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N250 **Weekend**

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In Nigeria everything is just abnormal. Can you imagine, gutter is now the road, while the road is now the gutter.

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Outrage trails slaying of girl by zealots in Sokoto

By **BY PAUL MICHAEL**
(Defence Editor) AND
OROWO VICTORIA
OJIEH (Education
Correspondent)

National anger from Sultan and President-General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar III; Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Sokoto, Matthew Kukah, and others has trailed the gruesome murder of a student of Shehu Shagari College of Education (SSCOE) in Sokoto State, by religious zealots over alleged blasphemy.

Deborah Yakubu Samuel, who was a 200-level Home Economics student, was mauled, killed and burnt on Thursday by a mob that accused her of blasphemy on social media against Prophet Muhammad. Videos showing how the student was stoned, beaten with sticks and subsequently set ablaze were circulated on social media.

Reacting to the unfortunate incident, the Sultan of Sokoto in a statement by the Sultanate Council, condemned the actions of the mob and called on security agencies to immediately bring the murderers to book.

"The Sultanate Council has learned with dismay the unfortunate happenings at the Shehu Shagari College of Education, (SSCOE) Sokoto that led to the loss of life of a female student of the Institution.

"The Sultanate Council condemned the incident in its totality and has urged the security agencies to bring perpetrators of the unjustifiable incident to justice.

"The Sultanate Council has urged all to remain calm and ensure peaceful co-existence among all people of the state and nation," the statement said.

Father Kukah in a statement described the actions of the mob as criminal and tasked authorities at all levels to fish out the perpetrators and ensure justice is served on the matter.

In a statement titled 'Murder of Ms Deborah Yakubu,' the revered cleric said the perpetrators no matter their motive must be punished.

He said: "We condemn

this incident in the strongest terms and call on the authorities to investigate this tragedy and ensure that all the culprits are brought to book.

"The only obligation that is owed her immediate family, her fellow students, and the school authorities is the assurance that those who are guilty of this inhuman act, no matter their motivation, are punished according to the extant laws of our land.

"This has nothing to do with religion. Christians have lived peacefully with their Muslim brothers here in Sokoto over the years.

"This matter must be treated as a criminal act and the law must take its cause," the statement said partly."

Governor of Sokoto, Aminu Waziri Tambuwal, announced the immediate closure of the institution while directing the Ministry of Education in the State and the Police to immediately investigate the cause of the incident.

This was contained in a statement signed by the State's Commissioner for Information, Alhaji Isah Bajini Galadanci.

The statement reads: "It has come to the notice of the Sokoto State Government, the unfortunate incident that took place at the Shehu Shagari College of Education (SSCOE), Sokoto, in which a student of the college lost her life.

"The government has ordered the immediate closure of the college.

"Already, the State Governor, Rt. Honourable Aminu Waziri Tambuwal has directed the Ministry of Higher Education, and relevant security agencies in the state to commence investigations into the remote and immediate causes of the incident and report back to the government."

However, the police in Sokoto said two suspects have been arrested in connection with the murder of the student.

A statement by Sanusi Abubakar, spokesman of the Sokoto Police Command, said operatives have been deployed to the area.

"At about 0900hrs, a distress call was received from Shehu Shagari College of Education, Sokoto, stating that students were rioting over one female student named Deborah Samuel, a level two student, who was accused



Prof. Itse Sagay (left) and other prominent Nigerians at the launching of his book in Lagos.

of making a social media post that blasphemed the holy prophet Muhammad (SAW).

"Students forcefully removed the victim from the security room where she was hidden by the school authorities, killed her, and burnt the building.

"The students banded together with miscreants and barricaded the Sokoto/Jega road.

"Upon receiving the information, the DC Operations led a team of policemen and all other operational commanders in the state to the school where the road was cleared and the situation was brought under control.

"Two students were arrested in connection with the crime committed.

"The school has been closed down by the school authority, and policemen were deployed to give tight security coverage.

"The Commissioner of Police, Sokoto State Command, CP Kamaldeen Kola Okunlola fdc, mnim, is appealing to members of the public to go about their lawful activities and should not panic as the situation is under control.

"Meanwhile, the suspects in the viral video on Twitter were spotted and will be nailed soon."

Following the ugly incident, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria and human rights activist, Ebun-Olu Adegboruwa, has called for the relocation of the 2022 Annual Summit of the Nigerian Bar Association Section on Public Interest and Development Law (NBA-SPIDEL) scheduled to hold in Sokoto State from the 22nd to 26th of May, 2022.

According to learned silk, the murder of the female student is barbaric and lawyers must not be seen to converge on her grave.

He wrote: "I humbly urge NBA-SPIDEL not

to hold any meeting or conference in the State where a Nigerian citizen has been brutally murdered and burnt to death.

"It is barbaric and lawyers should not be seen to be dancing on her grave in that State.

"We should make a statement to the government by cancelling the Conference and hold it in a neighbouring State in the North."

Meanwhile, Neo-Black Movement (NBM) of Africa has strongly condemned the "inhuman and unwarranted" slaying of Miss Deborah Yakubu Samuel.

NBM noted that the barbaric act has needlessly raised religious tension in the country. The lynching of Deborah is unacceptable; despite her alleged flaws, NBM stressed

It added: "NBM of Africa as a Pan- African organization driven by a passion for humanity is saddened and shocked over the gruesome act of religious intolerance at Shehu Shagari College of Education in Sokoto State, Nigeria," according to a statement by the movement's spokesman, Mr. Oluwatosin Dixon. "NBM is a non-religious organization; a home to members from all religions. It has overtime stressed the need for African people and humanity in general to foster religious tolerance, accommodate the disparities among faiths and exhort religions to unity and full freedom of Africa as our home and humanity as our family

"NBM of Africa believes that Islam is a religion of peace and has over the years lauded the peaceful endeavours of well-meaning Muslims. It is really saddening that some individuals will engage in such act under the guise of religion. "NBM of Africa believes that everyone is

interrelated and as such we are brothers and sisters. We, therefore, need to grow our bond as a family and not destroy it.

NBM of Africa condolees with the families of the deceased and pray that she rests in peace. We also reiterate that Humanity is our watchword and we will relentless walk this path."

"We also implore the the law enforcement agents to bring the perpetrators of this devilish act to face the wrath of the law."

President Muhammadu Buhari on Friday finally reacted to the gruesome murder of Miss Deborah Samuel, a second year Home Economics student of the Shehu Shagari College of Education, Sokoto by fundamentalists on Thursday.

Though Buhari condemned the killing, he nonetheless urged religious and community leaders to call citizens' attention to the need to exercise the right to freedom of speech responsibly.

Buhari reacted through a series of tweets titled: State House Press Release: President Buhari reacts to Sokoto Killing linked to alleged blasphemy, says violence does not solve problems."

The statement which came through the official Federal Government Twitter handle, Presidency Nigeria @NGRPresidency, reads: "President @MBuhari strongly condemns the resort to self-help by the mob in sokoto, resulting in violence, destruction and killing of a second year student of Shehu Shagari College of Education, Sokoto, Deborah Samuel.

"President Buhari said the news of the killing of the young lady by fellow students was a matter of concern and demanded an impartial, extensive probe into all that happened

before and during the incident.

"The President noted that Muslims all over the world demand respect for the Holy Prophets, incl Isah (Alaihissalaam, Jesus Christ) & Muhammad (SAW) but where transgressions occur, as alleged to be the case in this instance, the law does not allow anyone take matters into their hands.

"Moreover, religious leaders preach that it is not for the believer to judge the actions of another person. The constituted authority must be allowed to deal with such matters when they arise.

"No person has the right to take the law in his or her own hands in this country. Violence has and never will solve any problem," said the President.

Buhari also directed the Ministries of Information and Culture, Police Affairs and that of Communications and Digital Economy to work with GSM providers and Tech companies to help contain the spread of false and inflammatory information through social media.

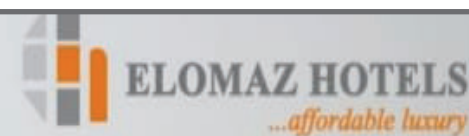
"The President extended the nation's condolences to the family of the deceased student and wished all those injured a quick recovery. He commended the immediate response to the incident by the Sokoto State Government and urged religious and community leaders to call citizens' attention to the need to exercise the right to freedom of speech responsibly," the statement further read.

"President Buhari called for tempered comments by the media and calm among the general population while investigation is ongoing to find out the remote and immediate causes of the incident."

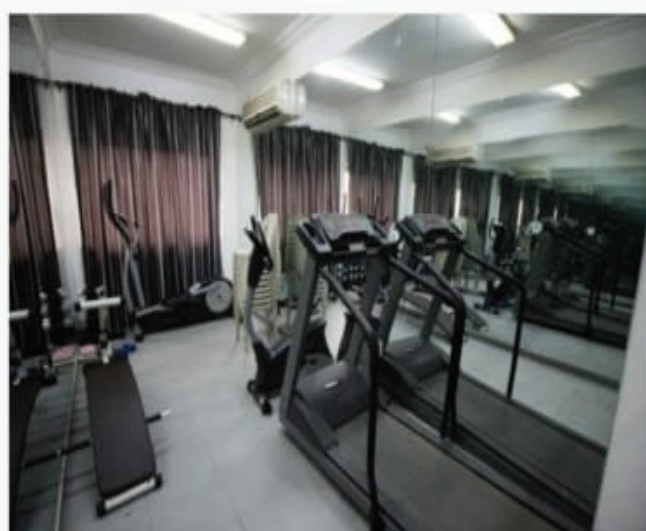
Bishop Korie said such Presidential aspirants that refused to condemn the action of the mob should not be entrusted with the affairs of the nation.

Chairman of the Southern branch of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), and National Vice President, South-East Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN), Bishop Maxwell Korie, has urged voters to shun presidential aspirants who have "cowardly" refused to make statements condemning the killing of Deborah Samuel.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



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Crisis brews in Taraba State communities over plans to upgrade villages, create additional districts

By **SURU CHARLES,**
Jalingo

While Tarabans are still living in fear following terrorist activities, crisis is again brewing in Ichen community of Kurmi local government council of the state.

To however avert the crisis, the people have called for the immediate deployment of more soldiers to some of the council's communities that are prone to the crisis.

They were led by a member of the Ichen Kurmi kingdom in Bissaula community, Fhatso T.N Tukura. The call, if urgently adhered to, they believed would go a long way to halt the outbreak of skirmishes in both Bissaula and Sunkuru communities.

The ongoing plans by the state government to upgrade villages to districts and create three additional districts in Ichen and Ndola Chiefdoms in the council was observed to have been the reason behind the ongoing tension in the area.

Several lives and properties, it would be recalled, were



Ishaku

recently destroyed in the council following an outbreak of clashes that occurred early this year.

Believing that the government can track down the "instigators of instability in the area" the need for the authority to call the council chairman, Ammamzalla John to order, they believed would as well assist in curtailing the situation.

The people who said they "recognized and applauded Governor Darius Dickson

Ishaku, for his tireless efforts in ensuring permanent peace throughout the state, particularly in areas where restiveness has been reported" expressed sadness that despite the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry to determine the remote and immediate causes of the dispute, the chairman is going about igniting dust.

"The genuine extent to which the government has reached out to resolve and ensure lasting peace as a result

of the regrettable conflict between the Ichen and Ndaka in Bissaula, including the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry to determine the remote and immediate causes of the dispute they said, "is welcome and appreciated."

Wondering why the council chairman, should go as far as sending a memo to the state government requesting the upgrading of fifteen (15) village areas to districts and the creation of three (3) additional districts in the Ichen and Ndola Chiefdoms, the need for the government to discard such request to avert upheavals, they said has become necessary.

The chairman's action, as stated by the community "is very upsetting to all well-intentioned people who want permanent peace in Bissaula town between the Ichen and Ndaka people."

While calling on the people to embrace peace in the "interest of reconciliation" outsiders who "care little or nothing about our shared existence in terms of language, interpersonal relationships, and interethnic marriages" as opined by them "should be viewed as common foes rather than friends."

Outrage trails slaying of girl by zealots in Sokoto

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

As at the time of filing this report, former Senate President Anyim Pius Anyim is the only one of all the 2023 presidential aspirants that has publicly condemned the gruesome murder of the 200-level student of the Shehu Shagari College of Education.

In a statement he personally signed earlier in the day, Senator Anyim decried the killing of Miss Deborah Yakubu as cruel, illegal, callous and inhuman.

The former Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF) and frontline presidential aspirant on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) insisted that "there is no place in a modern Democracy such as Nigeria for jungle justice and killing of human beings illegally."

According to Anyim, "Miss Deborah Yakubu deserved to have been put through the full process of the law which has adequate punishment for all offences including the one she was accused of. We cannot afford now to add religious intolerance to the plethora of problems bedeviling our country."

Former Vice President Atiku Abubakar had earlier condemned the killing of the Christian female student and even commiserated with her family, only to delete the message on all his social media handles in what appears to be an attempt not to offend extremists.

Vice President Yemi Osinbajo, former Lagos State Governor Bola Tinubu, former Anambra State Governor Peter Obi, Rivers State Governor Nyesom Wike, Kogi State Governor Yahaya Bello and other presidential hopefuls have kept sealed lips despite the outrage that greeted the murder of the female student.

Bishop Korie, during a one-day Minister's Conference in Ebonyi, said such Presidential aspirants that refused to condemn the action of the mob should not be entrusted with the affairs of the nation.

Bishop Korie said: "We are keeping track of the responses of the Presidential candidates. If any of them is such a coward, that he refuses

to make an appropriate statement about this, we now know that we should not entrust the affairs of the country into such a hand."

Bishop Korie added: "To the Federal Government, we are saying that we don't just want to hear statements of condemnations about what has happened, we want to hear statements of definite actions of the federal government to bring justice over this matter."

"All the people involved must be given the appropriate punishment according to the laws of the land. It is a case of wicked murder. It's not manslaughter."

"They moved against her with a deliberate intention to get her eliminated. So it is not a case of manslaughter," he said.

Bishop Korie said the Christian body would work against any move by either the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) or the All Progressives Congress (APC) to field Moslem, Moslem candidate in the 2023 presidential election.

"As we prepare for election in 2023, the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, PFN, which is the umbrella Association for all Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches in Nigeria is making an emphatic statement that any political party that fields Moslem-Moslem candidates for the presidential election, we will work against their candidate succeeding."

"That is, by withholding our votes from them and in order to punish them for such plunder, we will make sure that all their candidates from the State House of Assembly upwards will lose our votes."

"If you dare it, our reactions begin from the State House of Assembly election."

"We are calling on all well-meaning Nigerians, including Moslems who have a sense of equity, justice and fairness to fall in line with us to ensure that this absurdity is not associated with any of the two major political parties in Nigeria, APC and PDP," the PFN leader added.

Police arrest three bandits, rescue 15 kidnapped victims

By **PAUL MICHAEL,** Abuja

Niger State Command of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) has arrested three suspected bandits and rescued 15 kidnapped victims at Agigi/Kpashimi forest via Lapai LGA of the State.

This was contained in a press statement by the Public Relations Officer of the State, DSP Wasiu Abiodun, on Friday. Adding that the suspects were arrested after being overpowered in a gun duel with the tactical team of the Police.

Abiodun gave the names of the suspects as Aliyu Mohammed Dauda aged 19yrs, Wada Usman Shehu aged 20yrs and Mohammed Shehu Abubakar aged 19yrs.

He said, "Sequel to the ongoing onslaught

against banditry and other criminality in the state, on 11/05/2022 at about 1330hrs, information was received that suspected armed bandits were sighted at Agigi/Kpashimi forest via Lapai LGA.

"Police tactical team attached to Lapai Division with vigilante members were mobilized to the area where the bandits were engaged in a gun duel and overpowered by the tactical team, while some of the hoodlums escaped into the forest with bullet injuries."

"Consequently, three suspects among the bandits were arrested, and fifteen victims abducted by the hoodlums were rescued from the forest. The suspects arrested are: Aliyu Mohammed Dauda aged 19yrs, Wada Usman Shehu

aged 20yrs, both 'm' of Maikunkele and Mohammed Shehu Abubakar aged 19yrs 'm' of Mayaki village, Lapai

"Two burnt motorcycles were equally recovered from their camp. However, the case is under investigation as an effort is ongoing to apprehend other members of the gang. Suspects will be arraigned in court after the investigation."

In another development, the police repelled an attempt by armed bandits to invade Maraban Dan-Daudu and Jiko villages through Gwada, Shiroro LGA.

The Police alongside vigilante members reportedly engaged the bandits in a gun duel for hours, thereby forcing them (bandits) to escape into the bushes with bullet wounds.

"Similarly, on 12/05/2022

at about 0930hrs, armed bandits attempted to invade Maraban Dan-Daudu and Jiko villages via Gwada, Shiroro LGA.

"Joint security team deployed to the area, with vigilante members responded and engaged the bandits in gun duel which lasted for hours."

"As a result of this, the bandits were repelled as most of the hoodlums escaped into the forest with bullet injuries after they suffered some casualties."

"The Commissioner of Police, Niger State Command CP Monday Bala Kuryas, fsi commended the efforts of the tactical teams and urged them to sustain the momentum towards curtailing banditry in the state," Abiodun added.

Councillor arrested for allegedly supplying arms to bandits in Kaduna

Kaduna State Police Command has arrested a serving councillor for allegedly being in possession of an AK-47 rifle in the Giwa Local Government Area of the state.

The suspect, Abdulrahman Adamu, who is a serving councillor in the Soba Local Government Area of Kaduna State, was arrested by the operatives of Operation Puff Adder

II attached to the Kaduna Police Command during a routine patrol along Galadimawa Road.

According to a statement by the spokesman of the command, Mohammed Jalige, the police officers succeeded in intercepting the councillor, who was moving in a black Lifan motorcycle towards the Galadimawa community with a sack.

The policemen at that point became suspicious

of the sack being carried by the suspect and were prompted to search its content. It was in this process that they discovered an AK-47 rifle loaded with six rounds of 7.62 X 39mm live ammunition concealed inside the sack.

The police spokesman further revealed that the suspect was arrested and taken into custody alongside the exhibits while preliminary

investigation reveals the identity of the suspect, Abdulrahman Adamu, as a serving member in the legislative council of Soba Local Government Area of Kaduna State representing Kinkiba ward.

The suspect equally confessed to having gotten the firearm from his accomplices, adding that he was to deliver same to bandits around Galadimawa village for their nefarious activities.

Joel-Onowakpo's senatorial ambition pulls heavyweight politicians from PDP to APC

By **KELVIN OHOROR**

Hon. Joel-Onowakpo Thomas, the All Progressives Congress (APC) aspirant for Delta South Senatorial District in the forthcoming general election, has welcomed the former National President of Ijaw Youth Council (IYC), Dr. Chris Ekiyor, to the party.

Ekiyor, former Chairman, Patani Local Government Area and erstwhile Commissioner for Commerce and Industry, Delta State, on Friday, May 13th, 2022, decamped from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to APC with his teeming supporters including, High Chief Ekeremor Pinaowei

Dirikebamor, Chief Wesley Torukeregha, Isaiah Aboye, Ebiakpor Seriboh and Gift Michael among others.

Joel-Onowakpo, while welcoming Dr. Ekiyor and his supporters to the APC, described him as a grassroots politician and great mobilizer who has impacted greatly on his people, Delta State and Nigeria in general.

He stressed that the wealth of experience and wide reach of Ekiyor was richly needed by the APC to strengthen the desire of the ruling party at the centre in its quest to take over Delta State in 2023.

"I wish to use this medium to welcome Dr Chris Ekiyor and his teeming

supporters to our great party, the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Delta State. It is a thing of joy to have him join our party particularly now that the 2023 election is around the corner.

"I am confident that Dr Chris Ekiyor's decision has added a boost to our great party that is already taking over the nooks and crannies of Delta State. His decision to dump the PDP is a pointer to the acceptability of APC by the people of Delta State. I most sincerely welcome you to the APC family as we look forward to making great impact in our resolve to make our presence felt by taking over the elective positions in our

dear State."

He expressed gratitude to Deputy Senate President Ovie Omo-Agege for his outstanding leadership qualities and being a shining light attracting more followers to the APC. He thanked all those who made it to Government Waterside, Patani Town to receive Ekiyor and his supporters to the APC.

Joel-Onowakpo called on his teeming supporters not to relent in their efforts at propagating his political ideals to others who are yet to make clear decisions on where to go, assuring them that his wealth of experience in both private and public services will be brought to bear in serving the people.



Hon. Joel-Onowakpo Thomas,

Ngige withdraws from presidential race

By **CHARLES ONYEKWERE**, Southeast Correspondent

Minister of Labour and Employment, Sen Chris Ngige has withdrawn from the 2023 presidential election.

This is coming after the minister met with President Muhammadu Buhari and consulted with his family, constituents, supporters and well-wishers.

