

Clinton emails reveal why NATO killed Gaddafi

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH** with agency report

Real reasons for the killing of Col. Muammar Gaddafi as

Libyan leader have emerged.

He was captured and killed on 20 October 2011 after the Battle of Sirte. His convoys were

attacked by NATO aircraft.

It was shown in the published emails of Hilary Clinton that NATO acted to prevent

Gaddafi from founding an African central bank with its own gold-backed currency.

That institution would have challenged
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Confusion over airline operators' threat to suspend flights

By **EDU ABADE,**
JONHMARK UKOKO
 and **ADAKU WALTER**
 and **BEN OREVA**
OKOLOR (Lagos)

There is uncertainty over a threat by Airline Operators of Nigeria (AON) that with effect from May 9, 2022, its members will suspend flight operations across the country due to the high cost of aviation fuel, which has hit N700 per litre as against N190 per litre before the Russia-Ukraine war.

However, there is confusion in the air as some of the operators have said that they would continue operations.

A statement issued by the AON advised those who intend traveling by air to make alternative arrangements and avoid being stranded at the nation's airports.

AON said: "It is with great sense of responsibility and patriotism that the AON has continued to deploy and subsidise its services to its customers in the last four months, despite the steady increase in the price of Jet A1 and other operating costs.

"Overtime, aviation fuel price has risen from N190 per liter to N700 per litre currently. No airline in the world can absorb this kind of sudden shock from such an astronomical rise over a short period. While aviation fuel is said to cost about 40 per cent of airlines operating cost globally, the present hike has shut up Nigeria's operating cost to about 95 per cent.

"In the face of this, airlines have engaged the federal government, the National Assembly, Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation Limited and oil marketers with the view to bringing the cost of Jet A1 down, which has currently made the unit cost per seat for a one hour flight in Nigeria today to an average of N120,000. The latter cannot be fully passed to passengers who are already experiencing a lot of difficulties," the statement reads.

The statement added that while the AON appreciates efforts of the President Muhammadu Buhari administration to ensure that air transport in Nigeria grows, Minister of Aviation, Hadi Sirika lamented that the cost of aviation fuel has continued to rise, thereby creating huge pressure on the sustainability of operations and financial viability of the airlines, adding: "This is unsustainable and the airlines can no longer absorb the pressure."

But the management of

Ibom Airlines Limited said it will not suspend flight operations and distanced itself from the announcement of the AON and that in the present circumstances, it could not volunteer to stop operating and would continue normal operations on Monday, May 9, 2022 and beyond.

A statement issued by the management, explained that airlines have their unique business model and pressures, and it believes that in spite of the escalating fuel prices, airlines planning to stop operations would rather exacerbate the already bad situation.

Explaining the reasons for its action, the airline stated that it has financial obligations to suppliers, financiers and staff, which depend on uninterrupted flow of revenue to service.

The statement added: "More importantly is the fact that having been paid by customers in advance for flight bookings we are bound by contract to deliver the services already paid for, to avoid exposing the airline to avoidable litigations."

Besides, Minister of Aviation, Hadi Sirika, has appealed to airline operators not to suspend their operations as planned, considering the multiplier effect it would have on travelers and the nation's economy.

A statement issued by the Special Assistant to the Minister on Public Affairs, James Odaudu, expressed worry over the situation, saying it had continued to engage with agencies, institutions and individuals to assist the airlines in respect of the rising cost of Jet A1.

On his part, Chairman, House of Representatives Committee on Aviation, Nnolim Nnaji, has appealed to the airline operators to rescind action on its planned suspension of operations due to the escalating cost of Jet-A1.

Nnaji, who praised the operators for their patriotism, urged them not to ground their operations, stressing that such will inflict more pains on the already distressed economy.

He regretted that despite the last intervention of the leadership of the House of Representatives, Aviation and other relevant Committees, the problem remained unabated.

He assured the airlines that the committee and House leadership were not sleeping over their plight as a meeting of the stakeholders including the chairmen of the relevant committees has been summoned for Monday, May 9, to address their matter and assured the airline operators that the National Assembly



Sirika

was determined to ensure that the aviation fuel crisis was urgently resolved as air transportation remained the safest mode of travel.

In a related development, the local airlines operators have defied appeals by the National Assembly and the Ministry of Aviation to shut down their operations as hundreds of passengers remain stranded at the airports.

In a statement issued by the local airlines which include Air Peace, Arik Air, Aero Contractors, Azman Air, Dana Air, Max Air and United Nigeria Airlines, they insisted on suspending their operations due to Federal Government's inability to provide immediate solutions to the unbearable cost of aviation fuel that currently sells at N700 per litre despite issuing the threat to shut down operations.

President of the Airline Operators of Nigeria, Abdulmunaf Yunusa, said it remains resolute on the decision to suspend their operations.

Yunusa stated that the airline operators are patriotic citizens and are doing all they can to protect the flying public contrary to what some subjective schools of thought might suggest, adding that this is a collective sacrifice for the common interest of the country.

He expressed regrets over the position of Ibom Air against the AON's decision, adding that while the airline may reasons for its action, it is pertinent to note that they equally accepted in their statement that the Jet A1 situation poses existential threat to the air transport industry in Nigeria and that the remains unsustainable.

"May we use this medium to clearly state that airlines are not on strike. We are private investors who do not run our airlines with public funds to be able to continue to pay upfront in cash at N700 per litre for JetA1 which has increased our cost on daily basis to about 95 per cent. This is totally unsustainable. And

its consequences, if allowed to stay, will be borne by the passengers; which is what we are trying to prevent.

"To this end therefore, we remain resolute in our resolve to find a lasting solution to this crucial problem of national emergency and once again use this medium to appeal to the conscience of our esteemed passengers for their understanding," the AON boss stated.

However, in a confusing twist and turn, Dana Air, Overland Airways, Aero Contractors and Arik are among airlines that decided against suspending flight operations.

In a statement issued by Dana Airline's Communications and Marketing Manager, Kingsley Ezenwa, the airline affirmed its support for the agitations of AON, but stressed that it will not participate in the planned suspension of flight operations on Monday.

This followed after Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Dana Air, Sukh Mann, joined other airline operators to sign a memorandum of the AON insisting on its firm resolution to shut down operations.

But according to Dana Airline, the recent press statement issued by the Airline Operators of Nigeria, has become necessary for them to take a stand in the overall interest of their guests, corporate partners, staff and the industry at large.

In the same vein, Overland Airways Limited said. will continue to provide full service to its customers and general public with normal operations on Monday 09 May 2022 and beyond, stating that airlines stopping operations is not the solution to the problem.

The airline management in a statement issued by Mrs. C. M. Mohammed, said it has commercial and legal obligations to its customers, financiers and employees, which she said "is a promise that must be honoured."

"Overland Airways acknowledges the existential threat that these runaway

fuel price increases pose to the Air transport industry in Nigeria. However, we do not believe that Air suspending operations is the solution."

Also, management of Arik Air Limited and Aero Contractors assured the traveling public that they will operate all scheduled flights.

In a joint statement, their managements identified with and endorsed the efforts of the Airline Operators of Nigeria to bring about a conducive operating environment for Nigerian carriers as the current price of Jet A1 is unsustainable and could result in the untimely demise of most airlines.

They however expressed assurance that the government is looking at the issues raised by the AON and will come up with a decision that will be in the best interest of the industry and the traveling public.

They said passengers, who are booked flights both Arik Air and Aero Contractors on Monday and beyond should proceed to the airports of departure for boarding to their various destinations.

And in the latest drama and confusion, goodnews filtered in from the stable of AON as it called off the planned suspension of flights nationwide from Monday May 9, 2022.

This was contained in a statement signed by the President of AON, Alhaji Abdulmunaf Yunusa Sarina, and endorsed by other members who said they have listened to the appeal by stakeholders and the federal government for them not to withdraw their services.

The statement reads in part: "The Airline Operators of Nigeria (AON) wishes to inform the general public that further to numerous calls from the highest echelons in government with promises to urgently intervene in the crises being faced by airlines due to the astronomic and continuously rising cost of JetA1, that the AON has acceded to requests to withdraw the action for the time being while we allow for a fresh round of dialogue with government in the hope of reaching an amicable solution."

"We have also reached this decision with the highest consideration for our esteemed customers who have been faced with uncertainty over the last few days and to enable them to have access to travel to their various destinations for the time being during the period of discussions with relevant authorities."

"In view of the above and in the interest of national economy and security considerations, AON hereby wishes to notify

the general public that the earlier announced shutdown of operations on May 9, 2022 is hereby suspended in good fate pending the outcome of hopefully fruitful engagement with government."

But Air Peace has reportedly suspended local and regional flights.

Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC) had condemned the planned suspension of flights by the AON, stating that it was illegal.

It said: "The Commission encourages and implores domestic airlines to consider the effect of the proposed shutdown on passengers and the magnitude of difficulties and hardship associated with such an action.

"The Commission does not trivialise the disruption and potential challenge to business continuity and survivability an inordinately high cost of jet fuel presents to domestic aviation, especially coupled with other rising cost of operations and foreign exchange.

"It should also be noted that the Commission has been in discussion with the leadership of major fuel marketers to understand the global supply challenges and possible steps to ameliorate same.

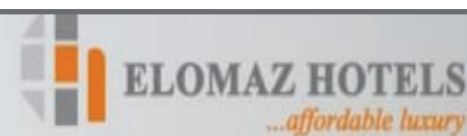
"Accordingly, the Commission strongly advocates engagement among all stakeholders across the value chain to mitigate the current constraints and develop an acceptable interim arrangement to address problems and costs associated with global supply constraints on account of a war, sanctions associated with the war, and a fragile ongoing post pandemic recovery in the aviation industry.

"The Commission says her major concern is the rising consumer feedbacks; that why would airlines continued to sell tickets beyond the date announced for the proposed service shutdown?

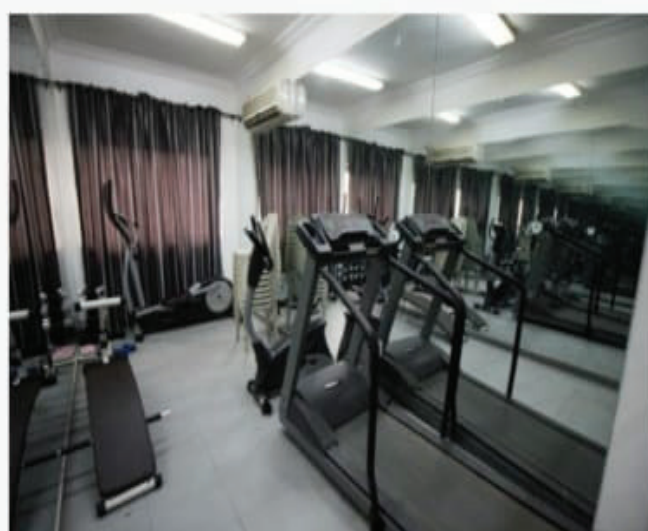
"To this to many consumers amount to exploitation and a violation of law to purport to sell a service that the service provider knows, it will not, or does not intend to provide or deliver.

"It is misleading and deceptive under S.123 of the FCCPA to represent a service will be delivered on a certain date when the provider knows the same is false or improbable.

"The Commission is optimistic that airline operators will not deliberately sell tickets for flights they do not intend to operate, and is as such hopeful that a solution short of a shutdown will emerge accordingly."



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CBN now finance dept of APC, says PDP

■ Accuses Buhari's govt of impunity ■ Demands Emefiele's sack, trial

By **TUNDE JOSHUA**, Abuja

People's Democratic Party (PDP) has alleged that the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) under Dr. Godwin Emefiele as governor is being run as finance department of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC).

The party also accused the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari of impunity and lawlessness in condoling illegality of watching as highly placed public servants such as Emefiele allegedly dabble into partisan politics.

The party queried the legality of the CBN Governor's continued stay in office while he has been linked with interest in contesting the 2023 presidency on the platform of the APC.

The PDP "wondered what Emefiele could still be doing in office after obvious and undeniable political hobnobbing."

A group of rice farmers in the country was said to have bought a N100 million APC presidential nomination form for Emefiele on Friday, which the PDP described as absurdity and evidence of recklessness, impunity and lack of respect for the rule of law being exhibited by the Buhari administration.

Addressing a press conference on Saturday at the party secretariat in Abuja, National Publicity Secretary of PDP, Debo Ologunagba said Emefiele does not deserve an extra stay in office as CBN Governor but to be arrested and prosecuted by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and other anti corruption agencies.

The party said by linking him to partisanship, "Mr. Emefiele has become a clear and present danger to the health, integrity and reputation of the CBN and our nation's financial sector. His continued stay as CBN Governor will further destroy investors' confidence in the integrity of our nation's financial regulatory Institution.

"Mr. Emefiele's involvement in partisan politics while still holding office as CBN Governor underpins the impunity, lawlessness and recklessness of the Muhammadu Buhari-led APC administration. It

further confirms that the CBN under Emefiele has all along been the finance department of the APC.

"It is now evident that the summersault of the economy under Mr. Emefiele as CBN Governor has been influenced by a personal partisan interest for which the CBN under his watch allegedly allowed multiple leakages in our financial regulations through discriminatory exchange rate policies and nebulous subsidies to funnel billions of naira to political lackies to fund a presidential ambition.

"This also explains why under Emefiele, the CBN which is supposed to be the bankers' bank continues to engage in fraudulent retail banking services under ill-defined economic intervention programmes to plunder the treasury.

"The tsunamic macro-economic and fiscal policies of the CBN under Emefiele brought untold hardship to the productive and service sectors of our nation's economy with consequential negative effect on the lives of our citizens.

"It is provocative that instead of being remorseful, Mr. Emefiele is even insulting the sensibilities of Nigerians by seeking the office of the President while still holding office as CBN Governor.

"The PDP points to reports in the public space of how Emefiele's agents through corrupt practices, including manipulation of exchange rate, allegedly amassed sum close to \$1 billion dollar which is already being deployed by the purchase of hundreds of Emefiele branded campaign vehicles in the colours of the APC in furtherance of a lavish Presidential campaign.

"The direct consequences of such atrocious regime in the CBN under Emefiele is the collapse of our naira from N197 to N600 to a dollar, the crippling of our productive sector, multiple economic recession, increased poverty, inflation and unemployment rates, high costs of living and excruciating hardship to our citizens.

"It is indeed saddening that President Muhammadu Buhari, who promised zero tolerance for corruption will enable, encourage and condone such atrocious regime in the CBN where our economy is opened to fraudulent



Ayu

pillaging to promote a political ambition."

Pointing out what it terms illegality in Emefiele's actions, the party drew the attention of Nigerians to the provisions of the CBN Act 2007 and particularly referenced Section 9 which provides that "the Governor and the Deputy Governors shall devote the whole of their time to the service of the bank and while holding office, shall not engage in any full or part-time employment or vocation, whether remunerated or not..."

Continuing, the PDP pointed out that "this provision is clear in demanding that 100 percent

of the time and expertise of the CBN Governor and Deputy Governors shall be dedicated to the service of the CBN. This is because the CBN is critical to the integrity and stability of our economy.

