefore, urge other Nigerians in the business sector to emulate the iconic entrepreneur by investing in such enterprises that will in time become worthy legacies as national assets, which will continue

to benefit their people from generation to generation, creating firm anchors of enduring prosperity for their citizens."

The President, who further commended Dangote and his team for investing in areas that bring the highest benefits to Nigerians, added: "I recall with great pleasure my visit to the Dangote Free Trade Zone about four weeks ago to commission the new three million metric tons fertiliser plant. Once again, I congratulate you and your board on a successful commissioning ceremony."

"As I said during the event, the coming on stream of this plant is a huge opportunity to ramp up the productivity of our agricultural sector."

It is, therefore, a most welcome booster to our government's strategy for achieving food security and reducing poverty.

"Given recent developments globally, especially the impacts of the Russia and Ukraine war on global food supply chain. I must commend your foresight for bringing the plant into operation."

Responding, Dangote said his board visited the President to appreciate him for the honour to the Dangote Group when the new three million Metric Tons per day (3m MTPD) fertiliser plant, the latest subsidiary company of the Dangote Industries Limited, was commissioned.

"We also seize the opportunity to restate our



Aliko Dangote

gratitude for the sustained effort of your administration through various policy initiative aimed at progressively improving the business environment and investment climate in the country," he said.

### Price of refilling cooking gas cylinders rises by 84%

Price of refilling cylinder of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), otherwise known as cooking gas rose by 83.62 per cent from N2,057 in March 2021, the latest report released by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) has shown.

The report showed that the average price for refilling a 5kg cylinder of LPG stood at N3,778 in March 2022 from N3,708 in February 2022, an increase of 1.88 per cent month-on-month.

The average price for refilling a 12.5kg cylinder of LPG increased to N7,617 in March 2022 from N7,447 in February 2022 representing a 2.28 per cent month-on-month increase.

Similarly, on a year-on-year basis, the average retail price for refilling a 12.5kg cooking gas increase by 74.75 per cent from N4,359 in March 2021.

Analysis of state survey showed that the highest average price for refilling a 5kg cylinder of LPG was recorded in Ekiti with N4,200, followed by Niger State with N4,163 and Imo State with N4,150, while Adamawa recorded the lowest average price with N2,604 followed by Yobe and Kano with N2,740.

Prices analysed on zonal basis showed that the average retail price for refilling a 5kg cylinder of LPG was highest in the South-East with N3,992, followed by the South West with N3,900 and South-South N3,877, while the North East recorded the lowest average retail price with N3,419.

The state analysis showed that the highest average retail price for the refilling of a 12.5kg cylinder of LPG was recorded in Osun at N8,782 followed by Oyo with N8,400 and Katsina with N8,300.

Also, the lowest average price for the refilling of 12.5kg cylinder of LPG was recorded in Borno at N6,100 followed by Akwa Ibom and Cross River states at N6,840.

The average retail price of a 12.5kg cylinder of cooking gas by zones showed that the average retail price was highest in the South West with N7,892.40 followed by the North West with N7,657, N7,656 and N7,533, while the South-South zone recorded the lowest price at N7,091.

## FG reopens land borders three years after

By **ADAKU WALTER**



Willie Walsh

After over two years of closing the land borders due to smuggling, the Federal Government has approved the reopening of the Idiroko, Jibiya, Kamba and Ikom borders.

The borders were closed on October, 15, 2019, but in December 2020, the Federal Executive Council (FEC), announced the immediate re-opening of four of the eight major land borders-Seme, Illela, Maigatari and Mfun leaving out Idiroko, Jibiya, Kamba and Ikom.

However, the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) in a circular obtained by

The Trumpet and signed by Deputy Comptroller General, Enforcement and Inspection, DCG E.I. Edozhe, titled: Reopening Of Four Additional Nigerian Border Posts, directed the immediate reopening of the other four land borders.

He said all Customs formations and Joint Border Patrol Teams (JBPTs) should ensure proper manning in compliance with extant operational guidelines.