The Trumpet recalls that Buhari had ordered all ministers vying for public office to resign on or before May 16.

A statement signed by Ngige on Friday in Abuja said his withdrawal has been communicated to the President and the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF).

The statement reads: "Having also consulted widely with my family, constituents, supporters and well-wishers, it is my pleasure to announce the withdrawal of my interest and earlier decision to contest the office of the President in the 2023 general elections.

"As a result of this, I will NOT be participating in any of the internal party processes of the said election, starting with the primary. I took this momentous decision firstly in the overall interest of the nation, in order to enable me to concentrate on my job, and assist the President and the Government, weather the difficult last lap, in the life of the administration and secondly for other family reasons".

You're sufficiently equipped to succeed me, Buhari tells ex-ministers

•We pray one of us succeeds you, says Akpabio

By **TUNDE JOSHUA**, Abuja

President Muhammadu Buhari at a valedictory session for appointees leaving his cabinet on Friday in Abuja affirmed that a significant number of them have been sufficiently equipped to aspire to higher elective offices, including his Office.

He said: "I have no doubt that if the next President emerges from among former members of this cabinet, like any other aspirant, ample competence and outstanding service delivery would be on display. This will be part of our legacies to Nigerians."

The President, who commended the departing public officers for serving the nation, "with dignity and honour", had at the last FEC meeting on Wednesday, May 11, 2022, directed that all Ministers and other political appointees who aspire to contest for elective offices in the 2023 General Elections should resign their current ap-



Chris Ngige

pointments.

"I note that some have complied while others are in the process of doing so.

"I would like to use this opportunity to commend your decision and courage to contest for elective offices and your compliance with my directive.

"I also wish to thank you for your invaluable services to this nation through your contributions as Cabinet members.

"I wish you success in the upcoming elections and your future endeavours," he said.

President Buhari told the ministers that looking back as the head of the team over the years, he had fond memories of incisive and robust discussions during cabinet meetings, rendering of performance reports during special sessions and presidential retreats.

"In 2015, citizens of this country overwhelmingly voted for me to become the President of this nation on the platform of the All Progressives Congress (APC).

"Selecting members of the Cabinet went through a careful process so that the best and most competent could emerge. The performance of that class of 2015 proved me right.

"In 2019, Nigerians similarly re-elected me as President. Again the selection went through another meticulous process.

"That re-election was significant because it served as a referendum on our performance during the first term and it inspired me to bring back

some of the members of the first cabinet either to their old Ministries or re-assigned to other sectors.

"New Members were also brought on board to inject fresh energies, skills and ideas to enhance the execution of government's programs and policies.

"With these and much more, I am happy to note that a significant number of cabinet members have become sufficiently equipped to aspire to higher elective offices, including the Office of the President. This shows the impact of the experience gathered while serving as members of the Federal Executive Council," he said.

The President acknowledged that prior to some of them joining his cabinet; they had made their marks in other areas as governors, legislators, entrepreneurs and core professionals.

He added that the experience and expertise they brought on board have significantly resulted in enormous development in various sectors and the accomplishment of government programmes.

"These include infrastructure, agriculture, health systems, financial management, administration of justice, building social safety net systems," he said.

Noting that the departure of some cabinet members has undoubtedly created a vacuum that should be filled, the President said appointments would be made without delay so that the business of governance will not suffer.

Buhari urged the

remaining members of the cabinet to show more diligence, resilience and commitment to serve Nigerians better, saying "the journey to the finish line is still very far".

"Like always, there will be challenges to address, programmes to deliver and policies to implement.

"You must therefore brace up for more work and target increased accomplishments.

"The determination to leave important legacies for Nigerians should never be compromised," the President told members of his cabinet.

The following outgoing members of FEC were present at the valedictory session: ministers of Transportation, Rotimi Amaechi; Niger Delta Affairs, Godswill Akpabio; Science, Technology and Innovation, Ogbonnaya Onu, State for Petroleum, Timipre Sylva; Labour and Employment, Chris Ngige.

Others are the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami (SAN), Minister of State, Mines and Steel Development, Uche Ogah, the Minister of Women Affairs, Pauline Tallen and the Minister of State for Niger Delta Affairs, Chief Tayo Alasoadura.

The Minister of State (Education), Emeka Nwajiuba, who had earlier tendered his resignation, was not present at the valedictory session.

Speaking on behalf of the outgoing ministers, Akpabio thanked the President for giving them the opportunity to serve and contribute their quota to nation-building.

He described working with the President as a

"fantastic and knowledgeable experience," adding that as they step aside they will continue to be great disciples of Buhari.

"As we step aside from FEC, I want you to know that you have disciples in us. I want you to know that it is time for us to propagate Buharism.

"I want you to know that we are going to be working closely with the Minister of Information and Culture to take your message of transformation, love, patience, and administrative sagacity to Nigerians," he said.

The Niger Delta Minister told the President that from his interactions with colleagues leaving the cabinet was like the story of the Spanish play of "sadness and joy."

"Sadness in the sense that we are going to miss the continuous daily and weekly interaction with a Father and learning from him; joy because we now have an opportunity to go to the wider audience in Nigeria to speak more of your achievements for this country."

Lauding the President's deep patriotism, Akpabio said he is the "best president Nigeria could ever have had at a time of difficult circumstances."

He prayed to God Almighty to grant the President a successful tenure and protect his family, adding:

"May one of us succeed you in order to continue the good legacies you have laid on the ground. We have seen and know your vision. We know where you want the country to be."

Battle over Ndubuisi Kanu's estate continues

•Court demands payment evidence of Lagos ex-MILAD's entitlement from Navy

By **BENJAMIN OMOIKE**

A Lagos High Court judge sitting in Ikeja, Justice Christopher Balogun, has ordered the Nigerian Navy, NN, to show evidence of payment of entitlement and benefit of the late retired Rear Admiral Ndubuisi Kanu, a former Military Administrator of Lagos, MILAD, to an interest-yielding dedicated account.

Justice Balogun gave this direction in an ongoing proceeding of a suit filed by Mrs. Gladys Ndubuisi Kanu on Thursday.

In the suit, marked LD/3685FPM/2021, Gladys is seeking to be declared as the only legal wife of the late Rear Admiral Ndubuisi Kanu.

The respondents in the suit are the first wife – Christine, Josephine Ndubuisi Kanu and children of the deceased, Kelly Kanu, Nigerian Navy, Simone Abiona (Nee Kanu), Andrey Joe-Ezigbo (nee Kanu), Paula Kanu and Karen Johnson (Nee Kanu), Jeffery Kanu, Laura Kanu and Stephen Kanu.

Gladys also sought for an order of the court to declare that she is the only widow of the late Ndubuisi.

She said she and the deceased were co-habiting until his death. She noted that she was married to him for 27 years but she was with him for 31 years.

At the resumed hearing, Counsel to the claimant, Wale Adesokan, SAN, had also sought for an order of the court joining the probate registrar of the High Court in the suit, but the registrar said she has not been served.

The second respondent counsel, C.G Cirbam informed the court that NN is seeking that the court struck out its name from the action.

The trial judge, Justice Balogun requested for a proof of payment of entitlements in the instance.

He queried, "How do we know whether his gratuity has been paid?"

"It is as if you are hiding something. What you should have done is to show us the evidence and leave the matter



The Late Ndubuisi Kanu

and let the family battle their matter."

He opined, "You can not pay gratuity twice and you can not pay pension when he has passed on, everybody knows that."

"Nigeria Navy, you are still here for some more time and be very patient.

"Do you have any other work you do apart from war?

The judge ordered that the claimant should service.

Also, O.A Shodimu, counsel for the first, third to the ninth defendant, who also held brief for the 10th defendant, prayed the court for extension of time to respond to the application.

Meanwhile the judge adjourned the proceeding till Monday, 16, 2022 for hearing of pending interlocutory injunction to join or add the probate registrar to the action.

Lagos First Lady to lead war against drug abuse in schools, communities

•Holds meeting with NDLEA, other stakeholders

By **BENJAMIN OMOIKE**

Lagos State First Lady, Dr. Ibijoke Sanwo-Olu, has pledged to work with the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) and other critical stakeholders to reinvigorate the war against abuse, especially in schools and communities.

The First Lady made the pledge on Wednesday at a strategic meeting held in Lagos House, Ikeja, with the NDLEA and other critical stakeholders, including the Wife of the Deputy Governor, Mrs. Oluremi Hamzat, senior officials of the Ministries of Education, Health, Youths and Social Development, wives of Local Government Chairmen, Police Officers Wives Association (POWA), School Principals, Market Women and the Medical Director of the Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital, Yaba, Dr. Gbenga Owuoye.

According to her, drug addiction, especially among the youths, has become a worrisome menace in society that no one could longer pretend about its existence.

In her words: "The earlier we begin to tackle the daunting challenge, the better for our youths, ourselves and the social health of our society. This strategic meeting is aimed at putting the menace of drug abuse and associated social vices on the front burner."

"We are truly and deeply concerned about the increase in the rate at which the younger ones are now getting addicted to illicit drugs, a development that brought about the need for all relevant stakeholders to embark on a campaign to fight the menace and enlighten victims on the dangers inherent in such lifestyle both now and in the future," the First Lady said.

Maintaining that the time was ripe for real action to tackle the war against drug abuse and not just mere rhetoric, Dr. Sanwo-Olu disclosed that a series of initiatives would be unveiled in the coming weeks to advance the fight against the menace in schools and in communities across the State.

She said: "At the level of the Nigerian Governors' Wives Forum (NGWF), we are all concerned

about this and we have resolved in our respective States to frontally confront the menace, looking at it from a holistic point of view."

"We have to be proactive and connect with the schools, the religious bodies, community leaders and associations and others to cascade the message to all segments and sectors of the State," Mrs. Sanwo-Olu asserted.

On his part, Commander of the NDLEA, Lagos State Command, Barr. Callys Alumona, commended the First Lady for convening the meeting of relevant stakeholders to advance the War Against Drug Abuse (WADA), noting that something urgent must be done to prevent Lagos from becoming a gateway for illicit and dangerous drugs, both within and outside Nigeria.

He also urged the First Lady to organise a training workshop for women in government who are mothers themselves, as well as political and social leaders, to enable them to have a better understanding of the consequences of drug abuse and the signs to note when a child is engaging in drug abuse or illicit dealing in drugs.

Buhari confers national award on commissioner

President Muhammadu Buhari has conferred the National Productivity Order of Merit (NPOM) Award on Lagos State Commissioner for Health, Prof. Akin Abayomi, in recognition of his high productivity, hard work and excellence, particularly in the fight against the global pandemic – COVID-19.

Abayomi, who was honoured alongside the Secretary to the Federal Government, Mr. Boss Mustapha and the immediate past Director-General of the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), Dr. Chikwe Ihekweazu, in the NPOM Special COVID-19 award category received the award during the 19th National Productivity Day (NPD), and Conferment of NPOM Award at the Banquet Hall, State House, Aso Rock Villa, Asokoro, Abuja.

The Minister of Labour and Employment, Dr. Chris Ngige, who conveyed notification of the award to Prof. Akin Abayomi via a letter titled Conferment of National Productivity Order of Merit (NPOM) Award and dated May 4, 2022, explained that the NPOM award is an award of honour and dignity instituted by the Federal Government of Nigeria to recognise hard work and excellence.

While congratulating the Health Commissioner for the honour, Ngige noted that his recommendation was based on the report of the National Productivity Order of Merit Award Committee after a rigorous selection process.

The letter personally signed by the Minister reads in part, "The President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR has approved the conferment of the National Productivity Order of Merit (NPOM) Award on you in recognition of high productivity, hard work and



President Muhammadu Buhari excellence.

"Your recommendation was based on the report of the National Productivity Order of Merit Award Committee after a rigorous selection process. The Award ceremony, which will be chaired by President Muhammadu Buhari, has been scheduled to hold on 12th May, 2022 at the Banquet Hall, State House, Asokoro, Abuja at 9.00am.

"On behalf of the President and the entire people of Nigeria, I congratulate you on this honour conferred on you by the nation. Once again, do accept our congratulations and good wishes".

Speaking after receiving the award, Abayomi thanked President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR, and the people of Nigeria for adjudging him worthy of national honours.

He noted that the purposeful leadership of Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu, the Incident Commander of the COVID-19 Response in Lagos, as well as the commitment of all health workers and the support of citizens earned him the award.

Actress Nkechi Blessing says she Has not worn undies since 18

Nollywood actress, Nkechi Blessing, has revealed that she has not worn pants since she was 18 as a clapback to her ex-husband, Opeyemi Falegan, who claimed he left her because she is not hygienic.

Recall that Falegan had apologised to the actress, admitting that he "messed up" while telling her "I still love you."

However, he backtracked, claiming that his apology was not because he wanted her back. Falegan went on to claim that Nkechi wore the same pants for three days while they dated and didn't brush her teeth.

Responding, Nkechi, in a series of now-deleted posts on her Instastory, called her estranged

husband a liar.

The 33 year-old actress said she has not worn a pant since she was 18 years old and accused the politician of only chasing clout.

"Wow just wow..Lmao I am glad your lies be staring into your face gidigba it's a known fact that I NBS have never worn a pant since I was 18..." she wrote in a mixture of English and Pidgin.

"Opeyemi Just wow..that was a weak come back bro...leave me alone in peace, when talking about hygiene please clean that rat hole you live in first..this battle is a lost one already.. please why is it so hard for you to move on, na by force? If I decide to go that route with you, you no go like me..."

"NBS Pant? Lmao. I no get one

single pata bro. Maybe you're mistaking me for the 21 year-old girl you were begging for 50k."



Nkechi Blessing

Wike, Ijaws and 2023

By **CHRIS EZEONOH**, PORT HARCOURT

The political conundrum in the Niger Delta, nay Rivers State, is taking a different dimension ahead of 2023 general election. The riverine extraction in Rivers State populated by the Ijaw speaking people appears to be taking their agitation for power balancing in the power equation in the state to another level.

This time, the agitation is being amplified by the mainstream leaderships of Ijaw ethnic nationality, the Ijaw National Congress, (INC) and the Ijaw Youths Council, (IYC).

Some analysts say that since Wike assumed the mantle of leadership as the governor, the riverine Ijaws have not been very comfortable with the administration, even though they are eminently represented in the cabinet.

The deputy governor is from the riverine, so is the Secretary to Government, the State Accountant General and other commissioners and appointees.

In 2015, Wike contested against an Ijaw man, Dr Adol. Dakuku Peterside. In 2019, another Ijaw man squared up against him, Arch. Tonye Cole, even though he was eventually disqualified before the election following Supreme Court judgment.

But Awara of AAC who got the backing of All Progressives Congress (APC) supporters to confront Wike following Cole's disqualification is also an Ijaw man. He almost became an albatross to Wike.

These are all lost opportunities by the riverine people or Ijaws to taste power domiciled in Brick House, Rivers Government House. They are still fighting to realize this somewhat life aspiration.

This may explain why more than 70 percent of the governorship aspirants for the 2023 election in the state across all parties are from the riverine Ijaws. They appear to be battle-ready this time and the state chapter of APC (Amaechi faction) is dancing to the 'melodious makosa' of the riverine Ijaws by zoning its governorship ticket to that part of the state.

Wike and the leadership of PDP on the other hand are still holding the state in suspense. But the riverine Ijaws are agitating that right of first refusal should be accorded them in finally deciding where the pendulum should be headed. Even so, they do not completely trust Wike.

Among the Ijaw sons in PDP who took up the gauntlet and purchased the Expression of Interest and Nomination forms for the position of governor is Dr Farah Dagogo who represents Degema/Bonny Federal Constituency in the House of Representatives.

Along the line, however, Farah's exuberance clashed with Wike's overbearing attitude.

While the screening of aspirants for the state and national assembly elections were ongoing at the state headquarters of PDP along Aba Road in Port Harcourt, Dagogo apparently feeling that those in charge might not be doing the right thing, led some young men, the state government called hoodlums and cultists, to disrupt the exercise. The action drew the ire of Wike who bared his fangs and declared Dagogo wanted. He further directed the police authorities in the state to arrest Dagogo.

Dagogo was subsequently arrested by the police and charged to court on two counts charges of felony and cultism at a magistrate court.

He has remained in incarceration for more than two weeks, prompting a clamour for his release by mostly people from the riverine extraction and members of the vocal opposition



Wike

in the state.

The leadership of the Ijaw National Congress, (INC) had joined their voices to the clamour for Dagogo's unconditional release and issued a 48-hour ultimatum to Wike to effect the release of their 'son'. But it appeared they just touched the tail of a lion!

Wike waited for them till last Sunday at St. Paul's Anglican Church, Diobu in Port Harcourt, at the Thanksgiving service to mark the victory of Rivers State in the disputed 17 oil wells between the state and Imo State.

There Wike lashed at the leadership of INC for daring to give him a 48-hour ultimatum to release Dagogo. The governor's choice of words against the leaders of Ijaw nation was considered too caustic by some observers who condemned the governor's outbursts.

As would be expected, the two umbrella leadership bodies of the Ijaw nation, the IYC and the INC were very vociferous in their condemnation of Wike's vituperations against the leadership of INC. The governor was quoted to have used the expression; "Thunder fire you" while reacting to the ultimatum by INC to release Dagogo.

Rising in defence of the Ijaw course, the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) in a statement said the derogatory use of "Thunder Fire You" by the Rivers Governor on the Ijaw people is "disturbing, inciting and denigrating" of the high office he occupies.

The National Spokesman of IYC who signed the statement, Comrade Ebilade Ekerefe, noted that such "tactless and disrespectful" comment by Governor Wike was the height of his prolonged disdain for the Ijaw nation as a whole and Rivers Ijaw people in particular since he became governor of the state.

"It is even more shocking that the Rivers Governor took his unrestrained verbiage to the hallowed pulpit of a church and desecrated the altar of God.

"The 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 an Ijaw son, Hon. Farah Dagogo that was arrested and remanded in prison on the orders of the Rivers governor."

The IYC pointed out that "despite being the fourth largest ethnic nationality in Nigeria and the largest in the Niger Delta, the Ijaws 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 unguarded 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, which he has equally ridiculed, to become an ordinary citizen like others in Rivers State and Nigeria."

The statement further said that Wike had forgotten that by calling fire and thunder on the Ijaw nation, his benefactor and the revered leader, former President Goodluck Jonathan, is also an illustrious Ijaw son.

"This 'thunder' 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," IYC demanded.

The group called on all their Ijaw brothers that are delegates in the PDP not to cast their votes for Governor Wike during the presidential primaries.

"Suffice it to say that if a governor can cast aspersion on an entire ethnic nationality, what would become of him as president of the most populous black nation on the planet?" the youth body reasoned.

Shortly after the IYC reaction, the INC marshalled its own arsenal against Wike, announcing the withdrawal of their guaranteed support for Wike's presidential aspiration in 2023.

The INC, in a statement issued by the member of its National Representative Council (NRC), Elder Christopher Abarowei, called on politicians who had declared support for Governor Wike's Presidential ambition to withdraw their support until he tenders an unreserved apology to the leadership of INC and IYC and the entire Ijaw nation.

According to Abarowei, the office of the Governor of a state and President is supposed to be occupied by persons who are considered by those who voted them into office in the first place as being among the best in terms

of their ability to manage success.

He said "There is a popular saying that you know a person better when you give him power. Governor Nyesom Wike has disappointed those who helped him to be Governor as he has turned himself into a complete public nuisance with the way and manner he quickly insults people at the least provocation.

"This drift into uncivilized and uncouth adventure by a state Governor is in our opinion unacceptable, undeserving and out rightly condemnable. The recent outburst in a church of all places by Governor Wike against the Ijaw National Congress (INC) and the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) is a clear case of a man whose mental state has to be interrogated.

"It is highly unacceptable for a man occupying the most exalted position of Governor of Rivers State to use derogatory words like 'THUNDER FIRE YOU' in a church that is supposed to be inhabited by decent people and respected workers in the Lord's vineyard. This is a clear indication that the Governor lacks the moral compass to manage a state not to talk of his delusional attempt to occupy the most exalted position in Nigeria."

Abarowei wondered how Wike will feel to ask for the votes of delegates of Ijaw extraction from Edo, Rivers and Delta States who according to him, Wike wants thunder to fire.

"Governor Wike should better still allow his aides to do what he is shamelessly doing now as the job of an attack dog does not in any way fit into the job description of a state Governor.

"We wonder how comfortable this Governor is with him having issues with almost everything around him except his over-bloated ego. There is a popular rule in boxing that requires a boxer with the longer reach and height to come down to the level of a shorter opponent to hit his target. In the process, the shorter man has an advantage to hit the face of the taller opponent with ease. Wike should be knowledgeable enough to know that using gutter languages will force weaker opponents to dive into the gutters with him."

