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Sheriff await
Ogboru in all-
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guber battle**

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CHANGE OF NAME

**DO CHANGE OF NAME, ADDITION
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Atiku



Obi



Wike



Anyim



Dele Momodu



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Ohuabunwa



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Bala Mohammed



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Battle of titans as presidential primaries enter business end, PDP kick-starts exercise

By **TUNDE JOSHUA**
 (Abuja), **CHARLES ONYEKWERE**
 (Abakaliki), **AHERHOKE OKIOMA** (Yenagoa),
ALEX OLISE (Lagos)

It is a weekend of anxiety, tension and pressure as the race for the 2023 presidential election will properly kick off today with the 811 national delegates of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) gathering at MKO Abiola National Stadium, Abuja to elect one of its 15 aspirants as the standard bearer.

The ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) has shifted its presidential primary election to June 6-7 until PDP picks its torchbearer.

Attempt was made at narrowing down the PDP contest by northern aspirants to produce a consensus candidate among Saraki, Tambuwal, Bala Mohammed and Mohammed Hayatu -Deen but the parley broke down and the gladiators decided to run solo.

The party also disappointed members from the south east at the peak of agitation for southern presidency when it's zoning committee led by Benue State governor, Samuel Ortom decided not to zone the presidential ticket.

Throwing it open made the aspirants to jettison parley talks and go all out on individual strength to test their popularity.

But along the line, it became obvious that some of the aspirants are not just in the race. Findings revealed that former Ekiti State governor, Ayodele Fayose, media mogul, Dele Momodu are being sponsored by one of the leading aspirant while South East contenders like, Nwachukwu Anakwenze, Sam Oluwalade were passive in their campaign while the former governor of Anambra State, Peter Obi surprisingly quit the race and dumped the party.

Aspirants like Hayatu -Deen is much more feasible on the social and electronics media while nothing was heard about almost seven of the aspirants after purchasing the nomination forms.

Among the array of aspirants, the pendulum of success tilted towards three major contenders. According to opinion polls and power inter-play in the party, the leading aspirants

are; former Vice President, Atiku Abubakar, Rivers State governor, Nyesom Wike, former Senate President, Bukola Saraki and Sokoto State governor, Aminu Tambuwal.

Atiku Abubakar, the party's candidate in 2019 is no doubt still a contender to beat by every standard because of his influence, alliance with stakeholders across geopolitical zone and financial muscle.

Atiku has some top notchers in the party working for his aspiration and pushing for his emergence. In the northern parts of the country, he stands a better chance of winning delegates from the North East and North Central. Taraba State governor Darius Ishaku and his godfather, Theophilus Danjuma are behind him while the Bauchi governor, Bala Mohammed may step down for Atiku at the convention ground. Rumour even had it that Bala will go back to pursue his second governorship term.

His chances of dominance in the north central may be punctured by the influence of Saraki who is likely to have the votes of Kwara delegates. But, the former governor of Kogi State is rallying Kogi delegate vote for Atiku.

The North West will be a battle field for Atiku, Tambuwal and to an extent, Saraki. The zone no doubt has the highest number of delegates.

Tambuwal is likely to have a larger bite of the bites from Sokoto, Zamfara, Jigawa and Katsina while Atiku will clinch Kaduna where he has the backing of former governor, Ahmed Markafi and Kano.

Wike who took the race by surprise is running at an unprecedented speed. He approached the campaign with all vigour and seriousness and he is among the front runners in today's contest.

With the help of the Oyo State governor, Seyi Makinde and former Ekiti governor, Fayose, Wike has made an inroad into the South West and may split the votes of the zone with Atiku. Both Wike and Atiku have polarized the Ogun State chapter of PDP, which resulted in the state producing two governorship candidates from parallel congresses.

In the South South, Wike is going to split votes with Akwa Ibom governor, Emmanuel Udom. Wike has foothold in Rivers and Edo while Emmanuel has



Peter Obi and chieftains of Labour Party

his grip on Akwa Ibom and Cross River while Governor Ifeanyi Okowa may deliver Delta delegates to Atiku.

The South West also will be a straight battle between Wike and Atiku. Governors Okezie Ikpeazu and Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi are allies of Atiku while Wike made an inroad in Ebonyi, Anambra and Enugu by raising faction simply to gain parts of the delegates votes.

While Wike may have weaker links in the north, Tambuwal may pick strain of votes in the southern parts of the country counting on his parliamentary alliance with former lawmakers in the House of Representatives.

Analysts are of the opinion that Wike might be banking on his financial war chest to rake delegates in zones where he is not too strong. He is believed to have more financial muscle than Atiku who is being circumspect in spending, probably conserving monetary energy till voting day.

Meanwhile, the political atmosphere is still hazy with the ruling APC as there is more confusion on the direction the party is going to take.

Amid this uncertainty, more confusion was thrown into APC political calculus as yesterday, a court cleared former President Goodluck Jonathan as eligible to contest the 2023 presidency.

This reawakened anticipated push for a Jonathan's consensus candidacy. The party has not made any pronouncement in this regard while the former president had in the past denied running.

Findings revealed that top echelon of APC leadership deliberately delayed screening of aspirants to await the ruling of the Federal High Court, Yenagoa on Friday.

It is expected that decisive position either towards consensus or otherwise may be taken as soon as President Muhammadu Buhari return

to the country today.

Precedent from the last national convention of the party indicates that Buhari calls the shot in APC and may have a say in breaking the ice.

The fallout from a scenario of Buhari endorsing Jonathan, is better imagined as aggrieved stakeholders may face the president in the eyes.

The Trumpet gathered that the 3,222 national delegates are not likely to take things lowly should the party go ahead with a consensus option as they will missed out of the expected monetary windfall.

Whatever happened in the next 24 hours will determine the chances of APC retaining power in 2023.

Peter Obi joins Labour Party to contest presidential election

Former governor of Anambra State and erstwhile presidential aspirant on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Peter Obi, has formally joined the Labour Party (LP) to contest the 2023 presidential election.

A close source confirmed that Obi registered as a member of the party on Friday in his ward in Anambra State. He is expected to contest the party's presidential primary election next Tuesday. The Trumpet had on Wednesday reported that Obi was planning to dump the PDP for Labour Party.

"The results of various primaries of the party conducted so far have shown who most of these delegates are loyal to," the source had said.

"So, he (Obi) is under pressure to leave the PDP for the moneybags, we are currently looking to find another party to accept him."

Obi had resigned his membership of the PDP two days before its presidential primary. He said his resignation was because of

the recent developments in the opposition party. In a letter dated May 24, 2022, and addressed to the national chairman of the PDP, Iyorchia Ayu, Obi said he had already informed the chairman of the PDP chapter in his Agulu Ward 2, in Anambra State.

"I am writing to intimate you of my resignation from the PDP, which was conveyed to the chairman of Agulu Ward 2, Anaocha LGA, effective Friday, May 20, 2022. Consequently, I am by this letter informing you of my withdrawal from the PDP Presidential Primary.

"It has been a great honour to contribute to nation-building efforts through our party. Unfortunately, recent developments within our party make it practically impossible to continue participating and making such constructive contributions," Obi said in the letter.

Meanwhile, more information has emerged on why Peter Obi formally joined the LP to contest the 2023 presidential election.

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Also, a Federal High Court sitting in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, has declared that former President Goodluck Jonathan is eligible to contest the 2023 election.

The presiding judge, Justice Isa Dashen, made the declaration in the judgement which lasted for over two hours on Friday. Justice Dashen held that Jonathan was elected into the office of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria once in 2011 as he only completed the term of Late President Umaru Musa Yar'adua in 2010 "not on the basis of any election but by constitutional appointment."

He further declared as "spurious, baseless and unsubstantiated," the plaintiffs claims that Jonathan has been elected as president on two previous elections. He also ruled that Jonathan's right to contest for the office of president again cannot be denied by any retroactive law.

In an origination summons filed by some members of the All Progressives Congress, APC, led by Andy Solomon and Idibiye Abraham, the plaintiffs had sought an order of the court stating that Jonathan is not affected by the fourth alteration to the constitution barring Vice-Presidents, who succeed their principals, from serving more than one full term.

In the suit marked FHC/YNG/CS/86/2022, the Jonathan, the All Progressives Congress, APC, and the Independent National Electoral

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Battle of titans as presidential primaries enter business end, PDP kick-starts exercise

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Commission, INEC, were listed as defendants. In his reaction to the judgement, counsel to Jonathan, Eric Omare, said: "Some members of the All Progressives Congress, APC, led by Andy Solomon approached the federal high court to seek for two declarations. Essentially, his case was that by virtue of Section 137 subsections 1(b), Jonathan having taken the oath of office as president on two occasions is disqualified from contesting the presidential election.

"Secondly, he also contended that by virtue of Section 137 subsection 3 which was brought into the Constitution by the fourth alterations to the Constitution in 2018, Jonathan having completed the term of late President Umaru Musa Yar'adua and having served one term is no longer qualified to contest.

"We joined the issues with them and today in a well considered judgment that lasted for over two hours, the court agreed with us that one, Jonathan had not contested for the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on two occasions that he only completed the term of late President Yar'adua on the basis of constitutional requirements.

"Secondly, the court also held that the fourth alteration which also introduced Sections 137, subsection 3, does not apply to disqualify Jonathan. So, in summary the court agreed with us and held that Jonathan is qualified to contest the 2023 presidential election."

Reacting to the judgement, counsel to the plaintiffs, Sigma Egbuwabi, said: "We are the plaintiffs' counsel in this suit challenging the eligibility of the first defendant, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, we canvassed our position before the court that he is no longer eligible by the introduction of Section 137 subsection (1b) and subsection 3 because he has taken the oath for the office of the president twice.

"Because he has taken the oath to the office of the President twice and by introduction of subsections 3 which is the law as it is now, it is our position that under that law he is going to be screened for the election coming 2023 which primaries will commence very soon.

"What we have canvassed is that he is no longer eligible. Ordinarily, we know that former President Jonathan is a good person, a person who has ruled this country with integrity and dignity. We do not have any

challenge having him back again, however, we also do not want a situation where he will come to transgress the law.

"For so much integrity he has acquired, he worked hard to acquire all these and he will not be allowed to slip into an error that will make him transgress. The law will not equally speak well of him. That was the reason why our clients who were the plaintiffs instituted this matter.

"The court has though ruled otherwise but we are eager to have a copy of the judgement. We will come together and look at it critically but I always assuage everybody that we will go to the court of appeal to test it.

It is not as if we are eager to deny him contesting the presidential election but what we are maintaining is that he cannot be allowed to transgress the law that is what we are maintaining and by provisions of that Subsection 3 though it commence in 2018, what we are maintaining is that he is no longer eligible. The law now as it is, we are talking of the law as it is, not the law as its ought to be, not the law, not the law as it was but the law as it is."

Security strengthened in Abuja

Ahead of the PDP primary election, the police have beefed up security in the Federal Capital Territory.

The event is slated to hold on May 28 and 29 at Moshood Abiola National Stadium in Abuja.

A statement by FCT command spokesperson Josephine Adeg, a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), said: "Consequent upon the above and in a bid to ensure a hitch-free event, the FCT Police Command has designed a robust security arrangement defined by a generous deployment within and without the election ground and to every nooks and cranny of the Territory.

"The deployment prioritizes the protection of lives and properties of all and sundry by emplacing counter-insurgency measures, maintenance of clear road access, Robust stop and search at strategic points around the suburbs and city center, effective crowd control, and intelligence gathering but to mention a few.

"In the light of the above, the Commissioner of Police FCT Police Command CP Babaji Sunday while briefing the Divisional Police Officers, heads of the various Tactical and Intelligence Units of the Command scheduled for the operation, charged them to be on top of their games,



Ayu

discharging their duties with the utmost respect for fundamental human rights and by standard best practices.

"He, therefore charged the good people of the FCT to go about the discharge of their lawful duties without the fear of harassment or molestation of any kind from any quarters.

"The good people of the FCT are therefore urged to remain vigilant and report any suspicious or abnormal occurrence to the Police through the following emergency lines: 08032003913, 08061581938, 07057337653, and 08028940883, While the Public Complaint Bureau (PCB) desk, could be reached on: 0902 222 2352."

Meanwhile, a civil society and former student activist, Engineer Esanero Agbodo, has entered the presidential race as an independent candidate.

The manifesto of Mr. Agbodo who is also a pastor and a newspaper columnist states:

1. To establish a Nigeria Company PLC that all Nigerians will be shareholders and money credited to their accounts every month as Nigeria earn income. This monies accruing to their accounts cannot be withdrawn for frivolous activities but every Bank will have a strict instruction with a law from the federal government to release such monies only for productive ventures that will impart positively on the economy or for educational purposes. With this monies in their accounts, they don't need a collateral to access loans that borders on small and medium scale industries because currently, most Nigerians especially youths cannot access Bank loans to promote their conceived ventures.

On the area of education, the Nigeria Company PLC will also guarantee any student loan from any Bank in Nigeria. This will expand the activities of the student loan board because every Nigerian desirous of educating himself or herself to the highest level should be encouraged as their development also impact on

the overall development of the country.

This access to loans will alleviate the sufferings of students and youths especially in the Higher institutions of learning.

2. I will also promote free and compulsory education at the primary and secondary schools levels to ensure that every Nigerian child have the basic education that is needed to develop themselves and the country. Free education will include free books and a well equipped library in all government schools to cater for further educational researches. Even private schools will be mandated to establish libraries to cater for the need of Nigerian students.

3. In the area of Agricultural development, my government will establish 800 government farms across Nigeria and in all local governments of Nigeria for a start. These farms will guarantee food security and create jobs for youths as food and cash crops will also be processed to make them durable for a period of time either for local consumption in Nigeria or for export to shore up our foreign exchange earnings.

The government farms will stabilize the prices of food stuffs in Nigeria so that the Nigerian population is well fed.

4. My government will also establish a strong social security system to guarantee that every Nigerian especially jobless youths are paid stipends either weekly or monthly to cater for their basic needs. My position is that all the crises and challenges in Nigeria today, whether the ones wearing religious garbs or ethnic colorations are all traceable to poverty especially among the youths and the only way to address the matter from the root is to ensure that every Nigerian youth is engaged or given hope for a better future through the effective social security arrangement.

5. On Security and Unity of Nigerians, I will engage all warring factions in Nigeria in a dialogue to address the issues from the root and in the interest of all Nigerians. But if any faction is seen to be insistent on pursuing violent options in furthering their goals, my government will not waste anytime to bring the full weight of the armed forces on such groups until they are decimated.

6. This and others including massive infrastructural development will be implemented if voted as the Nigerian President in the 2023 election. God bless the federal republic of Nigeria.

PDP is finished for plotting anti Igbo agenda, says HURIWA

Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria

(HURIWA) has accused the current hierarchy of the leading opposition political party in Nigeria, PDP of engaging in a choreographed SUICIDE MISSION by hatching and implementing active but corrosive and toxic anti-Igbo antics by withholding the zoning of the Presidency in 2023 to the South East to assuage the longstanding systematic and systemic marginalisation of the region in the political scheme of things.

HURIWA also accused Rivers State Governor Nyesom Wike of inflicting irreparable damage to the soul of the PDP by hijacking the party's National secretariat due to the overwhelming selfish ambition he is nursing to corner the slot of the candidacy of the party for the 2023 Presidency just as the Rights group accused political weaklings amongst some corrupt minded Igbo elites of conniving with him.

HURIWA said the fear of the unknown is driving Wike's horrific ambition to seize the Presidential slot of PDP because he is mortally afraid that should his arch political rival Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi get the Presidential slot of the APC and wins the 2023 Presidency then certainly, he could face political persecution by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission over alleged financial indiscretion since the last 8 years in power.

HURIWA also carpeted the governor for criticising Mr. Peter Obi for quitting the "heavily cash compromised PDP."

HURIWA which commended the former governor of Anambra State for displaying highest sense of conviction and political principles to walk out of the "collapsing political house called PDP due to the stinking CASH-AND-CARRY animalistic tendencies within the leading opposition political party the PDP which is bent on chasing away the South-East of Nigeria from her fold because having used and dumped the South East of Nigeria, the party now wishes to become a slave of the North or of Mr. Nyesom Wike.

"These two tendencies of Atiku Abubakar and Nyesom Wike have combined to ensure that South East of Nigeria does not get her deserved pride of place in the party they had laboured for over the past twenty years even at the risks of suffering some of the harshest policies of marginalisation and political apartheid from the President Muhammadu Buhari's administration for

the last 7 years because the South East has since 1999 been voting enmasse for the People's Democratic Party".

HURIWA also commended the immediate past Minority Leader Senator Enyinnaya Abaribe for abandoning the PDP because of the anti-Igbo sentiments and the antics of divide and rule just as it said the PDP has lost the support of the South East and will pay dearly for this sabotage of the political right of the Igbo.

HURIWA recalled that Abaribe had tendered a letter to the Senate President indicating that he has just resigned from his position even as this was sequel to his resignation from the PDP under which he was elected to the Senate in 2019. Abaribe announced his resignation in two separate letters – one addressed to his Ward Chairman and the other to the Senate President, Ahmad Lawan, dated 24th and 26th May, 2022 respectively.

HURIWA praised the Senator Abaribe and Obi for showing courage and determination to stand for justice, truth, social and political ideological principles and for taking a long walk away from the house of scam that the People's Democratic Party has suddenly become even as the Rights group told the PDP that its only redemption is to concede the slot of the President of Nigeria in the 2023 General election to the South East of Nigeria in line with the provisions of the constitution of the party.

HURIWA said zoning of offices by political parties is a fulfillment of Section 14(3) of the 1999 Constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria as amended which speaks to the issue of respecting FEDERAL CHARACTER PRINCIPLES in the allocation of offices and projects in the federation.

HURIWA said it offends the principles of natural justice and national unity that Igbo that has one of the three largest population of Nigeria has been treated with the short-end of the stick through the connivance of the Hausa/Fulani North and some reactionary elitist elements of the South West extraction for their selfish agenda which is undermining National cohesion.

In 2019, with Obi on the ballot as running mate to Atiku, the PDP garnered 1,693,485 votes (75 per cent) from the five states of the South-East; and 1,255,357 votes (27.5 per cent) from the North-East.

Conversely, the APC polled 403,968 votes (19 per cent) in the South-East and 3,238,783 votes (67.5 per cent) in the North-East.

Omo-Agege, Sheriff await Ogboru in all- Urhobo Delta guber battle

•Joel-Onowakpo Thomas, Emergor hail DSP's emergence

By **GABRIEL ELOZINO**, Asaba

With the emergence of Deputy Senate President Ovie Omo-Agege and House of Assembly Speaker, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborewori, as standard bearers of All Progressives Congress (APC) and Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) respectively, the stage is set for another titanic governorship battle with veteran old warhorse, Chief Great Ovedje Ogboru, in Delta State

Ogboru is being speculated to join the contest on the platform of All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) in what promises to be an all-Urhobo affair.

Until the emergence of APC as the main opposition political party in Delta, Ogboru had always been the major arrowhead of the fight against PDP in the state. He has contested all the governorship elections in the state since 2003, flying different parties' flags including the APC's in

2019.

Oborewori picked the PDP governorship ticket with ease, beating others including Deputy Governor Kingsley Burutu Oturo.

At the election held, on Thursday, 25th May 2022, at the Steven Keshi Stadium, Asaba, Sheriff polled 590 votes of the 821 valid delegates ballots cast, leaving his closest rival David Edevbie in a distant second with 113 votes. Serving Senator representing Delta South

Senatorial District, Senator James Manager came third with 83 votes.

Senator Omo-Agege, emerged as the APC torch-bearer after he was returned unopposed at the party's governorship primaries held at Federal College of Education, Technical, Asaba, after polling 1190 votes. A total of 1350 delegates were expected to take part in the election. However, only 1235 were accredited, with 1191 casting their votes. One of the

votes was voided leaving the total number of valid votes at 1190.

Omo-Agege in an interview shortly after his declaration, welcomed the candidate of the PDP into the contest, saying: "I don't care about who has emerged in the opposition. He is much welcomed into the arena. There is no structure outside Deltans and what Deltans want."

He said the 2023 election is about the liberation of Deltans, stressing that the APC was in a hurry to get to work and deliver the people from long years of suffering under the PDP.

He added: "We are very confident because we have taken our time to go on the best recruitment drive to pick the very best that will deliver the best in addition to our grassroots commanders who will lead this charge to uproot the failed PDP administration in Delta State."

For the first time since 2007, all the major political parties in the state will be fielding candidates from not just the central senatorial district but also the same ethnic nationality (Urhobo) for the governorship contest: Ovie Omo-Agege, Orogun, Ughelli North Local Government Area, (APC); Oborewori, Osubi, Okpe Local Government Area (PDP) and Ogboru,

Abraka, Ethiope East Local Government Area (APGA).

With the likely third force still officially being awaited, the stage is now set for who eventually becomes the next governor of the state.

Reacting to the emergence of Omo-Agege, APC's front-line consensus aspirant for Delta South Senatorial District, Hon. Joel Onowakpo Thomas, expressed optimism that the party was now poised for victory at all levels in the 2023 general elections.