"Sequel to the presidential directive dated December 16, 2020 granting approval for phased reopening of land borders namely, Mfum, Seme, Illela and Maigatari borders, I am directed to inform you

that four additional borders have been approved for reopening.

"The borders are Idiroko border post, Ogun State (South West Zone); Jibiya border post, Katsina State (North West Zone; Kamba border post, Kebbi State (North West Zone) and Ikom border post, Cross River State (South-South Zone).

"Consequently, all Customs formations and JBPTs are to take note and ensure that proper manning takes place in compliance with extant operational guidelines. Above is forwarded for your information and compliance," the circular reads.

## FG tampering with CVFF funds, ship owners allege, demand forensic audit

By **ADAKU WALTER**

Indigenous ship owners in the country have accused the Federal Government of tampering with proceeds of the Cabotage Vessel Financing Funding (CVFF) and demanded a forensic audit to determine its actual value before setting guidelines for its disbursement.

They made the accusation at the weekend in Lagos during the 2022 stakeholders' forum organised by the Maritime Academy of Nigeria, Oron (AMANO) alumni with the theme: The State Of The Nigerian Maritime Domain In 2022 And Beyond.

The CVFF, a two per cent contribution by indigenous ship owners from every contract they executive, was introduced to develop local shipping capacity. But till date, over 18 years ago, the over \$250 million which has accrued into the fund, has yet to be disbursed to any ship

owner.

Chairman of Starzs Investments Company Limited, Greg Ogbeifun, said since the establishment of the Cabotage Act the fund has not been disbursed, even as operators had continued to contribute two per cent of their contract value to the fund.

"We need to carry out a forensic audit to determine how much has accrued to that fund. We started contributing to that fund since it was established and as we speak, two per cent of our contract value is still being deducted," he said.

Ogbeifun explained that until a new guideline for the disbursement of the fund was developed by the Minister of Transportation, Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi, anyone interfering with the fund was committing a crime.

"We are stuck at the moment and anybody interfering with the fund is breaking the law. We need to review the

requirement of the Cabotage Act so that the fund can be unlocked.

"The Act is very clear and unless it is modified to reflect otherwise, it is mandatory that the Minister must come out with the guidelines taking cognizance of the fact that the funds are no longer in commercial banks but now in government coffers.

"So, in the existing guidelines, the PILs have a role to play in the funding. And until the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) can play that role or there is a completely new arrangement, anybody touching that fund is committing a crime," he said.

In his presentation titled: How To Be Among Respected Maritime Nations, Ogbeifun said while the nation's maritime industry has huge untapped potential, absence of cooperation and synergy among stakeholders that would implement recommendations to restructure

and position the industry as well as inadequate platforms are major factors militating against its development.

He recalled that recent efforts to establish a national fleet failed due to the nation's unfavorable trade policies and tax laws and not because indigenous ship owners could not raise the 60 per cent stake allotted to them as claimed by the Minister.

"Once our tax laws are right and tonnage taxes are reviewed, the government does not even need to invest in the buying of ships. The private sector can now key in knowing that they will become competitive with their foreign partners," he said.

In his goodwill message, Director General of the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), Dr. Bashir Jamoh, said the disbursement of the fund has been politicised, but assured that the fund would be disbursed.

### Why Nigerians should take farming business more serious

By **MIKE HUNDER**

One of the high-level shifts I've seen in Nigeria over the past couple of years is the surge of interest in the agricultural sector.

Stories abound of people leaving farming communities in search of white collar jobs in other towns and cities. Now, with soaring food prices, plus a recent warning from the President Dangote Group, Alhaji Aliko Dangote that Nigerians should brace up for a food crisis from June 2022-a lot of professionals and entrepreneurs are looking at various areas of agriculture-from piggyery, poultry, to crop production and related activities. So, farming is becoming the cool kid on the block.

However, in order to adjust to new farming developments, you have to be strategic about how you go about starting your farming business. In this article, I am going to share with you some interesting strategies to help you get started.