Abarowei insisted that "No Governor of Ijaw extraction has ever insulted the Ikwerres the way Wike has thrown caution to the wind and insult Ijaws at random and we want him to come down from his high horse and build some moral decency and desist forthwith from insulting Ijaw people as his becoming a Governor today is a function of some Ijaw persons lifting his head, legs and hands. His fellow Ikwerre brother, Rotimi Amaechi, would have crushed him without the support of the Ijaws.

"It will be insulting to ask Wike to render an apology to the leadership of INC and IYC as we see moral bankruptcy written all over Wike but he should know his stay as Governor with all the advantages working for him has a term which is eight years at most which come to an end just a year away while the Ijaw Nation is termless."

It remains to be seen what would happen in the days ahead. Would Wike call the bluff of the Ijaws and stick to his gun? The governor has one respected Ijaw man who has been supporting his administration all the way, Chief Ferdinand Alabraba. Wike holds this man in great esteem, just as the man is highly respected among his people.

Would Alabraba wade into the anti-Wike sentiment spreading fast among his people and swing a ceasefire? Or has he also been caught off-guard by the Wike 'Thunder'? Analysts believe Alabraba is unlikely to abandon Wike at this "critical" time.

Vote PDP, APC, elongate 24 years of bondage, Omolaja warns Nigerians

● *Declares presidential ambition under APP, promises restructuring of Nigeria*

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

A presidential aspirant under the platform of the Action Peoples Party (APP), Prof. Muhammad Omolaja has warned Nigerians that retaining the All Progressives Congress (APC) in power or bringing back the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in 2023 is only elongation the period of suffering as both parties have destroyed the country economy for 24 years.

Omolaja who declared his presidential ambition in Lagos last weekend said

Nigeria has been under bondage during the 16 years of PDP administration and close to 8 years of the ongoing APC administration.

He said there is no gainsaying that, at present, all is not well with the polity in Nigeria, adding that it is also crystal clear that the same mind-set that created and escalated the various challenges in Nigeria including but not limited to insecurity, unemployment, excessive importation, excessive foreign loan, epileptic power supply, acute shortage of food, poverty, economic mismanagement, inept leadership, corruption of the highest magnitude and so on.

He lamented that the country is facing a lot of hardships and political parties that created the situation still want to continue.

"Do we allow them to continue? If no, I also support your decision! If anyone of them should take over as the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria again, then, it means that there will be no change of government as we already know who and who will make their



Omolaja

ministerial, ambassadorial, Director Generals, and Executive Secretaries' lists, and so on, such that the next government will just be an elongation of the present administration; and the twenty-four years of hardship including, but not limited to, corruption, killing, poverty, unemployment, economic failure, inflation, and so on, will continue for the next four or probably another eight years," he cautioned.

On what the APP administration will do to free the country from the bondage of misrule, the presidential hopeful said "we are therefore faced with a great task of determining how to send them packing collectively so that the masses can live! On

that note, all hands must be on deck including me as the incoming President and all of us individually and collectively.

"The job of reconstructing the already damaged economy is not an easy task and we must face it and remain focused at all stages until we get to a stage we collectively install an Action Peoples Party government at all levels of governments throughout the nooks and corners of the Federal Republic of Nigeria so that the masses can truly and comfortably live!

"We, in the great Action Peoples Party (APP), are championing nationalism, oneness and indivisibility of our great Nigeria nation, and we affirm that as patriotic Nigeria citizens, we are called upon to build a society based on social justice and fundamental human rights, to correct the ongoing injustice of the highest order almost everywhere and every time in the country.

"Banditry, corruption, poverty, unemployment, inept leadership cum mismanagement of the economy, inadequate fiscal and monetary policies, and so on, are some of the darkest phenomena in the history of present day Nigeria and they are crimes of unparalleled barbarity. Only the Action Peoples Party government can reverse the trend.

"Our incoming APP government shall therefore promote the adoption of special measures and reforms including affirmative action programmes and targeted financial assistance as restitution to our Nigerian people upon taking up the mantle of leadership of our darling nation by the special grace of

the Almighty God.

"We shall further support all measures to be undertaken to address the historic and contemporary discriminations in various categories against the great people of Nigeria in governance, especially the youths and women. This includes increasing the representation of youths and women in politics and corporate governance in the appointment and elective positions of leadership in the public sector of the Nigerian society.

"As we strive to correct the wrongs of the past, we shall also combat the sexism and ethnic chauvinism of the present. We shall pursue this objective with all sense of sincerity, determination, energy and goodwill. Ending ethnicity and religious bigotry, particularly, is a fight in which each and every one of us has a stake.

"Let us all allow humanism to be our guide and solidarity to be our strongest force as we are called upon by history to redouble our efforts to build an ethnicity and religious bigotry free renewed and rebranded modern Nigeria of our dreams to collectively right the wrongs of the past and to restore the human dignity of all while at the same time restoring the lost glory of the nation.

"Furthermore, under our forthcoming administration of restoration, reconstruction and inclusiveness, Nigeria shall be made a responsible major country in Africa and the world globally that shall act as a promoter and builder of world peace, a contributor to global development and an upholder of the international order.

I'll return Abia to God if elected gov in 2023 - Igbokwe

By CHARLES ONYEKWERE

The governorship aspirant of the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, in Abia State, Mayor Lucky Igbokwe, has promised to return the state back to God if elected governor in 2023.



Igbokwe

The entertainment guru popularly known as Don Lulu who made the promise while addressing PDP delegates and stakeholders at Ikwuano said that "what Abia needs to survive now is a godly leader with a genuine love for the people".

He noted that a godly leader will not be comfortable cruising around as governor while workers and pensioners go to bed on empty stomach.

"Give me the opportunity and I will return Abia to God. A godly governor will not owe workers for even God forbids owning labourers.

"We should stop wasting our future with 'anointed' candidates, who have no vision and capacity. Abia has suffered enough underdevelopment.

The governorship hopeful whose slogan is "Youth O'clock", said he particularly joined the race to secure a better future for Abia youths.

"I joined the race because of my concern for the people, especially my fellow youths who deserve a better future."

He, therefore, called upon the youths to

rally round him to liberate the state from the stranglehold of 'imposition of leaders who are not prepared for leadership'.

"My fellow youths, we need to unite together and liberate ourselves. We should not be deceived by the so-called anointed ones. Real anointing comes from God, not man."

He argued that Abia is heavily endowed with enough resources that could guarantee a better living standard for the people but regretted that the residents have continued to wallow in poverty due to poor leadership.

"We have enough to secure our future and guarantee free education from primary to secondary school. But our parents keep struggling to pay school fees. Why? Those whose children are in public school decided to keep them there because they cannot afford school fees in private schools.

"We should stop saying there is no money. Abia has enough. All we need is someone who loves the people and is not a greedy person.

"There is so much pressure on parents today because of the bad economy. This is

the reason for the escalating insecurity in the land. It will get worse unless we elect a visionary leader with good plans and love for the people, and Don Lulu is that man Abia needs!

"Give me the opportunity and I will deliver good governance that will touch everybody's doorstep".

The Ohuhu-born computer expert and entertainment icon said that he would take many Abia youths out of poverty through the Entertainment industry.

He also promised to create massive jobs through the agric sector like his kinsman, the late Premier of the Old Eastern region, Dr Michael Okpara who he vowed to emulate his footsteps.

Igbokwe disclosed that already, he had commenced a farm estate project aimed at engaging 15, 000 Abia youths in poultry farming and modern agriculture.

He said that N650 million had been earmarked for the project that would train 5000 youths from each of the three senatorial zones, and provide them with soft loans to start after their training.

PDP governorship aspirant lauds Wike over Supreme Court victory on oil well dispute with Imo

By DENNIS ESSANG, PORT HARCOURT

A frontline Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) governorship aspirant in Rivers State, Bro Felix Obuah has lauded the state governor, Nyesom Wike over the Supreme Court victory against the Imo State government in the disputed 17 oil wells between the two sister states.

Obuah commended the governor for his courage and undaunted spirit to ensure justice

was not only done but seen to have been done over the legal battle that has lingered for so long.

The PDP gubernatorial aspirant and a bonafide indigene of the council area of the disputed oil wells (Ogba/ Egbema/ Ndoni) said the victory is a further confirmation of Governor Wike's resolve to see that what rightly belongs to Rivers State is not denied it.

Obuah noted that the ceding of the 17 oil wells will no doubt broaden the revenue base of the state henceforth.

In his words: "we can't thank His Excellency enough for giving every section of the state a sense of belonging by ensuring that not only their properties are secure but also protected from external invasion in whatever disguise.

"As a lawyer, Wike has demonstrated professional knowledge and capacity in the application of the legal instrument in the most Democratic manner to pursue and correct all the wrongs against our state.

"This is no mean feat. We should all be

grateful to the governor and pray for him as he proceeds to reposition the state and renewing Nigeria" Bro Obuah advised.

He equally commended the Supreme Court for standing firm against miscarriage of Justice against Rivers State by ruling that the disputed 17 oil Wells rightly belong to the state which by extension, has equally authenticated the boundary adjustment paper of 1976 where the disputed Ndoni and Egbema communities we're confirmation to be in Rivers State.

Asin of Oka-Odo gets Staff of Office, after 117 years of tussle

By FRIDAY OMOSOLA, AKURE

Ondo State Governor, Arakunrin Oluwarotimi Akeredolu, has presented staff of office to Sir Pius Omiyejola Akande as the substantive Asin of Oka-Odo, Iworo-Oka, Akoko Southwest Local Government Area of Ondo State.

The vacant stool was filled after 117 years of leadership tussle. And it has been upgraded to the status of an Oba Grade C.

Akeredolu, who was represented by his Special Adviser on Rural Development, Honourable Babatunde Kolawole, revealed that the battle for recognition of the Obaship status of the Asin stool, began when supremacy battle ensued between the Olubaka and Asin ruling houses and the paramount status conferred on the Olubaka ruling house which was rejected by the Asin ruling house, as at that time.

The Governor said the Asin Obaship status was accorded due recognition during the defunct Western Regional Government but was jettisoned due to the supremacy battle between the Olubaka and the Asin houses, which continued unabated.

Akeredolu added; "it was after this long legal battle which was decided at the country's apex court, the Supreme Court, ordered the State government for the implementation of the recommendation of the 1979 Justice Ogunleye commission of inquiry which conferred an Obaship status on the Asin stool."

"The State Executive Council Immediately Swung into action and approved the recognition of the Obaship status of Grade C for the Asin of Oka-Odo on the 4th of March 2022."

Akeredolu, therefore, congratulated the people of Oka-Odo and charged the new Oba to embrace the spirit of sportsmanship and peace as a father to all. The Governor urged him not to limit his activities to his domain alone but should make sure that the entire Oka-Odo area is developed as its paramount ruler.

He further enjoined the Community to accord the new king the required cooperation, support and loyalty needed to move the community forward.

While charging the new king to lend the government a helping hand in ensuring peace and security in his domain, Akeredolu promised that his government will continue to make life more meaningful and worthwhile for the people through



Gov. Arakunrin Oluwarotimi Akeredolu

the provision of basic social amenities and infrastructure.

Speaking at the occasion, the Chairman Akoko Southwest Local Government Area Council, Hon. Augustine Oloruntogbe appreciated the Governor for fulfilling his electioneering promise of recognising every chieftaincy stool that qualifies for recognition.

The Chairman further appealed to the people to support the government as well as key into his programmes, as a way of reciprocating his good gestures.

The Permanent Secretary, Ministry

of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Chief Segun Odusanya, joined the people of Oka-Odo and Akoko Southwest Local Government Area Council in thanking the Governor for approving the recognition of the Obaship status of the Asin of Oka-Odo on Grade C.

He appealed to other communities desirous of such a title, to come together, and speak with one voice, to enjoy the various goodies in stock for them.

The new Asin of Oka-Odo, His Royal Highness, Oba Pius Omiyejola Akande, appreciated Governor

Akeredolu for fulfilling his promise to his people as well as counting Oka-Odo and consequently Akoko Southwest Local government area, worthy of such a title, which will help protect the cultural values of his people and its orientation.

Akande asked for more projects to be cited in his domain, saying such projects will make life more meaningful for his people. He pledged to live up to the expectation of the government and his people by fostering peaceful coexistence with the people and other Obas in the Local Government Area Council.

How next Alaafin of Oyo will emerge

By RTD. ARCHBISHOP AYO LADIGBOLU

HRM Oba Lamidi Adeyemi the late Alaafin of Oyo

His Royal Majesty, Oba Lamidi Adeyemi, joined his ancestors on the 23rd of April 2022 at the age of 83 years.

It's customary for him to be mourned over a period of time. Within the period of mourning, the ruling house that will produce the next Alaafin, is expected to put finishing touches on preparations to present to the Oyo Mesi, the traditional kingmakers, the Alaafin designate, for consideration.

So fierce is this process, that before the demise of Adeyemi, the immediate past Alaafin of Oyo, there were numerous speculations, about how a successor to the throne of Alaafin of Oyo will emerge.

So much talk about the calibre of persons who will succeed Alaafin and the criteria for his selection.

The late Oba Adeyemi succeeded Alaafin Gbadegesin Ladigbolu in 1970, and after 52 years on the throne, civilisation has greatly influenced the tradition and culture of the ancient Oyo Kingdom.

There has been a change in the number of Oyo Mesi, the prominent palace chiefs, who are the kingmakers.

But despite these changes, the existing chieftaincy declaration still serves as a guide for the selection of Oyo kings.



When he ascended the throne at the age of 31 years



Before he passed on at the age of 83 years

TWO RULING HOUSES

The declaration states that there are two royal houses in Oyo - Alwolodu and Agunloye. The two families are to take turns ascending the throne.

The late Alaafin was from the Alwolodu royal family, so it is now the turn of the Agunloye family.

The Agunloye family is also known as 'Ladigbolu' or 'Gbadegesin' in some quarters

ANY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LADIGBOLU AND GBADEGESIN?

After the demise of Oba Adeyemi, a debate began on which family will present the next king between Ladigbolu and Gbadegesin.

Clarifying the confusion over the names, Ayo Ladigbolu, a retired Archbishop of the Methodist Church and a prominent elder of the Ladigbolu family, said they are one family under Agunloye royal house.

He said: "The late Alaafin Gbadegesin was the son of Alaafin Ladigbolu. The full title was Oba Bello Gbadegesin Ladigbolu (11).

"His father was the first and the next from the family will be the Third."

HOW IS THE SUCCESSOR

NOMINATED?

Based on the chieftaincy declaration, the ruling house that is to produce the next king, in this case, the Agunloye ruling house, will nominate candidates at a meeting which will be summoned by the head of that family.

The candidate or candidates will then be presented to Baba Iyaji, a titled Prince of Oyo, who will subsequently submit the names to the Bashorun, head of the kingmakers known as Oyo Mesi.

The Bashorun will then summon a meeting of the kingmakers and present the list to them.

Explaining further, Ladigbolu said the candidate acceptable to the majority of the kingmakers will thereafter be proclaimed as the Alaafin designate.

WHO ARE THE KINGMAKERS?

Ladigbolu said, apart from the Oyo state government declaration, which guides the selection of Alaafin of Oyo, the Oyo Mesi (kingmakers) will have the final say on this matter.

Although seven kingmakers

were once recognised, the numbers have dwindled with the nullification of one of the kingmakers.

"These seven kingmakers according to the declaration are, Bashorun, Ashipa, Agabaakin, Alapinni, Lagunna, Shamu and Akiniku," Ladigbolu stated.

"The title of Ashipa was the one that was nullified, and as such, it no longer exists. As we speak, only six kingmakers are remaining as members of the Oyo Mesi."

ONLY MALES MAY BE PROPOSED

According to Ladigbolu, women are exempted from being considered for the throne of Alaafin of Oyo.

"The chieftaincy of Oyo has an official declaration. It was made under section four, sub-section two of the Chiefs law cap 19 of the customary law regulating the selection of the Alaafin of Oyo chieftaincy.

"The person who may be proposed as a candidate shall be through the male line only."

NO SPECIFIC TIME-FRAME

There is no specific time frame for the selection of the next king

of Oyo because it all depends on those who run the process, says Ladigbolu.

Although the family will be given 14 days to hold a meeting and submit a list to Baba Iyaji, if the list contains more than one name, the process will take a longer time.

"The kingmakers may have to interview the individuals presented before taking a decision. The selection of Oba Lamidi Adeyemi took a bit longer because of the political atmosphere then," he said.

"There was a lot of tension and litigation so it was not a smooth process then.

"We pray that this time, there will not be a delay just as His Excellency, Governor Seyi Makinde, the governor of Oyo State, appealed to the kingmakers to be quick about the process."

TOO EARLY TO MEET

Does the Agunloye (Ladigbolu/Gbadegesin) family already have preferred candidates for the kingmakers? Ladigbolu said it is too early to start considerations.

He said "It will be irresponsible to begin the process when the town is still mourning the passage of Alaafin Adeyemi.

"I am from the Agunloye ruling family but it is too early to meet. This is a mourning period because we just lost a king. I have been busy since Alaafin died and it will continue till after the eighth day," said the retired cleric.

ALL COMERS AFFAIR

In selecting the next Alaafin, the law does not specify age, educational background, knowledge of the tradition and culture of Oyo or personal wealth as criteria.

All males of the Agunloye are qualified to come forward and signify their intention to become the next Alaafin.

WILL THE NEXT KING USE LATE ALAAFIN'S PALACE?

According to Ladigbolu, the present palace was not the property of the late king. He said "it is the traditional seat of the Oyo royal throne and all kings reign from there, except when it is under renovation or reconstruction.

"Alaafin means the owner of the PALACE. Oranyan was the first owner of that palace. The Palace is where the King resides," he remarked.

'In wake of NDLEA's synergy with military, drug cartels in trouble'

■ Navy boosts agency's operations with boats, other equipment

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

Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Brig-Gen Mohamed Buba Marwa (Rtd) has said that the ongoing synergy between the anti-narcotic agency and other stakeholders especially the military means trouble for drug cartels and spells doom for their activities in the country.

Marwa stated this on Thursday while receiving two epenal boats and other operational equipment from the Nigerian Navy at the Western Naval Command headquarters, Apapa Lagos. He described the gesture as symbolic and the beginning of an era of stronger ties between both institutions.

"The Agency is determined to cripple the activities of drug cartels on every front. We do not doubt that the combination of naval and narcotics

strategies will spell doom for drug barons in the coming days. NDLEA will continue to partner with relevant stakeholders as we tighten the noose on drug criminals," he declared.

The NDLEA boss, who was represented by the Agency's Director of Seaports Operations, DCGN Omolade Faboyede, further stated, "I am particularly pleased with the prompt response to my request for material that could help to strengthen the Marine Unit of NDLEA as part of a sweeping effort to protect Nigerian waters from the trafficking of illicit drug substances. The synergy between the Navy and NDLEA, as exemplified by this ceremony, is a testament that we are winning the drug war on the waterfront with the broad goal of preventing drug cartels from smuggling narcotics into our country through airports, land borders, and seaports.



Marwa

"We have come to a point where security organisations can no longer afford to work in silos. Illicit drug trafficking, as a transnational organised crime, requires the deployment of intelligence and close-knit collaboration with key stakeholders like the Nigerian Navy and other security organisations. In our effort to stem the tide of narcotic drugs, we have gone the extra mile and that includes the pursuit of synergy with organisations in

the security sector.

"And so far, our efforts in one year showed that the strategy is effective. In 2021, we recorded the arrest of more than 12,300 suspected drug offenders, including seven drug barons with 1,400 drug traffickers jailed. We were able also to counsel and rehabilitate 8,000 drug users and in the same period, also, we mopped up over 3.4 million kilograms of assorted drugs. Interestingly, drugs and illicit proceeds

of drug crime worth N130 billion were successfully recovered.

"This year equally started on an excellent footing. We broke our first quarter operational record with the arrest of over 3,539 suspected drug traffickers (including rogue security personnel and a well-known billionaire baron) and the seizure of more than 65,916 kilograms of drugs."

While thanking the Chief of Defence Staff, Gen Lucky Irabor, and other service chiefs for

supporting the nation's drug war, Marwa expressed confidence that the partnership with the Nigerian Navy will produce more outstanding results in the country's fight against narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

He expressed appreciation to the Nigerian Navy led by Rear Admiral Awwal Zubairu Gambo, adding that "I would like to close with the words of Helen Keller: Alone we can do so little. Together we can do so much."

Earlier in his remarks, the CNS Vice Admiral Gambo, who was represented by the Ag. Flag Officer, Western Naval Command, Rear Admiral HUF Kaoje, said the support for NDLEA was to enhance its efforts to fight the drug scourge and boost its capability to curb illicit drug activities on the waterways.

The Naval chief expressed determination to continue to support the Agency as a major stakeholder in national development.

Air Force at 58, holds religious activities, medical outreach, others

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

To mark its 58th anniversary celebration due to hold at the Nigerian Air Force Base, Kano from May 19 to 21, 2022, the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) shall be embarking on some religious activities and medical outreach among other programmes to mark the event.