Thomas is set to clinch the Delta South senatorial election ticket in Warr on Saturday.

Also speaking, a leader of the APC in Delta, Olorogun O'tega Emerhor, said for the first time the party was prepared to win elections in the state.

He said: "we thank God for a day like this because Delta State have been waiting for this day. For this first time I can say we are now ready to face PDP in Delta State. If you remember, I took up this mantle in 2015. I have been a governorship candidate of the APC so I know when we are ready. "This time around we are overrunning Delta State. We are rescuing Delta State. The primaries process went through the guidelines that have been prescribed by our party and the electoral act and we are ready."

FG to introduce e-procurement in contract documentation

By **ISAAC JOB**, Uyo

The federal government has said that it will begin the process of electronic documentation and packaging of contract procedures to make public procurement more transparent in line with international standards and best practices.

Addressing participants at a Two Day Retreat for Federal Permanent Secretaries held in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State capital, on Friday, the Director-General, Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP), Mallam Mamman Ahmadu, disclosed that the e-procurement system is being developed by the Bureau in partnership with the World Bank and 10 Ministries, Departments and Agencies selected as Pilot Procuring Entities before the full roll-out of the e-system. Ahmadu said the theme of the



Dr Folasade Yemi-Esan

retreat is "Strengthening Public Procurement for Optimal Effectiveness" adding that the benefits of e-procurement are tremendous.

He emphasized that one of the objectives of the retreat is to improve

procurement implementation in Nigeria and ensure effective execution of the annual budget.

"It is rewarding to note that tremendous improvements have been recorded in public procurement process over the years.

"However, there is need to do more to maximize the gains already recorded and to close gaps on the lapses."

In her remarks, Dr Folasade Yemi-Esan, Head of Service of the Federation, urged the permanent secretaries to demonstrate commitment toward addressing the capacity gaps of all officers involved in procurement cycles.

"This can be done by ensuring frequent training, retraining, tooling/retooling and performance assessment. In line with international best practices and the peculiarities of

procurement processes, we must embrace the emplace-ment of e-procurement practices and private sector participation."

Akwa Ibom State Governor, Udom Emmanuel, said the state government is prepared for the reforms of procurement services through the enactment of public procurement laws by the State House of Assembly.

Governor Emmanuel, who was represented by the Deputy Governor, Mr Moses Ekpo, stated that the state government has domesticated the regulated procurement culture in the affairs of the state.

"Before the enactment of the Procurement Act, corruption in procurement accounted for large fractions of government's total budget."

APC guber aspirants reject primaries result in Akwa Ibom

By **ISAAC JOB**, Uyo

Two aggrieved governorship aspirants of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Akwa Ibom State, Senator Ita Enang and Mr Augustine Utuk, have protested and rejected the emergence of Obong Akan Udofia, as the winner of the party's governorship primaries held in Uyo on Friday The Trumpet gathered.

Addressing a press conference in Uyo on Friday shortly after the APC gubernatorial primaries, Senator Ita Enang, the immediate past Senior Special Assistant (SSA) to President Muhammadu Buhari, on Niger Delta Affairs, who led other aspirants in the protest, noted that the outcome of the exercise was not in line with the provisions of the Electoral Act, 2022.

Ita Enang disclosed that Akan Udofia is not a member of APC in his ward and claimed that the exercise was heavily stage-managed to have a

predetermined outcome in favour of the purported winner.

According to him, all the aggrieved aspirants have written a petition to the National Executive Council (NEC) of the APC, to avert the crises which, he observed, could lead to the party not having a governorship candidate as was the case in Zamfara and Rivers State in 2019.

He said the purported winner of the APC governorship primaries in Akwa Ibom was on the ballot paper of PDP governorship primaries conducted at Godswill Akpabio International Stadium a few days ago and wondered how he sauntered into the venue of the APC primaries and later emerged the winner.

Ita Enang insisted that such irregularities and broad daylight robbery can dim the chances of APC in 2023.

"The name Akan Udofia, was a PDP member and governorship aspirant and had never defected and was

given the ticket at a primary that was not monitored and supervised by INEC and security agencies.

"By God's grace, we all filed out, praying and wishing that one of us shall emerge in a duly conducted process. Unfortunately, that dream for a peaceful and orderly conduct did not happen."

He queried the process by which the acclaimed winner of the primaries emerged in the state.

"The guidelines for the conduct of the primaries in the APC stipulates that aspirants should be furnished with delegates list. The party did not make this important document available to us. Only one aspirant was supplied the delegates list in the state, thus hedging the entire process in his favour."

The senator recalled that while party delegates and supporters were already at the venue of the primary, delegate tags were being issued at the country home of Senator Godswill Obot Akpabio in Ukana in Es-

sien Udim Council Area of the state adding that accreditation of delegates was not supervised by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) as required by law. He explained irregularities in the conduct of the APC primaries was perfected from the Akwa Ibom Airport where the officials were ambushed by paid thugs.

"The pandemonium had lasted for over four hours before the team chaired by Omoba Tunde Ajibulu, with Ms Evelyn Okere as Secretary, were rescued by officials of the Department of State Services."

He, therefore, urged the national leadership of the APC and other stakeholders to explore a round table, a possible window to address the problem to avoid the experience of 2019 in Zamfara and Rivers State.

ATABOR

I, formerly known and called: **ATABO JULIANA OJOCHNEMI**, henceforth wish to be known and called: **ATABOR JULIANA OJOCHNEMI**. Former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and general public to take note

Governorship candidates

Abia: Prof. Uche Ikonne (PDP), Ikechi Emenike (APC)

Adamawa: Governor Ahmadu Fintiri (PDP), Senator Aishatu Dahiru Binani (APC)

Borno: Mohammed Jajari (PDP), Gov. Babagana Zulum (APC)

Bauchi: Ibrahim Kassim (PDP), Air Marshall Sadiq Abubakar RTD (APC)

Delta: Sherif Oborewori (PDP), Senator Ovie Omo - Age (APC)

Enugu: Peter Mbah (PDP), Uche Nnaji (APC)

Gombe: Ibrahim Barde (PDP), Gov. Inuwa Yahaya (APC)

Jigawa: Mustapha Lamido (PDP), Umar Namadi (APC)

Kaduna: Isa Ashiru (PDP), Senator Uba Dani (APC)

Kano: Mohammed Sani Abacha (PDP), Nasiru Idris (APC)

Lagos: Olajide Adediran (PDP), Gov. Babajide Sanwo- Olu (APC)

Nasarawa: Hon. David Ombugadu (PDP), Gov. Abdullahi Sule (APC)

Ogun: Ladi Adebute (PDP), Gov. Dapo Abiodun (APC)

Rivers: Fubara Siminialayi (PDP), Tonye Cole (APC)

Taraba: Kefas Agbu (PDP), Senator Emmanuel Bwacha (APC)

Niger: Isah Kantigi (PDP), Hon. Mohammed Bago (APC)

Kwara: Yahman Abdullah (PDP), Gov. Abdulrshman Abdulrazaq (APC)

Yobe: Sheriff Abdullahi (PDP), Gov. Mai Mala Buni (APC)

Akwa Ibom: Umo Eno (PDP), Akanimo Udofia (APC)

Katsina: Yakubu LADO (PDP), Dikko Umar Radda (APC)

Kebbi: Aminu Muhammed Bande (PDP), Nasiru Idris (APC)

FG slams 23-count charge on Osinachi's husband

By BENJAMIN OMOIKE, METRO EDITOR/LAGOS BUREAU CHIEF

The Attorney-General of the Federation has filed 23-count charges against Peter Nwachukwu, the husband of late gospel artist, Osinachi, who died in April after she was allegedly assaulted by her spouse.

He was charged under sections 104 and 379 of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act, 2015 and culpable homicide contrary to section 221 of the Penal Code which is punishable with death.

The case with charge number, CR/199/2022, was

filed at the High Court of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, on May 20, 2022, by the Head, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, Department of Public Prosecutions of the Federation, Ministry of Justice, Mrs Yewande Gbola-Awopetun.

The prosecutor accused the defendant of forcefully ejecting the deceased from the family home, contrary to the VAP Act, adding that he also attempted culpable homicide by pushing Osinachi out of a moving vehicle.

The Federal Government further alleged that the defendant deprived the deceased

of her liberty by restraining her movement and locking her up in the house.

Nwachukwu was equally accused of emotional, verbal and psychological abuse contrary to section 14(1) of the VAP Act, 2015.

The defendant was said to have denied Osinachi access to her money for medication and household necessities and forced her into begging and borrowing. The charge further alleges that Osinachi's husband forcefully isolated and separated her from her family by preventing the deceased's mother and siblings from visiting her

matrimonial home.

Nwachukwu was similarly accused of cruelly beating the children and recording their cries and playing it on his phone, noting that he threatened the children and prevented them from reporting the acts of domestic violence against their mother to his pastor, Dr Paul Enenche or any other person.

One of the counts reads, "That you Peter Nwachukwu, 56, male, on the 8th of April, 2022 at Aco Estate, opposite police station, Lugbe, Abuja, FCT, within the jurisdiction of this honourable court, did commit an offence to



with: culpable homicide punishable with death in that you caused the death of Mrs Osinachi Nwachukwu by your various acts of violence and aggravated assault with the knowledge that her death would be the probable consequence of your acts."

Another count reads, "Statement of offence: Emotional, verbal and psychological abuse contrary to section 14(1) of the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2015 and punishable under the same section of the Act.

"Particular of offence: That you, Peter Nwachukwu, male, sometime between 14th

November 2009 and April 2022 at Aco Estate, opposite police station, Lugbe, Abuja, FCT, within the jurisdiction of this honourable court, did commit an offence to wit: emotional, verbal and psychological abuse on Mrs Osinachi Nwachukwu (deceased) by humiliating her and making utterances like 'you are smelling,' 'you are mad,' to her in the presence of her music crew members."

The popular Nigerian gospel singer who came into the limelight with the hit, "Ekwueme", which she sang alongside Prosopa Ochimana, reportedly died on Friday, April 8 in an Abuja hospital.

Driver allegedly absconds with employer's N36m jeep

By ALEX OLISE

A 40-year-old driver, Babangida Usman, was on Thursday brought before a Yaba Chief Magistrates' Court in Lagos for allegedly stealing his employer's Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV).

Usman is facing a two-count charge of conspiracy and stealing.

He, however, pleaded not guilty to the charge.

The prosecutor, SP Idowu Osungbure, told the court that

the defendant committed the offences sometime in February in Victoria Island area of Lagos.

She said that the defendant, who was a driver for the complainant, Habanera Limited, stole a Prado 2019 model, with registration number SMK 708 FU valued at N36 million belonging to the complainant.

"The defendant dropped off a staff of the company at the office and was supposed to fill up the tank at a fuel station, however, he absconded with the car," the prosecutor told

the court.

According to her, the offences contravene sections 411 and 287 (7) of the Criminal Laws of Lagos State, 2015 (Revised).

Section 287 (7) prescribes a seven-year jail term upon conviction for stealing from one's employer, while 411 stipulates two years imprisonment for conspiracy.

The Chief Magistrate, Mrs Adeola Adedayo, admitted the defendant to bail in the sum of N100,000 with two sureties

in like sum.

She held that the sureties must submit copies of their National Identification Number (NIN) and Lagos State Residents Registration Agency (LASRRA) card.

She ordered that sureties must be residents within the court's jurisdiction and be gainfully employed with evidence of three years of tax payment to the Lagos State Government.

Adedayo adjourned the case until June 29, for mention.

Children's Day: Sanwo-Olu tasks parents to inculcate right values in children

By BENJAMIN OMOIKE

Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, has urged parents/guardians to inculcate the right values in their children, as this will enable them to shun all social vices.

Sanwo-Olu, who was represented by the Secretary to the State Government, Folashade Jaji, gave the charge during the 2022 Children's Day Celebration, at the Police College, Parade Ground, Ikeja on Friday.

The celebration, the governor said, "makes a call to our beloved parents and guardians to protect these innocent ones from all harms by providing better childhood, in order to give them a promising future. We owe them a duty to ensure that their dreams and aspirations are realised through continuous training, guidance and mentoring."

Praying that they will continue to be a source of joy to their families and the state, the governor commended the 'Education Family of Lagos State', most especially the teachers, for their relentless contributions and outstanding initiatives toward ensuring that the students are actively engaged.

He promised that his

administration will do its best to ensure that it implements policies and programmes to nurture these legacies, instil the ideals of quality education, and ensure that no child is left behind.

Sanwo-Olu noted that the theme for this year's celebration, "A Better Future for Every Child" is quite apt as it highlights the principles of the convention on the Rights of the Child that all children, irrespective of their status and present global situations, should enjoy their rights to survival and development for a better future.

He lamented that presently, children are falling victims to many social vices like child abuse, rape, drug abuse, hard labour, and violence, among others, adding: "They are denied the opportunity to enjoy a healthy life, parents' love and commitment and other childhood happiness. Children's Day celebration gives us an opportunity to reflect and renew our commitment to building a society that will guarantee for them a better future."

However, Sanwo-Olu said that the "state is continuously embarking on series of initiatives and intervention programmes, in a bid to promote the Child Right Protection Law in line

with the goal of the Universal Children's Day to improve child welfare, promote and celebrate children's rights and promote togetherness and awareness among all children. We recognise the role education plays in ensuring a better future for our children."

Also at the event, the Commissioner, Lagos State Ministry of Education, Folasade Adefisayo, commended the Sanwo-Olu administration for raising the stake of the students to higher levels with the children showing competence to match their counterparts anywhere in the world by winning laurels at home and abroad.

She also lauded the students' ingenuity in competitions, saying it is very encouraging, as all points to the fact that "our future is in the hands of good and reliable keepers."

She commended Governor Sanwo-Olu and his Deputy Governor, Dr Kadri Obafemi Hamzat, for their genuine interest in the education, welfare and comfort of every child in Lagos State and for the approval to always celebrate the children through a week-long activities of various imparting, educating and entertaining programmes.

Reminding the students

that the Governor Sanwo-Olu administration "has invested enormously in your education by providing all that you need to meet your true potentials," Adefisayo added:

"You are the future of our dear state and nation. Therefore, I implore you to continue to work harder and excel both in academic and co-curricular activities." Saying that the state government has put a lot of facilities at the students' disposal the commissioner urged them to effectively use the facilities to their advantage.

She thanked the state education family for the passion and investment in the future of all the children of Lagos State, irrespective of the circumstances of birth, especially for ensuring a level playing ground for all to nurture and grow their knowledge in pursuit of a better tomorrow.

While commending the students for distinguishing themselves in national and international competitions winning several laurels and trophies for the state, the commissioner acknowledged the role of our teachers in mentoring the children.

She said: "You are indeed nation builders and we salute your commitment, diligence and dedication."

Police begin orderly room trial of four policemen who extorted man of 350 euros

By ALEX OLISE

Four policemen who extorted the sum of 350 Euros from a man, which he was taking to a hospital in Lagos, to pay for his father's medical bills have been given an orderly room trial by the authorities of the Lagos State Police Command.

The sister of the man, whose name on her Twitter handle is @Marisalex_22, had given details of how her brother, who was going to a hospital, was stopped by the policemen and the money he was taking to the hospital to pay their father's medical bills was taken from him.

After her tweets, which got the attention of the authorities of the State Police Command, the Command, through its Public Relations Officer, Benjamin Hundeyin, invited the man and his sister to the state police command.

The man was able to identify the policemen, who were said to have admitted to collecting the money and

were made to return the 350 Euros, which was handed back to the man.

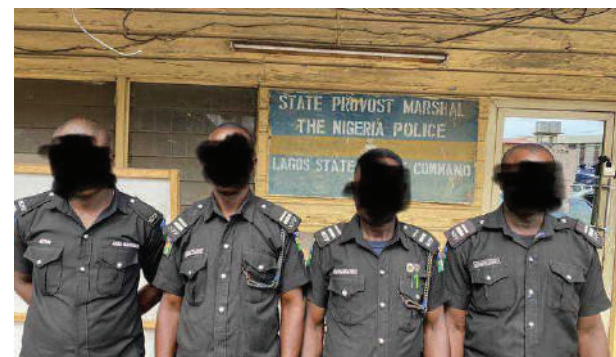
The lady also announced on her Twitter handle that the Lagos Police PRO facilitated the recovery of the money, while nothing was done to the policemen.

This action of the Lagos State Police PRO did not go down well with the Force Public Relations Officer, Muiyiwa Adejobi, a Chief Superintendent of Police (CSP), who wrote on his Twitter handle asking the Lagos Police PRO to take more disciplinary action against the policemen.

Hundeyin announced on his Twitter handle that the four policemen involved in the act are currently facing an orderly room trial at the Command's headquarters in Ikeja, the state capital.

Displaying the photograph of the policemen, he did not disclose how long the orderly room trial would last.

He simply wrote: "Orderly room trial has commenced."



Politicians mop up dollars for party primaries, APC presidential candidate, Nwajiuba laments

As presidential primaries of political parties take place, particularly in the ruling APC and major opposition PDP, a presidential aspirant on the platform of the All Progressive Congress, (APC), Chukwuemeka Nwajiuba in this interview decries the negative influence of monetary inducement in picking candidates as against other considerations and concludes that this was responsible for the scarcity of dollars and exorbitant exchange rate to naira. The former Minister of State for Education bares his mind on other national issues and how he intends to govern the country if given the opportunity. Politics Editor, **TUNDE JOSHUA** brings excerpts.

Why do you want to be President of Nigeria?

I think part of why I am running is because I was trying to bring some sense of social order to our polity. Let's not run away with the belief that our country has collapsed. That, it is no longer a country of laws or a country of rules and there is no more moral, there's no more order. In other words, everything works because this is at the heart of what it is that you see on display.

Agitation for restructuring has reached its peak, if you become President, will you restructure the country?

What is it that I would restructure? The borders of Nigeria are known and are defined, and accepted internationally in the world. Restructuring obviously can't be talking about landmarks, the issue is governance. Is it the question of landmarks or the resources? Since 1999 this Nigerian Constitution has been restructured. I ask, is there something a state does with its citizens other than service and tax? That is how citizens and the state relate. Is there anything you would like to do in Nigeria that the law says you cannot do? It's not. If you want to build a refinery there is a process, you just need to apply. Remember, we were three regions by 1966, and war was fought over this matter. When the military took over, they said we don't want the situation, it is better everybody creates states, they are no longer ethical. Nigeria had to create states to unbundle the structure as a way to stop a civil war again. To a large extent, they have succeeded. So, something must be right with the new structure. What do you want to restructure? Is there any limitation to what a state governor can do? Nigerian governors are the most independent governors in the world. If anybody knows the income that they generate in the states that they transfer to Abuja, they should say so. Nobody has ever compelled any state to generate one income and send. It is for the states to try and generate as much as they can. So, why keep saying let's revert to the thing that killed us; I said it's good to know a book, but read it.

What is your view on consensus candidate?

I already said it is not possible to win an election without the consent of everybody. So why will I say I can only win if I am the most powerful. You can only win by consensus. So whatever consensus my party agrees with for a better Nigeria will be okay. If they don't give me, whoever they give, they just decide that this is what we have to offer. That is my understanding of what we're doing.

Your party inserted a withdrawal letter in the nomination forms of every aspirant, in your view, is it



Nwajiuba

legal or ethical to withdraw ahead of an exercise?

Yes, in every situation, you make provisions. The Supreme Court has held repeatedly that political parties are not parastatals of government. They are voluntary associations, the only thing the Supreme Court has held repeatedly is been consistency, that the party is supreme in its decision on internal matters. The only condition is that the parties must obey their guidelines and regulations. So, that is the only limitation I see. You come to an association and they say for you to contest on our platform before we agree that we and you can work together, you need to give us the confidence that looks as if we don't like you to do this, you will not take us to court, will you give us that assurance before we can start. Check other parties, they don't have this. That's exactly how I look at this. It may not be moral or ethical, it is actually what you believe that you want to do. Political parties make their own rules and if this is what they said they want to do you may be guided on how to engage it.

Can you tell us about your economic plan?

All economies are socially based. You have to know the sociological content of an area to be able to decide what to sell to them and what they can produce. There is no point continuing the way we are, and expecting that we will survive. Just hearing that dollars will be shared; just knowing that there is a convention coming in the past few weeks, dollar has jumped by 12%. We are now at N607 to a dollar because every Tom, Dick, and Harry who has access to any allocation, whether local government allocation or contract is changing it to the dollar to head up to the convention because we thought there will be 7800 delegates. So all the big men with big money bought up all the dollars. You also have the need factor, if you explain to the poor people that they are the ones causing this problem they will say no. What caused inflation in the market; who will pay but they don't understand. When I was running for governor in Imo in 2003, I published a pamphlet. For every economic plan, you can just expand but it will remain the same. If you produce or at least don't produce, the only force on your production is determined by outside forces. When I said Nigeria is an oil occurring country

instead of an oil-producing country, there is a difference. Nobody knew there was oil here until outsiders came to do everything. That is Nigeria's condition. So, until a nation re-engages its paradigm it will be difficult for her to grow and I think we should have a different way of working.