#### Begin from your area of interest

Choose the type of farming you would like to get into, drawing from your area of interest. Basically, there are three main categories of food production to choose from crops, livestock and organic farming. Organic farming covers all crops and livestock production, just that it adopts environmental practices that preserve natural resources in producing such products.

Whichever one you choose, make sure it is an area you have a passion for. Another thing is to start small, so you don't spread yourself out too thin or end up wasting money on non critical things, when you start up.

#### Be willing to learn

Read books on the area of farming you want to engage in. Search the Internet for articles that cover topics on the farming business you want to get started. Online forums are also a great place to discuss your topics of interest, with other farmers and agricultural experts.

#### Find and meet with other farmers

Find and meet with farm owners who are doing what you intend to do. You may even volunteer your services on their farms. And you can ask questions and get a better understanding of their own farming experiences. No question is stupid!

Farmers' markets are another place to find and meet farm business owners. By this, you have an opportunity to purchase their products, to try them out at home, as well as discuss farming operations with them. They may even allow you to visit their farms to talk with them, and get a tour.

#### Tour a working farm

If you are visiting a working farm, dress the part. This may not sound serious, but imagine walking into a law firm for an interview dressed in a pair of jeans and work boots! Not inappropriate, right? Equally, it's inappropriate to walk onto a farm, wearing a suit!



# NASU, SSANU strike extended by one month

Stories by **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH**, Education Correspondent

**N**on-Academic Staff Union (NASU) and Senior Staff Association of Nigeria Universities (SSANU) have extended the ongoing warning strike by one month.

The Joint Action Committee (JAC) of the two unions revealed the decision to extend the warning strike in a statement by the National President, SSANU, Comrade Mohammed Ibrahim and the General Secretary of NASU, Prince Peter Adeyemi.

The statement said it is unfortunate that the government had kept mute and remained insensitive to the implementation of their demands.

Recall that JAC had directed non-teaching staff on March 25 and April 8 to embark on industrial action to force the government to meet their demands.

The statement reads, "Recall that the first warning strike for two weeks started on March 27th and extended for another two weeks on April 10th, which expire on midnight of Sunday, April 24th.

"Unfortunately, the government has kept mute and remain indifferent to the demands of JAC of NASU and SSANU."

JAC disclosed the feedback received from the various



Chris Ngige

branches on the resolutions conducted.

"Deriving from the feedback received from our branches in respect of the resolutions conducted which supported fully the ongoing strike and other actions taken by the leadership of JAC, this is to

inform members that the strike has been extended by one month to commence on midnight of Sunday, 24th April 2022, pending when the Federal government would have change of heart and be favourably disposed to our demands".

The union revealed that the list of NASU and SSANU demands was highlighted and presented to the representative of government, the Hon. Minister of Labour and Employment, Dr Chris Ngige on March 1st and March 10th, 2022.

The extended warning strike by JAC means that the administrative and academic activities of Nigerian universities would be shut down since the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) recently rolled-over its ongoing strike by eight weeks.



Mrs. Abiola Seriki-Ayeni.

## Lagos schools to resume on Monday

Lagos State Government has directed all public and private schools to resume third term on Monday 25th April, 2022.

The Lagos State Office of Education Quality Assurance, an agency of the Ministry of Education, has announced that all public and private schools are to resume on Monday, 25th April, 2022, in line with the Harmonised Academic Calendar for the 2021/2022 session.

In a statement, the director-general, office of education quality assurance, Mrs. Abiola Seriki-Ayeni, urged all proprietors and administrators to ensure compliance with the resumption directive and to ensure

that all students resume on that date.

The Director General also advised students to shun all forms of social vices as they prepare for resumption and parents should monitor the activities of their wards at home.

According to the statement, "The Director-General stated that the 2nd term holiday which started on Friday 8th April, 2022 ends on Friday 22nd April, 2022 as stated in the 2021/2022 academic calendar, while the 3rd term begins on 25th April, 2022.

