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N250 **Weekend**

'Attacked train's insiders worked with terrorists'

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'Attacked train's insiders worked with terrorists'

By **OBAH SYLVA** and
PAUL MICHAEL, Abuja

The terrorist attack on the Abuja – Kaduna train has raised multiple questions begging for answers. The attack occurred on March 28 with about 970 passengers onboard. Stakeholders are wondering why the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) has failed to publish the manifest of the passengers that boarded the train.

A statement by NRC Managing Director, Fidit Okhiria, debunked publications by media organizations that about 970 passengers were on board. He stressed that only 362 boarded the train of 398 passengers that purchased tickets on the day the train was attacked.

"398 passengers purchased tickets to travel on the NRC AK9 service, and 362 passengers actually boarded the AK9 service.

"The entire seat capacity of the train in question is 840; therefore, the figure of 970 being circulated cannot be correct. The AK9 service is the last service out of Abuja on a Monday evening and is usually at less than half capacity," he said.

NRC, however, stated that 186 passengers are confirmed safe. While saying 8 persons were already confirmed dead, he added that 168 are still missing with their mobile numbers unreachable.

A security expert and professor of criminology who specializes in victimology and restorative justice, Don John Omale, who spoke exclusively with The Trumpet, said there could be a likelihood that the terrorists were working with an 'insider' in the train. According to him, without credible information from insiders to outsiders, it is difficult for criminals to operate.

He stressed that the failure of NRC to publish the manifest is on its own a security threat as some of those that boarded the train might have disguised as passengers when they might be spies for the terrorists.

"Security is a complex phenomenon that requires a holistic and eclectic approach. The NRC's failure to publish the manifest of the passengers to ascertain the exact number of passengers on board the train is itself a security risk. Could it be that some of the people who boarded the train disguised as "passengers" were spying for the bandits?

"In as much as the tickets racketeering is a crime of corruption, it is also a security threat to the safety of the passengers that boarded the train involved in the attack.

"Hence in the proximity hypothesis theory of Victimology, we say that security becomes complacent and victimization becomes easier when "insiders" play strategic roles because no thief can come into a house and rob



Amaechi

successfully without a role (intelligence breach) by an insider.

"Therefore, background checks of people who work in our aviation and transportation agencies have become very imperative," Prof Omale added.

Meanwhile, a source that pleaded anonymity told The Trumpet that ticket racketeering is dominating train operations in Nigeria. He added NRC is not clean on the number of passengers onboard while noting that Mr Okhiria should have ordered the publication of the manifest of passengers to avoid the whole drama.

He claimed that the NRC is either hiding the entire number of people that were on-board to protect shady deals that are taking place at the train stations or trying to hide the ineptitude of the management to properly run an organized train business in the country.

"I don't understand

why it is so difficult to order the manifest for that train to be published?

We have issues of transparency in this country. How can people be attacked and the supposed operator cannot provide a document to ascertain the number of victims and their identity?

"I think the NRC MD is hiding something from Nigerians. I want to believe that those onboard were far more than 362 persons. There have been rumours of ticket racketeering in train stations. Perhaps, the management is trying hard to protect their illicit business or their poor level of management of the railway corporation," he said.

Similarly, a public affairs analyst, Isiyaku Mohammed Kudu frowned at the lack of transparency and poor management in NRC.

While saying that there is no reason why the manifest of passengers cannot be published

if there was proper management with accountability, he called on the National Assembly to probe the activities of NRC.

"If it's not 970 passengers then the board should publish the real figures of passengers on board. I think the NRC is lacking proper management, and lack of proper management leads to illegal ticket purchases.

"The Senate and the House of Representative Committee on Transport need to investigate the activities of the board. Because this clearly shows that illegal activities are taking place in the management of our train stations which is very bad and disappointing," he said.

Meanwhile, gunmen who attacked a Kaduna-bound train 10 days ago have threatened to kill the captives if the government does not quickly accede to their demands.

The gunmen issued the threat in a video they released stating the reason they freed the managing director of the Bank of Agriculture, Alwan Ali-Hassan, who they abducted alongside an unknown number of people during their attack on the Kaduna-bound train.

The 81-second video was posted on Twitter by a Senior Conflict Analyst at the Tony Blair Institute, Bulama Bukarti stated that Hassan was released because of his age and in the spirit of Ramadan. He was flanked by four heavily armed terrorists

dressed in military camouflage. A family source stated that ransom was paid for the release of the MD, however, the source declined to state how much was paid.

One of the terrorists, after a short prayer and praise of God and his prophet in the Arabic language, said, "We are the ones who kidnapped the people on the train. We decided to release this man (Ali-Hassan) because of the honour of the month of Ramadan and because he is old. He has been pleading since we kidnapped him."

A second gunman who spoke then threatened they will kill all the captives if the government does not promptly meet their demands. He, however, did not state what the demands are. But he stated that the government knew what they wanted.

"You (government) should know that this is just the beginning of what we're going to do.... Killing them is not a big deal to us. You know what we want and it's not money. If it's money, we'll not be doing this. So, it's left to you to hasten and do what we need from you. If not, we'll do what we want to do to them. This is our message," he said.

There are indications that the terrorists are probably members of the Ansaru faction of Boko Haram and their demand to the government may likely be the release of their leaders who have been in detention since 2016.

CSOs move to monitor NPTF, pick holes in provisions of Act

By **GABRIEL ELOZINO**, Asaba

The Rule of Law and Accountability Centre (RULAAC) has moved to monitor the implementation of the Police Act, 2020 and the Police Trust Fund Act, 2019 to provide for proper accountability.

RULAAC at its inauguration of the Civil Society Organisations Observatory on the Implementation of the two Acts and Capacity Building for the South-South in Asaba, Delta State observed that the two police acts were critical to reforming the police for a better public image.

While X-raying the Police Act, signed by President Muhammadu Buhari in April 2020, the Executive Director of RULAAC, Okwchukwu Nwanguma commended its provisions but noted that without political will, efficient and effective implementation as envisaged by the act will fail.

He also faulted the appointment of the present Inspector General of Police (IGP), Usman Baba Akali by President Buhari, saying it went against the letters and spirits of the act.

He noted that despite the provisions of the police act many police officers, especially those of lower

ranks still violate the rights of their suspects.

In her analysis of the Nigerian Police Trust Fund (NPTF), Faith Nwandishi, Executive Director of Centre for Transparency Advocacy, said there was need to do a midterm review of the law to reveal if it has so far achieved its set out objectives.

She pointed out that the act, signed in 2019, was only meant to serve for a period of six years after which it becomes invalid, adding that it has already served three years and needed a midterm appraisal.

Nwandishi however picked holes in the composition of the Board of

Trustees (BOT) of the fund as provided by the act, noting that it was defective as the beneficiaries are members of the board.

She further observed that based on the provisions of the act, which allowed for just eight BOT members, there was no way the Board could ever sit since the law stated that to form a quorum there must be a minimum number of 10 members.

While saying that the NPTF was a good initiative, she held that the letters of the act had made it impossible for proper implementation.

In his keynote address, the Delta State Attorney General, Richard Bozimo, represented

by a Deputy Director in the Ministry of Justice, Mrs Ojefia Juliet, said the police were the endangered species in the society.

She urged RULAAC and other CSOs not to only monitor the implementation of the NPTF but ensure it follows up the implementation process to the later for proper accountability.

Also speaking at the event, the representative of the Assistant Inspector General of Police (AIG) Zone 5 Benin City, and the Delta State Commissioner of Police, CSP Fidelis Odunna, O/C Legal, Delta Command, said the primary responsibility of the

police was to implement law and order.

He commended RULAAC for the capacity building workshop, saying the police are not expected to be heard, adding that Civil Societies were the voice of the police.

He appealed to CSOs to continue to speak and fight for a better police for the society, noting that what Nigerians want was a better police and which was possible

He said for a better society, there must be a better police, maintaining that even the police need people, especially CSOs to speak for them because they need help.



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UNIMAID Solar Hybrid Plant ready soon – Osinbajo

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH**

Vice President Yemi Osinbajo has said the 12MW Solar Hybrid Power Plant for the University of Maiduguri (UNIMAID) and its teaching hospital is nearing completion.

He stated this in his remarks at the formal handover of the Muhammadu Indimi International Learning Centre to the management of the University.

The Centre which was built and donated to the University of Maiduguri by a foremost businessman and philanthropist, Muhammadu Indimi, was commissioned by President Muhammadu Buhari in December 2021.

The vice president commended Indimi for the gesture, adding that the institution had, over the years, made strides in human capacity development in the country.

“UNIMAID has trained many great Nigerians including the current Senate President, the Group Managing Director of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation Ltd. and our very own, Prof. Babagana Zulum, Borno Governor.

“For UNIMAID to keep up with the fast pace of development in the world it needs enhanced investment; that investment cannot only come from the government.

“The forward-thinking and innovation to imagine, conceive and build a centre that allows for students in Maiduguri to interact and take lessons from Shanghai, Houston or Paris is exactly what is needed for this institution to keep pace and in certain respects lead the continued educational innovation we are experiencing.

“This centre will also allow for students to be enrolled in UNIMAID from Abuja, Lagos or even Johannesburg, expanding the enrolment base of the University and providing increased options for students to learn and interact.”

The vice president said the Buhari administration would continue to invest in the nation’s tertiary institutions to achieve greater results.

According to Osinbajo, UNIMAID is in phase 2 of the Energising Education Programme funded through the Rural Electrification Agency.

“The Federal Government through REA, in partnership with the World Bank, is in advanced stages of establishing a 12MW Solar Hybrid Power Plant to power UNIMAID and its Teaching Hospital.

“The project will also include a training centre and is modelled around similar projects that have already been completed in Bayero University Kano (BUK), the Federal University of Agriculture Makurdi (FUAM), Usman

Danfodio University Sokoto (UDUS) and the Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike (FUNAI).

Prof. Osinbajo also disclosed plans by the Federal Government to augment grid supply and protect against energy sabotage in Maiduguri with the deployment of 30MW of solar power to critical areas of Maiduguri, Borno State.

“Additionally, I am pleased to announce that through the Economic Sustainability Plan approved by the president, NNPC, REA and Yola DISCO are partnering with my office and the Office of the Governor of Borno to deploy 30MW of Solar Power to critical areas of Maiduguri.

“This will be six solar plants of 5MW each to augment grid supply and protect against energy sabotage.

“Let me also say that the efforts of the Federal Government and private persons can only be truly useful where the state government is serious about the development.”

Commending Borno State Governor Babagana Zulum, for the leadership that has transformed infrastructure in the State.

He said that Zulum had shown the benefits inherent in the government’s partnership with the private sector.

Osinbajo said the governor had built several mega schools, massive



Osinbajo

commercial centres, over 8000 housing units and the first flyover in Borno.

The VP noted that “education is the spark behind every girl and boy child to maximize their potential. Alhaji Indimi’s work through his foundation continues to focus on education as a core area.”

“Let me again commend and congratulate Indimi on the completion of this landmark project and the successful handing over of the International Learning Centre.”

Zulum, in his address, said he was greatly pleased with the presence of the vice president as the projects were another milestone in the state.

The governor said that

Indimi’s humanitarian and philanthropic efforts had impacted hugely on the lives of the people of the Borno state.

Indimi thanked the vice president for gracing the occasion, he said that his gesture was borne out of his passion for education and empowerment.

UNIMAID Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Aliyu Shugaba, also expressed a profound appreciation of the people and government of Borno to Indimi.

He said Indimi’s gesture was the first of its kind by any individual in Nigeria.

The event attracted members of the National Assembly, members of the Federal Executive Council, and traditional rulers among others.

Power Outage: National grid collapses again

The national grid that provides power to the nation has collapsed again leaving the country without power supply. This is the third consecutive time the grid has collapsed in less than a month.

The latest collapse came despite assurances by the Federal Government to take decisive steps to address the nation’s power problem.

The Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) who manages the grid had last month said it had developed alternative ways of managing the grid.

TCN had stated that its “in-house engineers have deployed a stop-gap solution to improve grid monitoring and acquisition of data from remote stations (power stations and transmission substations) to the National Control Centre. This was achieved by utilizing the Internet of Things (IoT) solution, and Virtual Private Network (VPN) by using various Internet Service Providers (ISP).

“The stop-gap solution became necessary as TCN could not access and receive comprehensive operational data of the entire power grid for managing the fast-growing system. The existing inadequate SCADA System cannot provide adequate grid visibility, as parts of the existing SCADA system are moribund and damaged, coupled with an ineffective telecommunication network infrastructure. The fact that several stations were never integrated into the existing SCADA at all, and made grid visibility and management very difficult and inefficient”.

Nigerian Navy school graduates 14 1st class

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH**

The Nigerian Navy Provost and Regulating School, Makurdi, graduated 14 first-class students.

The Chief Instructor of the school, Lieutenant Commander Uzor Igwe disclosed this on Friday, during the school’s combined graduation ceremony.

Igwe said that the graduation ceremony was for four courses, they are: Master-At-Arms Refresher Course 08/22, Master-At-Arms Qualifying Course 11/22, Regulating Petty Officer Qualifying Course 13/22, and Leading Regulating

Qualifying Course 14/22.

According to the chief instructor, 40 personnel were nominated for the courses but 38 eventually participated. The courses which started on Jan. 17 lasted for 12 weeks.

He said that 20 students made second class while four graduated with third class.

Igwe said that the courses were designed to enhance general discipline, crime prevention and detection, investigation, prosecution, enforcement of various regulations and interpretation of the Armed Forces Act.

“The overall objective of the courses is to teach students how to continue to maintain and enforce discipline as well as prevent crime,” he stated.

In his welcome address, the Commandant, Nigerian Navy Provost and Regulating School Makurdi, Cdr. Chindo Yahaya said that the school had graduated a total of 1,165 personnel since its relocation from Lagos to Makurdi in 2010.

He said that the school had imbibed in students’ best global practices in law enforcement within the military and, to an extent, outside the

military.

Yahaya added that the graduates were the first set to benefit from the reviewed curriculum of the school recently approved by the chief of naval staff.

“Since the school relocated from Lagos to Makurdi in 2010, it has trained 1,165 personnel comprising 164 officers and 1,001 ratings, the graduating students today inconclusive.

“The new curriculum incorporated subjects such as cyber security, health safety and environment, maritime domain awareness and contemporary operations.

“Plans are ongoing

to partner with the University of Mkar, for the next set of students to participate and benefit from diploma and an advanced diploma in security management,” he said.

The special guest of honour, Maj.-Gen. Joseph Omali, charged the graduates to live up to expectations.

Omali states that those enforcing the law should know and uphold it.

“This is also a period of transformation, the Nigerian Navy is looking up to you to apply what you have learnt to improve your performance at your respective duty posts”.

ICPC Boss tasks FCTA mandate secretaries, public officers against political ties

By PAUL MICHAEL, Abuja

The Chairman of the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), Professor Bolaji Owasanoye, SAN, has charged the incoming mandate secretaries and other political appointees of the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) to focus on their new offices rather than their political ties.

The ICPC boss gave the charge at an induction programme and retreat themed 'Capacity Building for Accountable Leadership', held in Abuja recently for incoming mandate secretaries of FCT.

Prof Owasanoye in a paper titled, "Ethics and Code of Conduct and Laws to Stay out of Trouble...", told the inductees that by taking the oath of office a responsibility to obey rules and extant regulations had been placed on them, therefore to stay out of trouble they needed to avoid the illusion that they were there to please those who honoured them with the appointment.

The ICPC Chairman told participants that the paper was part of ICPC's normative behavioural change initiative aimed at enlightening them on the slippery areas to avoid in carrying out their assignment to the nation.

He took the participants through 11 basic codes – conflict of interest; restriction on multiple public purse payments (as stipulated in the 1999 Constitution, as amended, and other extant regulations); prohibition of public officers operating a foreign account; prohibitions on gifts and benefits in cash or kind; bribery; abuse of power etc.

Prof Owasanoye also cautioned the inductees against engaging in commercialised farming and converting government property into personal use, which he said included using government money to fund private events like paying staff Duty Tour Allowance (DTA) for them to attend the wedding of one's child amongst others.

The ICPC boss said, "The interest and conduct of public officers are constitutionally regulated as well as governed by legislative guidelines including the 1999 Constitution, as amended, Code of Conduct and Tribunal Act, ICPC Act and so on."

Prof. Owasanoye also advised them to avoid the use of their position to abuse their subordinates including sexual harassment, adding that ICPC looks into such cases and have secured convictions on them.

Brekeke Family presents PDP presidential form to Gov. Emmanuel

By ISAAC JOB, Uyo

Akwa Ibom State Governor Udom Emmanuel has been presented with the Presidential Nomination Forms of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) by the Human Rights Radio, popularly known as Brekeke Family.

Udom received the nomination form on Friday at the Hiltop Mansion, Uyo when the delegation from the Media organization visited him.

He appreciated the President/Founder of the Radio/TV station Ahmed Isah and his team as well as all Nigerians who contributed towards the

purchase of the form.

"Honestly when I heard of the plan to buy me a Presidential nomination form, I asked myself, how can they raise N40 million to buy me a form?"

Governor Udom who felt elated commended the team for choosing him out of over 200 million Nigerians adding that it was a privilege and honour that he will not take for granted.

He assured Nigerians of their faith in him and for trusting in his capacity to deliver in a higher position of authority.

He explained that whatever he has achieved in Akwa Ibom state was due to the support of his people adding that the same

success can be attained in Nigeria collectively.

He said Nigeria presently needs leaders with capacity, sincerity of purpose, and selflessness who are ready to make sacrifices.

"It is unfortunate that if Nigerians are looking for an MD of a particular company, the CV needed spans 3-4 pages, but when they are looking for a President of the country, based on the constitution, all we need is WAEC without any form of experience."

"Premium is not placed on the leader in whose hands lie the destiny of over 200 million people, as it is done for a Managing Director of a company that had only a few shareholders

and stakeholders."

He said certain things needed to be corrected in 2023 so that the country can move forward.

He reminded the team of the importance of God in the business of leadership and hoped that the group had sought the consent of God before embarking on the venture.

Governor Emmanuel confirmed that he had accepted the forms as a gift from Nigerians who want good governance.

The leader of the delegation, Mr Innocent Orji said that although Governor Emmanuel was not the only one hosted on their programme. But after they came to Akwa

Ibom they discovered more than what they had heard from the Governor on their interview programme, the management decided to draft the governor into the contest.

"We all agreed that if you can do these in a state, given that opportunity, you will do even better at the national level."

Orji, popularly known as 'Scaffold,' said, "We don't believe in too much talk, so here today we are presenting to you the nomination form for the presidential candidate of your party."

Gov Emmanuel was presented with the PDP Nomination Form by the MD of Brekeke Radio station at Hiltop Mansion, Uyo.



Senator Moses Cleopas (left); Deputy Governor Lawrence Ewhrudjakpo (Bayelsa State); Governor Aminu Tambuwal (Sokoto); Governor Douye Diri and his wife, Gloria; Commissioner for Works and Infrastructure, Moses Teibowei and Speaker, House of Assembly, Abraham Ingobere, during the unveiling of a link bridge and road projects in Yenagoa.