"Furthermore, Section 030422 of the Public Service Rule states that no public officer shall (a) "hold any office, paid or unpaid, permanent or temporary, in any political organization",

(b) offer himself/herself or nominate anyone else as a candidate for any elective public office...", (c) "indicate publicly his support of or opposition to any party, candidate or policy and (d) "engage in canvassing in support of political candidates" unless

such officer resigns his appointment.

"Importantly, Section 030502 (g) of the Rule lists "engaging in partisan political activities" as Serious Act of Misconduct.

"Emefiele's involvement in politics without resigning as CBN Governor therefore amounts to gross misconduct in contravention of Section 11 2 (2)(c) of the CBN Act."

It said, "now that Mr. Emefiele has joined politics and reportedly obtained the N100 million Presidential aspirant form from the APC, he cannot continue to resume at the CBN which is the commonwealth of our nation.

"Our Party stands with Nigerians in demanding the immediate arrest, investigation and prosecution of Mr. Emefiele by security and anti-graft agencies, particularly the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) for alleged financial malfeasance and abuse of office in the CBN under his watch."

The PDP charged Nigerians; the civil society, students, organized labour, the media and all lovers of good governance to rise up as the party takes drastic actions in leading the charge to defend the integrity of the CBN, rule of law and ensure that those who brought Nigeria's economy to its knees face the wrath of the law.

However, Emefiele

expressed gratitude to those that purchased the APC Presidential nomination forms for him, saying if he decides to contest, he would use his personal resources.

In a series of tweets on Saturday, he said he is yet to make up his mind on 2023 Presidency.

In the tweet, he said "I I am humbled by the growing interest of those asking that I run for the Office of President in the 2023 general elections: I have not come to that decision. I note and salute the sacrifices of those farmers and patriots going as far as raising personal funds and offering me Presidential Nomination Forms: I thank them most profusely.

"However, Should I answer their calls and decide to seek presidential nomination, I will use my own hard-earned savings from over 35 years of banking leadership to buy my own Nomination Forms, without proxies in an open and transparent manner in full compliance with the laws and Constitution of The Federal Republic of Nigeria.

"And should I not run for elected office, I will continue to serve and sacrifice for the good people of Nigeria under the able leadership of President Muhammadu Buhari. This is a serious decision that requires God's Divine intervention: in the next few days The Almighty will so direct."

Clinton emails reveal why NATO killed Gaddafi

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the power of the dollar and finally allowed Africa to escape its colonial restraints.

The 2016 publication of Hillary Clinton's emails revealed the reason behind NATO's entry into Libya. It was to prevent the creation of an independent hard currency in Africa that would free the continent from its economic bondage under the dollar, the IMF and the French African franc. That hard currency would have allowed Africa to shake off the last heavy chains of colonial exploitation.

Clinton's emails revealed that another agenda behind the Libyan war.

Of the 3,000 emails released from Hillary

Clinton's private email server in late December 2015, about a third were from her close confidante Sidney Blumenthal. One of these emails, dated April 2, 2011, read in part:

"Qaddafi's government holds 143 tons of gold, and a similar amount in silver. This gold was accumulated prior to the current rebellion and was intended to be used to establish a pan-African currency based on the Libyan golden Dinar. This plan was designed to provide the Francophone African Countries with an alternative to the French franc (CFA)."

In a 'source comment', the original declassified email added:

"According to

knowledgeable individuals this quantity of gold and silver is valued at more than \$7 billion. French intelligence officers discovered this plan shortly after the current rebellion began, and this was one of the factors that influenced President Nicolas Sarkozy's decision to commit France to the attack on Libya. According to these individuals Sarkozy's plans are driven by the following issues:

1. A desire to gain a greater share of Libya oil production,

2. Increase French influence in North Africa,

3. Improve his internal political situation in France,

4. Provide the French

military with an opportunity to reassert its position in the world,

5. Address the concern of his advisors over Qaddafi's long term plans to supplant France as the dominant power in Francophone Africa."

However, the reason behind the NATO involvement in Libya is not for humanitarian concerns. Their objectives are money, power and oil.

Gaddafi's attempt threatened to overthrow the global financial scheme to establish an independent African currency. This was not taken lightly by Western interests. In 2011, Sarkozy reportedly called the Libyan leader a threat to the financial security of the world.

Court jails herders for stealing cows

By **FRIDAY OMOSOLA**, Akure

Abdulai Ibrahim, 26 and Dauda Mohammed, 22, have been jailed for ten years by an Odigbo Magistrate's Court for stealing three cows worth N900,000 belonging to one Abubakar Mohammed.

The duo and one Tajudeen Adiamot were said to have committed the offence on April 27, 2022 at midnight at Sabo Odigbo town in the Ore magisterial district by conspiring to steal and receive stolen property.

The charge sheet read in part: "The defendants Abdulai Ibrahim 'M', Dauda Mohammed 'M', and Tajudeen Adiamot 'M' on April 27, 2022 at midnight at Sabo Odigbo town in the Ore magisterial district conspired to steal and receive stolen property.

"That you, Abdulai Ibrahim 'M' and Dauda Mohammed 'M' on the same date, time and place in the aforementioned Magisterial District stole three cows valued at about N900,000, property of one Abubakar Mohammed."

The police prosecutor, Inspector Usifo said the offences contravene Sections 516, 390(9), 427 of the Criminal Code Cap

37, Vol1, Laws of Ondo State of Nigeria 2006.

While admitting the first and second defendants' statements of guilt, the prosecutor said the case needed not be proved.

Abdulai Ibrahim and Dauda Mohammed who had no legal representation pleaded guilty

to the offences, while the third defendant pleaded not guilty to the offence.

Counsel to the third defendant, Mrs K.M Lawani, prayed the court to grant his client bail in most liberal terms.

In his ruling, the Magistrate, Mr D.O. Ogunfuyi convicted the

duo to ten years imprisonment based on their guilty pleas.

Ogunfuyi, in his ruling, sentenced the first defendant to three years imprisonment on count one, two years imprisonment for count two and sentenced the second defendant to three years imprisonment on count one,

and two years imprisonment for count two

Also ruling, he granted the third defendants bail on the sum of N500,000 with two sureties in like sum.

He adjourned the case till May 18, 2022, for mention of the third defendant's case.

USA Consulate marks World Press Freedom Day

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH**, Foreign Affairs Correspondent, Lagos

United States of America ((USA) has reiterated its commitment to advocating for press freedom, freedom of information and access to factual and accurate reporting provided by independent media which is foundational to transparency and accountability in any democratic society.

To this end, the U.S. Consulate General in collaboration with Media Career Development Network will mark this year's World Press Freedom Day with multiple events from May 10 to May 27.

Activities will begin on May 10 with a screening and panel discussion on the documentary "Joseph Pulitzer: Voice of the People" at the Ikeja American Corner. In a similar fashion, the documentary will be screened on May 19 to a wide audience in

Port Harcourt.

The "Joseph Pulitzer: Voice of the People" documentary highlights how the remarkable man behind the prestigious Pulitzer Prizes became one of America's most admired newspaper publishers and a crusader for freedom of the press.

On May 17, reporters and editors will participate in a fact-checking workshop that will help build their capacity, deepen their professional knowledge and equip them with skills to conduct investigations, identify reliable sources, and fact-check information.

Participants will also discuss issues, challenges, and opportunities for the local media to play a greater role in helping the public identify misinformation and disinformation campaigns.

On May 24, there will be a press freedom panel discussion on the theme: "Journalism under Digital Siege: The digital era's impact on freedom of expression, the safety



Stephen Ibelli

of journalists, access to information and privacy."

The theme of the panel discussion underscores the increasing role of technology, which can be used not only to disseminate information more quickly and farther than ever before but also for spreading disinformation and misinformation.

The month-long press freedom activities will end on May 27 with

a reception in honor of journalists working to fight corruption, holding the government accountable, and calling out abuse and injustice, often at great personal risk.

Speaking on the activities to commemorate the 29th anniversary of World Press Freedom Day, U.S. Consulate Public Affairs Officer Stephen Ibelli noted that the events will provide an opportunity for journalists to discuss the state of press freedom, protection of journalists, and citizens' rights to unbiased, accurate information.

"The United States considers a free press to be a foundation of democratic governance. We believe a free press must be fostered to keep citizens properly informed and actively engaged in the issues that affect them in order to hold government and other institutions accountable to the public," Ibelli added.

Reporters, editors, students and faculty members from journalism schools as well as representatives from media development organizations interested in attending any of the events are encouraged to register using this link: <https://bit.ly/2022WPFD>

NCC assures Nigerians on purported tariff increase by Telcos

Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) has allayed concerns of telecommunication subscribers on the demand by Mobile Network Operators' (MNO's) to increase tariffs of telecommunication services.

NCC said the commission received the letter from the Association of Licensed Telecommunications Operators of Nigeria (ALTON) citing high cost of running their operations as the major reason for their proposed

increase in tariff.

"Consistent with international best practices and established regulatory procedures, the NCC ensures that its regulatory activities are guided by regular cost-based and empirical studies to determine appropriate cost within, which service providers are allowed to charge their subscribers for services delivered.

"The commission ensures that any costs determined as an outcome of transparent studies are fair enough to enhance healthy competition among operators, provide wider choices for the subscribers, as well as ensure sustainability of the Nigerian telecoms industry.

"For the avoidance of doubt and contrary to MNO's agitation to increase tariffs for voice and short messaging services (SMS) by over 40 per cent, the commission wishes to inform telecoms subscribers and allay the fears of Nigerians that no tariff increase will be affected by the operators without approval by the commission.

"While there could be justifiable reasons for the MNOs demand for tariff increase, it should be noted that they not allowed to do so, either individually or collectively," the NCC affirmed.



Danbatta

Ondo inaugurates body for restive oil community

By **FRIDAY OMOSOLA**, Akure

After over four years of crisis, Ondo State Governor Oluwarotimi Akeredolu has brokered peace in oil producing Ugbo community in Ilaje local government area. It has inaugurated 56 members of Ugbo Development Congress (UDC).

Akeredolu, who was represented by his deputy, Honourable Lucky Aiyetadiwa, said where there is disunity there be no meaningful development, adding that affliction would not arise again in the community as all belligerent factions have agreed to work together.

The inaugurated 56-member of Ugbo Development Congress (UDC) was headed by Mr. Benson Obayelu, the Ugboland Council of Obas and the Council of Chiefs.

While describing Ugboland as a rich and blessed oil community, Governor Akeredolu said its people cannot afford coming together as one to achieve a meaningful development.

He said: "The bringing of traditional rulers together will contribute to ease of administration. We will continue to support you where necessary to ensure the noble move is sustained and improved upon."

"Ugbo-Land, no doubt is a pride of Ondo State, not only because some of the prominent achievers of the State hail from the land, but for the fact that the reason the State is an Oil Producing State today is because the communities within Ugbo-Land are blessed with Oil and Gas resources which incidentally is the major contributor (about 80%) to Nigeria's revenue".

While commending the people, Governor Akeredolu said his administration will continue engaging, supporting where necessary to ensure the set objectives of the ideas are sustained and improve upon where necessary

However, he harped on the need for collaboration between security agencies and traditional rulers in the area for the security of the people.

Akeredolu who said Ilaje local government was home of cultist activities, implored parents to warn speak their wards to desist from the act, saying if catches by the law, it will be unpleasant.

The Traditional rulers and other stakeholders in the oil rich Ugboland in Ilaje who embraced the peace said the age long brouhaha had hindered development in the community despite possessing huge oil and gas deposits.

Korra Obidi threatens to sue ex-husband

Looks like the stage is all now set for another round of legal battle between U.S Based Nigerian Dancer, Korra Obidi and her estranged husband, Justin Dean.

Korra gade this warning through her verified social media handle, asking her ex-husband to refund

her money he allegedly stole from their former joint account.

Narrating the story, Korra said that she did not own personal bank accounts, when she got to America: but that both of them were using a joint one as husband and wife.

But she decided to open a personal bank account one day, when her husband allegedly sent her out of their matrimonial home.

Unfortunately, Korra Obidi said she mistakenly sent \$5,000 to their joint account recently.

She said she later realized in the morning that the ex-husband withdrew the whole money from the joint account.

She said he has been taking advantage of her silence but it is about time she broke out of the shackles.

Korra said she would not be silent henceforth. She said she has been the only one taking care of her children without collecting a dime from him yet, he is allegedly stealing her hard-earned money.

She said she has had enough,

hence going forward, she would start talking about the abuse she experienced while she was with him and provide evidence to that effect.

In her words: "At this point, I am no longer going to be silent. I am going to come out and I am going to talk about all the abuse and everything if he keeps stealing from my girls. I will not sit here and watch a man take advantage of me and my girls. I will fight with my blood."

"If he doesn't return this money, I

will come out with all my evidence. I will show him for who he really is. No more Mr. Nice guy."

She said she is not the first woman to get a divorce in America and definitely would not be the last. She said she isn't going to sit back and watch a man take advantage of her again.

Korra Obidi said she giving him 24 hours to return her money; and if he refuses to refund her money, she will do a live video to detail everything that he has done and what led to their divorce.

60 feared dead as bomb hits school

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH** with agency report

No fewer than 60 people are missing and feared dead due to Russia bombing a school in the eastern Ukrainian region of Luhansk, the regional governor said on Sunday.

The governor of the Luhansk region, Serhiy Haidai, said Russian forces dropped a bomb on Saturday on the school in Bilohorivka where about 90 people were sheltering causing fire that destroyed the building.

The governor said that two people were confirmed dead and 30 civilians were rescued, seven of them wounded.

His accusation could not be verified independently and there was no immediate response from Russia.

Bilohorivka is close to the government held city of Severodonetsk, where heavy fighting was reported in the suburbs on Saturday. The blast brought down the building which caught fire and it took firefighters morethan three hours to extinguish the blaze, according to the governor

"The fire was extinguished after nearly four hours, then the rubble was cleared, and, unfortunately, the bodies of two people were found," Gaidai wrote on Telegram.

"Thirty people were evacuated from the rubble, seven of whom were injured. Sixty people were likely to have died under the rubble of buildings."

Ukraine and the West have accused Russian forces of targeting civilians and war crimes, Moscow rejects the accusation.

Russia's 10-week-old war on Ukraine has killed thousands, destroyed cities and driven 5 million Ukrainians to flee abroad.

Since the invasion began on 24 February, the UN has recorded at least 2,345 civilian deaths and 2,919 injured in Ukraine, the High Commissioner for Human Rights said in an update last month.

Luhansk and Donetsk form part of the Donbas region, the region has been under the control of the separatists for the past eight years.



PDP National Chairman, Dr. Iyorchia Ayu, decorating one of his security aides, Sergeant Timothy Hembe, with his new rank of Inspector on Thursday at the party secretariat, Abuja. Supporting the chairman is his CSO, ASP Aniedi Edet.

Ayu decorates security aide

By **TUNDE JOSHUA**, Abuja

National Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Dr. Iyorchia Ayu, has said diligence is one of the hallmarks of security personnel including police officers and men.

Ayu said this at a short ceremony in his office at the party's secretariat, Abuja while decorating one of his security

aides with his new rank

The Nigerian Police Force recently promoted Sergeant Timothy Hembe to the rank of an Inspector.

The national chairman appreciated the Nigerian Police for founding Hembe worthy of elevation to a new rank.

