

\$1.5m govt printing press rots in A' Ibom

By ISAAC JOB, Uyo

A Kwa Ibom Government has abandoned a multi million naira printing press procured by immediate past governor, Senator Godswill Obot Akpabio, for the

state-owned newspaper corporation, The Pioneer.

The Trumpet investigation revealed that the equipment worth \$1.5 million was imported from Germany.

But the state government led by Governor Udom Emmanuel has

abandoned the printing press seven years since his administration came to power.

The printing press consists of a Supra Setter A105 otherwise known as Computer To Plate (CTP) machine and a Goss Community Press with a

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DO CHANGE OF NAME,
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APC, PDP in cat, mouse game over presidential primaries, candidates

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APC National Chairman, Abdullahi Adamu



PDP National Chairman, Iyorchia Ayu

Uncertainty over presidential primaries as APC, PDP play cat, mouse game

By **TUNDE JOSHUA**,
Politics Editor, Abuja

Barely 20 days to the primaries of political parties, the two major ones, the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) and main opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) are still undecided of where their presidential candidates will come from.

The two parties are no doubt caught in the web of zoning and are making frantic efforts to wriggle out without causing for themselves more mistrust by the electorate across regions, tribes and zones.

While the PDP has not made a formal commitment, the APC owing to its political arrangement is more entangled as there is much expectation that the party will produce a southern candidate.

But the APC dashed the hopes of many Nigerians from the southern part of the country by not being decisive in announcing the preferred zone for its presidency and moreso, the increase in number of its northern aspirants showing interest in the race.

Political observers have noticed similar trends in activities and decisions of the two parties in recent times that suggest the two are watching each other's moves for advantage,

especially on which will first it's presidential candidate and from what zone.

It started with the national convention of both parties. The PDP in October 30, 2022 zoned its chairmanship to the north. Dr. Iyorchia Ayu from the North Central emerged. The APC likewise on March 26 this year zoned its chairman's seat to the north. Alhaji Abdullahi Adamu also from North Central emerged.

An APC committee led by Kaduna State Governor Nasir El- Rufai prior to the convention, suggested to the party to swap its positions between the north and south, just like the PDP did.

There have been changes to election timetable and schedule of activities in both parties recently, with both finetuning processes at getting round producing nationally acceptable presidential candidates that can win the 2023 poll.

The two parties have a serious task of meeting up with deadlines of conducting wards, local government congresses in line with INEC directives.

Meanwhile, the National chairman of the Inter- Party Advisory Council (IPAC), Engr. Yabagi Sanni at a meeting between INEC and leadership of parties demanded on behalf of the 18 registered political groupings for extension



APC National Chairman, Abdullahi Adamu



PDP National Chairman, Iyorchia Ayu

of deadline for conduct of primaries from June 3 to August 16, 2022.

Before the closed door meeting, INEC chairman, Prof. Mahmood Yakubu reiterated the decision of the commission not to review the timetable.

In the PDP, both southerners and northerners are in the race for the presidential ticket but it is widely believed that the party is looking up north for its standard bearer. It has an array of qualified aspirants in the persons of former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, erstwhile Senate President, Bukola Saraki, Governors Aminu Tambuwal and Bala Mohammed of Sokoto and Bauchi respectively as well as respected business mogul Hayatu-Deen Mohammed,

from the north.

Though attempts to have a consensus northern candidate broke down amid agitation by southern aspirants that one of them should emerge as the presidential candidate, it is the belief of a majority of PDP members that Atiku Abubakar may bulldoze his way to emerge the standard bearer.

This notion, might have, in the first place, influenced the pronouncements of the APC on zoning.

The Trumpet gathered that the APC would have settled for a southern candidate but decided against this when it was becoming obvious that no other aspirant from the South (East, West or South) can withstand the

former governor of Lagos State, Bola Tinubu in a transparently conducted presidential primary.

The thought of emergence of a Tinubu as its candidature and possibly the nation's President, it was further learnt is already unsettling some stakeholders in the party. A source said influx of other gladiators from the South West was a plot to whittle down Tinubu's chance by dividing delegates from the zone.

This, the source added was a premeditated design to shop for another person from the South as APC candidate. Hence, the coming up of names like Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi, former President Goodluck Jonathan, Central Bank of

Nigeria Governor Godwin Emefiele, and President of the African Development Bank, Dr Akinwumi Adesina. Jonathan has denied having interest in the race while there is indication that Adesina was not properly contacted by the group that bought nomination forms for him.

Apart from Yahaya Bello whose candidature has not been taken seriously by many, the venturing of Jigawa State Governor Abubakar Badaru and Senate President Ahmad Lawan into the race is causing suspicion as to what game the APC might be playing.

According to findings by The Trumpet, the leadership of the APC came to a conclusion that the only way not to lose power in 2023 is to field an acceptable northern candidate. The calculation is that a northern candidate will split votes of the north with probably Atiku from the PDP while other geopolitical zones will be up for grabs.

The APC, it was learnt has come to terms with the fact that aside Tinubu, no southern aspirant among the personalities who have collected forms can match Atiku Abubakar. The party acknowledged how tedious it was to defeat Atiku and the PDP with a popular

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web offset press. It is meant to be operated by Akwa Ibom Newspaper Corporation (AKNC), publishers of The Pioneer.

It was learnt that the web offset press has the capacity to print 17 colour pages, 32 black and white pages of newspaper and runs 500,000 impression per hour, while the the CTP runs a resolution of 2,400 DPI.

Our correspondent gathered that the facility would have saved the state some costs and served as a commercial printing press for other newspapers among others.

Findings revealed that some national dailies had already indicated interest to print their newspapers at the press especially as it would enhance their circulation and early arrival in the South South region to Uyo, the state capital.

The machines were installed and commissioned on May 28, 2015 but were not tested. They didn't print any copy of The Pioneer on the day it was test-run by the experts brought in

to manage the press and have been lying fallow, while the complex housing them have remained locked.

When our correspondent visited the printing press, it was discovered that the machines have not worked after the day they were commissioned by Akpabio, just as the government is yet to officially hand over the press to the management of the state-owned newspaper corporation.

Former General Manager of The Pioneer, Mr. Silas Udo, who was in office when the press was installed told our correspondent that the machines were neither used to print any paper nor was any member of staff trained on how to operate them.

He explained that the Akwa Ibom Newspaper Corporation did not officially receive the printing press as it was never handed over to it by the supervising Ministry of Information and Strategy.

According to him: "The press was never used to print The Pioneer in my time. No Pioneer staff under me went

for training anywhere to master the workings of the press.

"Yes, we did not receive the press. It was a deliberate decision not to receive it as the procedural processes were not done or seen to be done. For example, the checklist to ascertain that what the government paid for are what were sent by the manufacturers was not done.

"It would therefore have been against civil service procedure to sign a Stores Receipt Voucher (SRV). So unless this was done after I left service. The press remained under the administration of the supervising ministry."

Mr Idorenjin Umoren, the Production Manager of AKNC then, confirmed the position of Udo. He said he was a member of AKNC Rotary Press Pre-shipment Inspection Committee announced by the state government to visit Goss Community Press Company in Germany.

Umoren, however, stated that the committee was not inaugurated and the inspection visit to Hiedelberg,

never happened.

He said they were only informed that the machines had arrived in Uyo through Onne in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, and they were expected to receive them. He said no production staffer of AKNC was trained on how to operate them.

Meanwhile, Mr. Patrick Usen, the consultant who handled the project has blamed the ministry and called for a probe into the abandonment of the printing press.

Usen explained that the machines failed to work due to improper installation, saying the managers of the project did not follow the procedures necessary to set up a press.

He revealed that if the machines were properly commissioned, the representatives of Hiedelberg, Goss Graphics and himself, who facilitated the process from the purchase and shipment would have been available at the installation and commissioning.

He questioned the manner in which the machines were

received. According to him, there was no confirmation of what was received vis-a-vis what was sent, He disclosed that the auxillary equipment which came with the machines such as forklift, rollers and others for their smooth running were missing.

"Governor Godswill Akpabio had excellent intentions for the state and The Pioneer newspaper in particular. Unfortunately, the ministry truncated that project. They should be held responsible. I don't know where this enquiry will end, but I think that a Commission of Enquiry should be set up to probe the issue.

"That web offset press has not been received till today by The Pioneer, that is, it has not been officially handed over by Goss Graphics to The Pioneer because of the haphazard installation procedures. There was no adherence to good engineering practice of installation. They hurriedly put that up together and called the governor, and I think the machine collapsed and failed there.

"There was no ink, no rolling papers, no printing plate needed to print for the governor to see. All those things were not there, and the machine collapsed that day," he stated.

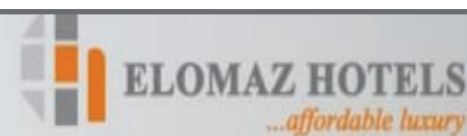
The consultant called for a technical audit of what was supplied and installed, and how it was installed, as well as possible errors with the installation processes so as to correct the abnormality that has kept the machines from working.

He lamented that the state was yet to pay him his contract fee for the project, adding that he was willing to return for a proper installation of the machines if the government was willing.

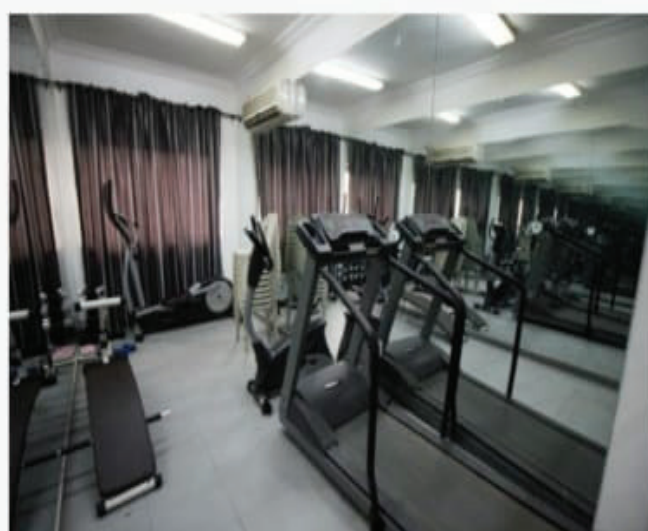
He however warned that the Supra Setter A105 (Computer To Plate) machine may have to be upgraded as it may have outlived its lifespan of six years while lying idle.

"There must be a technical audit of what was supplied, what was installed, how it was installed to find out if there were errors with the

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Uncertainty over presidential primaries as APC, PDP play cat, mouse game

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candidate in President Muhammadu Buhari in 2019.

The PDP, it is expected might make a categorical statement on the dicey issue of zoning at a make-or-break meeting of its National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting in Abuja. The APC may react to the outcome or pronouncement of the PDP by toeing the line of the opposition party.

Weeks of apprehension over Jonathan's interest or otherwise in the APC presidential race came to a halt on Monday when a group of cattle breeders and nomadic communities reportedly contributed N100 million to buy nomination forms for him with the intention to urge him to contest the 2023 election.

But in a swift reaction, the ex-President through his media office refuted Jonathan's interest in the race and denied having anything to do with the group.

His Media Adviser, Ikechukwu Eze in a statement categorically stated that Dr. Jonathan was not aware of this bid and did not authorize it.

While appreciating the overwhelming request by a cross-section of Nigerians, for Dr. Jonathan to make himself available for the 2023 Presidential election, he said the former PDP President "has not in anyway, committed himself to this request."

He said "buying a presidential aspiration form in the name Dr. Jonathan without his consent, knowing the position he had held in this country, is considered an insult to his person. The general public is therefore advised to disregard it.

"We want to state that if the former President wanted to contest an election, he would make his intentions clear to the public and will not enter through

the back door."

But a story of his alleged meeting with the APC national chairman, Abdullahi Adamu same Monday night further heightened tension in the party throwing some major contenders into confusion on what game the national leadership of the party might be playing.

The Trumpet recalled several meetings the former president had held with Buhari at the State House in recent times, though on the claim of discussing matters of national interest.

A reliable source said there might be an unwritten agreement between the two leaders after Jonathan willingly conceded victory even before the announcement of results of the 2015 presidential election.

Another source said a group of concerned leaders sold Jonathan's candidature to the Presidency as one that will attract sympathy and appeal across geopolitical zones, adding to the fact that he is a southerner in tune with popular request that power must go to the south in 2023.

Our investigation revealed that Jonathan who might have heeded the call after consultations decided to go to the negotiation table with APC with terms and conditions for accepting to run on APC ticket.

One of such, the source added is that Jonathan wants to enter the race as APC candidate and not as aspirant.

This condition is said to be giving party leaders sleepless nights as it has not come up with method of pacifying other aspirants.

The idea of Jonathan becoming a consensus presidential candidate, it was argued may be the reason that the APC invented a nine-point condition tagged 'withdrawal letter' included in the nomination forms to be obtained by all aspirants.



Buhari

The condition in the Form 18 is considered a ploy aimed at arm-twisting aspirants not to challenge the decision of the party in court should it adopt a consensus candidate where applicable.

Contenders are barred from going to court without first exhausting avenues for redress and ventilation of grievances.

The aspirants are also expected to sign undertakings to accept the outcomes of the shadow polls and support whoever emerges as a candidate for the general election.

The ruling group also directed them to take oaths not to engage in thuggery, anti-party activities, factionalisation or the creation of parallel congresses and APC organs at any level.

These conditions are contained on page 18 of the nomination form given to the aspirants.

Most of presidential aspirants are said to have expressed concern about the "voluntary letter of withdrawal", which they are expected to sign before a Commissioner for Oaths or a Notary Public.

They feared that the withdrawal clause may

lead to either imposition of a presidential candidate or abuse of the consensus clause in the Electoral Act 2022.

It was learnt that most presidential aspirants have been seeking legal advice on Page 18 of the nomination form, which they considered a boobytrap.

Denying this insinuation, the party leadership claimed that the conditions were in line with Article 21. 2 (i - xii) of the APC Constitution.

Many aspirants faulted the conditions as inconsistent with fundamental human

rights as enshrined in the 1999 Constitution.

The conditions are: "Abide to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the APC and the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

"Abide by the Primary election guidelines of APC and Nigerian Electoral Act.

"Abide to place APC above selfish interests.

"I, my primary campaign organisation and my supporters undertake to accept the outcome of the primary and support whoever emerges as APC candidate for the general election.

"Abide not to engage in dishonest practices, thuggery, being absent from meetings to which he/she is invited without reasonable cause; carrying out anti-party activities which tend to disrupt the peaceful, lawful and efficient organisation of the party or which are inconsistent with the aims and objectives of the party.

"Abide not to give wrong information to any organ of the party or unauthorised publicity of a party dispute without exhausting all avenues or settlement or redress within the party.

"Abide not to file any action in a court of law against the party or any of its officers on any matters

relating to the discharge of the duties of the party without first exhausting all avenues for redress provided.

"Abide to always follow the path of justice, honesty and unity amongst fellow contestants and party members. So help me God.

"Abide not to factionalise or create a parallel congress, election, or party organ at any level."

The letter of voluntary withdrawal says: "I... of the above address... vying for... hereby voluntarily withdraw my candidacy from the contest... scheduled to hold on... 2023. My withdrawal is in the best interest of our great party, the APC."

Apart from addressing the letter to the National Chairman of APC, Senator Abdullahi Adamu, each aspirant is expected to endorse the letter before a Commissioner for Oaths or Notary Public as aforementioned.

It was learnt that most aspirants were shocked by the attachment of the condition to the party's nomination form.

A source stressed: "Most of the aspirants have opted for legal advice on whether or not to sign the letter of withdrawal."

Bomb explosion rocks Jalingo

By SURU CHARLES, Jalingo

Residents of Jalingo, the capital of Taraba State, have again been thrown into confusion following an explosion that on Tuesday rocked the city.

The blast which is suspected to be bomb explosion, occurred at about 9p.m close to the military base which is located in the heart of the city.

The explosion, as noticed by The Trumpet, is coming barely a month to that of Iware

community in Ardo-Kola council where several lives were lost, with many others sustaining various degrees of injuries.

At the time of filing this report the number of casualties could not be ascertained.

Confirming the report, the state police command through its Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Usman Abdullahi, told our reporter that he heard the sound and that he has confirmed that it was an explosion, but could

not ascertain the number of casualties.

He however promised to furnish our reporter with details of information as soon as they are made available to the command.

The explosion, as observed by our state correspondent, is the third in the state within one and half month.

The first which occurred barely three days after that of Iware, did not claim lives, but inflicted various degrees of injuries on several persons.

Cocoa farmers protest alleged sale of farmland to Chinese company in Ondo

By FRIDAY OMOSOLA, Akure

Cocoa farmers in Ofosu in Idanre Local Government Area of Ondo have protested over an alleged sale of their farmland to a Chinese company by the state government.

The protesters who barricaded the Lagos/Benin Expressway were seen carrying placards with different inscriptions demanding for justice.

Some of the placards read "Please, Don't Take our Farms" and "Have Mercy on Us. Don't Take our Farms, Respect Our Right to Livelihood", "Don't Give Our Land to Mindless Capitalists" and "We Want to Remain Farmers and not Armed Robbers".

A community leader, Kazeem Akinrimisi, the Sasere

of Ofosu who spoke with newsmen noted that he had been farming on the land which the government is planning to sell for over 20 years.

The Sasere of Ofosu revealed that more than 25,000 farmers who registered with the state government had been paying their dues appropriately.

Mr Akinrimisi who affirmed that he paid N6 million as dues for farming on the land to the state government in 2021, pleaded with the government to allow the farmers to acquire the land instead of imposing foreigners on them.

According to him, the farmers occupy 74 camps in the community spread over 20,000 acres of land.

Another protester, Ezekiel Olatunji, urged the government to consider the

lands as the farmers' means of livelihood.

Mr Olatunji said in 2021, he paid N1.2 million as his due to the state government, saying he had been farming on the land for over 20 years.

The octogenarian who said he was astonished by the government decision to sell the land to foreigners, noted that cocoa is a major foreign exchange earner for Nigeria.

He asked Governor Oluwarotimi Akeredolu to allow the farmers to be paying their dues, even at the expense of paying more if desired by the government.

In a similar vein, Samuel Awolola, said Obada Camp in the community where he belonged paid N9 million out of N10 million as farming dues to the government in 2021.

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procedures of installation and realign the machine to start all over again.

"The lifespan of the Goss Graphics could be up to 50 years, but the Computer to Plate would last, let's say, for between five to six years. All you need is to change parts and upgrade," he advised.