Do you think politics is being monetized today as insinuated by many?

I must agree with you that we have a monetized politics but I can assure you that we have a Buhari elected, who didn't have money. I am only presenting myself for you to choose. I am not saying I can fly. I am not sponsored by the oil industry. So the only people who can sponsor me are Nigerians. 3150 people made contributions and we bought these forms. So, I know that if Nigerians are willing, once my party selects me, APC will be speaking to 90% of the demographics of Nigeria, speaking to the 70% who are below 50 and who believe it's possible to vote for somebody who is 55 who is hope for them. Right now Nigerians are sure that this is where they can get the most efficacious drugs and this is what I am providing. I know that is what I am up to and that is what APC will be offering Nigerians if they take me as their candidate. They will be speaking to elders who believe that they have gotten somebody who will do the work for them. Almost all my supporters are above my age. I have members of the House of Representatives from 1992 who endorsed me even before they contributed money. Some paid N1000, and someone from Nasarawa gave me 150 tubers of yams to sell from his farm. People are investing, thinking that there may be a new Nigeria. It is not about monetization or not, it's about Nigerians committing to a future where they want to go.

What is your position on the move by South East presidential aspirants towards having a consensus candidate from the zone?

The South East does not want to arrive at a consensus. The South-East wants to work with Nigerians. We are very disappointed, we thought about 10 to 20 people from the south-east will buy these forms so that we can make a case. When you are making a case, you can make it one way, let all of us come out; men, and women and say yes we believe in Nigeria. We have only seven aspirants and that is very small but I am sure out of this seven, we have those in their seventies, we have those in their sixties, we have those in their fifties. We have every type you need. Nigeria must have the full breadth of Igbo diversity. Any type you need Igbo people has it. So what we said was that anyone you choose we are going to back him or her.

Lagos APC aspirant, Olawale condemns denial to participate in governorship primary

● *Says State Exco intimidated by his popularity among Lagosians* ● *Faults non-release of screening exercise result*

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

One of the aspirants screened by the All Progressives Congress (APC) for the Lagos State governorship contest, Olawale Wasiu has condemned what he described as unjust denial from participating in the governorship primary election conducted on Thursday.

He faulted the process that led to the emergence of delegates to the governorship primary which he said was undemocratic as the delegate congresses held in the 245 wards of Lagos was a "sham".

Olawale insinuated that the 'powers that be' systematically schemed him out of the race because of his soaring popularity among Lagosians.

The aggrieved aspirants in a statement on Thursday after the primary said the exercise is one-sided and does not reflect the total interest of the entire APC members in Lagos State.

The statement read "a purported 'Governorship Primary Election' of the All Progressives Congress (APC)

Lagos State is being held at the Mobolaji Johnson Stadium. Onikan. According to the organizers of the event, the eligible "Delegates" to vote at the "Governorship Primary Election" are those handpicked by just one of the APC factions in Lagos State through a sham Delegates Congress purportedly held in the 245 Wards of Lagos State on the 18th and 19th of May 2022.

"The one-sided Congress which excluded all the other aspiring delegates that bought the APC Delegates Nomination Forms was conducted in gross violation of the APC Electoral Guidelines. APC Constitution and the Electoral Act.

"The Lagos State APC State Exco, headed by one Pastor Cornelius Ojelabi is complicit in the exercise or this blatant rape of democracy in APC Lagos.

"We also note that the Screening Committee which was inaugurated by the APC National Headquarters to screen all governorship aspirants in Lagos State, has refused to publish the results of the screening exercise as at the time of this press release.

"The approved Election Guidelines of the APC mandates the Screening Committee to release its results within 24 hours of concluding the screening exercise, so as to allow participating aspirants to appeal the outcome of the screening at the APC Screening Appeals Committee.

"I cannot understand why the Screening Committee chose not to contact the aspirants screened by them either by phone call, text message, written letter, or any other means of communication, considering their decision to withhold the results of the screening.

"This is a serious breach of aspirants' fundamental rights to fair hearing, as enshrined in the Nigerian Constitution.

"It is clear that my candidacy in this 2022 APC primary elections has generated massive positive excitement from party members and Lagosians generally. It has also created serious discomfort for those who are afraid of my message of a new agenda and accountability in governance.

"These discomforted powerful individu-

als have even gone to great lengths to prevent me from participating in the primary election of today by excluding me in a manner similar to the last Edo State episode where a sitting governor was denied participation in the internal democracy process of his party. The resultant effects of that misadventure still live with the party till date.

"The extent to which these same individuals have succeeded in their desperate scheming will become apparent when the Screening Committee eventually decides to "release" the results of the screening (which is already 12 days in arrears).

Optimistic that the will of the people will not be subverted, Olawale implored his teeming supporters to remain calm and law-abiding, despite the provocations.

Speaking on his next line of action, the aspirant said "we will continue to seek redress from the internal dispute resolution mechanisms or the party. Without foreclosing the enforcement of our rights to seek justice in the court of law."



Atiku

Atiku canvasses safe learning environments for Nigerian children

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

As the international Children's Day was marked yesterday, former Vice President of Nigeria and Presidential aspirant of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Atiku Abubakar, has called for a renewed focus on education in Nigeria, with particular attention paid to ensuring that our country's children are safe in their classrooms when they go to learn.

In a message released by his media office in Abuja to mark the 2022 Children's Day celebration, Atiku pointed out that equipping Nigeria's children with a solid education is the best way

to enable them to achieve their dreams and surmount whatever challenges that the society might throw at them.

"I know from personal experience how getting an education can transform someone's life and influence their destiny in unimaginable ways," Atiku said.

"My background, the loss of my father at an early age and the environment in which I grew up, were all factors that could have counted against me, but my going to school was the game changer; it made all the difference."

The Waziri Adamawa also noted the role that education can play in nation-building, especially in dispelling tribalism and other clannish divisions by expanding the minds of children to

see a world beyond their village or tribe.

"With a solid education, each Nigerian child will grow to learn that we can all do more when we work together than when we are divided," he said.

The PDP Presidential aspirant called on governments at all levels to ensure that children in schools in all parts of Nigeria study in safety, without fear of being kidnapped, attacked or sexually assaulted.

"Protecting these precious children is a responsibility that the government and security personnel cannot take lightly. By protecting them, we are protecting our country's future," he said.

He wishes Nigerian children a happy celebration on this Children's Day 2022.

2023: Presidency should be contest of ideas, not where you come from - Lawan

● *Assures FCT delegates of mayoralty status*

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

Senate President, Ahmad Lawan has urged Nigerian electorate to throw away regionalism in considering the next president of the country during the 2023 election.

Lawan said that the race for the presidency of Nigeria should be a contest of ideas and not where one comes from.

If competence should be considered in choosing the right person for the job, he said he is eminently qualified because he possessed the essentials that would make him an effective and efficient President of Nigeria.

The All Progressives Congress (APC) presidential aspirant made this plea in Abuja on Thursday during an interface with APC leaders and delegates from the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) as part of his consultation tour of the country.

Lawan said: "I stand here before you to tell you why I believe that I have what it takes. The social, political and educational wherewithal, are the essentials that will make me an effective and efficient President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria after

President Muhammadu Buhari finishes his tenure.

"For me, I am not an ethnic or geopolitical candidate. In fact, I always look forward to having the best from any part of Nigeria. So because I ran for this office and because I am from the North should not be any reason for me to say that somebody from another part of the country, for example, from the southern part of the country, cannot be President.

"I present my credentials that I have, with all humility the requisite training, the requisite experience and the network and links across the country to make Nigeria greater.

"So let this contest be a contest of ideas. Not a contest of where someone is coming from. I respect all the distinguished aspirants and I believe that whoever has the opportunity can serve well. But I will say that I can serve better.

"I am in between the old and the young. Only 63 years. So I can link up with the old ones because I am a young old man and I am also an old young man.

"But above all and on a very serious note,



Lawan

I have seen, I have practised governance in a very close range. Today I am working with the President, President Muhammadu Buhari very closely. As the President of the Senate, we also have reasons to engage, to interact for the development of our country.

"We have supported Mr President. We have supported the APC administration without let or hindrance. We have done so because we believe that the Legislature

and the Executive arm of government are APC. So why the fight.

"We are supposed to have the same programmes, the same manifestoes, whether you are in the Legislature or the Executive. What is expected of us as members of APC in the National Assembly is to support our President, our Presidency, and our Government to deliver services to the people of Nigeria.

"And that is what we have been doing over the last three years and that is what we will do until when this administration will complete its tenure.

"So I want to start from where Mr President will stop. I want to consolidate from where Mr President would have finished. I want to continue all those very successful work and services that President Muhammadu Buhari will provide to Nigerians.

"I have no doubt in my mind that this administration has gotten so many things right. It has done so many successful things. Some are not as successful. Some are not at all. For those that are so successfully done, we need to build on them. We need to consolidate. We need to make them the legacies of APC administration in this country.

Agbado stands still in honour of Oba Elect, who died before official coronation

By GABRIEL OMONHINMIN

The news of the death of His Royal Highness, High Chief Anthony Adetunji Olukayode Akinrinade, Olu of Agbado Elect in March 2022, was like a tornado which struck the entire community and its environs. It was difficult to believe as people gathered in small groups talking to themselves in low and hushed voices.

On Saturday, 14th May 2022, the reality of the passage of the Olu of Agbado Elect became real to most members of the communities. It was therefore not surprising when market women abandoned their wares in the ever-busy Agbado market to join the children, who had already lined up the streets as early as 7.30 a.m. to have a glimpse of the casket bearing the remains of the late Olu, whose corpse was being conveyed to the African Church, St. Paul's Parish, Agbado, situated along the Agbado Railway Station Road.

Also waiting for the remains of His Royal Highness were the Church officiating priests made up of the Curate, Rev. E.T. Adenuga, Vicar/Archdeaconry Chairman, The Ven. M.A. Aaron and Bishop of Ifako Diocese of the Church, The Right Rev. I. A Falana.

At exactly 9.30 am on citing the vehicle bearing the corpse of the late Olu, the whole area erupted in one big grief, as women and children wailed uncontrollably. Strangers and residents of the community made up of Igbo, Nupe, Efik, Takpa, and large Hausa indigenes, who now speak the Yoruba dialect fluently. One after the other without any form of prompting, they testified to the goodness of the late Olu of Agbado Elect. Everyone has one good thing or another to say about him. So many agreed that he was a detribalized man because of his long service in the Nigerian Police Force. Others said he was also a great emancipator of the masses.

The enormous goodwill, encomium, and grief expressed by both natives and strangers over his death made Palace Watch dig a little deeper into the possible legacy of the late Olu of Agbado Elect.

Ifo Local Government is a local government area of Ogun State with its administrative headquarters in Ifo town.

The Council area is made up of several towns and villages, which include Akute, Agbado, Ifo, Ojoolu, Abeloju, Jagunna, Lerin, and Pakoto.



HRH, High Chief Anthony Adetunji Olukayode Akinrinade

The unique and interesting thing about Agbado is that it is a commercial and the epicentre of the new railway line that connects the South West to other parts of the country.

Olori Faith Akinrinade, his wife, in her tribute said "Kabiyesi Anthony Akinrinade, although we can't see you anymore, we know that you are near, smiling down watching us. You are forever in our hearts until we meet again on resurrection morning, continue to rest in peace."

When President Muhammadu Buhari's administration invoked the 2017 policy to revive rail transportation to link some parts of the country through a railway network, most communities sited along the old rail network corridor in the country were not too pleased with the plan. Even

though the plan will enable more people to embrace rail transportation, which will further engender rapid development of these areas.

In the South West region, towns and villages like Agbado, Itoki, Abule, Ijoko, Ogba Ayo and Sango all in Ogun State never really welcomed the idea.

Some residents were seen complaining about the destruction of their houses along the rail corridors while others complained about the problem of being relocated to new areas of the state, which they were not happy about.

Immediately the Chinese contractors mobilized to the site, miscreants in these areas popularly known as 'Area Boys' whose parents and relatives were not too happy with the project,

deliberately made it very difficult for the contractors to perform.

A close Palace source said, as the dig-dong between the Chinese contractors and the Area boys in Agbado continued unabated, His Highness, High Chief Anthony Adetunji Olukayode Akinrinade, who had not yet been made the Olu of Agbado elect, as one of the elites in the town, stepped into the matter and used his influence as a retired Senior Police Officer, to make sure the foreign contractors were provided with adequate police security for them to continue with their work.

Another reason why the late Olu elect was so loved and cherished by all according to Baale of Paara Community, is that "The late Kabiyesi

Cont'd on page 10

Agbado stands still

Cont'd from page 9

was installed Baale of Agbado Station on the 27th of December, 1996 by the Late Oba Oyebade Lipede, the immediate past Alake of Egbaland. Immediately after his installation as Baale, he facilitated a Police post in the Ayinla area of Agbado. The police post was later upgraded to Agbado Divisional Headquarters. The late Olu of Agbado Elect again assisted through the help of the Alake and Paramount Ruler of Egbaland in the upgrading of the railway project to a full-fledged Agbado Train Station.

The residents, who initially gave the Chinese contractors problems, complained that so many people have left Agbado and relocated to all the adjoining places. Some of them have gone bankrupt as there were no longer buyers for their wares. They said they used to make about #20 to #25,000.00 in their various businesses a day in October 2013, but when the rail project began; some of them could no longer make up to #15,000.00 a week.

The residents were further incensed that, the regime of the former Governor of Ogun State, Ibinkunle Amosun, demolished buildings along Sango-Ijoko-Agbado-Akute-Alagbole Road to pave way for a 32-kilometre highway project that was designed to open up the boundaries of Ogun/Lagos State economic opportunities.

Just less than a year after the commencement of the project, the Chinese contractors made a considerable effort in the reconstruction of terminals at Agbado and Sango. The icing on the cake came, when the Federal Government announced that it has made more progress with the establishment of a partnership with a railway wagon assembly, which is now being built at Kasumu, Ifo area of Ogun State.

The bustling nature of present-day Agbado and the economic transformation of the entire areas and communities along that corridor are now beginning to excite the people, who live in these areas, especially Agbado which has been in existence for well over 60 years now.

According to Oluwakemi Agboola, "It is now very easy for us as market women to go into the inter lands in Abeokuta and Ifo, to buy and transport goods to Agbado, where we sell such goods and make quick returns. Furthermore, most of the few houses left in the areas have been remodelled and are now attracting better prices as rents.

If not for the way the late Olu of Agbado Elect stood his ground, when we were causing unnecessary trouble then, we would have missed



Chief Akinrinade

this particular opportunity to develop Agbado town, which we are now beginning to enjoy. This is among other reasons why we will not forget him in a hurry.

Mr Akinrinade Akintoye Olusola, one of the sons of the late Olu elect, in his tribute said, "Despite the hurdles and hotshots fired at you when you were doing well to our communities, the fearless persons that you were and your continued prayers kept you going. Now that you are gone, our people and communities have begun to appreciate your good deeds."

Princess Yetunde Osoba in her tribute wrote, "I never imagined that I would be writing this so soon, you have fought a good fight, you have finished your race and I know you

kept the faith. Your favourite saying whenever you saw me was, 'I am running my race.' If tears could build a stairway and memory lane, I would walk right up to heaven and bring you back to finish the running race you started, especially in the Agbado community."

The late Akinrinade was born in Agbado Railway Station into the families of Akinrinade – Somoye paternally and Adetokun – Adekanbi maternally of Egba land. His father was from Akodu compound of Egba Alake section. His grandfather was the Jaguno Ijaiye Obirinti (War Chief) during the Ijaiye war with Ibadan and Oyo in the olden days. His grandfather was part of the Exodus movement of the Egbas

from homestead to present Abeokuta during the reign of Alaafin Atiba of Oyo.

His father, Late Chief Gilbert Ige Akinpelu Akinrinade, was the Baba Ijo of St. Paul's Anglican Church till his death in 2005. He was among the first governing board members of the Agbado District Comprehensive High School. He was the Chairman of the St. Paul's Anglican Church Primary School. It was the late Oba elect father, who brought the Agbado Community Bank and was the bank's first Chairman.

The father to the late Olu of Agbado elect, began his career as a pioneer Clerk, in the Agbado Post Office. He was the first Dispenser of the Agbado Dispensary now known as the Agbado Health Center. He was traditionally the Agbado Town Secretary for many years and was later installed as the Osi Balogun of Agbado station in 1978. He was thereafter promoted to the position of Otun Baale of Agbado Station until his death in the year 2005.

The late Olu Elect began his education in St. Paul's Anglican Church School, Agbado, and later moved to St. Augustine R.M. School, Itesi, Abeokuta. He finally completed his primary school education at Ansaru-Deen Primary School, Oke-Ado, Ibadan, where he lived with his senior Aunt, Late Mrs Alugin.

He later proceeded to Gaskiya College, Sabo, Yaba and later joined the Nigerian Police Force. While in the service of the Nigerian Police Force, he enrolled in private studies with the School of Career and International Correspondence. He attended so many in-service courses such as Criminal Prevention and Criminal Jurisprudence.

While still in service, he served and held various positions as the Nigerian Police Administrative Officer, Divisional Police Officer, DPO, Officer in Charge of Pay and other Charges, the Falomo office of the Nigerian Police Force, Obalende. He served in the Nigerian Police Mobile Unit and later in his career became the Officer in Charge of Command, CID, Ebute Meta before his voluntary retirement.

During the Nigerian Civil War, he served under the 3rd Marine Commando when Chief Olusegun Obasanjo was the GOC of that Division. General Alani Akinrinade, who was then a Lt-Col, was the Divisional Staff Officer while the late Military Head of State, late General Sani Abacha, was then the C.O, 17 Brigade of the Nigerian Army.

The late Oba Elect retired from the Nigerian Police as a C.S.P.

Train Attack: Pakistani man seeks FG help to recover son from terrorists

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

A Pakistani father of one of the victims of the Abuja-Kaduna train attack has appealed to the Federal Government to safely recover his son from the captivity of the terrorists.

According to a publication on The News International, a Pakistan-based newspaper, on Friday, the father came to know about the abduction of his son, Dr Abuzar Afzal through social media when the terrorists released video statements of kidnapped persons recently.

"Afzal, who is a resident of Multan Zakariya town, was serving a Nigerian company as General Manager. He has done his PhD in Microbiology from the Faisalabad

University.

"Afzal said in his video message that he was abducted on March 28, along with 62 others.

"He said he was in a difficult situation. Afzal has also worked as a sub-inspector with the Anti-Narcotics Force. He resigned from ANF in 2020 and went abroad.

"Talking to The News, his father Muhammad Afzal Sheikh said his son went to Nigeria in 2020 after he received a job offer.

"He said they repeatedly tried to contact the Pakistan Embassy in Nigeria and requested the Foreign Ministry for help. A call came from the Foreign Ministry on Wednesday. The FO assured the safe recovery of Afzal who has a wife and two children. He appealed to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Foreign Minister



Buhari

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari to play their role in the safe recovery of his son," the report stated.

It added that Afzal's mother, Abida Bibi said the terrorists had threatened to kill her son.

"We will start killing the kidnapped if our members are not released in seven days," she quoted the terrorists as saying.

The terrorists were reportedly demanding the release of 16 top commanders

and sponsors in government custody in exchange for the release of the abducted victims from the derailed train on Monday, March 28, 2022.

However, in a recent publication in a Kaduna-based 'Desert Herald' newspaper, whose publisher, Malam Tukur Mamu, is a Media Consultant to a controversial Islamic cleric, Sheikh Ahmad Gumi, the terrorists amongst other things demanded unconditional release of their children held in an orphanage home in Adamawa State under the strict supervision of the Nigerian Army as well as their detained co-terrorists.

The terrorists also threatened to commence the killing of the abducted passengers in their custody should the Federal Government fails to meet their demands within seven days.

Zulum confirms 32 killed, 6 injured by terrorists in Borno

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

Governor of Borno State, Babagana Zulum, has confirmed the killing of over 32 youths by the Islamic State West African Province (ISWAP) terrorists in Kala/Balge Council of the State.

According to him, the youths were killed, while they were scavenging for steel scraps in some of the abandoned border villages with Cameroon last Sunday.

Spokesman to the Governor, Isa Gusau, stated this Wednesday in Maiduguri, adding that 14 bodies have been recovered.

He further stated that six other youths were injured, while others escaped unhurt in the border communities with Cameroon.

"Governor Babagana Umara Zulum is very disturbed by the unfortunate killing of fellow citizens at the weekend.

"Pending a full report, the Governor was briefed by the Majority Leader of Borno State House of Assembly, Mohammed Dige, who represents Kala-Balge where the victims hailed from," he lamented.

He noted that the youths were not farmers, but enterprising young men engaged in gathering metals popularly called 'Kayan Ajaokuta' which are sold as raw materials for steel production.

Continuing, he said that the victims were said to have gone to a deserted Mudu village in Dikwa LGA, 45 kilometers from Rann, the council headquarters in search of raw materials of steel.

According to him, soldiers alongside the Chairman of Kala-Balge LGA, on Tuesday, recovered 14 bodies of victims who were apparently tied and shot at close range.