He said the officer has displayed professionalism, diligence and trustworthiness while serving

in his office.

The chairman urged other personnel to emulate Inspector Hembe, stressing that the authority will always reward hard work.

Ayu said under a PDP administration come 2023, security personnel in the country will be encouraged to further serve the nation diligently because a PDP government will protect, reward and provide convenient working

environment to police officers and other mitary and para- military personnel.

The chairman assured that Nigeria will be a more secured country to live in by nationals and foreigners alike under a PDP administration.

He, thetefore urged Nigerians to kerp hope alive and vote mas- sively for the PDP to reposition, rebuild and restore the country.

Police in Delta assure residents of safety

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

Delta Police Command has called on residents to be wary of al- leged threat by the proscribed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) to attack the state, especially the capital city.

A Facebook post has warned residents of Asaba to observe the 'sit at home order' issued by the outlawed group.

Reacting to the threat, the Public Relations Officer of the State, DSP Bright Edafe, in a statement on Sunday, said the Commissioner of Police in the

State, CP Ari Muhammed Ali said there is no such thing as 'sit at home order' in Delta. Thereby asking residents to go about their legitimate business while assuring them safety and protection.

Edafe said the Delta State Police Command can be contacted through the following numbers: PPRO's Office on +234 915 557 0008, +234 915 557 0007, Or the Command Control Room via +234 803 668 4974.

He said, "The attention of Delta State Police Command has been drawn to a Facebook post by some faceless individuals with the caption 'Unknown gunmen

Asaba Delta State sends strong message', in which Asaba residents are warned to observe the 'Sit at home order' as declared by the proscribed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).

"For the purpose of clarity, the Delta State Commissioner of Police CP Ari Muhammed Ali, FCIA, psc+, has declared that there is no 'sit at home order' in the State. He assures residents of their safety and urges them to go about their lawful business(es) as the Command is willing and able to deal decisively with anyone or group of persons who try to cause any form of trouble in the State.

"He admonishes members of the public particularly residents of Asaba and the entire Delta North district to remain vigilant, monitor and report any strange and suspicious movements or persons in their neighborhood to the Command or other law enforcement agencies.

"Meanwhile, the CP in his determination to maintain the existing peace in the State, has placed officers and men of the Command on red alert and urged them to remain watchful and deal decisively with anyone or group of persons attempting to cause any form of mayhem in the State.

Akpabio, Udom presidential bids tear PDP apart in A' Ibom

By ISAAC JOB, Uyo

Presidential aspirations of Minister for Niger Delta Affairs, Senator Godswill Akpabio and Akwa Ibom Governor Udom Emmanuel, have divided the state chapter of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). This has exposed an internal battle for the soul of the party.

The Trumpet gathered that the division and internal wrangling manifested during the official declaration of Akpabio's presidential ambition at Ikot Ekpene Township Stadium.

It was observed that a banner purported to have emanated from the State chapter of PDP with inscription "People Democratic Party (PDP) Akwa Ibom State chapter in support of His Excellency Chief Dr. Godswill Akpabio for President 2023." was displayed at the venue.

Though some PDP supporters are alleging that this was done by the APC to embarrass them, others insisted that the banner was a reflection of the ongoing internal crisis in PDP against Emmanuel.

In a swift reaction, Borono Bassey, State Publicity Secretary, Peoples Democratic Party, Akwa Ibom State in a press release dismissed the banner thus: "We have seen a photograph of a banner with an inscription to the effect that a party with the name – "People" Democratic Party is in support of the presidential rally of the Minister of Niger Delta, Chief Godswill Akpabio.

"Whereas the aforementioned "Party" does not exist as a duly registered Political Party in Nigeria and certainly not in Akwa Ibom State, we understand that the innuendo that the mischief makers set out, but failed to achieve was to use

the name of our Party – The Peoples Democratic Party to score points."

The PDP spokesperson said the party was moved by sympathy to wonder why Akpabio's handlers chose a day like that to embarrass their principal by reminding him that any of his political aspiration will amount to nothing if such aspiration did not come on the platform of the only Party in Akwa Ibom State – the Peoples Democratic Party.

The statement continued that "As a Party, we are glad by this overwhelming decision by Chief Akpabio and his handlers to again admit the obvious truth, that without the platform of the PDP, electoral victories in the state are impossible.

"We however offer a tot of sympathy to the Minister of Niger Delta and his few guests who will be forced to eat from the dish of this monumental embarrassment that has been served by his handlers.

"More importantly, we are motivated by the reverberating message by Akwa Ibom People that the only party they have come to accept is the Peoples Democratic Party," the release boasted.

Bassey reminded mischief makers and people with unrealistic political ambitions that although the party would not be the ones to throw the first salvo, it would stop at nothing to visit its sledgehammer on any political fly that wanted to perch on and abuse its pristine image as a Party.

But some members of the PDP told *The Trumpet* that the banner at the venue of Akpabio's declaration was a product of the discontentment with Akwa Ibom PDP and not that of mischief makers as claimed by the party



Sen. Godswill Akpabio

spokesman.

According to these members of the party who pleaded anonymity, Governor Emmanuel had been running a clanish administration and only few members of the party had access to him or enjoy the booties of his governance.

They recalled that during Akpabio's administration, many

party members and Akwa Ibom residents were empowered by the government but that was not the case with the current administration that had literally handed over every business of the state to consultants and outsiders, thereby pauperising the locals.

They pointed out that though Emmanuel was among the first to

pick the PDP presidential form, he was yet to make an official declaration of interest in the state to inform Akwa Ibom people of his desire rather he was busy traversing across Nigeria giving an impression that the people who gave him a platform to aspire for the presidency did not matter in his political future.

According to them, the banner at Ikot Ekpene Stadium was a clear statement that in an event of Akpabio and Emmanuel getting their respective party tickets, the PDP in the state would vote for the minister, because of his antecedence.

Another reason for the discontentment in Akwa Ibom PDP is the imposition of Pastor Umo Eno by Emmanuel as the preferred aspirant and candidate for the 2023 governorship election which denied other gubernatorial aspirants a level playing ground to vie for the governorship ticket.

They pointed out that the conduct of last Saturday ward congress to choose delegates for the forthcoming primaries was controversial and did not go well with some governorship aspirants and their supporters, thereby widening the gulf between the governor and some party stakeholders in the state.

HURIWA deplores electricity tariff hike •Says FG impoverishing Nigerians

Civil advocacy group, Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA) has condemned the fresh hike in electricity tariff. The Federal Government effected the increase through its Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission.

The rights group asked "Nigerians to take steps to show to government their rejection of this attempt to send them to their early graves through the skyrocketed and uncontrollable costs of living." It also condemned "the plot by government to hike the taxation on data and calls which will inevitably mean that Nigerians will now pay one of the most exorbitant costs of making telephone calls in the world."

HURIWA said these decisions are against the fundamental human rights provisions enshrined in chapter 4 of the Nigerian Constitution. It warned that these unnecessary financial burdens may lead to a reduction of the lifespan of Nigerians.

HURIWA, in a statement by its National Coordinator, Comrade Emmanuel Onwubiko, said the government of President Muhammadu Buhari "is bent on impoverishing Nigerians with his anti-humane policies."

NERC had on Thursday released different documents indicating the approved power tariff increase payable by consumers to various electricity distribution companies

in Nigeria.

In different orders to the 11 Discos operating in Nigeria, the commission stated that the tariff hike was based on the extraordinary review of the Multi-Year Tariff Order, as it explained that the order took effect from January 1, 2022.

Reacting, Onwubiko said: "We strongly condemn and reject the hike in fees payable for darkness and wonder whether government isn't aware that millions of Nigerians lost their jobs due to Covid-19 and are in the job markets.

"According to the National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria's unemployment rate is over 33 per cent with over 23 million jobless Nigerians.

"How do they expect the 90 million absolutely poor Nigerians to afford the high costs of darkness as approved by NERC because electricity power to a few homes that are connected to the national grid are often left in darkness.

"Of note, despite trillions of dollars thought to have been borrowed by the Buhari regime to improve the megawatts produced by about 19 power generating plants in the country, the national grid keeps wobbling, with perpetual outages that throw businesses, homes and the entire country into subterranean darkness.

"Embarrassingly, the national electricity grid had collapsed five times in 2022.

"HURIWA urge Nigerians to protest and reject the fresh hikes in electricity tariff because it is an attempt to impoverish us, according to statistics by the Hanke's Annual Misery Index which showed that Nigerians were more miserable in 2021 than they were in 2020.

"According to the report, which analysed 156 countries by calculating their unemployment rates, inflation, prevailing lending rates and GDP growths, Nigeria went from 15th among the most miserable countries in the world's ranking in 2020 to 11th in 2021.

"Buhari and his government has deepened Nigerians further into unimaginable poverty and Nigerians including civil society organisations must kick against this unfortunate plunge."



Comrade Emmanuel Onwubiko

'Delta least developed South South state'

Delta has been ranked as the least developed state in South-South geo-political zone. According to the latest State by State ranking in terms of development, road network, industrialization, youth employment and economic growth, Delta State scored extremely low among other States in South-South.

Rivers State, Akwa-Ibom State, Cross River State, Edo State and Bayelsa State came out 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th position respectively, with Delta State lagging behind in 6th position in the ranking.

The criteria used for the ranking are as follows;

1. Development
2. Road Network
3. Industrialization
4. Youth Employment
5. Economic Growth

According to the ranking, Delta State scored 21% in

Development, 42% in Road Network, 1% in industrialization, 5% in Youth Employment and 27% in Economic Growth, thereby making Delta State to take last position (6th) in the ranking, behind Rivers, Akwa-Ibom, Cross River, Edo and Bayelsa States.

Rivers State took 1st position in the ranking, scoring 87% in Road Network, 83% in Development, 94% in Industrialization, 62% in Youth Employment and 85% in Economic Growth.

Akwa-Ibom State took 2nd position in the ranking, scoring 81% in Road Network, 83% in Industrialization, 60% in Youth Employment, 81% in Development and 79% in Economic Growth.

All these are despite the huge allocations from the Federal Government as well as Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) of Delta State.

Best Western Plus Elomaz Hotel, Asaba.

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ICPC to track 550 projects in 18 states

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

As part of its Phase 4 Constituency and Executive Projects Tracking Exercise, the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) is set to track 550 projects in 18 states.

The exercise will specifically focus on Executive Projects (Federal Government funded capital projects) in the following States across the country – Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau, Borno, Yobe, Taraba, Kano, Kaduna, Kebbi, Abia, Ebonyi, Enugu, Akwa-Ibom, Rivers, Edo, Lagos, Ogun and Ekiti State, and the Federal Capital Territory.

The Constituency and Executive Projects Tracking Initiative (CEPTI) of the ICPC commenced in 2019. The aim is to promote social accountability and transparency in the

conception, execution and management of public funded projects as well as ensuring value-for-money in the execution of the projects.

The first phase of the exercise in 2019 had a total of 424 projects tracked across 12 states, while the second and third phases respectively conducted in 2020 and 2021 featured 722 projects in 16 states; and 1,098 projects in 16 other states and the FCT.

The focal sectors of the Phase 4 exercise remain Education, Health, Water Resources, Agriculture and Rural Development as well as Power sectors among others.

According to ICPC spokesperson, Azuka Ogugua, the tracking exercise is to investigate fraudulent procurement practices, ensure projects are executed to the specified standard among others.

"The mandate of the tracking exercise

is to investigate fraudulent procurement practices in the award of contracts for the projects, ensure projects are executed to the specified standard and that value-for-money is obtained, monitor the implementation of the projects from inception to completion in collaboration with critical stakeholders, and make recoveries on projects/contracts confirmed to have been inflated or in which contractors under-performed or did not perform at all.

"In addition, the objectives of the tracking initiative include compelling the return of runaway contractors to sites to complete hitherto abandoned projects, tracking contracting companies for all statutory regulatory compliance, among others as well as prosecuting persons or institutions found culpable in undermining the execution of government funded projects," she said.



Prof Owasanoye

Group asks EFCC to probe Delta's controversial N150b credit facility

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

A group, Concerned Nigerians has asked the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to probe the recent controversial N150 billion "bridging finance" facility approved for the Delta State Government by the state House of Assembly.

The credit facility has generated lots of negative reactions since its approval by the House of Assembly.

While calling on the EFCC to investigate purported loan in a petition signed by its conversation, Deji Adeyanju, Concerned Nigerians said the credit facility is "a last minute looting by the state government to fund elections."

The petition, which was addressed to the Chairman of the anti-graft agency, Abdulrasheed Bawa, claimed that it has become a practice for state governments to obtain huge loans under the guise of public interest but subsequently divert it into private pockets.

The petition reads, "We write this petition in our capacity as a pro-human rights and anti-corruption group, seeking the urgent investigation of the Delta State Government, over its attempt to loot the N150 billion loan recently approved by the Delta State House of Assembly.

"At a time when the nation is engrossed with the commencement of electioneering process leading to the 2023 election, it is alarming to note that the Delta State government has initiated and secured the approval of the House of Assembly to obtain a humongous loan of N150 billion.

"Curiously, this loan has been approved just few weeks to the primaries of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), where Governor Ifeanyi



Okowa

Okowa is rumoured to have a vice presidential ambition. We are, therefore, constrained to ask: What is the purpose of this loan?

"In recent times, it has become a practice for state governments to obtain huge loans under the guise of public interest but subsequently divert same into private pockets. We recall that just few months ago, the Kogi State government obtained a similar loan with a view to paying workers' pension/salary but subsequently diverted it into a private account. It took the intervention of your Commission before the money could be returned to the Central Bank of Nigeria.

"It is on the basis of the foregoing that we believe that the N150 billion loan sought to be obtained by the Delta State government is an attempt at last minute looting. Sadly, the House of Assembly who should ordinarily



Sheriff

investigate this loan and protect the citizens is in bed with the executive arm and has turned a blind spot.

"We, therefore, call on you to investigate this loan, trace the money and ensure that same is not channeled towards any purpose other than people's-oriented projects."

Meanwhile, the State Governor, Dr Ifeanyi Okowa had on Thursday at the quarterly media briefing at the Press Centre, Government House, Asaba, said that the N150 billion "Bridging Finance" facility was not a fresh loan but an advance from N270 billion that the Federal Government is owing the State.

He added that the N150 billion had been tied to projects embarked upon by his administration and his predecessor, thereby accusing those questioning the approval of ignorance and lack of credible information.

13 suspected oil thieves grilled by EFCC

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Operatives of the Port Harcourt Zonal Command of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) have commenced investigation of 13 suspected oil thieves handed over to it by the Nigerian Navy.

On Wednesday May 4, 2022, the Nigerian Naval Ship, NNS Pathfinder, Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt, Rivers State had handed over the suspects to EFCC for allegedly dealing in petroleum products without appropriate licenses.

A statement by EFCC gave the names of the suspects as Goodnews Wilfred, Gabriel Awadis, Monday Anja, Sylvanus Benson, Timothy Rufus, Appolos Awajis, Tombari Lede, Ebirene Ebirene, Friday Aaron, Ataije Ebirene, Ibrahiim Attah, Shuaibu Magaji and Odeon Emmanuel.