Efforts to speak with Mr Aniekan Umana, the then Commissioner for Information who supervised the whole process of purchasing, installing and commissioning the press were unsuccessful as he did not pick calls or respond to text messages sent

to his phone.

It was gathered that the state government had talked about bringing in a consultant to man the place. But the plan never worked after the immediate past Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Mr. Charles Udo, visited the place and promised to take the issue of the printing press to Governor Emmanuel.

In a telephone interview, the current commissioner of Information and strategy, Comrade Ini Ememobong, said the state government will soon hand over the printing press to a consultant.

"Ehen i came into the

office, i visited the facility and commissioned an enquiry into issues surrounding the press. We are working to reconcile all grey areas. In line with the governor's determination to continue to achieve results in a most cost-effective way, we had to open up the business to private investors who would come and manage the press.

"Many have indicated interest and we are still considering the options. I assure you that before the exit of this administration, the press will be taken over for proper management," he said.

Court voids sale of recovered assets by Malami's committee

By **BENJAMIN OMOIKE**

For being “an invalid statutory instrument,” a Federal High Court sitting in Lagos has nullified the Asset Tracing, Recovery and Management Regulations, 2019.

The court further nullified all sales and disposals of assets made by the Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF) Abubakar Malami, SAN, under the Regulations.

It held that the Regulations were “ultra vires the office and powers” of the AGF.

Justice Ambrose Lewis-Allagoa made the order in a suit FHC/L/CS/40/2021 filed by the plaintiff, Incorporated Trustees of HEDA Resource Centre, against the AGF as the sole defendant.

The AGF on November 9, 2020, inaugurated the Inter-Ministerial Committee on the disposal of assets forfeited to the Federal Government.

This, according to the Minister, was in accordance with the president's directive in October 2018, following recommendations of the Presidential Audit Committee on Recovery and Management of Stolen Assets and a need for efficient management of the assets.

But HEDA, through its counsel, Omotayo Olatubosun, challenged the AGF's power to set up the committee.

It argued that the Regulations conflicted with the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Act, Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administrative Act, 2015, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) Act, 2004 and Independent Corrupt Practices Commission Act (ICPC), 2000, among others, on the matter of disposal of final forfeited assets.

The plaintiff sought nine reliefs, including the nullification of all disposals of assets by the AGF's Committee.

In its judgment, the court dismissed the AGF's preliminary objection argued by its counsel, Tolu Mokunolu, and granted all of HEDA's reliefs as prayed on the motion paper.

Justice Lewis-Allagoa held: “I am entirely in agreement with the submission of counsels to the plaintiff that the Asset Tracing, Recovery and Management Regulations, 2019 are contrary to the statutory provisions of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission EFCC Act, Trafficking in Persons Cohabitation Enforcement and Administration Act, NDLEA

Act and Immigration Act.

“A careful perusal of the above statutory provisions will show the provisions for the Attorney-General of the Federation to make regulations for the agencies for disposal of assets under the various enactments listed above.

“The above statutory enactments are therefore the enabling source of the Attorney-General of the Federation to the regulations. Consequently, the administrative powers to be exercised by the Honourable Attorney-General of the Federation must flow from the enabling statutes.

“It is pertinent to state that the powers of the Attorney-General of the Federation do not override the provisions of the enabling statutes stabilising the powers of the law enforcement agencies and anti-corruption agencies and consequently the powers referred to in the commencement clause of the regulations merely are to be exercised in accordance with the Acts not to usurp the mandatory powers vested in the law enforcement agencies and the anti-corruption agencies.

“I am therefore in agreement with counsel for the plaintiff that the executive orders or any other forms of definition can be

issued pursuant to session 315 of the Constitution; however, they are limited to enactments predating the 1999 Constitution.

“The Acts under Consideration in this instant suit were enacted after the 1999 Constitution and do not fall within the ambit of session 315 of the 1999 Constitution.

“In all and for the reasons hereinbefore given in this judgement, the questions put for determination in the originating summons are answered in favour of the plaintiff and all the reliefs sought are granted as prayed. This is the judgment of the court read in the open

court”

The Plaintiff's reliefs granted by the judge include a declaration that by the ICPC Act, the Asset Tracing, Recovery and Management Regulations, 2019 “is an invalid statutory instrument the former having conferred no power arrogated by the Defendant to himself in the latter Regulations; “An Order nullifying the Asset Tracing, Recovery and Management Regulations, 2019 as an invalid statutory instrument same being in excess of the provisions of the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission Act, 2000.”



Change Maker President of Rotary Club of Ikeja, Sir Gbenga Badejo (left); SOS Country Director, Mr. Eghosa Erhumwunse and a past president of the club, Otunba (Dr.) Simi Fasehun, when Badejo and Fasehun on behalf of the international organization presented an appreciation award to Erhumwunse.

IYC condemns Wike's outbursts

By **AHERHOKE OKIOMA**, Yenagoa

Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) has condemned as derogatory a statement credited to Rivers State Governor Nyosom Woke against the ethnic group over their demand for the release of Hon. Fara Dagogo. It described Wike's outburst as insulting and totally unacceptable.

Chief Wike's had on Sunday launched an attack on the Ijaw ethnic nationality following the controversy over the arrest of a federal lawmaker, Hon. Farah Dagogo, and the 48 hours ultimatum issued for his immediate release.

IYC, in a statement reacting to the use of “Thunder Fire You” by Wike on the Ijaw nation during the church service, described the comment as disturbing, inciting and denigrating of the high office he occupies.

IYC, through its National

Spokesman, Comrade Ebilade Ekerefe, noted that such “tactless and disrespectful” comment by Wike was the height of his prolonged disdain for the ethnic nation as a whole and Rivers Ijaw people in particular since he became governor of the state.

It said it was even more shocking that the Rivers governor took his unrestrained verbiage to the hallowed pulpit of a church and desecrated the altar of God.

IYC restates that its only ‘sin’ that attracted Wike's ire was its demand alongside its parent organ, the Ijaw National Congress (INC), for the release of their kit and kin arrested and remanded in prison on the orders of the governor.

IYC added: “Despite being the fourth largest ethnic nationality in Nigeria and the largest in the Niger Delta, the Ijaw have consistently promoted peaceful and harmonious relationships with

other ethnic groups, including Wike's Ikwerre nationality in Rivers State. However, Wike should be reminded that such ungaurded and incendiary comments are capable of rupturing the existing good relationship with the Ikwerres, and his kinsmen are advised to call him to order.

“The IYC also reminds Governor Wike that power is transient and that by May 29, 2023, he will vacate the exalted governorship seat, that he has equally ridiculed, to become an ordinary citizen like others in Rivers State and Nigeria.

“Wike has forgotten that by calling fire and thunder on the Ijaw nation, his benefactor and our revered leader, former President Goodluck Jonathan, is an illustrious Ijaw son.

“This ‘hunder’ did not fire the former president when, despite all odds, he made him the choice of the Peoples Democratic Party

in Rivers State against the wishes of other competent Ijaw aspirants in the state.

“Now, Jonathan as an Ijaw man, is also under fire from Governor Wike. For him, all those that made him, including the people of Rivers State, are in his pocket and can be insulted at will.

“We, therefore, call on our people as a whole to see Governor Wike as an enemy of the Ijaw Nation. We urge Ijaws all over the world to speak against this tyrannical behaviour of Wike.

“We also call on our Ijaw brothers that are delegates in his party not to cast their votes for him during the presidential primaries as this will be viewed as betrayal of our heritage. Suffice it to say that if a governor can cast aspersions on an entire ethnic nationality, what would become of him as president of the most populous black nation on the planet?”

Govt fingers climate change, blocked drains in Lagos flooding

Flooding on Lagos Island is caused by the effects of climate change and blocked drains in the area.

Commissioner for Environment and Water Resources, Mr. Tunji Bello, disclosed this in a statement, pledging that a massive pumping station equipped with high-capacity tanks would be provided.

His words: "A permanent solution to the issue of flooding in Idumagbo, Oroyinyin, Ojo Giwa, and environs on Lagos Island would be put in place before the end of the year, but I want to assure residents that what has been provided at

the Ilubirin end, for now, is a temporary measure which takes a minimum of two days to pump water after every heavy rainfall.

"The major problem responsible for flooding is the depressing nature of the area which has made it difficult for water to naturally drain into the canals. What was experienced in Idumagbo and its environs are the effects of climate change as Lagos is one of the cities projected as one of the sinking cities in the world.

"I advise residents of Lagos Island to desist from dumping refuse into drains and canals

and take ownership of the environment by moving against property developers who litter drains with building materials which prevent flowing drains."

Deputy Speaker, Lagos State House of Assembly, Wasiu Eshinlokun-Sanni, remarked:

"I appeal to residents to cooperate with the state government as it is set to proffer a permanent solution to flooding in the area and promise to use my good office to ensure that adequate funds are allocated by the state House of Assembly for the successful provision of the permanent solution."



Mr. Tunji Bello

PDP accuses APC of stealing govt funds for elections

•Alleges ruling party wants to muscle 2023 polls

By **TUNDE JOSHUA**, Abuja

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has accused the Buhari Presidency of allowing the mass looting of public funds to corruptly create a war chest for the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) to intimidate Nigerians and muscle the 2023 general elections.

It claimed that the APC is diverting public funds meant for development purposes and salaries of workers to its coffers by orchestrating the purchase of its presidential nomination form by all manner of persons at an excessive N100 million to warehouse sleaze funds for the elections.

Party spokesperson, Debo Ologunagba, in a statement Tuesday said PDP "has information of how public funds are being withdrawn from Ministries, Agencies and Parastatals of government and

diverted to people who have no verifiable means of livelihood to purchase APC's Presidential Nomination and Expression of Interest forms for individuals without any electoral value and who cannot even win Local Government elections."

He further stated that the party has "intelligence on how public funds are pulled out of government agencies in a surreptitious design perfected by an APC leader in connivance with certain individuals in positions of authority close to top persons in the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN)..

The PDP recalled that it had earlier alerted on how the CBN under Mr. Godwin Emefiele as its governor has been turned into the finance department of the APC "where APC leaders fraudulently access public funds through nebulous subsidies, shady intervention programmes and discriminatory exchange

policies which perpetuate illegal arbitrage system

"The rejected APC has resorted to this underhand method to corruptly rake in billions of naira from public treasury without consideration for the welfare of Nigerians.

"This APC's nefarious action is informed by its realization that its leaders cannot make huge donations to the APC coffers as they will be violating the limits of contribution to political parties as stipulated by law and regulation.

"The APC is a sinking ship with ill-fated and inchoate sailors holding on to straw including this shameless attempt to sweep our national treasury. It is regrettable that the APC has shamelessly and soulessly extended their corruption to our electoral process not minding the consequential effect on our democratic system.

"In any case, such shenanigan and criminal pillaging of our treasury cannot prevent the imminent crushing defeat of the APC at the polls in 2023, Nigerians having realized the fraud and life discounting experiences that the APC represents."

The PDP called on the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Accountant General of the Federation as well as the Auditor General of the Federation to immediately commence investigation and monitor the movement of funds in Ministries, Department and Agencies (MDAs) of government "so as to protect our national treasury from the APC as we approach the 2023 general elections."

"The National Assembly, pursuant to its constitutional duty to expose and prevent corruption should in the interest of Nigerians commence a public investigation into these happenings," it added

IGP presents N183 million to families of deceased officers

•Confirms establishment of Police Insurance Company

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

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Usman Alkali Baba has presented a cheque of over N183 million to families of 40 deceased personnel who lost their lives in the line of duty. He also restated his commitment towards enhancing the welfare of police personnel.

According to a statement by Force Public Relations Officer, CSP Olumuyiwa Adejobi on Tuesday, the IGP issued the cheque while kicking off a three-day workshop for Police Insurance Desk Officers. It was organized to develop the capacity of dedicated officers drawn from the 36 State Commands, the Federal Capital Territory and other Police Formations across the country.

IGP Baba also confirmed the establishment of the Nigeria Police Insurance Company (NPIC), which is set up to effectively manage the Police insurance policies, and maximise the welfare interests of police personnel constantly being exposed to occupational hazards.

Adejobi said, "The Inspector-General of Police, IGP Usman Alkali Baba, psc(+), NPM, fdc, has restated the commitment of the Force to enhanced welfare for Police Officers through robust insurance policies geared towards efficiency, dedication, and improved conditions of service. He stated this while flagging off a 3-day workshop for Police Insurance Desk Officers organized to develop the capacity of dedicated officers drawn from the 36 State Commands, the Federal Capital Territory, and other Police Formations across the country.

"The Nigeria Police Force

Insurance Unit, which was established in May 1992, is a scheme set up to cater for the welfare of police personnel who are either retired or have sustained injuries in the line of duty, and relatives of deceased police personnel. The IGP recently approved the establishment and incorporation of the Nigeria Police Insurance Company (NPIC) to effectively manage the Police insurance policies, and

maximise the welfare interests of police personnel constantly being exposed to occupational hazards. The workshop is one of the major steps towards repositioning the Unit for the attainment of its welfare mandate.

"The IGP, while declaring the workshop open, commended the Force Insurance Officer, ACP Uzairu Abdullahi, for his knowledge and professional foresight which has been instrumental in the repositioning of the Unit. He equally presented cheques to families of 40 deceased police officers, who lost their lives in the line of duty, amounting to One Hundred and Eighty-Three Million, Two Hundred and Ninety-Five Thousand, Three Hundred and Twenty Seven Naira, Thirty Two Kobo (N183,295,327.32).

"The Inspector-General of Police however, assured all members of the Force that with current efforts being emplaced to reposition the Force Insurance Section, better days are ahead in relation to the timely resolution of claims and benefits accruing the next of kin of injured or deceased police officers as well as other welfare schemes to serving members of the force."



Mr. Godwin Emefiele

NGO, *The Trumpet* hold leaders, media forum

•EX-VP, govs, others to speak

Political leaders and media professionals are gathering in Abuja on May 19th, 2022 to brainstorm on national and other issues.

Tagged "Leaders- Media Forum for National Development," the forum which will hold at National Merit House, is being put together by a non governmental body, Good Circle International Organisation, in partnership with *The Trumpet* newspaper.

The theme of the forum is PROMOTING CITIZENS UNITY AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

Editor-in-Chief of *The Trumpet* Omokioja J. J. K. Eto, said that "there is no better time to hold this event as there is

the need for leaders and the media as well as the general public to interact and bring lasting solutions to the challenges facing our society."

International President of GCIO, Engr. Esanerovo Agbodo, in a statement, said: "The forum is meant to beam searchlight on issues bordering on the unity and empowerment of Nigerians toward building a virile nation. The Forum is deliberately formulated to bring leaders from different political parties under one roof as a way of promoting unity among Nigerians irrespective of political parties affiliations. All Nigerian citizens are one in their search for good governance and economic empowerment. So, what we need in Nigeria is good governance and Nigerians under any political party

that have what it takes to govern the country effectively should present themselves and state clearly their visions so that Nigerians can make informed decisions in the 2023 elections."

Leaders expected at the

forum as speakers include former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, Senator Rochas Okorocha as well as Governor Yayaya Bello and Nyesom Wike of Kogi and Rivers states respectively.

The 2019 Presidential

Candidate of All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA), Major-General John Gbor (Rtd) will be the chairman of the forum to oversee deliberations.

The forum will also examine the use of philanthropy as a way

of complementing government efforts in the development of citizens in order to reduce poverty and crime rate in Nigeria.

For more details, contact Esanerovo Agbodo via esanerovoagbodo@yahoo.com and 07036893533.

Police raid, demolish drug cartels, structures in Sapele

Drug cartels and other criminal elements as well as structures harbouring them in Sapele, Delta State have been raided and demolished by the police.

Led by Divisional Police Officer (DPO), CSP Robinson Nwabuisi, they stormed the cartels with support of local vigilance groups.

On sighting the police, the suspected criminals took to their heels such that no arrest could be made.

Speaking with journalists, CSP Nwabuisi said the police got wind of the activities of the cartels from good spirited

individuals.

According to him, all types of illicit drugs are being sold by the cartels at locations not accessible with vehicles but by foot. One of them called "Pedro Cartel" located at Commercial Avenue, Sapele, had been a perpetual hiding place for drug addicts. It is at the heart of the town known as "Urban Area" with residential houses.

Nwabuisi advised residents to always report criminal dens because they are not good training grounds for children.

The police team demolished all makeshift building of the cartels.



Robinson Nwabuisi



R-L: Ooni of Ife, His Imperial Majesty, Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi, Ojaja II; Special Adviser and Representative of the Governor, Engr. Mrs. Aramide Adeyoye, and Sales Manager of Julius Berger AFP, Uchenna Uzoewulu, at AFP Pavilion during the Lagos Architects Forum 13.0 at Eko Hotel, Victoria Island.

Julius Berger AFP wins awards

•Sanwoolu, Ooni laud company

Abuja Furniture Product, AFP, the furniture and furnishing arm of Julius Berger Nigeria Plc has won 'Recognition for Corinthian Partnership Award' of the Nigerian Institute of Architects, Lagos State Chapter. AFP also won the 'Company with Most Popular Product Award' at the Lagos Architects Forum 13.0, held at Eko Hotels and Suites, Victoria Island.

The Forum described Julius Berger AFP as unique and supportive of the architectural profession. Chapter Chairman, Arch. David Majekodunmi described AFP's products on display at the accompanying exhibition as, "unique, superb and uniquely lovely."

Representative of the Governor of Lagos and Special Adviser to the state Chief Executive on Infrastructure and engineering services, Engr. Aramide Adeyoye, who also won an award of excellence, praised the chapter for "a well organised Forum and Exhibition." Mrs Adeyoye, on behalf of Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu, further said: "Nigerians appreciate the contributions of architects

to nation-building. Here in Lagos we always count on your support in our fight against building collapse and solid infrastructural development across the state."

The Lagos governor also assured that his government was committed to implementing the state's original development plan.

Ooni of Ife, His Imperial Majesty, Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi, Ojaja II, a builder himself, who attended the event, commended products on display at the AFP exhibition pavilion saying that "they are good and beautiful."

The Ooni lauded the role of architects in the design and development of systems and communities, describing them as "the real nation builders."

Ooni stressed that "globally, the indispensable roles of architects cannot be overemphasised as they design, prepare plans and even superintend all buildings and structures to ensure conformity with standard as well as safety."