NIS Recruitment Fraud: Court discharges Morro, convicts former PM

•As EFCC vows to appeal Morro's discharge judgement

By PAUL MICHAEL, Abuja

A Federal High Court sitting in Abuja sitting in Abuja on Thursday, April 7 discharged Abba Morro, a former Interior Minister of charges of procurement fraud in respect of the 2014 controversial Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) recruitment.

Justice Nnamdi Dimgba, however, convicted a former Permanent Secretary of the ministry, Anastasia Daniel-Nwobia, of complacency in the 2014 failed exercise but deferred her sentencing till April 17, 2022.

The former Permanent Secretary was prosecuted by the Economic and Financial Crimes Com-

mission (EFCC) alongside Senator Abba Morro, former Minister of Interior; Femi O Alayebami, a Deputy Director in the Ministry; one Mahmood Ahmadu (at large), and Drexel Tech Nigeria Ltd.

They were initially arraigned on 11 count charges bordering on procurement fraud and money laundering for allegedly defrauding applicants for employment in the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) to the tune of N675,675,000.

The amount represents N1,000 obtained from each applicant through e-payment for the online recruitment exercise on March 15, 2014 - an ill-fated exercise that led to the death of more than

15 applicants.

In the course of the trial, the counts were reduced to 4 (counts 2, 4, 5 and 11) after the court quashed seven counts (counts 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10) following a no-case submission by the defendants.

But in his judgment today, Justice Dimgba convicted Daniel - Nwobia on count 4 but discharged Morro and Alayebami on all remaining four counts.

The court in convicting Daniel- Nwobia, held that as the accounting officer of the ministry, it was her responsibility to ensure compliance with the Public Procurement Act and, having found that there was no approval from the Bureau

of Public Procurement (BPP) before inviting the four companies, found her guilty.

On the other hand, the court in exonerating Morro held that the EFCC failed to prove how he abused his position as minister, as he was neither a member of the tender board nor a member of the committee that recommended the setting up of the e-recruitment portal for the exercise.

Meanwhile, the EFCC has vowed to appeal the ruling on Senator Morro. The Agency averred that the trial court erred in discharging the former minister and his co-defendant.

All the defendants were initially arraigned before Justice Anwuli Chikere of the Federal High Court, Abuja.

MC Oluomo allegedly seizes Lagos NURTW's office, chases out Ag. Admin

By BENJAMIN OMOIKE

The acting administrator of the Lagos chapter of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), Oluwaseyi Bankole, has accused the chairman of the Parks Management Committee, Musiliu Akinsanya, popularly called MC Oluomo, of seizing the union's secretariat and chasing away staff of NURTW from the premises, with claims that he got an order from the State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, to convert the office into park and garages complex.

He disclosed that all property of NURTW inside the secretariat had been converted to Lagos State Parks and Garages Authority and that MC Oluomo went as far as removing the name of the union from the building, using paints.

Bankole said the 11 vehicles belonging to NURTW were also seized by MC Oluomo and that he also barred the union members from entering the premises, including himself, the Acting Administrator.

Speaking exclusively on the new developments, the acting administrator revealed that the chairman of Lagos State Parks Management Committee took over the premises two days before he was announced as head of the committee by the state government and that his team had been causing violence in the area where the union office is located.

Bankole claimed that the Secretariat had been placed under siege by MC Oluomo after deploying members of Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC), and other armed men to ensure that no one gained entrance into the premises without his directives.

Traditional head treats widows to food items, cash gifts

By **BENJAMIN OMOIKE**, METRO EDITOR/LAGOS BUREAU CHIEF

HRM Chika Nwokedi Okpoko 1, Ezendigbo of Ijegun community has invited widows from Ijedodo community, in Lagos State, while distributing food items and cash gifts to them.

It will be recalled that on March 21, 2022, the traditional ruler equally hosted several widows from Ijegun and gave out cash gifts and food items as well.

According to the Eze, he will be doing this more often, due to his sacred belief in the significance of mothers, stating that he reverences them dearly. He added that as Eze of two interwoven communities, he

will always do his best to see that the widows are well taken care of, stating that tribal sentiments will not be allowed in his palace.

He stressed that he will be extending this philanthropic gesture to a point of giving cash to empower the widows in their various businesses, as well as in assisting some in paying their children's school fees.

As the patron of a social club, namely Atuaerie club of Nigeria, Eze Chika was also paid a courtesy visit by its members. This men's club also contributed financially to further support Eze to intensify his philanthropic gesture toward the widows and the less privileged.

Speaking with Nze "Amony-enego" aka Tigana, meaning 'money is meant for everyone, he told stated that the Atuaerie Club was paying a courtesy visit to the Igwe, due to the good things he was doing for the Igbos, and as such, they were delighted to be part of his philanthropic gestures to the widows and less privileged by assisting through the financial support rendered.

Nze emphasised that the Igwe is a selfless leader and a patron of Atuaerie Club. "He gives for others to be happy, and as such, he deserves all the support we 'Atuaerie club' can give and we'll do that as often as possible,"

Mr Ibauchi Jonas, aka IBB,



said the Atuaerie Club (an only men's club) created 10 years ago, was paying its first courtesy visit to the Igwe, upon his coronation as Ezendigbo of Ijegun Ijedodo Community.

He noted that the club also

visited to assist the Igwe to support the widows and less privileged, while also attesting to the fact that Eze Chika is a good man. He further advised that the Eze should, as always, surround

himself with good people, like minds and wisdom oriented individuals; those who will project his goodwill. Jonas prayed for Igwe's sustainability and wisdom to keep up with the good work he commenced.

Clerics protest in Kaduna against killings, demand massive war against terrorists

By **ALEX OLISE**

A group of pastors under the umbrella of Interfaith Alliance, have staged a peaceful protest against the incessant attacks and killings by bandits in Kaduna State.

The protesters are asking the Federal Government to step up action against banditry and bandits, to wipe them out.

The protest comes days after 10 soldiers were killed and some others wounded by bandits, who attacked a

military base in Birnin-Gwari Local Government Area of the State.

The religious leaders marched through the major roads of the Kaduna metropolis, with placards of various inscriptions.

They said although the

security forces were trying their best in the fight against banditry and terrorism, their best wasn't good enough.

They appealed to the Federal Government to implement the submissions made by Governor Nasir El-Rufai and launch a massive

and precise bombing of the bandits inside the forest.

In addition, they also appealed to the Federal Government to compensate all the victims of bandits' attacks, award scholarships to children affected by the banditry and also rebuild

communities ravaged by attacks.

According to them, these measures will cushion the suffering of the victims and make them overcome the psychological trauma they may be experiencing as a result of the attacks.

Actress Nkechi Blessing, ex-husband fight dirty on social media

By **BENJAMIN OMOIKE**

Nollywood actress and social media influencer, Nkechi Blessing Sunday and her now ex-husband, Opeyemi Falega, has set social media agog as both revealed reasons they parted ways.

According to revelations made by Nkechi Blessing on an Instagram live video,

the marriage crashed over infidelity allegations and fake life.

However, on his part, the movie star's estranged husband, Falega also confirmed the end of their marriage after he went live on Instagram.

In the live video, the politician disclosed that he has a name to maintain and would never want

to associate himself with anyone that would dent his image.

Meanwhile, Nkechi Blessing later shared a post on her Instagram Stories denying being dumped. According to her, she walked away from the marriage.

She said: "The one wen I nor like na if you lie say you leave me. Nobody ever does...I simply take a walk

and not say my side of the story cus really its not worth it. Say all you want to say but you see lie? We wear same trousers, na there you go vex me," she wrote.

Blessing later took to her Instagram Live, where she started by mocking those spreading the rumours that she's a lesbian.

The actress debunked the rumour that her estranged husband built her a bungalow. She revealed that it was the money she had gotten from her social media influencing jobs that was used to build the house.

She later broke down in tears, as she swore at the blogger behind the reports that she cheated on her husband.

Nkechi further disclosed that she was going to curse the blogger for 21 days.

In a series of posts via her Instagram Stories, the actress stated that she could not continue in the union based on what people would say, so she opted out of the marriage.

It would be recalled that on June 10, 2021, Nkechi Blessing confirmed her marriage to the Ekiti politician, Falega Opeyemi David, after she shared photos from their wedding on his birthday via her Instagram Story.



Association visits police to show solidarity, support

By **BENJAMIN OMOIKE**

The Executives of Igbo Buru Otu Association of Nigeria, have paid a courtesy visit to AIG Ibrahim Kaoje of Maritime Police and CP Salisu H. Gyadigyadi of FIB Force HQ Annex, as well as their DCs and CPs to welcome them as they assumed duty.

Previously, HRM Chika C. Nwokedi,

had paid a courtesy visit to some of his friends who are high-ranking police officers in Abuja, DIG Danmallam Mohammed, DIG Moses Jitoboh and CP Kayode Akande, to show support as well as to discuss some bothersome issues the Association was facing in the hands of Lagos land grabbers, an issue he said would hit the news soon, for public attention.

He noted that over the years, he had seen police officers as his friends, and had learned never to despise low ranking officers. He pointed out that

these officers would always rise to top positions, and as such, should be treated with respect. He extended a hand of support to the officers to show consolidation.

HRM further noted that "The Police have a sensitive role to play towards securing the people, and as such, should be supported in whichever way the people seem fit to. A reason The Igbo Buru Otu Association loves the police well enough to support extensively."

Executive members of the Association who visited were Chief Obiekwe Ndukwe, CEO of Good God Pharmaceutical; Friday Okafor, Chairman Cooperative Igbo buru; Pastor Moses okwuosa, Chairman Disciplinary Committee Igbo Buru Otu; Chief Comrade Ifeanyi Ibugwe, Secretary of Igbo Buru otu; Chief John Ngwah; Chief Emeka Onowu 1 of IjegunIjedodo and Hon. Chief (Mrs) Rufina Emeduruowa, woman leader Igbo Buru Otu Association.



IGP moves to check insecurity, redeploys senior officers to 'tension states'

By ALEX OLISE

The Inspector-General of Police, IGP Usman Alkali Baba, has ordered the posting of CP Abutu Yaro to the Edo State Police Command as the new Commissioner of Police in charge of the State.

The IGP also ordered the posting of CP Sikiru Akande Kayode, CP Yekini Adio Ayoku and CP Mohammed Ahmed Barde, to head the Adamawa, Kaduna and Imo State Police Commands respectively.

CP Abutu Yaro, the new Commissioner of Police, Edo State Police Command, holds a B.A [Hons] from the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. He was appointed to the Nigeria Police Force as a Cadet Assistant Superintendent of Police in 1988. He has served in various supervisory capacities within the Nigeria Police Force, including as Commissioner of Police in charge of Zamfara and Imo State Police Commands respectively. Until his

recent appointment, he was CP Force Provost Marshal, Force Headquarters, Abuja.

The new Commissioner of Police, Adamawa State Police Command, Sikiru Akande Kayode holds a Bsc in Political Science from the prestigious University of Benin. He joined the service of the Nigeria Police Force as a Cadet ASP in 1990 and has served in various operational, investigative and administrative capacities within the Force. He has served as the

Officer-in-Charge of the Presidential/VIP Movement, State House Abuja. He was equally a one-time Commissioner of Police, Cross River State Police Command. Until his appointment, he was CP ICT, Force Headquarters, Abuja. CP Yekini Adio Ayoku, holds a B.sc from the University of Ilorin. He is an indigene of Agbeyangi, Ilorin East Local Government Area, Kwara State. CP Ayoku enlisted into the Nigeria Police Force as a

Cadet ASP in March 1990. He has served in several capacities in the Nigeria Police with a great wealth of experience. He was a one-time Commanding Officer, 24 PMF Squadron, Presidential Guard and Escort. He has participated in peacekeeping operations and was decorated with the United Nations Medal for meritorious service in Kosovo. He is a member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP).

CP Muhammed Ahmed Barde, the new Commissioner of Police, Imo State Police Command, is a versatile Police Officer. He has served in Police College, Jos, and Nigeria Police Academy, Wudil, Kano, as DC Admin. He equally served in Borno State Police Command as Deputy Commissioner of Police in charge of operations. He was one-time head of Force CID, Annex, Enugu. Until his recent appointment, he was

the Commissioner of Police, Adamawa State Police Command.

The IGP has charged the newly posted officers to hit the ground running in the areas of crime-fighting and public safety. He also called for support and cooperation from members of the public to the new police helmsman, to enable them perform optimally on their mandate.

The posting is with immediate effect.

LASG hands over mini-botanical gardens to public schools

By BENJAMIN OMOIKE

The Lagos State Parks and Gardens Agency (LASPARK), has handed over six mini-botanical gardens to the Public Secondary Schools that emerged as winners at the Public School Craft Art Competition organised during the year 2021 Lagos Tree Planting Day.

Speaking at the unveiling

of the Botanical Gardens at Government Senior College Agege, the General Manager of LASPARK, Mrs Adetoun Popoola, said the gardens are meant to serve as learning resources that will expose students to plant biodiversity, help them know more about a range of horticultural practices such as propagation, planting and cultivation techniques.

She added that the United

Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), has set a target to make environmental education a core curriculum component in all countries by 2025.

In her words: "We are contributing in our small way with this resource to enable school children to acquire first-hand knowledge, skills, values and initiatives to become active participants in the protection of the environment. The creation of the gardens will also complement activities of the Environmental Bees Club initiative anchored by our parent body, the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources."

"We hope that the gardens will fulfil the desired purpose by nurturing a young, green-fingered generation. Though the Mini-Botanical Garden might look small now, we hope it will be nurtured and cared for to blossom that future generations of students will meet someday", she said.

Also speaking, the Director-General of the Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF), Dr Muhtari Aminu Kano, said the partnership with LASPARK is in line with the mandate of the foundation which is to conserve the environment by creating green spaces.



The Director-General, who was represented by the Coordinator Green Recovery Nigerian Programme, Mrs Folake Salawu, noted that the initiative will enlighten the students and make them aware of the role they can play to protect the environment, stressing that school children need to be trained on how to nurture the botanical garden for the sustainability of the project.

Mrs Omobolanle Olushola Alamu, the Principal of Government Senior College, Agege, expressed gratitude to LASPARK for the laudable project, urging the Agency to set up more Gardens across schools in the State.

She said the botanical garden will serve as instructional material to the teachers, adding that the school will

put in place all necessary measures to ensure proper maintenance of the Garden.

Recall that the Agency had announced during the build-up to the year 2021 Tree Planting Day celebration that, as part of activities to commemorate the day, School Craft Competition will be organised for public schools. The organisation also promised to establish a Mini-Botanical Garden as a reward for each of the six schools that came out victorious.

In fulfilment of this promise, LASPARK, in partnership with the Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF) and Viathan Engineering Ltd, has created the botanical gardens which have been handed over to the six beneficiary schools through their respective districts.

Bobrisky, Denrele, others risk jail-term, as Reps consider crossdressing prohibition

By BENJAMIN OMOIKE

The House of Representatives has received a bill seeking to prohibit crossdressing in Nigeria.

The bill, sponsored by a member, Muda Lawal Umar, passed its first reading on Tuesday.

Though the objectives of the bill will only be debated at the second reading, our correspondent obtained a copy of the proposal after it was introduced.

The legislation is titled, 'A Bill for an Act to Amend Same-Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Act 2013 to Prohibit Cross Dressing and for Related Matters.'

The bill particularly seeks to amend Section 4 of the Act

by inserting a new Sub-clause 3 that reads, "(1) Crossdressing whether done publicly prohibited

"(2) A person shall be deemed to have committed the offence publicly where it is published or displayed publicly notwithstanding that it was committed privately or in any place that would have ordinarily been described as private.

"Provided that this section of this Act shall not apply to crossdressing in the course of a stage play or in any bona fide public entertainment."

The bill also seeks to amend Section 5 of the Act by inserting a new Sub-clause 4 that reads, "A person engaged in cross-dressing is guilty of an

offence and liable to imprisonment for six (6) months or to a fine of five hundred thousand naira (N500,000).

The bill further seeks an amendment to Section 7 of the Act by introducing the word 'cross dressing' and defining it as "...the practice of wearing clothes usually worn by a person of the opposite sex."

Notable among cross-dressers in Nigeria are popular television host, Adenrele Oluwafemi Edun, widely known as Denrele; suspected transgender woman, Olanrewaju Idris Okuneye, popularly known as Bobrisky; Port Harcourt-based crossdresser, Daniel Anthony, aka Jay boogie and James Chukwueze Obialor, aka James Brown.

23 year-old Nigerian law student allegedly dies after eating cannabis sweet bought online

By BENJAMIN OMOIKE

A 23 year-old Law student in the UK, Damilola Olakanmi, has died after consuming cannabis sweets she bought online via a messaging app on her phone.

Olakanmi, who lives in Ilford, East London, with her mother, fell ill last Tuesday and had to be rushed in a critical condition to Queen's Hospital, London, via an air ambulance.

The University of Hertfordshire undergraduate eventually died at the hospital on April 2 from complications from the

intake of the substance.

A US-based student and friend of Olakanmi, who also took the substance while on a visit to the deceased, fell ill but was later discharged by doctors after responding well to treatments.

According to Richard Taylor, a justice campaigner and friend of Wumi, the deceased's mother, Olakanmi, is reported to be the only child of her mother.

"Wumi has lost her only child - she has nothing now," Taylor was quoted to have said. "They had to hold her up because she broke down

every time a friend came to the house to give support.

"It's a tragic warning to all young people about how they live their lives. They should resist drugs."

"Damilola was a promising young woman who should be looking forward to her future and having children of her own. She was studying law."

A relative, named only as Danni, added that the family were demanding answers.

She said: "Damilola was a sweet, quiet girl - a bit of an introvert. Her mother looked up to her.

"She was very kind and

loved looking after children and wanted to please everyone. The family will never come to terms with this. We need to know what happened. Her mother is not young anymore.

Meanwhile, a suspect, Leon Brown, 37, has been arrested and charged with possession with intent to supply Class B synthetic cannabinoid, being concerned in the supply of a synthetic cannabinoid, and possession with intent to supply a psychoactive substance.

The Metropolitan Police said the case may be linked to a woman who was taken to hospital in March after eating

cannabis sweet in another part of London. Officers have issued a warning over the sweets and said a number have been recovered and are being tested.

Chief Superintendent Stuart Bell, of the Met's East Area Basic Command Unit, said: "I must warn the public against taking any illegal substances, including those packaged in the form of cannabis sweets.

"Please do not buy or consume these products. They are illegal and, because of the child-friendly packaging, they can pose a risk of accidental consumption."



2023: Avoid being lured into politics, INEC charges SGF, States Secretaries

● *Calls for support on credible election*

By **TUNDE OPALANA, ABUJA**

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has called on secretaries to governments at the federal and state levels to uphold professionalism as bureaucrats and avoid the political trappings by political officeholders.

The Commission also called for support from bureaucrats on its determination to conduct free, fair and credible elections in 2023.

Chairman of the commission Prof. Mahmood Yakubu gave this charge at the first quarter 2022 meeting of the Forum of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF) with Secretaries to State Governments held at the Conference Hall of the State House, Aso Rock Villa, Abuja on Friday.