While handing over the suspects, the NNS Pathfinder's Base Operating Officer, Commander U. A. Sidi, said that they were arrested on May 3, 2022 by Naval operatives while conducting anti-illegal bunkering raids in some communities around Cawthorne channels, Port Harcourt.

Sidi further explained that the communities combed by Naval operatives, were allegedly serving as semi-shelter stations and critical enablers to crude oil thieves and forward logistic stations for transportation of materials and equipment being used for the construction and establishment of illegal refining camps.

Items handed over to the EFCC alongside the suspects include two generating sets, nine pumping machines and 24 iron pipes.

Others are welding equipment, one motor jack lift, filters, hoses and 20 metal sheets being used for the construction of storage tanks and reservoirs for stolen crude.

Assistant Superintendent of the EFCC, ASE Abduljaleel Hassan, who received the suspects and exhibits on behalf of the Commission, commended the Navy for its collaboration and synergy with the EFCC in the fight against illegal oil bunkering.

He assured that thorough investigations would be carried out and culpable suspects prosecuted accordingly.

EFCC launches virtual town hall meetings



EFCC Chairman, Bawa

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has launched "EFCC Connect" for virtual town hall meetings to increase engagement with citizens of the country.

This was contained in a statement made available by EFCC spokesperson, Wilson Uwujaren, adding that the platform would operate online and shall among other things help to sensitize and educate citizens on the importance of war against economic and financial crimes.

Uwujaren said, "The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, wishes to inform the public that it has launched a virtual town hall meeting called EFCC Connect, to expand its reach and engagement with citizens within

and outside the country.

"EFCC Connect, is an online programme designed to engender close interface and collaboration with the Nigerian public, provide answers and clarification to issues, sensitize and educate them on the war against economic and financial crimes using the social media platforms – Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

"This move is in line with one of the objectives of the Commission's Strategic Plan (2021-2025), to increase the level of public engagements in the "fight against economic and financial crimes.

"The public is enjoined to be part of the weekly conversation which will be transmitted live on the official handles of the EFCC @officialEFCC on Twitter at 7pm every Wednesday."

Lagos suspends ad-hoc committee on removal of abandoned vehicles

By BENJAMIN OMOIKE, METRO
EDITOR/LAGOS BUREAU CHIEF

Lagos State Government has again placed an indefinite suspension on the entire ad-hoc teams on Removal of Abandoned Vehicles (RAVC) operating in the 20 Local Governments (LGs) and 37 Local Council Development Area (LCDAs) in with immediate effect.

The suspension, which was contained in a directive issued to the Commissioner for Transportation, Dr. Frederic Oladeinde, by the Governor of Lagos State, was as a result of

several complaints of extortion and harassment of members of the public by RAVC, which is causing embarrassment to the State Government despite several reviews conducted on the operational guidelines of the team.

The directive warned that any ad-hoc team found operating after this notice, will be handed over to the Law Enforcement Agencies for trial and prosecution in accordance with the Law of the State as captured in the Traffic Sector Reform Law (TSRL) 2018.

The directive, while requesting the general

public to take note of the order also advised abandoned vehicle owners, which, hitherto pose as environmental nuisances, security and traffic impediment to remove them from the roads, as this directive is not an excuse for negligence of the Traffic Laws of the State.

It would be recalled that Removal of Abandoned Vehicles Committee, (RAVC), earlier suspension was lifted on December 30, 2021, in view of several appraisals and review of the operational guidelines of the team by the State Government.



Sanwo-Olu

Lady alleges mother uses water from corpses to prepare restaurant food

A lady has anonymously opened up on her mother's alleged wickedness and greed, stressing that she uses voodoo to push sales at her 'chop bar' to retain all her customers.

As confessed by the lady, her mother uses water used to wash corpses to prepare food she sells and also buries some human body parts around the premises of the 'chop bar' on a regular basis.

She detailed that her

mother also travels to Togo every 21 days to make sacrifices to the deity she serves to keep her business booming.

The worried lady, who sounded very guilty in her writeup, further revealed that she feels sorry for her mother's customers because most of them became broke after they started eating from their restaurant.

According to her, she doesn't want to take over

her mother's evil practices but the evil mother insists if she fails to follow in her footsteps, a huge catastrophe is going to hit the family.

"Keep me anonymous sir. My mom owns a bar at East Legon. It's been operating for over 15 years and we are rich. Mom has a lot of money right now, we all studied abroad and have our own cars, houses and all. I am the first child and only daughter among

two boys.

"She wants me to take over the business because my brothers are into something else but I can't. Mom uses charm and I can't do it. Herself and all of us don't consume anything from the bar because of the spiritual implications involved. I've seen successful people go broke at mom's bar.

"She travels to Togo every 21 days but I don't know what she goes to do. She's

yet to introduce that to me. So far, she has introduced me to a diener (morgue worker) who gives her parts of dead people and water used to bath them. She mixes the water used in the food preparation with that of the one used to cleanse the corpse and then buries their parts anywhere around the bar.

"I feel sorry for our customers because people come there to spend so much money, some people

even have to leave their cars because they've consumed more than they can pay. I don't want to continue with her deeds. I wish to end it and use my qualifications to get myself a job because I studied abroad but, she said if I quit the business, it will have bad effects on us.

"I don't know what she means, but she has refused to explain and is insisting I take after her. What do I do sir? Pls advise me."

Pastor bags life in jail for defiling friend's daughters

An Ikeja Domestic Violence and Sexual Offences Court has sentenced a 54-year-old pastor, Michael Oliseh, to life imprisonment for defiling his friend's 12-year-old twin daughters.

Delivering judgment, Justice Abiola Soladoye, described Oliseh, the assistant Pastor of the Anointed Chosen Vessel Ministry in Okota, Lagos, as a "serial rapist" who took turns defiling his friend's daughters.

She held that the prosecution had convincingly proved the charges of defilement against Oliseh beyond any reasonable doubt.

The judge sentenced Oliseh to life imprisonment on the two-count charge bordering on defilement

She said, "The testimony of the defendant portrayed him as a serial rapist who took turns to defile the survivors.

"What a disloyal and untrustworthy pastor, who shamelessly and audaciously had sexual intercourse with his friend's children who were entrusted in his care.

"His conduct is unbecoming of a pastor.

Having been found guilty as charged with the two offences, the defendant is hereby sentenced to life imprisonment."

Read Also: Russia-Ukraine: War with us will be global disaster – Taiwan to China

She said that the sentences should run concurrently, adding that should have his name entered in the Sex Offenders Register of the Lagos State Government.

Soladoye also berated the parents of the survivors for lack of discipline by sending the survivors to stay with the convict.

Parents of the survivors lack discipline and ought not to have sent their children to go stay in Oliseh's house.

Children are not to be entrusted with rowdy adults. They should be kept in the

hands of responsible adults who have their goodwill at heart.

"The need for responsible parenting cannot be overemphasised," the judge said.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that five witnesses testified at the trial and five exhibits were tendered.

According to the prosecution counsel, Mrs Olufunke Adegoke, Oliseh committed the crimes sometimes in November 2017 in Ago, near Okota, a suburb of Lagos.

Adegoke said that the defendant defiled the survivors after their father had entrusted them in his care and travelled to the village for a burial.

She said that Oliseh then threatened the survivors that their father would become jobless if they told anyone about the sexual encounter.

She also submitted that Oliseh was caught by one of the neighbours after he had chased one of the survivors in the compound and dragged her with her pant.

NAN reports that the prosecution said the offences violated Section 137 of the Criminal Laws of Lagos State, 2015.

Policewoman 'kidnaps self' for ransom to fund wedding

By BENJAMIN OMOIKE

Nigeria Police Force has detained one of its personnel, Naomi Danlami, an Abuja-based sergeant, following suspicions that she faked her own kidnap to extort ransom from well-wishers to fund her wedding.

According to Fij, on April 18, Danlami had announced her engagement on Facebook, but the next day, reports of her abduction were made on a Facebook group she belonged to.

However, when the police-woman's family called her phone number, her supposed abductors said they didn't want money but just wanted to kill her.

"Some of her friends in various social media groups started posting about raising funds for her, saying it would make her abductors free her," a source said.

"During the fundraising exercise, there were dissenting voices who expressed doubts about the abduction story. Some of her colleagues said she had a history of criminal behaviour; they said she was not truthful, not to be trusted, and that her lifestyle was wayward."

As efforts to secure her release intensified, Usman Baba-Alkali, the Inspector-General of Police, ordered the Police Intelligence Response Team (IRT), to fish out Danlami's abductors.

When the IRT got to work, they revealed her last known location to be somewhere in Nasarawa State.

Danlami would suddenly appear on Saturday, claiming she escaped from the kidnappers' den where she was molested.

She was reported to have insisted on returning to work as though nothing happened, to the surprise of those around her, consequently raising suspicion from the Force Headquarters.

"We all thought that if she was kidnapped and molested in addition, the first thing for her to do was go to a hospital for

examination and possible treatment, not to show up at work straightaway," said the source.

Danlami went to work, and the IRT detained her as they continued their investigation into the matter.

An audio by a police-woman, who, in addition to knowing Danlami, helped with the fundraising accused her of causing her discomfort during the supposed kidnap, only to turn out it was staged.

She said, "See suffer wey I suffer. Do you know that the kidnappers called; they are not kidnappers. It is set up, this girl just set [it] up; she needs money. That girl is wicked, see the way I just de cry since."

The IRT eventually released Danlami on Tuesday, according to the source, but the circumstances of her release remain unknown.





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United Nations intervention in the Sahel crisis: what implications?

The United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres recently visited Senegal, Niger, and Nigeria as part of a tour of the Sahel to assess the impact of UN interventions in the region. A discussion of the Ukraine crisis with the nations' leaders was also part of his brief. The visit is in recognition of the role which the region can play in global stability, both as buffer and as an alternative source of agricultural produce in the aftermath of the war in Ukraine.

The Sahelian countries are classified among the low human development countries, according to 2018 HDI (Human Development Index). Together, the geographical expanse covers about 7 million square kilometres with a population of about 350 million people, characterized by a high population growth rate ranging between 2.6 and 3.8 percent. The region is experiencing frequent attacks by violent extremists and emergence of jihadists' movements, and many other challenges ranging from humanitarian to political crisis, which are threatening human development.

UN intervention under the auspices of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS), is hinged on the UN Support Plan for the Sahel. The plan is built around six priority areas: Cross-border cooperation; Prevention and sustaining peace; Inclusive growth; Climate action; Renewable energy; and Women and youth empowerment. The Support Plan, covering the period 2018-2030, is also expected to help the Sahel to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union Agenda 2063. The principles guiding the implementation of all UN interventions are national ownership and leadership, among others.

The improvements witnessed in the Sahel on account of UN interventions have been diminished by some multi-dimensional challenges, which are amplified by political crises, unequal distribution of wealth, lack of opportunities and basic services. The demographic bulge, combined with climate change and the worsening security situation are other factors

stifling the impact of UN interventions. Other vitiating elements include, endemic poverty, inequality (including gender inequality), deep exclusions and human rights abuses, limited access to basic services like health, education, high energy deficit, water, high rate of youth unemployment, and governance challenges and a lack of capacity of public service.

UN intervention is hampered by inadequate funding, poor coordination, coherence and sometimes the inability to address the humanitarian – development nexus. Many interventions by different UN agencies create overlaps and duplications. Meanwhile, there are some liberal concepts such as LGBTQ rights, pro-choice sentiments, which are introduced under the veneer of noble objectives like empowering women, reproductive rights, etc. These concepts are in direct collision with Sahelian norms and

culture.

UN Intervention in the Sahel is not without some measurable impact such as the MINUSMA and MNJTF operations in Mali and Chad. There are serious unattended or barely touched challenges including the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation, rising levels of displacement, social and economic inequalities, environmental degradation, and terrorist group movements as well as rise in small arms, light weapons, and drugs trafficking. Although Sahel is among the areas most spared by the coronavirus, the crisis has had severe repercussions in the region. About 30 million people, or about nine per cent of the population, have been pushed into poverty since 2020 due to border closures and reduced activity. And this at a time when half of the population is already living in poverty. No less than 24 million Sahelians are now in need of humanitarian aid and protection, one million more than 2019. Beyond the numbers, which are always abstract, human tragedies like violence and food and physical insecurity continue to beset the people. Other challenges include the rising tension between pastoralists and farmers, high levels of youth unemployment, and gender inequality.

It will, therefore, be worthwhile for the UN to consider prioritising investment programmes in the Sahel through financing quick-impact projects. This will provide credible alternatives to the 65% youths in the population and prevent their recruitment as terrorists. There is also the need to address political and governance crisis by interfacing with the governments in the region to institutionalise rule of law, inclusivity, and good governance. Global assistance to the Sahel in fighting insurgencies should be priority.

While the visit is welcome, we notice that some invited groups avoided meeting with the Secretary General on account of the visit being 'hijacked by pro-government' forces. Guterres should therefore appraise the situation correctly and take the necessary steps to develop an all-inclusive policy framework in handling the fallouts of the Russia-Ukraine crisis.



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Obi for President, Zulum for Vice President – Hope O’Rukevbe Eghagha

The proper and complete title of my essay is ‘Peter Obi for President, Babagana Zulum for Vice President – a Proposal by an idealist! One of the first responses I received when I published the title online was ‘If wishes were horses, beggars would ride! I can imagine he followed that post with a foxy chuckle. But I know I will chuckle last. We are in desperate times. We need a desperate remedy. We can no longer commit the future of this country to practicing politicians who have turned the theatre of politics into an absurd one! Politics is too serious a business to be left to politicians who often think about the next elections and the views of the imaginary ‘people! Let us give a thought to forming a Government of National Unity using the framework of the 2023 elections, with both parties sheathing their swords for the survival of the country, led by the incumbent President who I believe would like to reunite the country after bombing our cultural diversity with nepotism appointments and body language!

It is time to think out of the box. We are in an emergency. If Nigeria must survive and grow, if Nigeria must attain its full potential, then we must work on the process of producing leaders. The American model of democracy in terms of the power of the majority always having its way has not worked for us. We are not sure of the veracity of population claims. Population figures have been politicized. For example, to contend and stick to the point that the north has a greater population and must always produce the President of the

country is a recipe for a split of the federation. I have other suggestions about constituting the cabinet once my suggested candidates emerge as leaders. Apart from constituting a youthful cabinet, women with a solid background should work as Ministers. I am sure some politicians reading this would say I am crazy. I am not. I am very sane and patriotic!