The Ooni of Ife charged Nigerian architects and

other professionals in the nation's building industry to push towards implementing the country's National Building Code. Nigeria's National Building Code is a set of minimum standards on building pre-design, designs, construction and post-construction stages with a view to ensuring quality, safety and proficiency in the building industry. Referring to the frequent building collapse incidents in Lagos the Ooni said, "...building collapse is a major problem." To underscore how seriously he viewed the issue, the Monarch declared, "I am ready to join the drive to achieve the implementation of the building code and ethics in Nigeria."

The Sales Manager, AFP, Mr. Uche Uzoewulu, received the award plaque on behalf of the company as the Head, Media Relations, Julius Berger Nigeria Plc, Prince Moses Duku watched.

Since 2009, the Forum has become the annual flagship event for architects who live and work in Lagos, with active participation of Construction Industry professionals and service providers. The event is traditionally hosted at Eko

Hotel & Suites, Victoria Island, Lagos.

The event is an increasingly popular International Conference, which provides all participants and partners excellent opportunities to meet with the various key players and stakeholders in the Construction Industry. During LAF 13.0, participants had several opportunities to interact and establish bi-lateral ties with affiliated companies, service providers, manufacturers, corporate bodies, prospective end-users, and other relevant stakeholders.

The Lagos Architects Forum 2022 provided a number of unique opportunities for corporate bodies and organizations to promote their products and services that relate to the Construction Industry. They included product launches, display of products and services, exhibitions of architects' works, workshops, seminars, advertisement, partnership opportunities, post conference site tours, etc. In the words of the Chairman of the Lagos Chapter of the NIA, Arch. David Majekodunmi, "...It remains an unbeatable investment of time and resources."

Court declares Ebonyi Cybercrimes Law unconstitutional

Stories by **CHARLES ONYEKWERE**,
South-East Correspondent

A Federal High Court sitting in Abakaliki, the state capital on Tuesday declared the controversial Ebonyi Cybercrimes Law No 12 of 2021 unconstitutional, null and void.

The Court ruling followed a suit by one Pascal Etu who had sued the State Governor, David Umahi, over the controversial law.

Ebonyi State Government had in September 2021 enacted the law in an equally controversial circumstances.

Apart from the House of Assembly members, no Journalist was present when the law was enacted. Also there was no proof of the law going through public hearing before being passed.

It was also quickly and secretly accented to by the state governor, David Umahi almost immediately.

The public only became aware of the existence of the law when in October, a social critic, Godfrey Chikwere was arrested by the Police for allegedly flouting some sections of the law.

The Police were about to charge

him to court when he suddenly slumped and was rushed to the hospital.

Earlier this year, Mr Etu was arrested for allegedly flouting the law, as was the Spokesperson of the People's Democratic Party(PDP) in the State, Chika Nwoba.

Both were remanded in prison by the State Magistrate Court pending the determination of the allegations against them.

Mr Nwoba was later granted bail by the court following outcry and condemnations that greeted his arrest.

But Etu was not so lucky as he is still in prison custody till date with his matter suffering several adjournments.

While the case against Mr Etu was on at the State High Court, he instituted the matter against the state government and four others at the Federal High Court in Abakaliki challenging the constitutionality of the law.

In the suit FCAI/CS/6/2022, Mr Etu through his Lawyers prayed the court to declare that the Ebonyi State House of Assembly has no powers to make such laws.

He also argued that the law is unconstitutional, null and void as it runs contrary to the Cybercrimes Act passed by the National Assembly.

The respondents in the matter include Governor of Ebonyi state, Ebonyi State House of Assembly and the Attorney General of the Ebonyi state as first, second and third respondents respectively.

Others are Commissioner of Police Ebonyi State and Department of State Security Services as fourth and fifth defendants.

In his ruling, The Presiding Judge, Justice Fatun Riman granted all the prayers of the plaintiff.

The Judge while declaring the Ebonyi Cybercrimes Law 2021 unconstitutional, null and void also issued an order of injunction restraining the Ebonyi State government from continuing to enforce the law.

Justice Riman further held that the Ebonyi State House of Assembly had no constitutional powers to make such laws because the National Assembly had enacted the Cybercrimes Act in 2015 which is applicable in all the states of the federation.



Gov. Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi

Ebonyi PDP petitions security chiefs over alleged plans to seal secretariat

By **CHARLES ONYEKWERE**,
Abakaliki

The opposition People's Democratic Party (PDP) in Ebonyi has petitioned the nation's security chiefs over an alleged plan to seal its secretariat in the state.

It accused the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) for masterminding the plan.

PD P absolved itself of any complicity in the alleged shootings during the just concluded 3-man delegate congress election in the state.

Spokesperson of PDP, Mr. Nwoba Chika who said this in a statement made available to newsmen in Abakaliki, explained that there was no

internal party crisis to warrant the plot to seal its secretariat.

Part of the statement reads, "The attention of the Peoples Democratic Party in Ebonyi State has been drawn to the threat and allegation levelled against it by Ebonyi State government led by Engr David Umahi.

"He made the threat of sealing the state secretariat of the party, buttressing his reason on an alleged shooting on the premises of the party last week.

"It's pertinent to reiterate that no crisis erupted in the secretariat of our ebullient party. Police only fired shots into the air when a deluge of party members involuntarily swooped on the Adhoc delegation that came to organize a 3-man delegates congress in the state.

"Our party controls a better half of the Ebonyi population and it's not out of place to have the retinue of heads rearing to catch glimpse of the faces of the party's august guests.

"We frown at the threat coming from the government and charge them to desist from slandering the PDP in Ebonyi State out of envy of the successes the party has recorded within the little time frame.

"We are a law-abiding political movement that has always adopted decorum and rule of law in carrying out its activities. We, therefore, draw the attention of the security agencies in the state to this outlandish threat coming from a supposed refined leader".

Survivors of FGM/C urge laws' implementation, stiff penalties

South-East Correspondent

Survivors of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) in Abakaliki Local Government Area, Ebonyi State have called on government agencies and NGOs to ensure that the laws already available against perpetrators are implemented.

They asked that penalties prescribed for those who undertake genital mutilation and the collaborators should be made to be relatively stiff for that to be able to serve as a deterrent to others.

The survivors, women and girls, randomly drawn from Abakaliki Council Area spoke to our Correspondent who was on facts finding on the situation as it concerns FGM/C in the Local Government Area.

Nweke said that some others use warm water, and Vaseline jelly to mutilate their girls.

Another survivor; a JSS 1 student who merely gave her name as Joan said, she was forcefully cut at the age of 10 but that she had to invite their Village Head to stop her mother from cutting her younger sister because she was convinced of the dangers associated with the

mutilation after she participated in a workshop in Abakaliki.

An FGM Champion in the Nkaliki community, Mrs. Helen Uwa said the Abakaliki Urban communities, more than those in the far-to-reach areas where their belief and traditional commitment to FGM/C is relatively lower. POLL

Chief Emmanuel Nwangele, Chairman of the Abakaiki council said the council had at any chances spoken to their women, traditional rulers on the dangers of FGM/C, said it was drastically being reduced in the council area.

He noted that wife of the State Governor, Mrs. Rachel Umahi had taken on the fight against the FGM/C hence the council areas had replicated the campaigns in their Local Government Areas.

Recall that Female genital

mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The practice is mostly carried out by traditional practitioners. In several settings, there is evidence suggesting greater involvement of health care providers in performing FGM due to the belief that the procedure is safer when medicalized. It is strongly urged that health care providers should perform FGM.

FGM is recognized internationally as a violation of the human rights of girls and women. It reflects deep-rooted inequality between the sexes, and constitutes an extreme form of discrimination against girls and women. It is nearly always carried out on minors and is a violation of the rights of children.

Immortalise Nzeribe in Abuja, Okorocha tells FG

A former Governor of Imo State, Rochas Okorocha, has called for the immortalisation of the late Senator Arthur Nzeribe.

Owelle Okorocha, representing Imo West Senatorial District in the upper chamber, said Nzeribe was an astute politician and a philanthropist who was one of his predecessors in the Senate and was loved by his people.

Nzeribe who died on Sunday at the age of 84, hailed from Oguta local government area of Imo State and was a First Republic senator.

Senator Okorocha stated this during a plenary on Tuesday, after he called for a one-minute silence which was observed by Senators.

The news of his death was brought to the floor by Okorocha, following a point of order raised at plenary.

Rising on Order 42, Okorocha

informed his colleagues of the death of the former lawmaker after a protracted illness.

He noted that the late Nzeribe was an astute politician and philanthropist who was loved by his people in Oguta and beyond.

The lawmaker urged the Senate to push for the immortalisation of the deceased in the Federal Capital Territory.

In his remarks, Senate President Ahmad Lawan urged young politicians to emulate the life of service of the deceased politician.

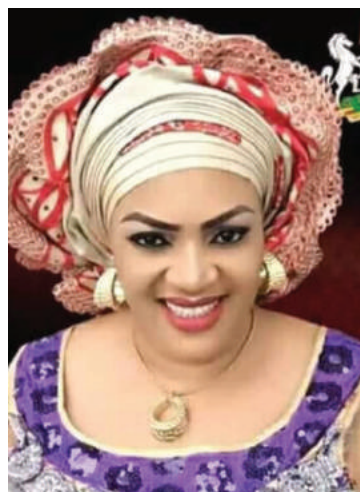
He said: "Arthur Nzeribe, played his part as a politician and legislator, and I knew him when I was a member of the House of Representatives and he was here in the Senate.

"Our paths crossed several times, and surely the political space will have some vacuum, but we pray that younger politi-



Rochas Okorocha

cians will grow to provide the kind of services that ordinarily would have been missed because of this monumental death."



Mrs. Rachel Umahi



How Senate President Ahmad Lawan joined presidential race

● *Why Orji Kalu withdrew, says zoning dead*

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

President of the Senate, Ahmad Lawan on Monday formally joined the race for the 2023 Presidency as he received the the All Progressives Congress (APC) expression of interest and nomination forms from a group called 'National Stability Project.'

The group led by Chief Sam Nkire, member, National Caucus/Pioneer Caucus Leader, Abia APC earlier in the afternoon obtained the form at the International Conference Centre before presenting to Lawan at the Senate President guest house in Maitama area of the FCT.

Declaring to run after accepting the N100 million forms offer, Lawan said he readily accepted the challenge to put himself forward in the search for a credible candidate to fly the flag of APC in the 2023 general election.

Lawan in his short response said "today is a special day and this moment is a very memorable and very historic moment.

"Over the last seven years, we have been participants in the administration of our

country at the national level.

"The APC led administration, our President, Muhammadu Buhari will be competing his tenure on May 29, 2023. I want to pay special tribute to what the President and the APC administration have done so far for developing our country.

"I have listened to various calls from all parts of our dear country, Nigeria for me to show interest to run for the Office of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

"I took my time to pray to Almighty God to guide me; I took my time to consult very widely, to consult Nigerians from all parts of the country.

"This is to ensure that I get the understanding of the citizens of this country on whose behalf, we will by the grace of God win the election and run the administration."

He said that Nigeria needed to be taken to the next level. "We know what we have achieved as an administration and as a political party.

"And we know where we are supposed to take this level to eventually.

"I want to commit myself to this call and to this movement of Nigerians from all walks of life; rich, poor, North, South, East and West.

"This is not my journey, this is our journey. This is our journey because every hand must be on deck for us to achieve exactly, what we need to achieve.

"I'm joining lately. The field is already full of other aspirants. I want to assure Nigerians that the APC is a very beautiful bride that is why we have many aspirants."

The senate president further said they he would play the game by the rules adding that he won't circumvent any rule.

"I will go door to door to ensure that I get the vote when the national convention to elect the presidential candidate of our party will hold.

"I place my trust fully, totally and completely with the Almighty God. That God will be bless this journey.

"I also appeal to all Nigerians that we are seriously committed to taking Nigeria to the next level from where it will be on May 29, 2023."



Lawan

Parties, INEC tangle over primaries deadline

● *IPAC urges extension to August 4*

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

The 18 political parties in the country have demanded an extension for conduct of primaries across parties from June 3 to August 4, but the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) stuck to its guns that it will not review timelines already released for the 2023 general election.

Chairman, Inter Party Advisory Council (IPAC), Engr. Yabagi Sanni made this demand on behalf of the parties Tuesday in Abuja at a quarterly meeting between INEC and leaders of political parties held at the INEC headquarters.

At the meeting which had in attendance, Senator Abdullahi Adamu, national chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and Dr. Iyorchia Ayu, national chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) among other party leaders, Sanni said that the demand for the adjustment of the timetable and schedule of activities for 2023 general elections, was a unanimous decision of the 18 political parties at its general assembly meeting.

He said "in summary, the General Assembly of IPAC, after an exhaustive examination of the INEC timetable and related issues, arrived at a unanimous decision to request for an extension of two months to the deadline of the time frame for the conduct of party primaries and resolution of conflicts arising from the primaries:

"By implication, the IPAC leadership is appealing to the INEC to extend the deadline for the conduct of party primaries and resolution of ensuing conflicts from the present INEC given date of June 3, 2022 to Aug. 4.

"Some of the issues considered by the IPAC General Assembly which necessitated the call for extension in the timeframe of the present INEC timetable and schedule of activities are based on certain circumstances and developments that have hampered timely and strict compliance by the political parties to the timetable."

He, however, advanced reasons for the

demand, stressing that there are certain constraints which INEC failed to put into consideration while drawing up its schedule of activities. Such includes but not limited to; fasting period by both Christians and Muslims as well as the Eld-el-fitr and Easter celebrations within the same period.

Others according to him include "the forthcoming gubernatorial elections in Ekiti and Osun states".

The parties said time allotted by INEC for the conduct of party primaries is too short in view of the efforts required by the political parties for effective and scrupulous screening and selection of their flag bearers.

The IPAC boss said the unprecedented large number of aspirants jostling to emerge as candidates of their various political parties in the coming general elections, had made the task of screening very cumbersome and demanding.

Sanni added that political parties also had to be cautious and painstaking in the screening and selection procedures as a safeguard against creating rooms for disruptive incidents of litigation by aggrieved aspirants.

"In making the request for extension in the INEC stipulated timetable and schedule of activities for the 2023 general elections, we in the Inter-Party Advisory Council, are not unmindful of the provisions of the Constitution and the Electoral Act with respect to timelines in the electoral process.

"We are however, of the considered view that our request will not, in any way, tantamount to an infringement or, a breach of any extant laws and provisions.

"This is because, the alterations that we are demanding, will not affect the statutory dates already fixed for the conduct of the 2023 general elections.

"We are praying for the slight changes in the timetable for the conduct of party primaries in full consciousness of our position as key stakeholders in the nation's democratic process and who, at the bottom of it all, constitute not only the greatest beneficiaries but, as the

platform of all the registered political parties, we are in fact, the fulcrum around which the entire system and processes revolve.

"We should therefore, be seen as a body of responsible and patriotic interest bloc with a very high sense of responsibility and commitment to the success of every crucial stage and aspects in the electoral chain."

Sanni urged INEC to consider IPAC request as a decision that was in the best interest of the nation's democracy and specifically, the smooth and successful conduct of a rancour free, credible, transparent, free and fair elections in the year 2023.

INEC Chairman, Prof. Mahmood Yakubu, reiterated that the June 3 deadline for parties primaries is sacrosanct.

Yakubu said that any extension in the timeline for one activity would affect other activities and put unnecessary pressure on political parties and the commission.

"This is also our first meeting since the Commission released the Timetable and Schedule of Activities for the 2023 General Election over two months ago on Saturday Feb. 26.

"Already, all 18 political parties have forwarded the schedules of their primaries to the Commission, and some have commenced the process of choosing their candidates by conducting Ward and Local Government congresses.

"The period earmarked for the conduct of primaries by political parties commenced on 4th April 2022 and will end 24 days from today i.e. June 3.

Twice in the last two weeks, the Commission had cause to remind political parties of the necessity for strict compliance with the timelines for party primaries.

"I hereby reiterate the position of the Commission that there will be no review of the timelines.

"There are so many inter-related activities that are associated with the timelines which must be carried out.

"Any review to extend the timeline for

one activity will affect other activities and put unnecessary pressure on political parties and the Commission," Yakubu said.

Yakubu added that such action would ultimately result in more complications than what the extension seeks to achieve.

"Therefore, the Commission will not review the timelines."

"Working together, we should ensure fidelity to the timelines in conducting transparent and democratic primaries for the purpose of electing candidates for the 1,491 constituencies for which elections will be held on Feb. 25 and March 11 2023."

Yakubu disclosed that the INEC had prepared a calendar of party primaries for presidential, governorship, national and state assembly seats based on the proposals submitted by political parties as at Friday May 6, presented to party leaders at the meeting.

He also advised political parties as they conclude their primaries and prepare for the off-cycle and general elections, to ensure a transparent electioneering process devoid of acrimony and rancour.

"In doing so, fidelity to internal democracy is critical.

"Unfortunately, the number of litigations by aggrieved party members challenging the conduct of party primaries so far may exceed the 807 pre-election Court cases on the 2019 General Election in which the Commission was joined by litigants.

"In addition, as we all know the security situation in the country is challenging enough.

"Do not wittingly or unwittingly compound the situation by the disruptive behaviour of your members and supporters during party primaries and general elections.

Leaders of other parties at the meeting include those of the Action Alliance (AA), All Progressives Congress (APC), Action Peoples Party (APP), New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP), National Rescue Movement (NRM), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the Social Democratic Party (PDP).

Zoning, presidential primary funding top agenda at PDP's NEC meeting

● *Forum to interface with aspirants*

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

Zoning of the presidential candidate spot of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) expectedly will top agenda at its 96th National Executive Council (NEC) meeting.

To do this, the meeting needs to consider a report submitted by the PDP Zoning Committee led by Benue State Governor Samuel Ortom.

To be presided over by the National Chairman, Dr. Iyorchia Ayu, the meeting may likely consider the approval of fund budgeted for the party's presidential primaries and source of funding.

The NEC will not end the meeting without fixing a venue for the primaries, though there is strong indication it may take place in Abuja. Though a few governors are said to be lobbying to host the party primaries in their states.

Meanwhile, as party is busy searching for a standard bearer, Forum of PDP Former Presiding Officers of State Houses of Assembly at a meeting in Abuja on Tuesday set up a 10-man Committee to interface with all presidential aspirants under the party platform.

Addressing journalists after the meeting, Hon. Inuwa Garba said the committee is to further liaise with the presidential aspirant and the PDP leadership to ensure credible and successful presidential primaries as well as victory at the 2023 general elections.