The commission said the impact of democratic elections on the bureaucracy in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized, adding that bureaucracy under the democratic experience has continued to be surrounded with so many fundamental historical issues that are unique to Nigeria.

National Commissioner, Mr Sam



Prof. Yakubu

Olumekun who represented the chairman at the event advised bureaucrats to continue to uphold utmost professionalism at all times, to avoid being lured into politics by political office holders, thereby politicizing the bureaucratic

set-up and destroying the fabrics of the profession.

He said, "political patronage among civil and public servants has the potential to destroy the gains attained over the years."

"The fact needs to be stressed that credible elections engender effective bureaucracy. Conversely, when elections are marked with malpractices, the recruitment process of political office holders is negatively impacted. In effect, public office holders may not have what it takes to put in place credible bureaucracy to better the lot of those ruled.

"The remarkableness of democracy in Nigeria since the commencement of this dispensation has influenced several remarkable reforms in the nation's bureaucracy to drive effectively government policies and programmes to grow every sector towards achieving nation-building," he said.

The chairman said INEC is saddled with the responsibilities of coordinating the process and activities that will give Nigerians a solid and credible platform to exercise their franchise during the elections within the ambit of law and internationally acceptable standards.

He said the commission requires all Nigerians to support her in the onerous assignment of delivering a free, fair, credible and crisis-free election going by the challenge posed by insecurity in the country.

Zenith Labour Party fixes nomination fees, presidential aspirants to pay N23m

By **TUNDE OPALANA, ABUJA**

Aspirants seeking to fly the presidential flag of the Zenith Labour Party (ZLP) in the 2023 election have to pay N23 million to obtain expression of interest and nomination forms.

According to the party, aspirants are to pay N5 million for Expression of Interest and N18 million for Nomination Forms.

According to the National Secretary of the party, Comrade Yahaya Makama, the National Working Committee of

the Zenith Labour Party (ZLP) after a meeting on Thursday approved the sale of nomination forms to aspirants wishing to contest the 2023 general elections.

Governorship aspirants are to pay N2 million for Expression of Interest and N10,000,000 for Nomination Forms while those aspiring for Senate seats are to pay N500,000 for Expression of Interest and N1,500,000 for Nomination Forms.

House of Representatives aspirants are to pay N200,000 for Expression of

Interest and N500,000 for Nomination Form while State Assembly aspirants will pay N100,000 for Expression of Interest and N250,000 for Nomination Form.

Speaking on the low cost of forms, the party scribe said "the reduction of the nomination fees is to allow credible Nigeria's who are popular but hindered by high Nomination fees charged by Political Parties to participate.

"They now have the opportunity to use a platform that is pocket friendly in their quest to serve.

"Youths, women and people living with Disabilities are to obtain their Nominations forms Free.

"The Zenith Labour Party is a Gender-sensitive Political Party and we believe in the inclusiveness of women and youths in the governance of the Country. Women and youths now have a very good opportunity to actualize their political dreams.

"We should all move away from the social media politics to practical grassroots politics to enable us to bring the positive change that we all desire in our country."

I'll appreciate Electoral Act forestalling cross-carpeting - Hon Leke Abejide

● *Says he remains only ADC member in Reprs*

By **TUNDE OPALANA, ABUJA**

Hon Leke Abejide, member representing Yagba Federal Constituency in the House of Representatives and



Hon Abejide

the Chairman House Committee on Customs & Excise, has expressed confidence that the new Electoral Act will bring sanity into the polity by putting an end to cross-carpeting by politicians.

Abejide, who is the only standing elected member of the African Democratic Congress (ADC) in the House of Representatives said if the law had been in place, it would have been difficult for his other two colleagues to dump the party.

While speaking in an interactive section the lawmaker who won his election in 2019 on the platform of the African Democratic Congress, ADC said the Electoral Act has already addressed the issue of cross carpeting by elected officers.

He said "elected officers may decamp at the end of the tenure to a bigger party if they wish, but not in the middle.

"In the next tenth Assembly, you will see a lot of small parties having candidates here. When the big parties,

as a result of internal problems, throw away a popular candidate, the smaller parties will pick them and use them to win elections. And when they come here, they will not be able to cross. They will remain where they are. The law has gone a bit better."

Commending the National Assembly for the landmark Electoral Bill which was signed by President Muhammadu Buhari, he said the electioneering process has been strengthened through Electoral Act to the benefit of Nigerians.

He said "elections before now are usually rigged from collation centres, but now the election is going to be won from the polling units. The moment you vote; the result is already uploaded. Even if you are voting from the other side, the situation room is seeing it. If they like they should come and scatter and take the ballot box, the result is there".

"This Electoral Act has arrested so many anomalies, especially the issues of the BVAS. If you go to court before

now and you said the card reader didn't work, they will say the law does not recognize it. Now, all electronic gadgets can be used during elections and they can be used as evidence in the court. It's going to be more transparent.

"Election is going to be clean and clear. It will help the masses to enjoy more because anybody in power will know that if he or she did not perform, he will not come back.

"The thugs will have less work this time. Their mode of operations is to waylay ballot boxes and when you are popular it's difficult for any thug to thrive because when they look at what is on ground and see that they cannot operate, they will go quietly.

"Anybody that wants to rely on thuggery or wants INEC to declare your results under duress, you are just deceiving yourself. I will advise those thugs that they should change their attitude and become reasonable otherwise the thuggery will take them nowhere".

More worries over Ortom's committee report on PDP zoning

By TUNDE OPALANA, POLITICS EDITOR, ABUJA

The political space was kept in suspense as to where the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) will zone its presidential ticket ahead of the 2023 general election.

But the committee commissioned by the party to chart a course and guide it on where to search for a standard-bearer dashed hopes as it failed to be categorical in the declaration of its outcome.

Benue State governor, Samuel Ortom who is the chairman of the Zoning Committee simply told anxious journalists at the end of the Committee's meeting in Abuja on Tuesday that members have taken a position that was unanimous adding that the report will be submitted to the party leadership.

However, the recommendation of the committee got leaked to a section of the media indicating that the ticket has been thrown open.

In the recommendation sighted by The Trumpet, the committee said the PDP constitution affirmed zoning.

It however recommended that 'In spite of zoning arrangement, the ticket is thrown open, this time around due to exigency of time.'

"Our party is encouraged to always make the issue of zoning very clear at least 6 months before sales of forms.

"Our party should commend the efforts of some of our contestants on the issue of consensus candidacy; the efforts should be seen to a peaceful and logical conclusion".

But, the following day on AriseTV breakfast programme, the 'Morning Show', Ortom denied saying the committee recommended that the presidential ticket be thrown open. He described this as insinuations in the media. He insisted that the committee was being quoted on what it did not say.

The governor queried why those who were not part of the meeting of the committee would want to "force words into the committee's mouth."

His Chief Press Secretary, Nathaniel Ikyur in a statement said Ortom who frowned at the caption on the news bar while the interview lasted quipped: "I want to clear the insinuation that the zoning committee has thrown open the presidential ticket. I did inform the media yesterday (Tuesday, April 5, 2022) that the committee has adopted a unanimous position to be presented to the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the party. Where did I say that the committee has thrown open the presidential ticket?"

He maintained that "the committee will present the report to NEC. It is NEC that has the final authority on the zoning of positions".

He quoted the Governor saying "I came out to brief the media. So it is completely wrong. I did not say that. And like I said, NEC is the final authority on deciding where this position will be zoned to."

He continued: "as the chairman of the committee, we did not say that. So it is very wrong for anyone to insinuate that we have thrown the presidential ticket open. I am still repeating that, whatever we did, we submitted our report to NEC. So it is wrong for the



Ortom

media to come out with a position even though they were not members of the committee.

The governor then implored the media not to, "crucify us. Don't kill us before you get the answer because PDP has not brought up a report, insisting, "that will be done by NEC".

Ortom's reversal jolted many and raised curious questions as to why the frantic efforts at such rebuttal.

The Benue governor was said to be under pressure by an interested party in the race who wanted what really transpired at the Committee's meeting to be made known rather than a vague statement that gave room for speculation.

The Trumpet learnt that a powerful influencer who is very close to Ortom was enraged by a media report that the committee recommended an open contest. The aspirant has been a strong advocate of power rotation to the south.

Even, it was further learnt that at the committee level, "there were arguments that the presidential ticket should go to the South. While some said it should go to the Northern part of the country. Others thought that it should be thrown open for the best candidate who will

be able to deliver good governance."

The Chief Press Secretary in his statement went further to say that Governor Ortom recalled that, when the party positions were being zoned before the national convention, "NEC directed us that in zoning these positions, go and do it right without minding where the president will come from yet. When the time comes for the presidential ticket, a mandate will be given to the people and NEC will take a decision. That is what we have done."

To further confound the situation is the fact that the expectation is rife that the Ortom - led Committee must have submitted the report to the National Working Committee (NWC) which will either take a temporary decision on behalf of the National Executive Committee (NEC) or outrightly call NEC meeting to dissect the Committee's recommendations.

It was expected that the NWC ought to make the receipt of the report public but there is no compulsion in it as the report might have been submitted unannounced.

A source told The Trumpet that "it is you journalists that are worried about

this thing. Who told you that the report has not been submitted already. Political parties are not mandated to carry you media along on everything they do. They are not as worried as you are.

"Even if the report has not been submitted, is there any urgency in doing that?"

To further buttress this position, the National Publicity Secretary of the party, Hon. Debo Ologunagba on a national television station confirmed that the report has not been received by the NWC.

If the report has not been submitted, then the party might be in a great dilemma as there is no indication of an extension of the timeframe given to the Zoning Committee. Also, it will be an absurdity for the committee to continue deliberating after officially concluding its assignment.

There is a sharp division on the broad acceptability of the Committee's recommendations which may have necessitated its holding on to the report.

Pending the NEC meeting, it will be right to take to Ortom's submission that "Pre-empting the committee's work and NEC decision is not correct."

Christ's quintessential leadership model

Christianity is in some many aspects in sync with ancient Western philosophy especially that of Plato. The relevant aspect one would draw from is Plato's bifurcation of reality into two. Whereas one is immaterial and imperceptible, the other is material and perceptible. The latter - the world of the senses - derives its being from the former, the world of ideas. The world of ideas provides the forms of the perceptible world. The perceptible is their *shadows, reflections or images* of the immaterial world which Plato simply sometimes calls Reality. Reality, according to Plato, can only be known through reflection or reason. It is changeless and permanent and it is also the archetype of all existents. Reality - expressed in the world of Ideas - is the Truth and Being-as-it-is. The take home here is that whatever should be brought into existence ought have a model or paradigm with which it is or should be created as a foundation and reference point.

Today, we live with various forms of leadership models in Nigeria and Africa. We read about their lifestyle. How they rule us here and have their families in Europe. How we are subjected to darkness due to their inability to fix the power sector yet we pay through our taxes for the generators they run. They establish new universities for us which they will attend. They secure loans for us that end up in their private foreign accounts. They build hospitals for us that they will never use. So much is spent on security yet they cannot move freely on the streets they tell us are safe. Reflect on the lifestyle of our religious and traditional leaders. There is difference from that of their political collaborators who even lavish them ceaselessly with unquantifiable cash and state of the art cars.

"Have this mind among yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this in mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death" (Philippians 2:3-8). The humility of Christ

was epitomised in the fact that Judas Iscariot - His betrayer - told those to whom He had sold his master that, "The one I shall kiss is the man; seize him" (Matthew 26:48). This implies that both in life style and appearance Jesus Christ could not be differentiated from His disciples. A 'kiss' was needed to identify him! This cannot be said of today's leaders in Nigeria. Fellow "ordinary citizens" are pushed far away from these leaders.

The Prophet, Zechariah, spelt out the quality of the coming King. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on an ass, on a colt the foal of an ass" (Zechariah 9:9). Two leadership qualities Christ taught His followers are humility and servitude. The principle of servant leadership is often associated with his teaching and character. "But he who is the greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Matthew 23:11-12).

Another leadership model Christ taught and lived by was selflessness, altruism and sacrifice, even unto death. He emptied Himself that His followers shall be full. "... because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your captives free from the waterless pit" (Zechariah 9:11). This conclusion was reached by John when he drew a parallel between the example of Christ and the Church. "By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16). And this leads us to another leadership model Christ gave which is love. We have leaders today who thrive on hate and division. One ethnic nationality is Satanized over the other. Leaders now talk about some sections of their communities as "enemies." "But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:17-18). The unity and peace that must permeate the world flow from the love of Christ for us. It is also a reflection of the love He shares with His Father. "The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they



Dr. Karo Ogbinaka

may be one even as we are one, I in them and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them even as thou hast loved me" (John 17:22-23). Where there is love, unity and peace exist. "I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and He shall command peace to the nations; his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth" (Zechariah 9:10). Now, we have a leadership whose tracks are trailed with pool of blood, war, physical conflicts and divisiveness. They are fake and ungodly shepherds.

There cannot be peace except there is righteousness and justice. The leadership of Christ is also equated with the reign of righteousness and justice. "Great and wonderful are thy deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are thy ways, O King of the ages" (Revelation 15:3). The Bible is replete with many verses on the righteousness and justice of Christ Jesus. "For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds that righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter

the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:20). Leadership devoid of these characteristics epitomise oppression and a reign of the anti-Christ.

In spite of the above, leadership comes with strength and power. Jesus Christ has the strength and power to establish his reign. He is the only one so empowered to overcome the beast and anti-Christ. He is the one commissioned by God to overthrow Lucifer. The Psalmist puts it thus: "Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors! That the King of glory may come in. Who is the King of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle!" (Psalm 24:7-8, 9-10). Again Christ says, "And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder" (Matthew 21:44). Christ is not only a Stone upon which the Church is built, he is also a strong stone that would make his enemies stumble and fall and be crushed. "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and he who believes in him will not be put to shame." To you therefore who believe, he is precious, but for those who do not believe, "The very stone which the builder rejected has become the head of the corner," and "A stone that will make men stumble, a rock that will make them fall", for they stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do" (1 Peter 2:6-8).

A good leadership model should exhibit humility, servant-leader, selflessness, altruism, sacrifice, peace, righteousness, justice, power and strength among others. Jesus Christ stood as an archetype for these leadership qualities that are canons with which we may evaluate our religious, corporate and political leaders. As Christians celebrate Palm Sunday this week, all should bear this in mind in all processions and shouts of, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the Highest!" (Matthew 21:9). Let us strive to enter the New Jerusalem to meet Jesus Christ! Happy Palm Sunday!

Be blessed and shalom!!

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

This subject, "The power of a woman" is a very important one because women are very key partners to the success of the human race.

In the beginning, after God created Adam the first man, He saw that Adam was alone and decided to create a woman (a helpmate) for him from his rib. Adam called her Eve because "she was the mother of all living" - Genesis 3:20 (Holy Bible).

But the question we must ask in today's world is, "are women living up to the mandate given them as mothers of all living?"

To answer this question, we must first and foremost understand the role of a mother. Every human being whether male or female is birthed into the world through a woman, so every human being is deeply connected to the mother because he or she shared everything with the mother for about nine months before delivery.

Secondly, the mother is a covering for the kids from the breast sucking period until maturity. It is the mother that has the deep and robust emotions to cater for the needs of the growing young ones while the father protects and provides for the family spiritually and otherwise with the support of the woman. In fact, the spiritual state of the mother affects everybody in the family because all the children have a bond with her from birth and the father also bonds with her through copulation. So, the woman is the nucleus of the family and the state of the woman is very key to the overall state of the family and the society.

It is because of this knowledge of the power of a woman that the devil makes it a key agenda to try to possess evil spirits or influence every woman that comes into this world because he knows that through her, others will share from whatever she possesses, either good or evil. This is the reason we need to pray for women everywhere they are, whether they are relatives, friends, neighbours, or colleagues because their spiritual and physical states are very important to the well-being of any family, organisation or society.

The innate deep motions in a woman make her love deeply and also feel deeply hurt if unloved. They believe easily and feel deeply hurt if disappointed. These deep emotions also affect their abilities to forgive because they feel deeply hurt by negative reactions when offended.

Having stated all these, let us now go into the scriptures and look into the word of God for the sanctity of women.



Dr. Agbodo

In the Bible, God said we should not prostitute our daughters so that evil will not fill the land - Leviticus 19:29. So, the question you now ask is that "how is prostitution connected with evil filling the land." That means, just as women are created to physically give birth to human beings, they are also equipped with a spiritual womb to also give birth to either good or evil in the society based on their spiritual state. Little wonder, evil is filling the society these days because many women are prostituting themselves due to hardship and moral degradation in the society. Women consciously or unconsciously open up themselves as gates for evil to fill the earth when they live in immorality. This is one of the key reasons God created them as virgins, with a resisting membrane so that they are preserved to be the gate of good into the world, but the narrative is changing these days with the world media celebrating fornication (pre-marital sex) to high heavens and encouraging infidelity of all kinds in marriages.

So, now that we know the power of a woman in either bringing good or evil into the society according to the interpretation of the scriptures, women must abstain from premarital sex, fornication and adultery to secure their destinies, families, children and future and ultimately to obey the

The power of a woman

mandate from God and make heaven.

Also, women must be taken care of physically and spiritually to take them away from the grip of immorality and Satan, so that sanity can come back to the world, else they may continue to be evil gates delivering evils like terrorism, violent crimes, kidnapping, poverty, diseases and the rest negative vices into the world.

By God's creation, a woman is not supposed to suffer so that they are not tempted to go into sexual immorality because the society will eventually suffer for it since sexual immorality is both a personal sin and also a sin of the land.

A sin of the land affects everyone whether you were a party to it or not according to the Holy Bible.

Therefore, fathers, husbands, mothers, wives, and the entire society should beware so that women are not allowed as prey to Satan to destroy the world.

Please, pray the following prayers for yourself and the women around your destiny to ignite a holy restoration and a better society for all.

INTERCESSORY PRAYERS FOR WOMEN

Pray in the name of Jesus Christ and by the power in the blood of Jesus Christ.

1. O God my father, have mercy on me and forgive me my sins and unrighteousness.
2. Anything in my life rebelling and resisting the perfect will of God, die
3. Bank of evil thoughts, envy and self-centeredness in my life die and scatter
4. Any evil power promoting pride, hatred and unrighteousness in my life, die.
5. O God help me to forgive others their trespasses so that you can forgive me my trespasses.
6. Any power that wants women to remain in sin and go to hellfire, lose your hold and release all our sisters worldwide to Jesus Christ.
7. Every deep emotional pain-blocking me from constant fellowship with the Holy Spirit, be removed today in Jesus Name.
8. Any power saying no to the true salvation of women and sisters around me, be paralysed and lose your hold.
9. Power in the blood of Jesus Christ, lose every woman and sister in any bondage of Satan and usher them into the kingdom of God.
10. O God, help wives to love and submit to

their husbands as the Church is totally submissive to Christ.

11. Every evil covenant and curses from the water, earth, under the earth and in heavens holding any woman on earthbound to evil spirits, break and release them.

12. O God, release any girl or woman in my family and my environment from every satanic prison and give them the grace to serve you in truth and in spirit.

13. O God, bless my mother, sisters, girls and women in my environment and the world with true salvation, baptism of the Holy Spirit and multiple blessings from heaven.