Another reaction I received was that the two men are from different political parties. And I said so? Is there any real difference between APC and PDP? The current Chairman of APC was a member of PDP before he decamped. The politicians see the political parties as Special Purpose Vehicles. My proposal is therefore a patriotic extension of that perception. Besides, I had preceded my submission with a potent rider: we are in desperate times; we need desperate solutions. A combination of these two men in the presidency with the hope that Zulum will succeed Obi after eight years will end the unhealthy jostling and bustling currently distorting the national space. To achieve this, we need the cooperation of all stakeholders, acting on the Doctrine of Necessity. At the forefront of this effort should be President Muhammadu Buhari. But because I am almost certain that he will not initiate such a move, I am calling on the Sultan of Sokoto, Ooni of Ife, Obi of Onitsha, Orodje of Okpe, Oba of Benin, Middle Belt Forum, the Etsu Nupe, Arewa Consultative Forum, Afenifere, Ohaeneze Igbo, PANDEF, Chief E.K. Clark, Christian Association of Nigeria, MURIC, and other patriots to summon a national

meeting and give this proposal serious thought. Recall that after the June 12 debacle, it was such a consensus that produced two persons of Yoruba extraction that gave way for an Obasanjo Presidency. The denial of the presidency to MKO Abiola and his subsequent death created a big tension in Yorubaland, his own folks who did not massively support him ab initio. We need that type of intervention again. Nigeria is crumbling. Nigeria is bleeding. Nigeria is dying. The politicians who led us into this cesspit cannot redeem us from it!

In proposing these two men, let me state clearly that I have met Peter Obi only occasionally, twice at state functions and often at the airport where we flew together from Lagos to Asaba or from Asaba to Lagos. He would always stay with us in the open lounge, avoiding the VIP lounge, carrying his bag even as Governor. He would hold discussions with ordinary people anywhere and everywhere. At a state function where he had to wait for the event to start, he sat with his State Commissioners, and they were having discussions there in a circle in the open and he sat there like an ordinary mortal, not specially dressed with the airs of a pompous emperor. Not a tin god! I have not met Zulum in person. I have read about both men and think that they can change the fortunes of the country, if we work out a joint ticket on the platform of PDP, APC having just completed a two-term tenure in office.

Peter Obi was Governor of Anambra State for eight years. He

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gave a good account of himself as the Number One Citizen of the state in terms of accountability, projects and the entrenchment of the rules of engagement. He preached and practiced prudence, cutting costs and removing wastes. He has struck a chord with the people of Nigeria, especially the young people across the country. He has a different perspective to governance. He has put himself forward to be President and has made some definite promises about changing the Nigerian story. He has spoken about ‘investing in education and exporting graduates’ and increasing diaspora remittance from \$20bn’. Add to these the current clamour in the southern part of the country that the presidency should rotate south, particularly to Southeast, and give the Igbo people a sense of belonging. Let us give Peter Obi a chance.

Professor Babagana Zulum is incumbent Governor of the troubled State of Borno. In the midst of hunger, poverty, and the highest level of insecurity, he has governed well to the satisfaction of both the

ruling party and the opposition in the state. He has concentrated on his job and gained a huge following across the country. He is from the north. To work out an agreement that he should run with Obi in 2023 would be putting two men who have made a name in the public sphere as good administrators would reduce ethnic tension, guarantee a solid future and promote national cohesion.

I got responses to the proposal online, ranging from the skeptical to the supportive. Lovely Nyoreme Obodozie asked: ‘Omo! Will they allow this sweet combo? Anthony Ogene wrote: ‘What a fine combination! But can it become a reality? Both are not moneybags and power drunk! Yet another responder Angela Agoawike wrote: ‘Excellent combination for the sake of Nigeria! Aguonye Onyema George summed it up: ‘Government of National Unity. We need it now! Need I say more?

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A common saying among most young people in Nigeria today is “school na scam!” If you care to demand the logic that supports this claim, they will be quick to roll out a few for you. These range from the fact that the most respected persons in our society are not those with high level of education. The respected are the financially wealthy people. They have on their catalogue wealthy and successful sportspersons, politicians and their collaborators with questionable wealth in the public service sector. They believe that even our religious organisations do not accord respect to any one based on the number of university degrees they have acquired. Not even your family does. Consequently, “school na scam!”

Nobody would go into any argument with one who strongly believes that education is worthless. In today’s Nigeria, this is a hard sell thing to do. This is

also compounded by the fact that educational institutions and parents collude with candidates to cheat the system, and often find success in making ‘good certificate grades’ at all levels of our learning system. The disdain melted on the university system by government in Nigeria, and the fact that politicians could establish new universities and other tertiary institutions much easier than even political parties give credence to how education is disdained by our people. In spite of this attitude, education will in no way be the ultimate victim or loser. We shall all pay dearly since our development and progress as a people is a function of our education. It is becoming obvious each passing day that those at the helms of affairs of our nation are merely lipstick patriots whose sole desire is to plunder and bring the Nigerian state to her knees. There are many who believe, as Chinua Achebe cunningly put it, ‘there was a country.’

Nigerian Education! Boko Haram!! School is a Scam!!!

The fact that many well-placed Nigerians send their wards to good universities abroad indicates that education is useful for this class of people. This ruling class see Nigeria and every institution of the state as a source for their personal income. There is a little and big Abacha in those who rule us. They have their souls outside the shores of Nigeria. They leave their bodies here to steal this country dry for the sustenance of their souls in Europe and the USA. They have to use foreign hospitals and health facilities if they must not die earlier than their time. They have three homes. The first one is outside Africa where they have the core members of their family. The second one is in their villages. This is the bastion of their political battles; and the third home is in their state capital city or Abuja. This is their looting base. They need these three home to sustain their souls abroad.

The current ASUU strike and the attitude of the elite to education is quite shocking. The most painful part of it is the labour movement in Nigeria as a body. The Nigeria Labour Congress’ leadership would always stake the blood of her members whenever increments are contemplated by government on the pump price of fuel. Sadly, this body is less serious on matters of education. The foursquare basic necessi-

ties that should concern any labour movement is education, health, food and shelter. There is no better way to enslave and pauperise a people than using education as a weapon. That the public feels government must not be held to give us the best of these four cardinals of the common good of human existence only means that we have gotten used to our chains as a people. Karl Heinrich Marx was born on 5 May 1818. He was a German eclectic philosopher of Jewish descent. Today, Karl Marx is famous as a critic of political economy, economist, historian, sociologist, political theorist, journalist and socialist revolutionary. His 1848 pamphlet The Communist Manifesto and the three-volume Das Kapital (1867–1883) are his best known works.

The huge influence of Marx on political and philosophical thought cannot be ignored in contemporary social and political history of our time. Our interest in Marx’s here is in the Communist Manifesto where Marx and Engels “argue (in a mock address to the ruling class) that education is: determined by the social conditions under which you educate, by the intervention, direct or indirect, of society by means of schools, etc. They added; Communists “have not invented the intervention of society in education; they do but seek to alter the character of that intervention, and to rescue

education from the influence of the ruling.” Without being a Marxist, one can easily discern that what is happening in Nigeria is not far from the conclusion of Marx. The view that education is meant to promote class interest should not be promoted by our elite. This book was written by Marx on the request of Workers/Labour. May 01 is Labour Day! May 05 is Karl Marx’s birthday!!

At the close of the week, news filtered in that government would soon commence discussion with ASUU on the current crisis in the sector. This should be carried out with the good of the system in mind; and not just as a way of securing the suspension of the current strike action. It is shameful that academics are some of the least paid and ill-treated workers in Nigeria. Unless we have a rethink as a people then our children and wards will always hold that “education is a scam!” And nobody should blame them. We are all part of the Boko Haram (book is haram) generation. This group did not blossom overnight. It may have started in the current way of our youth. We have a collective moral responsibility to reverse their perception of what education is by re-imaging education in Nigeria. They have to be convinced that “school is not a scam!”

•Dr Karo Ogbinaka lectures at the Department of Philosophy, University of Lagos. He is a member of The Trumpet’s editorial board.

Vote wisely, SDP chairman charges Nigerians

By TUNDE JOSHUA, POLITICS EDITOR, ABUJA

Ahead of the 2023 general election, Nigerians have been charged to take their destinies in their hands by voting for the right set of leaders who are capable of changing the nation's present narratives.

National Chairman of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), Alhaji Shehu Musa Gabam, expressed optimism that Nigerians can change the nation's trajectory of bad leadership and under-development during the 2023 general elections by voting rightly.

Gabam in a statement said it was not only too bad to have bad leadership but worse to have docile citizenry who could not utilize their civic rights of voting to decide leaders of their choice.

He said "as Nigerians who desire a national retrieval and restoration of the

lost glory, we must use our thumbs to rescue ourselves by voting in responsible and committed, and patriotic people into positions of authority in the next general elections."

The party's chairman specifically tasked Nigerians to ask the right questions from the current administration and its major players who are jostling to be brought back to power, about what more they could offer the country, after being a part and parcel of what brought her to the present situation.

"Shall we reinforce failure of the status quo with a new mandate, and expect any positive improvement in achieving sustainable development? The answer to this critical question from Nigerians, old and young, across the country is a resounding, NO!

"We pray our reflections as a nation about how low we have sunk as a nation will stir positive actions in all of us, and will make us come to the realization and consciousness that we cannot keep doing the same thing over and over again, and expect a different result.

"New results demand new approaches, new strategies, new people, new orientation, new thinking, and new processes. All the foregoing is what the SDP brings to the table towards national development as the only credible alternative to getting the country out of its current socio-economic woes.

"Going forward therefore, the party calls on all of us to be bold enough to walk a new and uncharted path, one that may not even be unfamiliar to us. Why? Because the path we thought we knew, has brought us nothing but failure and pain.

"The power to change the current negative condition of the country for good is in the thumbs of the Nigerian electorate. Going by the prevailing sense of

pervading disaffection occasioned by the obvious dashed hopes and expectations, the Nigerian people have resolved to use the power of their votes in 2023 to change the unsavory state of the nation for good by going the way of a refreshing hope that the SDP offers."

While calling on the Buhari administration to intensify efforts aimed at rescuing Nigerians held hostage by terrorists and kidnappers in various parts of the country, Gabam asked Nigerians to continually pray for victims of violence and other horrendous criminal acts, especially hapless citizens held in captivity by Boko Haram and those also held as hostages by bandits, and kidnappers in forests across the country.

He said: "We are witnesses to the carnage brought about by violence, banditry and acts of criminality induced by political shenanigans and desperation for power which have turned our country to a killing field and an anarchic society.

We are witnesses to how social disorder is fast, degrading us as a people and a country.

"Hence, we must realize that we cannot afford further degradation and slide. We must recognize that the hard work of returning peace and stability to our besieged communities and countryside must be borne by every Nigerian compatriot, home and abroad.

"In this regard, it becomes imperative for us to renew our pledges and commitment to peaceful and harmonious co-existence and preserve our diversity. As a people, we must all recommit to doing what is right in our neighbourhoods and communities, and we must pledge to uphold what is right even if we may not immediately gain from it.

"This is the simple and fastest way of achieving our quest of building a good Nigerian society, and spreading the social harmony, peace and justice that we all long for."



Gabam

Tinubu wades into Kano State APC crisis as campaign DG dumps party

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

A twist was added at the weekend to the presidential campaign of the national leader of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Asiwaju Bola Tinubu. The Director General of the Tinubu Support Groups Management Council (ABATSGMC), Hon. Abdulmumin Jibrin, dumped the ruling party.

However, Tinubu was said to have stepped in to resolve the local political squabbles between Jibrin and key stakeholders in his constituency leading to his exiting APC.

The former chairman, House of Representatives Appropriation Committee, who has been politically relegated in the Kano State APC polity disclosed his decision to defect from APC to a yet to be named party at the weekend.

He has been struggling to retain his political career in the state after his suspension from the APC by the Bebeji Local Council chapter, Kano State a year earlier.

It was revealed that Jibrin decided to quit the APC because of the decision of the party leadership in Kano State not to give him the party's ticket to return to the House of Representatives.

Jibrin announced his decision to dump the ruling APC on his official social media accounts, indicating that, he will disclose his next political move

within 24 hours.

He said, "I have done my best for APC. Its time to move on.

"I will announce my new political party within the next 24 hours insha Allah. I will make a formal statement in due course," he said, signing off with his name.

Jibrin, lost his reelection bid to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) candidate, Aliyu Detti Yako in a rerun election on January 25, 2020.

There is palpable apprehension in the Tinubu's camp over Jibrin's possible movement to the Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso' new party, the New Nigeria Political Party (NNPP).

His defection from APC, no doubt will decimate the influence he could wield for the aspiration of Asiwaju Tinubu in Kano State even though the state governor, Abdullahi Ganduje, is also a die-hard follower of the frontline APC presidential aspirant.

To save his campaign from looming setback in Kano and the Northwest, Asiwaju Tinubu was said to have reached out to Governor Ganduje to broker a truce and ensure the unity within the Kano State chapter of the APC.

The source said Asiwaju Tinubu has already intervened on Jibrin's behalf with Governor Ganduje and that Jibrin may rescind his decision to dump APC if he could be pacified.

APC gets over N19b from sale of forms for aspirants, still counting

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

All Progressives Congress (APC) has raked in N19,940,000,000 in the ongoing sale of nomination forms to aspirants vying for various positions ahead of the June 3 deadline for party primaries fixed by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

The party may still be counting the windfall from the exercise as deadline for sale of form was extended to accommodate more interested aspirants.

Information from the office of the National Organising Secretary of APC, Alhaji Sulaiman Arugungu, said the party as at the weekend has so far realized a total sum of N1,500,000,00 from 15 aspirants that

picked the Presidential nomination forms at N100 million each.

The party made N2,400,000,000 from 48 governorship aspirants that have so far obtained forms at the cost of N50 million each.

The NOS added that 241 senatorial aspirants have picked forms at the rate of N20 million each, totalling N820,000,000.

According to him, a sum of N8,210,000,000 was realized from 821 aspirants that picked the party's House of Representatives forms at the cost of N10 million each.

Arugungu said APC has so far made a sum of N3,010,000,000 from 1,505 aspirants who picked States House of Assembly forms at N2 million each.

PDP holds North West Zonal Congress

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

National Working Committee (NWC) of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has approved the conduct of its North West Zonal congress. It is to elect zonal executive officers and National Ex-Officio members of the party in the North West zone.

The exercise is scheduled to hold today, Monday, May 9, 2022 at the Zonal head-

quarters of the party in Kaduna.

The NWC requested that all leaders, critical stakeholders and teeming members of the party in the North-West be guided accordingly for a smooth and hitch-free exercise which will be conducted in line with the constitution and guidelines of PDP.

The party advised members to strictly comply with directives of the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) Protocol on Covid-19.



Tinubu



Jibrin

AfDB's Adesina drafted into APC presidential race

●28 groups pick form for him

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

President of the African Development Bank, Dr Akinwumi Adesina, has been drafted into the 2023 presidential race as 28 groups at the weekend procured the N100 million Expression of Interest and Nomination forms of the All Progressives Congress (APC) for him.

The forms was collected by leader of one of the groups, Youth Arise Movement, Comrade Ademola Babatunde.

The groups consist of Youth Arise Movement (YAM), Nigerians in Diaspora, One Nigeria Group, Prudent Youth Association of Nigeria, women groups, farmers, People With Disabilities and other civil society groups.

Comrade Babatunde told journalists at the International Conference Centre,

Abuja after collecting the receipt for the N100 million paid into the APC account, that the groups are concern about the recruitment process into the Nigerian political space and went in search of a credible compatriot capable of leading the country come 2023.

He said "we are 28 groups precisely that came together after a very serious consultation, deliberations on the way forward for a better and united Nigeria. We unanimously decided that though the money is outrageous but if we truly wants a better future for ourselves and our children and our land of birth and soil of origin, we must put our resources together to obtain the forms for Dr.Akinwumi Adesina.