Chairman, Organizing Committee, NAF Day 2022 Celebration/Reunion, Air Commodore Olasunkanmi Abidoye disclosed this at a press briefing held at the NAF Headquarters, Abuja, on Thursday.

According to the Chairman, the theme of the anniversary,

"Enhancing Nigerian Air Force Efficiency in Joint Operations for Effective Response to Contemporary National Security Imperatives," is aimed at emphasizing a renewed focus on joint military operations and effective synergy among the Services and other security agencies as well as consolidating on the gains of the employment of airpower, especially at this critical stage in the Nation's history.

He also added that the theme is also in tandem with the vision of Chief of the Air Staff (CAS), Air Marshal Oladayo Amao, "To enhance and sustain critical airpower capabilities required for joint force employment in pursuit

of national security imperatives."

While mentioning some of the programmes to be carried out by NAF, Abidoye further disclosed that a series of activities have been lined up to enlighten Nigerians on NAF's efforts in the fight against insurgency, terrorism, and other forms of criminality in the country.

He noted that the anniversary would feature a seminar and aerial display by some NAF platforms.

"There will be a series of pre-event activities taking place simultaneously at NAF units across the country. These activities include Juma'at Prayers and Interdenominational

Church Service on Friday, 13 and Sunday, 15 May 2022 respectively," he said.

He further stated that there would be medical outreaches to host communities across the country, while the Nigerian Air Force Officers' Wives Association (NAFOWA) would also embark on humanitarian support activities to some selected communities in Kano State.

The Chairman noted that activities scheduled for the celebration were geared towards appreciating Nigerians for their support and goodwill over the years and to further win their consent and support.

More so, Abidoye

noted that the seminar scheduled to take place on 19 May 2022 would provide the opportunity for seasoned experts to present papers on air to ground integration and operational efficiency as well as optimizing NAF platforms for effective joint force employment.

The focal point of the Seminar, he said, was to proffer workable strategies aimed at checkmating various security challenges confronting the Nation. The anniversary, he noted, would also witness the pulling out ceremony of members of the 35th and 36th Regular Course who recently retired from the Service.

He added that a golf kitty would

also be held in Kano while other sporting activities would take place simultaneously in all NAF units across the country on Friday, 20 May 2022, as well as a Re-union Night, to honour some retired senior officers of the NAF after many years of meritorious service to the Country.

According to him, the anniversary ceremony is expected to end on Saturday, 21 May 2022 with a ceremonial parade, symbolic fly-past, Research and Development (R&D) exhibition, and photo gallery display. Adding that the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, President Muhammadu Buhari GCFR is expected to be the Special Guest of Honour at the event.

Spectators' unruly behaviour and FIFA sanction

Last week, social media was set aflame by a video of a young Nigerian lady boasting that she had sex with a dog for a fee of one million five hundred naira only. The furore which it generated must have alarmed the lady. A few days later, she claimed in a remorseful manner that the dog-sex claim was a stunt to gain followers. The debate which followed suggests that bestiality is a widespread practice these days. The viral video therefore is a slice of our now degenerated lives that is mirrored by the social media. It is a comment on the degeneration on our core values. It reflects failed socializations at family, school, and religious levels.

The question is what triggers bestiality? The answer could be found in mankind's penchant for the abnormal, especially by a small minority. It also happens when humans refuse to give their souls to the Great Spiritual force of the Universe – God Almighty. They sell their souls to dark forces and sink into moral depravity. The result is all forms of bestialities like that viral video of a lady having sex with a dog!

Bestiality is as old as mankind. For this reason, the two major religions – Christianity and Islam – and our traditional society made laws to taboo the practice. Those core-values are what make man different from animals. Porn sites which are easily available with the advent of social media promote depraved behaviour. But bestiality exists in different forms in our world.

Ritual murder and pounding a day-old baby to be eaten for political power is a form of bestial behaviour. We also have terrorists, kidnappers, herders' killings, stealing and destructions in a bestial way. The level of man's inhumanity to man in our country is bestial in a sense.

Bestiality does not start in a day. It has

its origin in many factors. When Government removed religion and prayer from our schools, distorted curricular of Christian and Muslim Religious Studies, removed Civic Education, introduced new normal Human Rights Philosophy, strange political correctness, they were sowing the seeds of bestialities in our societies!

When parents do not train their children the way they should go, so that when they are old, they will not depart from such ways, as well as nurturing happy homes, they end up laying the basis for bestial behaviours in their children. Dysfunctional homes, broken family values, lack of family primary socialization set the stage for bestial

behaviours!

Primitive materialism and desperation for Machiavellian end-justifies-the-means criminal tendencies on the part of our girls is a challenge of our time. Such girls are ever ready to do anything for money, including prostitution, and appearing half naked at parties under the influence of drugs and other stimulants lead to bestial behaviour.

Politicians and Parties that create the enabling environment for the degeneration of our moral character, core values and integrity must be exposed, condemned for us to come out of present bestial attitudes and inclinations. Our judicial system's degeneration even in our core values must be corrected.

The Police and Law Enforcement Agencies must root out men and women that lure people to all forms of bestialities, in line with the rule of law to face appropriate punishment and sanctions as a deterrent to others. Our laws stipulate that those who are guilty of any form of bestiality are liable to imprisonment for 14 years. But this provision of our laws has not been enforced. This is the time to act.

There must be massive media sensitization, reorientation and mobilization for parents and their children to know that those who are guilty of bestial behaviours must be held accountable for their actions. They must also know the health hazards that are associated with bestiality. Parents should also live up to their responsibilities by paying close attention to their wards' growth in their formative years.

We at The Trumpet call for a thorough investigation into the bestial video origins. All persons involved in the act should be brought before the law and prosecuted in line with extant provisions. If there are powerful persons luring poor vulnerable ladies into depravity, such barons should be fished out and tried for the criminal behaviour.



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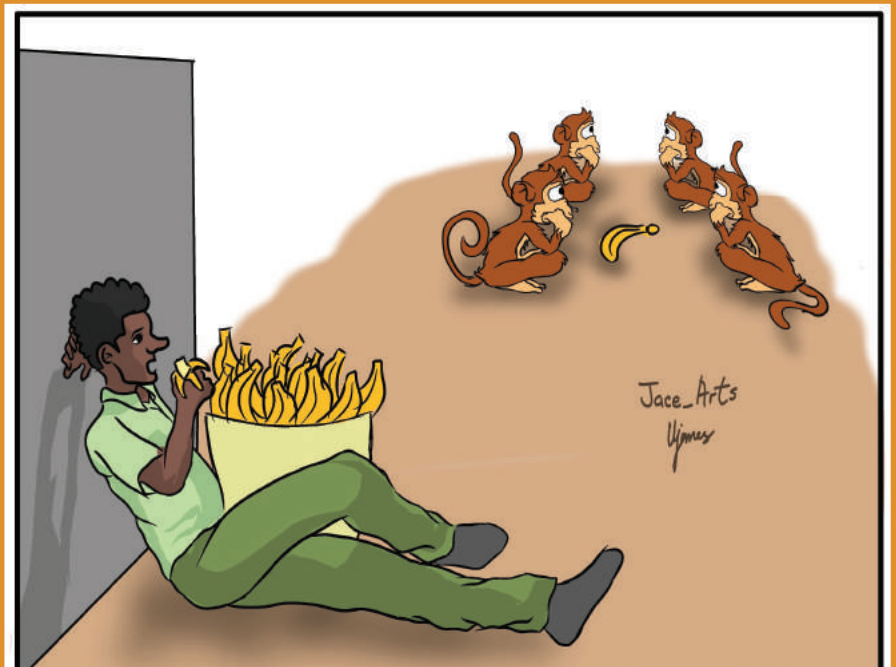
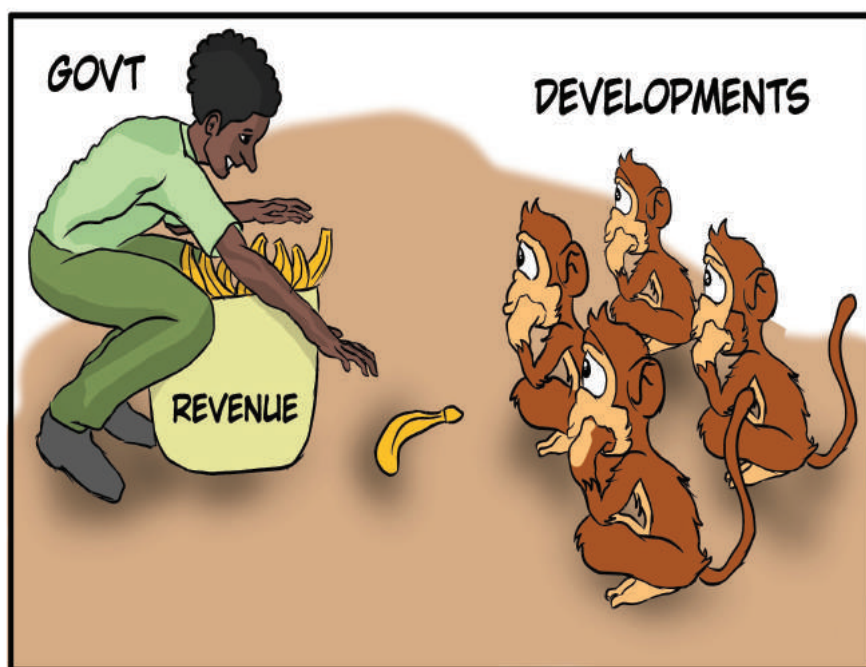
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No Cross, no Crown; pain unto gain

We just witnessed a humanly painful death. Deborah Yakubu was martyred by her colleagues, mates and fellow students at Shehu Shagari College of Education, Sokoto. A type of happiness is often enjoyed by people who kill on behalf of the religions they may profess to hold. They are often wrong. This type of happiness was once expressed by Dr Isa Pantami who is currently the Minister of Communications and Digital Economy. The BCC website archival record of the Honourable Minister reads: "... also a renowned Muslim cleric, expressed views sympathetic to groups such as al-Qaeda and Boko Haram. Dr Isa Pantami, was a religious extremist." As the Chief Imam of the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University (ATBU), Bauchi mosque, "his preaching may have led to the brutal murder of a 400-level student, Sunday Achi, who was the leader of the ECWA Student Ministries (ESM) on the camps." Mr Achi was said to have distributed Christian tracts which the then Sheikh Isa Pantami adjudged to be blasphemous! Today, repentant Pantaminists are attributing their past misjudgements to immaturity and youthful short-sightedness. He has been appointed a Professor at a University, Federal University of Technology, Owerri; a city in the heart of Catholicism in Imo State. At the apogee of his Islamic clericalism, the honourable Minister was determined that the 'spreading' of Churches all over northern Nigeria must be checked at all cost. Now, we can only pray for our honourable Minister and wish the Owerri community religious peace and harmony as they welcome him to the university town.

Here, we pray for the departed in the LORD. Deborah is enrolled on the list of Saints Triumphant. She is among those Revelation 6:9 writes, "I saw under the altar the souls of those who have been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne; they cried out with a loud voice, 'O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before thou wilt judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell upon the earth?'"

The killing of Christians because of their faith is not a strange thing. Believers are meant to be enamoured by this. It deepens the courage and faith of believers in Christ Jesus. One Saul (Paul) was among

the zealots that killed the Church's first martyr, Stephen. On his way to Damascus to carry out more persecution, Jesus Christ met him; for this was said of Saul by Ananias, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to the saints at Jerusalem..." (Acts 9:13). But the message of Jesus was that: "Go, for he [Saul/Paul] is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name" (Acts 9:15-16).

The pain that Christians undergo in this part of eternity is always a precursor to the eternal joy awaiting all believers. The Bible calls such believers *overcomers*. Precursor simply means "something that exists before something else, and is related to it or it influences its development." The righteous man is likened to a "tree planted by the water" (Psalm 1:3). The precursor of such a tree is different from that of other wild trees without planters that grow accidentally. The planter must have selected a seed, chosen the *placeland* to sow the seed; he would have *cared/nurtured* the seed. On its own, the seed must be a good seed with the full potential to grow; when planted; it is bound to undergo the biological processes of growth/reproduction; it will die, germinate, etc., until it will begin to bear its own fruit. This process is itself quite challenging and could be painful for both the tree and the planter. But the Bible calls the end product blessed! (Psalm 1:1)

Underlying every form of Joy, be it graduation, housewarming, business successes, etc. is some form of toil as its basis, foundation or precursor. Nothing comes out of nothing. No cross! No Crown!! And our Lord Jesus Christ tells us, "A woman; when she is in labour, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world" (John 16:21). Here, we see that underlying the anguish of birth is joy.

The "pain" and "anguish" we are talking about is not the same as evil. Evil is outrightly bad; nothing good can be derived from evil. This pain refers to the labour, and the tireless efforts we put in



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order to get the things we desire; in order to bring our desires into being. Indeed, the joy we expect to follow are efforts is enough driving force to make us put more effort. There is therefore power in human afflictions. Of late, an institution like the Nigerian Prison was rebranded as a "correctional facility". Be that as it may, prisons are not where people are kept to enjoy. They are places of isolation and punishment for crime with the hope that when freedom is restored the freed will live better and more fruitful lives.

Similarly, many people find the Christian life to be tortious and painful. A life of holiness is a life in which one would deny oneself some form of lifestyle. There are ways that are sinful and unrighteous. In 1 Corinthians 5:1-5, Paul tells the church that her ultimate goal is to *save the spirit of man*. "You are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (verse 5). The joy of all believers is that one day is the 'Day of the Lord Jesus.' What joy is the church of God seeking today?

Ordinarily, the human earthly way is one of passion, and of the flesh. We want to pursue the money, wine and women of this world. Nobody enjoys an ascetic and hermetic lifestyle. We only need to walk down our streets in the early night - drinking joints. We only need to imagine what goes on in the various clubs, parties and social

events. This is what some have called the Epicurean lifestyle.

But there is another way. It propels us to a more joyful relationship with Christ. There are two ways we can relate with Christ. One gives happiness. But this is worldly happiness. The other gives joy. This is eternal joy. Christ, Himself points this out to His disciples. [1] Earthly happiness with Jesus is the foundation of the eternal joy with Him. The disciples had this relationship while Christ was with them. As Christians, we are today enjoying it while in the church of God. It entails some pains and denials. It is the wilderness we must pass through to reach the promised land. In our relationship with Christ, we are called to love and holiness, and to partner with the Holy Spirit; as the precursor to eternal joy! (2) It is consequent upon our understanding of eternal joy that we may appreciate Jesus Christ's instruction to His disciples concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit; who will stand in His stead when He would no longer be with His own physically. In the Holy Spirit, His promise that He will be with believers at all times is fulfilled. "Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy" (John 16:20). Those who are not of Christ Jesus in this part of eternity may have their temporal moments of "rejoicing", but in Christ, while we may suffer, weep and lament, there will ultimately be permanent joy.

God in Christ Jesus is not oblivious of our sorrows and pains. But He assures us that we will trade our sorrows for joy. "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart I will send Him to you" (John 16:7). May we find peace and joy among all who are truly the created, for there is only One Creator to Whom all lives belong. To Him be all power, praise, honour, glory and adoration.

Be blessed and Shalom!

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

You are on earth to serve yourself not God

It is important we get this message into our hearts because many people think they are doing God a favour by choosing to live right and holy in line with the commandments of God. We must understand that when we obey the commandments of God, we are doing ourselves a favour, not God. Whatever God has commanded in His commandments is final and it is to guide and help us serve ourselves best on earth because whether we obey the commandments of God or not, we cannot add or subtract from the Glory of God. It is like a child who obeyed the father's instructions and studied well in school and finally came out with flying colours. The awards and accolades as a result of the hard work of that son or daughter go to him or her and the highest thing that goes to the father is the honour and pleasure that his child did well in school.

In the same way, what God gets from us when we obey Him is the pleasure that a Father gets when the children are obedient to the laid down principles and the happiness of his success.

In essence, the actual reward goes to the children.

God said of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased". In the same way, God wants you to serve yourself well in your



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destiny with the provisions in His Word so that He will be pleased with you just like a man who is happy that his project is succeeding or has succeeded. So, serve yourself with the Word of God so that God will be pleased with you and admit you into Heaven now and on the last day because anyone that refuses to do the right thing will be cast into Hell Fire forever and ever with Satan and fallen angels.

The Word of God has never failed and

can never fail, else the earth would have crashed because it is the Word of God that is sustaining the whole earth.

Heaven and Hell Fire are real and once you leave this world, judgement will be passed and the destination whether Hell Fire or Heaven will be determined based on the works of the person on earth.

God is not joking. Look up to Jesus Christ today, accept Him as your Lord and Saviour according to the Word of God and be saved from sin and all works of darkness. It is as simple as that and you will receive the Holy Spirit that will transform your life.

So, your first business on earth is to repent and get saved from the power of sin, death and the devil. It is after serving yourself and becoming saved that you can now help others to be saved because it is not the will of God that any person should perish. Note that there is a huge reward for every soul you facilitated through evangelism to be saved. God will surely reward you on earth and in the world to come for taking your time to share the good news with others who do not know the truth. God will surely reward you for helping others to be saved.

So, note that every word of God you obey is serving yourself a good meal and you will surely enjoy the nutrients.

When you go out to evangelise the word of God to others, you are serving yourself. The scriptures say that the feet of those who evangelise are beautiful and if your feet are beautiful, wherever you step into for whatever endeavour will favour you because your feet will be divinely ordered.

If you obey God's commandment by giving to the poor and those in need, you are serving yourself because the reward and the blessings of that giving will surely come to you according to Psalm 41:1-3.

When you pay your tithe according to the word of God, He will open the windows of Heaven and pour out His blessings without sorrow on you. Remember, blessings that did not come from God are easily bedevilled with sorrow.

Also, when you stay away from fornication, adultery, lies and other sins, you are actually protecting your soul from pollution and attack from the devil.

So, note that you are on earth to serve yourself and it is in your own interest to obey the Word of God. God bless us in Jesus Name.

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

2023: Bakare throws hat into presidential race

By GABRIEL OMONHINMIN, Culture and Religion Editor

The founder of Citadel Global Community Church (CGCC) popularly known as the Latter Rain Assembly in Lagos, Pastor Tunde Bakare is not at all a stranger to the country's rough and murky political terrain.

In 2011, he was the vice-presidential candidate to the then Retired General Muhammadu Buhari, who was the flag bearer of the Congress for Progressive Change, (CPC). At the end of that year's general election, General Buhari lost the presidential election to the ruling party, the Peoples Democratic Party, (PDP).

It would be recalled during former President Goodluck Jonathan's administration, Bakare who was the Convener of the Save Nigeria Group (SNG), gave Jonathan's administration a black eye in the poll that followed in 2015.

Surprisingly, as things became worst under the watch of Buhari, the man he was once his running mate could hardly speak or do anything to change the ugly situation in the country.

As expected, after his failed attempt with Buhari to secure the presidential ticket in 2011, Bakare returned to his church to shepherd his folks, who were enthusiastically waiting for him to return to the pulpit to water their souls.

Exactly 11 years after his first major attempt into partisan politics, Bakare has this time around, taken a full plunge into the murky waters of Nigeria politics. Will he swim ashore safely or sink? Are Nigerians ready for a man like him?

On Monday, May 9, 2022, Pastor Tunde Bakare in a speech entitled "A New Nigeria for Every Nigerian," gave an insight into the reasons why he wants to contest the country's highest office.

"Today, we converge on our nation's capital to collectively take a historic step towards the realisation of a possible Nigeria. When our founding patriots resolved to live as one nation under God, they had a dream of a Nigeria, whose diverse peoples would be knitted together though tribes and tongues may differ; a nation bound in freedom and peace, and a people united against the common enemies of poverty, corruption and insecurity; a Nigeria where the little boy in Abeokuta, where I was born and the Almajiri in Sokoto, where I lived as a child would find common ground in the quest for a future worth looking forward to; a Nigeria where the fisherman in Okpoama Kingdom in Bayelsa State, on whose creeks, I was once hosted like a brother, would find common purpose with the cattle owner in Kano, in whose city I have built enduring friendships; a Nigeria where the enterprising men and women of Onitsha, some with whom I have built businesses, would have the absolute liberty to build successful enterprises anywhere in the country; a Nigeria where the Christians of Jos and Southern Kaduna, several of whom I have sat with and prayed for in the search for justice and reconciliation, would live in peace and harmony with the Muslims in Jos and Northern Kaduna with whom I share a common Islamic history.