14. Every agenda of Satan to frustrate the marriage of any woman in my family, my environment and in the world, be destroyed now

15. O God, deliver and bless the children in my family, my environment and the world to fulfil their true destinies.

16. Every concluded evil plan against girls and women in my family and my environment be scattered by the power in the blood of Jesus Christ.

17. O God, rescue the destinies of every woman around me for them to make heaven.

18. O God, let your original plan for creating a woman manifest in all women in my family, my environment and the world.

19. Let the fire of God burn continually and scatter the camps of all witchcraft covers dedicated to wasting the lives of women on earth.

20. Every plan to hinder any woman from a happy marriage; make them barren and also to kill them in childbirth, be wasted in Jesus Name.

21. Like Mary the mother of Jesus, O God make every girl and woman on earth holy to serve you.

22. Any evil power from the marine witchcraft kingdom assigned to waste the lives of women in my family and environment, die and release their destinies

23. Every evil power wasting the lives of women in immorality, die and release your captives in Jesus name.

24. Satanic powers from the waters manipulating the lives of women for evil, die and release your captives by the power in the blood of Jesus Christ.

Thank you for digesting this message and interceding in prayers for women worldwide. God bless us in Jesus Name.

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

Why Ramadan month is special for Muslims

-Ustaz Abu Jabir Adullahi Musa Abdul (Penabdul)

By GABRIEL OMONHINMIN, Culture and Religion Editor

The month of Ramadan is important to every Muslim because the Holy Qur'an was first revealed in the month of Ramadan to Prophet Mohammad (bpuh). Ramadan is the ninth month in the Islamic calendar which Muslims worldwide observe as a month of fasting, prayer, reflection and communal living during this period.

Fasting in the month of Ramadan is prescribed because it is the fourth Pillar of Islam. The month of Ramadan is, therefore, one of the most important months to Muslims. It is a time of increased worship, spiritual cleansing, good deeds and acts of charity. In the light of Allah's love and mercy towards us, the reward for every good deed in the month of Ramadan is multiplied by 70 percent.

To unravel the very essence of Ramadan and fasting in Muslim life, Trumpet Newspaper Culture and Religion Editor decided to reach out to a Kano based Cleric and Islamic Scholar, Ustaz Abu Jabir Adullahi Musa Abdul (Penabdul) to help shed more light on the significance and importance of the month of Ramadan and fasting.

Trumpet Religion: Ustaz, what is actually the significance or importance of this Holy Month of Ramadan and fasting for Muslims?

Ustaz Abdul: According to Quran Chapter 2:183 Al-Baqara, which reads as follows, "Yaayyuhallazeenaaamanookutibaalal-kumusSiyaamukamaakutibaalalazeena min qablikumla'allakumtattaqoon." This means, "O believers, fasting is enjoined on you as it was on those before you so that you might become righteous."

Every year, Muslims all over the world are expected to see the crescent new moon that symbolizes the first day of Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar and it is assumed to be the most sacred in Islamic culture.

The beginning and the end of the phase of Ramadan or Ramzan depend on the moon sighting committee in Saudi Arabia. Usually, the moon is seen first in Saudi Arabia and some parts of India along with some western countries. Then a day later, in the rest of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and other regions.

These were the processes followed, before this year's Ramadan began on April 2, 2022, and it will end on May 1, 2022. Besides, it is also indicating the coming of the auspicious Eid-ul-Fitt celebration. Muslims who can afford it may decide to prepare for the pilgrimage to Mecca this month because Umrah is encouraged throughout Ramadan.

Now there are five pillars of Islam of which fasting is among, 1- the declaration of faith (shahada), 2-Prayer (salah), 3-Alms-giving (zakat), 4-Fasting (sawm) and 5-Pilgrimage (hajj). These constitute the basic norms of Islamic practice. These practices are accepted by Muslims globally irrespective of ethnic, regional or sectarian differences.

Whether one is a Sunni or Shiite Muslim, the five pillars of Islam are the same. Faith (witness), Prayer, Charity, Fasting and the Pilgrimage. These Pillars come from the Qur'an, although not very well defined therein, it is in the Hadith literature that the Five Pillars are fully defined and detailed.



Muslims breaking their ramadan in Bauchi

Ramadan is therefore the period of devotion, fasting, charity-giving and self-accountability. It is also a month of forgiving, where every Muslim gets closer to Allah. According to the Holy Qur'an, Angel Gabriel descended from heaven to reveal the Qur'an, Allah's message to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, (bpuh), it was therefore instructed that the month of Ramadan should be marked by 29-30 days of fasting.

In Qur'an Chapter 2:184, the holy book further stated, "Fast a (fixed) number of days, but if someone is ill or is travelling (he should complete) the number of days (he had missed), and those who find it hard to fast should compensate by feeding a poor person. For the good they do with a little hardship is better for men. And if you fast it is good for you, if you know."

During this period, fasting is obligatory for all adult Muslims unless they are sick, travelling, having a menstrual cycle, pregnant, diabetic, or elderly.

During fasting, people are expected to consume Sehri early in the morning, before sunrise. After this, they are also expected to attend Fajr, the early morning prayers. They are also expected fast the entire day without eating or drinking until evening. Later in the evening, Muslim faithfuls are expected to gather to break their fast with a Khajur at ifar and go for Maghrib, evening prayer.

During Ramadan, Muslims aim to grow spiritually and become closer to Allah and their loved ones.

During the last ten days of the month of Ramadan, several people prefer to mark the event of the 27th night known as 'LaylatulQadr' 'The Night of Destiny.'

Thus, keeping to these tenets of Islam is a way of celebrating and honouring Prophet Muhammad and developing more self-control as a Muslim.

Trumpet Religion: Oftentimes some Muslims find it difficult to fast during this period, because of various reasons. Such as poor health and hardship. How can Muslims in these categories compensate for not being able to fast, when other Muslims are fasting?

Ustaz Abdul: Islam is a complete way of

life, people who are extremely sick during this month of Ramadan are already told what to do in the Holy Qur'an.

According to Islamic Law, a sick person is exempted from fasting from the very first day or for all of the 30 days depending on the condition. Such a person is however expected to make up for the missed days if he or she is well enough later. If such a person is unable to make it up for the missed days, he or she is expected to feed or pay the poor or needy to make it up for them.

There are, however, people exempted from fasting during this month. They are children, who have not reached puberty, the elderly, those who are physically or mentally incapable of fasting, pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers and travellers.

Hardship to a true Muslim is not enough reason(s) to abstain from fasting during the Holy Month of Ramadan.

Qur'an Chapter 2:155 says, "Be sure, we shall try you with something of fear and hunger and loss of wealth and life and the fruits (of your labour), but give tidings of happiness to those who have patience.

What is decreed for us is not always in harmony with our desires and fancies. But then, we are not in a position to suggest. On the contrary, our right station and position are that of a worshipper, who surrenders his will.

A slave (of Allah) is tested according to the level of his/her faith. The Prophet (bpuh) said: "I feel the pangs of death equal to what two of your men feel." The most severely tested are the Prophets and then the righteous. A verse of the Qur'an reads "Therefore be patient (O Muhammad) as did the Messengers of strong will..." Qur'an 46:35.

For Whomsoever Allah wishes good, He will afflict him.

From the above explanation, fasting is mandatory for able body Muslims, who are not sick or travelling. So hardship in any form is not an excuse to run away from fasting in the month of Ramadan, it is compulsory.

Trumpet Religion: Is it true that people who fast during this month of Ramadan

are extra protected alongside members of their household, against all manner of evil, during observance and after the fasting period.

Ustaz Abdul: Allah protects those who believe. Every man or woman, whether we admit it or not, needs a god, and it follows that god must possess certain qualities, such as omnipotence, power, richness, and everlastingness. The One Who has all of these – and all other perfect qualities is Allah, the Lord of all that exists.

Therefore, the sincere seeker is drawn to and then finds comfort in his belief in Allah, the Exalted. He is the sanctuary of the weak and of the ones who see refuge.

Remember when you sought the help of your Lord and He answered you. Qur'an 8.9.

And He protects all, while against Whom there is no protector, i.e. if Allah saves anyone none can punish or harm him, and if Allah punishes or harms anyone, none can save him... Qur'an 23:88.

When there will be neither a protector nor an intercessor for them besides Him... Qur'an 6:51

So, Whosoever worships other than Allah, even though he loves Him to a certain degree, is worse than the one who enjoys eating food that has been poisoned.

The need we have for Allah is shown by the connection sought by us between the transient and the Everlasting, the weak and the Almighty, the poor with the Rich. And whoever does not take Allah to be his Lord and God will positively take other than Him as a god. He will, for example, take pictures, objects of love, or his desires to be his deity, and then he becomes the slave and servant of that false deity. Of this, there is no doubt. The Qur'an informs: "Have you seen him who has taken as his god his own desire?" Qur'an 25:43.

It continues, "Yet they have taken besides Him other gods..." Qur'an 25:3

In essence, the month of Ramadan which is the ninth month in the Islamic calendar is very important in the life of any Muslim. We are therefore enjoined to fast, pray and make fervent supplications to Allah alone. I repeat, it is a must for every able body Muslim.

2023: What do the political parties have for Nigeria?

As we approach election year 2023, there are lingering and disturbing questions on what the political parties have to offer Nigerians in form of their action plans and strategies.

Is there any indication that the two main parties, PDP and APC have anything new to offer the electorate? Is there any hope in the minority parties? Have the parties developed any blueprint to restore sanity to the country? What plans do they have on security and other challenges confronting the country? Is it reasonable to conclude that they hold the electorate in contempt and do not see the need to introduce persuasive programmes?

What hopes are these Parties offering Nigerians in the face of their narrow-identity politics, nepotism, lies, propaganda, hate messages and fake news that tend to destroy the reason behind formation of parties? What have these divided parties developed for Nigeria? What programmes do they have for improved security, ending kidnapping, ending the Boko Haram insurgency, inflation, agriculture, health, education, alternative innovations to meet the challenges of our dear country?

Sadly, these men and women pretend to be purveyors of our unity and togetherness while dividing us daily and killing us softly in stagnation, underdevelopment, system destruction, corruption, retrogression, and inflation. The parties are simply Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) to achieve their personal and narrow objectives.

Political Parties in the developed economies usually have a form of ideological or political identity. These are what can be identified with such political parties or what such parties stand for in terms of ideological inclinations or political directions. For example, we know of the political directions and ideological inclinations of the Conservative Party in UK, the Democratic and Republican Parties in the United States of America. Even in the early days of political party formations in Nigeria,

we knew what Nigeria People Congress (NPC) stood for. We also knew what Northern Elements People Union (NEPU), Middle Bell Congress (MBC), National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) stood for. A mention of National Party of Nigeria (NPN) quickly brings to memory their housing and agricultural or Green Revolution or Ethical Revolution Programmes, while a mention of Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) quickly and nostalgically resonates the 4 Cardinal Programmes - Free Health Services, Free Education at all levels, Full employment, and Integrated Rural Development.

When it comes to the reality of contemporary Nigeria, what can we say about APC, PDP, and the other registered Parties in Nigeria?

These registered political parties, constituted by a combination of strange political bed fellows, most of whom decamped from one Party to the other are political gangsters. They are neither here nor there in terms of political ideologies or programmes. They are politicians that are neither birds nor animals and political vultures in a haven of the cesspit of corruption. This identity makes it impossible for them to have anything to offer Nigerians. They change their political Parties as women change their dresses. It is only the current landmark historical judgement in Nigeria that "votes belong to Political Parties" that can change these politicians' penchant for political rascality and political 'chameleonism'.

It is hoped that the historical judgement on cross-carpeting will compel our Parties to have goals, directions, cardinal objectives, manifestoes, visions and missions. Currently, we cannot see any visible plan by the ruling Party and those in opposition which will give direction to the nation. The political parties have no articulated plan or blueprint or roadmap for real change and the transformation of Nigeria.

Political Parties are expected to be the fulcrum for uniting the over 250 ethnic nationalities that occupy the geographical space of Nigeria. Elected representatives who are fielded by the political parties must reflect this diversity. They should work towards uniting our centripetal and centrifugal forces in a peaceful and harmonious relationship as envisioned in the first national anthem – 'though tribe and tongue may differ, in brotherhood we stand'.

The Trumpet believes that even in the face of this catalogue of our present woes, the existing political parties can borrow a leaf, not only from the nation's founding fathers, but also from developed democracies. As we prepare for 2023 general elections, the electorate should also task the political parties and ask them critical questions on what programmes they have to end the current season of anomie that we live in.



THE TRUMPET

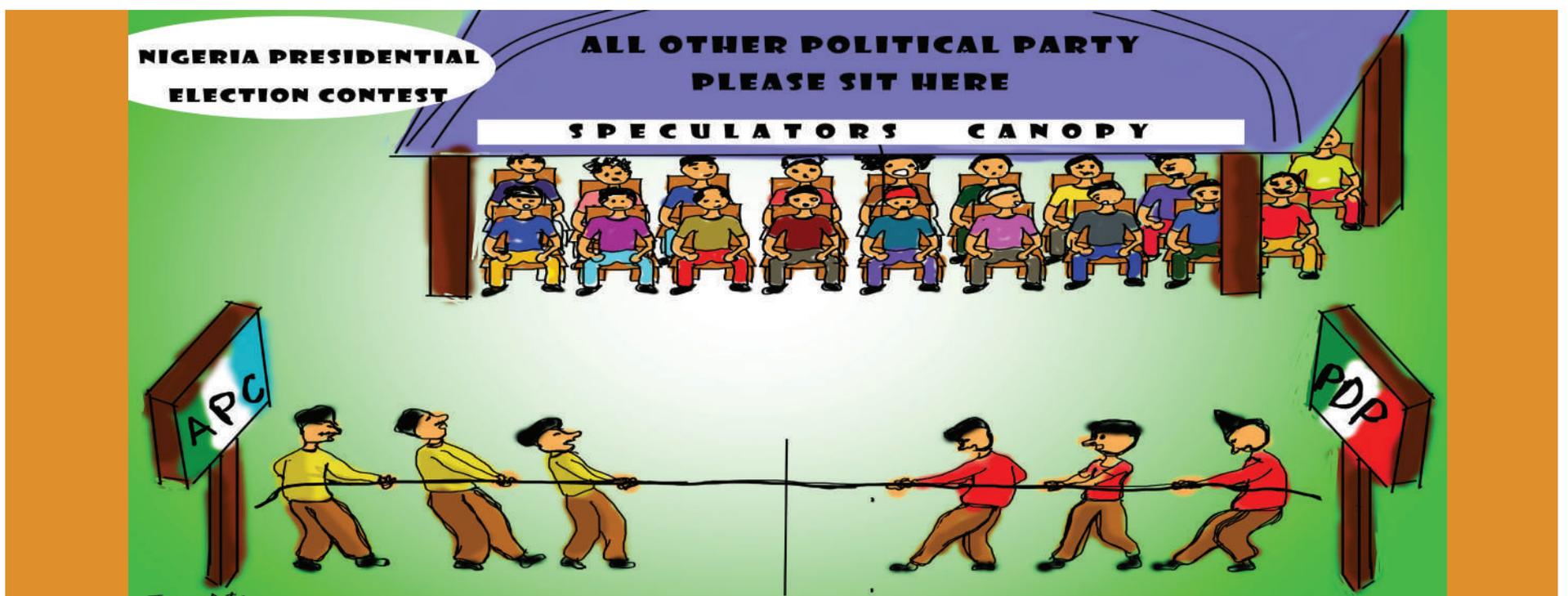
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Troops set to battle oil theft in Niger Delta, launch special operation code

- Defence Hqtrs laments recent terrorist attacks
- Says troops capture terrorist's spies, logistics suppliers in Borno
- As 51,114 Boko Haram terrorists, families surrender

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

A new special operation code has been launched by the Armed Forces to tackle crude oil theft and illegal oil bunkering in the Niger Delta region, The Trumpet reports.

This was announced on Thursday by the Director of Defence Media Operations, Major General Benard Onyeuko, during a press briefing on various theatre of operations of the Armed Forces between 25 March - 7 April 2022, at the Defence Headquarters, Abuja.

According to him, the special operation code, which was flagged off at Onne in Port Harcourt, is named "Operation Dakatar Da Barawo (Operation Stop the Thief)." Added that the objectives of the new operation include among other things, to secure critical maritime infrastructure, create enabling environment for the sustenance of desired level of hydrocarbon production, safe shipping and economic activities as well as to restore investor confidence in Nigeria Maritime domain.

Gen Onyeuko lamented operational setbacks experienced by troops following recent terrorist attacks and criminal activities across the country. He, however, expressed optimism over the readiness of troops

to combat crime while noting that "huge gains and success achieved by own troops in other theatres of operation especially in the North East, North West and South South."

He told the press that the land component of Operation Hadin Kai with support of the air component conducted offensive operations at different locations of the theatre of war in Borno state and troops captured terrorist's stronghold by "Ukba/Camp Zairo in the Sambisa Forest where some artillery guns, Armored Personnel Carrier (APC), trailers, and large cache of arms and ammunition were captured."

Gen Onyeuko, while stating that some kidnapped civilians were rescued, said troops arrested terrorist's spies and their logistics suppliers during the offensive operations. He added that the air component between 28 - 31 after several days of surveillance of terrorist activities at Bukar Meiram and 2km South of Kollaram conducted air interdictions which took out heavy stockpile of ISWAP weapons in their depot.

"Cumulatively, in the last 2 weeks troops recovered 1 Battle Tank, 5 artillery guns, 2 GTS, 3 AA guns, 1 Mine Resistance Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle, 3 gun trucks, 1 MOWAG Armored Personnel Carrier, 2 RPG tubes, 3 RPG rockets, 3 RPG bombs, 1 NSVT

gun, 2 GPMG, 1 light MG, 1 PKM, 3 GPMG belts, 4 belts of PKT rounds, 600 7.62mm NATO rounds, 16 AK 47 rifles, 1 dane gun, 270 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition, 1 Toyota Buffalo vehicle, 1 Golf saloon car, 4 motorcycles, 6 magazines, 2 pairs of camouflage, 2 terrorists flags, 1 tricycle and 1 active drone," Gen Onyeuko stated.

He disclosed that a record 51,114 Boko Haram terrorists and families comprising of 11,398 men, 15,381 women and 24,335 children surrendered to troops on 5th April, 2022. He said all the surrendered terrorists have been documented and handed over to appropriate authorities for onward action.

"Also, troops neutralized scores of terrorist arrests, 22 terrorist spies, 11 terrorists, 3 logistics suppliers, rescued 30 civilians, of significant is the surrendered of a high-profile terrorist, Commander Sale Mustapha (Ibin Kathir) to own troops in Bama. He was the Qaid of Garin Ba-Abba.

"While a total of 51,114 Boko Haram Terrorist and families surrendered to troops comprising of 11,398 men, 15,381 women, 24,335 children as at 5 April 2022. Accordingly, all surrendered terrorists have been documented, while arrested, rescued civilians and recovered items have been handed over to the appropriate authorities for further action," he said.