The form also commended the leader-



Ortom

ship of the party, led by Senator Iyorchia Ayu, and therefore called on all PDP federal members and the leadership at all level to remain committed and dedicated to the ideals of the party in order ensure success at all levels in the coming elections in Nigeria.

"We have received submissions and



Ayu

interaction with most of the presidential aspirants and the forum decided to form this committee so that we can further check and see their capacity, credibility and make recommendation to larger General Assembly of the forum so that we can take a decision on behalf of the all of us on which candidate can

we unanimously support so that we can ensure successful conduct in the primaries and in the general election.

"We don't want our forum members to go and vote randomly, we want to have a block vote for a particular candidate whom we agree, have the capacity and credibility to win the general elections for the nation.

"Consensus is not part of our mandate. We are not a political party, PDP is a political party and they've set up a committee on this issue. Whatever the party resolves is binding on us, we are not to determined or to decide for the party.

"So we are not here to decide for the PDP, but as far as this forum is concerned, we are looking at larger country in Nigeria. We are looking at a candidate that will emerge that is for Nigeria's, we are looking at a candidate that will emerge and win a general election that all Nigerians irrespective of political divides will accept him as a president for Nigeria, and he will work for Nigeria and make Nigeria better, Rescue Nigeria."

Members of the committee are Right Hon. Rt Hon. Inuwa Garba; Rt. Hon. Prof. Matoh D. Dogara; Rt. Hon. Dr. Bakkita Bello; Rt. Hon. Dr. Boyelayefa Debekeme; Rt Hon. Ass. Prof. Rabiul A- Kurfi; Rt. Hon Williams Edor; Rt Hon. Jonas Okeke; Rt. Hon: Joyce Ramnap; Rt. Hon. Barr Friday Itula and Rt Hon. Kwamoti Laori.

Don't disrupt parties primaries, Senate pleads with NANS

● *Promises to wade into FG, ASUU faceoff*

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

The Senate on Tuesday moved to halt planned disruption of activities of political parties including scheduled primaries by promising to intervene in the crisis rocking the ivory towers.

The upper chamber therefore urged the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) to shelve the planned action but toe the part of consultation, not confrontation.

It promised to bring the Federal Government and the striking Academic Union of Universities, ASUU back to the negotiations table.

Senate President Ahmad Lawan gave the assurance on Tuesday at a meeting with executive members of NANS at the National Assembly.

Members of NANS met have visited to urge Lawan intervene in the prolonged crisis, else the students will have no option than to carry out the threat of not allowing any political party hold its convention in Abuja to elect candidates for 2023 general elections.

The meeting between NANS and the Senate President was facilitated by Bishop (Dr.) Sunday Ndukwo Onuoha to find solution to the prolonged ASUU strike.

Bishop Onuoha said "ASUU embarked on an indefinite strike, as the second round of the eight-week warning strike ended. Since the first strike on February 14 this year, till the present day, other staff unions in the university system, like the unions of Senior Staff Association of

Nigerian Universities, SSANU; National Association of Academic Technologists, NAAT, and the Non-Academic Staff Union of Education and Allied Institutions, NASU, have joined the train.

"The negligence in education sector is letting the lives of our young generation waste away, while they watch some of the political-elite do the dance of shame", adding "where are the children of the elite and the affluent right now? They

have been whisked away abroad, to learn in better managed institutions, with money that can feed an entire village fat".

President of NANS, Comrade Asefon Sunday Adedayo told the Senate President, as the number three citizen, to use his good offices to impress on President Muhammadu Buhari to urgently resolve the strike embarked upon by ASUU to enable their members

go back to classes.

Adedayo said as leaders of Nigerian students, they have nothing to tell them to calm them any more, adding that they have decided to move from "consultation or dialogue to confrontation", by not allowing any political party to hold its convention in Abuja to elect candidates for the 2023 general elections.

In his response, Lawan recalled that it was the intervention of the Senate in the past and had sessions with ASUU and the FG that led to ASUU getting N20-30 billion as academic earned allowance.

"I want to be very frank and if anyone finds what I'm going to say not palatable, I'm sorry. The so-called 2009 agreement signed, for me it is the main cause of problem. That agreement shouldn't have been signed because there was no way government can provide that kind of resources that the 2009 agreement envisaged. It was not possible. With due respect for those who worked so hard, but eventually hoping to just get ASUU back to class just signed everything like that".

He said the 2009 was not practicable, adding that someone just wanted ASUU back to class.

According to him, "we are not happy that our students are at home. If we get our act right we ought export labour, not brain drain".

The Senate President paid special respect to Bishop Onuoha for his nationalistic stand, adding that "the Bishop deserves national honour".



Lawan

Court admits more evidence against fake Army General

By PAUL MICHAEL, DEFENCE EDITOR, ABUJA

The trial of one Bolarinwa Abiodun, a self-professed Army General on a 13-count charge bordering on possession of forged documents and obtaining money by false pretence of N266,500,000 continues before Justice Oluwatoyin Taiwo of the Special Offences Court sitting in Ikeja, Lagos.

The court admitted more evidence against him through the fourth witness of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

The defendant, whose bail was on April 25, 2022 refused by the court as he was ruled to constitute a flight-risk, is being prosecuted by the Lagos Zonal Command of the EFCC on offences contrary to Section 1 (3) of the Advance Fee Fraud and other Related Offences Act 2006; Section 363 of the Criminal Law of Lagos State 2015 and Section 6 of the Advance Fee Fraud and other Related Offences Act No 14 of 2006, respectively.

He was first arraigned on April 11, 2022 and he pleaded "not guilty" to



Abiodun

all the charges.

One of the counts reads: "Bolarinwa Oluwasegun Abiodun, between 15th June, 2020 and 31st December 2020 in Lagos, within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court, with intent to defraud and whilst holding yourself out as a General in the Nigerian Army, obtained the sum of N111,400,000 from Kodef Clearing Resources Limited, under the pretence that the sum represented part of the amount expended to "press and process" your incoming appointment

by the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, as the CHIEF OF ARMY STAFF of the Nigerian Army, which pretence you knew to be false."

Another count reads: "Bolarinwa Oluwasegun Abiodun, sometime in May 2020 in Lagos within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court, knowingly forged LETTER OF APPOINTMENT AS CHIEF OF ARMY STAFF dated 20th May 2020 and purported the said document to have emanated from the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which document you know to be false."

Testifying as the fourth prosecution witness, Buhari Bello Kobi, an operative of the EFCC involved in the investigation, narrated how the EFCC had received a petition against the defendant who, in the guise of being an Army General, allegedly defrauded his victim of N266,500,000.

Led in evidence by the prosecuting counsel, Rotimi Oyedepo, he told the Court that the EFCC received the petition sometime in November 2021 and that the investigating team immediately swung into action by carrying out surveillance

activities, which led to the arrest of the defendant on January 12, 2022.

He said, "Attached to the petition was a letter (purportedly) signed by President Muhammadu Buhari addressed to the defendant for the appointment, the Certificate of Confirmation as the incoming Chief of Army Staff as well as the invitation for inauguration as the COAS all sent to the petitioner via WhatsApp.

"We further gathered intelligence through surveillance. And on 12th January, 2022, the suspect was arrested at his residence at Alagbado, Lagos.

"In the course of the search, several items were recovered from his house, including six pump action guns, three cartridge bullets, a swagger stick, a military ID card with the passport photo of the defendant and his name as General Bolarinwa, several forged documents and several photographs of him in the military uniform."

According to him, four vehicles were also recovered from his house, including one Hilux, one Range Rover, one Land Cruiser and one other vehicle with OBJ1 as its number plate.

He also told the court that the investigating team wrote to relevant authorities, including the State House and the Defence Headquarters to ascertain the genuineness of the documents.

He added that letters of investigation activities were also written to First Bank of Nigeria Plc, where the account of the defendant was domiciled, as well as Zenith Bank and UBA, where the accounts of the victim were domiciled.

He thereafter confirmed Exhibit A, which was already before the Court as the petition, and identified the responses received from First Bank, UBA and Zenith Bank, which were already before the Court, as exhibits.

He also identified the letter of investigation activities written to the Chief of Defence, the Chief of Army Staff, the State House as well as their responses. When the prosecution sought to tender the documents in evidence against the defendant, there was no objection by the defence counsel, Kayode Lawal.

Defendant voluntarily gave statement in Malabu scam, EFCC official says

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

An investigator with the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Ibrahim Ahmed, has said the 2nd defendant, Aliyu Abubakar, in the trial of former Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF), Mohammed Adoke, did not make statement to the agency under duress but voluntarily.

Abubakar, a businessman, had alleged that statements made in the course of his investigation by the EFCC, were made under duress, adding that he was also induced to implicate others. Following the development, the court to ordered a trial-within-trial.

Ahmed, who was the 1st prosecution witness (PW1) in the trial-within-trial of the money laundering charge preferred

against the duo by the anti-graft agency, told Justice Inyang Ekwo on Monday that the allegation by Abubakar was untrue.

Also, while being led in evidence by counsel to the EFCC, Ofem Uket, the witness who is a CSP seconded to the anti-graft agency, also denied the allegation that Abubakar was induced to make the statements.

"There was no inducement my lord. The 2nd defendant (Abubakar) was not forced to make any statement and he was not detained. He did it voluntarily and was not threatened," Uket told the court.

During a cross examination by lawyer to Abubakar, Chief Wole Olanipekun, SAN, the witness said though he could not tell how long the interview with

the 2nd defendant lasted, the timing was in the record made.

Ahmed said Abubakar made two statements out of the six the commission sought to tender in evidence, in his own handwriting.

He said the defendant also brought lawyers who he said he trusted to write some for him and he (Abubakar) attested to the statements.

The witness also acknowledged that two of the statements were written by one Bashir, a police officer seconded to the EFCC on Abubakar's behalf and that the defendant undertook that he gave him the go-ahead to do so.

Ahmed said Bashir took the recording during the investigation. Justice Ekwo adjourned the matter until tomorrow for the continuation of the trial-within-trial.

Witness to testify electronically in NIMASA ex-DG's alleged N754.8 million fraud

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Trial of Patrick Akpobolokemi, a former Director-General, Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), and Ezekiel Bala Agaba, before Justice R.I.B. Adebisi of the Lagos State High Court sitting in Ikeja, for an alleged N754.8 million fraud continued on Monday, May 9, 2022, with the trial judge upholding the application by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to have its next

witness who is based in the United States of America testify through electronic means.

During the last sitting on March 18, 2022, the prosecution had approached the Court with the application.

The prosecuting counsel, Kufre Uduak, told the Court that the witness, one Charles Aroawode Oboh, a

Director in Aroward Nigeria Limited, is based in the United States of America.

He said, "The prosecution is seeking an order granting leave to call the witness based in the United States of America to testify through electronic means; and for such other order, as this Honourable Court may deem fit, to make in the circumstance."

The counsel for the second defendant, E.D. Onyeke, had opposed the application arguing that "it will be prejudicial, as he is not situated within jurisdiction."

"We believe his evidence could be manipulated," Onyeke added, as he prayed the Court to dismiss the application.

However, delivering the ruling today, the Judge dismissed the opposition of the defence as lacking in merit, and granted the prayers of the prosecution.

The case has been adjourned till June 30, 2022 for continuation of trial.



Akpobolokemi



Agaba

Election 2023: Agenda for the Nigerian electorate

Since the beginning of 2022 the Nigerian political environment has been charged with politicking and power-play towards the 2023 general elections. National conventions are being held, forms for expression of interest are being purchased and almost all political parties are warming up for their primaries. The stakes appear to be particularly high this time. Nigerians want to escape bad political circumstances and hope a leader will emerge to rescue the country from insecurity, impunity, lack of accountability and reckless tribal politics.

The Nigerian electorate, need a clear and unambiguous agenda in this entire scenario. As the body of citizens who have satisfied the constitutional provisions and are eligible to cast votes in each successive general elections in the country, the Nigerian electorate is critical to the Nigerian democratic experiment. Actions and inactions from it largely determine the political future of Nigeria especially after 2023.

Past electoral situations have not been impressive, especially in the areas of voters' registration and voting. Available statistics show that as of March 2019, the electorate population in Nigeria was estimated at 84,004,084, which represents 49.78 per cent of the 200,962,417 estimated population of the country. But in the last presidential election, only about 35 per cent of the eligible voters participated in the process. This means that a huge proportion of eligible citizens failed to either register to vote or vote. Instead, some opted to be used to perpetrate violence during campaigns, snatch ballot boxes, thumb-print ballot papers and write results which were either announced by returning officers or validated by the courts. In some other cases the electorate opted for ethnicity, religious sentiments, and financial inducements as motivations

for voting. Sometimes they voted but never ensured that their votes counted.

As we approach the 2023 general elections, we specially call for a serious self-check on the part of the Nigerian electorate. They need to register and vote. Failure of eligible citizens to register or vote as represented in the 35 percent of 2019 is unacceptable. In fact, it is disheartening when compared to about 65 percent reported in other countries of West Africa. Where majority of the electorate fail to exercise their franchise, they avail the politicians the opportunity to manipulate the political process.

In the general sense there is need for the electorate to re-educate themselves on the meaning and power of their votes

in a democracy. One may understand that the polity is such that many in the electorate either met democracy on the pages of textbooks or the streets of their neighborhood, so, they lack the in-depth understanding of what the democratic system rarely entails. Now is the time for them to be clear that voting is a part of their political obligation, and it is a major determinant of governance. Their vote is what closes the gap between their political expectations and political realities. It should neither be sold to, nor bought by money and sentiment; but guided by conscience only.

Furthermore, the electorate need to understand that Democracy is an interplay between voters and who they vote for. It is a symbiosis in which the quality of electorate in the system largely determines the quality of elected political office holders, and subsequently the quality of political services available to the people. Elections determine the present and future situations of a country. These must not be subjected to the vagaries of religions and ethnicity. The Nigerian electorate should choose leaders based on quality and capacity of candidates to deliver political goods to the nation. They also need to know that to vote is not as important as ensuring that the votes count. For whatever it is worth, they must now imbibe the culture of waiting for elections results and insisting that their votes really count.

We consider the role of the government, the press, civil society organisations, the family, political parties, schools, and universities critical in providing the Nigerian electorate with the foregoing political education at this critical time. We therefore call on these groups and individuals to play the agenda-setting role against the 2023 general elections which crucial to what will make or mar the Nigerian state in the nearest future.



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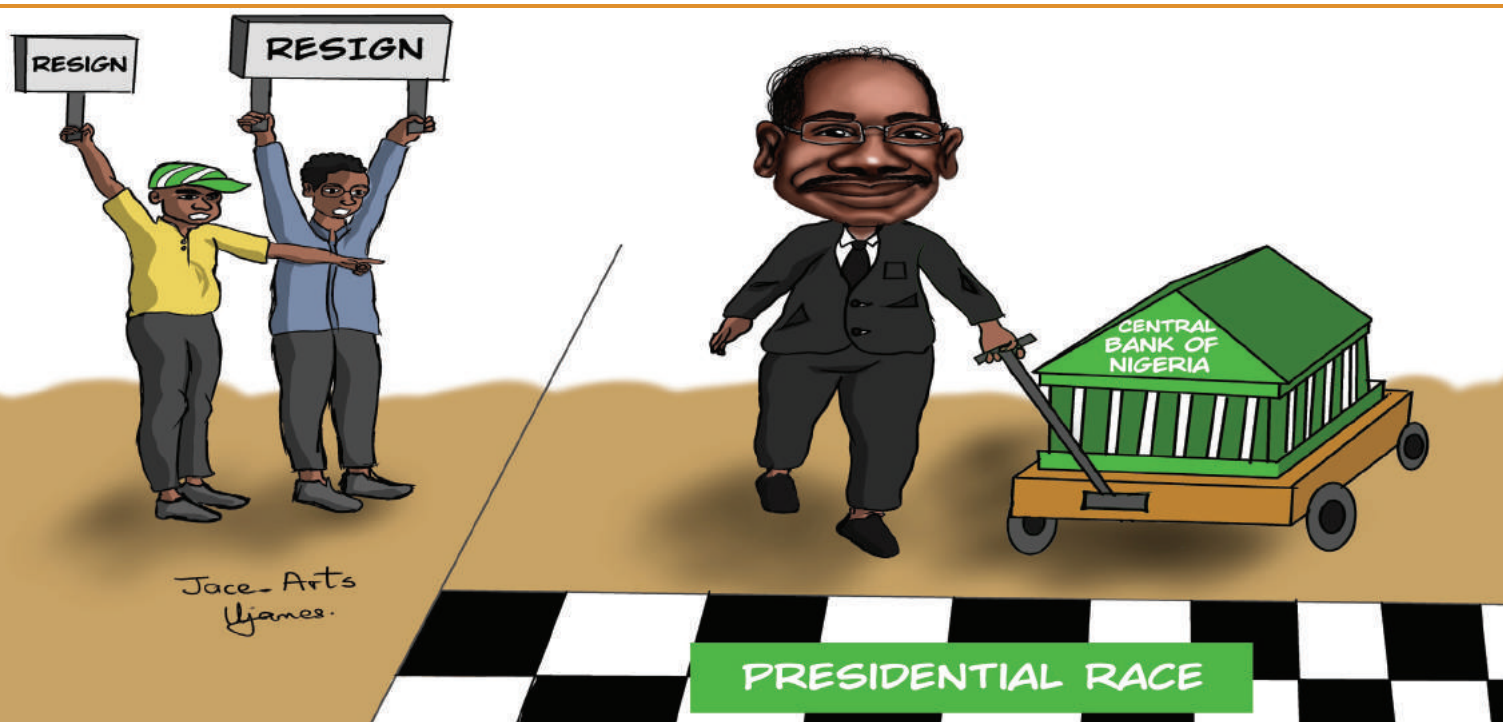
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I am calling for the scrapping, abolishing, and dissolution of Nigeria's financial crime watchdog, The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) without further delay. By this call, I am not subscribing to the idea that Nigerians employed in the agency should be thrown into our constricting unemployment space. The entire staff should still be retained in a different flank of the Nigerian Police Force. But the financial crime watch body so constituted should be scrapped immediately because it has become redundant, expendable, and comatose.

The primary responsibility of the agency is to fight economic financial crimes against the Nigerian state no matter who is involved. Among other things, the EFCC is required to investigate, uncover, and bring to the book citizens living beyond their means. But regrettably, the EFCC has abandoned ship, abnegated its primary responsibilities, and abjured the distinguished virtues of its establishment.