"The Realities of Nigerians

In the course of decades of diverse nation-building engagements with the Nigerian people across the nation, from representing individuals and businesses as a lawyer trained by Chief Gani Fawehinmi, GCON, SAN, and Chief Rotimi Williams, SAN, to building businesses across diverse sectors including manufacturing and aviation, from bearing the burdens of

individuals and families and speaking truth to power as a Pastor, to improving healthcare delivery in communities and facilitating transformation in education outcomes, from leading reformatory civil society movements on the platform of the Save Nigeria Group (SNG) across the states of the federation and mediating in interethnic and communal clashes in some of Nigeria's conflict hotbeds, to campaigning as a vice-presidential candidate in the nooks and crannies of Nigeria, I have seen enough to realise that the Nigerian dream is not yet the reality of most Nigerians with whom I am forever conjoined far beyond the bond of geography.

"I can relate to the nine-year-old walking to and from the public tap every day to fetch sixty-four pails of water to make ends meet. I have been there, too. I recognise the relentless drive that propels young people to do odd jobs – from being a 'washerman' to washing plates at restaurants. I have been there, too. The man who lays his head under the bridge after a hard day is a kindred spirit; I have been there, too. I have walked in the shoes of those young men and women of Nigeria, who were first in their families to attend and sponsor themselves through university. I, too, have walked the paths of hunger, poverty and shame; that is why the vast majority of Nigerians, who live with these realities, remain my family; my brothers, my sisters.

I stand here before you today mindful of the realities, but hopeful enough to offer myself as a bridge; a bridge connecting the dreams of our founding patriots to the highway of every Nigerian dream; the ones deferred and the ones you still wake up to each morning; a bridge between today's Nigeria and the one you know is possible. I stand here today to acknowledge that the realisation of my dreams was facilitated by Nigeria. I first saw the four walls of a classroom only because Nigeria footed the bill and asked me only to serve her with love, strength and faith in return. The bedrock for all I would become was laid by an inclusive free education policy that gave me a head start despite abject lack. Nigeria made many of the stories of my generation possible, so we cannot now in good conscience bequeath anything less than a New Nigeria in which every dream is possible.

"Twelve Years of Engaging the Government

The inadequacies of the Nigerian experience have kept propelling me to seek lasting solutions, and have led me from the grassroots to Aso Rock in my quest to be a reconciliatory bridge between what was, what is and what should be. With the utmost fidelity to truth and integrity, I have remained committed to engaging the government at the highest level. For President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, not only did we mobilise Nigerians through the Save Nigeria Group (SNG) at a time of great confusion to ensure he became the substantive president of Nigeria, we also provided him with a framework to "Save and Transform Nigeria," worked with him on efforts to reengineer Nigeria's governance structure, and supported him through a difficult transition process in 2015.

"As running mate to the then General Muhammadu Buhari in the 2011 elections, the current president and I designed a framework to rebuild Nigeria and make Nigeria work for every Nigerian. That framework was adopted as the manifesto of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) and would form the bedrock



Pastor Tunde Bakare

for the manifesto of APC. The thrust of that framework was the reengineering of Nigeria towards the emergence of six geoeconomic powerhouses that can compete with world-class cities; a well-structured and well-governed nation that would guarantee the security and welfare of every Nigerian. It is not too late for this dream and others like it to come to pass.

"The Challenges of Ongoing Efforts and A Path Forward

Fellow Nigerians, I am not here to gloss over your disappointments or ignore the fact that even the most genuine efforts of government over the decades have not taken away your pain; I, for one, can relate to the frustrations of Nigerian business owners as they lose around \$29 billion annually to poor electricity, even as we count the gains of such projects as the Presidential Power Initiative. I cannot ignore the glaring reality that even my best intentions and modest contributions have barely been a drop in an ocean of possibilities. Yet, I have continued to rise to the occasion, I have continued to participate, and I have continued to insist. Whether by running for the office of Student Union president as a young man at the University of Lagos (UNILAG) or by collaborating with eminent stakeholders at such fora as the 2014 Centenary National Conference, whether by propagating the promise of the New Nigeria from universities to think-tanks around the world or by building businesses that employ Nigerians, I have continued to find ways within the limits of private citizenship to improve the status quo.

"Today, I am offering myself to close the distance between the Nigerian reality and every Nigerian dream; to unlock the power of public policy to accelerate transformation; to infuse our young people with a surge of hope for what is possible; to roll my sleeves up and work to solve Nigeria's most intractable problems; to build a cutting-edge nation at the forefront of innovation; to create a new dynamic of belonging in which everyone has a seat and a say; I am committed to the realisation of A New Nigeria for Every Nigerian in

my lifetime. This is why I am formally announcing that I am running for the Office of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on the platform of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the 2023 elections.

"The Four Mandates of My Administration

As President, my administration will deliver on four mandates, namely Peace, Progress, Prosperity and Possibilities.

1. The Peace Mandate

The Peace Mandate will achieve our policy thrust on Nationhood, Leadership, Governance and National Security. Through the Peace Mandate, we will reconcile and reintegrate the Nigerian people into true nationhood; galvanise a broad-based and competent leadership that can unify Nigeria and harness our enormous potential; lead our nation on a pragmatic pathway to governance structure reforms; end the scourge of insecurity, and guarantee the safety and security of every Nigerian within Nigeria's borders.

"We will address the grave wounds of the past and present and lay to rest the politics of suspicion. Towards achieving true nationhood, among other policies and programmes, we will establish the Presidential Commission for National Reconciliation, Reintegration and Rebirth whose Board of Trustees will consist of three eminent Nigerians from each of our six geopolitical zones. These eighteen Nigerians with bridge-building antecedents will include traditional monarchs, former Heads of State, religious leaders and statesmen and stateswomen while ensuring representation of youth and vulnerable groups. The Commission will be mandated to, within the first one hundred days of our administration, engage every aggrieved group in Nigeria and secure their commitment to dialogue for true nationhood. Then, within two years, the Commission will acknowledge and reconcile every past and current national and sub-national group grievance and foster the integration of the diverse sectional groups in Nigeria into true nationhood. Peace will not just be a word on our Coat of Arms; it will become the Nigerian reality.



Aviation fuel crisis and survival of Nigeria's local airlines

*Most sectors of the Nigerian economy have been grappling with various challenges in the last few years, leading to a situation where several firms and businesses either closed shops or relocated to other countries. Since the Russia and Ukraine war started in February, most sectors of the country's economy have been negatively affected. One of such sectors is the aviation sector. Recently, the Airline Operators of Nigeria (AON) announced its decision to suspend local flights due to the escalating price of aviation fuel (Jet A1) but shelved the move shortly afterwards. This followed the intervention of the House of Representatives, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) after the local airlines got what appeared like a lifeline. **JOHNMARK UKOKO**, in this analysis, probes if the lifeline for local airlines will provide the final solution to the challenges.*

The Nigerian aviation sector and particularly the local airlines have had to grapple with various challenges, which had led to the bankruptcy of some local airlines and firms.

Some of the local airlines that once ruled the country's air space but have closed shops for various reasons are; Okada Air, ADC Airlines, Midwest Airline, Albarka Airline, Concord Airline and other local operators. Before the outbreak of the Russia and Ukraine war in February 2022 the surviving airlines were already contending with several challenges.

However, since the war, which has negatively affected the importation of petroleum products into the country and the increasing price of crude oil in the international market, the airline operators have been in disarray.

The current price of aviation fuel, otherwise called Jet A1 has constituted a major challenge to the local airline operators to the extent that on May 6, 2022, the airline operators addressed journalists and announced that from Monday, May 9, 2022, they will suspend their operations, due to the high cost of aviation fuel, which has risen to as much as N700 per litre.

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Air Peace, who doubles as Spokesman of AON, Allen Onyema, disclosed that prior to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, a litre of Jet A1 was sold for N190 per litre, but now sells for N700.

The AON disclosed that the local airlines concluded plans to suspend flights across the country, as it also advised the travelling public, who intend to fly to make alternative arrangements to avoid being stranded at the country's airports.

"It is with great sense of responsibility and patriotism that the Airline Operators of Nigeria have continued to deploy and subsidise their services to the Nigerian flying public in the last four months despite the steady and astronomical hike in the price of Jet A1 and other operating costs.

"Over time, aviation fuel price has risen from N190 per litre to N700 currently. No airline in the world can absorb this kind

of sudden shock from such an astronomical rise over a short period. While aviation fuel is said to cost about 40 per cent of airlines operating cost globally, the present hike has shut up Nigeria's operating cost to about 95 per cent.

"In the face of this challenge, the airlines have engaged the Federal Government, the National Assembly, Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and the oil marketers with a view to reducing the cost of Jet A1 without success," Onyema lamented.

But a few hours into the announcement, Ibom Air, Dana Airlines and Arik Airlines, among others, announced that they were not part of the AON's decision and would continue to operate despite the challenges.

Despite the division among members of the AON, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Femi Gbajabiamila, summoned the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Godwin Emefiele, Group Managing Director of NNPC, Mele Kyari and leadership of the AON to a meeting.

Gbajabiamila had announced the resolutions after about four hours of brainstorming that the House of Representatives' intervention culminated in a decision to mandate the CBN to provide aviation fuel at N480 in what seemed like a foreign exchange (Forex) subsidy, pending when the local airlines would



Allen Onyema

be granted licences to import the product.

"In the long-term, you can commence the process of applying for licences to import Jet A1. So that it will remove middlemen or whatever you know will be the landing cost to assist your business" he said.

Gbajabiamila said the House of Representatives and the Federal Government lamented the plight of the local airlines in the past few months, adding that the CBN had been asked to assist the troubled local airlines.

"The CBN Governor will provide six million litres of Jet A1 to the local airlines, as a matter of urgency. You will get an allocation in the next three months through the companies and marketers you have nominated

so that you would not say Jet A1 is now certain amount and it is no longer NNPC's fault. You have nominated the marketers that will sell the fuel to you," he stated.

He maintained that a long-term solution was for the local airline operators to commence the process of securing licences for the importation of aviation fuel to avoid suspicion over the landing cost of the product and other associated logistics issues.

Despite the House of Representatives' intervention to prevent the local airlines from suspending their operations, it is not yet time to rejoice, as one of the critical stakeholders to the survival of the troubled airline sector, the NNPC told the AON some home truth at the meeting.

Kyari told the meeting involving NNPC, CBN and AON at the behest of the Speaker of the House of Representatives that it was impossible to fix the price of aviation fuel because the petroleum sector has been deregulated and as such, Jet A1 will remain a deregulated product.

"You cannot hold onto any price and indeed what we have seen is N700 reference point. It depends on the market conditions. It can be higher than N700 depending on the market and as the market shifts. As we speak, it is closely related to the price of crude oil. Given the present circumstances, we cannot fix the price. We cannot ask that the product be sold at N500 or less. We cannot say it

must be below N600 or N700," Kyari stated.

Most airline operators and Nigerians may not like Kyari's position, but he made a valid point and at the end of the meeting, the NNPC and CBN agreed to provide six million litres of aviation fuel at N480 per litre for the next three months.

That means Jet A1 fuel will sell for N480 per liter between May and July, but the matters and questions arising are: What happened after July? What will happen if the price of crude oil rises further in the international market?

The intention of Forex being promised by the CBN to make available Jet A1 at N480 per litre in what Gbajabiamila described as 'subsidy' pending when local airlines will be granted licences to import the product may be genuine.

But it also throws up some challenges. Do local airline operators have the capacity to import aviation fuel? Do they have the logistics and expertise to import Jet A1 in a sustainable manner? No doubt, these are trying times for the country's aviation sector, as the Minister of Aviation, Hadi Sirika, admitted recently while pleading with the leadership of AON not to suspend their operations.

The airline operators had told the Nigerian flying public to prepare to pay as much as N120,000 for a one-hour flight. While the rich will not bother to pay N120,000 for an hour's flight, what about millions of Nigerians, who are less fortunate?

The roads and the railways are no longer safe for travel, which leaves Nigerians with only the safer option of travelling by air for those who can, due to insecurity.

Now that the Russia and Ukraine war has affected the local airline's business, will Gbajabiamila's intervention through the tripartite arrangement be the magic wand to rescue the local airlines and assure Nigerians of affordable flights?

As the challenges linger, Nigerians are asking: Why have successive administrations failed to fix the country's refineries in Warri, Port Harcourt and Kaduna over the years?

"In the face of this challenge, the airlines have engaged the Federal Government, the National Assembly, Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and the oil marketers with a view to reducing the cost of Jet A1 without success," Onyema lamented.

Africa food crisis looms as Russia, Ukraine war continues

• Continent needs aid, expansion of social protection to prevent hunger

By JOHNMARK UKOKO

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has worsened the food security crisis in most African countries. Many countries in East, West, Middle and Southern Africa rely on Russia and Ukraine for a significant percentage of their wheat, fertilizer or vegetable oils imports, but the war disrupts global commodity markets and trade flows to Africa, increasing already high food prices in the region.

Even countries that import little from the two countries are indirectly impacted by higher world prices for key commodities. Governments and donors should ensure affordable food access in Africa by scaling up economic and emergency assistance and social protection efforts. Otherwise, millions of people across the African continent may experience severe hunger.

Senior Researcher on Poverty and Inequality with Human Rights Watch, Lena Simet, said: "Many countries in Africa were already in food crisis. Rising prices are compounding the plight of millions of people thrown into poverty by the COVID-19 pandemic, requiring urgent action by governments and the international community."

Under global and African human rights law everyone has the right to sufficient and adequate food. To protect this right, governments are obligated to enact policies and initiate programmes to ensure that everyone can afford safe and nutritious food. Social protection systems that implement the right to social security for all can be key instruments for realising the right to food.

Before the war, countries in East, West, Middle and Southern Africa, including Angola, Cameroon, Kenya and Nigeria, were already grappling with soaring food prices due to extreme climate and weather events, such as floods, landslides, droughts and the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted production efforts and global supply chains.

Since Russia's invasion, global food prices have reached new heights. The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation's (FAO) Food Price Index (FPI), a measure of the monthly change in international prices of a basket of food commodities, increased by 12.6 per cent from February to March. The March index is the highest it has been since the measure was created in the 1990s.

Russia and Ukraine are among the top five global exporters of barley, sunflowers and maize, and account for about a third of the world's wheat exports. Nigeria, the world's fourth-largest wheat importer, receives a fourth of its imports from Russia and Ukraine. Cameroon, Tanzania, Uganda and Sudan source over 40 per cent of their wheat imports from Russia and Ukraine. The UN World Food



Lena Simet

Programme (WFP) –buys half of the wheat it distributes around the world from Ukraine. With the war, supplies are squeezed and prices continue to rise, including fuel, increasing the cost of transporting food in and to the region.

Human Rights Watch research on the food situation in Cameroon, Kenya and Nigeria confirms that the rising food prices, exacerbated by the war severely affect people's livelihoods and food security in most African countries, especially where adequate social protection is lacking. The United Nations defines food insecurity as "a lack of consistent access to food, which diminishes dietary quality, disrupts normal eating patterns and can have negative consequences for nutrition, health and wellbeing." In situations of severe food insecurity, people have higher likelihood of running out of food and experiencing hunger, sometimes going days without eating.

In Cameroon, where more than half of the population experienced food insecurity before the war, the cost of imported food is driving local food inflation, with bread and other staple foods increasingly out of reach to those with low incomes. In Kenya, nearly seven of 10 people were food insecure before the war, but only one of 10 are covered by at least one form of social protection, and the cost of cooking oil increased by 6.5 percent between February and March alone. In Nigeria, where food insecurity affected nearly six of 10 before the war, year-to-year food inflation was 17.2 percent in March, with prices of bread, rice and yams rising even faster by over 30 percent.

The WFP warned that if the war lasted beyond April, acute hunger may increase by 17 percent globally, with the sharpest increases expected in countries in East, West and Southern Africa. They said the total number of people in these regions experiencing acute food

insecurity may rise by 20.8 percent, affecting 174 million people.

Before the war, the cost of nutritious foods and high rates of poverty and inequality kept healthy diets out of reach for 66.2 per cent of people in the region, according to FAO estimates for 2020. Approximately 323.2 million people in Africa or 29.5 per cent of the population ran out of food or went without eating that year. In West Africa and Middle Africa, the share of food insecure populations is even higher at 68.3 percent and 70 per cent, respectively. The number of people affected by food insecurity continued to increase under the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Also, the World Bank data suggests that the Nigerian adult population suffering from moderate or severe food insecurity increased from 48.5 per cent in 2019 to 75.5 per cent in 2021. A Gallup World Poll before the war found that in Nigeria, 71 per cent of the population lacked money for food in 2020 and 69 per cent in Kenya. The poll also noted that the two countries imported approximately 31 per cent and 34 per cent of wheat from Russia and Ukraine and with disruptions occasioned by the war, the situation can only become worse, with the risk of people being pushed into destitution, starvation and premature mortality.

Food inflation particularly

affects poor people, who spend more of their income on food even when consuming the lowest-cost options. The World Bank reported that in African cities food accounts for 60 per cent of total expenditures for the bottom 20 per cent of urban households and 35 per cent for the wealthiest, making it hard to absorb price hikes. People forced to spend more on basic staples have to adapt by purchasing lower quality food, eating less and reducing essential nonfood expenditures like health or education.

To prevent a hunger crisis, a rights-centered response is vital, Human Rights Watch said. Governments should act to protect everyone's rights to an adequate standard of living and in particular the right to food, by scaling up emergency food aid and expanding social protection systems. Investing in social protection might be a tall order for many African governments facing high debt levels and stretched fiscal positions after two years of the pandemic.

A Global Fund for Social Protection should be set up to increase the level of support for low-income countries, helping them to establish and maintain social protection floors in the form of legal entitlements. Many social protection systems in African countries are at least in part financed and supported by the World Bank, which should ensure that support reaches everyone in need.

International financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank should refrain from pressuring countries to adopt fiscal consolidation measures that could further raise the cost of food or cut social spending.

Preventing a worsening food crisis requires international cooperation. Food exporting governments should carefully balance export restrictions to protect the right to food domestically while minimising to the extent possible impacts on food supply and prices for other countries. The World Trade Organisation (WTO) estimates that 40 per cent of the increase in global wheat prices during the 2011 food crisis resulted from hoarding. Importing governments should work to ensure that nutritious food is affordable and accessible to everyone. In the long run, importing countries in Africa should boost local food production to increase food sovereignty and make food systems more sustainable. This requires support for climate change adaptation and resilience in the region.

"The war in Ukraine has led to more people across Africa going hungry. Governments should do everything in their power to mitigate the impact of rising food prices and avert a hunger crisis. Expanding social protection and ensuring the supply of affordable food is critical to protecting the right to food for everyone," Simet said.

Workers commend Diri on welfare as deputy gov canvasses civil servants award

By AHERHOKE OKIOMA, Yenagoa

The Bayelsa State Administrative Officers Forum (BSAOF) has commended the Governor DDiri-led administration for its commitment to the welfare of its workers in the state's civil service.

The group gave the commendation when its members visited the Deputy Governor, Lawrence Ewhrudjakpo, at the Government House, Yenagoa.

Chairman of the forum, Dr Stanley Sokari, commended the Diri administration for prioritising workers' welfare, noting that the state government had demonstrated a friendly disposition towards workers by ensuring prompt payment of salaries, implementation of yearly increments and promotion of professionalism.

"We appreciate the prosperous administration of Governor Diri and his deputy for their friendly disposition towards civil servants in the state. It is on record that Bayelsa State is one of the states in the country where yearly increments are implemented and where salaries are paid before the end of every month."

He, however, urged the state government to urgently address the impending knowledge gap in the service through capacity building and sponsorship of administrative officers to relevant

professional programmes.

Sokari lamented that only about 24 percent of administrative officers in the state were members of relevant professional organisations, such as the Chartered Institute of Personnel Management (CIPM) and the Nigeria Institute of Management (NIM) due to their inability to meet the required financial commitments.

He also appealed to the state government to consider members of the forum for appointments into higher political positions that border on administration in the service.

Ewhrudjakpo canvassed institutionalisation of yearly awards for civil servants in the state to motivate them for higher commitment, professionalism and enhanced productivity.

He noted that civil servants, especially the administrative officers, constituted the engine room of policy implementation, stressing that the introduction of best staff awards in different ministries and agencies, would bring about significant improvement in the civil service.

He said: "I am an apostle of positive reward, because once there is a mismatch between the excitement for performance and reward for work, the worker is likely to be demoralised and less productive."

"Because performance does not receive commensurate and

proportionate reward, the reward must not necessarily be bread and butter, that is, in monetary terms. There are other factors of motivation.

"So, we can institute the annual civil service award cutting across all the ministries to ensure that every ministry produces first, second and third best staff members."

Ewhrudjakpo, who also advocated continuous capacity building of civil servants, assured that the state government would do everything possible to make the state's Public Service Training Institute functional to check capital flight and generate higher revenue.



Lawrence Ewhrudjakpo



Distressed buildings to be demolished in Lagos

Stories by **OZIWO BLESSING**

Lagos State Building Control Agency has disclosed that it has marked over 10 distressed structures in the state for demolition.