More so, Gen Onyeuko said the air component of Operation Thunder Strike on March 30, 2022, intercepted and neutralized 34 terrorists and recovered 14 locally made guns and 17 motorcycles when the troops received credible intelligence that some terrorists were moving in motorbikes towards Akilibu-Sarkin Pawa road at Mangoro village, between Kaduna and Niger States.

"Also, on 31 March, 2022 a large concentration of terrorists were sighted around Kusasu after deliberate air surveillance and air interdiction was carried on fewer than 33 terrorists were neutralized according to eyewitness account," he said.

The Defence Media Director expressed excitement that the Nigerian Navy recorded a milestone in indigenous systematic survey and charting of our offshore waters. He added that indigenous survey and charting is necessary to support the Federal Government's economic diversification initiative through maritime security, trade and transport.

While saying the indigenous survey and chart will lead to safety on our waters and boost confidence of mariners, Gen Onyeuko noted that Nigeria has joined the elite group of chart producing nations in the world.

According to him, "Prior to this time all the navigational survey

and charts was surveyed and charted by the United Kingdom Hydrographic office. Some of them were conducted as back as 1938. Furthermore, Nigerian Navy took delivery of a new Ship NNS KADA.

The change of flag was carried out in UAE by the Minister of Defence and the Chief of Naval Staff. The Ship is billed to stop over in 5 ports in different nations for flag show before it berths in Nigeria. With the acquisition of this Landing Ship Tank (LST) it will give more impetus for aggressive combat patrol, policing and other duties in our coastal waters by the Nigerian Navy."

Meanwhile, troops of Operation Delta Safe in the Niger Delta waterways discovered and destroyed 30 illegal refining sites, 37 reservoirs, 31 ovens, 12 large wooden boats, 2 cooling systems, 3 receivers, 3 storage pits and b metal drums. Gen Onyeuko said 12,150,000 liters of illegal refined AGO and 4,000 liters of stolen crude oil were also recovered by the troops.

Terrorism: Court Strikes 8 of 15 counts against Kanu

An Abuja Federal High Court on Friday ruled on the terrorism charges preferred by the Federal government against Nnamdi Kanu, leader of the proscribed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).

Justice Binta Nyako struck out 8 of the 15 counts against Kanu.

The 15-count charges were bordering on terrorism and treasonable felony.

Justice Nyako while ruling on a preliminary objection filed by the IPOB leader challenging the validity of the 15-count amended charges, freed Nnamdi Kanu on 8 counts.

"In this instant preliminary objection application, I have read the counts and come to the conclusion that counts 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 14 have not disclosed any offence against the Defendant. "Counts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 15 show some allegations, which the Defendant has to answer.

"The court shall proceed to try the defendant on those counts," Justice Nyako ordered.

The Trumpet recalled that the IPOB leader has been in the custody of the Department of State Services (DSS) since June 2021.

Kanu was arrested in Kenya and repatriated to Nigeria to continue his trial before Justice Nyako.

His arrest and arraignment came as a result of agitations for the actualization of Biafra.



Kanu

Newly recruited NSCDC personnel begin training nationwide

- As NSCDC CG tasks Zonal, State Commanders on adequate preparations

All is set for the newly recruited personnel of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) to commence their training across the country. This follows the successful completion of documentation exercise that started at the beginning of February.

The Trumpet gathered that prior to the nationwide training, all the newly recruits were subjected to full documentation in batches, where their details including biometric data were captured at the

NSCDC National Headquarters Sauka, Abuja.

A statement by the Director of Public relations, DCC Odumosu Olusola, on Friday, April 8, 2022, stated that the new entrants are required to physically present themselves for basic mandatory training before proceeding for career courses at State Commands level. He added that the training programme is pre-planned and coordinated from the National Headquarters in Abuja.

DCC Olusola further stated

that in preparation for the commencement of the nationwide training, the Commandant General of NSCDC, Dr Ahmed Abubakar Audi, had directed Zonal Commanders and State Commandants to make adequate arrangements for the resumption of the training program.

"The harmonized basic training is expected to progress simultaneously for three months in different locations across the country where they will be exposed to regimental orientation

and the mandates of the Corps.

Thereafter, they will proceed in batches for more training at the various training colleges of the Corps," he said.

The Trumpet recalled that Dr Audi, in a bid to upgrade the standard of the Corps to a world class organisation through training, had with the approval of the Ministry of Interior, inaugurated a 16-member Committee made up of members of the academia, security experts amongst others to develop a standard curriculum for NSCDC Training Colleges.

The committee, which is headed by the Vice Chancellor, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Prof SB Suleiman, has submitted the first draft copy of the curriculum to the CG, who expressed delight in the assignment and promised to set up an internal committee made up of senior officers to look into it.

According to DCC Olusola, "The CG urged the new recruits to show commitment and exhibit high level of discipline during the training as this would help them to sharpen their skills for the task ahead, which is directly linked to the security of lives and protection of critical national assets and infrastructure."



Strengthening anti-corruption war in Nigeria

By EDU ABADE, BUSINESS EDITOR

As the 2023 general elections draw nearer, civil society organisations (CSOs) have stressed the need to strengthen the anti-corruption fight to engender public accountability, transparency and sustainable service delivery in the country.

To successfully achieve the goal, the Africa Network for Environment and Economic Justice (ANEEJ) in collaboration with other civil society groups and stakeholders, organised a one-day inception summit in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja, to brief stakeholders on ANEEJ Strengthening Civil Advocacy and Local Engagement (SCALE) project to spell out clear roles and communicate project goals to all stakeholders.

Prior to the meeting, ANEEJ revealed that it was responsible for anchoring the anti-corruption cluster under the SCALE project with eight cluster organisations in six states of Abia, Edo, Delta, Imo, Ondo, Rivers and the FCT, Abuja.

It explained that the project covers a five-year period from October 8, 2020 to October 7, 2025, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and being implemented by Palladium in collaboration with Nigerian resource partners.

In his opening remarks titled: Enhancing Anti-Corruption and Social Inclusive Reform Initiatives In Nigeria, Executive Director of ANEEJ, Reverend David Ugolor, explained that the meeting was aimed at strengthening the financial, management and advocacy capacity of local civil society organisations to create a more accountable, transparent, peaceful and democratic Nigeria with more effective and efficient public service delivery.

"We consider this project is an important one that seeks to promote and engage in anti-corruption policy reforms at both the national and sub-national levels. The SCALE project is a five-year project being implemented by Palladium and its resource partners with funds from USAID. It is designed to enhance local civil society organizations' ability to be positive and responsible change agents in Nigeria.

"It is designed following the anchor cluster model adopted by Palladium to promote and engage in anti-corruption policy reforms. ANEEJ is the anchor for the Anti-Corruption cluster under the SCALE project working with eight cluster organisations in Abia, Edo, Delta, Imo, Ondo, Rivers and the FCT, Abuja," he stated.

He also explained that the cluster organisations are 21st Century Community Empowerment for youth and Women Initiative, Abuja; Community Empowerment and Development Initiative (CEDI), Warri, Delta State; Community Heritage Watch for Development Initiative (KAI) Akure, Ondo State and Christian Fellowship and Care Foundation (CFCF), Owerri, Imo State.

Others are Foundation for Environmental Rights, Advocacy and Development (FENRAD), Aba, Abia State; Gender and Development Action (GADA) Port Harcourt, Rivers State; Joint Association of Persons With Disability (JONAPWD), Edo State Chapter and New Apostolic Church Centre for Development (NCD),



Benin City, Edo State.

Ugolor added that besides the anti-corruption component, the SCALE project was also designed to address reforms, as well as issues of transparency and accountability in the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and six oil and gas producing states of Abia, Delta, Edo, Imo, Rivers and Ondo.

"This explains why we have invited officials from these institutions to the meeting, as important stakeholders of the project. Interventions will include advocacy for passage of pending Anti-Corruption Bills, the NDDC Act Amendment Bill, among others currently before the National Assembly.

"The project will also support oversight and implementation of the Nigeria's International anti-corruption and asset recovery commitments; Oil and Gas Producing Areas Development Commissions (PADECS) among others. Our cluster will also advocate for the mainstreaming of anti-corruption issues into the country upcoming 2023 general elections discourse," he said.

He charged all presidential and gubernatorial aspirants in the 2023 general elections to tell Nigerians how they plan to tackle corruption, ensure transparency and accountability in governance if they win their respective political position.

Ugolor also urged political parties to tell Nigerians their plans toward anti-corruption reforms as they campaign around the country seeking the support of Nigerians ahead of the polls.

The inception meeting was facilitated by Deputy Executive Director of ANEEJ, Leo Atakpu with assistance from the Assistant Director, Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Mrs. Ebi Ake, who represented the Acting Managing Director; representative of the Chairman, Delta State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (DESOPADEC), Bawo Yalaju; Executive Director, Community Empowerment and Development Initiative

(CEDI), Mrs. Onose Martha.

In his presentation, Atakpu cited the theory of change, which illustrates that: "If CSOs build capacity and work collaboratively and if they effectively engage government institutions to advocate reforms and there is enabling environment and government is receptive to CSOs, using the Multi-Stakeholder Platform of OGP, CSOs can influence government in key anti-corruption reforms, which will improve transparency, accountability and service delivery."

He also highlighted the key strategies and approach as well as activities to achieve the project's goals and objectives.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Officer for the project, Sandra Eguagie, in her presentation, highlighted the plan for the project cycle, which she said, include indicators and units of measurement of the indicators and success.

She concluded by stating the social value of the project, which is the number of persons lifted from poverty through anti-corruption activities, infrastructure development and social inclusion as a result of interventions emanating from the project.

"Clear roles and project goals and objectives were communicated to key stakeholders. Stakeholders now have clearer understanding of the ANEEJ-SCALE Enhancing Anti-corruption and Social Inclusive Reforms Initiatives in Nigeria project. They expressed interest in working with ANEEJ at all levels to deliver on this project and fight corruption, as it has killed the country," she added.

National Coordinator of Publish What You Pay Campaign (PWYP) in Nigeria, Comrade Taiwo Otitelaye, Dr. Palterson Ogon of the NDDC, representatives of Civil Society Organisations, government officials, journalists and People Living With Disabilities (PLWDs).

In their good will messages, Ake appreciated ANEEJ for the invitation to the event saying that the NDDC was disposed and

inclined to the project, which focuses on social inclusive reforms in the Niger Delta States as it aligns with the commission's objectives to positively impact members of the communities and bring development to the region.

She stated that the commission will identify with anything that will bring succor and a sense of responsibility to the people of the region assuring that the constitutional review of the NDDC Act would ensure internal best services for service delivery and expressed readiness to work with ANEEJ to actualize this.

Also, representative of DESOPADEC, Yalaju thanked ANEEJ for convening the event, saying that as an interventionist agency, it was concerned about infrastructure development and also as a grassroots agency, partnering with ANEEJ was a welcome development. He stated that he will relate the outcome of the meeting to the Chairman for appropriate action.

On her part, Executive Director of CEDI, Mrs. Martha Onose, who spoke on behalf of the cluster members, commended ANEEJ for the project, adding that working with ANEEJ on the SCALE Project remained a big plus for the organisation.

Executive Secretary of the Administration of Criminal Justice Monitoring Committee (ACJMC), Sulaiyman Dawuda, who was represented by Joshua Dada, expressed delight to be invited to the meeting pointing out that the ACJA supervises criminal justice in Nigeria and was also interested in anti-corruption crusade.

He further stated that the ACJA has been making reforms in the legislature through advocacy for the amendment of various bills and that progress is being made with continued advocacy since advocacy never ends.

Participants recommended that traditional rulers should be considered during advocacy visits because they represent various oil communities, while youth demography should be actively engaged in the implementation of the project in the communities since they constitute over 60 per cent of the population.

They also canvassed inclusion of People Living With Disabilities (PLWDs) should be invited and trained and involved during advocacy and partnership at all levels should be encouraged so that people can raise flag when and where necessary.

"Linking anti-corruption to the 2023 election is important, especially assets declaration by candidates. Politicians should declare their assets before and after their tenure and there should be increased public awareness in OGP NAP 2 as well as in NOCOPO, more so, government portal should be accessible to the citizens.

"NDDC projects should reflect the needs assessments of the communities and not that of the National Assembly. There is need for Nigerians to hold their representatives accountable, especially with respect to the projects they execute in their communities to know if those projects are based on needs assessment of the communities or whether they have been replaced by their representatives," they said.

They also advocated the inclusion of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) as a tool to track anti-corruption, while compliance with the provisions of the electoral act should be a component of the indicators of success in the anti-corruption fight.



UBA holds 60th AGM, pledges to create more value for shareholders

United Bank for Africa (UBA) Plc has assured shareholders and investors of its unwavering commitment to sustain its current growth trajectory even as its efforts at business diversification across the continent and beyond continues to yield increasing returns.

Group Chairman, Tony Elumelu, who made this declaration at UBA's 60th Annual General Meeting, which was held at Transcorp Hilton Hotel, Abuja, noted that the bank's strategic investment decisions over the past few years have indeed translated to huge returns for its investors, despite the challenging business environment witnessed in the last two years.

"I am proud of how as a Group, we have been able to further consolidate on the new capabilities we have built, novel customer solutions we have deployed, efficiency gains recorded and the growth prospects we have leveraged from a recovering world," Elumelu stated, adding "These were the building blocks for the very strong financial performance and the growth delivered by your Group in 2021, further confirming the wisdom of the

investments we made and the strategy we have pursued, to ensure the diversification and sustainability of our business model."

Expressing his delight to shareholders and customers who have stood with UBA for almost eight decades, Elumelu remained confident of the bank's capacity to sustain this momentum especially as economic activities recover from the impact of the Covid -19 pandemic.

"Our goal is to continue to build strong brand loyalty with our customers and create additional value for our shareholders, whose underlying support has positioned UBA for continued growth," the Chairman noted.

UBA's Group Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Kennedy Uzoka, who went into details about the improved performance of the bank's subsidiaries in the financial year under consideration, said, "We are happy that the global community recognises the role our Group is playing in the transformation of the African economic landscape through innovative and customer focused banking services."

He pointed out that the bank's business in the United Kingdom

had specifically witnessed remarkable expansion, adding "As from July 2021, UBA UK started making profit, and even to date, they are still doing well, and the same can be said for many of our African subsidiaries. The truth is that we are driven by the opportunities and potential in each of the geographies that we invested in, and we are happy with what we have achieved so far'.

Shareholders who spoke at the meeting including Sir Sunny Nwosu, Alhaji Farouk Umar, Mr. Nonah Awoh, Mr. Patrick Ajuda, Mrs. Bisi Bakare and Chief Timothy Adesiyun, were unanimous in their commendation of the board and management of UBA, for the impressive financials which have translated to higher dividends for shareholders.

"Despite the economic situation UBA has been able to grow profitability and increase its customer base. If you compare the dividend with the share price of UBA, you will see that our dividend yield is very high. No bank in Nigeria has been able to achieve this, and I therefore commend the UBA board," Umar noted in his remarks.

At the end of the 2021 financial

year, UBA's Profit Before Tax was impressive with a 20.3 percent growth to N153.1 billion, compared to N127.3 billion at the end of the 2020 financial year; while Profit After Tax rose by 8.7 percent to N118.7 billion in 2021, compared to N109.2 billion recorded the previous year. As a result, the Bank proposed a final dividend of 80 kobo for every ordinary share of 50 kobo for the financial year ended December 31, 2021, bringing the total dividend for the year to N1.00 as the Bank had earlier paid an interim dividend of 20kobo.

United Bank for Africa Plc is Africa's global bank, offering banking services to more than twenty seven million customers, across over 1,000 business offices and customer touch points in 20 African countries. With a presence in the United States of America, the United Kingdom and France and its more recent operating license in the United Arab Emirates, UBA is connecting people and businesses across Africa through retail; commercial and corporate banking; innovative cross-border payments and remittances; trade finance and ancillary banking services.

Indomie celebrates mothers, unveils 'unconditional love' campaign

Leading noodles brand, Indomie Noodles has commenced a new campaign aimed at celebrating the unconditional love between mothers and their children.

The campaign, which started online with 'unconditional love' as its harsh tag, took most Nigerians by storm, as it trended for days and ranked as the number one online content with people sharing stories of the unconditional love from their mothers.

A poll was conducted on Twitter to determine the best expression of unconditional love with categories such as mother's love, love for football, relationship love and love for food. The mother's love won the unconditional love poll by 84 per cent.

Besides the online engagement, Indomie noodles collaborated with the Lagos State government-owned Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) to offer free rides to mothers at selected terminals from March 24 to March 27, 2022.

The climax of the campaign was the release of a new television commercial on unconditional love, just as it saw Indomie celebrate mothers at the 2022 Mothers' Day celebration.

Group Corporate Communications and Events Manager, Dufil Prime Food Plc, Temitope Ashiwaju, said: "A mother's love is unconditional even when the children do not deserve it. They express their love to their kids in different forms, especially with delicious bowls of Indomie.

Mothers are always relentlessly performing their duties towards ensuring the well-being of their children and family day - in and day - out without fail or break even at their own expense," he stated.

He described the campaign as an emotional reflection on mothers' unconditional love for their children despite all their shortcomings and how Indomie has been quite handy as a bargaining tool, especially when mothers need to negotiate terms with their children.

Ashiwaju further explained that the new commercial exposes the unconditional love between a mother and a child right from birth through the upbringing and taking care of them despite some of the challenges they face.

"We are confident that the new theme of the campaign will adequately showcase the special love of mothers for their children, even as it will help to engender a better society," he said.



L-R: Non-Executive Directors – Erelu Angela Adebayo, Ms Angela Aneke, Mrs Owanari Duke; Group Managing Director/CEO, Mr. Kennedy Uzoka; Group Chairman, Mr Tony Elumelu, CON; Non-Executive Directors –Hajia Aisha Hassan Baba and Mrs Caroline Anyanwu, at the 60th Annual General Meeting of the Bank held in Abuja.

CBN cautions Nigerians against illegal financial operators

Stories by JOHNMARK UKOKO

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has cautioned Nigerians against patronising Illegal Financial Operators (IFOs), saying the consequences should be better imagined than experienced.

Its Financial Services Regulation Coordinating Committee (FSRCC) specifically drew attention of members of the

public to the worrisome activities of the IFOs, which it said, constituted grave risk to public confidence and stability of the financial system.

The FSRCC, therefore, warned Nigerians in particular and members of the general public to refrain from dealing with unlicensed or illegal financial operators, who lure and defraud people through offer of extraordinary returns on investments.

"Members of the public are advised to visit CBN website, Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and other relevant member agencies of the FSRCC to verify the registration and license status of such companies and schemes before investing in them.

"You are also advised to report any individual or entities suspected to be involved in such nefarious activities to

the law enforcement agencies. Financial Regulatory agencies shall continue to carry out all necessary due diligence before registering and licensing any operator under their regulatory purview," it stated.

It will be recalled that several innocent Nigerians and foreigner have been defrauded by such firms that promised their customers mouth-watering incentives only to end up being defrauded.

Insurance operator flays NAICOM over N100,000 advert fee

An insurance operator who spoke on condition of anonymity has expressed displeasure over introduction of N 100, 000 advert processing fees recently introduced by the National Insurance Commission (NAICOM).

The fee, which was announced through a circular issued by NAICOM, took effect from April 1, 2022.