"The public holidays within the term such as Workers Day, Eid El-Fitr and Eid-El-Kabir were put into consideration

and embedded in the calendar.

"The Director-General advised students to shun all forms of social vices as they prepare for resumption and that parents should monitor the activities of their wards at home."

Ayeni also enjoined Proprietors and School Administrators to ensure strict compliance with the Lagos State Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, stressing that there must be full compliance with all safety protocols on school premises for a safe learning environment, as the State Government remains committed to the delivery of quality education.





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2 x 2	24,941.96	26,812.61	2 x 2	22,588.91	24,283.09	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	3 x 2	33,987.48	36,622.04	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	4 x 2	45,177.83	48,566.17	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	5 x 2	56,472.29	60,707.71	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	6 x 2	67,975.12	73,073.25	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 3	101,962.78	109,609.99	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	6.5 x 3	110,459.64	118,744.11	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	7 x 2	79,304.29	85,252.11	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 3	128,456.43	138,090.67	7 x 3	96,336.94	103,562.21	10 x 2	86,147.92	92,609.02
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14.5 x 4	520,790.19	559,849.45	9 x 2	101,962.78	109,609.99	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 3	152,944.01	164,414.81	9 x 3	141,108.54	151,691.68	10 x 4	172,301.37	185,224.22
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11 x 6	592,622.16	637,068.82	11 x 5	389,441.887	418,650.01	11 x 5	358,396.62	385,276.37	HP7.25 X 6	218,226.87	234,593.89
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## Lukaku's Italy return experiences setback



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

Lukaku's Italy return experiences setback

Chelsea Romelu Lukaku's intention to return to Italy with AC Milan reportedly interested in the player may have hit the brickwall.

The Belgium international, unsettled at Chelsea since his record move to the West London club, has fallen below the pecking order in recent times with Kai Havertz preferred by Thomas Tuchel in the squad's lineup.

After failing to meet up with the expectation of his £97.5million deal from Internazionale in Stamford Bridge, scoring 12 goals in all competitions this season inclusive of 5 Premier League goals, Lukaku seeks a return to Italy.

Paris Saint-Germain, Inter Milan, and AC Milan have

reportedly signified interest but the latter have found an alternative, opting for Lukaku's compatriot and Liverpool forward Divock Origi.

With this new dimension AC Milan has taken, it, however, truncates any further interest Rossoneri may have in the Chelsea striker.

According to Gazzetta Dello Sport, the Italian giants Milan are waiting for the "right moment" to "define the agreements" with the Liverpool striker.

If the agreements between both clubs sail through, it brings to an end the eight years spell of Origi at Anfield.

Moreover, the unhappy Lukaku

has never hidden his desire to return to Italy despite having four years left in his contract.

In December, Lukaku said, "Now I think it's right to speak because I said that I will always have Inter in my heart and I genuinely hope to one day go back to play there."

"I am in love with Italy, this is the time to let people know what happened, without bad-mouthing anyone, because that's not my style."

"Now it's the right time to share my feelings. I have always said that I have Inter in my heart: I know I will return to Inter, I hope so. I am in love with Italy, this is the right moment to talk and let

people know what happened," he added.

Meanwhile, Chelsea boss Thomas Tuchel believes the embattled striker has what it takes to prove his worth.

Tuchel recently before the clash with Arsenal where Chelsea lost 4-2 at home, expressed that he can bring out the best from Lukaku but the player must be ready mentally for the task ahead.

According to the Chelsea boss, Lukaku does not need any motivation but just that one moment to ignite his career at Stamford Bridge.

Tuchel said: "For us it is clear we can play with Romelu and we can be very strong with Romelu and we proved it. And we will prove it if he is involved and keeps involved mentally and stays involved in the situation. He can grow from it and come back stronger."

"We will push him. We will push as far as we can and as long as the player stays involved in the mentality that is needed to bring a team forward; he can still be a crucial player. I don't think he needs inspiration. What he needs is maybe that one moment, one spark," he added.