"We are very much aware of the critical time that Nigerians and our country

Nigeria is going through.

"If we fail to support a candidate of credible and worthy note, an icon of unblemished integrity as Dr. Akinwumi Adesina to come on board and contest for the Presidential race come 2023, we will eventually handover this country to mediocres who will finally destroy our common wealth.

"This is one of the supports we are fundamentally and passionately determined to render for ourselves by putting Akinwumi Adesina forward to Nigerians."

The groups promised to mobilise massively in coming days by reaching out to all stakeholders and ensuring the whole world to support Adesina to become the flag bearer of the APC.



Adesina

What Tinubu told other aspirants at S'West APC parley

●Promises to correct party's reward system

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

Leaders of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the South West stormed Lagos for a meeting with presidential aspirants from the geopolitical zone at the weekend.

They were concerned about not the number of personalities in the race from Yorubaland but the squabbles and politics of name calling being adopted by supporters of the key players in the contest for the party's ticket.

Efforts of the leaders comprising a former governor of Osun State and former interim National Chairman of APC, Chief Bisi Akande and former governor of Ogun State, Aremo Olusegun Osoba at finding a consensus landing proved abortive as the presidential gladiators insisted on running.

However, one of the strong contenders and National leader of APC, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu dared his co-contenders to see who wins the party's ticket and the election proper.

Tinubu also observed with concern the reward system in APC which he said was poor. He promised to ensure dedicated party members are adequately and handsomely rewarded if elected president next year.

"Many of you I know, and you have

participated in governance and political activities. You have given a value to your various states.

"When we merged as one and took broom as the symbol of party, broom has a lot of meaning.

"Let me first of all address our element of constitution, I promise to look into that if elected.

"Our reward system as APC is very poor, and it was late before I could recognize that.

"Let me assure you, I won't repeat that mistake, if I'm elected.

"I know that you still have people who believe in you, in the system.

"But for those who have decided to be an opponent, I will not dwell on that, let's see who wins, but I want to win and I want you to work along with me and to convince more delegates," Tinubu said.

The former governor of Lagos State as well said he will resolve all issues in crisis infested state chapters of APC immediately after taking office as president.

"In some states where we have divisions, please, tell us, we have to harmonize and become one.

"Particularly, Oyo is divided. Osun and Ekiti elections are coming, these elections are precursors to the national election," he added.

'Ninth N'Assembly conquered difficult legislations that defied passage

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

Senate President Ahmad Lawan has said that the 9th and current National Assembly will leave indelible marks in the annals of parliamentary procedures in the country having stood out from the previous Assemblies.

He commended the uniqueness of the Ninth Assembly in its ability to conquer most complex and critical legislations that had either defied passage or assent.

Lawan gave this credit to the 9th Assembly on Saturday night in Lagos while responding to the honour bestowed on him as The Sun Political Icon of the Year 2021 during an event to mark The Sun Newspapers' 19th Annual Awards at Eko Hotels and Suites, Victoria Island, Lagos.

The Senate President who dedicated the award to the past presiding officers of the National Assembly said: "I am sure the award has been given to me because I have been in the Legislature or in the National Assembly for more than two decades and that is to say that the Legislature has been recognised at this stage.

"I'm so pleased and delighted that the Sun Newspapers are able to sieve through and see what the other arm of government, the Legislature, is doing because more often than not, the Legislature does not receive the kind of attention that it deserves from the citizens.

"For us in the Ninth National Assembly, we believe that service to our fatherland, service to our people, service to different Senatorial Districts and Federal constituencies is paramount and there is nothing more than that.

"Thank God in less than three years, the Ninth National Assembly has done tremendously well in the area of important, critical and crucial legislations for national development.

"I have dedicated this award to previous presiding officers since Nigeria started as a democracy because whatever we have achieved in the Ninth National Assembly, there must have been some foundation set by others before we came on board.

"I therefore dedicate this award to the previous presiding officers of the Senate and presiding officers of the House of Representatives.

"Let me say that I have learnt a lot from one very outstanding presiding officer and his name is Senator David Mark who was Senate President for two terms - the sixth and the seventh Assemblies.

"And of course the 13th President of the Senate, my brother and my friend(Senator

Bukola Saraki) who was here(for this occasion) before he left. I worked with him as a Senate Leader. He made contributions too like previous President of the Senate did.

"Therefore I cannot take credit for the Ninth National Assembly but the Ninth National Assembly stands out in one way. He stands out in the way of conquering the most difficult legislations that defied passage and where they were passed, defied assent."

Lawan also applauded President Muhammadu Buhari for his cooperation with the current National Assembly to get things done.

"Let me also pay tribute to President Muhammadu Buhari because for us in the Ninth Assembly, if not because we have the buy-in of the President, to ensure that the Legislature works very cordially with the executive arm of government, all the legislations wouldn't have been assented to.

"And this President assented to more bills than all the previous Presidents since the fourth Republic started.

"Therefore we believe that the Legislature and the executive arm of government must always work together. They can disagree but not to cause friction to such an extent that citizens will not receive the services from government," Lawan said.

He thanked the founder of the Sun Newspapers who is the Chief Whip of the Senate.

"This Chief Whip does not spare anyone even the Senate President. He whips everybody. We want to thank you for being a very progressively minded person, very practical person, very reliable person.

"You have brought experience, you have supported this Ninth Senate to achieve stability, productivity and the kind of relationship that you will always like to see in the parliament.

"For Nigerians, I want to see the cup as half full. The cup is half full, not half empty. I don't want to see it as half empty.

"Yes, we are faced with numerous challenges but it is also true and it is an established fact that we have also achieved a lot in the last seven years. Those challenges, we can surmount them when we unite and fight against them," Lawan said.

Distinguished Senators in the company of the Senate President at the Saturday night event included: Senator Mohammed Sani Musa, Senator Barau Jibrin, Senator Solomon Olamilekan Adeola, Senator Bello Mandiya, Senator Yakubu Oseni, former Yobe State Senator Mohammed Hassan and his Chief of Staff, Dr. Babagana M. Aji.



Tinubu

Microsoft ADC W'Africa inspires Schoolgirls in ICT

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

International Girls in ICT Day was celebrated globally on April 28th, 2022. The team at Microsoft Africa Development Center (ADC), West Africa, celebrated the day at an intimate event with schoolgirls and female tech enthusiasts.

Themed "Access and Safety," the day was marked to reinforce the safety for girls and young women to thrive in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), and the need for safe and reliable access to the Internet and digital tools. This and every year, the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and partners work to develop solutions and ideas for lowering barriers to access and improving safety online for girls and young women.

The event was held at the newly launched Microsoft facility in Lagos with young girls from Girls Senior Secondary Grammar School Obalende, Ikoyi Lagos, female tech enthusiasts as well as 30 ladies under 30 with no prior tech knowledge all in attendance.

The audience was treated to inspiring

conversations, one-on-one sessions with mentors, a tour of the office facility, and an introduction to skilling pathways in technology.

On their part, the 30 ladies under 30 who attended the observance without an academic degree or career in tech left with renewed energy and willing to pursue careers in tech and software engineering.

Hosted by Sefunmi Wande-Durojaye, Lead Ecosystem and Program Development at Microsoft ADC-West Africa, the observance sparked conversations in ICT for girls during the day-long event, with a keynote address delivered by Bolanle Olumekor, Knowledge Management Assistant at United Nations Information Centre Nigeria.

Participants had the opportunity to hear inspiring and insightful speeches from the speakers during the sessions. Paula Wigwe, Business Manager at Microsoft ADC-West Africa, shared a relatable story of how she got into tech even though her first degree was in Estate Management. Her story had a lot to do with her curiosity, resilience and being focused.

Beyond the significance of internet

access and safety for young women, the day was leveraged as another channel to inspire young women interested in STEM to dream and believe in a future at Microsoft like many women, they had the opportunity to meet.

Jacquelyn Ekwueme, Senior Program Manager in the Governance, Risk, and Compliance (GRC), and Adora Nwodo, Software Engineer in Mixed Reality, shared their experiences on ways to become a voice and remain relevant within the tech industry.

Per opportunities in skill advancement, Microsoft ADC West Africa partnered with Utiva and Skillup Africa to help the females in skilling up toward their career journey in tech.

Other notable sessions during the day included a career session anchored by Tejumade Olaniyi, Recruiter at the Microsoft ADC West Africa and an experience at the Garage led by Lydia Karanja, Program Manager of the Garage, ADC East Africa.

The Garage session gave participants the opportunity to try their hands on a few projects, bringing home how very accessible and fun tech can be for young women.



Bolanle Olumekor

NCC rallies media stakeholders on telecoms industry reportage

By SHARON O. ISAALAH

Consistent with its strategic objective of stakeholder collaboration and partnering, Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) recently met a section of stakeholders in the mass media industry.

The forum was a workshop organised to keep Nigerian journalists who specialise in reporting on the telecom and ICT sector, abreast of emerging developments in the telecom industry, in order to ensure the general public receives contextual, interpretive and illuminating reporting on telecom matters.

The journalists, who attended the workshop under the aegis of the Nigeria Information Technology Reporters' Association (NITRA), Abuja Chapter, revelled in the opportunity provided by NCC to glean emerging trends and topical regulatory issues in the telecom industry.

The workshop was part of NCC's commitment to encouraging the continuous professional development of journalists because the commission sees good journal-

ism as central, both to the achievement of its mandate and to the flourishing of our nation's democratic project.

The training programme featured intense sessions focused on understanding the renewal the Commission has brought to bear on many major industry issues, including International Termination Rate (ITR) for voice services, benefits of the National Identity Number/Subscriber Identity Module linkage (NIN-SIM integration), the menace of illegal use of GSM boosters, updates on Fifth Generation (5G) deployment plan, spectrum administration, as well as compliance monitoring and enforcement, and other emergent regulatory matters.

Speaking at the workshop, which also featured special focus group discussions facilitated by subject-matter experts and senior officials from selected departments of the Commission, the Executive Vice Chairman (EVC) of NCC, Prof. Umar Danbatta, said approval for the training was granted by Management as it is in tandem with its media relations and stakeholder engagement strategy.

"Given the dynamic nature of the digital space and its impact on the economy, we believe this demands that our media partners are brought up to speed with the current requirements for maximum productivity and effective reporting of the telecom industry," Danbatta, who was represented by the Director, Public Affairs, Dr Ikechukwu Adinde, asserted to justify the relevance of the workshop.

The EVC said, through capacity-building initiatives such as the workshop organised for professionals in the media industry, "we would build mutually-beneficial relationships for sustained media support as we continue to discharge our mandate of regulating this dynamic sector for the benefit of Nigerians and the economy as a whole."

Accordingly, Danbatta said NITRA is a long-standing strategic partner of the Commission and the knowledge empowerment programme through this workshop seeks to provide a platform for equipping stakeholders in the media with the knowledge and skillsets they require for effective, efficient and professional reporting.

The EVC, who commended the media stakeholders for their support over the years, said, without the support from journalists and other communication professionals, NCC would not have been able to deliver on its mandate as effectively as it has done over the years. Accordingly, Danbatta enjoined all members of NITRA to continue to support NCC's programmes, activities, and initiatives with the same enthusiasm with which they have been prioritising timely, adequate and accurate reportage of the nation's telecom sector to enhance Nigeria's growth and development. Danbatta also stated that the National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy (NDEPS) 2020-2030, the Nigerian National Broadband Plan (NNBP) 2020-2025, the NCC Strategic Management Plan (SMP) 2020-2024, the

creation of a Digital Economy Department in the Commission, among others, underscored the policy directions of the Federal Government which the NCC is diligently driving by working with relevant industry stakeholders, including the media, to deepen commitment to a digital Nigeria.

"So, it is expected that by empowering the media as our key stakeholders, they would be willing to ensure that members of public are accurately and adequately informed and are aware of the Commission's regulatory strides toward building a robust digital economy for our country," the EVC said.

Speaking on behalf of members of NITRA after the training, the Chairman NITRA, Abuja Chapter, Blessing Olaifa, commended the Commission for providing a platform for sensitisation of media stakeholders on contemporary matters within the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) ecosystem, particularly the telecom industry and especially the initiatives of the Commission in protecting telecom's consumers.

Olaifa, who was represented by NITRA's Secretary-General, Emmanuel Elebeke, applauded the Commission for consistently supporting and partnering with the media organization. Olaifa stated that this demonstrates how transparent and accessible NCC has been to its stakeholders.

"We must commend NCC for its regulatory strides over the years. The success of the 5G auction in December last year easily comes to mind as one of the recent achievements of the Commission, among several others.

"So, these capacity-building programmes will help to provide a collaborative partnership for an advanced digital economy and towards boosting the fortunes of ICT for development in Nigeria. Today, we have been thoroughly enlightened as better specialists in ICT journalism," Olaifa said.



Prof. Umar Danbatta

UK govt tech regulators move to tackle major firms' dominance

By SHARON O. ISAALAH

Small businesses will be protected from predatory practices and consumers will get more choice and control over their online experiences as the government today sets out its final vision for how the new digital markets regulator will boost competition to drive economic growth and innovation.

The majority of UK companies now rely on powerful tech firms to ensure customers find their business online. These firms control key online gateways for millions of internet users and give preference to their own apps and browsers. They are also able to set their own prices for the online services they provide businesses without challenge, which can be passed on to consumers.

The impact of weakened competition is stark – the Competition and Markets Authority estimates that Google and Facebook made excess UK profits of £2.4 billion in 2018 alone

– harming consumers through higher prices.

In response to its consultation issued last year, the government today sets out its plans to give statutory powers for the Digital Markets Unit (DMU) to allow it to enforce pro-competition rules and rebalance the relationship tech giants have with consumers and businesses so they are better protected from unfair practices. The DMU is a new watchdog to make sure tech companies don't abuse their market power.

The proposals aim to make it easier for people to switch between Apple iOS and Android phones or between social media accounts without losing their data and messages. Smartphone users could get more choice of which search engines they have access to, more choice of social media platforms as new entrants enter the market, and more control over how their data is used by companies.

Tens of thousands of UK small and medium-size businesses will get a better deal from the big tech firms which they rely on to trade online. Tech firms could need to warn smaller

firms about changes to their algorithms which drive traffic and revenues.

The measures will also make sure news publishers are able to monetize their online news content and be paid fairly for it, with the DMU given the power to step in to solve pricing disputes between news outlets and platforms. App developers would be able to sell their apps on fairer and more transparent terms.

More competition across digital markets will create incentives for internet companies to deliver better quality services. Lower fees for advertisers and businesses will stop costs being passed on to consumers leading to lower prices for the goods they buy online.

The government will introduce legislation to put the Digital Markets Unit on a statutory footing in due course. Digital Minister Chris Philp said:

Technology has revolutionised the way thousands of UK firms do business - helping them reach new customers and putting

a range of instant online services at people's fingertips. But the dominance of a few tech giants is crowding out competition and stifling innovation.

We want to level the playing field and we are arming this new tech regulator with a range of powers to generate lower prices, better choice and more control for consumers while backing content creators, innovators and publishers, including in our vital news industry.

The DMU, launched in non-statutory form within the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) last year, will have the power to designate some of the world's most powerful firms with 'strategic market status'.