Financial crime in Nigeria has exceeded scandalous levels, stretching towards appalling, abominable heights under the watch of the EFCC. If Buhari does not scrap EFCC, let the topic become part

of the Nigerian socio-political discourse. So perhaps, my advice and opinion that EFCC should be scrapped are mainly directed to the next occupant of Aso Rock, that is, if Nigerians, in their grovelling self-debasement and materialistic fantasizing will elect a good leader.

There is no justifiable reason for the EFCC to continue to exist seeing that financial crime, in all its predatory, sinister devaluating potential, has almost crippled the country. People accused of various crimes, those who have plundered the Nigerian exchequer at different times and under different guises now shamelessly flaunt the same before Nigerians. Many of these people are lawmakers. People with criminal cases hanging on their heads make laws in Nigeria. Many of these people are aspiring to become Nigeria's President, some want to be Governors, others want to be Ministers too and many others are jostling to occupy one leadership position or another while their criminal files occupy large spaces in EFCC's office. While flaunting their filthy lucre, they ride their chariots over the cringing, degenerate, deprived masses whose misery they have enthroned.

Recently the media was awash

with reports that the Federal Government of Nigeria trained 177 youths in Smartphone repairs with a whopping sum of N5.9 billion naira in Kano State through the N-Power program. Mathematically, this means that N33.3 million naira was spent on each youth in the scheme. How brutally wicked and unconscionable can people be? How on planet earth can a government defend such obscenity? As soon as the news broke out, I expected our financial crime watchdog to go to work and arrest all the officials involved in the scam at least for questioning. But the EFCC did not bestir. They slept like a lame, crippled mass of flesh, pretending not to know that Nigerians have been robbed and the exchequer vanquished.

In what seems like an afterthought, the Federal Government, perhaps realizing that the press had uncovered their oozing, lucre dyspeptic underbelly, immediately issued a statement denying the information as misleading. The Federal Government did not deny spending N5.9 billion naira, no. Rather, they admitted that instead of 177 youths, the funds were spent on 16,629 youths. The truth is that 177 youths were trained, simple. The 16, 629 figure was an afterthought by the government. Indeed, it is criminal to expend such a mind-boggling amount of money on the training of 177 youths while our university teaching hospitals are a crying necropolis.

In the same vein, Nigeria's Attorney General and Minister of Justice Abubakar Malami, a public servant ostensibly earning salaries, recently in Kebbi State distributed

thirty exotic cars to politicians. The gesture came some days after he declared his intentions to contest the 2023 governorship election in the state. The cars include fourteen Mercedes Benz (GLK 2022 model) valued at 40 million naira each, eight Prado SUVs 2021 model, valued at 45 million naira each, four Toyota Hilux 2021 model valued at 35 million naira each, and four Lexus LX 570 2021 model valued at 95 million naira each. Hapless and befuddled Nigerians read the invidious details of the Greek gift with chagrin and a sense of loss. It grates on the soul of a genuine citizen how a public officer will donate such expensive gifts to possibly influence delegates towards the APC governorship primaries in Kebbi State. If EFCC was alive to its responsibilities, Abubakar Malami would have been answering questions now explaining how and where he got so much money to indulge in that kind of reckless ostentation and vulgar display of wealth. But EFCC has looked away and Abubakar Malami is a free man, perhaps planning to donate more exotic cars and other material items towards the State's party primaries soon.

If there was no agency of government saddled with the responsibility to investigate and arrest financial criminals, Nigerians wouldn't have bothered much. But the certainty that there is an agency of government with the responsibility to watch, arrest, and investigate those who indulge in financial impropriety drives the pain deeper. The Nigerian Senate is populated by suspected criminals, those who have cases to answer

with big files at EFCC. Godswill Akpabio was accused of mismanaging N100 billion naira State funds by the EFCC. Today he is a serving minister of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Theodore Orji was accused of mismanaging N27 billion naira State funds by the EFCC. Today he is a serving Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Ibrahim Shakarau was accused of mismanaging N950 million naira of Goodluck Jonathan's campaign funds by the EFCC. Today he is a serving Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Ifeanyi Ubah was accused of N43 billion naira subsidy fraud by the EFCC. Today he is a strong member of the Nigerian Senate. Yet, there are many more.

It is this kind of existing double standard by the EFCC that has necessitated a call for their immediate scrapping. To look away while those accused of financial crimes in the country, especially government officials walk the streets while hounding petty thieves whose motives are driven by hunger is to demonstrate pathetic irresponsibility. Towards party primaries at all levels, politicians are baring their fangs, sharing billions amid hunger and deprivation in the country.

EFCC should either do their job or close shop and go home. Nigerians deserve more respect as they confront survival headlong. EFCC should speak up now or keep quiet forever.

•Dr. Adiele is Convener of the Third Force Movement and a member of The Trumpet's Editorial Board.

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Quite very few of ASUU's past strikes won public sympathy like this current one has. Student bodies have reacted. Sectional leaders have passed comments. Parents, traditional rulers, politicians and religious leaders have all put in some words, and all seem to agree that this time the striking professors and their university system deserve some more equitable deals in the Nigerian rewards system. If this appears exaggerating, I can re-phrase that no stakeholder seems to consider the professors' current claims as frivolous; not even the Minister of Labour who recently declared that he too was unsatisfied with the conditions of service of the Union members. In spite of these, the striking lecturers had to extend the strike to another three months.

The seemingly unending imbroglio suggests that meetings

may never bring success to the struggles of Nigerian professors. My opinion of what can be the need for them to augment their current strategies with action. This is one of such times one cannot help relying on indigenous wisdom to resolve a global problem, so, to some two Yoruba sayings I went: 'Ebi n pa mi ko se e fife wi, ina n jo mi o se e kun yamunyanmun'; and 'Airin po nii j'omo ejo n'iya, t'oka ba saaju, ti sebe tele, ti monamona n bo 'leyin, ko s'eni naa to le duro d'omo eranko'. Meaning? Don't worry you'll get it in the cause of the writing.

In this opinion I observe that ASUU's many meetings with the Federal Government cannot send the real message to the world. It's looking more like some joke, every day. It's like joke not because the striking lecturers do not have their facts, but because their dominant methods

Now ASUU needs to activate the streets to save Nigeria's educational system

of engagement, the sit at home strike, appears incompatible with, and inadequate for the character and nature of the current Nigerian government. I then propose that from professors to graduate fellows they need to wear their gowns and file to the streets of Nigeria in protest demonstrations. Of course, gowns are never violent, so, fear not. And if your fear is that hoodlums may hijack the show from the lecturers, then note that intellectuals have the capacity to manage crowds; after all, they teach and research for those professionally employed to do so. What to note is that unusual situations demand unusual approaches. Boardroom meetings do not appear potent enough to elicit response from the current Nigerian government. The foregoing sayings are my frameworks for declaring so.

A Beninois Visiting Research Fellow at the University of Lagos Institute of African and Diaspora Studies narrated the experience of his country's lecturers during a struggle similar to ASUU's. For 15 years they lived under inadequate salaries and dehumanizing working conditions. Like ASUU's, sit at home strike was their first strategy. The day they went further to engage in street protests across the country did not extend to third before

the government bulged. Since the year 2014 in the economically humble country of Africa, a full professor has been earning 1.5m CFA monthly, and in same proportions it goes across the ladder. New reviews are in process.

Industrial action is a critical part of the social struggles that balance social relations in every social formation. It is some form of protest, and the very idea of protest is primarily aimed at striking the highest sentiments of the target of the protest. These sentiments are not universal; they depend largely on targets, political environments, plans, locations, times and other logistics surrounding them. The Nigerian government that is the target of the current ASUU protest does not exist on character but coercion, not on ambition (of returning for another term) but of exit plans to regroup for future political merchandise. In addition, the government holds little takes in terms of university education. Many ministers and governors and presidents hardly have kids in the public universities; maybe some distant relatives. Now they nurse the ambition of establishing private universities whose survival lies in the death of the public ones. Definitely, confronting this kind of group

with sit at home strikes is like stoning to bring down a wild elephant. It may take the cows coming home before the impacts are felt.

As ASUU's boardroom meetings with government deadlocks into another three months extension, its members at every part of the country need to move beyond the comforts of their homes. They need to take the struggle to the public and disturb the flow of daily governmental activities to save themselves from starvation and dehumanizing social conditions. Snakes suffer hazards because they don't walk in den. If the vipers lead, the cobras follow and the mambas crawl behind them no rational mortal wait can await the pit. The effort of a starving man crying out in whistle is a huge joke, and mumbling cannot be an option for a man inside a large inferno. Now you have translations to the proverbs, don't you? The take home is that ASUU's struggle needs to respond to the true character of Nigeria's Federal Government, and the characters are best understood from the lyrics of Fela's VIP, BONN, ASBP, STB and CBB to mention just a few. Please find out.

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Chief of Staff tasks RSMs on army culture

■ NACOL/BMATT holds seminar for innovation, logistics

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

Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Lieutenant-General Faruk Yahaya has tasked Regimental Sergeant Majors (RSMs) to improve on the level of discipline and regimentation in as well as sustain the traditions and cultures of the service.

The COAS gave the charge while opening the RSMs Convention 2022 in 81 Division, Lagos. In attendance at the four-day event are principal staff officers from Army Headquarters, Corps Commanders, senior officers and over 250 RSMs drawn from various formations and units.

The convention is featuring several lecture presentations with the theme "Capacity Building for RSMs in the Nigerian Army for Enhanced Regimentation." It was organized to enhance the capacity of the RSMs as custodians of army discipline and regimentation.

Yahaya, represented by the Chief of Administration (Army), Major-General

Usman Mohammed, said discipline and regimentation are pivotal to professionalism in the Army.

He further stated that enhancing these qualities are in consonance with his command philosophy premised on Professionalism, Readiness, Administration and Cooperation (PRAC).

The COAS therefore reminded the RSMs that they are vested with the responsibility to ensure that the cherished traditions, customs and ethics of the Nigerian Army are sustained. He tasked them to live up to their responsibilities, considering the Army's engagements in ongoing operations to tackle security challenges across the country.

Earlier in his welcome address, the General Officer Commanding 81, Major General Umar Musa, urged participants to take advantage of the convention to develop themselves, adding that the training package was carefully designed to address contemporary challenges at regimental levels.

He expressed optimism

that the participants will be better equipped with the capabilities to effectively discharge their responsibilities in their respective formations and units.

Presenting the first lecture titled "Building the Capacity of RSMs through Proficient Training", Brigadier General Shuaibu Nuhu was enlightened the participants on the responsibilities of RSMs, urging them to redouble their effort in maintaining discipline and regimentation in the Army.

Meanwhile, the Nigerian Army College of Logistics (NACOL) in conjunction with British Military Advisory and Training Team (BMATT) held a seminar for innovation and enhancement of Nigerian Army logistics.

The Logistics Estimate Process Seminar and Workshop with the theme "Enhancing Logistics Support in Contemporary NA Operations" commenced Monday 9 May, 2022 at the TY Buratai Hall, Nigerian Army College of Logistics Permanent Site Ojo.

While welcoming participants to the event, the Commandant NACOL,



Lt Gen Yahaya

Major General Martin Enendu expressed delight over the seminar.

The Commandant told participants that the BMATT Logistics Estimate seminar is aimed at bringing home new innovations and ingenuity based on the experience of the British Army in asymmetric warfare.

The Commandant also thanked the COAS, Lt Gen Faruk Yahaya for rejuvenating the collaboration of the college with BMATT and numerous interventions in ensuring that NACOL permanent site remains the centre of Excellence in Logistics training.

"The College is to produce Efficient

Logisticians capable of planning and executing Logistics Support for the Nigeria Army in joint and combined operations at formations and higher levels using modern management concept and techniques," he said.

He further urged participants to take advantage of the seminar to improve on logistics support planning capabilities.

In attendance were NACOL Faculty and Administrative Staff Officers, participants of Logistics Staff Course 19/22, Military Officers from Units and Formations within 81 Division NA AOR were also drawn to witness the ceremony.

Customs sanctions officer for assaulting unarmed civilian

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

Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) has sanctioned one of its officers who assaulted an unarmed civilian as shown in a video that has gone viral on social media.

In the video, the officer was seen assaulting his victim physically and verbally while been encouraged by a colleague and a soldier on the scene along the Benin - Agbor expressway on Saturday 7th May, 2022 at about 5:00pm.

Reacting to the incident, the National Public Relations Officer, DC Timi Bomodi, in a statement on Monday said the officer and other members of his team from FOU Zone 'C' have been withdrawn from patrol duties. Stressing further that they are currently being investigated by the NCS Zonal Headquarters Zone 'C', Port Harcourt.

He assured the public that the officer would be sanctioned and disciplined accordingly while adding that the officers of NCS were trained to carry out their duties with dignity and respect, and are expected to also display decorum in all their conduct at all times.

DC Bomodi said, "The attention of the Nigeria Customs Service has been drawn to a video making the rounds on social media. In it, one of our officers was recorded assaulting an unarmed civilian. This action took place on the Benin - Agbor expressway on Saturday the 7th of May 2022 at about 5.00 pm.

"This officer and other members of that team from FOU Zone 'C' have since been withdrawn from patrol duties and are currently under administrative investigation at the NCS Zonal Headquarters Zone 'C' Port Harcourt.

"Officers of the Nigeria Customs Service have been trained to carry out their duties with dignity and respect, and are expected to display decorum in all their conduct at all times. Where they fail to carry out their brief as assigned, appropriate sanctions are applied to enforce discipline. The NCS would like to reassure the general public of its commitment to the welfare and safety of all citizens and frowns seriously at any act by its personnel capable of misrepresenting its corporate image.

"We ask that all law-abiding persons go about their activities without fear of intimidation or harassment as we work assiduously to bring closure to this unwholesome incident."

IGP tasks journalists on crime reportage

■ Congratulates new CRAN executives

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

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Usman Alkali Baba has charged journalists and media organisations to be balanced in crime reportage so as to reduce tension across the country.

The IGP gave the charge in a congratulatory message signed by the Force Public Relations Officer, CSP Olumuyiwa Adejobi to the newly elected Executives of the Crime Reporters Association of Nigeria (CRAN).

Recall that Mr Olalekan Olabulo of the Tribune

Newspaper, was elected President of CRAN along other elected Executive Officials at the Association's general elections, which was held on Friday 6th May, 2022 in Lagos State.

CSP Adejobi in the statement said that the IGP noted that the new officials have dignified and distinguished themselves in their various media organisations, adding that their election is a recognition of their years of selfless service and commitment to values.

He therefore charged the new executives and members of the association



to work closely with the Nigeria Police Force in ensuring a balanced crime reportage in the interest of the country.

The Statement reads, "The Inspector-General of Police, IGP Usman Alkali Baba, psc(+), NPM,

fdc, congratulates the newly elected President of the Crime Reporters Association of Nigeria (CRAN), Olalekan Olabulo of the Tribune Newspaper, and other elected Executive Officials at the Association's general elections held on Friday 6th May, 2022 in Lagos State.

"The IGP notes that the new officials are individuals who have dignified and distinguished themselves in their various media fora, adding that the election is a recognition of their years of selfless service and commitment to value. He equally appreciates the outgoing officials led by the

immediate past president, Sunday Odita, of the Guardian Newspaper, for their labour at maintaining a friendly mien while carrying out their statutory responsibilities.

"The IGP while assuring of his administration's commitment to leave no stone unturned in the fight against crimes and criminality in the country, urges the new officials to work collectively and closely with the Nigeria Police Force in ensuring a balanced reportage while the Force collaborates with CRAN for a safe, secured and peaceful country in general."

Police confirm priest's abduction

Akwa Ibom State Police Command has confirmed the abduction of a Catholic Priest, Alphonsus Ubob, at the church premises in Mkpato Enin Local Government Area, describing the development

as unacceptable.

State Police Public Relations Officer, SP Odiko Macdon, disclosed this to the newsmen in Mkpato Enin LGA.

He said that the priest was abducted on Sunday,

at Ikot Abasi along Ekparakwa Etinan road in Mkpato Enin LGA by unknown gunmen at about 7:30p.m.

SP Macdon said, "Preliminary findings show that the abductors

who came with two motorcycles went to the back fence of the victim's house and whisked him away.

"The Commissioner of Police, Andrew Aniengheme, was

very saddened at the development and said that it is unacceptable," he said.

Macdon said that all hands would be on deck to ensure that police rescue the priest and perpetrators brought to book.



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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
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10 x 4	299,302.72	321,752.57	8 x 6	271,900.48	292,008.02	8 x 6	250,284.32	26,911.09	7 x 4	120,404.56	129,434.90
14.5 x 4	520,790.19	559,849.45	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
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11 x 6	592,622.16	637,068.82	11 x 5	389,441.887	418,650.01	11 x 5	358,396.62	385,276.37	HP7.25 X 6	218,226.87	234,593.89
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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			
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Health advocates caution Nigerians against high level of TFAs in foods

By **EDU ABADE**, Business Editor

Public health advocates from the public and private sectors as well as civil society groups have, again, cautioned Nigerians against the consumption of foods containing high levels of industrially produced Trans Fatty Acids (TFAs).

They stated this at a training organised for journalists by the Corporate Accountability and Public Participation Africa (CAPPA) drawn from print, broadcast and online media in the five South East states of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states on effective reporting of trans fats.

The two-day training organised in collaboration with the Network for Health Equity and Development (NHED) in Enugu was funded by the Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHAI) and facilitated by local and international public health, media and communications experts including Country Director of GHAI, Joy Amafah, Executive Director of NHED, Dr. Jerome Mafeni and representative of the National Agency for Food, Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Dr. Eva Edwards, who shared insights on the status of NAFDAC regulations on trans fats.

The training module targeted building the capacity of Nigerian journalists to understand and exhaustively report on TFAs and its link with poor health for consumers, strengthening the relationship between Nigerian journalists, civil society advocating a trans fat-free Nigeria and

regulatory agencies, particularly NAFDAC and sharing knowledge on local, national and global issues relating to TFAs and the oils and fats industry.

Enugu State Commissioner for Health, Prof. Ikechukwu Obi, who was special guest at the event, explained that the goal of the allied with the vision of the Enugu State Government for healthy citizens as espoused in its health sector reform law, which provided for a legal framework for citizens' participation in health sector and the setting of new standards for health research and information system management.

Obi noted that the high levels of trans fat in foods consumed by Nigerians, from the fast foods to re-used oils, meant the country was sitting on a keg of gun powder that might explode any time in form of cardiovascular diseases of all kinds.