Sunday Adetunji's strike against second-place Renova has helped Shkupi to lift their first Macedonia First Football League (MFL) title at the Chair Stadium.

With three matches remaining until the end of the season, Adetunji's 81st-minute strike ensured that the first half deadlock was broken for the Skopje-based club.

Adetunji, 23, who played for Rivers United before joining the Macedonia topflight club scored his 19th goal of the season in 24

## Sunday Adetunji's strike helps Shkupi to first league title win

appearances to lift his first trophy.

However, Renova in the course of the game stifled all areas to frustrate the home team but the Nigerian who has been capped once for the Super Eagles in an international friendly with Mexico on July 4, 2021, ensured the visitors left devastated.

After the match, the promising Nigerian ace striker took to Twitter

to celebrate the victory tweeting "We are champions; 19 goals".

Shkupi won the match in a 2-0 victory after Brazilian midfielder Queven sealed it 5 minutes to stoppage time.

Arguably, Shkupi which disapproved that is their first league title emphasized that it is their fourth after they succeeded the dissolved Sloga Jugomagnat.



## Bored Claudio Ranieri expects offers from ambitious clubs

Claudio Ranieri has not called it a day in football after being out of a job for some months.

The Italian, until his sack in January, was in charge of the Premier League club, Watford insists that he is waiting to get offers from ambitious clubs.

The former Juventus coach who also managed Leicester City and almost won the league in the 2015/2016 Premier League season, has coached a total of nineteen clubs in his coaching career.

Ranieri, 70 years of age, keeps tabs on the game of football by monitoring ongoing leagues. One of such games Ranieri will find interesting to watch is when Leicester takes on Roma in the Europa Conference League.

The Italian described his stay at home as boring and emphasized that he has a long way to go in coaching despite his age, AS reports.

"I miss football, it's my life. I can't wait to be called for a good project, in an ambitious club. I want to go back to work, I don't think about retiring," Ranieri said.

"I'm bored being at home, not being around the world of coaching. I've never counted the number of teams I've coached. In fact, in my opinion, there's not many and I still have a long way to go," he added.

Ranieri started his coaching career in Vigor Lamezia in Italy and proceeded to coach several top clubs across Europe.



## How undefeated Fury knocked out Whyte to retain WBC title

Tyson Fury has defeated Dillian Whyte in defence of his World Boxing Council (WBC) world heavyweight title in front of over 90,000 fans at the Wembley Stadium to remain unbeaten in 33 bouts.

The Briton knocked out his challenger in the sixth round to become the latest undisputed heavyweight champion.

In the highly intense contest, Fury, adored as the Gypsy King proved to be better than Whyte with his advantageous height and long jabs.

Fury, dominating the contest as the rounds progressed, caged Whyte at a conclave of the ring in some instances and threw jabs at the boxer who was already becoming weak.

Whyte, however, sustained a head injury from an unexpected headbutt that saw him bleed from his head.

Marca reports that Fury smelled blood and went to the front, broke his opponent's guard, and punished him with a jab to the

body. Jab, jab, jab, the champion kept Whyte where he wanted him, he dominated him, he was ready to hunt.

Resultantly in the sixth round, the challenger looked tired after missing too many punches that couldn't get to the WBC champion who at the crucial moment threw a one-punch stoppage to record Dillian's third defeat in 31 career fights.

Fury after the fight divulged he was going to retire from boxing soon adding that it will be historical to be the second undefeated heavyweight champion after Rocky Marciano.

Fury said, "This might be the final curtain for the Gypsy King."

"I've spent a lot of time on the road. I've been away for a long time. I fulfilled everything I've ever wanted to fulfill."

"I will retire as only the second heavyweight in history, after Rocky Marciano, to retire undefeated. I was unbeatable at this game," he added.

## Akpudje Joshua records clean sheet in A Lyga

Center back Akpudje Joshua maintained a clean sheet for FK Panevėžys in a match against Banga in Lithuania's topflight league, A Lyga.