The regulator will enforce new tailored codes of conduct for how the handful of firms dominating digital markets should treat their users and other companies fairly, with tough sanctions for those which ignore the rules.

Under these binding conduct requirements, firms must ensure consumers have open choices about the digital services they use.

College hosts free online training on cybersecurity, IT for Africans

By SHARON O. ISAALAH

Champlain College, a non-profit college established in 1878 in Burlington, Vermont, USA is set to host free online career training on cybersecurity in collaboration with the Centre for Higher Education, Innovation and Development in Nigeria for Africans. Champlain College Online offers more than 60 nationally acclaimed and fully accredited undergraduate, graduate, and professional certificate programmes.

According to Johnna Herrick-Phelps, the vice-president of Champlain College online, "This session, scheduled to hold virtually on June 30, 2022 is designed to bring Champlain College online faculty and administration face-to-face with parents, young adults, and professionals in Nigeria and across Africa to share insights on educational opportunities ushered in by the fourth industrial revolution with a focus on how to develop globally relevant skills and advance career paths

through well-structured online education programmes."

"With the global economy being disrupted and redefined in more ways than one, we are happy to partner with Champlain College Online to host this information session and explore other learning opportunities thereto for the teeming youths and young professionals in Nigeria and across Africa. This collaboration and the value it brings align with some of our key objectives at the centre," Herrick-Phelps said.

"The forthcoming session is focused on three key disciplines – cybersecurity, blockchain, and data science. It will be very interactive, therefore individuals who may have questions are advised to get ready to have them answered during the session."

He explained that a strong faculty with in-depth knowledge and industry experience has been assembled including Sérgio Tenreiro de Magalhães, PhD, and Kathleen Hyde, MCIS, MBA, Co-Chairs, Cybersecurity Programmes,

Champlain College online, to share insights with participants.

There will also be representatives from Champlain's academic advising team to speak about the admissions process, and how students are supported throughout their academic journey. Iloh is expected to serve as the moderator for this session.

Nigerians in particular and Africans, in general, need every available opportunity to access quality education and skills development. With the flexibility that online education affords individuals, the expanding learning opportunities are there for the taking.

Champlain College will in addition to exposing participants to career advancement in cybersecurity, train them in information technology.

The college's online unit was established in 1993 to provide adult learners with 100percent remote online programmes in four main areas of study: business, cybersecurity, healthcare, and information technology.



Phelps

New omicron sub-variants behind S'Africa's Covid surge, scientists say

By SHARON O. ISAALAH

South Africa's Covid cases are beginning to soar again because of two new mutated sub-variants of omicron that could be dodging the body's immunity, according to scientists.

In the last two weeks, South Africa's daily new cases have gone up sixfold to almost 10,000 a day, with one in every four tests coming back positive. This means the country is now staring down the barrel of a fifth wave.



Tedros Ghebreyesus,

Scientists scrambling to find out what's causing the uptick in cases say it could be linked to two new offshoots of the original omicron variant (BA.1) which hit South Africa in December, called BA.4 and BA.5.

Both sub-variants have a mutation on the spike protein. This means the virus might be able to evade immunity acquired from past infections or a vaccine, according to Dr Nicole Wolter of South Africa's National Institute for Communicable Diseases.

On Wednesday, Tedros Ghebreyesus, head of the World Health Organisation, confirmed that the two sub-variants were behind the surge. But emphasised that it was "too soon to know whether these new sub-variants can cause more severe disease than other omicron sub-variants".

Widespread apathy Official statistics say that South Africa is by far the worst-hit country on the continent. There have been more than 300,000 excess deaths – the number of deaths above the yearly average – since the pandemic began, according to the South African Medical Research Council.

The potential fifth wave comes at a time when Africa's most industrialised nation has almost completely lost interest in Covid-19. While both the beta and delta variant waves

were utterly devastating for South Africa, the latest omicron wave in December was relatively mild.

The lack of severity in December has contributed to widespread apathy about the disease. Local reports say that vaccination rates are down to an all-time low, even though more than 50 per cent of South Africans have not been vaccinated.

Last week, just over 45,000 people got vaccinated in the country, compared to more than a million in late August 2021.

Estimates suggest that South Africa has an extraordinarily high level of natural immunity, with so-called seropositivity rates hovering at around 90 per cent. However, it's not all good news. The hard-won natural immunity will slowly be waning and one recent study indicates that this natural protection may not stop people from getting reinfected.

A team of scientists including Prof Alex Sigal, the scientist at the University of KwaZulu-Natal who originally found the Beta variant, shows that unvaccinated people who have previously had BA.1 (omicron) have little protection against infection with BA.4 or BA.5.

While the research has not been peer-reviewed yet, it did offer a strong dose of

hope. Prof Sigal's team found that those who had been vaccinated and previously had BA.1 were much better protected.

Scientists say the new sub-variants offer us clues as to how the pandemic will develop, not just into a myriad of different variants but into a vast sub-variant family tree.

"What we are seeing now, or at least maybe the first signs, is not completely new variants emerging, but current variants are starting to create lineages of themselves," Dr Tulio de Oliveira, director of South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal Research and Innovation Sequencing Platform, told the New York Times earlier this week.

What happens in South Africa, which has an average age of 28, does not translate easily to China with its average age of 38 and a wholly different social structure.

However, some scientists say that the fact that BA.2 – another omicron sub-variant which is genetically similar to BA.4 and BA.5 – has already spread around Europe might blunt the new mutation's effectiveness in countries like the UK, France and Italy.

Moreover, the fact that summer is coming up in the northern hemisphere might help limit infections because more social interactions will be held outside.



Despite constant outages, electricity bills continue to soar

In the 1950s to the late 1990s, Nigeria's electricity supply was not that stable, but the bills were much lower. Those were the days of the Electricity Corporation of Nigeria (ECN), National Electricity Power Authority (NEPA) and later, the Power Holders Company of Nigeria (PHCN). However, since the privatisation of the power sector was completed in the early 2000s, power supply has been erratic, but the bills continue to rise on regular basis. To compound matters, the power generating and distribution companies that acquired them are not behaving running them better than public utility concerns, due to their priority for high targets and profits, while Nigerian are left in perpetual darkness. JOHNMARK UKOKO writes that the power Distribution Companies (DisCos) have not been fair to electricity consumers.

About a decade and half ago when former President Goodluck Jonathan announced the handing over of power distribution to the Benin City Electricity Distribution Company (BEDC), Eko Electricity Distribution Company (EEDC), Ikeja Electricity Distribution Company (IEDC), Ibadan Electricity Distribution Company (IEDC), Kano Electricity Distribution Company (KEDC), Abuja Electricity Distribution Company (AEDC), Enugu Electricity Distribution Company (EEDC), Port Harcourt Electricity Distribution Company (PHEDC), Yola Electricity Distribution Company (YEDC) and Calabar Electricity Distribution Company (CEDC), the electricity distribution firms have made life unbearable for power consumers, as they keep sending crazy estimated bills on monthly basis without commensurate electricity supply.

As the PHCN handed over to the DisCos in 2010, Nigerians celebrated what they believed was the liberalisation of the power sector hoping that the distribution companies would deliver on their mandate for steady electricity supply, little did Nigerians realise that they were falling from fire pan to fire, as while power supply has remained as it was in the days of PHCN, the bills have risen by over 1,000 per cent.

For instance, before the privatisation programme, a two or three bedroom flat were not paying up to N1,000 monthly, such category of residents are paying between N10,000 to N 25,000 monthly depending on which of the DisCos that supply them electricity.

While poor Nigerians that live in one room 'face me I face you' or those that leave in self-contained apartment that were paying not more than N500 monthly pre privatisation are now paying between N5,000 and N10,000 depending on which part of the country they reside.

The DisCos re notorious for billing Nigerians highest on a monthly basis without commensurate electricity supply are Eko Electricity Distribution Company, Ikeja Electricity Distribution Company and Abuja Electricity Distribution Company.

As if the monthly crazy bills were not enough, electricity consumers are forced to buy electricity poles and cables to supply electricity to their homes. They are also made to buy or replace damaged or malfunctioning transformers in their communities.

The DisCos have also refused

to give their customers meters to enable them to monitor their electricity consumption, despite various warnings from the Federal Government and the National Electricity Regulation Commission (NERC).

The complaints of electricity consumers over indiscriminate bills against the DisCos led the President Muhammadu Buhari's administration to purchase pre-paid meters to be distributed freely to electricity consumers.

But despite the gesture to provide prepaid meters to Nigerians instead of the DisCos, the companies still demanded N63,000 for single and N105,000 for three phased meters. The means that the DisCos are now selling prepaid meters purchased by government and keeping the funds in their vaults.

Nigerians who have been exploited by the DisCos have to pay for the prepaid meters to end the monthly huge bills they usually charge consumers on monthly basis.

When the communities or Community Development Association (CDAs) are forced to contribute money to buy transformers, the DisCos usually force the CDAs to sign an undertaking that they have donated transformers to the DisCos in charge of their areas.

To make matters worse, electricity consumers that are forced to buy cables to connect light from electricity poles in their street, once they failed to pay their monthly electricity bills, employees of the DisCos will disconnect them from the poles on their streets and take the cables of the defaulting customers away and curiously, such consumers may never see their cables again.

Another funny aspect of the estimated billing system is the fact that every house in the areas using transformer are billed the same amounts without the DisCos considering that houses in the same street or CDAs are not the same.

So also, the fact that everyone in the same street or CDA can't consumed equal electricity.

The DisCos on a monthly basis will simply send their staffs out to go on light disconnection of consumers, who failed to settle the huge bills they are given on a monthly basis.

Consumers whose light is disconnected from the electricity poles are charged what the DisCos called Re - connection Fees, which goes to the employees of the companies that go about carrying ladders.

If the transformer fuss is burnt



Former President Goodluck Jonathan

or the transformer develops a fault, those using such transformer are made to pay for the fuss, cables or its repair or spend several days in darkness, but will still be billed monthly notwithstanding the several days of outage.

Instances abound of residents, who spend several months in darkness, because their transformer developed fault, who still received bills for the many months of outages.

While employees of the defunct ECN, NEPA and PHCN were not given monthly revenue targets, the employees of the distribution companies were given monthly targets that must be attained. The employees are poorly paid, restricted from joining trade union or entitled to anything meaningful on their exit from the companies.

On a regular basis, the Federal Government kept n telling Nigerians to stop buying or replacing transformers and other items for the DisCos in their domains.

Reacting to the development, Executive Secretary of the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC), Dr. Babatunde Irukeya, asked Nigerians to stop buying equipment for the DisCos, stressing: "It is not the responsibility of the customers or communities to buy, replace or repair transformers."

He stated this on the official Twitter handle @fccpcnigeria recently and cautioned the DisCos against pushing their responsibilities to the consumers, which he said, was against consumer rights.

The commission also stressed that it was not the responsibility of consumers to purchase poles or other associated equipment used in the distribution of electricity

in line with the National Electricity Regulation Commission's Investment in Electricity Network Regulation 2015.

"It is not the responsibility of the customer or the community to purchase, replaced or repair transformers, poles or other associated equipment used in distribution of electricity," he said.

Citing the NERC's regulation, he said faulty transformers were supposed to be replaced by the DisCos within 48 hours of official complaint, stressing that the DisCos should be responsible for such replacements or repairs at all times.

However, if the DisCos are unable to replace the faulty transformer immediately, residents might engage the company and agree on the terms of replacement of the affected transformer if they so wish.

"Consumers that intend to go into such discussions with DisCos are strongly advised to read the commission's guidelines for such agreements. This is nearing in mind that any equipment purchased and integrated into the electricity system or grid automatically become the property of the electricity DisCos," the statement reads.

While the various firms are running rough shod on electricity consumers, the Federal Government kept deploying funds to the power sector, yet Nigerians keep groaning under the poor power supply.

Respondents berate the federal government for its inability to withdraw the licences of the DisCos that have shown that they lacked the wherewithal to provide stable power to Nigerians.

They say since about 13 years of the power privatisation, government has continued to pumped money to private companies, who have shown that their promoters lack the know-how to provide stable power to Nigerians.

They say the DisCos promoters just bid for the license to enable their promoters to milk helpless Nigerians.

They cited example of Benin City Electricity Distribution Company (BEDC) that has performed so poorly that apart from the residents of the Edo, Delta, Ekiti and Ondo states that it covers who have cry over the years over the company poor service, the Oba of Benin, the state governors of those states have appealed to the Federal Government to withdraw the company's license without success.

Respondents blamed officials of the Bureau for Public Enterprises (BPE) and the National Council for Privatisation for corruption in handling over government's property to businessmen who lack the expertise to run power distribution.

Consumers also blamed the Jonathan administration for handing over Federal Government's assets and property to businessmen who were not ready to deliver stable power supply to the country.

A lecturer at Novena University, Ogume, Ndokwa West Council of Delta State, Dr. Andy Iwowo, alleged that the problems electricity consumers were grappling with arose due the Jonathan administration's hand over of the power sector to politicians and businessmen, who were loyal to his administration.

He also alleged that President Muhammadu Buhari hands were tied by the terms and conditions the Jonathan administration gave promoters of the DisCos, hence the current government has been unable to withdraw the licences of the various DisCos.

Iwowo advised electricity consumers to save money to enable them to pay for prepaid metes, as they should ignore the government's directives to them not to pay for prepaid meters.

He said the successive ministers of power under the Buhari administration in the past seven years have realised that their hands were tied, hence they have been unable to restrain the DisCos.

The fact that president Buhari is unavailable to call the various DisCos to order showed that the agreement President Jonathan led administration had with them is serious.

"Despite his purported toughness, Babatunde Fashola, could not handle them during the four years in which he served as minister of power. The two ministers of power in the last three years appear helpless in handling the powerful distribution companies," he stressed.

Electricity consumers should take the bull by the horn by ensuring that issue of power supply and how much they will continue to pay for the constant outages is one of the agenda in the 2023 general elections.

Nigerian electricity consumers continue ask whether they will continue to pay for non-existence power supply, but the years ahead will determine if there will ever be a solution to the plight of electricity consumers in the country.

GTCO, MTN, others lead in CVA 2022 online voting

By JONHMARK UKOKO

After 30 days of voting on the consumers' value awards portal, GTCO emerged leader in the banking sector award for value for money bank services with 40 per cent, while MTN and Milo lead the tech and beverage categories with 63 per cent and 64 per cent. With two months left to conclude the votes, consumers are responding to the call to celebrate brands based on values enjoyed by voting on the platform.

Besides the three categories, over 20 other categories are listed for consumers to vote for or against brand action in the market place based on their service experiences and brand encounter.

In carbonated drinks category, Coca Cola leads with 56 per cent, while in Cereal Kellogs leads with 86 per

cent and Checkers Custard leads with 66 per cent in the custard category.

Sunlight leads the detergent category, Orijin leads in the alcoholic beverages category, while Lucozade leads in the energy drinks category.

Speaking on the voting result, Managing Director of Consumers Value Broadcasting Limited, Akonte Ekine, commended consumers for supporting the initiative with their votes.

He said a total of 32 brand categories are up for voting in the first edition of the Consumers Value Awards, adding that it is an opportunity for brands to get recognised as brands of value for consumers' money.