An insurance operator with one of the insurance forms told The Trumpet that the fees would discourage most underwriting companies from advertising their products or services.

He said: "The circular is coming at a time when the insurance regulator has accused the underwriters of not doing enough on awareness campaign."

"One wonders if the fees would be refunded when advert copies failed the vetting process. The commission should evolve strategies to enhance their operations, especially now that businesses are not doing well."

According to him, his company presently is working on 10 advert copies, which would amount to N10 million.

The source noted that the firm would also seek approval from the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON), which usually collects N25,000 per advert copy, adding that means the company would pay another N2.5 million to APCON.

The circular with reference number: NAICOM /CFI / CCMD/ AAF/ 001 dated March 28,2022 titled: *Advert Processing Fees*, signed on behalf of the Commissioner of Insurance, Sunday Thomas by Head, Corporate Communications and Marketing Development, Rasaq Salami, was sent to all insurance companies in the country.

It stated that in accordance with the provision of Section 74 of the Insurance Act 2003, which empowers it to review, vet and approve all advert copies of insurance companies before exposure, it had performed the role over the years, deploying its resources towards achieving the mandate.

NAICOM said in the light of the foregoing, it hereby notifies all insurance and reinsurance companies in Nigeria that henceforth, an application processing fees of N100, 000 only, would now be charged on every advert request per copy.

It, therefore, urged operators to take cognisance of the development effective April 1, 2022.

Expert blames erratic power supply on political interference, lack of technical capacity

Stories by JOHNMARK UKOKO

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Centre for the Promotion of Private Enterprises (CPPE), Muda Yusuf, has advocated review of the power sector policies to urgently address the crippling energy crisis in the country.

He said the power sector reform has not delivered the desired outcomes and as such, the citizens' expectations have not been met.

"The experience has given privatisation a bad name. There are issues of due diligence, technical capacity, financial capacity, political interface, metering issues, estimated and arbitrary billings, payment defaults to the electricity Generating Companies (GenCos), commercial losses, electricity theft, technical losses, cost-reflective tariff and the economics of private sector investments," he stated.

Yusuf also raised concerns about the capacity of the Nigerian Bulk Electricity Trading

(NBET) Plc to effectively play its role of providing liquidity to support the country's electricity supply chain.

This is contained in the CPPE's first quarter (Q1) of 2022 economic review signed by Muda Yusuf and made available to The Trumpet in Lagos.

He stressed that evidently there are diverse internal and external variables impeding the achievement of the desired outcomes of the power sector reform, adding that there is need for more holistic approach to the multifarious challenges hampering power delivery.

He said the there should be greater emphasis on off grid solutions in order to ensure the decentralisation of the power sector, insisting that the current model of high dependence on the national grid had not effectively served the economy, adding that the country was too vast for the highly centralised regime of national grid.

Yusuf argued that the continued ownership and control of



Muda Yusuf

the transmission component of the transmission component of the power supply chain is also a challenge to grapple with.

He, therefore, urged rapid promotion of renewable energy

solutions through the enactment of policies that would make it more affordable, stressing that the current high cost of acquiring renewable energy installation has been a major impediment to access of energy solutions.

"The cost of solar panels and batteries are very prohibitive. We submit that import duties and taxes on solar batteries and inverters should be scrapped to improve access to renewable energy solutions.

"Implementation of government's energy mix programme needs to be accelerated, because the power sector is critical to the economic development of the country. We are sometimes faced with a conflict between development objectives and commercial objectives.

"I believe the government still needs to provide generous financial incentives for investors in the sector because of the economic development and social impact in our economic development," he stressed.

Google unveils plans to create 1.6 million jobs in Nigeria

•To invest \$1 billion in Africa



Juliet

Director of Google West Africa Mrs. Juliet Ehimuan-Chiazor, has disclosed that Google plans to fund the Equiano subsea cables to boost Internet speed and create no fewer than 1.6 million jobs in Nigeria.

She said during her visit with her team from Google West Africa to the Minister of Communications and Digital Economy Prof. Isa Ali Pantami in Abuja.

Ehimuan-Chiazor visited Pantami to update him on the activities of Google in the country.

This was disclosed in a statement issued by the Technical Assistant, Research & Development to the minister, saying: "She updated the minister on Google's commitment to invest \$1 billion in Africa in the next five years begging from October 2022.

"The investment includes funding of the Equiano Subsea Cable, expected to create a five-fold increase in average Internet speed in Nigeria and 1.6 million jobs.

Equiano, whose name was inspired by a Nigerian, is being launched at different points on the continent like a road construction being launched as the project progresses.

"Nigeria is a major landing point for the cable and the launch of this is a major milestone is expected to take place in April 2022," she said.

She further informed the minister of Google's support for the technology ecosystem in Nigeria through skills development programmes and grants, adding that over six million Nigerians have benefitted from other digital skills initiatives and that Google's plans to reach 10 million Nigerians.

Responding, Pantami assured Google that the Federal Government would continue to promote regulations that support development and technological innovations.

Japanese corporation seals deal to secure 25% of Nigeria's gas sector

A Japanese Helios Investment Partners has completed 25 per cent deal in Axxela to Sojitz Corporation, a leading conglomerate of investment trading houses listed in on the Japan Stock Exchange in Tokyo.

Helios would retain 75 per cent in Axxela, one of the largest private sector gas distributors in Nigeria.

The transaction makes Solitz firm a significant equity investor in Africa, indicating its growth ambitions on the continent and serving as a blueprint for future collaboration in Africa between Helios and Sojitz across several sectors.

As like-minded shareholders, Helios and Sojitz expect to further boost Axxela's businesses by leveraging Sojitz expertise in developing gas and power infrastructure projects

and providing lower-carbon energy solutions to industrial customers globally.

Axxela is a pioneering energy infrastructure company at the forefront of delivering cleaner, cheaper and more reliable energy to industrial customers in West Africa and beyond.

Its operations support the utilisation of Nigeria's vast domestic gas resources to drive industrial growth, while also facilitating fuel transition by industries to gas reducing CO₂, Nitric Oxide and sulfur oxide emissions, which enable the transition to lower carbon economy.

Axxela enabled its customers to reduce their CO₂ emissions by 1.7 million tons between 2018 and 2022 by switching their energy sources from diesel or fossil fuel.

It commenced operations

in 2001 and currently serves over 200 industrial customers across key industrial hubs in Lagos State, Port Harcourt, Rivers State and Sagamu, Ogun State providing comprehensive energy offerings across pipelines gas and compressing Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG).

It also supplies gas to power utilities and industries in the West Africa region, taking advantage of its status as designated shopper on the West Africa Gas Pipeline (WAGP), a regional gas pipeline spanning Republic of Benin, Togo and Ghana.

Commenting on the project, Senior Partner at Helios, Ogbemi Ofuya said: "We feel privileged to enter into this partnership with Sojitz to drive further growth of Axxela's businesses.

"This transaction demon-

strates the value of our strategy to build market-leading strategically important businesses, which become highly sought after by global investors seeking to invest in Africa or grow their presence on the continent."



Ogbemi Ofuya



Executive Order 11 on maintenance of public buildings takes off

•Opens new vista in construction value chain, say experts

Stories by **ONYEBUCHI SAMPSON**

In what has been described as a major breakthrough in the built environment, President Muhammadu Buhari has signed Executive Order 11 on maintenance of national public buildings.

Speaking shortly before signing, he directed all Ministries, Departments and Agencies of government (MDAs) to set up maintenance departments, in line with provisions of the new Order.

He said the Order now gives legal backing to the country's national maintenance policy, following its earlier approval by the Federal Executive Council.

The president said government had already started utilising the policy to give facelift to some of its buildings, like the federal secretariat, Abuja, and 24 others spread across the country.

He said: "The office of the Head of Civil Service of the Federation has approved the establishment of a department of federal public assets maintenance as a vital step in support of the implementation of this national policy, which is unprecedented in our history and approach to maintenance."

"In order to ensure the fullest implementation and impact of the policy, it is my pleasure to sign this Executive Order that ties maintenance directly to our economy.

"By this Order, I expect MDAs to set out and ensure the operation of their maintenance departments and make necessary procurements for their maintenance in accordance with the provisions of the Public Procurement Act."

Before his assent to the new order, experts in the built environment have been urging the National Assembly to come out with legislation on issues about facility management in order to institutionalise it and grow the industry.

According to them, facility managements are capable of contributing towards reducing facilities costs, increasing the capacity to generate revenue and improving the productivity, image and core business of the organisation.

One of such advocates, Dr. Muhammed Kassim Olatunde Balogun, the Managing Director of Global Property and Facilities International Limited (Global PFI), an integrated

services company, with expertise in Integrated facilities management, property management and Infrastructure.

He described the signing as great news and congratulations to the built industry as well as to the Minister of Works and Housing, Mr. Babatunde Fashola.

According to Dr. Balogun, the minister had assembled everyone in the industry, MDAs, State Ministries of Works, Tertiary Institutions, Directors of Works and Planning in Abuja, where 'we came up with the national policy on maintenance.

"I am delighted that the policy document has now become a legal instrument and our desire to make maintenance of public buildings a major national activity has been achieved.

"We look forward to the creation of the office of the facility manager of the Federation," he said.

President, Nigerian Institute of Architects (NIA), Architect Enyi Ben-Eboh, said the recent signing of Executive Order 11 by the President of the Federal Republic of



President Buhari



Ben-Eboh

Nigeria is cherry news to those in the architecture family in particular and the construction industry at large as most of the public buildings have not left much to desire in the past.

Ben-Eboh stressed that buildings like humans, require constant maintenance to achieve their optimum lifespan and not constitute a hazard to its occupants.

He said: "Part II of the National Building Code

breaks down the technical processes in building procurement into four parts; the pre-design stage, the design stage, the construction stage and lastly the post-construction stage.

"This underscores the fact that the post-construction stage is as important in maintaining the integrity of the building as the other three stages even though lip service has been paid to this stage over the years.

"Every building is

required to have a maintenance manual, which stipulates the frequency and mode of intervention in dealing with all the components of the building as obtained in the aviation industry where aircrafts are required to undergo various classes of checks at periodic intervals to remain airworthy.

"I have seen a number of buildings whose steel reinforcements initially hidden in concrete are

now exposed and corroding with its attendant implication for subsequent collapse.

"Another recent case in point is the embarrassing night time power outage at one of our international airports when passengers were arriving, due to aging power cables.

"As architects, this executive order opens a new vista of opportunities in job creation within the construction value chain which had hitherto been neglected or at best limited to large corporate organisations in the private sector and at the end of the day, society will be better for it and our public assets will not only last longer, but be user-friendly."

The NIA president, said he would recommend legislation in the future to make it mandatory for building owners to pay some attention to the maintenance of their buildings much in the same way as we are required to periodically renew our vehicle roadworthiness certificates to safeguard society from the harmful effects of building failures as a result of lack of maintenance.

LAWMA boss tasks local engineers on fabrication of bailing machines

Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Lagos Waste Management Authority (LAWMA), Mr. Ibrahim Odumboni, has challenged innovative engineers in the state and the country, to design affordable bailing machines for plastic materials, to make recycling business more attractive and less capital intensive.

He also frowned on the use of brown-coloured pet bottles, for the packaging of plastic drinks, urging such companies to stick to white transparent ones.

Odumboni made the observations in his keynote address, at a stakeholders' consultative forum for plastic recycling value-chain, organised by Giz, a German concern, at Sheraton Hotels, Ikeja.

He observed that the bailing component of the recycling process was a vital one, and locally fabricated machines would go a long way in simplifying the process, since they would come

cheaper and more easily maintained.

According to him, bailing is an important component of the plastic recycling process.

"We need our innovative and enterprising engineers, to come up with locally designed and manufactured bailing machines, that would be durable and affordable for our recycling investors. It will be easy to maintain them. If we have this, the business of plastic recycling will gradually become less capital intensive and better domesticated. This is my challenge to our local engineers and I know they can do it.

"Honestly too, I do not understand why some manufacturers use brown-coloured pet bottles to package drinks for us to consume. Why? You do not see this in the UK or Dubai for example. What is wrong with using white transparent pet bottles? Please, such drink producers should take a

second look," Odumboni said.

Speaking further, he disclosed that no less than 500 bags of fertilizer was daily produced from organic waste at a LAWMA facility in Odogunyan, a suburb of Lagos, adding that several tonnes of briquette from sawdust, was also daily produced from another LAWMA facility at Agbowo, also a suburb of Lagos.

The LAWMA boss enjoined the stakeholders', to shun needless competition and work in synergy and collaboration, to tap the huge economic opportunity in the business, noting that there was more than enough floating pet bottles, to go round all investors in the value-chain.

Odumboni took a swipe at some Non Government Organisations, exploiting the process with their cosmetic engagements, describing them as a burden, with their sharp and

ill-intentioned practices, urging them to be truthful, honest and fair, in their chosen endeavour.

Also speaking, one of the panelists, Mrs. Agharese Onaghise, executive secretary of Food and Beverage Recycling Alliance, FBRA, noted that the 22-member group had been self-funding in its various interventions for plastic recovery,

promising that the group would collaborate more, to stabilize the recycling value-chain, for fair reward to all stakeholders and investors.

The programme was attended by several prominent facilitators and panelists including, Dr. (Mrs.) Dolapo Fasawe, general manager, Lagos Environmental Protection Agency (LASEPA).



Ibrahim Odumboni

LAWMA urges Lagos Island residents to use refuse bins

Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Lagos Waste Management Authority (LAWMA), Mr. Ibrahim Odumboni, has challenged households in Lagos Island to acquire waste bins, for proper keeping and easy evacuation of their waste.

He threw the challenge during a stakeholders meeting organised by LAWMA, at Lagos Island West Local Council Iso, Onigari, where he insisted that the real headache behind waste mess around the Island, was lack of waste bins in respective homes.

Odumboni said, if residents had waste bins in every home, properly containerizing their waste, it would prevent litter, which is common sight in Lagos Island, and enable easy evacuation.

According to him, the problem with waste management on the island is non-availability of waste bins in households. If you have waste bins, you can properly containerize your waste and there will be no litter everywhere. It will make evacuation easy and everywhere will be clean. Lagos Island cannot be left this way, we have to make a change."

He said it was not mandatory to purchase LAWMA bins, but just ensure they have any bin to properly package their waste.

Responding, the council chairman, Hon. Tijani Adetoyese Olusi, represented by his vice, Hon. Mohammed Eshinloken, hinted of the recruitment of youths as drainage guards to clear the channels around the Island, adding that it was a way of empowering the youths and keeping the environment clean.

"We have recruited youths here as drainage guards to clear our gutters. This will help to frequently desilt the drainage channels and improve our environment. We are also appealing to the government to help find a lasting solution to environmental pollution," added.

LAWMA's Executive Director, Finance, Mr. Kunle Adebiyi, and the Chief Technical Officer, Dr. Olorunwa Tijani, both enjoined residents to enhance environment-friendly habits and stop patronising cart pushers.

The Community Development Committee chairman for Lagos Island West, Chief Abu Elemoro, commended LAWMA for the stakeholders meeting, and called for a continuation of such consultation, to arrest the people's attention.

The event was attended by Iyaloja General Lagos Island West, Alhaja Rasikat Abeje Lasisi, Supervisor for the environment; Alhaji Audu Atanda, among others.

FG allocates houses to 1994 Nations Cup winning Eagles

•Pledges proper maintenance of estates

Stoies by **ONYEBUCHI SAMPSON**

After 28 years of waiting, the Federal Government has commenced allocation of houses to 22 members of Super Eagles in the 34 states of their choices for winning the 1994 African Cup of Nations.

President Muhammadu Buhari disclosed this while commissioning 80 units of low-cost housing estate, located at three-arm zone in Minna, the Niger State capital

The President explained that the Federal Government has made a promise to provide housing for the eagles for winning the African Cup of Nations, but the promise remained unfulfilled.

Represented by Minister for State for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Zubairu Dada, he stated that the Federal Government felt proud and privileged to redeem the promise it made 28 years ago.

He said: "It is better late than never, and I have approved the allocation of houses to 22 members of the Super Eagles in National Housing estates



Fashola

located in any state of choice. Their keys and title documents will be handed over at the commissioning in their states, while the remaining of the housing will be allocated to members of the public."

President Muhammadu Buhari added that in the states where the houses have been completed, government has awarded contracts to facility managers to ensure that the estates are maintained and kept in good condition.

Niger State Governor, Abubakar Sani Bello, who was represented by his deputy, Ahmed Mohammed Ketso,

said the 80 housing units in the phase 1 of the National Housing programme will go a long way in alleviating housing challenges in the state through a national housing fund.

He noted that every Nigerian, above 21 years that is in paid employment is entitled to a low interest government funded loan through the Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria (FMBN).

"As a state government, we have since provided land for the implementation of the phase two and three of the programme in the state," Bello said.

Earlier, Minister of

Works and Housing, Babatunde Raji Fashola, said the Federal Government had completed and handed over 80 units of housing comprising, four units of one bedroom, 52 units of two bedroom, using stabilised earth bungalows.

The minister, who spoke through Director of Urban and Regional Development of the Ministry, Dr. Mohammed K. Mohammed, said the survey of the project revealed a prevalent need for bungalows in the North and flats in the South.

Fashola further said the survey revealed the need for space such that one bedroom unit has 60-70 square metres, while two bedroom units have 76-103 square metres.

He assured that government has offered all the housing units to members of the general public in a non-discriminatory way by opening the National Housing portal at <https://nhp.worksandhousing.gov.ng/>, to ensure that those interested are not inhibited by any artificial obstacles, stressing that out that allocations will be made on the basis of those who apply and pay on a first come first serve basis.



Martin Brack

Berger names Hausemann as new financial director

Engineering construction company, Julius Berger Nigeria Plc, has announced a change of corporate guard at its financial directorate at its head office, Abuja.

Martin Brack, who has served the company as its Financial Director since December 16, 2017, has been replaced by Christian Hausemann.

The company has also notified the Security and Exchange Commission (SEC) of the appointment by the Board of Hausemann, another veteran of the financial operations of Julius Berger as Director and its new finance director.

At a well-attended

transition party held at the Bon Elvis Hotel Abuja last week, the change of guard at the financial directorate of the company was operationally consummated.

In attendance at the colourful night of lively, healthy, encouraging and positive speeches and eulogies for both Brack and Hausemann were members of the company's executive management and the Board of Directors, Corporate Chief Executives Officers (CEOs), executive directors and other senior officials from the banking and financial sector and other key private sector operators as well as public officials.

Chairman of Julius Berger, Mr Mutiu Sunmonu set the cheerful tone for the lively evening when he welcomed invited guests to the event.

Managing Director, Engr. Dr. Lars Richter, traced Martin Brack's career journey with Julius Berger Nigeria to the year 2000, having joined the Nigerian operations from Bilfinger Berger, where he worked for some time as Head of the Controlling Department and then as Head of the Commercial Department of GWK Plan, an engineering office within Bilfinger Berger.

Richter said Martin began his career in

Julius Berger Nigeria at the Commercial Department in head office, where his determination and negotiation skills helped to significantly accelerate customer payments and improve the company's cash flow.