The Nigerian international, who played in the Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL) for MFM before plying his trade in Latvia for BFC Daugavpils in the higher league, spending two seasons, switched to FK Panevėžys three months ago in February 2022.

FK Panevėžys presently top the A Lyga table and extended the lead over FC Hegelmann to 5 points after the latter narrowly slipped

from a loss to FK Žalgiris with a stoppage-time equaliser.

Akpudje, a regular for the Lithuanian league leaders, has ensured the club maintains a consecutive four clean sheets in its eight's this season.

After the match, the excited Akpudje said, "3 points collected and a clean sheet and unto the next one forever grateful lord."

FK Panevėžys' next fixture is against fourth-place Riteriai at home in the Mainland Progymnasium Stadium to continue their blistering A Lyga campaign.







## Expect a strong reaction from us, WTA Chief tells Wimbledon, LTA

Women's Tennis Association (WTA) Chief Steve Simon says Wimbledon and Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) should expect a strong reaction should they go ahead to ban Russian and Belarusian athletes from participating in their events.

Simon made this statement after organisers of Wimbledon, All England Club (AELTC), and Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) pronounced an impediment to athletes from these regions following the invasion of Ukraine.

Reacting to the obnoxious move, ATP and WTA said the decision by Wimbledon and LTA contravenes the Grand slam rules which portray it as discriminatory. They expressed that entry into events is always on merit-base.

Simon underlined the distinctions in WTA

jurisdiction over Wimbledon and its own sanctioned events adding that Wimbledon should expect a strong reaction from the tennis governing body.

According to the Tennis Podcast, Simon said, "We don't have the same jurisdiction over the Grand Slams as we do over our own sanctioned events."

"We have precedents, where these situations may have occurred where fines and tournament sanctions have been imposed."

"I do think that you'll see some strong reactions that will come from us but what those are and how far they'll go is still to be determined," he added.

However, the WTA chief stressed that sports are supposed to be exempted from all sorts of political inclinations but could hardly see it so.

Simon continued: "People take the position that sports and politics shouldn't match and shouldn't be intertwined, but that's not the reality."

"At times sports does cross into politics and here is a situation where politics is crossing into sports. It is real life."

"The one thing that this sport has always agreed upon, we don't agree on a lot of things, but the one thing we have always been united on was that entry into our events has always been based upon merit and without discrimination," he added.

AELTC defending its actions said its decision complemented the British government's efforts

## Drogba loses as Diallo becomes Ivorian Football Federation chief



Former Chelsea striker and Cote D'Ivoire international, Didier Drogba, has lost his bid to become the President of the Ivorian Football Federation (FIF).

Drogba, who could not make it to the second round of the contest lost out in the first after he garnered a paltry number of 21 votes against Yacine Idriss Diallo's 59 and Sory Diabate's 50.

The former Chelsea talisman's intention to contest for the president of the federation had earlier suffered a setback last year after he failed to have the much-needed support through stakeholders' nomination.

The Ivorian football stakeholders such as the coaches' association and the players union, did not give the 44 years old the needed support to have his name included in the ballot.

Consequently, the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) waded in by dissolving the federation and empowering the 'Normalisation Committee' to steer the process with the FIF statutes and electoral code rewritten.

The actions taken by the world football

governing body FIFA gave Drogba the avenue to challenge other candidates for the federation's presidential elections.

Though the majority of Ivorians wanted the two-times winner of the prestigious African footballer of the year award, 2006 & 2009, as their football federation president, the stakeholders in the Ivorian football federation feel otherwise, France24 reports.

In the build-up to the election, Drogba was accused of pulling out of a public debate hours before it was due to be aired on a live TV broadcast according to an Ivorian state broadcaster.

However, Diallo, a senior FIF official in the 2000s, went ahead to win the elections in the second round after he pulled a total of 63 votes against that of his closest rival, Sory Diabate's 61.