In a statement by the Head, Public Affairs, LASBCA, Adetayo Asagba, who said the buildings were marked for being structurally distressed and unsafe for habitation.

The development came on the heels of the demolition of a distressed building located at 47 Jebba Street, Ebute-Metta, Lagos State.

The General Manager, LASBCA, Gbolahan Oki, who spoke during the enforcement exercise, commended the efforts of the community leaders, youths, and residents of the areas for cooperating with the enforcement agents of the agency.

The other buildings marked for demolition before the end of the week by the agency are located at 37 Coates Street; 3, Ondo Street; 14 Ondo Street;

16 Church Street; 13, Ibadan Street; 3 Simpson Street; 35 Jebba Street; 11 Jebba Street; and 19 Ibadan Street.

The LASBCA boss further explained that the exercise was a proactive step by the agency to prevent the loss of lives and property due to avoidable building collapses.

He said that the move had become imperative to rid the state of inhabitable structures, promote standards, and attain a liveable, organised, and sustainable built environment.

"We urge the people to recognise the urgency in this matter as we cannot afford to wait for another building to collapse; because every distressed building is a disaster in waiting," he said.

"Occupants of distressed buildings will keep asking for more time before they vacate but the truth is that we cannot afford to wait in the matter of life and death," he added.

Oki said the agency would no longer tolerate excuses by occupants of distressed build-

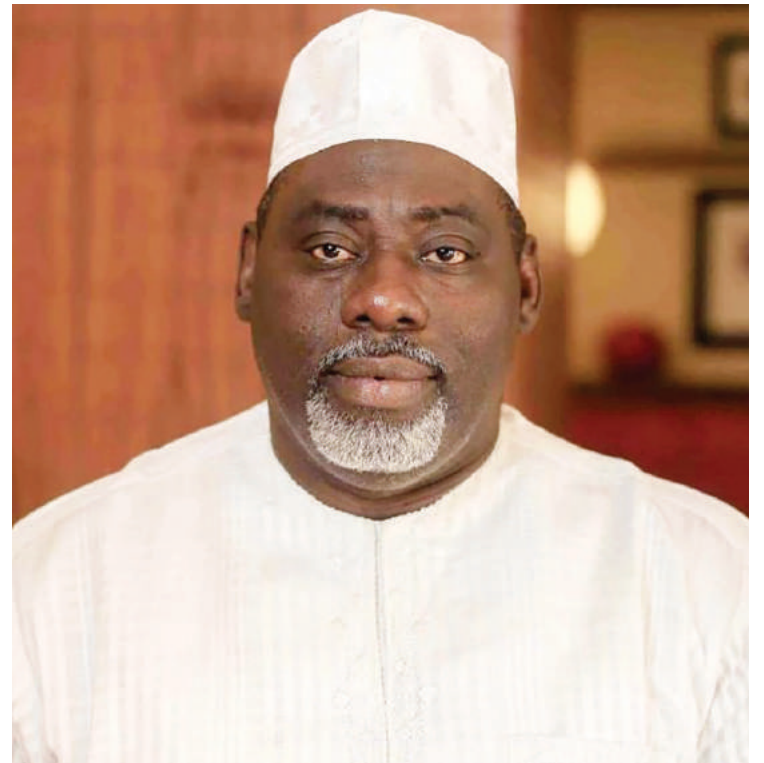
ings, who often cited emotional attachments as putative reasons for not being willing to vacate the distressed structures.

He called on owners/occupiers of distressed buildings within the state to vacate immediately, particularly during the rainy season which is associated with more cases of building collapse.

He urged Lagosians to emulate the cooperation of the youths and residents of Ebute-Metta who liaised with the government by reporting distressed buildings within the area to appropriate government agencies.

The General Secretary, Association of Real Estate Developers of Nigeria, Lagos State Chapter, Olumegbon Mutairu, commended the efforts of the state government in ridding the state of distressed buildings.

He promised the continued support of members of the association, especially by providing helpful information about the status of buildings across the state.



Gbolahan Oki

FG to reposition Delta port, dredge Escravos channel to boost vessel traffic, says NPA

In a bid to revive the port in Delta State, the Federal Government said it had awarded a contract for remedial dredging of Escravos channel.

The government said that the move would help to expand the channel and attract bigger vessels to the port in Delta State.

According to a statement by the Managing Director of Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) Mohammed Bello-Koko, who stated this in Warri, Delta State, said the dredging of the channel would boost the cargo volume to both Warri and Calabar Ports.

According to him, the dredging, which was halfway done, would enable the port in Delta State to have a better draft, receive bigger vessels and record fewer incidences of vessels running aground when completed.

"We all know that the breakwaters collapsed about 10 years ago, and there has been high siltation resulting in the reduction of the draft from seven meters to three meters in some places."

Bello-Koko also said that the agency had started the mapping and charting of the Escravos channel, starting from the fairway buoy down to Koko Port, which had not been done for over a decade or more, has commenced.

"The essence is to enable us to be able to know the draft along the way and also ensure that the navigational aids are properly placed. This is because some decisions can only be taken after knowing that the channel has been properly mapped and surveyed," he said.

He said that the efforts showed that NPA was beginning to pay attention to the ports outside Lagos.

"We have a special interest in ensuring that Warri and other ports are more active. This is why we have been holding stakeholders' meetings and we

are going to Port Harcourt for another one. This enables us to engage with the importers and exporters for them to know that these ports are available for use. We will deploy more marine equipment and ensure that the signals are also working to ensure safe navigation of vessels," he added.

The NPA team visited the Olu of Warri Kingdom, Ogiame Atuwatse III, to seek support in reviving the Warri Port. The monarch said he was satisfied with the visit of the NPA management to the Warri Port as the first port of call after Bello-Koko's confirmation as the managing director.

He said the eastern ports needed to be opened up, adding that the recent efforts would yield positive results for the benefit of the importing community.

He, however, said that the NPA should always come to the royal family for support to achieve the goal of opening up Warri Port for business.

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

In its effort to recover outstanding debt, the Asset Management Corporation of Nigeria (AMCON), has taken possession of all assets belonging to Aeroland Travels Limited from Polaris Bank (formerly Skye Bank) in 2018.

According to AMCON spokesperson Jude Nwauzor, this development was followed up by the order of Honourable Justice D.E. Osiagor of the Federal High Court, Lagos Division. That all the property as listed in the Court Order has to be taken over by AMCON with

the assistance of Court Bailiffs among other officials of the law. AMCON purchased the Non-Performing Loan (NPL) of Aeroland Travels Limited from Polaris Bank (formerly Skye Bank) in 2018.

"It would be recalled that Justice Osiagor gave the ruling on February 7, 2022, and in compliance with the enforcement order of the court, AMCON put logistics together, and on Friday, May 6, 2022, took effective possession of the nine properties as listed by the court through its debt recovery agent – Robert Ohuoba & Co.

"The properties include those situated at Plot 4 & 4B Block 66 Magodo Scheme, Lagos State; Plot 9, Block 44c, Adetoro Adelaja Street, Magodo Lagos; No. 4C Maye Ogundana Street, Magodo Lagos; No. 10 Oluyomi Oshinkoya Street, Magodo Residential Scheme, Lagos; Plot 8, Block 66, Residential Scheme, Sangisha, Lagos; No. 2A John Olugbo Street, Ikeja, Lagos; No. 2 Fadeyi Street, off Awolowo way, Ikeja, Lagos; No. 8 Surulere Alelor Street, Millenium, Gbagada; and No. 14 Jerry Iriabe Street, off Bashorun Okunsanya, off Admiralty Road, Lekki Peninsula."

According to Nwauzor, the court also ordered the freezing of the bank accounts and shares of the company's directors, including Segun Adewale and Victoria Adewale.

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

Until the coming of the order of the Court, all previous efforts by AMCON and its representatives to resolve the debt amicably with the obligor had proved abortive, which was why the Corporation resorted to the Court for justice.



Ahmed Kuru, AMCON boss



Mohammed Bello-Koko

PWDs lament unfair treatment at airports

•Demand seamless access, facilities

By OZIWO BLESSING

Persons Living With Disabilities (PWDs) have demanded increased access at airport terminals in Nigeria, calling on airport and airline operators to make provisions for equipment, personnel and infrastructure that will guarantee a seamless travel experience for them.

PWDs made the call when the Coalition for Disability Organisations (CODO) held a sensitisation programme for the management of the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria and other airport-related agencies in Lagos.

CODO had flagged off an advocacy project seeking to address discrimination faced by persons with disabilities at Nigerian airports.

A paper presentation was made during the event with the title, 'A Public Presentation of Research Findings on Access to Airports for Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria.'

The Convener of CODO/ Executive Director, Centre for Citizens with Disability, Mr David Anyaele stated that the PWDs travelling by air are often faced with a lack of amenities such as ramps for persons in wheelchairs, inaccessibility to restrooms at some airports, and in some cases denied the chance to fly.

According to him, the sensitisation programme was to draw the attention of stakeholders to the inability of the PWDs to access airports and services in the nation

On his part, the Director, Spinal Cord Injury Association in Nigeria, Mr Abdulwahab Matepo, said it is important to highlight the challenges of the PWDs with stakeholders such as the Federal Government, Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), among others.

He emphasised that the goal of the event was to remove all barriers preventing the PWDs from accessing airport services like others who do not have their challenges.

Also, a professor of Sociology, Soyombo Omololu, who spoke at the event, said the PWDs were constantly lamenting the unfair and inhumane treatments they were being subjected to at airports; a situation, he said, had forced many of them to resort to other means of transport.

While responding, the Managing Director of FAAN, Capt Rabiul Yadudu, who was represented by the agency's International Terminal Manager, Mr Ayinla Gbolahan, assured stakeholders that the grievances raised by the PWDs would get to the appropriate authorities.

"I can assure you that this report will be taken back to the heads of FAAN, NCAA, and others. Plans are being made to put amenities in place for Persons with Disabilities," he said.

Obaseki kicks off 'Operation Plan Edo'

•NEWMAP seeks media support to curb environmental hazards

•Tasks stakeholders on handwashing

'Operation Plan Edo,' an exercise aimed at re-certifying building plans and collecting data on socio-economic needs of communities in Benin City, the capital will be kicked off by the state government *The Trumpet* gathered.

Commissioner for Physical Planning, Urban and Regional Development, Isoken Omo, during a press briefing, said the exercise, which will commence in the Ugbor area of Benin City, is an expansion of the 'Operation Show Your Building Plan.'

She thanked those who have complied with 'Operation Show Your Building Plan' exercise, assuring that all applications have been fast-tracked and that over 400 approvals will be granted to those who have already gone through the process.

She noted that the state government through the programme will be able to collate the needs of communities which in turn will enable it to provide relevant services to Edo people. According to her, "The programme enables the government to know what services and infrastructure the people need. The 'Operation Plan Edo' will involve various ministries, such as Education, Roads and Bridges, Health, Power, among others".

She called on citizens to cooperate with officials of the ministries and provide necessary information to help plan the city and State in line with the 30-year master plan. Condemning attacks on its staff by residents, she warned: "Edo State Government frowns at the attack on Staff of Ministry of Planning, Urban and Regional Planning on duty.

Government is concerned about the ugly incident and has vowed to bring the perpetrators to book to serve as a deterrent to others." Meanwhile, Edo State Coordinator of Nigeria Erosion and Watershed Management Project (NEWMAP), Dr Tom Obaseki, has canvassed media collaboration in driving the conversation on flood control as the rains intensify.

Obaseki made the submission at a flood engagement workshop organised by the agency in Benin City, the Edo State capital. He stressed that beyond government action and infrastructural intervention, there was need for all stakeholders, particularly the media to continue to sensitize the people so they can take ownership of flood control efforts and change their attitude towards environmental protection.

According to him, "The media has a crucial role in spreading information in bridging the knowledge gap and enhancing public awareness. The media



Isoken Omo

chooses which issues to highlight to its viewers and how to frame them, influencing what people perceive to be a priority.

"When the public discussion about a particular topic is structured in such a way that it creates a sense of outrage and menace, people will put pressure on their leaders to put that issue at the top of the political agenda. "The manner in which the media presents information shapes audience perceptions. When communicating a message, the media transmits not just the content of the message, but also their interpretation of it."

Highlighting the state government's intervention in tackling erosion in the state, Obaseki said that the state government has built a total length of over 40 kilometers of secondary drains. "We have built a total length of over 40kms of secondary drains. This excludes over 400km constructed by other ministries and agencies; over 14kms primary stormwater culverts and drains and over 4km of earth stormwater channels.

This is more than what has been done by any other government in the history of the state. On his part, the Resident Engineer and ZUTARI Consultant, Mr Almeroux Loubser, said global warming has contributed to the excessive rains while advocating

for use of green energy solutions to reduce burning of fossils.

Also, Edo State Primary Health Care Development Agency (ESPHCDA) has urged stakeholders to collaborate with the government across all levels to sustain awareness campaigns on regular hand washing to prevent diseases.

The Executive Secretary, ESPHCDA, Dr. (Mrs.) Otanyienuwa Obarisiagbon made the submission in commemoration of the 2022 World Hand Hygiene Day in Benin City. She urged healthcare workers, parents and other stakeholders to adopt the culture of washing hands frequently in order to prevent diseases. She said, "Healthcare workers are to ensure proper handwashing with soap and water before contact with patients, before a septic procedure, after contact with patient's body fluids, and after leaving the patients surrounding in line with the World Health Organisation's 5 moments of hand hygiene.

"This will help protect the health worker as well as others from diarrheal diseases, Covid-19 and others. The use of liquid soap for hand washing is better than bar soap, especially in our health facilities." Obarisiagbon noted, "When the hands are visibly dirty, washing hands

with soap should be done rather than using alcohol-based hand sanitisers." She added, "Special attention should be paid to the fingertips, the thumbs, the inter digital spaces between our fingers, the back of our hands, and our wrists when washing our hands.

After hand washing, hands can be air dried or single-use hand towels should be used to dry our hands. The hand towels should be washed after use and not shared with others." "We must avoid touching the eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands to avoid infecting ourselves."

She urged, "Mothers of children less than 5 years old must remember to wash their hands after changing their diaper and before preparing food for their children. "Let's remember to wash our hands before we eat, after using the convenience (restroom), and before and after contact with a sick person," the Executive Secretary added.

According to her, "the celebration helps to increase awareness on the importance of washing our hands regularly and ensure people of all levels work together to influence the culture of washing hands always. Washing of hands regularly is a simple and effective way to remove germs, avoid getting sick, and prevent the spread of germs to others."

CSOs welcome Buhari's assent to anti-graft bills, laud N'Assembly

•Urge passage of Whistleblower Witness Protection Bills •President vows to end money laundering, others

Stories by **PAUL MICHAEL**, Abuja

Anti-graft watchdog, Africa Network for Environment and Economic Justice (ANEEJ) and eight other Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have welcomed the signing into law of three anti-corruption bills by President Muhammadu Buhari.

The Bills, which include the Proceeds of Crime (Recovery and Management) Bill, 2022, the Money Laundering (Prevention and Prohibition) Bill, 2022, and the Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Bill, 2022, were signed into law by the President on Thursday at the State House, Abuja.

ANEEJ and the eight CSOs, which are partners in implementing the "Enhancing Anti-corruption and Social Inclusive Reform Initiatives in Nigeria" project under the Strengthening Civic Advocacy and Local Engagement (SCALE) project of Palladium supported by USAID, described the development as a significant milestone in strengthening the war against money laundering, terrorism financing, and asset recovery.

Executive Director of ANEEJ and leader of the group, Rev David Ugolor, while reacting to the development at Benin City on Friday, said the CSOs have been calling for the passage of POCA and charge the National Assembly to do the needful.

He said, "The passage of the Bills and their eventual assent by President Muhammadu Buhari yesterday marks a significant milestone in strengthening the war against money laundering, terrorism financing, and asset recovery in the country. ANEEJ and its allies have been campaigning for the passage of POCA and other anti-corruption Bills for a long time coming."

More so, he called on the National Assembly to consider the passage of two other Bills, the Witness Protection Bill (2022), and the Whistleblower Protection Bill, (2022) before the end of the tenure of the present administration.

According to him, both bills are direly needed by citizens who are prepared to volunteer information to the Anti-corruption Agencies and the judiciary, adding that they would complement the effectiveness of the three Bills signed by President Buhari.

Ugolor, a member of the Board of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) Coalition representing Sub-Saharan African CSOs also said the Money Laundering (Prevention and Prohibition) Act will help crackdown on Politically Exposed Persons (PEPs) and other perpetrators of Illicit Financial Flows (IFF).

"Even though our quest to have a separate asset recovery and management agency was not achieved in the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA), ANEEJ and its allies are prepared to work with the Anti-Corruption Agencies (ACAs) to firm up assets management capabilities," Ugolor noted.



Gov. Arakunrin Oluwarotimi Akeredolu

On his part, the Executive Director of 21st Century Community Empowerment for Youth and Women Initiative, Mallam Lukman Adefolahan, Nigeria has met some milestones required by International anti-corruption bodies.

He said, "We are happy that we are able to pull through with these three pieces of legislation and our focus will now shift to the enforcement of anti-corruption laws. By this development, Nigeria has met some milestones required by International Anti-corruption bodies, and it is now left for all stakeholders to go ahead with implementation."

Also, the Executive Director of the Joint Association of Persons with Disability (JONAPWD) Edo State Chapter, Ms Ann Ojugo commended members of the National Assembly, particularly, the President of the Senate, Ahmed Lawan, and the Speaker House of Representatives, Rt Hon Femi Gbajabiamila for expeditious consideration of the Bills brought before them by the President.

Ojugo urged anti-corruption agencies to put in place systems that would enable proper

management of recovered assets that will help fight poverty in Nigeria.

"We expect that recovered assets should be used for development programmes that will help in poverty eradication. Persons With Disabilities should be carried along when such programmes are being conceptualized and implemented," Ojugo requested.

Meanwhile, President Buhari while speaking at the signing ceremony at the Council Chamber, State House, described the bills as being in tandem with this administration's commitment to fighting corruption and illicit financing activities, as well as critical to the governance agenda and the development of Nigeria.

The president noted that the inadequacy of all the repealed Acts had impacted legal actions against offenders. He, however, vowed to end money laundering, terrorism and financial crime.

"The new laws have provided enough punitive measures and containment strategies against abuses and compromises."

"We will not rest until we rid the nation of the menace of money laundering, terrorism, and other financial crimes," he



Senate Ahmad Lawan

added.

President Buhari commended the National Assembly for their tenacity, courage, and commitment to ensuring that Nigeria has put in place effective measures to address the menace of money laundering, terrorism, and terrorism financing.

Buhari noted that the 9th National Assembly has proven to be patriotic, responsive, resourceful, and industrious in its legislative assignments, recalling that on January 14, 2022, he had sought expeditious passage of the said Bills.

He lauded the Assembly under Senate President Ahmed Lawan and the Speaker, Femi Gbajabiamila, and their colleagues for responding to his request, saying they "have certainly carved out a worthy legacy for themselves."

While emphasizing the importance of the legislation, the President said, "The signing of these Bills into law today not only strengthens the Anti-Money Laundering/Combating the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) framework in the Country but addresses the deficiencies identified in Nigeria's 2nd round of Mutual Evaluation as assessed

by Inter-Governmental Action Group Against Money Laundering in West Africa on compliance with the Financial Action Task Force global standards.

"Accordingly, the repeal of the Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act, 2011 as amended and enactment of Money Laundering (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2022 provides comprehensive legal and Institutional Framework for the prevention and prohibition of money laundering in Nigeria and confers on the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, the legal status of the Special Control Unit Against Money Laundering."

"The repeal of the Terrorism (Prevention) Act, 2011 as amended in 2013, and enactment of the Terrorism Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2022 provides for the effective implementation of international instruments for the prevention and combating of terrorism and suppression of the financing of terrorism."

"The enactment of the Proceeds of Crime (recovery and Management) Act, 2022 makes comprehensive provisions for the seizure, confiscation, forfeiture, and management of properties derived from unlawful activity."

EFCC nabs alleged 'yahoo-yahoo' academy owner, 16 'trainees'

•Arrests 23 suspected cybercriminals in Ibadan

Operatives of the Abuja Zonal Command of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) have arrested one Afolabi Samad, the owner of a 'Yahoo-Yahoo Academy' in Abuja.

The 24-year-old and 16 of his students were arrested on Thursday in a sting operation. The youngsters between the ages of 18 and 27 years were arrested at their hideout located in Peace Court Estate, Lokogoma, a suburb of Abuja.

The owner of the alleged academy rented the three-bedroom flat for three million Naira to impact

the tricks of cyber-frauds on his apprentices for undisclosed fees.

Some of the items recovered from the suspects include laptops, phones, charms, and two vehicles: a Lexus RX350 and Toyota Highlander.

The EFCC in its statement said investigations are ongoing and the suspects will be charged accordingly in due time.