He revealed that in 2021, the World Health Organisation (WHO) reported that cardiovascular diseases remained the leading cause of deaths globally and that in 2020, an estimated 17.9 million people died from cardiovascular diseases, representing 32 per cent of global deaths.

The commissioner also explained that 85 per cent of the deaths were due to heart attacks and stroke, adding that if public health advocates learnt anything in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, it was the realisation that working together, the challenges that threaten the collective well-being of the citizenry could be overcome.

He also commended NAFDAC



Akinbode Oluwafemi,

for approving the draft Fats and Oils Regulation 2019 and the Pre-Packaged Foods, Water and Ice Labelling Regulations 2019, insisting that once the regulations were gazetted, Nigeria would join the list of countries that have effective regulations to limit or eliminate trans fats in the diets of its citizens.

Earlier, Executive Director of CAPPA, Akinbode Oluwafemi, explained that the training was informed by the need to empower the media to better report trans fats and amplify advocacy of the Transfat-free Nigeria coalition.

Oluwafemi explained that what was being consumed should be everyone's business, hence the importance of a well-informed media in getting the right message to ordinary Nigerians and policy makers to elicit the change that the #Transfatfree Nigeria coalition has been canvassing.

FG to train young farmers abroad on livestock, crop production

Stories by **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA) has concluded plans to sponsor 200 young farmers to Israel and Morocco for capacity building on crop production and animal husbandry to tackle hunger and enhance food security in Nigeria.

Executive Secretary of NALDA, Prince Paul Ikonne, who disclosed this in Abuja recently at an event to officially handover travel documents to the beneficiaries, said the programme was a continuation of the National Young Farmers Scheme (NYFS).

He explained that the pro-

gramme would improve the country's food production and exportation, noting that it was aimed at making agriculture more attractive to the youths.

He said the initiative was initiated in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, noting that the youths were drawn from the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja and would visit Israel and Morocco for six days to undergo intensive training on greenhouse farming and animal husbandry.

Ikonne further stated that the two countries were chosen because they have the expertise in agriculture and animal husbandry, adding that the Federal Government

paid for their travel expenses and training as contained in NALDA's budget.

"These 200 youths will be engaged in learning proper crop production and greenhouse management and 100 youths will be engaged in animal husbandry, slaughtering, meat processing and other aspects.

"So, we are sending them to Israel and Morocco that we know have strong expertise on what we are doing to enhance their knowledge and expose them to modern crop production and animal husbandry. Upon their return, they will teach others what they have learnt," he stated.

Marketers attribute resurgence of fuel queues to N100b bridging debt

Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria (IPMAN) has declared that some of its members have shut down operations following their indebtedness to commercial banks.

President of IPMAN, Chinedu Okoronkwo, said insufficient supply from marketers was building up queues at filling stations across the country, especially in Abuja.

Also speaking, Vice Chairman of the association, Abubakar Maigandi, disclosed members of IPMAN pay N1 million for 1,300 litres of diesel, while the government pay them N600,000 with shortfall of N400,000 and that the accumulated debt was challenging their businesses.

They stressed that marketers buy diesel for N700 per litre and since there was no subsidy and government refused to pay them, it would be difficult to sustain the business.

Maigandi, who advocated an extension of intervention funds to resuscitate the diesel business or they will stop further supply, said the Federal Government has failed to refund 12 months products bridging claims, amounting to about N100 billion.

"We are still loading, but some marketers have shut down operations because they are highly indebted to the banks and could not continue to sustain their operations. Only few of our members are now operating and cannot satisfy current demand, he stated.

FG seeks increased content in film streaming firms

•CBN, banks support sector

Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, has asked companies offering streaming services to increase their local investments, open offices and increase local content on their platforms, if they wish to continue doing business in Nigeria.

Mohammed, who stated this at the closing ceremony of this year's edition of the Zuma Film Festival in Abuja, said this had become necessary to ensure that promoters of content development reap the benefits of their work.

"As we celebrate the astronomical growth of our film industry, we must critically examine their creative minds behind the phenomenal growth to reap the benefits of their hard work. This is

why I am delighted with the theme of this year's festival: Show Us The Money.

"I hope this year's film festival has shown film makers how they can exploit new platforms, not only to get money, but also to touch and keep profitability and global reach of their films," he said.

He stressed the need to boost the exhibition revenues of the film industry, saying the ministry had partnered with the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and the Bankers Committee on the renovation of the National Theatre at a cost of \$100 million.

Mohammed maintained that the move was important because the National Theater was conceived as the hub of the creative industry in the country many years ago.



Alhaji Lai Mohammed

AMCON takes over assets of Aeroland Travels over N1.8b debt

Stories by **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

Following the ruling of Justice D. E. Osiagor of the Federal High Court, Lagos Division, the Asset Management Corporation of Nigeria (AMCON) has taken over assets of Aeroland Travels Limited and its directors over indebtedness amounting to N1.8 billion.

The Trumpet recalls that Justice Osiagor delivered the judgment on February 7, 2022 and in compliance with the enforcement of the court order, AMCON moved to take the company's assets on Friday, May 6, 2022 as listed by the court through its Debt Recovery Agent, Robert Oluoba & CO.

This was revealed in a statement issued by the corporation's Head of Corporate Communications, Jude Nwauzor recently and made available to *The Trumpet* newspapers in Lagos.

The property include those located plot 4 & 4B, Block 66 Magodo Scheme; Lagos State; plot 9, Block 44C, Adetoro Adelaja Street, Magodo, Lagos and other listed locations.

The court also ordered the freezing of the bank accounts and

shares of the company's directors including Segun Adewale and Mrs. Victoria Adewale.

It equally granted AMCON the rights to seize any other landed property in any other location that might be found within the jurisdiction of the Federal High Court belonging to Aeroland Travels Limited or either of its directors.

Nwauzor confirmed that all the property listed in the court order have been taken over by AMCON with the assistance of court bailiffs and other law enforcement officials.

Following the development, AMCON had purchased the Non-Performing Loans (NPLs) of Aeroland Travels Limited from Polaris Bank, formally Skye Bank.

ity of protecting the life and property of citizens.

On their part, the National Executive Council (NEC), the Central Working Committee (CWC), members and staff of the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN) felicitated with Nigerian workers on the 2022 workers day celebration.

In their message, Comrade Lumumba Ighotemu Okugbawa

and the President Comrade Festus Osifo, PENGASSAN said: "We salute our comrades in the oil and gas industry, telecommunications, education, power, food and agricultural products distribution and indeed every Nigerian worker for staying strong and committed to their jobs, despite the challenging and difficult situation occasioned by the worsening economy and insecurity.

"Our special greetings to all PENGASSAN members who toil day and night to keep the oil wells, platforms, offices and rigs flowing despite all the challenges encountered in performing these Patriotic duties, sometimes at risk to their lives.

"We can rightly say that May Day 2022 is not different from the previous years of 2020 and 2021 that were marred by the global COVID-19 pandemic whose sad memories are still affecting families, businesses, communities and ways of life. In fact, the 2022 event may even be marred by concerns that are akin to worse than the pandemic as there are many unresolved issues biting the Nigerian workers and the masses."



Festus Osifo

DMO opens more FGN bonds for subscription



Onihar

Debt Management Office (DMO) has announced the offer of two additional Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) bonds for subscription.

The first offering is a two year savings bond, which will be due on May 18, 2022 at a 7.93 interest rate per cent per annum.

It fixed the opening date for the bonds on May 9, 2023, while the closing and settlement is May 18, just as it fixed the coupon payment dates for August 18, November 18 and December 18.

The bonds are offered at N1,000 per unit subject to a minimum subscription of N5,000 and multiple of N1,000 and thereafter, subject to a maximum subscription of N50 million.

The DMO explained that the interest payment would

be made on a quarterly basis, while bullet repayment would be made on the maturity date, adding that the bonds qualify as securities in which trustees could invest under the Trustee Investment Act.

"They qualify as government securities within the meaning of Company Income Act (CITA) and personal Income Tax Act (PITA) for tax exemption for Pension Funds among other investors.

"They are listed on the Nigerian Stock Exchange and qualifies as liquid assets for liquidation asset and for liquidity ration calculation for banks," the DMO said, assuring that the bonds are backed by the full faith and credit of the Federal Government and charged upon the country's general assets.

CIS holds AGM, elects Adeosun as new president

Chartered Institute of Stockbrokers (CIS) has announced Oluwale Adeosun as its new President and Chairman, Governing Council

A statement in Lagos disclosed that

with his election at the hybrid Annual General Meeting (AGM) held recently in Lagos, Adeosun, who former Vice President of the institute, succeeds the erstwhile President, Olatunde Amolegbe, whose tenure witnessed several laudable achievements.

By his election, Adeosun will be formally decorated with the insignia of office at investiture to be held at a later date.

Under the new leadership, the institute's Second Vice President, Oluropo Dada, will now move to the First Vice

President.

Adeosun, a fellow of the institute and multinational professional, brings on board over two decades of experience in the financial sector.

A product of the Layola College, Ibadan, he holds a B.Sc Degree in Business Administration from the University of Ilorin in 1986 and a Masters Degree in Business Administration (MBA) in Finance and Banking from the University of Lagos in 1993.

He was trained at Coppers and Lybrand (Chartered Accountants) now Pricewaterhouse Coopers, qualified as a chartered accountant in May 1991 and later qualified as chartered stockbroker and banker.

He has been a long standing member of the Governing Council of the CIS since April 2013 and has served as the institute's First Vice President between 2021 and 2022 and Second Vice President from 2018 to 2020.

He also served as a member of the Finance and General Purpose Committee of the Chartered Institute of the Bankers of Nigeria (CIBN) and its investment sub-committee.

It would be recalled that in a recent interview, Amolegbe had expressed confidence that he left behind a team of professionals that would further advance the growth and development of the institute.



Olatunde Adeosun

SMEs solicit govt's help over high cost of doing business

While most players in the various sectors of the country's economy are groaning over harsh operating environment, promoter of Crystal Limited, George Okey, has appealed to the Federal Government to tackle the challenges facing businesses in the country.

Speaking in interview with *The Trumpet*, Okey, whose company imports electrical materials into the country, disclosed that businesses in the country were grappling with so many challenges, lamenting that importers were finding it increasingly difficult to access foreign exchange (Forex).

He also bemoaned the fact

that the price of diesel has impacted negatively on businesses in the country and that buying a litre of diesel at between N600 and N900 depending on your location was not crazy.

"Businesses are currently facing a worst situation. There is no Forex for importation. The price of diesel has gone beyond local businesses to the extent that some banks and manufacturing firms have reduced the hours they open for business.

"As if that is not enough, the price of Aviation fuel (JetA1) oil has gone beyond the reach of local airlines. If the local airline carried out their plans to suspend flight on May 9, 2022, how do

you think we can run business in such an environment, when our roads and railways are not safe for travel? He asked.

He pleaded with the Federal Government and those responsible for managing the country's economy to urgently tackle the several challenges killing businesses in the country before it gets to a crisis point.

Okey said with the high rate at which businesses were closing down and huge number of youths graduating from the various institutions of learning in the country, crime and criminality could worsen in the months ahead if government failed to act fast.

Leveraging Lekki Deep Seaport for FG's regional trans-shipment hub

Over the years, Nigeria continues to lose revenue and investments due to multiple bottlenecks at the nation's ports exacerbated by diversion of cargoes to neighbouring countries. **ADAKU WALTER** writes that Federal Government's has been intensifying efforts to regain the losses and position the country as the maritime hub of West and Central Africa region.

Poor infrastructure, cumbersome clearing processes and other challenges have made Nigeria to lose trans-shipment and transit cargoes to neighbouring countries thereby jeopardising the country's chance of becoming a regional maritime hub.

Landlocked countries like Chad and the Republic of Niger, which, before now, were using the country's ports as transit points for their cargoes, have been diverting their shipments to Ghana, Togo, Republic of Benin, Cote d'Ivoire and Cameroon.

Reports indicate that most importers divert Nigeria-bound cargoes to the neighbouring countries just as investors shun the nation's ports and patronise other destinations, which costs Nigeria an estimated N130 billion yearly.

The challenges have restricted the country from reaching its heights in the maritime sector, which is one of the highest contributors to the economies of other countries.

The neighbouring countries capitalise on the shortcomings in Nigeria's maritime sector to assume trans-shipment hub status as they are rapidly developing into modern seaports with automated facilities and infrastructure as well as deeper draught that could accommodate larger vessels with Nigeria-bound cargoes.

While the ports in neighbouring countries could accommodate vessels with 16 metres draught, no Nigerian seaports is capable of accommodating such vessels due to shallow draught of as low as 13 metres.

It was learnt that the draught level of Togo is 15.5 metres, Republic of Benin has 15 metres, Ghana has close to 19 metres, while Cameroun has 16 metres.

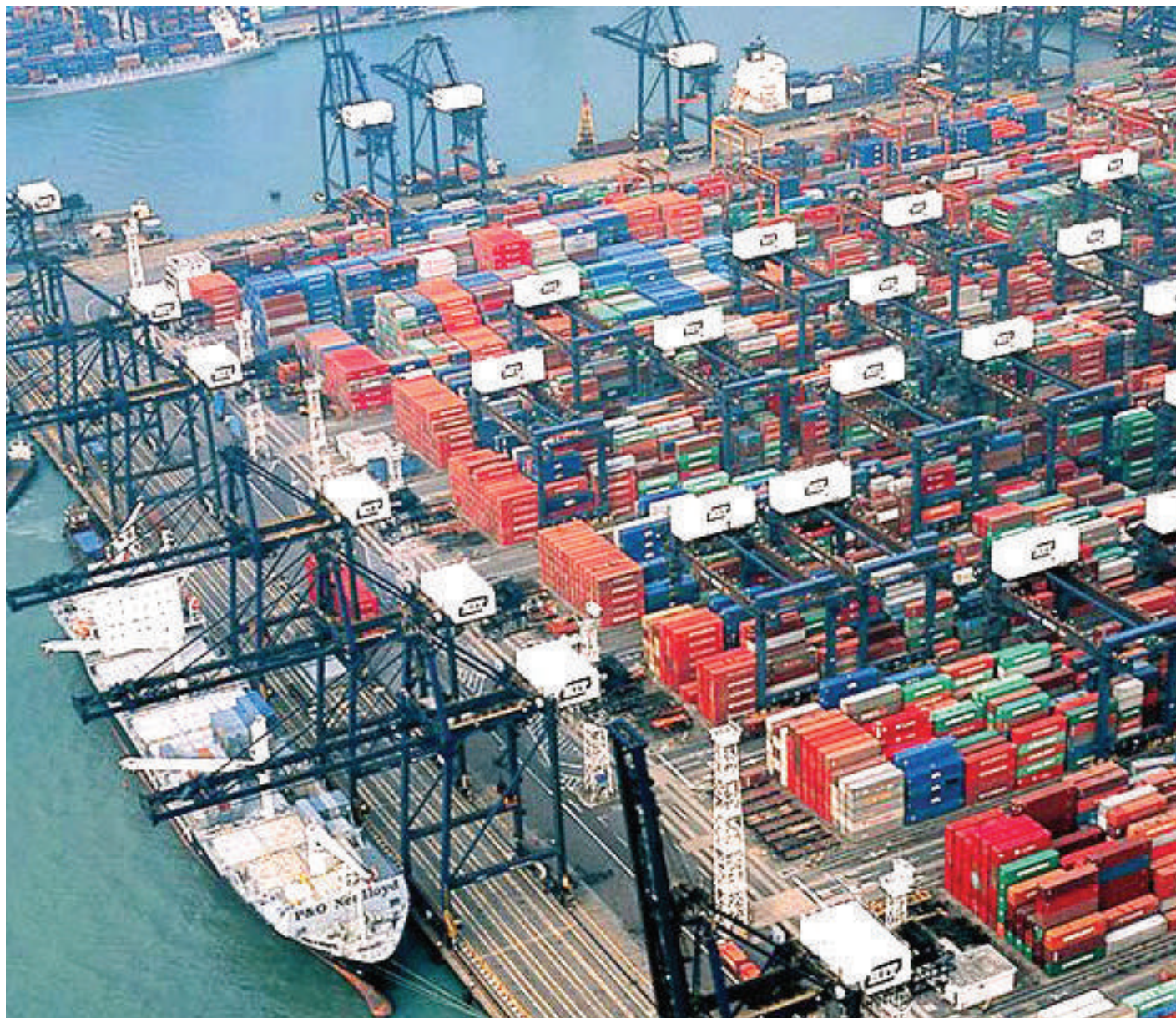
Already, Togo has overtaken Nigeria to become the leading port in West Africa, as the United Nations (UN) report showed that Togo recorded 1,725, 520 twenty-foot equivalent (TUEs) of cargo throughput in 2020, while Nigeria recorded 1, 528, 520 TUEs, thereby losing over 196, 750 TUEs or 30 per cent of container traffic to the Lome Port.

Also, ports within the region have positioned themselves and are ready for participation in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) regime.

Meanwhile, stakeholders in the country's maritime sector have advised the Federal Government to design deep seaport and trans-shipment centre to accommodate large vessels and mega-ships of between 8,000 and 20, 000 TEUs currently being demanded regionally and globally, which they said, was the only solution to diversion of cargoes to neighbouring ports.

Also, the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) stated that with the country accounting for over 70 per cent of the cargoes imported to West and Central Africa, developing modern deep seaports would translate to huge potential for revenue earning for the nation along with the attendant socio-economic benefits.

Worried by the loss of the maritime



hub status and revenues due to the inadequacies of the country's seaports, the Federal Government and Lekki Port LFTZ Enterprise Limited signed a 45-year concession to develop a deep sea and multipurpose port in Lagos State.

With a draught level of 16.5 metres, Quay wall of 1,523 meters and turning circle of 600 meters, the Lekki port is projected to be one of the most modern deep seaports in West Africa, which will support the burgeoning commercial operations in Nigeria and reposition the country as the maritime hub of the region.

Minister of Transportation, Rotimi Amaechi, expressed confidence that the commencement of operations at the port would strengthen the country's maritime sector to meet the growing demands for goods transported by sea.

Also, Minister of Information, Lai Mohammed, during a recent tour of the port, said when completed, the port would make Nigeria to regain the maritime business it lost to ports in Togo, Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana.

He explained that it would also boost the country's quest to take advantage of the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), which he said, was capable

of generating over \$201 billion in taxes, royalties and duties, as well as create no fewer than 169,972 jobs when the port commences full operations at the end of the year.