Didier Drogba in his congratulatory speech to the newly elected FIF President Idriss Diallo expressed satisfaction in the conduct of the election.

The elections went well, I congratulate the new president on his election," he said.

## PSG offers Mbappe mouthwatering deal to dissuade Real Madrid move



Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) has offered its top forward and Real Madrid-bound Kylian Mbappe a huge deal which will see him to become the highest-paid player in the world.

The French club desperate in thwarting all efforts of Real Madrid, who have from the previous season made multiple offers to sign the player to Spain, presented what seems irresistible to stall the player's move to Los Blancos.

With media reports alleging that Mbappe's summer move to the Santiago Bernabeu is sealed, the Parisians have made an offer to the prolific French forward worth €50million a year deal equivalent to an £800,000 a week deal.

The former Monaco prodigy and World Cup-winning star continues to assert that he is worth the huge wages by creating spectacular moments in both the domestic league, international scene, and European Champions League.

More so, in what seemed like PSG were through to the quarterfinal of the UEFA Champions League ahead of Real Madrid, after Mbappe scored two goals in the double-decker tie, lost on aggregates over the failure of his striking partners to compliment his efforts.

Following, Mbappe in French Ligue 1 has scored a total of 22 goals in 30 appearances with 14 assists. The goal-puncher has scored more than Lionel Messi's and Neymar's put together.

However, the Mirror reports that chances of Mbappe making the move to Madrid this summer have taken significant damage over a dispute surrounding the player's image rights. Those at the top of the Los Blancos hierarchy are desperate to not see this deal fall through their hands just months before the striker becomes

available.

Meanwhile, the President of the French Football Federation (FFF), Le Graët, had earlier advised Mbappe to remain in PSG as the better option if he desires to win the Ballon d'Or.

In an interview with Quest France, "I want Kylian to stay in Paris. For French football, it's better to have one of the best players in the world, if not the best, in his league. He has a better chance of winning the Ballon d'Or with PSG," Le Graët said.

## Rudiger rejects new Chelsea contract

Ace defender Antonio Rudiger is set to leave Chelsea at the end of the season after refusing to sign a new contract worth over £200,000 per-week, a deal that will make him the highest-paid defender in the club's history.

The defender whose contract ends at the end of this season is rumoured to be courted by Spanish giants Real Madrid which he would likely join on a free transfer.

A snippet by BBC Sports reveals that the signing-on and agents fees hamper the agreement between both parties.

The alleged move by the 29 years German to the Santiago Bernabeu will unbalance the defensive structure of Thomas Tuchel who has made Rudiger an integral part of his plan for next season.

As Rudiger, who joined the West London club from Roma in 2017 at a record fee of £29million, Andreas Christensen has also been linked with a move to Barcelona.

The 26 years old Danish contract ends this summer with Xavi who is keen on rebuilding Barcelona seeking the services of the Chelsea defender. Reports have it that he has agreed on a deal with Barcelona.

Following the UK's government sanctions on Chelsea which hampered the club's financial dealings, it is inarguably impossible for the club to effect the contract of Rudiger until the end of the season when the government grants it a special licence.



Rudiger's contract saga lasted for weeks before the government's slammed sanctions on Chelsea over Roman Abramovich's close ties with President Vladimir Putin.

Meanwhile, emerging reports from the UK, reveal that three bidders for Chelsea have placed bids worth over £2.5billion with expectations that a successful bidder will be announced later in the week.





# Putin brags new nuclear missile 'can defeat ALL modern defences'

Russian President Vladimir Putin has announced his regime's latest nuclear-capable missile will be deployed as early as this autumn, saying it will 'force those who try to threaten Russia to think twice'.

The Sarmat missile, or 'Satan II', is said to be the world's longest-range intercontinental ballistic missile, capable of striking a target 11,200 miles away - meaning it could easily strike targets in the US and Europe.

Putin hailed the development of the missile, which was successfully test-fired earlier this week, 'a big, significant event' for Russia's defense industry, saying the Sarmat will 'ensure Russia's security from external threats and make those who try to threaten our country with aggressive rhetoric think twice.'