In a related development, Operatives of the Ibadan Zonal Command of the EFCC have arrested 23 suspected internet fraudsters in Ibadan, Oyo State.

The suspects were arrested

on Thursday, May 12, 2022, at Apata, Jericho, and Ire Akari Estate areas of Ibadan following credible intelligence on their alleged computer fraud-related activities.

Sixteen of the suspects were indicted by forensic analyses carried out on their devices and the incriminating documents recovered from them.

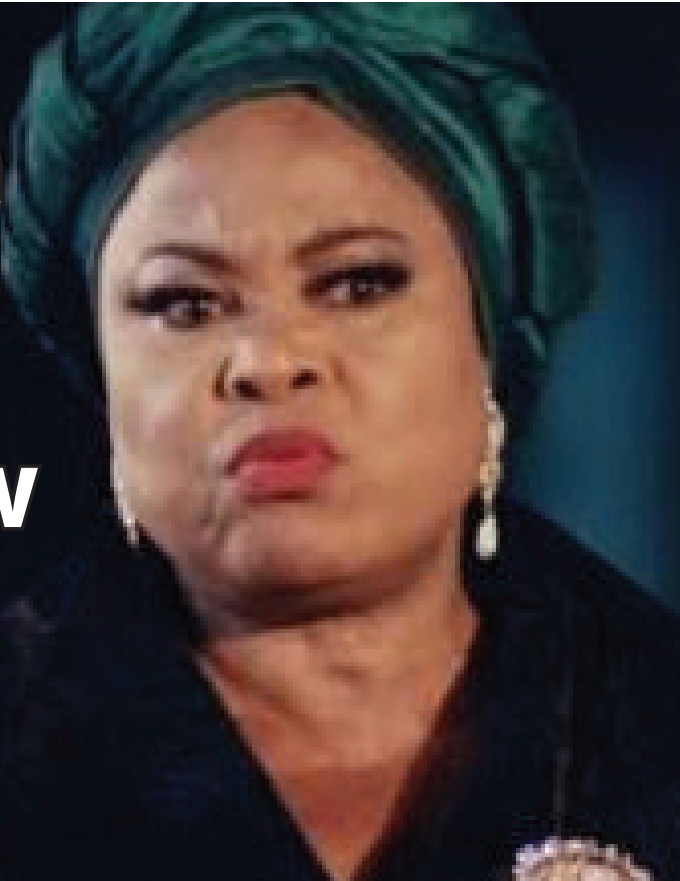
A statement by the EFCC gave their names as "Oluwale Oduwanye Kelvin, Adams Segun Ojo, Amuwo Oluwagbemi Oluwatobi, Theophilus Ademola Akinyele, Mimiola Olamide Victor, Ajayi Pelumi Pamilerin, Tolulope Adara Mati Timothy, Bamgbose Temitayo Abiodun, Ajibola

Timilehin Isreal, Ajibade Habeeb Olakunle, Tobiloba Isaiah Seyi, Joseph Odunayo Clement, Victor John Enya, Odebode Temiloluwa Kehinde, Olaniyi Ajibola Roqeeb, and Olushola Oyetunde Samuel."

According to the EFCC, the remaining seven Oladipo Tunde Lawrence, Eludire Gbemileke Joseph, Gbenga Abiona Wale, Ojuwaye Emeka Oluwaseun, Babatunde Kolade Tunde, Abu Idris Olalekan and Boye Timilehin Emmanuel are under investigation.

Seven exotic cars, mobile phones, laptops, and several incriminating documents were recovered from the suspects.

If I had towed a different part; I may not be relevant as now -Sola Sobowale



Multitalented scriptwriter, producer and actor extraordinaire Sola Sobowale has remained relevant in the industry for nearly three decades now but her enigmatic strides returned her to the spotlight, a feat very hard to achieve in the sector that produces new stars nearly every passing quarter. Having featured in countless movies; Toyin Tomato as she is fondly called since her role in Wale Adenuga's Popular TV Series 'Oh Father!! Oh Daughter'. In this interview with **OMONIYI ALLI**, she spoke about the journey so far, the new name Laburu amongst

Your name has transited from Toyin Tomato to Eniola Salami and now Laburu, a character from King of Boys where you played the lead role; how does that make you feel?

You see in life, consistency is key because despite taking a long break for so many years in the movie industry, my comeback was huge and a big shout out to Mo Abudu and Kemi Adetiba for bringing me on board during the shoot of Wedding Party and the rest they say is history. These days people don't even call me Toyin Tomato anymore, only a few oldies do, but my role in King of Boys became a game-changer but the new role of Eniola Salami 'Laburu'. Anywhere I step foot, the scream is Mama King of boys and I am grateful that a lot of people connected with that character. The truth is that transitioning from Toyin Tomato to what I am now was huge and I am enjoying every bit of it.

What is your favourite part of working with Kemi Adetiba on the King of Boys project?

Working with Kemi isn't easy at all because she is someone who pays keen attention to details when on set; you may feel you are done with your role on set but Kemi has a way of speaking to you and you will end up talking about five shots for a particular scene. Kemi made me stronger, Kemi believed in me. I've been around for a while. You know you can do something, but you were never given the chance. I have never met Kemi Adetiba before; I came from the UK for an audition for Wedding Party. She auditioned me, and I got the role. After the Wedding Party, I got a call. She said I should come for dinner with her. When I got to Landmark, she looked at me and said we are going to work. Then she gave me the script. I said 'this is huge'. I asked 'what am I doing?' She said 'you are the king', I laughed and said 'you are joking'. She said 'no'. I said 'you are putting this responsibility on me, you are putting your life on the line for me, and you believe I can do it?' she said 'yes'. I said give me the baton and said let us run, and we have been running. We will not stop, we

are just starting."

How much of Eniola Salami are you now?

"Some of the things I do in films are natural to me. I am a mother as seen in Wedding Party. As Eniola Salami, Sola Sobowale would not take no for an answer, Sola Sobowale would not want to be cheated, Sola Sobowale is principled, I call a spade a spade; Eniola is a killer, I am not a killer; Eniola is a liar am not a liar; Eniola is forceful, I am not. Sola Sobowale is a natural being.

Not many can leave Nollywood for a long time and then return as if they never left in the first place. What is your secret?

It's not my doing, it is God almighty's doing and I believe so much in him. I believe that this (acting) is what God ordained me to do and that is why I am still relevant. I am very sure that if I had towed a different career path I would have been forgotten by now so this is the path and this is what I have been led to do.

So did you at any point in time miss the industry while you were away?

Yes, I did because every year I come home, produce a movie, and return to England. Now I have my time and now I only travel abroad on holidays. I am also glad that the Wedding Party came at the right time because if I didn't play that role I would be so envious of the person who played the role.

There are many sides to you as we see in movies, some portray you as being very hot, at other times very meek and you could also be lukewarm- who exactly are you in real-life situations?

You see, what you saw in Wedding Party mirrors what Sola Sobowale is in real life- I love my family passionately. I protect my family. With me what you see is what you get because I call a spade a spade. I don't mince my words because I'm a very down to earth person. I'm also a very free person; I play with people a lot, male and female

alike. I love the people around me. I don't like to be around unhappy people and if I find myself there, I'd do my best to make them happy. I'm always smiling and you can tell that my therapy is on my face. If you brood and waste time thinking evil, soon virus will enter your system. I'm a very happy person.

Come to think of it, we see less of you in Yoruba movies as you feature quite often in English movies; does that mean the script isn't coming from that part of the industry?

You are right, I am not the regular face in Yoruba movies but I have acted in a few but the truth is when the Yoruba movie makers are ready, I am ready. Sola Sobowale loves Nigeria and I'm a typical African woman. I don't joke with my roots. I always even advise that when we want to produce a movie, don't just do straight English language, code-switch and co-mix appropriately. I like it when we input our culture into movies. Whether the movie maker is Hausa, Igbo or Yoruba, I'm ready to act any day. I don't have a shop where I sell, the only thing I do is to act and I'm ever ready.

How did the journey begin for you?



I opted out of a College of Education to follow my dream by going to Ibadan then the hub of entertainment in Nigeria. I initially enrolled as a Secretary in training at Sight & Sound, Ibadan.

However, Tunji Oyelana, (Sura Di Tailor) who married my elder sister, Kikelomo, enrolled me in the University of Ibadan's Department of Music. But I switched to Theatre Arts. I starred in Village Headmaster, to Lola Fani-Kayode's Mirror In The Sun and a couple of stage productions including Femi Osofisan's Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again.

I was lucky to work with Adebayo Salami, and we shot Asewo To Re Mecca. Before the advent of the home video though, I also shot a celluloid movie titled Eri Okan with Adebayo Salami and the rest is history now.

Watching movies from pacesetters like you, we saw less cleavage on display, how do you feel when see actresses appearing almost nude in movies?

I don't get annoyed, the bottom line is this; nobody forces you to do anything. We need education and we need exposure. I'm a typical Nigerian woman, I love my Naija and our culture; there are some things we don't do, it's not in our culture. If we say we want to do it, we can do it in our house under our roof, not in public because you get no respect for doing that. Our producers and directors need to know that when you are acting as a prostitute, you don't need to remove your dress to become a prostitute. You don't need to be touched to act as a grade-A prostitute. I did Asewo to Re Mecca, the pacesetter, fantastic; myself and Toyin Adegbo. I played the number 1 Asewo and I introduced Toyin's character to it. We didn't remove anything and it was the talk of the town. When the producers know this, you will not see nakedness again. We should want people to respect us and respect this profession.

You act with so much passion and conviction, what is your staying power?

First of all, I'm from a disciplined home. My late father was a retired school principal and my mom was a retired head teacher. We were taught that 'what is worth doing is worth doing well. This is what I'm ordained to do, this is what I love doing and when you're doing something you love, you need to put in all your effort and energy. You must be focused, know your onions and know what you want to do. That is why you see me working like this.

Is there any movie that is very dear to your heart?

I owe every one of them close to my heart. Toyin Tomato took me almost everywhere, it made me recognisable, and so I want to thank Wale Adenuga for giving me the opportunity.

How do you feel when you sit down and watch the role you played?

AMAA 2022: Organisers extend entry submission to June 15

The race to the 2022 African Movie Academy Awards popularly referred to as AMAA has officially begun as they have called on African filmmakers to submit their films.

After calls for the entry submissions in early January 2022, the AMA has extended the entry submission till June 15, 2022.

In a recent statement signed by the founder of the awards ceremony, Peace Anyiam-Osigwe, the organisers called on filmmakers to submit their genres of films to vie for the nomination in almost 30 categories of the film award.

"Africa Film Academy, organisers of the AMAAs, is now accepting submissions for the 18th Africa Movie Academy Awards (AMAAs). The Africa Film Academy invites filmmakers to submit their feature, short, animation, and documentary work for consideration in nearly 30 film categories of the awards," the statement read in parts.

The AMA team also stressed that

submission of films is strictly open to films produced within one year.

"This submission is officially open to only films produced and released between 1st of May 2021 and April 31st, 2022 (last day of submission). All entries for the 18th AMAAs will be made via Filmfreeway. The Africa Film Academy will not accept any film that exceeds the 120-minute run as a feature or a short film that is longer than 40 minutes."

The 17th edition of the AMAAs was held at the Lagos Marriott Hotels, Ikeja with Lagos state Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu, several filmmakers across Africa and diaspora, executives, and government officials in attendance. At the event, the governor pledged to host AMAA for the next three years.

Sanwo-Olu also called on Africans across the globe to work together to boost the creative industry, maintaining that "There is power in oneness as a continent."



Idol: Zadok, Banty, and Praise emerge top 3

After weeks of impressive performances, Nigerian Idol Season 7 top three contestants finally emerged at last night's live show.

The show opened with Zadok and Jordan's electrifying performance of Fireboy DML's Peru remix with Ed Sheeran. It was followed by Banty and Progress's duet of Wizkid and Tems' chart-topping single, Essence. Sadly, the duet with Zadok was Jordan's last performance in the Nigerian Idol race as the Kaduna-born singer polled the lowest votes and was eliminated after the round of duets.

The top three contestants were required to perform two songs each, one from the year they were born and another from songs made 'special' by contestants who didn't go beyond the live auditions. Opening the stage for the first round of songs was Banty, who performed a cover of Beyoncé's Listen, to a standing ovation from the audience and judges, and according to

Simi, this was Banty's best performance so far in the competition.

Next up was Zadok, whose rendition of Jennifer Hudson's And I Am Telling You I'm Not Going blew everyone away. To seal the first round of performances, Progress performed a Whitney Houston classic, I Will Always Love You to the admiration of the judges and his teeming fans.

The night's competition got fiercer with the next round of songs. Once again, the last girl standing, Banty, took the crowd back in time, with her cover of Brandy's 1995 hit, I want to Be Down. Next up, Zadok gave a good account of himself with a thrilling performance of Boyz II Men I'll Make Love To You, which had the audience swaying in their seats.

Progress rounded up the night of outstanding performances with his cover of Westlife's Swear It Again to another round of standing ovations from everyone.



Zee World's Dance Naija Dance debut in Nigeria



From roaring success in India to inevitable greatness in Singapore and across 52 countries in Africa in 2021, it's time for Zee World's Dance Naija Dance in Nigeria.

Zee Entertainment's popular General Entertainment Channel Zee World (DStv channel 166 and GOtv channel 125) will be keeping its viewers glued to their seats and screens with a dance show like no other. Dance Naija Dance, Zee World's reality dance competition aims to reveal the best dance crew in Nigeria. Dance Naija Dance offers a fusion of Nigerian-Indian dance moves uniting both cultures through music, vibrancy, colour and diversity.

Dance Naija Dance will be anchored by a blend of Nollywood and Bollywood personalities and dancers. These include the Hosts - Hero Daniels and Pelumi

Buari, Choreographers/Mentors - Sashin Kandhai and Kenneth Agabata; while Kunle Remi and Uraysha Ramracha will be the judges.

The reality show is expected to run for 10 weeks and with not only a grand cash prize of five million naira but also prize hampers for the winning teams.

With the reality competition set to start airing in August, production has begun for the top 16 finalists selected from more than 350 entries across Nigeria. Dance Naija Dance will air in 52 countries in Africa and the Indian Ocean Islands.

ZEE Africa CEO (Sub-Saharan Africa & Indian Ocean Islands), Somnath Malakar said "Knowing full well how Zee World is important to the family entertainment needs in Nigeria, we have taken steps to ensure that we would always deliver.

Tunde Kelani's 'Ayinla' set for Netflix debut

Global streaming platform, Netflix has licensed Tunde Kelani's 2021 film 'Ayinla'; the film based on iconic Apala singer Ayinla Omowura is set to debut to African subscribers on May 20.

Set in 1980, the same year the Ayinla music star died, the Jade Osiberu produced film follows the events leading to his death.

Omowura was played by Lateef Adedimeji with Debo 'Mr. Macaroni' Adebayo, Bimbo Manuel, Ade Laoye, Bimbo Ademoye, Omowunmi Dada and Kunle Afolayan (who doubles as executive producer) in supporting roles.

'Ayinla' recorded an impressive theatrical

release, grossing over N70 million in box office despite launching in 33 cinema locations

The Kelani directed film's success at the box office was followed by award nominations and an AMAA win for its Achievement in Cinematography category.

'Ayinla' joins Netflix's growing library of Nigerian titles and is reportedly the first licensed title from the streamer this year. Netflix kicked off the year with original titles including the Bolanle Austen-Peters directed 'The Man of God' and the soon-to-debut Ebonylife studio's 'Blood Sisters'.



EXCLUSIVE: 'Drowned 13-year-old, beat security check to gain access into pool'

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

The Nigeria Aquatics Federation (NAF) said that Matthew Godwin, the 13-year-old kid who drowned in its swimming pool on May 3, 2022, at the federation premises in Package B of the MKO Abiola National Stadium, passed under the barbed wire to beat security check.

In a telephone conversation with The Trumpet, the NAF Secretary-General, Sani Mohammed said Godwin alongside his brother, trekked from the IDP area in Durumi on that fateful day to the swimming pool where he met his untimely death.

According to Mohammed, there are three professional lifeguards and a coach whose duties are to ensure that those coming into the pool can either swim or are given tubes and floaters to keep them afloat while in the pool.

Godwin and the brother, having no money with them to pay to use the services of the pool, stole away through the barbed wire and found themselves in the pool.

The Secretary-General claimed that he was told that Godwin has not swam in his life before, a statement he said the brother to the deceased corroborated.

"What happened is why I was on this two days holiday; I



was with my family in Kaduna. So the coach called me and told me, confirmed by the brother that came with him, they passed under the barbed wire and entered the pool, and that boy has never swam in his life," Mohammed told The Trumpet.

"He has never entered the pool and they were dodging, they came from Durumi, according to the coach. And when I heard that I came down to investigate and confirmed that what they told me was the truth of the matter.

"I went to the family of the deceased to confirm. They narrated the same thing that they trekked from Durumi. Even when their mom tried to stop him not to go anywhere that day. The brother took him out and they went to the pool. There was a furious play under the barbed wire. The boy went into the pool and they were hiding from the lifeguard.

"In normal circumstances, we have lifeguards and coaches who are in charge of the pool. You know, I'm not a lifeguard or a coach. The responsibility lies on some people that are professionals. So if you are coming into the pool, they will ask you questions. Are you conversant or can you swim? If you can swim they will watch you swim before they allow you. If you cannot swim they will give you a floater and tube.

"So these people did not come in for them to be noticed and the three lifeguards were controlling those people that came in and those people that were using what they call it, floater. So one lifeguard noticed that there was one boy under and quickly dived in.

"If you understand there is a deep place down, near the scoreboard. He went in quickly and brought him out. He was bringing out some

flush. He gave him an artificial resuscitation and took him immediately to the National Hospital.

"In a minute, two or three minutes the boy died. The brother was there, the relatives were there, the coach and the lifeguards and every other person. From there the brother said they should take him home; they now went to Durumi, where all those IDPs' are, that's where they live.

"When they got there, the brother narrated to the family what happened. Then the coach called me to inform me. Then the following day I entered immediately. When I came, I went to Wuye to report the case. I went there to meet with the family to try to investigate if what I was told was true. What they told me was exactly what the family narrated to me. I gave them some support and reported to the ministry.

"After informing the ministry about the ugly incident, the Permanent Secretary inaugurated a committee to look into what happened on that day," he added.

The NAF Secretary-General noted that the permanent secretary of the Federal Ministry of Youth And Sports Development, Alhaji Ismaila Abubakar delegated some persons who paid the family of the deceased a condolence visit and are planning on something to console the late Godwin's family.

Tottenham deskin Arsenal to blow top-four race open

Tottenham Hotspur were on a rampage against Arsenal in the North London derby as Antonio Conte's men deskin the Gunners 3-0 to blow open the top-four race until the season's end.

Before the contest, Arsenal led Tottenham by four points and needed at worse, a draw to maintain a four-point lead to keep the hope of qualifying for next season's Champions League not only alive but secured.

Against Arsenal's wish, it was a must-win for Tottenham to shrink the gap with Mikel Arteta's side as anything short of that expectation plunges their desire into the lacuna of Europa competitions.

Surprisingly, after kick-off, Tottenham mounted pressure on Arsenal in a cracker that saw both sides exerting so much pressure afterwards to dominate the game. Not a second was left to an unremarkable moment.

Gunners struggled to break the deadlock but could not as the resilient Lilywhites curtailed Arteta's men until the 22nd minute when Harry Kane opened the scoresheet for Spurs to herald the end to Arsenal's trail for a top-three contest with Chelsea.

The English top striker alongside his teammates did not relent but kept on firing from all cylinders with roaring chants from their supporters to reinvigorate the team's spirit. Kane, the goal poacher, doubled the lead through a sublime header 8 minutes to the end of the first half.

Tottenham wrapped up the 3-0 win two minutes after the second half started with Heung-Min Son netting his 21st goal of the season against a 10-man Arsenal.

Meanwhile, Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta has attributed his side's loss to poor officiating on the part of referee Paul Tierney.

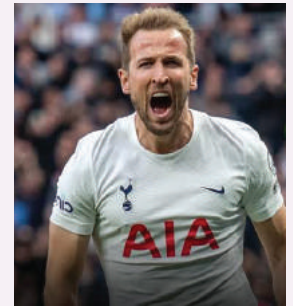
"I want the referee to come in front of the camera and explain his decisions. It's a shame because such a beautiful game was destroyed," Arteta lamented in a post-match interview.

Reacting to Arteta's claim, Tottenham manager Antonio Conte, described the Spanish as a good coach but he complains too much.

"He complains a lot. He has to focus more on his team. He has to focus more on his work," Conte took a swipe at Arteta.

"He has to continue to work because he's a very good [coach]. To hear someone complain all the time is not so good," he added.

Arsenal travel to Newcastle in their next fixture on Monday and round the season up with a home game at the Emirates Stadium with Everton.