"Governor Zulum shares deeply the pains of bereaved families and the good people of Kala-Balge," Gusau said.

He added that the governor is awaiting a full report before necessary measures are taken.



Zulum

Arms control: NCCSALW, NSCDC agree to collaborate

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

■ As Audi pledges support in retrieval of illegal weapons

The National Centre for Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (NCCSALW) has called for closer collaboration with Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) to mop-up illegal arms in Nigeria.

National Coordinator of NCCSALW, Maj Gen Abba Dikko (Rtd), made the call during a courtesy call on the Commandant-General of NSCDC, Dr Ahmed Audi, at the NSCDC headquarters in Abuja on Wednesday.

Gen Dikko said that NCCSALW had been working assiduously to deliver on its mandate. Adding that the Centre is willing to work with the NSCDC and other security agencies to ensure that the illegal arms in possession of

unauthorised people were recovered.

He commended Dr Audi for his leadership, innovation and direction, particularly in the area of protection of critical infrastructure and national assets across the country.

Gen Dikko called for partnership with NSCDC in the areas of intelligence sharing, data collection and mainstreaming control of arms in the NSCDC's hierarchy and work environment.

He stressed that leveraging the existing capacities of NSCDC and other security agencies will go a long way in strengthening coordination and building the capacity of relevant stakeholders

on their responsibilities under the small arms and light weapons management paradigm.

While responding, the NSCDC boss lauded the establishment of the Centre, noting that it was in the interest of peace and security as well as crime prevention and control.

He pledged the support of NSCDC to the retrieval of illegal weapons in the country, attributing the current security challenges facing the Nation to the proliferation of illegal arms in the hands of unauthorized persons.

Dr Audi thanked the coordinator and his team for their efforts toward achieving the centre's mandate.

He expressed delight with the opportunity to support NCCSALW in the discharge of its duties of mopping illicit arms in the country.

The CG expressed NSCDC's readiness to give full support to the Centre, saying that the fight against illicit arms in the polity was a must and could only be won through collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

"There is a need for all security agencies to come together to fashion out new strategies to address this menace. We have to stop the smuggling of weapons and clean up the system by mopping up the ones already in circulation.

"For us in the NSCDC, we are ready to key into the programmes of the

National Center for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons because we are partners in progress," he said.

He applauded the contribution of the Centre to National Security and assured of a more robust relationship with the center.

Dr Audi emphasized that it was in recognition of the center's mandate and credibility that the Corps handed over the cache of arms recovered from a criminal hideout in Imo State.

According to him, the weapons handed over include 34 foreign-made semi-automatic guns, 27 double barrel guns, 5 pump actions, 2 sniper rifles and 15 sets of gun cleaning kits.

Correctional Service says Kyari is not under attack

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

The Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS) has refuted the claim by embattled and suspended Deputy Commissioner of Police, DCP Abba Kyari, that his life was in danger in custody.

Kyari had on Thursday approached a Federal High Court for another bail plea.

Kyari and three of his co-defendants, through their counsel, urged

Justice Emeka Nwite to admit them to bail because their lives in the Kuje Correctional Centre, where they are being remanded, were unsafe.

Report also emerged that Kyari was assaulted by some inmates but escaped death after offering them money.

Reacting to the development, Francis Enobore, the Service Public Relations Officer (SPRO), described the allegation that Kyari was attacked in custody as "false, reckless and

mischievous."

Enobore said the report was the handiwork of some jobless, cheap, and recognition-seeking charlatans masquerading as newsmen, who lack the intellectual capacity to interrogate what they conjure or hear before feeding the public.

He said, "That the author is completely oblivious of where and how the detention of a suspect originates, speaks volumes of his ineptitude and the much his story can be relied upon.

"For the record, Abba Kyari is one of the over 800 inmates in the location where he is being kept.

"However, notable individuals including ex-governors, ministers, senators and other celebrities of higher social status have passed through the same facility without any threat to their lives."

He emphasized that Kyari was safe and sound and go about his daily routine like any other inmate unharmed.



Kyari

The ongoing Parties' primaries

Political parties across the country are conducting their primary elections to choose candidates that will bear their flags in the 2023 general elections. It is a positive development which signposts a measure of progress in Nigeria's democratic journey. The primary elections are taking place despite all the eviscerating conditions in the country which range from gruesome murder of innocent citizens, absolute collapse of the country's security architecture on all fronts, and the perennial dislocation of the country's university calendar occasioned by industrial actions. Indeed, hard-pressed Nigerians can hardly wait for the current administration to end. It appears that everyday ushers in one disembowelling situation or another. Given this mindset all over the country, Nigerians collectively accept the party primaries seeing that it is the first step to enthroning a new administration.

The principal figures in the primary elections are party delegates and representatives who are nominated to vote at designated venues of the elections. However, there are deep concerns that the delegates and party officials have turned the exercise into a cash circus for personal enrichment. All over the country, the story is the same – party delegates collect money from aspirants to vote for them. There are reports in the media that a certain politician in the North is asking for a refund of seventy-six million naira after losing the primary election. He expended the amount to compromise delegates but eventually got only two votes. This is a despicable practice which portends disaster for our democracy. If this kind of practice continues, it means that those who have the largest war chest, no matter their background, will emerge as party candidates. There is a risk of having never-do-wells, criminals, thieves, and incompetent people emerge as party flag bearers because they have the cash.

What calibre of people are party delegates? Who selects them and what are the criteria for their selection? From reports across the country, delegates are ready to merchandise their conscience for the devil's filthy lucre. In other climes, party delegates are distinguished, morally upright, and honest people who have the interest of the community and the country at heart. The future of our country is in danger if, through the unconscionable undoing of these party delegates, unsuitable people emerge as leaders. It is instructive that some people in Nigeria will have no scruples to steal every available currency in Nigeria even if it means the death of 200 million people.

All the party delegates in the country have a duty to themselves first, God, their families,

and to Nigeria to vote for credible candidates. Although this view appears distant and unrealistic in a country like Nigeria battered by hardship and economic strangulation, the ugly narrative can be changed. The party delegates have a responsibility to rescue Nigeria from the throes of political marauders who masquerade as saviours of the people. To the delegates we say: reject the bad eggs by rejecting their money. Stay away from the devil and never dine with him. Kindly remember your future and the future of your children. Nigeria currently hangs on a dangerous precipice and your decisions at the primaries can go a long way to decide if the country will tip over the abyss or not.

Party primary election is not an opportunity for self-enrichment. Ironically, the delegates must know that the good candidates do not always have money to share. Those who share money are political predators, wolves in sheep clothing that must have made money by compromising social structures. Party delegates who collect money to vote in the primaries are thieves, simple. There is no better way to say it. They are invidiously assaulting their conscience and the future of the country. A process that thrives on stealing will automatically produce thieves; this is the moral burden the delegates must bear.

By the time the party primaries are over, different candidates would have emerged for different positions. Then, a head count will be made and Nigerians will know whether the delegates stole the future of the country or demonstrated a responsible attitude at the primaries. Also, politicians who imagine and are convinced that they can compromise the process by inducing party delegates with huge sums of money should remember the divine and inevitable day of reckoning. It is never far away. The 2023 election is symbolic in many ways but more directly, its outcome will signify the revival or collapse of Nigeria. Party delegates at party primaries have the onerous responsibility to kick start a renewal process of the Nigeria entity.



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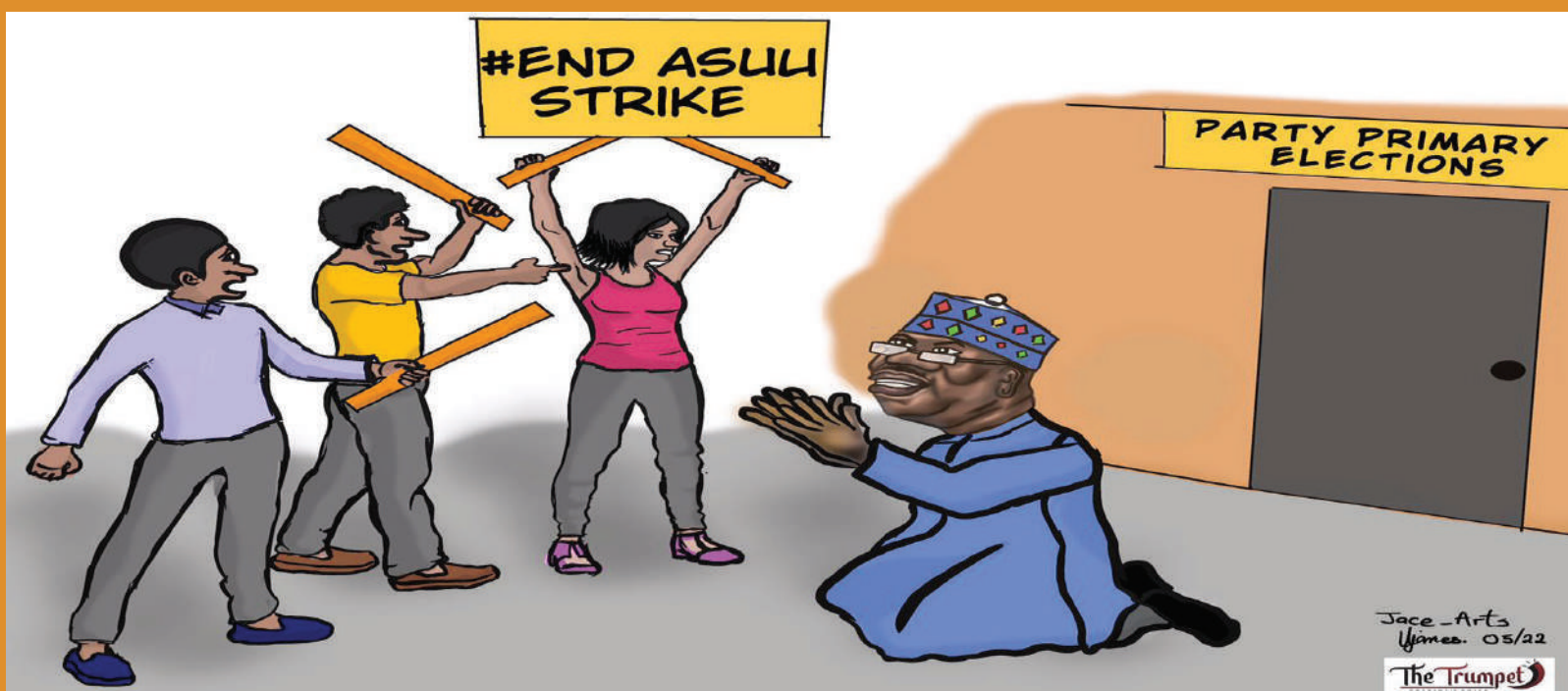
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Ascended, after being crucified, dead, buried, and risen!

Jesus Christ was crucified. He died. He was buried. He rose again. The fact of His rising from the dead signified that Christ is indeed alive. But he needed to show that He was living. He demonstrated this to His disciples. "To them He presented Himself alive after His passion by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days, and speaking of the Kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3). He used the intervening forty days (that followed the resurrection of Jesus Christ) to prove that He has indeed arisen and had a body. He appeared to two men who were on their way to Emmaus. One of them was named Cleopas. "They said to Him, 'Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since this happened. Moreover, some women in our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; and they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see'" (Luke 24:19-24).

After His resurrection, Jesus Christ lived 'among' His disciples for forty days - as mentioned earlier - before He ascended to heaven. Hence forty days after the resurrection is generally celebrated as Ascension Day by the Church. "Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried into heaven. And they returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the temple blessing God" (Luke 24:50-53). Ascension bringing joy to the disciples. It reinvigorated the act of worship from the disciple knowing

full well that Jesus is alive.

A major significance of the ascension of Christ to believers is that it confirms his divinity and ever-presence among His people. He was seen alive and taken away in the very presence of His disciples. "And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold two men stood by them in white robes, and said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who you were taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven'" (Acts 1:9-11).

The reality of the ascension of Christ was not accidental. It was prophesied by the prophets of the Old Testament and by Jesus Christ Himself. "The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand" (Psalm 110:1). "In my father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2). If Jesus had not ascended there would not have been anyone to sit by God to propitiate for human sins (Matthew 26:64; Hebrew 1:3, 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22).

The ascension elevated Jesus to a tower from which He could fight on our behalf and subdue the enemies of the Church; making our enemies His footstool (Psalm 110:1). Hence, we - soldiers of the Cross and faith - can become rulers and be strengthened for the fight against the world and all that does not represent the will of God (Acts 9:22; Psalm 29:11). And in Hebrew 11:32-34, "For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, of David and Samuel and the prophets - who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight."

The ascension enthroned Christ at the right hand of God. Consequently, all



Dr. Karo Ogbinaka

authority is given to Him by God. His authority is of absolute sovereignty. He shares it with no other power on earth below, and in heaven above. Apostle Paul puts it thus: "Therefore God has exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippian 2:9-11).

The ascension of Christ Jesus makes it possible for Him to elevate all believers to become priests forever in the order of His own dispensation. "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek" (Psalm 110:4b). "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9). God has always desired that all believers should be called His own people. Prophet Jeremiah affirms this Divine desire in a most loving expression, "The

Lord has appeared him afar. I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you" (Jeremiah 31:3).

The ascension becomes meaningful in a believer's life only when they accept its reality, its mystery, and the fact that He died, was resurrected on the third day, and ascended into heaven; sitting at the right hand of God the Father. The writer of Hebrew thus called Jesus Christ the Forerunner. "This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the Forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become the High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek" (Hebrew 6:19-20). We must therefore anchor our faith and hope - that the ascension secures for believers - on Jesus. "Therefore lift up your drooping hands, strengthen your weak knees, and make a straight path for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather healed" (Hebrew 12:12). And in verse 25, our task as believers is: "See that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For they did not escape when they refused Him who warned them on earth, much less shall we escape if we reject Him who warns from heaven."

"Now, may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the Great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do His will, working in you that which is pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."

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

What is Christianity all about?

This question is very important these days because people need to know what Christianity is all about. Christianity is not a political party where you defend the interest of your party whether wrong or right and attack the opposition or seek their downfall. The mandate of Christians as given by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is to love our neighbours the way we love ourselves and also to love our enemies the way we love ourselves.

The business of Christians cut across equipping fellow Christians to live a holy and righteous life with each other who are not Christians yet through peaceful evangelism and also ineffective prayers for them to understand the mandate of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ so that they can key in.

It is however not expected that in the process of passing the message to anybody, we should insult anyone or their religion.

God has the power to change everybody but has left everyone to take a personal decision without any form of coercion, and as faithful Christians, we should follow the standard of God.

Christianity is about living a holy and righteous life in Christ Jesus. It is not about self-discipline or living a high moral life without accepting Jesus Christ as Lord.

To be a Christian is to first and foremost recognise that all humans have sinned and come short of the glory of God and regret your actions as a sinner. Even children born into this world have the sins of their parents following them, so no one is exempted.

Then, after realising that you are a sinner who has not lived the holy life of God and has even inherited sins from your parents, you now look for a way out on how you



Dr. Agbodo

can be redeemed from your sins and all the consequences. It is then that you make up your mind to forsake your sins and invite Jesus Christ to come and head your life instead of the devil that has been heading your life as a sinner.

Once you invite Jesus Christ genuinely into your life, He will come and wash you clean of all your sins and release the Holy Spirit to you so that living a holy life will be easy.

You cannot call yourself a Christian and you are fornicating and telling lies always and you are justifying yourself how nobody can live a holy life. That is not Christianity.

The Spirit of God is Holy and even if a Pastor decides to leave a holy life and starts sinning, the Holy Spirit will depart.

It is the Holy Spirit living in a person that can help the person to live like Jesus

Christ on earth, so without the Holy Spirit in you, you are not a Christian.

Practising Christianity is when you allow the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of Christ to take over your spirit, soul and body and the result will be the manifestation of holiness and true love in your life and to others.

In essence, you and your former wrong visions of life will cease and the vision of Christ will take over.

For instance, if what you do in private does not reflect the holiness of the Spirit of Christ, then you are just a Christian by association and not in deed.

If you habitually engage in things that Christ would not do if He was on earth, then the Spirit of Christ is not living inside you, hence you need to repent and ask the Spirit of Christ to take over your soul or spirit before it is too late.

Your stay on earth is timed by God, so you are bound to leave the earth one day and give an account of how you made use of the spirit, soul and body God gave you. The judgement will be whether you allowed God to rule you or you allowed the devil to rule over you.

Life after death is real. Surrender and allow God to rule your life. Rebellion or sin against God, yourself and others is the highest form of foolishness because every human being is meant to live forever like God as a spirit being and you must reap what you sowed either on earth or after your journey on earth.

No human being dies completely because the spirit is still living somewhere even when they depart from the earth in physical death.

The truth is that if you can take time off and examine the consequences of any sin dispassionately, you will agree with God

that sin is a killer. The wages of sin is death and the gift of God is eternal life brought through Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Messiah. He has come and gone and He left for us through His commandments how to please God and fulfil our destinies. He is the only man that ever lived who conquered the mystery of death. He said He will die and rise on the third day and that is what He did to prove that He is from God Almighty, the only one that has power over life and death. Don't be deceived because Satan has different religions to turn the faces of men from accepting Jesus Christ. Accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour and your life will receive revival through the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, in summary, Christianity is a religion where the adherents live like Jesus Christ in holiness and righteousness on earth. Anything short of living a holy and righteous life according to the Word of God is not Christianity but another religion and we should beware because Christ said that even some people that called Him Lord on earth will still be thrown into Hell-Fire (Matthew 7:22) on the last day if they didn't live according to the Holy Word of God on earth. So, don't believe any false teaching that the Grace of God is sufficient to exempt you from the consequences of sin on earth and after earth. The Grace of God is to help us live a holy life and not to continue in sin.

God bless us in Jesus Name.

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

'We should not honour men above God' – Pastor Mokuolu

•Exposes dirty side of General Overseers of Nigerian churches

By GABRIEL OMONHINMIN, Culture and Religion Editor

A careful look at the Prophet in Psalms 75 to 83 will enable one to picture the signs and instruments as they served in the ministry of prophesying.

Old Testament prophecy, among other things, was a declaration of God's message to the people, which sometimes includes a message about future events. Prophets, who were uniquely empowered by the Spirit of God, were considered the mouthpiece of God. They spoke from their first-hand experience and knowledge of God.

What did prophesying sound like? Sometimes it was a ringing declaration of God's word for that moment. Other times it pronounced spiritual truth with authority or warned of impending judgment or reassured people of God's deliverance. Often delivered in a poetic or figurative language, Old Testament prophecy usually focuses on God's character and power. Sometimes Isaiah or Ezekiel seemed rather eccentric as they act out an object lesson to underscore their message from God.

Pastor Olusegun Mokuolu is a 42 years old part-time Pastor; he is the Coordinator of the Living Throne Ministry. His areas of concentration in the Ministry are discipleship, youth ministry, and church revival. He is currently an Assistant Director, in the Directorate of Corporate Affairs, at the University of Ilorin, Kwara State, North Central Nigeria.

Just like Prophet Nathan did to King David, he has come out to warn Church Pastors, Prophets, and Church leaders especially Church General Overseers in Nigeria, to be mindful of what they do and preach, otherwise, they will incur the wrath of God.

Mokuolu declared boldly that Nigerian Church leaders are preaching covetousness instead of salvation, faith, and holiness. He added that their general lifestyle in the past 40 to 50 years has not also helped Nigeria's development. Mokuolu noted that many G.O.s are only desperate for money, which has contributed in very large measure to the present decadence in the country.

He said, "Dear General Overseer of Churches in Nigeria, I bring you greetings in the name of the Lord, and I speak the following words with utmost respect; I have great respect for you all.

"It has been in the news recently, that some of you have started lamenting about the spate of violence in Nigeria. It is nice to know that you are concerned and are speaking out. You are condemning the government and you are asking questions. But the surprising thing is that we are actually surprised that you church leaders are equally surprised about these ugly developments. We are surprised that you are lamenting too.

"Now we are asking ourselves, what exactly did you people do, as Church leaders when all these ugly things were developing? And what do you people actually expect now? Do you people expect to see anything different in the country from the kind of messages Church leaders have been preaching in the country in the past 40 years? What kind of Christians do you people expect that these types of messages will produce? Another question is what kind of society did you people expect your messages to help produce?

"How do you expect Nigeria to be a righteous nation with the kind of messages most of you have been preaching in the past 40 to 50 years? The crux of your messages all these years is centered on materialism. All you've been preaching is nothing but messages that centered on how people are going to eat, spend and have money. You the Church leaders failed to raise righteous people for this society. You also failed to raise Godly people for Nigeria. You did not discipline people and you did not preach the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"Why are you then surprised? You never mobilized your followers to witness, and preach to the people who have become bandits today. Rather you keep mobilizing them to give, and to help you build magnificent buildings, which you people call Churches. These buildings in all honesty don't mean anything or serve the purpose of the body of Christ. They really do nothing to the true believer. It is these same buildings you spend so much money to maintain.