'The missile can break through all modern anti-missile defences,' he declared.

'There is nothing like this anywhere in the world, and won't be for a long time.'

Western military experts said the Sarmat is capable of carrying 10 or more nuclear warheads and decoys - easily enough to wipe out territories the size of Britain or France in a

single strike.

However, analysts believe the autumn target revealed by Putin and Dmitry Rogozin, head of the Roscosmos space agency, is an ambitious one because Moscow reported its first test-launch only on Wednesday and more tests will be needed before the missile can be deployed.

This week's test, after years of delays due to funding and technical issues, marks a show of strength by Russia at a time when the war in Ukraine has sent tensions with the US and its allies soaring to their highest levels since the 1962 Cuban missile crisis.

Rogozin said in an interview with Russian state TV that the missiles would be deployed with a unit in Uzhur, in the Krasnoyarsk region, about 3,000 km (1,860 miles) east of Moscow.

He said they would be placed at the same sites and in the same silos as the Soviet-era Voevoda missiles they are replacing, something that would save 'colossal resources and time'.

The launch of the 'super-weapon' was an historic event that would guarantee the security of Russia's children and grandchildren for the next 30-40 years, Rogozin added.



Putin

# Ten confirmed dead after tour boat with 26 people sank

Ten people were confirmed dead on Sunday after a tourist boat with a total of 26 passengers and crew aboard went missing on Saturday. The country's coast guard confirmed seven men and three women are among the dead after the tour boat sank.

The Kazu I sightseeing boat sent a distress signal on Saturday afternoon after it began taking on water off the remote northeastern tip of Japan's Hokkaido region.

A search and rescue operation began immediately, but hopes soon began to fade for the 26 people

on board, including two children and two crew, because of the cold temperatures in the region.

The boat had set out on Saturday morning on a sightseeing cruise of the sort that is popular in the Shiretoko Peninsula, a designated UNESCO World Heritage site for its pristine natural environment and diverse wildlife.

The authorities are continuing to search for the remaining 16 people and the boat. The boat left port around 10 a.m. on Saturday, and all were believed to be wearing life jackets.

It was not

immediately clear what had caused the disaster. But NHK, the Japanese public broadcaster, said there had been warnings of high winds and waves of up to 10 feet in the area of Kashuni Falls, a well-known sightseeing spot on Hokkaido's Shiretoko Peninsula, where the boat had been when the first distress call was sent. Reefs are just below the surface of the waters there.

Naomichi Suzuki, the governor of Hokkaido, Japan's northernmost island, said police officers and members of Japan's Self-Defense Forces had been helping with

the search, in waters colder than 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

Shiretoko Pleasure Cruiser, the company that owns the Kazu I, said the boat left the port at Utoro, in eastern Hokkaido, at 10 a.m. on Saturday. It had been scheduled to travel around the tip of the Shiretoko Peninsula and return to Utoro around 1 p.m.

The tourist boat was piloted by a 54-year-old captain and a 27-year-old deck officer.

On Sunday, a group of people, apparently family members and acquaintances of the passengers, went to a town hall where an emergency

headquarters was set up.

Fishing boats and tourist ships from the area joined the search in the morning, but some returned to port a few hours later because of strong wind.

The Kazu I was the first tourist boat to operate in the area this season, with wind and high surf advisories issued in the area on Saturday, a captain of another tourist boat operator said he advised the Kazu I crew not to leave port.

According to the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, the Kazu I collided with a floating

object in May last year, injuring three passengers. The boat also ran aground in June in shallow water shortly after leaving port.

The ministry started an on-site inspection on the operator of the boat, while the Japan Transport Safety Board sent officials to a local coast guard office to investigate the incident.

The peninsula in the northeast of Hokkaido is known as a popular destination for spotting drift ice and was designated as a World Natural Heritage site in 2005. It is a habitat for many rare species of animals and plants.