Nestle-Milo Championship: Jigawa, Adamawa schools win 22nd edition

The 2022 Nestle-Milo Secondary School Basketball Championships finally climaxed with Jigawa State and Adamawa State coasting home the girls and boys trophies respectively in the zonal tourney.

The event, held at the Indoor Sports Hall of Sani Abacha Stadium, Kano, saw the girls' basketball team of Government Secondary School, Numan, Adamawa State, winning their opponent, Government Girls Secondary School, Shekarau, Kano, 20-8 to lift the diadem.

While in the male category, Yobe State's Nigeria Tulip International College were humbled by a humiliating 51-23 loss to Dutse Model International Secondary School, Jigawa.

The basketball event witnessed six teams that were grouped into A and B slugging it out to emerge victorious.

Speaking at the final, Funmilola Oyewole, Category Development Manager Beverages, Nestle Nigeria Plc, said Milo had been in the forefront of the development of grassroots sports in the country, according to a NAN report.

She emphasised that Milo-sponsored championships had played a crucial role in grassroots sports development in the country.

Oyewole, who said Nestle was committed to sustaining the development, noted that the competition started with 500 schools in 1999 but had risen to around 10,000 across the country.

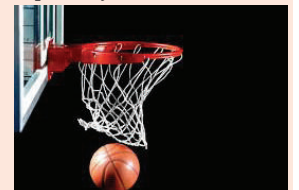
"The Milo Basketball Championship is Nigeria's only private company-sponsored school sports and it enjoys the collaboration of Nigeria Schools Sports Federation (NSSF) and the National Collegiate Sports Foundation," she said.

Oyewole added that the winners would play in the national final scheduled to hold in Lagos later in the year.

Puiami Dickson, star player of the Adamawa team, won the Most Valuable Player (MVP) Award of the tournament for the girls' category.

In the boys' category, the MVP went to Benjamin Ishaku of Dutse Model School, Jigawa.

Winners of both categories went home with a trophy as well as N125,000 and N100,000 each, while the runners up pocketed N75,000 and N60,000 respectively.



Buhari approves Nigeria's withdrawal from basketball for two years

Following the squabbles engulfing the Nigeria Basketball Federation (NBBF), President Muhammadu Buhari has approved with immediate effect the withdrawal of the nation from all international basketball competitions.

In a brief with newsmen in Abuja on Thursday, the Minister of Youth and Sports Development, Sunday Dare revealed that it became expedient to save the grits left of the sports owing to the controversies rocking the leadership of the NBBF.

The minister, represented by the ministry's permanent secretary, Ismaila Abubakar, added that a committee will be

set up to oversee basket leagues in the country while engaging in the total restructuring of the ailing sport gasping for a breath of survival.

According to him, the ministry is committed to the revamping of the sport from the grassroots to the basketball leagues in the country and appealed to all players, fans and relevant stakeholders to remain calm.

"Following the unending crises which have plagued and nearly crippled the development of basketball in Nigeria, President Buhari has approved the withdrawal of Nigeria from all international basketball competitions for a period of two

years," Ismaila said on behalf of the Minister.

"This is with immediate effect," he reiterated.

He continued: "This will also allow for the setting up of an Interim Management Committee (IMC) to oversee the management and development of the domestic basketball leagues in Nigeria.

"In issuing the order, the Federal Government reiterates its interest and commitment to the development of the sport of basketball in Nigeria as well as the huge talents of our youth domestically in an atmosphere free of rancour and squabbles.

"Government, therefore, calls on players, officials, fans and other stakeholders of the sport

to remain calm as it embarks on far-reaching initiatives to reposition, sustain and stabilise the game of basketball.

"This will aid in the growth and success of the sport in the long-term interest of the country," he added.

The leadership of the Nigeria Basketball Federation have been enmeshed in deep-rooted controversies that brewed between two factions for over five years running.

Following the above, two factional executives of the contending groups held parallel congresses that ushered in news exco in 2017 in Kano and Abuja and subsequently, Abuja and Benin in 2022.

Erik ten Hag wins Ajax 36th Eredivisie title

The incoming Manchester United coach Erik ten Hag has guided Ajax to win the 2021-22 Eredivisie season after cutting Heerenveen to size in a resounding 5-0 victory at the Johan Cruyff Arena.

The Dutch becomes the fifth permanent manager to coach Manchester United following Sir Alex Ferguson's retirement in May

2013 after spending a remarkable 27 years at Old Trafford.

Though the Ajax gaffer has a final game on Sunday against Vitesse at the Gelredome Stadium before he departs for England, he was able to beat Roger Schmidt to the title with a four-point lead over PSV Eindhoven who also recorded a win against NEC Nijmegen in the

matchday 33 fixture.

Erik ten Hag's move from the Dutch top-flight league to the English Premier League has been indented on a good note as he delivered the 36th Eredivisie trophy to De Godenzonen.

Meanwhile, Manchester United have congratulated their incoming head coach Erik ten Hag after he

won the 36th Eredivisie trophy for Ajax on Wednesday.

"Ten Hag has a reputation as an attack-minded manager and that has certainly been evident with his side this term. Ajax have an impressive goal difference of 79, having scored 96 goals in the league so far," United wrote on its official website.

India 2022: Namibian officials to take charge of Ethiopia, Nigeria clash

The Confederation of African Football has appointed Namibian official Antsino Twanyanyukwa as the referee for next week's FIFA U17 Women's World Cup final qualifying round first leg match between Ethiopia and Nigeria in Addis Ababa.

Twanyanyukwa will be joined at the potentially explosive encounter, scheduled for the Abebe Bekila Stadium from 4 pm Ethiopia time on Friday 20th May, by compatriots Eveline Augustinus (assistant referee 1), Pulen Agnes Mahomo from Lesotho (assistant referee 2)

and another Namibian Vistoria Shangula (fourth official).

Amina Ali Karuma from Tanzania will serve as match commissioner while Ugandan Constance Adipo will be the referee assessor.

Nigeria's Flamingos prevailed over their Egyptian counterparts 6-0 on aggregate in the last round, after dismissing their counterparts from the Democratic Republic of Congo 8-0 on aggregate.

It is an all-Senegalese crew with Adia Isseu Cisse (assistant referee 1), Fatou Bintou Sene (assistant referee 2), and Fatou Thioune (fourth official) also heading to Nigeria's administrative capital.

Souadatou Djallo-Kalkaba from Cameroon will be the



match commissioner while Emmanuella Grace Aglago from Ghana will serve as referee assessor.

The winner on aggregate

will pick one of Africa's tickets to this year's FIFA U17 Women's World Cup finals, to hold in India from 11th - 30th October.

Injured Abdullahi recovers in hospital, out of WAFU B Championship



Flying Eagles' forward Ahmed Abdullahi has recovered and is recuperating in hospital following a scary incident during Nigeria versus Burkina Faso game at the WAFU B Championship in Niamey, Niger Republic on Wednesday.

The former Golden Eaglet, who scored Nigeria's second goal against Cup holders and African champions Ghana on Sunday after coming off the bench, was rushed

to hospital after suffering a head injury during the 2-2 draw with the Junior Etalons at the Stade General Seyni Kountché.

"The player has recovered fully and is in good health, but he is out of the tournament. We went through several scary hours before and after he got to the hospital, but we thank God that he is fully recovered now," Team Secretary Aliyu Lawal Ibrahim told thenff.com.

General Secretary of the NFF, Dr Mohammed Sanusi was with the Abdullahi at the hospital and asked the player to remain focused and pray for the team to succeed at the tournament.

The 2-2 draw sustained Nigeria's leadership of Group B, and the seven-time African champions will play in the semi-finals as group winners should Burkina Faso fail to defeat Ghana by up to three goals on Saturday.

'Erling Haaland signing for City makes no difference'

With the buzzing news of Borussia Dortmund striker, Erling Haaland agreeing on a deal to join Manchester City, the football community are marvelled at the English club for securing one of the world's most-sought goal punchers.

Haaland has featured for Dortmund in 88 games and has scored 85 goals which have made the youngster a highly courted asset among Europe's top clubs.

Real Madrid and Barcelona were reported to have been on the player's trail, with the latter having held talks with the 21-year-old regarding a switch to Camp Nou in the summer.

Though some reportage and sports journalists stressed that Real Madrid President

Florentino Perez has sealed a verbal agreement with the Norwegian, Manchester City in dire need of a natural centre-striker have succeeded in activating the €65m release clause of the player.

However, former Liverpool defender Jamie Carragher believes that there is nothing spectacular Haaland will add to Manchester City that are already playing at their peak.

Manchester City are almost set to win their fourth Premier League title in five years and Carragher thinks that a team that have been able to record an average of 95 points for three seasons, is revelling in its best.

Sequel the above, the former Liverpool man disagreed that Haaland's inclusion in the team

will guarantee Manchester City's success adding that the player will need time to fit into the team.

"He will score goals - that's what he has been brought in to do, of course, he will. But that doesn't guarantee that City will win everything. They will have to integrate him into the team. That means City will lose a creative player who helps them keep the ball," Carragher told Sky Sports.

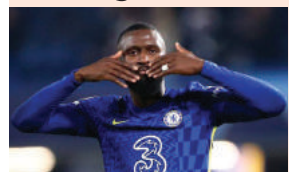
"There are lots of questions, including from myself. We will be analysing his performances at City and how he fits in. They had a world-class striker a few years ago in Sergio Aguero and they have another one now.

"It makes Man City stronger, of course, it does,"



said Carragher. "But I look at it a different way. There are so many points you can win in a season. Haaland is not going to elevate City to a different level, they are already at that level of getting 96 to 100 points a season.

Rudiger snubs United, others: signs 4-year-deal with Madrid



Chelsea defender Antonio Rudiger has snubbed Manchester United, Juventus, and Paris Saint-Germain to sign a four-year deal with Spanish giants Real Madrid.

Rudiger whose Chelsea's contract comes to an end this

season after talks with the West London club broke down, has agreed to a €400,000 a week deal with Los Blancos.

The switch by the 29-year-old German to Santiago Bernabeu did not augur well with many Chelsea fans, and club manager Thomas Tuchel who lamented over the ugly development.

Manchester United, Juventus, and PSG were interested in securing the services of the defensive rock after talks with Chelsea failed due to the UK

sanction on Roman Abramovich over the invasion of Ukraine by Russia.

Meanwhile, Tuchel has characterised Rudiger as a player who invigorates Chelsea's dressing room and acknowledged that over the one-half-year, he has proven to be top class.

He stressed that he did everything he could with the club to retain the player in Stamford Bridge but the sanction on the club stalled the

whole process.

"We gave everything - me and the club - but we could not fight anymore because of the sanctions. Without the sanctions, we would at least be able to carry on fighting, but our hands are tied. We don't take it personally. It is his decision," Tuchel told Sky Sports after the win against West Ham.

"He is a key figure and will stay that way until the end of the season. But it is disappointing. We will miss him a lot.

Al Ahly drag CAF to international court

Al Ahly has resolved to drag the Confederation of African Football (CAF) before the Court of Arbitration of Sports (CAS) over its decision to hold the final of this year's TotalEnergies CAF Champions League in Morocco.

The Egyptian club, in a statement, described the action of CAF as one that goes contrary to the rule of fair play adding that the resolve by CAF gives one of the teams an edge over the other.

Al Ahly already afoot in the final after demolishing the Algerian club, ES Sétif 4-0 in the first leg of the semi-final at Al-Salam Stadium in Cairo, had earlier sent a letter to CAF to consider using a neutral venue to host the grand finale of CAF Champions League.

However, despite the letter sent to the continental football governing body by the North African club, CAF went ahead to announce Morocco as the venue for the final after the Senegalese Football Association who were in the race to host it withdrew.

Moroccan club, Wydad AC is a finalist favourite which would probably see them slug it out with Egypt's Al Ahly in their home country, an occurrence the Red Devils will not allow to take place.

However, Al Ahly insisted that the club will unrelentingly, pursue its course until justice is served through a statement published on its official social media handles.

The statement read: "Al Ahly SC decided to present an appeal to CAS (Court of Arbitration for Sport) against the decision of the Confederation of African Football (CAF) of not holding the 2022 CAF Champions League final in a neutral

venue, aside from the venues of the four semi-finalists, in addition to other violations that do not meet the Olympic Charter, FIFA and CAF regulations.

"The club has previously demanded CAF to play the game in a neutral venue and will appeal against CAF's decision, requesting CAS to resolve the situation before the competition's final.

"CAF announced in their statement, which was published yesterday on CAF's official platforms, the chosen venue to host the game and mentioned in the same statement that they are in discussions to revert to the old two-legged home and away final.

"Moreover, Al Ahly SC hopes that CAF will be keen not to disrupt justice and that they will provide CAS with all the required documents that will help in achieving justice.

"Al Ahly's decision to appeal to CAS came after CAF took the decision to hold the CAF Champions League final in the same venue for the second season in a row.

"This decision will give a home advantage to a certain team that will play at home in front of their fans in addition to violating other laws and regulations.

"CAF stated that their decision was based on the fact that there was only one bidder available to host the match without giving a proper explanation over the reasons behind the withdrawal of the other bid," the statement read.

Al Ahly travel to Algeria on Saturday, May 14, 2022, to tackle ES Sétif in the second leg of the semi-final while Wydad AC host Angolan club, Petro de Luanda at Mohammed V Stadium on Friday.



I am not injured, I live with it, says defeated Nadal

Spain's world number 4 Rafael Nadal has refuted claims that he was injured in the round of 16 clash with Canada's world number 16 Denis Shapovalov after he limped off the court in the Italian Open.

Nadal started the contest on a brilliant note, winning the first set distinctively, but fell to the relentless Shapovalov's clinical strokes to concede to a 1-6-7-5-6-2 defeat.

The Spaniard, who was evidently limping during the round of 16 action after sustaining a brilliant start, said that he felt excruciating pains

in his foot which degenerated as the game progressed.

However, the Spaniard is not new to being affected by injuries which have reoriented the tennis star's mindset towards living with it as a normal thing.

The 35-year-old Spanish only recently returned to action after suffering a rib injury that forced him out of action for six weeks.





Nigeria set to host TotalEnergies Confederation Cup final

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

Nigeria will on May 20, 2022, host the final of the 2021/22 TotalEnergies Confederation Cup at the Godswill Akpabio International Stadium, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

CAF in a statement on its official website announced that it has awarded the right to Nigeria to host the finals with the home of Nigeria Premier League club, Akwa United pinpointed as the venue for the cracker.

The continental football governing body in last year's edition chose Benin Republic with Cotonou as the designated venue for the match which Moroccan club, Raja Club Athletic won.

According to CAF which is yet to fix the kick-off time for the match slated for next week, the second leg for the semi-finals among four African clubs, will be played this week Sunday, 15

May, 2022.

CAF statement reading part: "CAF has today announced that Godswill Akpabio International Stadium in Uyo, Nigeria will host the 2021/22 TotalEnergies Confederation Cup final on Friday, 20 May 2022.

"CAF will confirm the kick-off time in due course.

"This is the first intercontinental major cup final to be hosted in Godswill Akpabio International Stadium in Uyo. Uyo is the capital of Akwa Ibom State – the home of Nigeria's Premier League side Akwa United.

"Last year (2021), the TotalEnergies Confederation Cup was hosted in Cotonou, Benin where Morocco's Raja Club Athletic beat Algerian side, JS Kabylie 2-1," the statement read.

Four teams battling to qualify for the grand finale in Uyo, include DR Congo's TP Mazembe who narrowly secured a 1-0 victory over RS Berkane of Morocco, and Orlando Pirates that edged Libya's Al Ahli Tripoli to a 2-0 win in the first leg of the semi-finals.



Kevin De Bruyne is beyond perfect, says Guardiola

Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola has heaped praises on Belgium star Kevin De Bruyne after the latter led the riot that demolished Wolverhampton Wanderers at the Molineux Stadium, yesterday.

Manchester City, contending for the Premier League title this season with four points needed to ice the campaign after the 5-1 win on Wednesday, saw the midfielder scoring four of the five goals to attain eight goals in eight games.

According to Guardiola, Kevin De Bruyne has been very instrumental to the success of the club in the second half of the season, dismantling all obstacles to their surge for the trophy.

"What can I say? The second part of the league he has been beyond perfect," Guardiola said in Sky Sports' dock.

"He is a guy who is always so generous, always has the sense to make the assist. But I think this season he has also had the sense to be prolific to score goals. He scored against Chelsea, he scored against Madrid, and he has been decisive in scoring goals. In the end, this is what makes the greatest.

"I am very pleased for him because, of course, scoring four goals in the decisive part of the league is so important," he added.

Manchester City have been put under pressure by Liverpool which prompted the manager to react recently that the whole of England is supporting the Reds to win the trophy.

Liverpool fought to close the gap with Manchester City to a point until they drew with Antonio Conte's men and Manchester City reconfigured Newcastle United to extend the lead to three points.

However with two games left for both teams having played 36 games of the 38 matches in the Premier League season, Manchester City need a minimum of a win and a draw, except Liverpool's two outcomes, go otherwise, to lift their fourth Premier League title in five years.



FIFA review Chile's petition against Ecuador

The world's football governing body (FIFA) said it has opened disciplinary proceedings against Ecuador over an allegation bordering on falsification that was brought before its panel by the Football Federation of Chile.

Chilean Football Federation reported Ecuador who secured automatic qualification to the 2022 Qatar World Cup after emerging fourth in the CONMEBOL tourney, for fielding an ineligible player.

According to the Chilean federation, one of Ecuador's defenders, Byron Castillo, who is

alleged to be a Colombian, falsified his age and nationality to play eight matches for Ecuador; an act that is a breach of FIFA's rule.

Chile in the petition asked FIFA to void all games Castillo featured in and award the points to the other teams.

FIFA, in granting Chile's plea, will offer them the leverage to leapfrog Peru and Colombia to the fourth position, a position that automatically gives them a qualifying ticket to Qatar.

Following, FIFA in a statement confirming the receipt of Chile's

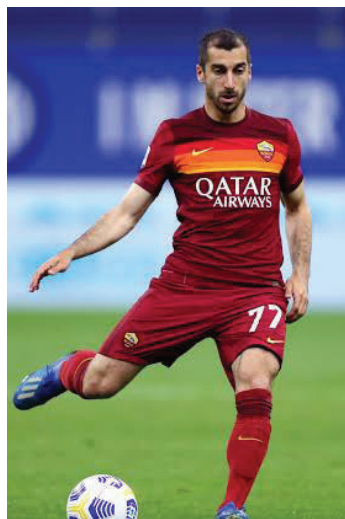
petition revealed it has invited the Ecuador football federation and their Peruvian counterpart regarding the issue.

The statement read: "As recently confirmed by FIFA, the Chilean Football Federation has filed a complaint with the FIFA Disciplinary Committee, in which it presents various allegations about the possible falsification of the documents that grant Ecuadorian nationality to the player Byron David Castillo Segura, as well as the possible non-compliance of a said footballer with the call criteria to participate with

the national team of the Ecuadorian Football Federation (FEF) in eight qualifying matches, corresponding to the preliminary phase of the Qatar 2022 FIFA World Cup.

"In view of the foregoing, FIFA has decided to open disciplinary proceedings in relation to Byron David Castillo Segura's possible breach of the call criteria for the indicated matches. In this context, the FEF and the Peruvian Football Federation have been invited to present their positions before the FIFA Disciplinary Committee," the statement added.

'Henrikh Mkhitaryan, the amazing Roma utility figure



Jose Mourinho has praised former United midfielder Henrikh Mkhitaryan for being an amazing player in the Roma squad to the extent of obliging to feature in unfamiliar roles.

Mourinho during an interaction with Sky Sports pointed out that the player has fitted into many positions especially during the Covid19 pandemic when the Roma squad was hit.

The Roma boss, who had an estranged relationship with the player when both were still at Manchester United, revealed that contrary to the belief that they would not get along, Mkhitaryan and him are having a perfect rapport.

Mourinho said, "We [Mkhitaryan]

[Community Shield, League Cup, Europa League] at Man United, unfortunately, the last three titles of Man United. I say 'unfortunately' because, yes, I like the club very, very much and I wish the club the best.

"We won three titles together so everything went well. In the second season, we were a little bit different. The thing that makes me really happy was because, in the beginning, people try to go on a negative and say, 'Miki with Jose has no chance, Jose is the kind of guy when things go wrong never go well again', it was proven exactly the opposite. We were very mature, and honest with each other at that time even with Mino (Raiola), rest in

good.

"I try always to be very honest with the players. I saw my project in Rome needing a player like Miki, I also understand the importance of Miki in the group and he's having an amazing season.

"He's helping us cope with all the problems that we face as a small squad. Miki has been playing everywhere, a winger, as a 10, then we had injuries and Covid situations and he became a central midfielder which he's never been in his life.

"I am so happy with Miki and I'm happy with people understanding me not everything is black or white. It's possible that a player comes with a different relationship than it was in the past," Mourinho added.