His success soon led to his appointment as the Commercial Manager of the then newly established Facility Services Nigeria (FSN) division, where he established reporting and controlling tools for maintenance projects, negotiated contracts and supported to realize the business plan and acquisition strategy of the facility services business together with the executive management.

We will support El-Rufai's call for Mercenaries if FG don't act



Alhaji Zuberu Idris Abdulrauf-Danmasani Birnin-Gwari

By **GABRIEL OMONHINMIN**

Birnin-Gwari Local Government Area of Kaduna State, in North West Nigeria and one of the highly terrorized areas in the country.

The Local Government Area headquarter in Birnin-Gwari town has been under attack several times, to the extent that no functional financial institution or outlet is in the local government.

Birnin-Gwari has an area of 6,185 kilometres and a population of 252,363 according to the 2006 Census. It is an agrarian society, which used to be one of the country's food baskets before the peace of the area was destroyed by bandits and terrorists.

A week before March 28, 2022, when the Abuja-Kaduna train attacked in Kateri-Rijana area of Kaduna state, about 200 people were killed in Chikun area of Birnin-Gwari in the Kaduna state by terrorists.

The Abuja-Kaduna train attack that followed a week later caused the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) to briefly halt train operations along the route. Hundreds of passengers, who were on their way to Kaduna were either kidnapped or killed in Kateri Dutse, outskirts of Kaduna state,

where the train was attacked. Several others were injured by the bandits/terrorists, who allegedly bombed the Abuja-Kaduna bound train.

Approximately 970 passengers, were on board the train, out of which several other passengers were alleged to have been abducted by the marauding bandits.

An apparently frustrated and worried Governor of Kaduna State, Mallam Nasir El-Rufai, shortly after meeting with President Muhammadu Buhari over the incident in the Aso Rock Villa in Abuja, told newsmen, "if the Federal Government fails to address the insecurity in the country, especially in Kaduna State Government will be left with no other option, but to bring in foreign mercenaries to end terrorism, in the northern part of the county.

He added, "With the deteriorating security situation, I will be left with no other choice but to take action to protect the lives and property of my people."

The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) wasted no time, in rejecting El-Rufai's plan to bring in foreign mercenaries to help tackle insecurity in the State.

In a statement, the Chairman, Kaduna chapter of CAN, Reverend John Joseph Hayab,

appealed to Buhari, to call the State Governor to order to avoid a bigger security problem.

Surprisingly, Alhaji Zuberu Idris Abdulrauf-Danmasani Birnin-Gwari, Kaduna State, one of the Chiefs in Mai-Gwari's Palace called Palace Watch not only to express his concern over the unabating terrorist attacks in the area but to express his firm support for Governor El-Rufai's proposal on the deployment of mercenaries in Kaduna state.

According to him, "except the Federal Government of Nigeria wakes up, and takes decisive step to halt the menacing cases of banditry, kidnapping and terrorism in Kaduna state, the entire areas he described as conjugal states might just be left with no option than to hire mercenaries to flush out these bandits and terrorists in our forest".

Abdulrauf stated that these conjugal States are made up of Kaduna, Zamfara, Kastina, Sokoto, Kebbi, Niger and the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja. These States, according to him, might support the Kaduna State Governor's proposal on his quest to hire mercenaries to tackle the insecurity problems in these areas.

Abdulrauf, who is presently planning to contest the Birnin-Gwari/Chikun Federal Constituency in the forthcoming elections, had a one on one interview with the Trumpet Newspapers Palace Watch over this development.

Palace Watch: Since the inception of Governor Nasir El-Rufai's administration, there has never been love lost between the people of Birnin-Gwari and the Kaduna State Government. Why the sudden change and why are your people now supporting the Governor's quest to bring in foreign mercenaries to defend the people of Kaduna State?

Abdulrauf: We were not and will never quarrel with His Excellency, Governor El-Rufai. At the time we disagree with his government, we were only worried, that he deliberately refused to act, or take decisive steps to help solve the problem of insecurity which was on the rise then, and has now rendered the economy of our entire arrears useless. As we speak, there is no longer economic life in the entire Birnin-Gwari area of Kaduna state.

For years now, we have suffered all manner of inhuman treatments at the hands of criminals, who are behind these banditries, cattle rustling, kidnapping and now terrorism. Up to the extent that the economy of Birnin-Gwari, Chikun and all the surrounding

areas, now lies prostrate. All efforts by my Emir and our people to get the Kaduna state and the federal government to act, or take decisive measures against these terrorists failed then. The state government and the government at the centre in Abuja did not deal with the situation then, with the commensurate force that was required, that was why all the criminal activities in these areas, now festered with time to become full-blown terrorism.

Now that the state Governor has now realized that we were not just making noise, that the problem of these bandits/terrorists, is a big issue, we have no other option than to support our Governor.

Governor El-Rufai has since visited our area to tender an apology to us, for his government's inaction in the past. What else do we need from him? We just have to support him, especially now, that he is ready to do the needful to save the lives and properties of our people.

About a week before the attack on the Abuja Kaduna train, well over 200 indigenes of the Birnin-Gwari area were recklessly slaughtered by these same terrorists.

If you can still recollect, sometimes in 2018, when the problem of banditry was on the increase in our areas, you spoke with our Emir, His Royal Highness, Zubair Jibril Mai-Gwari II. The Emir in that same interview told you the true situation of the criminal activities of these bandits, instead of being commended for painting the true pictures of what was going on in our communities, the Emir was issued a query by the Kaduna State Government for speaking out. Since then, the Emir has kept quiet. Sadly, the ugly situation has further deteriorated to an unbearable point. If our Emir refuses to speak out not because he is afraid, he just wants to maintain peace in his kingdom, we the Chiefs will not be forced to keep quiet, we will continue to speak out. We will continue to support any move by our Governor that will help liberate us from the hands of these wicked criminals.

Palace Watch: How serious is this problem of banditry, Kidnapping and Terrorism now in Kaduna as a whole especially as it affects Birnin-Gwari. And where are these forests located, that Governor El-Rufai, wants the Nigerian Military to bombard?

Abdulrauf: It is a very serious problem. As we speak, it is now about time that our people begin to clear their farmlands, so that they will begin to plant food crops. You know what? They hardly have access to their farmland anymore as

bandits and terrorists are all in control of those areas where they farm. For example, if they are going to commence the initial activities that lead to planting, these bandits or terrorists made sure they collect some fees from them. This is the only way they gain passage to their farmland. As if this is not enough pain on my people, when they now begin to clear their farmland, they are again made to pay a certain percentage of fees. When they are planting they again pay to gain access to their already cleared farmlands. After planting, when they are going to weed their farmlands they pay again to these bandits and terrorists. The bandits and terrorists do not want to know if they have paid them during all these stages of farming. They must pay them afresh to gain entrance into their farms. Anytime, they go to their farms they are made to cough out something. When the crops are matured for harvesting, each time, our farmers go to their farms to harvest the crops they still pay a ransom. If a farmer harvest ten bags of crops, he or she is made to part with two bags of those crops as ransom to the bandits. This has gone on for several years now, unchallenged. Any surprise, that's why most people can no longer feed themselves and their families?

For you to know, the seriousness of this problem, send a secret journalist among security agencies about this problem. It is not that the Federal Government is not aware of what is going on in our areas. On September 9th 2021, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, in a letter reference NSCDC/NHQ/INT & INVST322/2021 entitled "Update On Relocation of Boko Haram Terrorists (BHTs) To Rijana General Area in Kaduna State." Part of that letter reads as follows, "Sequel to a memo dated 2nd September 2021, recovered from the Ministry of Interior on the above subject matter, upon an intelligence report from the office of the Director-General, Department of State Security Service, National Headquarters in Abuja dated 20th August 2021 with reference No.S.314/31/B/2915.

It has been uncovered, plans by Senior Boko Haram Fighters, Ibrahim (FNU) alongside his foot soldiers to relocate from "Sambisa Forest in Borno State to Rijana Forest in Chikun Local Government Area of Kaduna State", to join their counterpart under the leadership of one Adamu Yunusa (aka Saddiqu).

In the light of the above, you are hereby directed to step up

Why I have stayed off scandal – Dr Helen Paul

Helen Paul is a superstar comedian, media personality, academia and entrepreneur who have been around for over a decade dazzling Nigerians with hilarious jokes; She is Nigeria's first comedian to have a PhD in Theatre Arts from the University of Lagos. Helen Paul became a household name after her first breakthrough came through a radio programme where she acted 'Tatafo,' a character with a child's voice and the rest is history. In this interview with OMONIYI ALLI, the Qacademician spoke about her recent induction, managing home front, and why is still investing in more books.



You came into the industry as a multi-faceted entertainer, now you have this scholarly feather in your cap. Where did your flair for education come from?

Helen: Sincerely, in most cases the people that you are surrounded by matter. My mentors are mostly scholars. I am surrounded by people who believe that if you are going to do something, do it well and understand it. I didn't like the fact that in 2004/2005 when I was trying to practice journalism, I didn't like the fact that they used to give us back seats, or when entertainers go for shows they put the camera guys behind and give them leftovers. But these are the same people that are going to bring out your message and publicize you. That is why at each event I do; I make sure my media people are in front because they are the ones that represent my image. It is not just for doing sake, I want to learn so I can help to correct things. It might be through entertainment, but I would inform you that the people you are meant to honour should not be behind just because they are not wearing branded designer clothes and all of that. In case they are even shifting people back, everything that would make them not shift me back is what I am having. As my friend would say, make sure you make it for the now so that in the future you will be celebrated.

How are you combining shuttling between America and Nigeria, academics, career and business?

Helen: The people you are surrounded with really matter. I don't have any sentiments in relationships. If you are not meeting that plan, I will cut you off. Having the right relationships help you. I am very intentional in my circle and that has helped me even in appointing staff as well, so when I am opening a store or company, I am constantly looking beyond the play. In my

playfulness, I am studying temperaments and checking out if that relationship is for a short or long term, or if it is for a season, reason or for lifetime. That is who I am and that helps me be ready if disappointment occurs.

Do all these not take a toll on your role in your family?

Helen: As I said, I am very focused on the things I am doing at every point in time. Hardly will you catch me at some events. Most times I don't attend events if I am not there to work. It is my job, and I see it as my job. I'm usually not everywhere. Yes, it is good for an artist to be everywhere, at least it would sell my face, but having my publicist and media friends make it unnecessary. If I want people to see my face, they will handle it. Of course, my husband is someone that enjoys this. When we got to America, I told him that I don't want my portfolio to be full of Nigeria; I want to do some courses. In less than seven months, during COVID, as I was finishing one course in the morning, I was resuming another one in the evening. In between all that for about 30 minutes I quickly come on Instagram Live and do my show business. But mornings I am on zoom live having classes back to back. There is always time for things, but most times we don't know how to set timetables without sentiments.

A friend cannot visit me now without telling me ahead that he is coming. I can be very strict and it is very possible to plan your life. I remember when I was running my MBA. It was almost clashing with my other activities. My MBA classes were always on Saturdays, so for that period, I was not taking Saturday shows in the morning. I wasn't taking weddings because I would go to classes at nine in the morning and we would close at four in the evening. So I would only

take shows that start at six in the evening till dawn, then on Sunday I get home and quickly go to church, and when I can't I sleep. The children also go to school in the morning and luckily for me I was able to beg my husband to let us move from Ikoyi to Yaba because we were both studying at UNILAG.

The house wasn't the kind of place we would ordinarily enjoy, but my husband agreed to it because he was also doing his courses then. As I am earning degrees my husband is doing the same. We both have like three or four masters and as I am doing my own thing in my field, he is doing his in Law. The same thing happened when we got to America. The house is always very quiet. As the children are going to school in the morning, we are on zoom. As they are returning in the evening, they also get on zoom to do their assignments. I discovered that my boys are always on the internet researching something or finding out information.

So sometimes my house can be very quiet because everyone is busy doing something. When I go out, I then wear the character of an entertainer. You can actually plan your life, no sentimental weddings, birthday attendances. If I attend, it is because I am working or the person has impacted my life in such a way that I cannot but attend. In other cases, I just send in a gift.

How long did this journey to your induction take?

Helen: It's been for years, immediately I finished my master's in Public Administration at LAUTECH. I started by joining as a member, then advancing to this point as a fellow.

Why didn't you just stop at the point of getting masters?

Helen: I believe that Theatre is not just the art of performing or entertaining but more of impartation. Of course, my primary work as a theatre practitioner is to relate to the public through acting, re-enacting what happens in our society for corrections, entertainment and information. And that is what public administration is all about, only that they don't have the performance part, so I wanted to merge the two. I also wanted to be a good blend of the town and gown; understanding people, where they are from and relating accordingly.

Asides from these two things you have touched, is there any other field you plan to bring into the fold?

Helen: They are actually not different because it is the public you are relating with, but the style is just different. So as a theatre practitioner, performance is to relate to the people to let them understand things according to their own level. I am just bringing these two together to make sure we achieve a result of making people understand our message.

You are also an ambassador for INEC. Is this your way of entering into politics?

Helen: The duty of a politician is to help, speak and stand for his or her people. I don't

necessarily have to be elected or appointed to do that. We all have that duty to relate with, help and educate people. That is my office. For now, that is not my plan.

How do you unwind?

Helen: Sometimes I have my friends or students come over to the house so that we can watch a movie. We pass silly lessons from the movie. But I think that even in my unwinding, my brain is still tuned to career and people's personal growth. I think I enjoy counselling as relaxation. Sometimes, my husband says we should travel and that is relaxing. Even then, I find a way to do a few courses while we are there even if it's just two weeks, and I register online. I believe that wherever you find yourself and your feet are touching the ground if you make up your mind to succeed, you will succeed. Whatever it is that they do there, I must learn and make it.

What is your eventual goal with all of these?

Helen: The goal is to enjoy my life and make sure I have great records of achievements, not just to impress but to have impacted lives. Look at Mother Theresa or Funmilayo Anikulapo Kuti, you can't say there is just one thing they achieved. These are strong women. That's why I am a woman; I am a multi-tasker.

How do all of these impact your children?

Helen: My children believe that mummy reads a lot and I want to read too. They also think mummy plays and pray a lot and they want to play and pray. Many times they tell people that I am quiet, and their dad would tell them "Yes, mummy is quiet at home." I make them realize that it is my job to sell the sanguine nature and not to give people my choleric nature. My students at the Helen Paul Theatre and Film Academy have come to realize that I am not a comedian. They tell me that I am strict. I will still laugh and play with you if you allow me till midnight even when I know you have an exam the following day. I believe you should have your focus. If you fail, I will still be the one to tell you why you failed because you didn't know how to draw the line. During one of my exams, I remember I distributed all the reading chapters among my roommates and told them that the best person that explains what they have read well would win N100,000. Everyone went to read while I relaxed. They all came back to download what they had read and it was as if I did the reading. People wonder how I do it when it is time for exams, but it is just wisdom and understanding the people I have. I have the right people in my circle and I know how to manage them.

How have you managed to stay scandal-free?

Helen: I am afraid of not disrespecting my people and all those watching me. The fear of the people that are my roots that I do not want to lose keeps me scandal-free. It is not that I don't want to misbehave, because that may help my brand, but when I get the brand and lose my roots, what happens?

MI out with New Single, 'Daddy'



Africa's finest hip-hop artist, M.I. Abaga who is widely heralded as Africa's most commercially successful rapper drops his single "Daddy".

A household name and one of the pioneers of hip-hop music in Africa from classic hit projects like "Talk About It" to "M.I the Movie", he is undeniably an instrumental element when defining hip-hop/rap music in Africa.

In addition to the heavily prolific songs, the African hip-hop legend is back with his first official single of the year 2022 "Daddy" to serenade the ears of his listeners.

The song with its afrobeat and rap infusion is crafted to praise women and give them enough reasons to feel themselves.

In this song, M.I. Abaga blends his ever flawless rap flow with the classic mid-tempo rhythm to leave you bobbing your head. He is accompanied by fellow collaborator Chillz who mutually blesses the ears with a catchy chorus that replays countless in your head to create an exciting masterpiece.

Speaking on the new single, M.I. Says "Daddy is a song that's here to celebrate our women and further appraise their beauty".

"Daddy" is the lead single of M.I's forthcoming project that promises to be more than exciting for his fans. This project has been specially curated to put the rapper in a new light and reaffirm his stance as one of Africa's finest artists.

The song reintroduces M.I as a renowned artist; ready to deliver lines and bars that have a good hook on listeners. As always, he is unmatched in the music industry.

Kizz Daniel announced as Brand Ambassador for legend extra stout and star radler



Legend Extra Stout and Star Radler have announced the onboarding of prominent afrobeats star Oluwatobiloba Daniel Anidugbe, popularly known as Kizz Daniel, as brand ambassador. The singer will join BB Naija's Erica Nlewedim as the face of the two brands housed with Nigeria Breweries and play an important role in strengthening its presence across Nigeria.

The signing took place at a cocktail event that preceded the Legend/Star Radler we're Outside Mix Party that was held at the Moist Beach, Oniru, Lagos.

Throughout the partnership, Kizz Daniel will be spearheading various innovative campaigns that align with both brands' ideals that encourage authenticity and originality as well as fun and excitement. The campaign, which is expected to take several creative routes will amplify the brand's exceptional qualities that allude to the use of the finest ingredients. The campaign will be released on both online and offline platforms.

Kizz Daniel launched his musical career in 2014 and has since amassed a good following with his music, as well as collaborating with some of the biggest acts to emerge from Africa, namely: Wizkid, Davido, Nasty C, Diamond Platnumz.

Excited about inking the deal, Kizz Daniel Said,

"Legend Extra Stout and Star Radler are names that speak for themselves and I am excited to be working with both of them. I feel honoured to be part of the process in terms of storytelling that inspires millions of people."

Launched in 1992 into the Nigerian market through the Nigerian Breweries, Legend Extra Stout has undergone a series of reformulations and product package facelifts that match the rich taste and appeal of stout lovers with no compromise in quality.

On her part, Portfolio Manager, Flavoured, Non-Lager and Craft, Nigerian Breweries Plc; Maria Shadeko, hinted that the ambassadorial signing with a strategic one. She said:

"Kizz Daniel's influence on contemporary afrobeat music, fashion and lifestyle are one of immense impact. Climbing through the rungs to where he is now, he has shown exceptional craftsmanship in his creative process that has already left some legacies.

"It is these qualities that we identify with and that led to his signing. It aligns with our core visions of authenticity, originality, fun and excitement. In the coming months, we hope to achieve a lot together," she concluded.

Declare state of emergency, RMD urges government

Veteran Nollywood actor, Richard Mofe Damijo, also known as RMD, has taken to social media to comment about the recent happenings in the country and as such appeal to the government on the urgent need to declare a state of emergency. RMD reflected on the recent attack on the Abuja-Kaduna railway in a lengthy Instagram post.

"My heart goes out to the families of those who lost their lives and families, the wounded and those who will be traumatized by this incident for a long time.

"At this time last year, I was on this same train to Kaduna and we talked about how unsafe life is and the risk we are taking. We are the lucky ones.

"Again, a month ago, I was on the Lagos/Ibadan train, it was the same spectre of death and attacks that plague our minds. This is not to disregard the comfort and timeliness of the train ride and how desirable it is.