Mohammed pointed out that the aggregate economic impact of the port, put at \$361 billion in 45 years, will be over 200 times the cost of building the port, adding that the direct and induced business revenue impact of the port has been estimated at \$158 billion in addition to impact on the manufacturing, trade and commercial services sectors.

"No port in Nigeria currently has this. The equipment is why the port can do 18,000 TEUs, which is over four times the number that can currently be handled by the other ports," he said.

He explained that with regulatory agencies as the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA), Nigeria Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), Nigeria Police Force (NPF), National Agency for Food, Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Department of State Security (DSS), Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS), Port Health Services (PHS), Nigerian Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), the Federal Government's ease of doing business would be achieved at the port

On the readiness of the Lekki port to help country attain its regional maritime hub agenda, Architect of the project, Matthew Oloyede, explained that with the automated infrastructure, the port will be capable of accommodating the largest and post-Panamax vessels.

"With power plant generation of 16 megawatts, we will have an efficient port where all operations are automated. We are competing with other neighbouring ports in terms of automation. Containers will pass through our scanners and not the usual physical examination process, which will reduce the clearing time.

Also, Managing Director of the Lekki Deep Sea Port, Du Ruogang, assured that it would change the economic landscape of Nigeria and West Africa with its largest terminal capacity, adding that the operators will have a more integrated terminal operating system, not only to drive the functionality of the port, but also its e-commerce.

Ruogang added that the competitive edge of the port remained its ability to accept larger vessels and discharge ships twice as fast, thereby reducing the overall port stay of vessels, as well as the costs for importers and exporters minimally, while ensuring savings for consumers.

Oyo govt reintroduces history in public schools, distributes over 4,950 textbooks

Stories by **OROWO VICTORIA**
OJIEH Education Correspondent

Oyo State Government has directed all public primary schools to immediately implement the teaching of History as an independent subject starting from the third term of 2021/2022 academic session.

Executive Chairman, Oyo State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), Dr. Nureni Aderemi Adeniran, made this known in Ibadan while monitoring schools' resumption.

Adeniran commended the massive turnout of pupils in public primary schools and said the reintroduction of History in school is in line with the new education policy of the State Government.

He also appreciated the leadership of the Universal Basic Education Commis-

sion, Abuja for the technical support received, as well as the supply of textbooks.

The Oyo State SUBEB Chairman said over Four Thousand, Nine Hundred and fifty (4,950) history textbooks are being distributed to public primary schools in the state adding that it will give pupils a proper understanding of the Nation's history.

He indicated that the curriculum would enable pupils to appreciate history as an instrument of national integration and it would allow pupils to know the country's history.

The OYO SUBEB boss, an Education expert, amazed OYO SUBEB workers and teachers by teaching pupils. He said he was optimistic that the curriculum would equip the younger generation with the knowledge of the past.

He further asserted that the importance of history to na-



Adeniran

tion building, patriotism and human development could not be overemphasized.

Adeniran appreciated the heads of public primary

schools across the state, who had started academic activities immediately, saying idleness of teachers or pupils would not be tolerated.

WAEC returns May-June timetable, exams start May 16

The West African Examinations Council, Nigeria, On Monday announced that the West African Senior School Certificate Examination for School Candidates, 2022, will commence on the 16 of May and end on June 23.

The Head of WAEC in Nigeria, Patrick Areghan, disclosed this during a press briefing on Monday. He said the exam would take a period of six weeks, adding that the revert to May/June period for the conduct of the examination should be celebrated.

Areghan said, "Gentlemen of the Media, I am delighted to inform you that the conduct of the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) for School Candidates, 2022 will take place between May 16 and June 23 2022 in Nigeria, spanning a period of six (06) weeks.

"The revert to May/June period for the conduct of the examination should be celebrated. The significance of this is that the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and the various member States, save Ghana, have now again found a common ground in respect of their academic calendars.

"This shows a massive recovery from the devastating effects, disruptions, and confusion caused by the pandemic. We must give kudos to the Honourable Minister of Education and his Ministry for this wonderful feat."

He added that a total of 1,607,975 candidates from 20,221 schools had registered for the examination.

Areghan also urged parents to desist from patronizing operators of rouge-websites.

"Parents are hereby warned to desist from patronising these evil-doers who are hell-bent on frustrating the efforts of WAEC. They should not patronise them as that would only lead to the destruction of their children's destiny.

"Meanwhile, we shall, as usual, work hand-in-hand with the Nigeria Police to bring perpetrators to book. There will be no hiding place for them. Perpetrators will surely face the full wrath of the law."

'No candidate from Sokoto, Zamfara govt schools enrolled for WASSCE'

No public schools in Sokoto and Zamfara states will sit for the West African Senior School Examination (WASSCE) scheduled to hold from May 16 and June 23, 2022 because the government-owned ones did not present candidates.

Head of National Office,

HNO, West African Examinations Council (WAEC), Mr. Patrick Areghan, disclosed this at a news conference in Lagos, to announce details of the body's preparations and readiness for the conduct of the examination in Nigeria.

Areghan however stated that

private schools in the states had registered their candidates for the examination, he also explained that "the reason why candidates from public schools were not registered remains unknown."

The WAEC chief also frowned at late registration of candidates, particularly by private schools, saying such act is totally unacceptable as it delays preparations for the examination.

He said over 1.6 million candidates from 20,221 schools have registered for the examination, out of which 800,055 representing 49.76 percent are males, while 800,724, estimating for 50.24 per cent, are females.

Areghan said that candidates

would be examined in 76 subjects, made up of 197 papers while about 30,000 practicing senior teachers, nominated by various Ministries of Education, would be participating in the examination as supervisors.

The organisation frowned on malpractices, it therefore called on parents and guardians to admonish their wards to study hard and desist from any form of examination malpractice. WAEC also warned supervisors to desist from aiding and abetting examination malpractice by assisting candidates, especially by allowing them to enter the Examination Hall with their cell phones and making use of it.

Why ASUU extendef strike by 12 weeks

Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has extended its m strike by twelve weeks or three months.

The president of the union, Prof Emmanuel Osodeke disclosed this on Monday in a signed statement.

The decision was taken after ASUU National Executive Council meeting which started on Sunday night and ended early Monday morning at the National Secretariat, Abuja.

At the meeting, ASUU accused the Federal Government of being not serious. The

roll-over strike took effect from Monday May 9, 2021.

Osodeke said the extension is aimed at giving the government more time to satisfactorily resolve all the outstanding issues.

The implication of the extension of the strike is that public universities would remain close.

ASUU is demanding the release of revitalization funds for universities, renegotiation and implementation of the 2009 FGN/ASUU agreement.



Mr. Patrick Areghan

Where is Durella?

With yet another single by D'banj titled "Be with you", lovers of Nigerian music who have been following from time wouldn't miss the familiarity in the voice when compared to Durella. Now that calls for the question, where is Durella?

Self-titled King of The Zanga, Oluwadamilare Okulaja, popularly known as Durella is a Nigerian recording artist and song writer, performer and businessman.

He kicked off as an artist while he resided at Mushin, a quite popular and rugged part of Lagos at the time.

You may remember his notable hit singles like "Enu Ose", "Shayo", "Wizkolo Wiska", "Club Rock" and "Gaga" featuring Wizkid. Those songs blew minds and with his features, it was almost impossible for DJs to spin without his tracks. Durella is beyond question a part of the Nigerian music industry. He's also featured with prominent stars like Dbanj, Femi Kuti, Duncan Mighty, Terry G, Olamide, and Dammy Krane, and

has shared stages with legendary performers not exempting his performance live with Wyclef Jean in South Africa. Durella began receiving awards in 2008 from MTV Base.

Durella was originally signed to TC Records in 2006 after its executives witnessed his performance at an event. Under this record, he released his first debut album "King of The Zanga" which includes tracks like- In the Zanga, SHAYO, Gunner's Anthem, Queen of My Zanga and Wizkolo Wiska and later on, he dropped his second album, Reconfigured. With

"Life in The Zanga", Durella emerged winner at a competition organised by Airtel (then, Zain)/MTV where he won 50,000 dollars.

He collaborated with various stars when he was visibly in the music scene. With the likes of his sound-identical, D'banj in "Ibadi E" Featuring Olamide, Durella and Kay Switch, "Nkiruka" featuring Duncan Mighty, "Buddy Hanging featuring Olamide", "My Life" featuring Terry G, "Gaga" Featuring Wizkid, Jahbless - "Joor Oh" Remix Featuring Ice Prince, Reminisce, Ruggedman & Eldee, "Don't Go Funny" Featuring Timaya,

"2 Casket" by Quest Featuring Durella, HCode "Monster" (Remix) Featuring

Olamide, Durella, Dammy Krane & Shobzy.

You may remember Durella as the dude who is always on Dark shades. D'banj is a man of shades as well. One major difference between D'banj and Durella is their mode of presentation. Durella, who now resides in Lekki featured in songs of individuals with street credibility. Men of the street! The likes of Olamide, HCode, Terry G and Wizkid who reps Surulere anytime, any day, to mention a few. Now how many street credible artists has D'banj had in his singles? D'banj is definitely a solo kind of entertainer.

While all that was happening, the Koko Master was doing his own thing.

Every follower of Nigerian music will agree that Durella sounds very much D'banj. Although Durella doesn't think it is right to think that as he stated some years ago that their elements and manner of delivery is



very different.

But how true is that? We still hear D'banj say "I'm D'banj", "Or Skibanj", then the Koko Master thingy comes in. Of course, that's the brand. Durella on the other hand also uses catch

phrases like "Omo Yapayaski", "Durella Mistyasky". Virtually all performers have slangs and catch phrases but what makes this similar is majorly the tone and rhythm.

Since his last major hit, Durella hasn't been on the limelight for several months. You may blame it on lavish spending as some of his fans accused him of or bad management from his former record label, Iconic Music or maybe he probably just ran out of songs which is almost impossible for a song writer.

Durella was signed to Iconic Music who made some of his hits. He probably became irrelevant in the industry when rumours passed that he was D'banj's back-up singer which seemed true but only a sound guru can separate the voices anyway.

Durella recently came back to the music scene with "Otiye" in the first quarter of 2017. "Otiye" is a love song that sees Durella longing after his lover. Although he may not have received the welcome back he deserved, it counts as an effort that shows he has plans to stay in the industry.

To Durella, if he is reading this, your fans await another hit single or any wave rocking come back at all as we remember he is also the first Nigerian artiste to own a shoe line: Durellasneakers, named after his popular slogan "2Gbaski". How many stores or persons have them now?





Accelerate set to support Nigeria's creativity with The Phoenix Project

Nigeria's leading digital, lifestyle, and entertainment platform, Accelerate, recently unveiled The Phoenix Project. It is an exciting learning platform aimed at expanding the creative potential of Nigeria's youthful population.

The new initiative, powered by Access Bank, aims to fill the existing gap in the creative industry and provides the resources needed for individuals

to succeed.

Speaking at the unveiling, Colette Otusheso, Chief Executive Officer of Accelerate, commented on the launch of The Phoenix Project, saying, "Our society is filled with a large pool of resourceful, creative, and energetic young people seeking opportunities to advance and build rewarding careers borne out of passion. As a result, through the Phoenix Project, we are committed to empowering the next generation of creative's by providing them with unique opportunities to realize their creative potential."

The Phoenix knowledge areas are grouped into three bundles, namely; Film and Production, Business of Entertainment, and Social Media for Business, and they are built across the project's beginner, intermediate, and

advanced levels. However, the project cover 12 knowledge areas that includes Social Media for Business, Entertainment Law, Advertising your brand, Graphic design, becoming an Influencer,

Introduction to Film, Scriptwriting, Business of Vlogging, Introduction to Songwriting, Introduction to Film Production, Business of Entertainment and the Business of Fashion.

The first of its kind in Nigeria, The Phoenix Project has taken a deliberate approach to assemble an impactful line-up of facilitators from the creative industry to ensure a well-rounded learning experience for program participants. They include Kemi Lala Akindoju, Amaka Agbakoba, and Uche Ugo. Others include, Enioluwa Adeoluwa, Dapo Osaji, Adetoke Oluwo, Paul Okeugo, and Umeeta Rabiou.

NaijaHoodRep: Lawani, Ifeking evicted as other Reps saved Jenniesimpss

The Ongoing Reality Television show, Naija Hood Rep has evicted both Lawani and Ifeking representing Obalende and Ilorin hoods respectively at the last eviction show.

Of the three with lowest votes, Jenniesimpss was saved by other Hood reps who queued behind her based on the instructions given by the landlord.

Meanwhile, Lotto64banks, Omeche, ghetto smaller Caroline, ramzy and Deziign were saved by voters.

Fockelly, Imade, Jenniesimpss, Don David, Lovezoe, Boman and Queenifa were also saved.

Earlier speaking, The Landlord explained that they were all nominated for eviction due to their bad behaviour last week.

He noted that the three hood reps standing have the lowest votes and naturally should be evicted but put the power in the hands of other hood reps to save one of the three.

While giving his last speech in the house, Lawani expressed dissatisfaction towards his eviction but stayed positive.

He, therefore, gave gratitude to God as he assured of keeping it going. "I think everybody in my position would feel bad. I feel bad but I am staying positive."

"I believe the road does not end here. I believe nothing happens to me by



chance.

"I am grateful to God and the universe for this moment. I will keep it ongoing," Lawani said.

Also speaking, Ifeking said she never expected to stay in the show for long and thereafter lauded herself for getting the level.

"I don't know why I am happy but

believe me sincerely when I came to this show I thought I won't last one week.

"It is not easy. I am proud of myself" Ifeking said.

Thereafter, the landlord wished both of them the best while giving them 10 seconds to say goodbye and exit the hood.

Jaywon releases new album 'Jahbahlee'

Gifted Afropop artiste, Jaywon has finally released his highly anticipated album titled 'Jahbahlee'.

The project consists of 14 tracks featuring Portable, Timaya, Tanasha Donna,



Namenj, Apass, Fameye and a host of others African artistes who added their melodious vocal dexterity to the album.

Asked what inspired the name of the album, the 'Zelle' crooner said:

"First, Jahbahlee or Jabali is an African origin word from Swahili, which means "strong", "rock" or "strong as a rock."

"It also implies a dependable family member which is something I can definitely relate to because its reflecting my life. In as much as I have experienced greatness in my career journey, there are parts of it that people don't see and don't know."

"I was literally dealing with all sorts while putting this album together. But I sailed through because of the strength and courage God put in me making me strong enough to bear and carry all that burden to my promised land. It takes a 'Jahbahlee' to do that. The satisfaction of that victory made me feel reinvigorated, like a newborn, a strong champion."

On how personal the album is to him, the award winning artiste said: "I am sure you already have an idea of how personal this body of work is to me and how much work I must have put into it. The album is a total expression of different emotions all wrapped in one."

"The happy, the sad, the love, the pain, the feel good moments. Unlike my previous albums you will notice something about the featured artist on this Jahbahlee album. The features cut across different African countries and cultures."

"I had some of my brothers and sisters who are top acts in their respective countries on this project from Ghana, Uganda, Kenya and Trinidad. It gives it a cultural sensational and quintessential feeling."

You can call it an Afrocentric album. This alone should tell you how different and special Jahbahlee is."

My new single is to appreciate my past, present, says Yinka Rythmz

United States- based Nigerian musician Adeyinka Hazzan known as Yinka Rythmz has released a new singles to appreciate his family, friends and fans that have been supportive to his career.

The single titled "The Appreciation" will wow music lovers.

"It's a super vulnerable song that appreciates my past and present."

I want to appreciate my blessings now and give others their flowers to smell as we journey through life together."

The song itself is executively produced by Rashan Music International in collaborative with Top Dreams Universal. The Appreciation (Memoir) was recorded in Maryland, USA.

The Musical Video was shot & edited by the Multi-Award winning international Duo, Mr. Temitope a.k.a Africano Media.

The New Song "The Appreciation (Memoir)"s description starts with a headline that sums up what you can expect from the new single and its video. The description fills us in on what the new single and its video represents, The Distinct Sound of Fuji in Yinka Rythmz's voice infused with the new skool Afrobeats and Afro cultural sound gave 'Yinka Rythmz

Birthday Appreciation (MEMOIR)' to stand out. We hope you take time to relax and Enjoy it as much as it was a moment of unforgettable memories for Yinka Rythmz and it was a moment of Unexplainable and unexpected feelings of Fulfillment, Gratitude and appreciation.





Morocco to host CAF Champions League final

■ Egypt's Al Ahly protests

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

Confederation of African Football (CAF) have given Morocco the right to host the 2022 TotalEnergies Champions League final scheduled on May 30, 2022.

The continental football governing body received two bids from the Senegalese Football Association and Royal Morocco Football Association.

However, Morocco emerged as the favourite candidate to host the CAF Champions League grand finale after the Senegalese pulled out in the middle of the race.

Consequently, CAF decided to jettison the usual two-legged final

for a one-legged clash to determine the winner.

In a statement, CAF said: "The previous CAF leadership decided on 17 July 2019 that the winner of the TotalEnergies CAF Champions League will be determined by a one-leg final, instead of the usual two-legged, home and away final.

"CAF received a bid from the Senegalese Football Federation and from the Royal Moroccan Football Federation to host the final of the TotalEnergies CAF Champions League 2022.

"The Senegalese Football Federation subsequently withdrew their bid.

"CAF is therefore pleased to award the hosting of the TotalEnergies CAF Champions League 2022



Final to Morocco. The date of the final is 30 May 2022.

"There are currently discussions underway within CAF to revert to the old two-legged home and away final to determine the winner of the TotalEnergies CAF Champions League, rather than the one-leg final."

Meanwhile, Al Ahly have written to

CAF to appeal that a neutral ground should be selected to host the grand finale of this year's 2022 TotalEnergies CAF Champions League competition.

They advised that the continental football governing body should pick a venue outside the country of the four teams that made the semi-final spot.

Flying Eagles to grab semi-final ticket against Burkina's Etalons



After a comfortable 2-0 win and three maximum points secured against defending champions and reigning Africa's best, Ghana on Sunday, Nigeria's Flying Eagles are expected to keep things intense but firm against the

Junior Etalons of Burkina Faso on Wednesday, to earn their semi-final ticket at the ongoing WAFU B U20 Championship in Niamey.

Both teams will take the pitch at 5pm at the Stade General Seyni Kountché,

the same venue where the Flying Eagles enacted a masterclass to send African champions Ghana tumbling on Sunday. Ibrahim Muhammad and former U17 star Ahmed Abdullahi scored the goals that downed the

Black Satellites.