"We are therefore wondering why some of you are surprised at the level of evil in

Nigeria. If there is a group of people that have failed Nigeria, it is the Church. And within the Church, the greatest culprits are the General Overseers, the Pastors, and the preachers, who have refused to raise righteous people. But rather are after their own pockets, after what they will get, they are also after fame and name.

"When you preach to a group of people, saying If you are the firstborn of your family, you need to give some special offerings, how can Nigeria develop if these are the type of messages you are preaching? Again, you get up to preach saying they are going to eat and they will be filled. And if the Christian population in the country is to increase astronomically, how will they eat? How are we going to eat as Christians, if there is no mechanized farming? Is the food you preach that the Christian population is going to eat, going to drop from heaven?

"Who will be the people that are going to practice this mechanized farming if the needs ever arose? Do you expect members of other religions to farm and feed the Nigerian Christians? Sadly, Nigerian Church leaders keep putting people's faith in things that are not real. Why? Church leaders want their folks to keep expecting some divine miracles; will God just throw money at Christians from heaven without work? Church leaders daily give the impression through their preaching that hard work is no longer needed for the faithful to grow, all they need to do is to keep giving offerings and they will be rich.

"Now, if you must know, the Church leaders are part of the people who created all the problems we are currently experiencing in the country. Why are some of you complaining that it is difficult to travel from one part of the country to another? Your past and present actions are part of the reason(s), my Lord General Overseer! These problems are now steering us on the face. It is because as Church leaders, you have not been preaching the truth. You know and see the decadence around you. If the Church is this corrupt, and if around you, we have this high level of corruption, what do you expect from the larger society? Jesus said, we are the light of the world, and we are the salt of the earth. Two kinds of relationships we must have with other people are being the light and salt to them.

"Some of you as Church leaders neither raised people that reflect light nor salt among your followers. Permit me to ask, where is the salt among your folks in today's society? Where are the testimonies? When a General Overseer is preaching against women wearing trousers and suits instead of looking at more important issues. These irrelevant issues are what our G.O.s have been preaching for decades, and they expect the society to develop and grow or for things to begin to work well in the country. How can this happen Mr G.O.?

"As Church leaders, you have continually let out the real issue of unrighteousness in your preaching. As a Church, we are now focusing on clothing, and you are expecting the society to turn right. Whenever our Church leaders travel either within or outside the country and once they arrive at their destinations, we begin to see their pictures all over the internet alerting us of their private jets.

"People also see you daily travelling in a convoy of exotic cars. These are the pictures you are painting to the young people in our society. These young men and women also want to be where some of you are today. They also want to have what you have. Unfortunately, the Nigerian economy does not support that mad craving for money and material wealth. In the process of looking like some of you G.O.s, our Pastors and Church leaders, so many youths have resulted in stealing, kidnapping, robbery, and banditry.

"Many people who attend your programmes annually are into adultery, fornications, and ungodliness. You never get to do altar calls for these types of men and women. All you say during the crusades is 'those who want to rise this year should come forward'. Every December you as Church leaders keep using sweet words to deceive your faithful. You keep saying 'This is your year of upliftment! This is your year to rise and shine!' You continue this is your year of this and that. You have been saying these things for well over 40 years now.

"People are suffering and things are getting worse in society. In countries where people



Pastor Olusegun Mokuolu

don't believe in God, they are advancing far more than we do. You hold all kinds of night vigils, as Church leaders, you do not care about the safety of your folks; they have to travel several miles to attend your programmes. In these programmes, you keep promising them that you can solve all of their problems. Now as Church leaders, you are again urging your followers to go into active politics. Did you ever train, prepare or raise the Church members you are presently asking to go into active politics to do so? Did you raise any of your followers to stand as Daniel in our various offices across the land? Can you tell or show us the difference between a Christian and an unbeliever in some of our offices in Nigeria today? Why should any of you, as Church leaders, be surprised that there is a lot of evil today in this country called Nigeria?

"It is nice to know that Church leaders have now begun to realize that all the promises they have been making to their congregations are not visible. Why? Because the economy does not even support their empty promises to their folks. I know as a Pastor, you'll be quick to say that we are dependent on heaven's economy. You know, within your heart of heart, that people will continue to suffer because our economy is not good. No matter what you pray and prophesy. If we continue to pray and refuse to fix our hospitals and put adequate equipment in these hospitals that are supposed to help people to diagnose simple ailments, and tell them what is wrong with their health, people will continue to suffer and die.

"As Church leaders, instead of doing just this, you prefer to build big Church auditoriums; Church structures worth billions of naira just to gather people on Sundays. These same people will die at home because they have no diagnostic centers to go to when they are sick. No MRI scans. No X-ray and whatever. Simple ailment, people who are supposed to be members of your Churches and congregations are dying. God gave us this knowledge, and we have become so selfish and so self-centered. Church leaders now oppressed people even with their wealth. This is the wealth that came from the offering of some people.

"Let me tell you something Mr G.O. in Acts, the Bible says, they laid all that they had in the Apostles' feet. The Apostles in question did not lay claim to that money as their personal money. They took this money and distributed it, and the bible says, there was none that lacked among them. But what you do today as Church leaders, you take all the money and begin to boast to us, that you are the richest Pastor in the world. You begin to boast to us that you have so much wealth. You prefer to oppress people with your wealth than to express the love of Jesus to them, in sharing it with everybody.

"Your chairs in the Church altar are separate, they have big cushions, while every other person can sit on a plastic chair in the Church assembly or auditorium during service. These are the kind of examples you are setting. If politicians are doing all these things, you should not blame them because these are the examples we see

in you, sir.

"Mr G.O. Sir, where is the Christ that you have been preaching? Your gospel is largely becoming ineffective. Now you are begging people to respect you. For example, did the late Nelson Mandela beg anybody to respect him? NO! He was respected, because of the great sacrifices Madiba made. He is even respected so much after his passage. He is respected even in death. If an unbeliever is so much respected and venerated, how much more are the supposed servants of God?

"But instead, what you are now doing Mr G.O. is to threaten us that if we dare correct you that God will just spank us. We must not correct you, and we must not say anything against you, because you have raised so many young people now that have become sycophants.

"These sycophants now call you people father! father!! These groups of people have now become a dique. They have now become a cult. These people believe they can't succeed in the Ministry except they bow to you. Some of them even believe that you carry some special anointing, that they must tap into before and until you go. Sir, Ephesians Chapter 4 verse 7, says that 'God has given to every one of us the grace to succeed in life according to our measure of faith.' We all have what we need to fulfil our ministries. Whether Apostles, Teachers, or Prophets. Jesus will give every man and woman what he or she needs sir. Note what you carry is for the body of Christ. What you carry is to raise the children of God to become like Christ. What everybody needs to do in the Ministry, Jesus will deposit in them.

"But you have confused people, that they now literally worship you. Many of you have surrounded yourself with sycophants who can never tell you the truth. Some of you have Universities, you have institutions. What students and teachers do in these schools is terrible. It is worse than what is happening in some federal institutions across the country.

"Some of your schools are dying, but now, you are blaming the government. Are we not supposed to be light and the salt of the earth? Where are the people that you have raised as Minister of God? You gather people from year to year, all that you do, or tell them, is about money and material success. How then, do you not expect that we are going to end up like this? Everybody is desperately looking for money. Everybody!!! When politicians come to you, you bless them. When people attend your programme what you preach to them is how to make more wealth. How to be wealthy. You tell them that the wealth you have now is still small. There is still a place God is taking them to. What do they want to do? A man has four cars. You are telling him that isn't enough. Mr G.O. sir, how many cars do you want such a person to drive in life to be comfortable? Why are you teaching us covetousness?

"Why can't some of our Churches' G.O.s. Speak the truth? Some of them have truly disappointed our Lord Jesus Christ. This is not the gospel Jesus commissioned you and committed you to preach. Most of these G.O.s have turned the Church and Ministries into family affairs. Some of them, their children, oppressed people they talk to and have the audacity to be abusing Pastors.

"And the so-called G.O sits there watching, thinking the society will grow. Some of them, their children talk to believers, the people our Lord Jesus Christ died for as if they are beggars. As if these Pastors are nobody. You sit down there as a G.O. watching like Ella, as your children are desecrating the altar of God. Many of you are planning how you will quietly hand over your Ministries to your children.

"The Church of God has now become a family business. Because it is now all about money and wealth. And then you are wondering why Nigeria is bad? Why will it not be bad? If you as a G.O. of a Church or Ministry is all concerned about money, what do you expect from the kidnapper?

"What do you expect from the hoodlums and the armed robbers? If you must know it all about money today. The lady that is prostituting her body, she is doing so, because she wants money. They are looking for money. Many of you G.O.s are stealing from the people. You are preaching and they are dropping money. And sir, you think that is the call of God. Do you think this is the same gospel that Apostle Paul preached? Do you think this is the same gospel Peter preached? That he told somebody, that may you perish with your money. For you think, you can buy the gift of God with money.



Power generation continues to decline as investments rise

*In most parts of the world, the more investments in terms of funding and equipment the government provides for power generation and distribution, the better services the citizens enjoy, but the reverse is the case in Nigeria. Since the democratic dispensation began in 1999, successive administrations have invested huge amounts of money in the country's power sector. **JOHNMARK UKOKO** writes that despite the huge funding and investments in the sector, perpetual darkness has remained the lot of Nigerians and businesses in the country.*

Since 1999 when democratic governance began till date, successive administrations have, as a matter of policy, invested huge resources in foreign and local currencies in the country's power sector.

From former presidents Olusegun Obasanjo and Goodluck Jonathan to the President Muhammadu Buhari administration, the governments have, as a matter of deliberate policy, engaged eggheads to man the country's power sector.

At the inception of his government, Obasanjo appointed the late Bola Ige to provide Nigerians with stable power supply and on assuming office, Ige assured Nigerians that he would turn stones into bread in the power sector, but when he was killed, the power situation deteriorated from bad to worse.

When Jonathan assumed power, he appointed Prof. Barth Nnaji to tackle the power challenges, but as of when he was removed from office, there was no noticeable improvement in the country's power sector.

Nnaji even left the power situation worse than he met it, as his time as Minister of Power witnessed scandal due to his interest in private business in the power sector, especially in his home state of Abia.

On his part, President Buhari, who came to power on a change mantra, appointed former Lagos State Governor, Babatunde Raji Fashola, as Minister of Power. At his appointment, Nigerians who have seen his performance as Lagos State governor hoped that as Minister of Works, Housing and Power, the days of darkness were over.

They had hoped that with Fashola at the helm of affairs in the power sector, generation and distribution would improve significantly, but as the years went by, Fashola's reign in the sector proved another mirage, as power generation and distribution remained around 5,000 megawatts.

At the commencement of Buhari's second term, he moved Fashola from the Ministry of Power and appointed Muhammad Saleh, again, with the hope of reviving the sector.

Most Nigerians thought electricity supply would improve with an electrical engineer in place of Fashola, a lawyer as Minister of Power, but barely a year and six months after Fashola's successor in the ministry, the country's electricity situation has been challenged

by the constant collapse of the national grid and power outages.

In the last six months or thereabouts, Saleh had been explaining to Nigerians why the country had constantly remained in total darkness.

The national grid that had over 6,000 megawatts a few years ago has now plunged to about 3,526 megawatts as of last week with most parts of the country experiencing unprecedented outages.

The Nigeria Electricity System Operators (NESO) has negatively impacted the transmission and distribution of electricity to consumers, including households and businesses across the country.

However, the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) explained that the Federal Government was making an effort to deliver two units of 330kv power transmission substations in Katsina and Kano states.

Managing Director of TCN, Sule Abdulaziz, disclosed that the company would deliver two units of 330 KVA power transmission substations in Katsina and Kano along with the transmission lines in the next two years to boost power supply in the country.

A statement issued by General Manager, Public Affairs of TCN, Ndidi Mbah, said on completion, the Katsina substation will improve the transmission of bulk power supply to Daura, Dutsima, Kankara and other parts of the North.

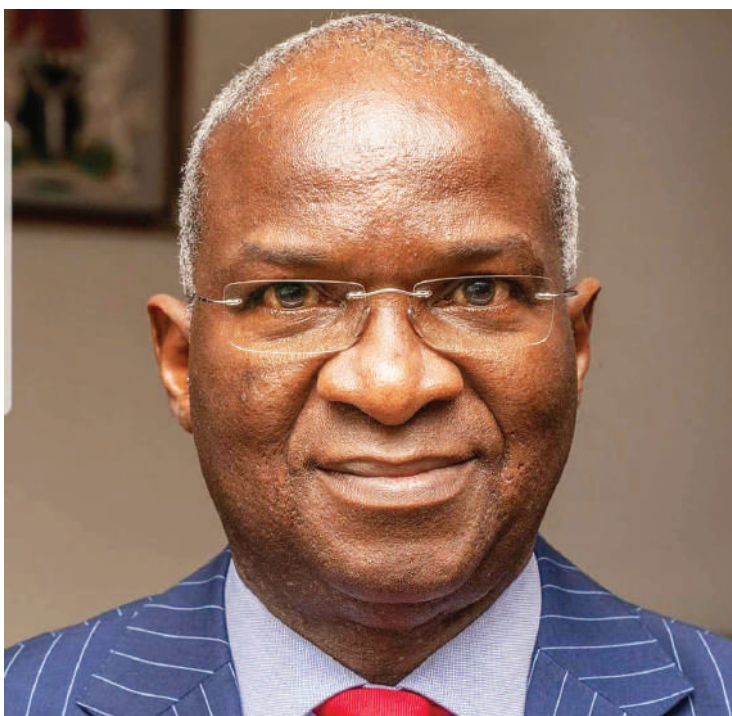
No doubt, the Buhari administration in its seven years had awarded several power contracts running into billions of dollars and trillions of naira, but improvement in the power sector has been at best negligible.

President Buhari's administration has awarded a lot of power projects across the country aimed at guaranteeing the country a stable power supply but to no avail

On assumption of office, ministers of power keep assuring Nigerians that they know the challenges of the power situation and that they have what it takes to remedy the situation.

But at the end of their tenures, they often leave the power supply worse than they met it, even after supervising the award of huge contracts and projects to boost the sector.

Former Minister of Solid Mineral Resources, Kayode Fayemi, recently said he knew the challenges of the power sector and possessed the magic wand to tackle them.



Babatunde Fashola

Fayemi, who is the Governor of Ekiti State and a presidential aspirant on the platform of the All Progressives Congress (APC), stated this while addressing Niger State delegates, assuring that if elected president, the country's power challenges will be a thing of the past.

"I need your votes to continue the good legacies of President Buhari's administration on several fronts. This government has done well in the economy, security and infrastructure development. The only area where there are still some challenges is power supply.

"If I emerge as the next president of the country, the challenges currently being witnessed in the power sector will be a thing of the past," he said.

While the politicians are doing what they know how

best to do in making promises, businesses in the country are closing down due to the failure of the power sector.

Most businesses that have not shut down operations now run skeletal services as a result of erratic power supply and rising cost of diesel.

Only recently, President of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), Mansur Ahmed, told The Trumpet that members of the association were grappling with serious challenges of epileptic power supply.

Most Nigerians, who commented on the situation, lamented that successive administrations have failed the country in the area of power supply, wondering why 62 years after independence and huge funds invested in the power sector, the country still gropes in utter darkness.

They expressed sadness that it appears the more money the government spends on power, the worse it gets.

A public affairs analyst, Sam Nwajoba, berated the engineers in the ministry of power for the high level of corruption and compromise with foreign and local contractors to exploit the country.

Nwajoba alleged that the engineers and some senior civil servants were not being sincere with Nigerians and as such the more projects awarded and commissioned in the power sector, the more epileptic electricity supply Nigerians experience.

"The Federal Government is not sincere in its avowed commitment to delivering stable power supply to Nigerians. We are told that for every budget, about one power project or the other will be commissioned or about to be awarded. But despite that, the power generation has remained between 5,000 megawatts and 7,000 megawatts for years until recently when it crashed to below 4,000 megawatts.

"Politicians, top civil servants and engineers in the ministry of power are feeding fats from the various power projects while the country's business sectors and the economy at large suffer.

"As long the government fails to make tough decisions and take concrete actions against senior civil servants and engineers in the Ministry of Power, Nigerians will continue to be told one story after another, while power supply remains erratic," he said.

As the power situation worsens, Nigerians ask why has it become nearly impossible for successive administrations to deliver stable power supply in the country?

Agriculture remains highest employer of labour in Africa, says Elumelu

By **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

Chairman of Heirs Holding, Tony Elumelu, has said at the World Economic Forum (WEF) that agriculture remains the highest employer of labour on the African continent.

He made this known during PepsiCo's Global Leaders roundtable on mobilising climate finance for regenerative agriculture, stressing: "In the wake of the food security crisis caused by the Russia-Ukraine war, I championed Africa's ability to feed the world."

Elumelu, who also pointed out that the continent has abundance of arable land, maintained

that African leaders and all stakeholders need to fix commodity exchanges, and deal with issues of processing agricultural produce, transportation, storage and access to stable electricity.

"We must work hard to incentivise our farmers. We must support farmers for our progress in the agriculture sector. We must support our farmers to see progress in the sector and create an export and tariff regime that works," he added.

He further stressed that there was a great need to mechanise and leverage technology to harness the full potential in agriculture for the benefit of humanity.



Tony Elumelu

ILC conference holds from May 27 to June 11

Stories by **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

The 110th session of the International Labour Conference (ILC) has commenced and will run from May 27, 2022, to June 11, 2022.

The conference will be held in hybrid format with delegates attending personally in Geneva, Switzerland and virtually in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, sanitary and travel restrictions as well as renovation work at the United Nations (UN) and

International Labour Organisation (ILO) offices.

In a statement made available to *The Trumpet*, the ILC said the inaugural sitting will be held fully virtually, while the various committees will begin their work on May 30, 2022, just as plenary sittings will be held between June 6 and June 11, 2022.

The high-level world of work summit will take place on 10 June, while the conference will close on 11 June.

Among the items on the

agenda is a possible amendment of the ILO declaration on fundamental principles and rights at the workplace which will include safe and healthy working conditions.

An initial discussion on an apprenticeship will take place with a view to possibly creating a new international labour standard.

Committees will also discuss decent work, the social solidarity economy and the strategic objective of employment as part of

the follow-up mechanism of the ILO declaration on social justice for fair globalisation.

The conference will be followed up by a meeting of the ILO governing body on June 13, during which it will elect its officers to run its affairs between 2022 and 2023.

It would be recalled that ILC, sometimes referred to as the World Parliament of Labour, is the largest international gathering dedicated to working issues and is usually attended by representatives of governments, employers, and workers from the 187 ILO member countries.

FCMB, Mastercard Foundation partner to lift 100,000 Nigerian MSMEs

First City Monument Bank (FCMB), a member of the FCMB Group Plc has partnered with Mastercard Foundation to provide subsidised loans to 100,000 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the country to boost their operations and create job opportunities for young Nigerians.

The programme, which is part of the Mastercard Foundation's Young Africa work strategy in Nigeria, is aimed at sustainably moving the Nigerian youth out of poverty.

Speaking on the initiative, the Managing Director of FCMB, Mrs Yemisi Edun, said the programme was being executed through a fresh fund of \$27.8 million, an equivalent of about N15.5 billion.

"The MSMEs revitalisation fund ensures that qualified MSMEs can access loans for their businesses at a single digits interest rate, 70 per cent of the MSMEs revitalisation fund targets women-owned MSMEs in agribusiness, the creative industry and digital sectors. The remaining 30 per cent will be deployed to the funding needs of youth-owned enterprises and businesses in Nigeria.

On the partnership, she described it as a purpose-driven intervention that would further help to break the barriers that limit MSMEs productivity and success in the country.

She said: "The past few years

have been very challenging for individual households and businesses in Nigeria. Now more than ever, all hands must be on deck to create opportunities that will sustainably enable people and businesses to thrive.

"We are proud to partner with the Mastercard Foundation to rebuild businesses, drive recovery and stimulate economic growth by providing the much-needed support for Nigerians to engage in productive activities.

"As a large and inclusive institution, we will deploy our products, services and other excellent offerings to ensure that this partnership achieves the desired results."



Mrs Yemisi Edun

Academy asks FG to address challenges of participating in AfCFTA

Registrar of the National Association of Government Approved Freight Forwarders (NAGAFF), Francis Omotosho, has urged the Federal Government to address issues militating against Nigeria's participation in the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA).

Omotosho stated this at a one-day workshop organised by the Lagos State Council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) recently in Lagos, with the theme: African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) Challenges For Nigerian Businesses.

According to Omotosho, the AfCFTA had come to stay, but unfortunately, the country has been facing several challenges, hence the government should do the needful to enable the country to benefit maximally from the initiative.

"Lack of commitment to eradicating existing trade barriers, inadequate trade infrastructure, inconsistency in trade agreement issues with cross border payment and other issues should be urgently addressed," he said.

He, however, said for Nigerian businesses to key into the framework and concept of AfCFTA and benefit equitably, Nigerians needed access to Information Communication Technology (ICT) facilities and Internet connectivity.

"Nigeria needs adequate training on the concept, needs access to capital, loans, access to the multimodal, reliable transportation system, adequate security and integrated single African Customs platform, among others.