"A few weeks later, we heard reports of the same train breaking down on the tracks due to lack of diesel. Again, I was lucky that this didn't happen to me. Point is, it could be anyone any day. On the road, at the airport, at the train station. Nowhere is safe anymore. This is the extent of our brokenness."

The actor in the same post spoke about the pandemonium that broke out at the Moshood Abiola Stadium in Abuja after Nigeria lost to Ghana in the world cup qualifier match. He stated that Nigerians are very angry and bitter and are just looking for a trigger.

"If anything is an indication of how broken we are today, then the shameful storming of the pitch and the destruction of the MKO national stadium is a clear indication. People are angry and bitter and just looking for triggers. And any boy! They are plenty.

"See the initial reaction to the quiet and clear tweet of the young doctor, who died from gunshot wounds from the train and you will see that we have lost our humanity.

"Nothing surprises and shocks us anymore. We've seen and heard it all. Ridiculousness has been enthroned by our leaders at every level.

"There is an urgent need to declare a state of emergency in this country. We are heading for the precipice and it doesn't seem like we are interested in pulling the break. After that, it's a free fall.

"The government needs to do more than just promises to apprehend the perpetrators and truly save the lives of WE THE PEOPLE."

Rita Dominic to hold wedding this April

Multiple award-winning Nollywood actress and producer, Rita Dominic and her beau, Fidelis Anosike have released pre-wedding photos.

In a statement by Rita's representatives, the couple "got engaged some time ago and has privately been putting plans together for their upcoming nuptials."

Rita's representatives also added that the couple in the coming weeks will have their wedding ceremony, Bella Naija reports.

They added that Rita's friends will

start receiving invitations for her bridal shower this week.

Rita and Anosike will be tying the knot on April 18th and 19th in Imo State.

Rita on December 26, 2020, sent social media into a frenzy when she shared some cosy photos with her partner.

Anosike is the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Folio Communications Limited, which controls Nigeria's oldest newspaper, the Daily Times.





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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	
9 x 2	112,183.69	120,597.47	7 x 4	158,608.73	170,504.38	7 x 4	145,965.10	156,912.48	14.5 x 2	124,915.92	134,284.61	
9 x 3	168,358.90	180,985.39	7 x 5	198,260.25	213,129.77	7 x 5	182,500.19	196,187.71	5 x 3	56,804.77	61,065.13	
10 x 3	187,065.45	201,095.35	8 x 2	90,633.42	97,430.92	8 x 2	73,399.58	78,904.54	6 x 3	68,170.86	73,283.67	
14.5 x 2	260,395.00	279,924.62	8 x 3	135,950.22	146,146.48	8 x 3	125,871.78	134,674.05	7 x 3	79,526.68	85,491.18	
8 x 4	199,536.48	214,501.71	8 x 4	181,266.93	194,841.95	8 x 4	167,043.40	179,022.80	8 x 3	103,375.58	111,130.80	
9 x 4	224,478.54	241,314.43	8 x 5	226,238.74	254,477.52	8 x 5	208,805.79	224,469.23	6 x 4	100,634.10	110,944.41	
10 x 4	299,302.72	321,752.57	8 x 6	271,900.48	292,008.02	8 x 6	250,284.32	269,911.09	7 x 4	120,404.56	129,434.90	
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	
8 x 5	299,304.72	321,752.57	9 x 4	203,925.29	219,219.69	9 x 4	187,921.52	202,015.71	14.5 x 3	187,057.43	201,086.73	
8 x 6	359,165.65	386,103.08	9 x 5	305,373.04	328,276.02	9 x 5	281,288.07	303,022.10	14.5 x 4	249,838.03	268,575.88	
9 x 5	404,061.37	434,365.97	9 x 6	367,065.92	394,595.86	9 x 6	337,805.68	363,141.11	7 x 5	141,001.98	161,793.93	
10 x 5	448,957.08	482,628.86	10 x 3	169,651.36	182,375.21	10 x 3	156,602.81	168,348.02	8 x 5	172,116.65	185,025.40	
11 x 5	493,852.78	530,891.74	10 x 4	226,258.00	243,176.28	10 x 4	208,808.58	224,469.23	9 x 6	278,649.91	299,548.66	
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10 x 6	538,748.49	579,154.53	10 x 6	424,845.04	456,708.42	10 x 6	390,978.13	420,320.48	11 x 6	340,573.10	340,466.08	
11 x 6	592,622.16	637,068.82	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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FP 14.5 x 6	560,500.00	602,537.50	14.5 X 2	197,128.09	211,912.70	14.5 x 2	151,178.45	162,516.84				
			14.5 X 4	394,256.19	423,825.40	14.5 x 4	362,827.71	390,039.79				
			14.5 X 5	472,286.06	507,707.52	HP7.25 X 6	246,131.63	264,591.50				
			HP7.25 X 6	269,191.05	289,380.38	14.5 X 5	431,525.39	463,889.79				
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NFF Presidency: Amaju Pinnick rules out third term bid to heed family's call

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

The President of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF), Amaju Pinnick has ruled out the option of contesting for a third term citing family reasons.

Pinnick, despite being qualified and eligible to run for the office for the third time, decided to heed the call of his family to take a bow at the end of his tenure.

According to the sports administrator, who is also a member of the FIFA council, he has put in his best in the development

of football for this country and regrettably, would take a bow to attend to his family's needs.

In an interview on Arise TV, he said, "First am I eligible to run? Yes, I'm eligible to run based on our statutes.

"Do I want to run at this moment? It's a no-no because my family says so at the moment.

"My family is very key to me, they say that I have put in my all, put in my best.

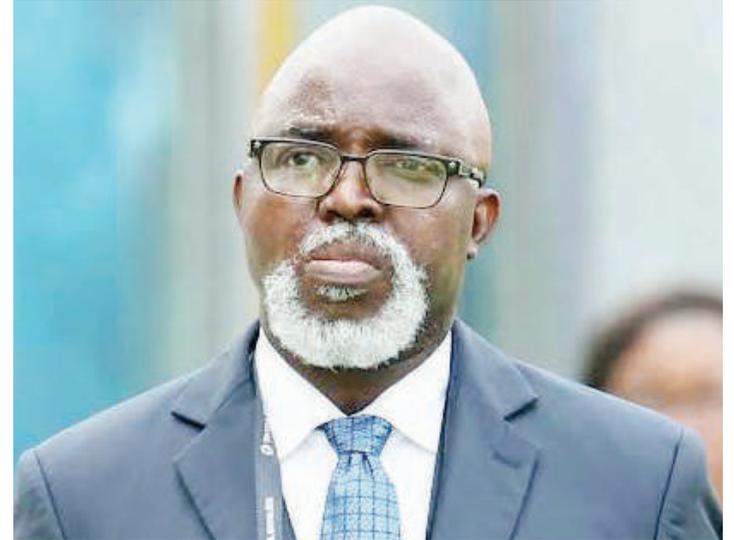
"They say it's taking a toll on me, taking a toll on the family. It's a very regrettable decision," he added.

The current NFF President, first elected in September 2014, was re-elected on September 20, 2018.

He has also held a position in the Confederation of African Football (CAF) as the First Vice

President between September 2018 and July 2019 and a member

of the Organising Committee for FIFA competitions.



Ademola Ola-Adebomi signs first professional career with Crystal Palace



Crystal Palace has signed a Nigerian international, Ademola Ola-Adebomi on a professional basis after progressing through its youthful stages to its U18 team.

Ola-Adebomi was conscripted into the club ten years ago at the age of eight and has since developed into a promising center-forward, breaking into the ranks of the U18 in the 2020/21 season.

The developing prodigy under Rob Quinn's team has scored 14 goals in 22 appearances as they occupy the third position on the league table.

After signing the contract, Ola-Adebomi conceded that this was his best season. He added that as a team they have moulded well to fight for the title this season.

He said, "This season has been my best season so far. I feel like I'm playing with confidence and I'm scoring goals, assisting goals, and playing well.

"As a team, we've moulded well, and I feel like we're battling for the title, which is quite big. Hopefully, we can go on and win the title... The aim was to win it this year, which I feel is definitely possible," he said.

The chairman of the club, Steve Parish in response to the event described it as historic.

He noted that Ola-Adebomi the club will provide all the necessary support to help develop the player who has spent ten years at the club.

He said: "Ademola has been with this club for a decade, which makes today's announcement all the more special.

"I feel sure he will capitalise on this landmark moment and continue to work hard - we will make sure he has all the tools and support from every member of staff in our new Academy facility. Congratulations to him and his family, we are all very proud of him," he added.

Ademola Ola-Adebomi while with the U15s, won the national Super Floodlit Cup final for the first time in the club's history.

NPFL: Heartland FC to kick start a resurgence with Remo Stars?

Heartland FC of Owerri will on Sunday host Remo Stars at the Okigwe Township Stadium on MatchDay22 to continue their struggle out of the red zone of the Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL) table.

The Spartans, who lost their last match to Nasarawa United, will hope to excite their performance to get maximum points at home to reinvigorate the pursuit of survival in the NPFL.

Presently rocking the bottom of the table, the Fidelis Ilechukwu side in their last five outings were only able to secure a win and a draw, losing the last two away games to MFM and Nasarawa United, will not take any chances in battling Remo Stars to a standstill in Okigwe.

The visiting side has been in a good shape on the NPFL table winning three of the last five matches. Though with a fairly poor away run, they hope to square it out in pursuit of the 2021/22 NPFL title.

Presently fourth on the NPFL table with 35 points from 21 league matches, Remo Stars that are two points below Enugu Rangers, and a point above Kwara United hope to maintain their lead ahead of Gbanga Ogunbote's men.



Napoli declares Victor Osimhen fit to feature against Fiorentina

Napoli has been handed a boost after Victor Osimhen was declared fit to face Fiorentina in Sunday's Serie A encounter at the Diego Armando Maradona Stadium.

The striker, who was forced out midway in a training session at the Konami Training Centre due to a thigh injury on Wednesday, was in doubt to feature in the match against the visiting eighth-placed Serie A side.

However, after the medical team of the club carried out

thorough scans on the player to ascertain the extent of the injury, they declared Osimhen fit for the clash against Fiorentina.

In the statement released by the Italian club on its website, it stated that Osimhen was allowed to see the medical staff of the club after he complained of having discomfort in training.

It read, "The Nigerian forward underwent tests and it was determined that he hadn't suffered an injury.

"Today [Wednesday] Osimhen followed a personalised schedule in training, covering gym and pitch work," it added.

This update is a good one for Luciano Spalletti who hopes to continue his pursuit of the Serie A title by leapfrogging AC Milan to the number one spot.

Moreover, the Nigerian international who was left out of their 3-1 win against Atalanta after returning from international duty with Nigeria's senior men's team world cup playoff with Ghana, will hope to increase his goal tally this weekend.

Osimhen in Serie A has scored 11 goals with 3 assists and is

looking ahead to the fixture with the Violets to increase his number of goals as the 2021/22 season progresses.



AS Roma will defeat Bodo/Glimt in Italy, says Mourinho

Jose Mourinho has said AS Roma will upturn the first-leg deficit against the Norwegian club, Bodo/Glimt after they were defeated 2-1 in Thursday's Europa Conference League.

The Portuguese stated that the second leg which will be played in Italy in a well-packed stadium will be a determining factor in the match.

According to him, Roma does not deserve to lose the match having played well. He added that Giallorossi will get to the semifinals when they host the Norwegian club in the return match in Stadio Olimpico.

Mourinho said, "We certainly didn't deserve to lose, but it's not actually a defeat.

"It's halftime, we are losing 2-1

and we have the second half to play at home in front of a packed stadium with our fans there for the team.

"So I have no issues in saying we are favourites to reach the semifinals," he added.

While the Roma football tactician blamed the texture of the plastic pitch for the club's loss, he condemned the injury it meted on

defender Gianluca Mancini who was substituted in the second half.

He continued: "It's a pity that we had an important injury, which I call the injuries of the plastic pitches," Mourinho told BT Sport.

"It's out of our control. People decided that European competitions can be played on plastic pitches, so we have to play," he said.



Buhari 7 years: How Nigeria fared in sport

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

Sports is indeed one of the factors keeping the multi-ethnic nation Nigeria unified. This was inarguably proven in the recently Qatar 2022 World Cup playoff at the Moshood Abiola National Stadium where Nigerians trooped out en masse to speak one language in support of the Super Eagles against the Black Stars of Ghana.

Nigerians love sports, this ranges from basketball, football, athletics, gymnastics, scrabble, aquatics to hockey, tennis, badminton, squash etcetera. But how have we fared since President Muhammadu Buhari took over power 7 years ago?

Taking a delve into two major areas of sports, football and athletics, we are going to look at the impact of President Buhari's administration's contributions and failures towards the development of sports and the honours won.

Nigeria U17 national team - Green Eagles

A few months after President Buhari came into power on May 28, 2015, the Nigeria U17 team, Green Eagles, won the sixteenth edition of the FIFA U17 World Cup on November 8, 2015, in Chile, having won it previously in 2013.

Despite Nigeria being the most successful country in this biennial international football event with a record of 5 golden trophies, it is yet to replicate the same level of success after two editions were held in 2017 and 2019 in India and Brazil respectively.

Nigeria U20 national team - Flying Eagles

The Flying Eagles last made their mark as runner-up on the world stage, 17 years ago, at the U20 FIFA World Cup in the Netherlands in 2005. In the competition that is biannually organised, the Flying Eagles are yet to make themselves a force to reckon with on the world stage. Since Buhari came into power, FIFA has organised three consecutive U20 World Cups; in 2015, 2017, and 2019 without the Flying Eagles clinching the world stage.

More so, the Nigeria U20 national team known to be the most successful in the continent as a 7th-time champion of the U20 Africa Cup of Nations, last won the tournament in March 2015, two months before Buhari came to



Buhari

power on May 29, 2015.

Following this, the Flying Eagles have struggled to come to the limelight in Buhari's seven years reign and only succeeded to emerge fourth in the 2019 edition held in the Niger Republic after they were defeated by South Africa on penalties.

However, the only success the team recorded in this present administration is succeeding as the 2018 runner-up in the first edition of the WAFU Zone B U-20 Championship held in Togo.

The Nigeria Senior Team - Super Eagles

The Super Eagles have continued to find their feet on the continental and international stage after it won the 2013 Afcon title two years before Buhari came on board. Within Buhari's 7 years of reign, the team has only managed to secure third place in the 2019 Afcon tournament in Egypt.

Recently, having recorded maximum points in the group stage of the 2021 Afcon tournament in Cameroon, the Super Eagles crashed out in the round of 16 to Tunisia in Garoua.

Also, in Goodluck Jonathan's administration, the Nigeria senior men's team ended third place in the 2010 Afcon event and progressed to win it in 2013.

However, it has not been so in this present seven years old administration. The team has been very inconsistent and could not capitalise on its 2019 third place feat, as they did in Jonathan's administration, to upset the Afcon 2021 tournament in Cameroon.

Most disappointing was the



The Super Eagles did not go past the group stage at the AFCON 2021 edition

team's recent crashing out of the world cup event slated to take place in Qatar by November despite the massive support it got from Nigerians, at home, and in the diaspora. That singular game at the Moshood Abiola National Stadium against Ghana exposed the Super Eagles' lack of in-depth quality.

With a great decline in the successes recorded by the previous administration with the Super Eagles in the world of football, reaching the round of 16 in Bazil 2014 FIFA World Cup, winning the Afcon title in 2013, and winning the WAFU Nations Cup in 2010, this present administration had only succeeded with the Super Eagles as runner-up in the 2018 African Nations Championship.

Nigeria U17 female team - Flamingoes

The Flamingoes have been a dominant team on the continental stage in previous administration where they won, on four consecutive occasions, the Africa women U17 Cup of Nations in 2008, 2010, 2012, and 2013. One year after Buhari's administration came on board, the U17 female national team won the next event in 2016 but six years after then, the team has not been able to replicate the same feat that sustained them to the quarterfinals of the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup in 2010, 2012 and 2014.

Nigeria U20 female team - Falconets

The Nigeria U20 female team first appeared on the world stage in FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup in 2002. Falconets as they are popularly called came as runner-up in 2010

and 2014 having been defeated by Germany on both occasions.

However, in both Buhari's dispensations, the team has not recorded any notable achievement on the continental or international football stage.

Nigeria senior woman's team - Super Falcons

In this area, the seven years of the administration of Buhari have been able to sustain the success of the senior female football team in the continent. The Super Falcons, after the previous administration, continued its dominance in Africa, winning the 2016 and 2018 Africa Women Cup of Nations consecutively.

Taking a close observance of the seven years reign of Buhari's administration, it can be noticed that the administration has done poorly in this area of Nigeria sports as against what the previous administration recorded with these teams.

Athletics

The athletics sport, outdoor and indoor, has been a buzzing sport in Buhari's seven years administration. Ranging from track to field, Nigerians have made their marks on the international stage in athletics at different times. The likes of Divine Oduduru, Edose Ibadin, Anthonio Hicks, Peter Moreno, Chukwuebuka Enekeuchi, Enoch Adegoke, Ogho-Oghene Egwero, Emmanuel Arowolo, Jerry Jakpa, placed Nigeria on the spotlight in this seven years of Buhari's administration.

Also, Blessing Okagbare, Tobi Amusan, Ese Brume, Ruth Usoro, Chioma Onyekwere, and others have been very instrumental in recording

successes right from Buhari's takeover till date.

However, with the turn of events which is characteristic of sportsmen, over five cases of doping were recorded within this period with the most recent being that of Blessing Okagbare who has been banned for ten years until 2031.

Despite Buhari's administration recording lesser cases of doping compared to cases recorded by athletes in the previous administration, it is pathetic the government showed little concern over the doping case of Blessing Okagbare, leaving the Olympic silver medalist to her fate.

Invariably, in the areas of infrastructure, Buhari has shown greater commitment to giving a facelift to the decaying sports infrastructure in the country. The Moshood Abiola National Stadium through the Public, Private, Partnership (PPP), the national edifice was renovated with some new standard facilities, like the digital scoreboard, lighting, and regrassing.

The administration aside from the Moshood Abiola National Stadium also appropriated taxpayers' money to renovate the National Stadium Surulere so that our national teams can make use of both pitches alternatively.

Buhari's government in its 7 years administration, restored key sports infrastructures that were left to rot for years, with the previous administration doing nothing tangible to walk the talk amid its bogus promises, one of such was in 2012.

In 2012, the Minister of Sports in President Goodluck Jonathan's administration, Bolaji Abdullahi told Nigerians that the government has awarded a contract to construction giant Julius Berger to renovate the National Stadium.

According to Abdullahi's statement, "Of course, we have concluded arrangements with Julius Berger to bring alive the pitch of the main bowl and training grounds in January, after the holidays.

"If we can get the pitch fixed, the Super Eagles and other national teams will have a good ground to train. Nobody can say we do not have a field where they can play anymore.

"I think that by relocating my office to the stadium, it will breathe life back into the stadium to a reasonable extent.

"If we can sensitize the Nigeria Football Federation on the facilities available here, they can also use it for the various national teams and not just for the Eagles," he added.