Coach Ladan Bosso still has the full complement of his squad and is unwilling to rest any of his regulars as he looks to make sure of a place in the last four.

"We must approach the match against Burkina Faso with even stronger determination and desire than we did for the Ghana match. A ticket to the semi-finals is key at the moment, and we can then start thinking of a ticket to the final and a place in the Africa Cup of Nations next year."

Only the two finalists at the WAFU B Championship in Niamey will be eligible for next year's Africa U20 Cup of Nations, already scheduled to take place in Egypt in February/March.

Nigeria to pay Eagles ex-coach Rohr N157m

International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) has partially granted a request of former Super Eagles coach Gernot Rohr against the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) over a breach of contractual terms.

Rohr was sacked by the NFF in December last year after a poor performance in the qualifiers to the 2022 TotalEnergies Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) in Cameroon and was replaced by Augustine Eguavoen in the interim.

Angered by the turnout of circumstances, the German whose contract stipulated that he will be paid in full until December 2022 when the contract ends, dragged Nigeria's football governing body to FIFA alleging a claim of \$1.2m as compensation.

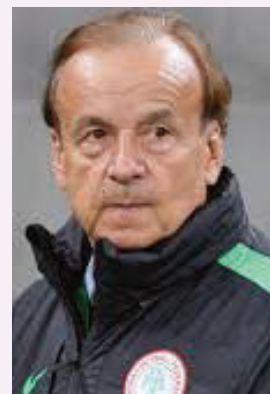
However, after reviewing the case brought by the German, who recently missed out on becoming the head coach of the Mali national team to Eric Chelle, the FIFA tribunal awarded the sum of \$377,879.46 to Rohr, admitting that his claim is "partially accepted insofar as it is admissible".

FIFA tribunal stressed that the NFF must ensure that they pay the money within a timeframe of 45

days or incur the wrath of the apex football governing body.

"If full payment (including all applicable interest) is not made within 45 days of notification of this decision, the respondent [the NFF] shall be imposed a restriction on receiving a percentage of development funding, up until the due amounts are paid," FIFA tribunal said.

However, NFF, not oblivious of the terms of the contract they signed with the German gaffer, will have to cough out an additional N156,933,339.74 to N62,718,294.52 FIFA slammed on the country over fans' destruction of MKO Abiola National Stadium during the world cup qualifiers with the Black Stars of Ghana.



Floyd Mayweather plans boxing legacy in Nigeria

American boxing promoter Floyd Mayweather, who owns a team in the NASCAR Cup Series called 'The Money Team Racing,' as part of his global tour to promote the exhibition fight against Don Moore on May 14, visited the most populous black nation, Nigeria.

The undefeated boxing champion, who retired from the sport in 2017 after winning fifteen major championships, returns to the ring to challenge 18 times undefeated 'Dangerous' Don Moore at the exhibition fight, 'The SHOWCASE IN THE SKIES OF DUBAI' in Burj Khalifa, Dubai.

Mayweather in a press conference at Transcorp Hilton, Abuja, stated that he looks forward to establishing his legacy in the country by building camps to nurture youths and children interested in the sport.

"Before I go to Dubai, I couldn't choose a better place than Nigeria. I look forward to coming back to Nigeria to train and continue to build my legacy, and we also want to help

build a boxing camp for the young youth and children coming up. With the help of Keane [Anis], one of my closest buddies, who is from Nigeria," the 45-year-old told the Nigeria media.

"It's all about giving back. A while back, I knew we were supposed to come to Nigeria, but things didn't go as expected, I'm here now, and I'm proud.

"Being in Africa and being able to travel around the continent. I've been to Johannesburg, Morocco, Egypt, and now Nigeria. And, hopefully, before I'm gone, I get to see every country in Africa. Such a beautiful place. Africans worldwide show me love, and there's nothing like African love," Mayweather praised the African people.

Following, the 2021 International Boxing Hall of Fame inductee, visited the Minister of Transportation and Presidential aspirant under the platform of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Hon Rotimi Amaechi, in his Abuja residence.

Erling Haaland completes Man City medicals

Borussia Dortmund striker Erling Haaland has completed medicals in a hospital in Belgium.

According to snippets by an anonymous source to Sky Sports News, the striker who is highly courted by Manchester City undertook a medical in Erasme hospital in Brussels.

Haaland has been in the headlines lately after Manchester City CEO Ferran Soriano agreed to activate the €75m release clause of the player following a discussion with Dortmund CEO Hans-

Joachim Watzke.

Meanwhile, German News reported that the player has already informed the club that he wants to leave, without stating the destination but with the recent scenario, all pointers direct at Manchester City.

Dortmund demanded that the Norwegian striker's release clause, as part of the agreement to see the player who still has a contract until 2024, will be paid in full without leveraging on instalmental payments.



EPL title race not over yet, Klopp dares Guardiola

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp has said he has not given up on the English Premier League title race despite the slip-up over the weekend in Anfield against Tottenham Hotspur.

The Reds, aiming to win a quadruple this season, have posed a stiff competition for the title, contending with Manchester City, the league leaders.

However, with a clear distinction to set aside Chelsea from the race, Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola and Klopp are at daggers drawn to finish the season ahead of each other.

Consequent to the one-all draw by Liverpool on Saturday, Manchester City dismantled Newcastle United at Etihad Stadium in a resounding 5-0 victory to extend the one-point difference to a somewhat comfortable three points.

"It's clear it is not over because we both have three games to play and my concern is how can we win our games," Klopp said in a



pre-match conference ahead of a visit to Aston Villa.

"We can take it exactly like it was, we drew, they won. It makes it three points and the goal difference changed as well. Or you can see it like we were six points behind and they lost and we won," Klopp said in a bid to boost the morale of the Reds.

Meanwhile, Pep Guardiola has claimed that the whole country is supporting Liverpool to

win the Premier League trophy after Manchester City hammered Newcastle United on Sunday.

The City gaffer in his statement to BeIN Sports, said, "Everyone in this country supports Liverpool, the media and everyone."

"Of course because Liverpool has an incredible history in European competition. Not in the Premier League, because they have won one in 30

years, but it is not a problem at all."

However, Klopp shrugged off Guardiola's claims saying he understands the latter is under pressure after losing out on the UEFA Champions League.

He added that he also faced the same circumstance against Tottenham on Saturday that made him criticize Antonio Conte's tactics at Anfield.

Yusuf invites Musa, Simon, 28 others for Mexico, Ecuador friendlies

Super Eagles' First Assistant Coach Salisu Yusuf has released a list of 30 players, including Captain Ahmed Musa and forward Moses Simon, ahead of friendly matches against the 'A' Men National Teams of Mexico and Ecuador in the United States of America.

The three-time African champions will clash with CONCACAF powerhouse Mexico at the AT&T Stadium in Dallas, State of Texas on Saturday, 28th May, before flying to New Jersey to tackle Ecuador at the Red Bull Arena in Harrison on Thursday, 2nd June.

Yusuf, who is also Head Coach of the CHAN and the U23 teams, has included eight home-based professional players, including goalkeepers Adewale Adeyinka and Ojo Olorunleke, defender Ibrahim Buhari, and forwards Victor Mbaoma and Ishaq Rafiu.

Only 25 players will make the final list for the tour, which is preparatory to next month's 2023 Africa Cup of Nations qualifying matches against Sierra Leone in Abuja (9th June) and São Tomé & Príncipe in Marrakech, Morocco (13th June).

Goalkeepers: Maduka Okoye (Sparta Rotterdam, The Netherlands); Adewale Adeyinka (Akwa United); Ojo Olorunleke (Enyimba FC)

Defenders: Olaoluwa Aina (Torino FC, Italy); Abdullahi Shehu (AC Omonia, Cyprus); Zaidu Sanusi (FC Porto, Portugal); William Ekong (Watford FC, England); Leon Balogun

(Glasgow Rangers, Scotland); Isa Ali (Remo Stars); Chidozie Awaziem (Alanyaspor FC, Turkey); Oluwasemilogo Ajayi (West Bromwich Albion, England); Calvin Bassey (Glasgow Rangers, Scotland); Ibrahim Buhari (Plateau United)

Midfielders: Joseph Ayodele-Arifo (Glasgow Rangers, Scotland); Alex Iwobi (Everton FC, England); Oghenekaro Etebo (Watford FC, England); Chiamaka Madu (Rivers United); Babatunde Afeez Nosiru (Kwara United); Azubuike Okechukwu (Yeni Malatyaspor, Turkey); Samson Tijani (Red Bull Salzburg, Austria); Alhassan Yusuf (Royal Antwerp FC, Belgium).

Forwards: Ahmed Musa (Fatih Karagumruk, Turkey); Moses Simon (FC Nantes, France); Samuel Chukwueze (Villarreal FC, Spain); Ademola Lookman (Leicester City, England); Sadiq Umar (UD Almeria, Spain); Emmanuel Dennis (Watford FC, England); Cyriel Dessers (Feyenoord FC, The Netherlands); Victor Mbaoma (Enyimba FC); Ishaq Rafiu (Rivers United)



S'Eagle Dessers marks 100th career goal at Kuip

Cyriel Dessers has continued to amaze Feyenoord fans and the football community with his exemplary performance in the Dutch league.

Rated as surplus to requirement in KRC Genk, the Nigeria Super Eagle, who is on loan in Feyenoord until the end of the 2021-2022 season, has won the hearts and love of the fans of the Pride of South.

Feyenoord Rotterdam, on Sunday, played a two-all draw with PSV Eindhoven with Dessers scoring a brace to dent the title hopes of the Peasants.

Ajax top the Eredivisie table with PSV Eindhoven also contending for the title, but Dessers' 86 minutes and stoppage time goals dashed the hope of Roger Schmidt's

team.

Coincidentally, Dessers' late-minute brace saw the Super Eagle record his 100th international career goal at De Kuip which he acknowledged that there is no better place than Kuip to record such a feat.

"No better place to score your 100th official goal than in an exploding Kuip," Dessers tweeted after the match.

Dessers, who has been a clinical striker for Feyenoord, is open to making a permanent switch during the end of the summer should the Club de Meuse pay the sum of €4m to secure his services.

Irked by the news that the player will be returning to RKC Genk after his loan move expires,



knowing fully well that the goal-puncher has been instrumental to the club's excellent campaign this season, Feyenoord fans have set up a crowdfunding system to help raise the money to secure the player on a permanent deal.

Cumulatively, Dessers

has scored a total of 20 goals from 45 appearances this season in all competitions, including a consecutive brace against Slavia Prague in the second leg of the quarter-final and Marseille in the first leg of the semi-final of the UEFA Europa Conference League.

Mark D'Ball Men's Basketball: APA Flames beat Novena Heartlanders

APA Flames basketball club has defeated Novena Heartlanders 64-49 to record their first win in the ongoing round of 16 stage of the Mark D'Ball Men's Basketball Championship.

The matches are being played at the Moshood Abiola National Stadium in Abuja.

APA Flames, which lost their first two games in the competition, led Novena Heartlanders 18-9 after the first quarter, and went on to finish the second quarter leading 26-23.

They widened the gap in the third quarter by leading with 10 points for 47-37, before wrapping the game up with a 64-49 scoreline.

James Kala scored the highest points of 18 for APA Flames while Marvelous Darlington had the highest points of 15 for Novena Heartlanders.

Speaking after the match, the coach of APA Flames, Aniyebi Ujoh, said, "I am so happy that my boys won this game, because we lost our two

earlier games. Today (Monday), they played to instructions. I did not expect that they could beat Novena Heartlanders because they won their two earlier games. Kudos to the players for the work well done."

Ujoh, however, commended Igoche Mark, the president of Nigeria Basketball Federation (NBBF), for bringing back the sport at the local level.

"The players were not happy. In those few years there were no

competitions for them in the game. I pray that God will continue to bless Mark to be able to organise more competitions," he said.

In other games played at the competition on Monday, Suleja Bulldogs beat the NSCDC Civil Defenders 81-65, while Gombe Bulls also beat Plateau Peaks 82-69.

The round of 16 stage of the 2022 Mark D'Ball Men's Basketball Championship which started on Saturday will end on Tuesday. (NAN)



“Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself.”

— Leo Tolstoy



‘African parliamentary speakers seeking debt cancellation, not relief, review – Gbajabiamila

■ Calls for continental centre on vaccine research

Conference of Speakers and Heads of African Parliaments (CoSAP) is out to push for total cancellation by creditor-nations as opposed to debt relief or review.

This is according to the Speaker of Nigeria’s House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila who stated that the said there was a clear difference between the three terms.

Speaking at the ongoing 1st CoSAP in Abuja on Tuesday, he explained that the body would want all debts owed by African countries cancelled to help them to “reset the button to zero,” meaning that they had no liabilities outstanding against them.

Compared to review or relief, the Nigerian Speaker told his colleagues that in the case of the latter, the debts would still be outstanding, except that there would be

some alterations, adjustments or even postponement of the repayment schedules.

“We want to reset our buttons to read from zero. That is the position, and I appeal that we all support this push”, he stated

Gbajabiamila was contributing to discussions on the first plenary topic of the day, “Financing Africa’s pandemic Response: Legislative Imperatives and Interventions,” anchored by the Country Representative in Nigeria, World Health Organisation, Dr. Walter Kazadi Mulombo.

The session was chaired by the Speaker of the National Assembly of South Africa, Rt. Hon. Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula.

Participants at the session, backing Gbajabiamila’s position, spoke on the need for parliaments to step up their oversight duties in tracking how the Executive



Gbajabiamila

spent the loans taken on behalf of countries, which ended as debt burdens or traps.

Some noted that in countries that secured debt

reliefs, the parliaments must interrogate how the money returned to them was spent.

They pointed out that the creditor-nations, in considering the appeals for

debt cancellation or relief, would look at several factors, including accounting for how the loans were utilised and the compliance of countries to agreements signed at the inception of the loan requests.

Meanwhile, as part of his recommendation for tackling or preparing for pandemics, Gbajabiamila suggested setting aside a percentage of the health budget for vaccine research and manufacturing by African nations.

He said this could also be legislated to make compliance mandatory.

The Nigerian speaker also recommended the establishment of an African Centre for Vaccine Research and Production.

He explained that the joint centre could be located anywhere on the continent, where all African countries could contribute to its development.

Ifeoma Uddoh, fintech start-up emerges winner of SelectUSA Tech Pitch Competition

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH** with agency report

America’s Consulate General in Lagos has hosted the SelectUSA Tech Pitch Competition for Nigerian female-led tech startups interested in expanding their business operations into the United States.

The U.S. government is a longstanding, committed supporter of entrepreneurship as a key driver for stimulating economic growth and increasing prosperity in Nigeria.

Nine startups made their pitch before a panel of accomplished U.S. and Nigerian business leaders, including U.S. Consulate representatives, and received valuable feedback on their business proposals.

Following a close contest, Ifeoma Uddoh, 2021 alumna of the Academy for Women Entrepreneurs emerged as the overall winner of the SelectUSA Tech Nigeria Pitch Competition. Uddoh is the founder of Shecluded, a fintech start-up dedicated to bridging financial inclusion gap among women of color.

Uddoh will receive a complimentary ticket to attend the annual SelectUSA Investment Summit in Washington DC from June 26-29, with the opportunity to pitch at the Regional, Middle East & Africa Pitch event, to venture capitalists, corporate investors, representatives from startup ecosystems, and industry experts.

The summit will offer Uddoh an unprecedented opportunity to learn how to expand her business to United States, make the right connections, learn about investment destinations, and discover relevant resources to move the start-up forward.

U.S. Consulate Deputy Public Affairs officer Jennifer Foltz congratulated all the participants for their outstanding pitches. Foltz noted that the U.S. government is committed to providing women with the knowledge, networks, and access they need to launch and scale successful businesses.

Marcos wins Phillipines presidency amid protests

■ Say judge me by my actions, not family’s past

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH** with agency report

Ferdinand Marcos Jr has vowed to work for all Filipinos after his remarkable election victory, and he told the world to judge him by his presidency, not his family’s past.

The son of the late Philippines dictator’s victory would return his family to power 36 years after they were ousted by a popular revolution.

The Junior Marcos, better known as “Bongbong”, has become the first candidate in recent history to win an outright majority in a Philippines presidential election, paving the way for a once unimaginable return to rule for the country’s most notorious political dynasty.

“Judge me not by my ancestors, but by my actions,” Marcos told the world, according to a statement by his spokesperson Vic Rodriguez.

Marcos fled into exile in Hawaii with his family during a 1986 “people power” uprising that ended his disgraced father’s autocratic 20-year rule. He has served in congress and the senate since his return to the Philippines in 1991.

Marcos’s victory in Monday’s election now looks certain with 98 per cent of the eligible ballots counted in an unofficial tally showing he has 31 million votes, double that of nearest rival, Vice President Robredo.

An official result is expected around the end of

the month.

“This is a victory for all Filipinos, and for democracy,” spokesman Rodriguez said.

“To those who voted for Bongbong, and those who did not, it is his promise to be a president for all Filipinos. To seek common ground across political divides, and to work together to unite the nation.”

Though Marcos, 64, campaigned on a platform of unity, political analysts say his presidency is unlikely to facilitate that, with bitter feelings about his family’s vast political influence and wealth.

About 400 people, mostly students, staged a protest against Marcos outside the election commission on Tuesday, citing election irregularities.

Several election observers said they had received thousands of reports of election-related irregularities since the vote on Monday. Malfunctioning voting machines were one of the biggest concerns, with VoteReportPH, an election watchdog, saying the breakdowns had “severely impaired this electoral process.”

On Tuesday, Leni Robredo, Mr. Marcos’s closest rival in the race and the country’s current vice president, said that her team was looking into reports of voter fraud. But every opinion poll before the election had predicted that Mr. Marcos would win by a huge margin, and his lead by Tuesday was so overwhelming that reports of fraud and malfunctioning machines were unlikely to

sway the result.

Sara, the daughter of President Rodrigo Duterte and Mr. Marcos’s running mate, had gathered 31.5 million votes by Tuesday, more than triple the votes of Senator Francis Pangilinan, who ran as vice president in support of Ms. Robredo.

A big win for Junior was securing Duterte’s daughter as his vice presidential running mate. Sara Duterte-Carpio won more than three times the number of votes compared with her nearest rival and also likely broadened the Marcos appeal in many areas.

Manila city Mayor Francisco Domagoso, became the first presidential contender to accept defeat.

Mr. Marcos and Ms. Duterte are expected to take office on June 30.