"There should be one accept-



Francis Omotosho,

able and single African trade currency, 24-hour operations at land border posts, airports and seaports in Nigeria and others should be adopted for the country to benefit maximally from the AfCFTA," he said.

Omotosho noted that if well implemented, a robust participation in AfCFTA would boost economic growth, as well as improve the quality and quantity of goods available for the country.

Speaking, Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, pointed out that the state had set up a committee that named coconut, fish and vegetables to be traded on the AfCFTA platform.

Sanwo-Olu, who was represented by Deputy Director in the Ministry of Trade, Commerce and Cooperatives, Mrs Omolabake Bashiru, said the state was also

venturing into fashion.

"We have a fashion hub in Ikeja and we are establishing one in Yaba. We are preparing people in this sector for AfCFTA. For the Small and Medium Enterprises, there is a business clinic where they will be trained on packaging and other areas, but unfortunately, we are yet to have a policy on AfCFTA, but the process is ongoing," she stated.

Earlier, former President of NAGAFF and Chairman of the occasion, Eugene Nweke, pointed out that Nigeria has the largest market on the continent should position itself adequately, so as not to be at a disadvantaged position.

"If we position ourselves properly for the AfCFTA, it will help reduce poverty, especially among women, increase trade and boost the country's economic development," he said.

On his part, Chairman of Lagos Council of NUJ, Adeleye Ajayi, noted that successful implementation of the AfCFTA would demonstrate to the world that Africa was emerging as a leader in global trade.

He said the AfCFTA has the potential of increasing employment opportunities, income and help to expand opportunities for Africans.

"In its implementation, there should be careful monitoring of impacts on skilled and unskilled workers, women and men in all countries and sectors to ensure the full benefits of the agreement. Also, achieving the full potential of AfCFTA will depend on putting in place significant policy reforms and trade facilitation measures," he said.

Nigeria to ban used refrigerators, generators in 2023

By **ADAKU WALTER**

The Federal Government has declared that it will, from January 1, 2023, ban all substances that are not ozone-friendly in accordance with the Montreal Protocol Agreement to which Nigeria is a signatory.

These substances include used refrigerators, air conditioners, generators, water dispensers, and photocopiers.

Speaking with newsmen at a stakeholders' workshop on the validation of the Draft National Cooling Plan in Abuja, Programme Manager, Environment Unit of

the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Oladipo Supo, said Nigeria has delayed in implementing the agreement because it has failed to get alternatives to ozone-friendly substances.

"Under the Montreal Protocol Agreement, some of these ozone-depleting substances are actually eliminated and barred from being used. We started with HCFCs and now we will replace them with HFCs, which is where we are today.

"Nigeria has committed itself because it is part of the signatory. We are looking at January 1, 2023, when some of the substances will

no longer be allowed into the country. Before then, the Federal Ministry of Environment will try to ensure that the alternatives are available because we cannot ban something when we don't have alternatives.

"In the refrigerating sector, we only have technicians. The people who actually use them are technicians on the streets. You remember that some time ago, some air conditioners blew up in Ogun State. It was because of all the contaminated things and recycled ACs that are not supposed to be in circulation," he said.

Inq. Digital Nigeria champions campaign for more girls in ICT

Managing Director of Inq.Digital Nigeria, Valentine Chime, has stressed the need to encourage females to pursue careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) for greater development of the country.

He stated this at this year's International Girls in Information and Communication Technology (ICT Day), saying that the ceremony was observed in over 166 countries across the globe and that the initiative was organised by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

The event is celebrated yearly to create a global environment that empowers and encourages girls and young women to consider careers in ICT.

At the 2022 STEM Future for Girls event with the theme: Access And Safety, which was attended by communication regulators, private sector operators, women STEM leaders in Nigeria, academics, and

policymakers, speakers stressed the importance of providing safety for girls and young women to thrive and participate in STEM as a way to close the equality gap in the sector.

Commenting on the event, Valentine Chime said: "It has never been more expedient for girls and women to embrace tech as a career path and inspire the next generation of female technologists."

He stressed the significance of women's involvement in STEM fields to Inq., and the manner in which this commitment is exhibited through the company's purposeful focus on the recruitment of women in technical roles within the organisation, adding that Inq.'s support for initiatives such as Girls in ICT Day, which helps to highlight the essential purpose, is to build a world in which there would be no gender discrimination when it comes to the progress of STEM fields.



Problems bedevilling Nigeria's Real Estate sector

It is no longer news that Nigeria has overtaken other African countries as the country with the most Real Estate investments.

This feat was achieved thanks to a growing population of over 200 million people. Despite this feat, Nigeria, like most African countries, is bedevilled by numerous economic and political woes that have hurt the country's real estate sector making it difficult for the sector to thrive better.

The coronavirus pandemic increased drastically the risk in the capital market. The volatile nature of the equity capital market in this post-pandemic era is one of the reasons why there is a drastic drop in returns in Nigeria. Because the real estate sector is a component of this financial system, most protective investors will reconsider investing in real estate. Additionally, the raising capital for lands, fees, and construction costs have made things more difficult for estate agents.

One major effect of this problem is the impact on the Nigerian economy by limiting the flow of cash in the real estate sector, thereby having a very negative effect on the country's Gross Domestic Product.

The ongoing rise in the price of most Nigerian homes is posing a significant challenge to the country's real estate sector. Most Nigerian cities are overpriced, which discourages potential investors. Rivers, Lagos, and Abuja are the most affected cities, all of which are important commercial hubs.

Furthermore, the exorbitant price tag has widened the social divide between different income earners. In short, there are some areas where a middle-income earner, let alone a low-income earner, cannot afford to rent a home.

Taking Lagos State as an example, certain housing units are occupied by the wealthy and cannot be afforded by low-income earners. When this happens, combined with the country's rising economic woes, people tend to flock to less expensive areas, putting a damper on hopes of a possible drop in rent costs.

Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG), a set standard that is used to evaluate the environmental and climate effects of housing units is a major factor in the Nigeria Real Estate sector. Most apartments are characterised by pollution, the prevalence of waste in public areas, lack of trash bins for proper waste disposal, and more. This is not just mostly prevalent in big cities such as Lagos, Abuja, Port-Harcourt and Kano but is also common

in some local communities.

More so, according to the Global Housing Standard, real estate professionals should be concerned about greenhouse gas emissions. Some real estate practitioners in Nigeria disregard this standard, resulting in widespread environmental and climate change in most areas of the country.

Statistics show that Nigeria's ESG indexes grew by approximately an additional 40% in 2020. This is said to have been primarily influenced by matrices determined by how Nigerians handled waste and how conducive their environment was. Another important factor that contributed to the exponential increase was the high proportion of healthy residents compared to the low rate of medical cases caused by environmental factors.

Furthermore, the depreciation rate of the Naira is a major source of concern for the real estate sector and other sectors of the Nigerian economy. The failure of the government to subsidize the cost of building materials after so many failed promises adds insult to injury,

forcing contractors and building engineers to purchase this expensive construction equipment at exorbitant prices across the country.

Notwithstanding, though not taken seriously by the government, housing experts have made several recommendations for the country to become self-sufficient in the manufacturing of building materials. These recommendations have yet to bear fruit, but in the meantime, Real Estate investors in Nigeria will most likely be purchasing construction materials at exorbitant prices, aided by rising naira depreciation for who knows how long.

The increase in rural-urban migration occasioned by the inability of the government to create jobs in the rural communities is a major factor. The large influx of renters from rural areas to urban areas has had a significant impact on property regulation in the country. As a result of this unchecked migration, the prices of home rent have increased drastically over the years. In places like Abuja, the price of a 1 bedroom apartment which was around N300,000 to

N350,000 in the semi-urban areas of the city is now at an all-time high of N450,000 to N500,000

Even though rent prices in rural areas are relatively low, people flock to urban areas in search of white-collar jobs and greener pastures due to a lack of investment opportunities in other sectors of the economy, especially agriculture. As a result, most real estate managers and agents capitalize on this flow by raising house rents.

Similarly, Estate laws are generally not properly implemented in Nigeria, which has resulted in many cases where investors have been deprived of the land they legally purchased. This problem is very common in Abuja and Lagos. It is primarily orchestrated by a group of land grabbers commonly known as omo-onile in Lagos. These well-known property scammers have a penchant for dubbing investors with the settlement fee tag. They are also commonly found on construction sites where building projects are in progress, where they either violently or deceitfully extort.

In Lagos State for instance, despite the city's law, which

guarantees offenders 21 years in prison, land grabbers continue to thrive in certain areas of the State. There have been numerous cases where people's land has been forcibly taken and buildings demolished, rendering the property protection law ineffective. One such case happened recently in Abuja where the house of a prominent Magazine publisher and aspiring politician in Nigeria, Prince Kpokpogri was demolished.

This problem that has remained largely unchecked appears to be deterring a significant number of real estate investors from investing in Nigerian property.

Buildings collapsing in various parts of the country indicate that the construction materials used by some contractors are subpar. In short, some of these building contractors in Nigeria lack the necessary educational credentials and professional experience.

This persistent problem appears to have become a source of concern for the majority of Nigerians, and if allowed to persist, it may succeed in tarnishing the image of the country's real estate sector taking it backwards. Presently, some buildings in certain industrial areas of the country do not meet construction standards, which is largely due to the incompetence of the responsible building contractors, a lapse on the part of regulatory agencies.

Finally, the importance of real estate to the economy of Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. It is undoubtedly a major economic driver and has generated wealth for the country. Despite the fact that it is the largest Real Estate market in Africa, it has faced these critical challenges over the years without the government making significant efforts to tackle them.

No country grows to its full potential without a healthy Real Estate sector. It is time the government makes deliberate efforts to tackle these problems for the betterment of the country.



Prince Kpokpogri

Court orders final forfeiture of Lagos port containers to EFCC

By **BLESSING OZIWO**

The Special Offences Court sitting in Ikeja presided over by Justice Mojisola Dada on Thursday, May 26, 2022, asked the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to take custody of some properties that belongs to one Obinna Anthony Okonkwo at the Apapa ports in Lagos.

It was recalled that Justice Mojisola had earlier ordered the interim forfeiture of the properties, after an ex-parte

application filed by the EFCC.

The properties are container with no: TCLU A576813 located at 7, Okotie-Eboh Street, Lagos; a container with no: TGHU 8404304 located at 7, Okotie-Eboh Street, Lagos; and a container with no: GESU 600 located at a warehouse on 191, Muyibi Street, Olodi, Apapa, Lagos.

Counsel for the EFCC, S.O. Daji, at the sitting on Thursday while requesting the final forfeiture of the items, informed the court that the EFCC had complied with the

directive of the court, including publishing the interim forfeiture order in a national newspaper.

He tendered exhibits to prove his case saying "My lord, after the publication, till now, no one has come forward to lay claim to the items."

Furthermore, Daji told the court that investigation revealed that the owners used fake documents to import the items into the country and that the containers were acquired with proceeds of unlawful activities.

"We urge your lordship to grant our application, which is brought pursuant to Section 17 Advance Fee Fraud and Other Fraud Related Offences Act 2006," he said.

Justice Dada granted the prayers of the Counsel for the EFCC and thereafter ordered the final forfeiture of the items.

The items were ordered to be sold and the proceeds remitted to the Consolidated Revenue Fund Account of the Federal Government.

Marketers seek funds to replace old oil Trucks

By **BLESSING OZIWO**

Marketers of oil have called for investment in new tankers to replace existing ones

Executive Secretary of the Major Oil Marketers Association of Nigeria (MOMAN) Clement Isong, on Tuesday, called for investments in new trucks.

He said, "Many of the trucks that are on our roads are about 40 years old. Those trucks should not be on the road because they are prone to accidents."

He made this known during an oil and gas summit in Lagos where he delivered a lecture on 'Opportunity areas and challenges of investments in the Petroleum Products Marketing & Bunkering sector'.

According to him, "those trucks should not be on the road because they are prone to

accidents." The old trucks were no longer road-worthy and were the causes of tanker accidents, adding that lack of funds to purchase new ones were some of the fallouts of low investments in the downstream sector.

However, he said, with the passage and implementation of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA), marketers were hopeful that investors would be encouraged to invest in new trucks as part of the way forward for the downstream sector.

"Those are investments that haven't been made in Nigeria for very many years because the business was not generating enough money. But by the time the PIA is implemented, then we will have better quality trucks – trucks that will not continue to cause accidents like those we currently see on the road," he said.

According to Isong, the same situation of asset depreciation applied to product storage tanks. He noted that most of the tanks were about 50-60 years old, calling on the government to ensure that it drove investments into the sector to guarantee safety of the depots.

"Although most of the tanks at the private depots are also old, those at the NNPC depots are even older.

"The 30, 000 filling stations in the country are also very old. Most of them are about 50-60 years old. Most of the stations need to be pulled down and rebuilt. Filling stations are supposed to be rebuilt every 10 to 15 years. The underground tanks also need to be changed because they are rusty and cause products to seep into the water being consumed," he said, adding that new technologies needed

to be deployed to improve the safety of lives and properties in the sector.

He called on the government to put in place self-regulation that would pull investments into the downstream sector, and in turn improve safety performance in the sector.

"When I say safety, I mean the entire health, safety, environment

and quality of the depots across the country. And I'm not just talking about the private depots alone. So, there is so much investment that needs to be made to upgrade the filling stations in the country. But sometimes, the sector probably will need the regulator to accompany us to make sure that we do the things that we must do," he said.



Clement Isong

USAID Trade Hub partners with ShEquity to support women entrepreneurs

ShEquity Partners, an investment firm that promotes African women in entrepreneurship, has revealed that it will invest in and support more than 100 potential women-owned and led businesses in Africa.

Armed with a \$1.2 million co-investment grant from the USAID funded West Africa Trade & Investment Hub, the firm is poised to help women actualize their goals.

According to the founder and Managing Director, Pauline Koelbl, women entrepreneurs are very vital to Africa's success. She revealed that they operate more than 40 percent of small and medium-sized businesses in Africa. She revealed that one of the hurdles faced by African women entrepreneurs is inability to collectively grow these businesses due to a shortfall of \$42 billion in financing than their male counterparts in the continent.

The fund is meant to establish the ShEquity's USAID Trade Hub project to address these challenges by combining cash investment, structured technical support, and access to high-value networks, specifically leveraging on its \$1.2 million co-investment grant which will attract at least \$15 million in private funding that will be cumulatively used to invest in, scale, and accelerate women-owned or led businesses operating in the following countries; Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Niger, and Nigeria. The targeted businesses will operate in one of some selected sectors which are: agribusiness, healthcare, tech-enabled solutions, renewable energy, mobility, and fast-moving consumer goods.

"If Africa is to reach its full economic potential, smart investment for African women entrepreneurs needs to be dramatically increased." The lack of financing, combined with insufficient business support, put potential women entrepreneurs and those seeking

to expand their already successful businesses in a growth deficit or low-income trap, widening the gender gap and reinforcing negative biases." Koelbl said.

Additionally, as part of the USAID Trade Hub project, ShEquity will provide business development services and technical support to 120 women-owned or led businesses in the target markets and also select 12 high-growth, high-impact businesses that will each receive at least \$50,000 in venture capital funding.

The combined investments in the 12 selected companies are expected to create at least 200 jobs and benefit around 20,000 people economically either directly or indirectly, along their respective value chains, through 2024.

To accomplish these goals, ShEquity will leverage its proven experience in championing women-led businesses for success. ShEquity is intentionally building an integrated and holistic approach toward unlocking the potential of African female founders. The strategy involves combining its Business Accelerator and its Investment

Vehicle to support women to grow their businesses. This provides pre-investment venture building support to allow access to a trusted pipeline of potential deals and serves also as a post-investment technical assistance facility.

ShEquity was started by Koelbl in May 2020 with her seed capital of around \$250,000. The firm has since invested in eight businesses in Sub-Saharan countries. ShEquity has been investing as a special vehicle purpose and is now in the process of formalizing into a venture capital fund structure. Koelbl says ShEquity's current portfolio of companies have impacted more than 13.5 million people across Sub-Saharan.

Speaking on what this partnership means to ShEquity, Koelbl stated thus: "We are excited about the future, as we hope to see more action towards democratizing access to capital and closing the gender funding gap in Africa. Backing female-led funds are the best strategy to address the gender funding gap because of its trickle-down effect: more diversity in capital allocators translates into the diversity of businesses getting funded.

The USAID Trade Hub's partnership with ShEquity represents its commitment to ensuring more women in West Africa have the access to finance, resources, and knowledge needed to grow their businesses and speed economic development in the region.

Speaking on the development, the Chief of Party for the USAID Trade Hub, Robin Wheeler said "African startups face many hurdles, but those launched by women even more so, despite their drive and determination. The USAID Trade Hub is proud to join with ShEquity to respond to this challenge with a coordinated approach, providing capital as well as operational and technical support to unlock the full potential of the many women-owned businesses in Africa."



Pauline Koelbl

CAPPA applauds Chima Williams over Goldman Environmental Prize award

The Corporate Accountability and Public Participation Africa (CAPPA) has commended Executive Director of Environmental Rights Action-Friends of the Earth Nigeria (ERA-FoEN), Chima Williams, for emerging winner of the Goldman Environmental Prize 2022, describing it as a well-deserved feat.

Williams and six other recipients were named in the 2022 award ceremony which was captured virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic and broadcast online on May 25, 2022

In a statement issued by CAPPA Director of Programmes, Philip Jakpor, the group said: "The Goldman Environmental Prize is an award that honours the achievements and leadership of grassroots environmental activists from around the world.

"The prize recognises individuals for their sustained significant efforts in protecting the environment. The award given to recognized individual leaders from different continents seeks to inspire other ordinary people to take extraordinary actions to protect the natural world."

Williams is the third Nigerian to receive the award after the late Ken Saro-Wiwa and Odigha Odigha, who got the award in 1995 and 2003.

"Williams was recognized for his role in the legal quest for environmental justice. He worked with the four fisherfolks from the three communities in the Niger Delta that held Royal Dutch Shell

accountable for the oil spills and environmental damage to Oruma, Goi and Ikot Ada Udo communities.

"He was also on the legal team that litigated the action over gas flaring in the Iwherokan Community in the case of Jonah Gbemre versus Shell in 2005," he said.

Executive Director of CAPPA, Akinbode Oluwafemi, said: "The award of the Goldman Environmental Prize to Chima Williams serves as encouragement to individuals, groups, and communities even beyond the Niger Delta that are fighting environmental injustices. The environmental justice community hails this announcement.

"The recognition of Williams is a testament of his doggedness in the quest to hold corporations like Shell accountable for environmental recklessness that they think they can get away with."

A statement issued by the Goldman Environmental Foundation listed other winners to include Niwat Roykaew from Thailand; Marjan Minnessma of The Netherlands; Juliet Vincent, Australia; Nalleli Cobo, United States and Alex Luciatante and Alexandra Narvaez, Ecuador.

The Goldman prize was inaugurated in 1989 and awarded yearly to environmental justice activists from each of the world's six continental regions and had produced 213 winners, who had been so far honoured, including 95 women from 93 nations to date.

Court denies Okorocha bail after EFCC's arrest

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

A Federal High Court sitting in Abuja on Friday denied the bail application of a former governor of Imo State and presidential aspirant of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Sen Rochas Okorocha.

Okorocha was arrested on Tuesday 24th May 2022, in a commando-style by operatives of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) after laying siege on the ex-governor's Maitama home for several hours in a bid to produce him in court over allegations of fraud.

Okorocha, who represents Imo West Senatorial district at the red chamber, had filed an ex-parte application seeking release

on bail pending the determination of the suit he filed against the Federal Government.

It was gathered that the former governor premised his application on his presidential ambition under the APC.

A statement by the Spokesperson of EFCC, Wilson Uwujaren, on Friday, said Justice Ekwo refused the bail application. He added that the Commission has filed a 17-count criminal charge against Okorocha with arraignment adjourned until May 30, 2022.

He said, "The attempt by a former governor of Imo State, Senator Rochas Okorocha to force his release by the EFCC on Friday, 27 May 2022 failed as Justice Inyang Ekwo of the Federal High court, Abuja refused his

ex parte application asking to be released on bail pending the determination of a suit he filed against the Federal Government.

"Mr Okorocha who was arrested by the EFCC on Tuesday, May 24, 2022, premised his application on the grounds that his presidential ambition under the platform of the All Progressives Congress could be imperilled unless granted bail.

"But Justice Ekwo declined to compel the EFCC to release him on bail but ordered the applicant to put the Federal Government on notice to justify his continued detention.

"The EFCC has filed a 17-count criminal charge against Okorocha before the same judge, with arraignment adjourned until May 30, 2022."



Okorocha

Court orders final forfeiture of 3 containers in Lagos

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Justice Mojisola Dada of the Special Offences Court sitting in Ikeja, Lagos, on Thursday, May 26, 2022, ordered the final forfeiture of some properties belonging to one Obinna Anthony Okonkwo.

Justice Dada had earlier granted an interim forfeiture of the properties, following an ex-parte application filed by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

According to EFCC Spokesperson, Wilson

Uwujaren, the properties recovered from the Lagos Port, includes "a container with no: TCLU A576813 located at 7, Okotie-Eboh Street, Lagos; a container with no: TGHU 8404304 located at 7, Okotie-Eboh Street, Lagos; and a container with no: GESU 600 located at a warehouse on 191, Muyibi Street, Olodi, Apapa, Lagos."

At the sitting, counsel for the EFCC, S.O. Daji, who brought the motion for final forfeiture of the items, told the court that the EFCC had complied with the directive of

the court, including publishing the interim forfeiture order in a national newspaper.

Tendering exhibits to prove the same, he said, "My lord, after the publication, till now, no one has come forward to lay claim to the items."

He further told the court that investigation revealed that the owners used fake documents to import the items into the country.

He also told the court that the investigation showed that they were acquired with

proceeds of unlawful activities.

"We urge your lordship to grant our application, which is brought pursuant to Section 17 Advance Fee Fraud and Other Fraud Related Offences Act 2006," he said.

Thereafter, Justice Dada granted the prayers and also ordered the final forfeiture of the items.

The items were also ordered to be sold and the proceeds remitted to the Consolidated Revenue Fund Account of the Federal Government.

Anti-graft War: POCA to address architectural gaps, ICPC boss says

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

The Chairman of the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), Professor Bolaji Owasanoye (SAN) has stated that the recently passed Proceeds of Crime (Recovery and Management) Act (POCA) would help address the architectural gaps in the fight against corruption in the country.

Professor Owasanoye made this known during a one-day capacity building training for officers of the Commission on the POCA and Money Laundering (Prevention and Prohibition) Acts 2022 held at the Commission's headquarters.

The ICPC Chairman explained that the training was organised to keep the staff of the Commission abreast with two of the newly passed bills signed into law by President Muhammadu Buhari about two weeks ago.

According to him, corruption and other related offences such as money laundering and illicit financial flows undermine the stability of not only Nigeria but other countries, adding that in the quest to fight the menace of corruption, countries now engage in self-assessment, which considers several indices and reveals many things including vulnerabilities.

He further noted that since corruption is sophisticated, many countries have

designed various mechanisms for dealing with unexplained wealth.

He said, "One of the examples that we have found that worked in other countries is civil recovery or civil forfeiture. Because corruption is a crime, the global standard was that you must prove beyond a reasonable doubt; whoever is alleging must prove beyond reasonable doubt and this can be very challenging, especially when you are dealing with intangible assets and timid capital.

"For the first time in Nigeria, we have the reversal of the burden of proof."

The Chairman implored all participants, particularly prosecutors, to take advantage of the innovations of the two new legislations as they carry out their work in fighting corruption in the country.

Four papers were presented on the topics, 'Introduction to the Proceeds of Crime (Recovery and Management) Act 2022 - Legal Procedures', 'Introduction to Proceeds of Crime (Recovery and Management) Act 2022 - Administrative Issues under the Act', 'Innovations Under the Introduction to Money Laundering (Prevention and Prohibition) Act 2022', and 'Quick Wins under the Introduction to Money Laundering (Prevention and Prohibition) Act 2022'.

The presenters were Yetunde Mosunmola, Olakunle Akinsola, John Paul Okwor, and Paul Okoko, all officers of the Commission.

Court jails two internet fraudsters in Benin, one in Port Harcourt

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

The Benin Zonal Command of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) on Thursday, May 26, 2022, secured the conviction of two internet fraudsters, Aigbe Joseph and Adefulire Abiodun before Justice Efe Ikponmwonba of Edo State High Court, Benin City.

Joseph and Abiodun were arraigned on one count each - fraudulently representing themselves in order to defraud unsuspecting victims.

The charge against Aigbe Joseph reads, "That you, Aigbe Joseph sometime between 2019 and 21st February 2022 in Benin City, Edo State within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court did with intent to defraud represent yourself to be Jeannette Provencal, a lady based in the United States of America, thereby committed an offence contrary to and punishable under Section 484 of the Criminal code Law Cap 48 Laws of Bendel State of Nigeria (as applicable in Edo state) 1976".

The defendants pleaded guilty to the charges when they were arraigned prompting the prosecution counsel, A.A. Ozigbu asked the court to convict and sentence them accordingly.

However, counsel to the defendants, A.S. Adeshina and A.S. Akinfolarin pleaded with the court to temper justice with mercy as the defendants have become remorseful for

their actions.

Justice Ikponmwonba sentenced Joseph to three years imprisonment with an option of a Two Hundred Thousand Naira fine while Adefulire Abiodun bagged two years imprisonment with an option of One Hundred and Fifty Thousand Naira fine.

The judge also ordered that the Mercedes Benz C300 car recovered from Joseph at the point of arrest and the balances in his bank accounts be forfeited to the Federal Government. The convicts also forfeit their phones, being proceeds and instruments of fraud, to the Federal Government of Nigeria.

In a similar development, Justice A .T. Mohammed of the Federal High Court sitting in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, has convicted and sentenced Abiye Dokubo to two years imprisonment for impersonation.

A statement by the Spokesperson of EFCC, Wilson Uwujaren, on Thursday said Dokubo was convicted on May 19, 2022, on a one-count charge bordering on impersonation, upon his arraignment by the Port Harcourt Zonal Command of the EFCC.

The count-charge read, "That you Abiye Dokubo on or about the 10th of November, 2021 at Eagle Island, Port Harcourt within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court fraudulently impersonated yourself to be one Nina Lambert via your Telegram account with the intent to gain advantage for yourself and thereby committed an offence contrary to Section 22 (2) (b) (1) of Cyber Crimes (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act 2015 and punishable under Section 22 (2) of the same Act".

He pleaded guilty to the charge when it was read to him.

Following his plea, prosecution counsel, J.N. Dogonyaro prayed the court to convict and sentence the defendant accordingly.

Justice Mohammed convicted and sentenced the defendant to two years imprisonment, with an option of a fine of One Hundred Thousand Naira (N100, 000) payable into the Consolidated Revenue Fund Account of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

EFCC harps on proper parenting to curb corruption

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Acting Zonal Commander of the Ibadan Command of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), ACE II Hassan Saidu, has called on Nigerian parents to inculcate acceptable values in their children through exemplary behaviours for a better and quality upbringing that would berth positive changes in the Nigerian polity.

The Ag. Commander made this call on Thursday during a sensitization lecture organized by Right Thinkers Global Initiative (aka EAGLEPING) at Adekile Goodwill Grammar School, Aperin, Ibadan, Oyo State.

According to him, all forms of corruption essentially revolve around the degeneration of personal and social ethical values.

He further added that the inability of parents and teachers to build sound morals of respect

for rules and regulations on children places a heavy burden on society.

Saidu said, "Ethics measures the standard of right and wrong, so you will agree with me that whatever is ethical is moral, and the failure of parents and teachers in school to instill sound morals of respect for rules and regulations burden the nation with a new generation of citizens who believe that you can do anything and get away with it."

I have one of the sexiest African shape -Jaiye Kuti

Nollywood actress, **Jaiye Oluwakemi Kuti** is sure a known face in the movie industry having paid her dues over time. Not affiliated with the popular Kutis, Jaiye is sure a delight to watch at all times. In this interview with **OMONIYI ALLI**, the Ogun born actress opened up on her sojourn into acting, her opinion about the movie industry, and attraction to the opposite sex amongst others.

Acting for you, how did it all start?

You know, when I left my paid employment work, I started acting gradually, and even before I left the job I always go on part-time stuff. I started with Laff patterns and everyday people. So when I left my paid job, it was very easy for me because I started it as a career. Coming into the industry is like coming into familiar terrain, because I know I have the talent for acting in me. So that is how I started gradually and to God be the glory I started growing in the industry from soap opera now I have done home videos. At a time, I was the assistant coordinator for the Actors Guild's of Nigeria (AGN) in Ogun State, and then later I joined the Association of Nigeria Theatre Arts Practitioners (ANTP). I started with Oga Bello, and then with Jide Kosoko, you know I started studying under so many people. After studying under these people I came out with my own film which is "Eewon Lafin-Itan Kokoro ede" shortly then it was taken to Italy, it was a big one, I was happy for that. I have done other jobs and equally lost counts on those I have featured in and the rest we say is history.

How has the journey been so far?

The journey has been up and down. Not quite rough, and I would not say it has been so smooth, but gradually if you are ready to grow in it, you have to trick it gradually which is what I did, and which I am still doing, am still working on it, am still working gradually and taking it easy. But the journey so far has been wonderful and great; at least I have a good story to tell about it and am enjoying it and I thank God.

As an actress what makes you unique?

I think God make me special, everything about me starts from God. Because every day I asked God for wisdom, knowledge and understanding, with that you can stand with any other person, so I think God created in me that uniqueness, and I also try to be unique in my own little way, to try to create things better than what I see. So creating what is better than the best of course will stand you out.

As someone who has been in the industry for a long time, what is your opinion generally about the Nigerian movie industry?

The Nigerian movie industry now I can say is growing very fast and can compete to some extent with other movie making countries of the world. Apart from the piracy issue that we are all faced with, which is affecting us terribly, I can say we are growing fast. You see that these days our people are producing good movies because gone are the days when we produce low standard film and it will be accepted by the people, even the cinemas will not take it. So at the moment, filmmakers are beginning to be creative with their storylines and entire production outlook so that they can fit

into any market. For me at the moment, I won't feature in a movie that cannot leave the shores of Nigeria to other parts of the world.

It is often time believed that sex for role is very much rampant in the industry, especially for females who want to become superstars overnight; how true is this?

Well, let me just put it as 50-50. From my own experience in the industry, I have never been asked out by any producer or director, or even co-artiste. Though, my co-artiste may just admire us. I have never been told specifically that because of this role I have to go out with you, and I don't think anybody has reported it to me, even though I know that once in a while it happens. But you see as you lay your bed so you lie on it. When you are focused and you know what you want to do in the industry, you have come to the industry for a purpose, if you know the purpose of your coming to the industry and why you are there, nobody will say look if I don't sleep with you, you won't be a superstar. The truth is if you are good in your act; producers would be the ones chasing you for appearance in their movies. I know a lot of actresses that if they come for an audition you would not just let them go because they are good. You really have to ask yourself, are you really an actress? Because some

people just see the industry and feel that haa! Money is there oo, I am a beautiful girl, I want to be there, no! It doesn't work like that. While others who know they don't have the acting qualities; they force their self and by so doing they are inviting trouble at the end of the day the producer will want to sleep because they know that at the end of the day you are still useless and the scene you feel you have featured in won't make the final cut of the movie.

Any regrets so far?

No regret. Every day I am happy being an actress. In fact, do you know every day I thank God that I am in this industry? Because I couldn't have done anything better. This is an industry that has taken me to Paris, Italy, and London to mention but few.

What do you think gets you attracted to the opposite sex?

I have this physique of an African woman, and when you have this physique of an African woman, believe me, it is the hottest in the world. We call it figure 8. when the woman is having a pretty face, then you have got everything in place, in the right places, the front, you have got the future, the back you know what I mean and above all you are friendly, that makes you a hot figure and irresistible for the opposite sex, and I think I have got all these.



Short movie 'Stupid Finder' explores brotherhood

Multi-award-winning short movie, "Stupid Finder", has officially premiered on YouTube.

The short film was released on Friday on EbonyLife creative academy platform on YouTube.

The new Nollywood short film streaming on YouTube has amassed hundreds of views after its release. "Stupid Finder" was written by Hope Matthew and directed by Dotun Ololade and Sylvester Ahonsi.

The short film, featuring new talents from EbonyLife Creative Academy, was produced by Eric Nwanso, Lawrence Iweriebor, Imoh Eboh and Stephanie Ugbe.

"Stupid Finder" takes its cue from the happenings around various rural communities and areas in Lagos, Nigeria.

Since its debut at the EbonyLife Creative Academy graduation in 2022, where it won the best picture, best screenplay,

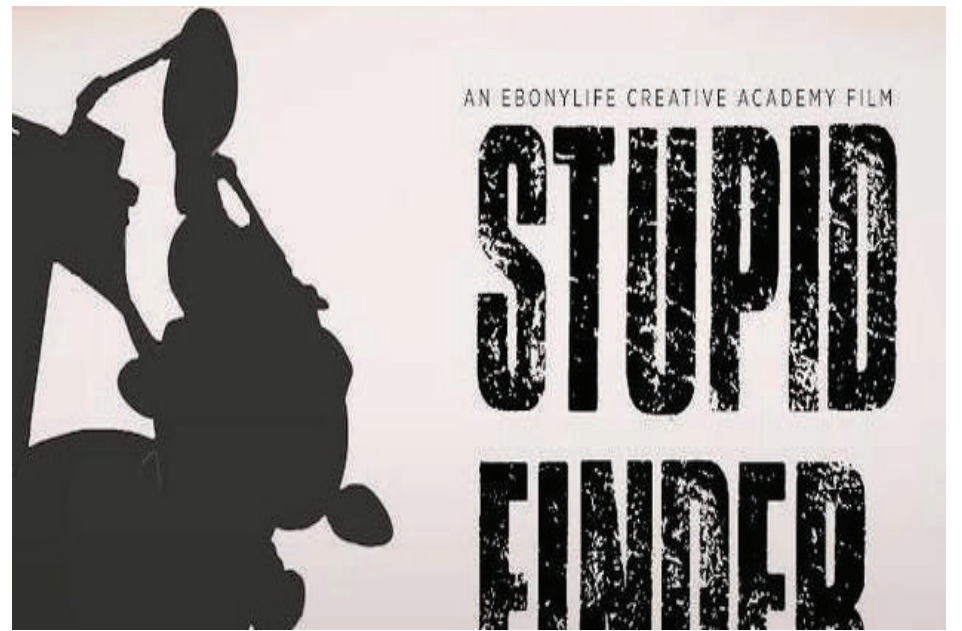
best director, best male lead actor, best editing, best costume design, best art director, and best final mix and music, the short film has gotten a lot of attention.

The movie talks about brotherhood and a new path of discovery.

The short film features new talents and alumni of the EbonyLife Creative Academy, including Ezekiel Abayomi, Akorede Ajayi, Ayodeji Adejumo, and Joy Chioma Obilo.

Speaking on the purpose of the film, co-director Dotun Ololade, stated: What we did with Stupid Finder is simple; we used storytelling to engage the Nigerian communities on complex social issues in a relatable way and make sense of the problems we are addressing.

According to Mr Ololade, the short film is relevant and timely as it explores how some Nigerians survive and their chances of carving a path out of life.



Progress Chukwuyem Wins Nigerian Idol Season 7

Progress Chukwuyem has won the 7th edition of the Nigerian Idol after weeks of competition. Host, IK Osakioduwa, announced at the finale on Sunday, May 22, 2022.

The 21-year-old singer won after polling more fans' votes to beat fellow finalist Zadok in a record-breaking voting season. The top-2 secured 45 million votes in the finale week alone and over 220 million votes all season long. IK Osakioduwa revealed this in a celebratory finale episode on Sunday.

He won a cash prize of ₦30 million, a brand-new SUV, a Bigi branded refrigerator and a year's supply of Bigi drinks. He will also get to record an EP and six music videos, a weekend getaway from TravelBeta, and a DStv Explora fully installed with a 12 months premium subscription.

Speaking after his big win that night, Progress shared what would be his next steps. He said, "Music is my life, it's everything, and it comes from a place of passion. So definitely from here, I'm making music - great music. I'm going to express myself in the best way that I can. Out here, I do not compete with anybody, so I'm going to take it one step at a time".

On the finale night, Zadok, who has been a fan favourite from the beginning of the show, performed Whitney Houston's 'Dance with Somebody'. In contrast, Progress sang Ariana Grande, Jessie J and Nicki Minaj's 'Bang Bang' and Ruben Studdard's 'I Need an Angel' at the live show, which had hundreds of audience

members at the studio and was watched by millions of fans across Africa on DStv and GOtv, and across Europe via the Showmax app.

Simi took a minute to address the top 12, telling them, "And for you all who took part in this experience, it takes a ton of bravery to do what you have done. I'm proud to have experienced this with you. You're so amazing, and I wish you so much goodness in your future, present, and everything you do."

Simi took on the stage at the finale singing her hit song, Duduke. Fellow judge D'banj also performed a medley of his biggest songs, including Oliver Twist, Emergency and Your

Face Show. Other performers at the highly-charged live show included Nigerian Idol season 6 winner Kingdom, the Nigerian Idol season 7 top 10, and popular musician Pheelz.

D'banj, who performed with Zadok and Progress, said a few words about his unreleased track, I Got My Answer, with the top two finalists. He said, "my family and I went through a traumatic time when I lost my son. It was so devastating, and I felt like the world caved in. All we could do was pray to God for restoration. The song was done and written in Los Angeles two weeks before I had my new son".



Musician 'KONGA' make a huge comeback

● Set to release new music 'Soro'

Years after taking a halt in the entertainment industry, Afrobeat artiste, Lawal Olalekan Olumo better known as Konga is set for a comeback in the music industry with the release of his trending album titled 'AWOL' and ever since has been gaining massive airplay.

Speaking on his current work, Konga



disclosed that all is now set toward the release of the visual of 'Soro' off his just-released album and the new body of work is the display of Konga's creativity and zeal to give his fans a new trending tune they can sing along to, vibe to and even create social media trends from.

Produced by Rhaffy; mixed and mastered by Perf Perf, the new visual is expected to be released Friday, May 27, 2022.

It is pertinent to note that KONGA's ghetto story changed when he scored the viral hit song "Baby Konga" in 2003. Also, he was the first Artist in Nigeria to release a single track titled "BABY KONGA" as an Album due to popular demand in 2004. He went on to drop his debut 14 track album "KONGA H2O", featuring the living legend "2Face IDIBIA" & Dj Zeez on the track "Ja won si" Morachi- on

"Holl It" and a lot more hit songs at the end of 2005.

It's obvious that Konga is the only Nigerian artist who uses an ancient African language called "Eno" in a unique style to deliver his music.

"Eno was used during the slave trade era as a coded way to communicate amongst women and both Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba has a way of speaking the coded language"

Currently signed to his personal imprint, Funky Monkey Entertainment; KONGA as a brand believes in consistency and working hard to build a solid reputation and an outstanding body of work that hopefully will outlive him. He's a talented artist who is ready to give back to the music world what he has gained from them.

GTCO Food and Drink 2022: Promotion of SMEs on large scale

The 2022 edition of the annual GTCO food and drink might have come and gone but testimonials from vendors and consumers cannot be overlooked.

With over 150 vendors; the financial institution has surely contributed to the development of local SMEs as platforms were given to small business owners to thrive and connect with consumers from different locations.

Tagged, "Authentic Nigerian food" the free-to-attend three-day festival saw 15 cooking masterclasses by top international chefs as an Avenue of allowing local food vendors experience several cuisines from other parts of the world.

Street food, international cuisines, indigenous drinks, finger foods, fresh farm produce, and many more were the foods and drinks on display at the GTCO Food and Drink.

Speaking at the event, The Group Chief Executive Officer of Guaranty Trust Holding Company Plc, Segun Agbaje noted that the event was aimed at seeing retail customers who also own small businesses thrive by giving them opportunities to connect with consumers from around the world.

It is, however, pertinent to note that aside from the several vendors on ground to cater to different food cravings; the kids were not left out as they had a fully secured state of the art play center for amusement.

In a chat with a representative of Mash Baby Food, a government-approved baby food making factory disclosed that being a first-timer at the festival, it was indeed an eye-opener that their brand was well known.

She said, "As a baby food company, we do most of her sales online and few offline, but I was surprised at the recognition the brand had with a lot of offline clients meeting us physically for the first time and giving attestation to what we do".

Olamiji Tosin, a participant at the fair expressed her delight for attending the first day of the festival as she was able to interact with several vendors and the opportunity to connect with their brand directly.



Ban on Basketball: South East association condemns Sports Ministry's action

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

■ Accuses Minister of connivance

The South East Basketball Association (SEBA) has condemned the recent pronouncement by the Ministry of Youth and Sports Development banning Basketball sports from all international competitions following the imbroglio engulfing the Nigeria Basketball Federation (NBBF).

SEBA which is the apex body governing the sport in the South-Eastern part of Nigeria comprising Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States, lamented that the decision will harm the zone which happens to own a majority of the local and international players.

According to SEBA, which empathises with the players over the decision of the Sports Ministry under Minister Sunday Dare's leadership, their allegiance is pledged to the Nigeria Basketball Federation led by Musa Ahmadu Kida, who has of yore, contributed greatly to the growth of the sport in the nation.

In a statement by SEBA on Wednesday, May 26, 2022, and signed by the secretary, Mr Osundu Ngwude, they accused the Sports Minister of discreetly working with



the Igoche Mark-led faction to raise teams to compete in 'phantom events' in the South East.

SEBA statement reads: "The South East Basketball Association representing all the South East basketball chairmen has condemned the withdrawal of Nigerian basketball from international competitions.

"The zone made up of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo commiserates with all players local and abroad that the actions of the Minister of Youth and Sports Development, Sunday Dare have and will affect.

"For a fact, the Nigerian national teams are dominated by South East players.

Hence, the withdrawal will adversely affect the zone.

"Without any contradiction, SEBA is 100 per cent behind the Nigeria Basketball Federation and its President, Musa Ahmadu Kida who in the last four years have built an enviable basketball dynasty.

"It is no mean feat that D'Tigers and D'Tigress have become the two best teams in Africa and the top 10 globally, which calls to question the Minister's decision to suspend the best sports federation in Nigeria?

"The only federation to qualify the men's and women's teams for the 2020 Olympics built the most robust grassroots program in the history of the game with the first-ever Division One and Two tournaments sponsored by TotalEnergies Nigeria.

"It has also been the first-ever time the South East as

a block participated in any grassroots event and the first time a South East team, 'Coal city Miners' featured in the premier league 'THE PRESIDENTS CUP'.

"The South East believes the actions of the minister are politically motivated, a witch hunt, and not a sports-related decision as all excuses lack any justifications cooked up as a defence to the withdrawal.

"Hence, the South East will not support or participate in any 'manufactured' programs from the Federal Ministry of Sports.

"It is already well known that they have sent their co-conspirator acolytes of the Igoche Mark group to raise fake teams to participate in phantom events on behalf of the South East.

"The South East will be convening an urgent meeting to find creative ways to keep our players engaged and motivated during what will be a gloomy period for Nigerian basketball," the statement concluded.

However, the South East statement follows the recent press release by the Nigeria Basketball Federation appealing to the Sports Ministry to rescind its decision banning the nation from all international basketball tournaments.

French Open: Djokovic, Nadal, others through to third round

World number one and defending champion Novak Djokovic, defeated Alex Molcan with ease to proceed to the third round of the French Open championship.

Djokovic, who is playing in his first major Grand Slam event for the year, won Molcan Alex 6-2 6-3 7-6 at Court Suzanne to book a tie with 195 world-ranked Aljaz Bedene in the next round.

Consequent to the second-round victory, the elated Italian Open champion, Djokovic, conceded that Alex was a worthy opponent.

"I'm pleased with the way I'm feeling on the court, the way I have been striking the ball," Djokovic said after the second-round victory.

"Playing against a specialist on clay, someone that is a tricky opponent, it was never going to be an easy match, but I thought I performed very well. Everything is going in the right direction," the Serbian added.

Elsewhere, 21 Grand Slams winner and 13-time French Open champion, Rafael Nadal, strolled past Corentin Moutet to clash with 26th seed Botic van de Zandschulp.

The victory, which correlated with Nadal's 300th Grand Slam win and 107th French Open match victory, saw the Spaniard humble the French 6-3 6-1 6-4 to surge towards a prospective quarter-final clash with Serbia's Novak Djokovic.

Meanwhile, German tennis professional and world-ranked No 3 Alexander Zverev saved a match point at Court Philippe-

Chatrier to defeat Sebastian Baez in a five-set thriller.

Zverev, who has never fallen below 10th position in the ATP ranking after being ranked number three in July 2017, beat Baez 2-6 4-6 6-1 6-2 7-5 to book a round three clash with United States Brandon Nakashima at the Court Suzanne, Lenglen.

After the arduous duel where Zverev triumphed over the 36th world-ranked Baez, the former muttered to the latter how it feels to lose on the tennis court.

"I said to him that how he feels now is the worst you're going to feel on a tennis court," Zverev revealed to Sky Sports what he told Baez after he lost.

"It was such an incredible match. I know how it feels, as I lost the US Open final from being two sets to love up. I was two points away from winning it and I lost 7-6 in the fifth.

"You always get better from it. I wish him nothing but the best, he's an unbelievably great kid and he's going to do a lot of great things in this sport," Zverev advised.

World number 6 and fast-emerging tennis top talent, Carlos Alcaraz, in a strenuous contest with fellow Spanish national Albert Ramos-Vinolas, proceeded to the third round.

The champion who defeated tennis greats, Djokovic, Nadal and Zverev, to win the Madrid Open, cantered through with 6-1, 6-7, 5-7, 7-6, 6-4 win to schedule a next round duel against United States Sebastian Korda.

Immortalised Mourinho replicates Julio Ceaser

AS Roma boss, Jose Mourinho, has been immortalised with a mural in Circo Massimo following the first UEFA tournament triumph by the Giallorossi.

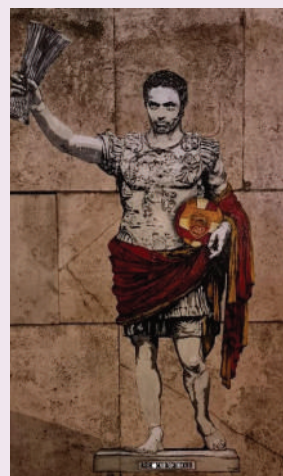
Roma, after returning on Wednesday to Tirana, celebrated with the fans and supporters long into the night at Circo Massimo and continued on Thursday, in an open roof bus parade to showcase the UEFA Europa Conference League trophy.

Remarkably, an Italian artist, Harry Grab, in appreciation to acknowledge the feat the Portuguese gaffer has achieved for the club, designed a mural depicting him dressed as Julius Cesar holding aloft the trophy with a Roma badge as a shield.

After the win, Mourinho became the first manager in history to win UEFA titles with four different clubs and the third manager after Sir

Alex Ferguson and Giovanni Trapattoni to win UEFA trophies in three consecutive decades.

Meanwhile, on Wednesday, immediately after winning the inaugural UEFA Europa Conference League, celebrating Roma players who were totally overwhelmed with their club's first-ever major European triumph, gatecrashed into Mourinho's post-match press conference.



CHAN 2022 Qualifiers: Eagles to play Benin or Ghana



The Super Eagles B of Nigeria have been drawn to face the first round winner between Ghana and Benin in a two-legged qualifying tie to feature in the 2022

TotalEnergies African Nation Championship in Algeria.

The draw which was done in Cairo, Egypt, under the watchful eye of Algerian legend Djamel Menad, saw the

most populous black nation categorised in the second round under Western Zone B alongside Cote d'Ivoire, Niger, Togo and Burkina Faso.

While the other Western Zone B teams have all had their opponents fixed for second round crackers, Nigeria hangs on the first round outcome of the home-away clashes between Ghana and the Benin Republic.

Meanwhile, Algeria got an automatic qualification as the host nation of the tournament and were joined by Libya and Morocco.

According to the Confederation of African Football (CAF), Libya and Morocco automatically

qualified in the Northern zone as they were the only teams to engage.

Moreover, Nigeria's first qualifying match whose opponent is predetermined by the aggregate of the first-leg schedule within 22-24 of July and the second-leg schedule within 29-31 of July, between Ghana and Benin Republic, will take place around 26-28 of August.

Following the Super Eagles B team first-leg tie, Nigeria who emerged as runner-up in the 2018 edition of the CHAN championship under the present coach, Salisu Yusuf, will play the second leg of the second round qualifying tie within 2-4 of September.



FC Zurich, Basel win FIFA Youth Cup 2022

FC Zurich prevailed in penalty shootouts against Olympique Lyon in the final to win the women's FIFA Youth Cup 2022 trophy in Altstetten in Zurich.

FC Zurich, who came from behind to force the game into triumphant penalty shootouts after Lyon took an early lead, displayed resilience to render the game to parity.

Excited after winning the final, FC Zurich women's coach, Costa Vettas noted that the team consistently improved in every game until they won the final contest to lift the trophy.

"Winning a tournament is just a super feeling. The whole team is so happy for these young women. They constantly improved from the first match to the last, and in the end, we managed to beat four international sides," Costa Vettas said.

Furthermore, Vettas added that they deserved to win the trophy having scored handsomely and paraded the best player in the tournament.

"I also think we deserve to win the tournament, as

we have the best player of the tournament and scored the most goals. As a coach, I couldn't be happier," FC Zurich coach affirmed.

However, several participants have commended the tournament which has given the exposure to play opponents from other countries.

They acknowledge that the tournament was spectacularly organised and the way teams progressed through the phases was superb.

Leela Egli, named the "Best Women's Player of the Tournament", while commending the tournament for providing such an amazing experience, praised her team, FC Zurich, for performing incredibly well to displace all teams in their campaign to win the trophy.

She said, "It was an amazing experience to be able to play at this tournament. I'm so proud of our team – the fact that we were able to come out on top against international opponents is incredible."

Meanwhile, FC Basel defeated Mainz 05 5-4 on penalties after both clubs



played a barren full-time draw to win the men's FIFA Youth Cup 2022.

Remarkably, FC Basel became the only side that was unbeaten during the competition with four wins and a draw.

Speaking after the match, Emirhan Eraslan (FC Basel) described that the tournament and the teams were superb and added that everyone gave their all to ensure the team came out victorious.

"The tournament was superb. Good opponents, good teams. Everyone gave it their all, and of course, it's

great to be able to finish the evening as winners. I'm very proud of my team; we fought so hard. We earned the victory and are over the moon about it," Eraslan said happily.

Aside from Leela Egli (FC Zurich) who was named the women's Best Player of the tournament, Brajan Gruda (1. FSV Mainz 05) emerged as the best men's player, F. Belhadj (Olympique Lyonnais) as the best women's goalkeeper, Tim Spycher (FC Basel) as best men's goalkeeper and Fair Play awards go to VfL Wolfsburg (women) and SL Benfica (men).

NPFL: LMC reschedules Dakkada, Rivers United clash

League Management Company (LMC), organisers of the Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL), has rescheduled the matchday30 fixture of Rivers United with Dakkada FC to Saturday, May 28, 2022.

The fixture which was fixed to hold on Sunday, May 29, 2022, at the Godswill Akpabio Stadium, Uyo, was adjusted to an earlier day by the LMC.

In a press release by the Rivers State-based club, the development was conveyed in a letter dated May 23, 2022, and signed by the LMC Chief Operating Officer, Mr Salihu Abubakar.

According to Rivers United, the LMC letter stated that all matchday30 fixtures, except Wikki Tourist vs Abia Warriors

for Sunday, May 29, 2022, have been rescheduled to 28 May, 2022.

LMC's letter reads in part: "Kindly be informed that due to fixture congestion and the upcoming midweek matches, all matches of the MD 30 [matchday30] fixtures have been rearranged to take place on Saturday, 28th May 2022, with the exception of Wikki Tourist vs Abia Warriors - Sunday, 29th May, 2022.

"Please ensure that all logistics are put in place for the match. Accept our best sporting regards," LMC added.

Rivers United tops the NPFL table and sits five points above Plateau United after coach Abdu Maikaba's side lost 2-0 in their last away fixture against Abia Warriors at the Enyimba Stadium.



Immaculate Queens, Joyt Queens for Aiteo Cup final



Furtherance to Immaculate Queens FC's pursuit of Enugu State Women's Aiteo Cup triumph, the club defeated Green Foot FC to schedule a final cracker with FC Joyt Queens.

Immaculate Queens, an offshoot of Queens School football team in Enugu that

narrowly lost to FC Joyt Queens of Igbo-Etiti in the 2021 edition, looks to take its pound of flesh in this 2022 edition.

In the semi-final clash between Green Foot FC and Immaculate Queens that ended as a barren draw in fulltime, penalty shootouts

decided the knockout fixture which the latter team flawlessly won 3-0 at the Rangers training ground in Enugu.

However, Immaculate Queens processed the semi-final clash with utmost caution ensuring the opponents' advances were curtailed to avoid unsavoury eventuality.

More so, in a post-match interview, the elated captain of Immaculate Queens, Chika Godwin attributed their victory to hard work which motivated her teammates to boldly slug it out with Green Foot FC.

Godwin explained that the match was tactically approached adding that they would retire home to prepare

ahead for the State's Aiteo Cup final.

"We trained hard for this match and thank God we won as it will give us the morale to face our next opponents squarely," Godwin said after the match.

"The match was a good one and we are going home to strategize for the match against FC Joyt, and with determination, we will beat them," she added.

Immaculate Queens, who eyes a qualification to represent Enugu State in the national Aiteo Cup competition if they win the State's FA Cup final, are confident they will do well in the national event should the opportunity present itself.

Kristo College holds 2nd Annual Inter-house Sport

By **GABRIEL ELOZINO, Asaba**

Kristo College, one of the fast growing private schools in Kwale, Delta State, on Monday held its second inter-house sports festival with a commitment to ensure the development of sports amongst the younger generation.

The annual event which was held at Iyiatu Primary school, Umusadege, Kwale, Delta state featured different sporting events such as 1500m race, 8000m race, 100m, 200m and 400m race

Other events include catching them young, lime and spoon race, sack race, football competition, long jump and high jump amongst others.

Speaking during the event,

the Proprietor of the school, Mr Eugene Chukwudi Osuya, an expert in business management and education, said the school was established not as a money making venture but out of passion to provide quality education to the Ndokwa people.

He pointed out that the secret behind the huge success recorded by the school in terms of population, academic performance and acceptance in the society was due to the humanitarian face it has adopted in going about its services.

He thanked God for making the event a success and appreciated everyone who participated in one way or the other to make it worthwhile.

In his remarks, Mr



Eudurance Odogwu, Chairman of the occasion commended Mr Chukwuji Eugene Osuya for building a formidable team which have been able to move the vision beyond imagination and encouraged him to do more.

Highlights of the event was

the presentation of trophies to winners which saw Red House, called House of Tovia lifting the first place trophy, followed by White House and Yellow House in second and third position respectively while Green House settled at the button of the table.

Cyriel Dessers emerges UEFA League top scorer

Feyenoord prolific striker Cyriel Dessers has finished the UEFA Europa Conference League tournament as the highest goalscorer with 10 goals.

Dessers, who joined the Dutch side on loan from Genk, was very instrumental to the UEFA campaign of De Stadionclub for their fourth European trophy after 20 years.

The Super Eagle, having one international cap for Nigeria, opened his Europa Conference goal chart in a Group E clash against fellow Super Eagle's side, Taiwo Awoniyi's German club, Union Berlin.

He, exemplifying his

loan deal with a consistent form, prompting the Feyenoord fans to organise a crowdfunding system to permanent his stay, scored successive braces against Slavia Prague and Marseille.

Though the Belgium-born 27-year-old goal-poacher fired blank in the final, his 10 goals tally was unbeaten to earn him the highest goalscorer accolade.

Despite his superb UEFA campaign, the Super Eagle who featured 47 times for Feyenoord in all competitions, recording a total of 21 goals, scored 9 goals in 27 appearances in the Dutch Eredivisie.





US friendly: Super Eagles camp opens in Dallas

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

The Nigeria senior men's football team have officially, on Thursday, opened its camp ahead of the international friendly matches with eleven times CONCACAF champions Mexico and 2007 gold medalist in the Pan American Games, Ecuador, in the United States.

Super Eagles head coach and his crew are already with the Nigerian team in the United States to play Mexico this Sunday, May 29, 2022, at the AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas.

The Nigeria national team whose brilliant start in the 2021 AFCON in Cameroon was marred with an abrupt exit from the continental tourney and a successive exit from the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar after its archrival, Ghana, edged them out on goal aggregate, looks to reignite their footballing campaign ahead of the 2023 AFCON in



Cote d'Ivoire.

Nigerians are eager to see the fortunes of the team turnaround and surpass the 1994 team under the tutelage of Dutch tactician and most successful Super Eagles head coach, Clemens Westerhof.

Although the Nigerians are sceptical over what Jose Peseiro could achieve with the team, the Portuguese seek to win

the fourth AFCON title for the Super Eagles using the friendly matches to put the team in shape ahead of the biennial continental competition.

Eventually, the Super Eagles, already in Dallas including Jose Peseiro, players and backroom staff, start their first training session on Thursday 6:00pm (Dallas, Texas time).

Following the Mexico

fixture, the Super Eagles will on June 3 tackle Ecuador in Red Bull Arena, New Jersey.

It is noteworthy to report that Chidozie Awaziem, Francis Uzoho, Adeyinka, Olorunleke, Buhari, Madu, Rafiu, Mbaoma, Sanni, Bello, Aina, Ajayi, Ekong, Simon, Iwobi, Bassey, Aribi, Moffi, Bonke, Awaziem, and Uzoho have arrived Super Eagles camp.

Ambitious Peseiro seeks S'Eagles' fourth AFCON title

New Super Eagles coach Jose Peseiro says Nigerians and all the ethnic nationalities deserve success from the Nigeria senior men's football team and hope to win the AFCON title.

The Portuguese gaffer presently with the team ahead of the double friendly matches with CONCACAF giant Mexico and Ecuador on May 29 and June 3 respectively, hopes to win a fourth Africa Cup of Nations title for Nigeria.

The 62-years-old, who fend off stiff competition from former France and Paris Saint-Germain manager Laurent Blanc, Phillip Cocu and former Barcelona boss, Ernesto Valverde to become Super Eagles' 37th head coach, underlined that Nigeria is among football great nations.

He opined that knowing the history of the Nigeria senior men's football team plays an indispensable role in commanding the three-time AFCON champions to victory.

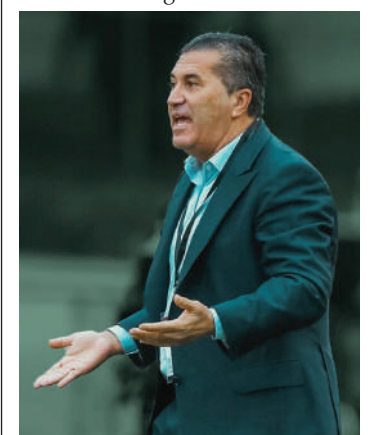
"Pride! It is with great pride and joy that I am the coach of one of the greatest football nations in the world," Peseiro said.

"Commanding the Super Eagles starts with knowing how to respect history, value it and be inspired by its roots.

"Over 200 million Nigerians, from all states and ethnicities, want the same thing: success.

We will work with great ambition so that in the end we can finally call Nigeria the four-time African champions," Peseiro vowed.

The Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) who appointed Sunday Oliseh to replace Augustine Eguavoen as the Super Eagles Technical Adviser included Finidi George, Salisu Yusuf, Usman Abd'Allah, Ike Shorunmu and Eboboritse Uwejabomere as the team's coaching crew.



Kano Pillars record third consecutive victory

The male handball team of Kano Pillars extended their unbeaten run in the Prudent Energy Premier League competition after they defeated Makurdi-based Benue Buffaloes at the MKO Abiola National Stadium on Wednesday, May 25, 2022.

Kano Pillars, who are the league's defending champions, were no match for the debutants as they won convincingly 37-24 to record their third win in a role.

The defending champions during the match, complemented their win by following the coach's instructions, showing grit in the contest while being firm in their grips on the ball.

Sequel to the team's victory, coach Solomon Yola attributed Kano Pillars' win to the players' commitment to hard work, and adherence to match tactics and instructions.

Yola expressed his satisfaction with the outcome of the match and added that they will not underrate any team in their league's campaign.

"My players performed according to instructions and we are not going to ever underrate

any team. My team will continue working hard to gather points by ensuring that we fight hard to win our subsequent matches," Yola to the media.

Furthermore, Yola congratulated Benue Buffaloes for their performance as a newly-promoted club conceding that they are no pushovers in the competition.

He advised both teams to keep improving in their games as every team in the competition is a potential champion qualified to win the competition.

Yola said, "We congratulate them for putting up a very good fight. The newly-promoted male teams are just two Benue Buffaloes and Owena Kings and we have played against them and we give kudos to them.

"Both teams should keep it up and never relent in this competition. Every team in the league is a potential champion, so we have come highly prepared for both the younger and older teams," Kano Pillars' coach assured.

Prior to Kano Pillars' third win, the defending champions saw off Police Machines and

Owena Kings 29-15 and 34-19 respectively, while in another vein, Benue Buffaloes recorded a 29-22 win and a 25-33 loss in the clash with Lagos Seaside and Niger United respectively.

NAN reports that in another male competition fixture played on Wednesday, Niger United humiliated Confluence Stars 37-28 victory, while Rima strikers walked over Kada Stars.

Meanwhile, in the female category on Wednesday, debutants Rima Queens drew their third match 37-37 against Imo Grasshoppers.

Safety Babes secured a 31-22 victory over De:Defenders Babes, while Seaside Babes walked over Kada Queens.

Twenty-two teams, made up of 10 females and 12 males, are participating in the league.

The male teams include Benue Buffaloes of Makurdi, Confluence Kings of Lokoja, De Defenders of Civil Defence, Kada Stars of Kaduna, Kano Pillars of Kano, Niger United of Minna and Owena Kings of Akure.

Police Machines, Rima Strikers of Sokoto, Safety Shooters of FRSC, Seaside Boys of Lagos and



Tojmarine Academy of Lagos are also in contention.

The league's female category has Adorable Angels of Ilorin, Benue Queens of Makurdi, Defender Babes of Abuja, Bendel Dynamos Rebranded of Benin City and Imo Grasshoppers of Owerri.

The rest are Kada Queens of Kaduna, Plateau Peacocks of Jos, Roma Queens of Sokoto, Safety Babes of Abuja and Seaside Babes of Lagos.

The league, played at two venues in the Moshood Abiola National Stadium in Abuja, began on Monday and is expected to end on June 2.