The award was initiated for consumers to name brands that are making great contributions

in the market place based on the quality of service and expected value of the products.

Other brands leading in their categories are Power Oil with 59 per cent, Chivita 38 per cent, Dano Milk 52 per cent, Dangote Sugar 51 per cent, Colgate 38 per cent, Toyota 59 per cent, Air Peace 40 per cent, Dangote Cement 63 per cent, Interswitch 38 per cent, Mobil Super 59 per cent, Mastercard 90 per cent, Shoprite 66 per cent, Samsung 49 per cent and MTN 50 per cent.

Also, Amstel Malt polled 50 per cent, Reload Multivitamin 90 per cent, Lush Hair 63 per cent, Dettol 75 per cent, Golden Penny Spaghetti 60 per cent, Knorr 100 per cent, Dulux Paint 80 per cent, MR Chef 60 per cent and Easyon 66 per cent.

Voting ends on June 30, 2022.



Akonte Ekine,

OPEC to raise monthly production by 0.432mb/d for June

By JONHMARK UKOKO

The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has affirmed its decisions for upward adjustment of the monthly overall production by 0.435 million barrels per day (mb/d) for June 2022.

This followed the conclusion of the 28th OPEC and non-OPEC ministerial meeting held through video conference at the weekend,

after which the organisation reconfirmed the production plan and monthly production adjustment mechanism approved at the 19th OPEC and non-OPEC ministerial meeting.

It restated the importance of adhering to full compensation and taking advantage of the extension of the compensation period till the end of June 2022.

OPEC explained that compensation plans should be submitted

in accordance with the statement of the 15th OPEC ministerial meeting, adding that it would continue oil market fundamentals and consensus on the outlook for a balanced market.

It further noted the continuing effects of geopolitical factors and issues relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, adding that its 29th OPEC and non-OPEC ministerial meeting will hold on June 22, 2022.

BUA Foods records N22.85 billion net profit

By JONHMARK UKOKO

Nigeria's leading food and fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) business, BUA Foods Plc has announced that it recorded N22.858 billion net profit after tax for the first quarter (Q) of 2022.

The product lines of BUA, which processes, manufactures and distributes sugar, flour, pasta, rice and edible oils, currently include fortified and

non-fortified sugar, flour for large, small-scale use and pasta.

It is also expected to commence the processing, manufacturing, production and distribution of rice by the end of 2022 and edible oils by 2024.

To confirm its place BUA Foods Plc has released its statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive incomes for the three months ended March 31, 2022 with 18.6 per cent raise in its group net profit after tax

(PAT) of N22.844 billion from N19.26 billion in Q1, 2022.

The group's turnover for the quarter rose to N90.06 billion from N70.203 billion in Q1, 2022, while earnings per share increased from N1.07kobo in the corresponding period in 2021 to N1.27kobo in the current year, as total assets also increased accordingly.

The company currently owns mills, plants, refineries and plantations across different regions of the country namely: oil mills, rice mills, Bassa sugar plantation, Lafiagi Sugar Plantation and sugar refinery, among others.



Abdulsamad Rabiu

Access Bank partners FG on loans for farmers, SMEs

By JONHMARK UKOKO

Access Bank Plc has partnered the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs Disaster Management and Social Development to facilitate a loan scheme for poor farmers aged 18 to 55 years and other vulnerable groups.

The bank's Group Head, Emerging Businesses, Ayodele Olojede, disclosed this in a statement issued in Lagos, saying the initiative tagged: *Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP 20)* will be implemented in the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja.

The GEEP 20 is a loan scheme designed by the Federal Government to provide financial inclusion and allow poor and vulnerable individuals including persons with disability to access credit facilities.

The government initiated the scheme for persons at the

bottom of the economic pyramid who are engaged in small scale commercial activities under what the Federal had categorised as *Farmermoni, Marketmoni and Tradermoni*.

Olojede explained that farmers aged between 18 and 55 years in rural areas operating in the agricultural space will be provided with loans of up to N300,000 for agricultural production and value addition activities.

The scheme has 12 months moratorium and nine months repayment period.

"*Tradermoni* targets lifting of underprivileged and marginalised youths aged between 18 and 40 years in Nigeria by providing them N50,000 loans, while *Marketmoni* targets underprivileged and marginalised women between the ages of 18 and 55 years including widows and divorcees. The N50,000 non-interest loan is payable between six and nine months," he said.

NERC denies approval of electricity tariff hike

Chairman of the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC), Sanusi Garba, has said the commission has not approved new tariff rate review in recent times.

Garba told newsmen in Abuja at the weekend that the last tariff review was approved in December 31, 2021 and became effective in February 2022.

"On behalf of the manage-

ment of NERC, I want to clearly state that we have not approved any rate review and no indication that any Electricity Distribution Company (DisCos) will increase tariffs under the current reality.

"If you notice that your tariff changed in the last one to three weeks, we want evidence. The information posted on the NERC's

website indicates that the last time tariff rate review was in December 2021.

"It is our duty to approve applications for tariffs for DisCos and we have not received any. We have said that we have an obligation by law to do minor reviews every six months to take care of inflation, foreign exchange (Forex) challenges and other related issues," he stated.

NDLEA arrests pregnant women, barber for alleged drug trafficking

● *Intercepts large consignments of drugs in Kaduna, Yobe, others*

By PAUL MICHAEL, DEFENCE EDITOR, ABUJA

Operatives of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) have arrested two pregnant women and others for allegedly attempting to import and export illicit drugs through Murtala Muhammed International Airport (MMIA), Ikeja, Lagos.

The Director of Media and Advocacy, Femi Babafemi disclosed this in a statement on Sunday, stressing that the suspects were arrested last week.

"Wednesday 4th May, NDLEA operatives at the SAHCO export shed of the airport intercepted some cartons of alcoholic drinks suspected to contain illicit drugs. A freight agent who brought the consignment for export to Dubai, UAE, Shola Ogunrinde was immediately arrested while a follow up operation led to the arrest of a pregnant woman, Mrs Seun Babatunde, who operates an alcohol joint in Pleasure area of Iyana Ipaja.

"When the cartons were opened in the presence of the agent and the pregnant owner, seven parcels of cannabis and a sachet of ecstasy drug (MDMA) were found concealed inside Cans of black bullet alcoholic drinks. In her confession, Mrs Babatunde claimed the drugs were being sent to her husband who lives in Dubai.

"The second pregnant woman, Mrs Gloria Asibor was arrested on Thursday 5th May while attempting to board a Turkish Airline flight to

Bolonia, Spain via Istanbul, Turkey. A search of her luggage containing food items led to the discovery of 300 tablets of 200mg and 225mg high dosage Tramadol concealed in crayfish," Babafemi stated.

He said earlier a Brazilian returnee, Nworie Phillip Chikwendu, who claimed to be barber in Sao Paulo, was also arrested by the Agency when two parcels of cocaine were found in a pair of black slippers hidden in his backpack during an inward clearance of passengers on Qatar Airways flight from Sao Paulo, Brazil enroute Doha to Lagos.

"The first to enter the Agency's dragnet is a Brazilian returnee, Nworie Phillip Chikwendu who was arrested on Tuesday May 3rd during an inward clearance of passengers on Qatar Airways flight from Sao Paulo, Brazil enroute Doha to Lagos.

"During a thorough search of his luggage, two parcels of cocaine were discovered concealed in a pair of brown slippers hidden in his ox blood backpack. A further search of the pair of black slippers worn by the suspect also led to the recovery of additional two parcels of cocaine built into the soles of his foot wears, bringing the total to four parcels weighing 800grams.

"When undergoing preliminary interview, Nworie who claimed to be a barber in Sao Paulo, said he came to Nigeria for the burial of his father. He confessed he decided to get into



Babafemi

the criminal act because his trip was sponsored by his Brazil-based friend who gave him the drug to deliver in Lagos for a fee of N2,000,000," Babafemi said.

Meanwhile, large consignments of psychoactive substances have been intercepted in parts of Northwest, Northeast and North central.

According to Babafemi a drug dealer, Obinna Anene a.k.a Young Alhaji was arrested on Friday 6th May at Buwaya Kaduna with 50,000

tablets of Diazepam weighing 9kg, 595 tablets of Tramadol weighing 318grams and 8 tablets of Co-codamol weighing 6grams.

He added that a trafficker, Alhaji Modu Yahaya was caught same day with 26.5kg cannabis in Damaturu, Yobe state while travelling in a commercial vehicle from Abuja to Maiduguri, the Borno state capital.

Babafemi added, "At least, nine drug dealers were arrested by operatives in Lagos on Thursday

5th May during raids in black spots in Mushin Olosha and Akala as well as Langbasa and Ikota in Ajah area of the state with different quantities of Cocaine, Heroin, Methamphetamine, Cannabis, and Skuchies.

"Those arrested include: Kehinde Ilori; Osho Demola Nurudeen; Kamarudeen Isiaka; Kazeem Ishola; Afeez Adebolade; Oguntana Aduragbemi; Chuks Alowai; Mrs. Bola Kazeem and Kehinde Ogunleye.

"In Plateau, NDLEA operatives on Saturday 7th May intercepted a truck carrying 673.3kg cannabis along Bassa/Rukuba Barracks road in Jos while the driver and his assistant fled into the bush. In other parts of the state capital, two dealers; Manga Emmanuel and Yusuf Usman were arrested with 34 pinches of cocaine and 400grams of cannabis at old airport and Rikkos respectively."

While commending officers and men of the MMIA, Kaduna, Yobe, Lagos and Plateau Commands of the Agency for the arrests and seizures, Chairman/Chief Executive of NDLEA, Brig Gen Mohamed Buba Marwa (Rtd) charged them and those in other commands across the country to sustain the heat on drug cartels as well as balance their drug supply reduction and drug demand reduction efforts.

Police arrest officer involved in cultism on viral video

● *IGP condemns act, orders disciplinary actions*

By PAUL MICHAEL

Nigeria Police Force (NPF) has identified and arrested an officer involved in secret cult activities in a video that has gone viral in the social media.

The Officer, Corporal Matthew Isaac, who is attached to the Ebonyi State Police Command, was caught in the said viral video singing, dancing, and brandishing a rifle in praise of a particular confraternity.

A statement by the Force Public Relations Officer, CSP Olumuyiwa Adejobi, on Saturday confirmed the

arrest while adding that the Inspector General of Police, IGP Usman Alkali Baba condemned the unruly conduct of the police officer and ordered disciplinary actions.

The statement further said that the act of the officer, which was meant to portray the NPF in a bad light, contravenes First Schedule to Regulation 370 of the Police Regulations and NPF Social Media Policy (SMP).

"The act of the officer in question, which is clearly calculated to portray the NPF negatively, is a discreditable conduct in line with the provisions of the First Schedule to Regulation 370 of the Police Regulations.

"His actions equally violated the provisions of the NPF Social Media Policy (SMP), penal laws, and other extant laws regulating the conduct and discipline of all Police officers.

"The Inspector-General of Police, IGP Usman Alkali Baba, psc(+), NPM, fdc, has directed the Commissioner of Police in charge of Ebonyi State to detail the Command's OC Provost to hand over the erring officer to the Force Provost Marshall for necessary disciplinary actions.

"The IGP further warned officers to ensure total compliance with the laws guiding the Force as any breach would be severely sanctioned," the statement said.



IGP, Usman Alkali Baba

Chief of Army tasks commanders on professional conduct

By PAUL MICHAEL

Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lieutenant-General Faruk Yahaya, has charged operational level commanders who are participants of Army War College Nigeria (AWCN) Course 6/2022 to be professional in discharging their constitutional roles.

A statement by Director of Public Relations, Brig Gen Onyema Nwachukwu, said that Gen Yahaya gave the charge on Friday while delivering a lecture titled "My vision for the Nigerian Army" at AWCN, Asokoro, Abuja.

The statement said, "In an interac-

tive session with the participants, Gen Yahaya stated that the platform provided an opportunity for him to share his thoughts on contemporary issues as well as listen to their views and lessons learnt during their course at the apex Army College.

"He pointed out, that the lecture and interactive session will enhance the requisite knowledge required for operational level commanders of the Nigerian Army to effectively discharge assigned tasks.

"The COAS added that the NA under his watch, will continue to build personnel capacity by placing premium on the training of officers

and soldiers.

"The Army Chief revealed that timely rotation of troops amongst other welfare packages in various theatres of operations, are being implemented to boost troops morale.

"He expressed appreciation to the Ministry of Defence (MOD) for overhauling some NA equipment, adding, that more platforms will soon be injected into various theatres of operations. He expressed optimism, that these efforts will no doubt inject more vigour into the ongoing campaign against insurgency and other security challenges confronting the nation.

NSCDC nabs suspects over oil smuggling

● *Receives 17 suspects, 6 wooden boats from Navy*

By PAUL MICHAEL

Rivers State Command of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) has arrested two suspects for alleged illegal dealing in petroleum products and diversion of them to neighbouring countries.

This was confirmed on Saturday by the Commandant General of the Command, Commandant Abu Abdu Tambuwal, in a statement by the State's Public Relations Officer, Deputy Superintendent Olufemi Ayodele.

Tambuwal decried the defiant behaviour of individuals dealing illegally in petroleum products and sabotaging the nation's economy, noting that such acts contravene the Miscellaneous Offences Act, 2004 Laws of the Federation, the

Anti Sabotage Act, the Petroleum Act and its regulation.

According to him, the suspects, Nwachi Emmanuel (M) 49 years of No 100 Umunna road Afikpo North, Ebonyi State and Chukwudi Obi (M) 52years of No 7 Okwuonu street Aba, Abia State, were arrested following credible intelligence.

"Following a credible and sustained Intelligence which revealed that some Oil dealers were diverting petroleum products via States sharing borders with Rivers State and thereafter channel the products to neighbouring countries; the Antivandal border patrol team swung into action and impounded a Blue and white colour 50,000 litres capacity Truck with registration number Abia EZA 850 YF in conveyance of Premium

Motor Spirit (PMS) popularly called Petrol," Tambuwal said.

According to the statement, the suspects revealed during interrogation that the truck in question took off from Conoil Depot at Ibeto road in Port Harcourt where the product was claimed to have been loaded.

"They further maneuvered to the border between Rivers and Imo State where they were arrested. Preliminary investigation report showed that the product's waybill stated that the product should be delivered at Omo Wealth in Ikwerre Local Government, Port Harcourt. The suspects further claimed that there was a mistake while writing the waybill and that they decided to take the product to Imo State," the statement added.



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3 x 2	37,413.09	40,219.07	2 x 2	22,588.91	24,283.09	3 x 2	27,524.84	29,589.20	3 x 2	22,721.91	24,426.05
4 x 2	49,884.02	53,625.42	3 x 2	33,987.48	36,622.04	4 x 2	36,700.09	39,452.60	4 x 2	30,295.53	32,657.70
5 x 2	62,355.15	67,031.71	4 x 2	45,177.83	48,566.17	5 x 2	45,866.19	49,315.34	5 x 2	37,863.00	40,710.09
6 x 2	76,142.50	81,853.18	5 x 2	56,472.29	60,707.71	6 x 2	55,049.68	59,178.41	6 x 2	45,443.82	48,852.10
7 x 2	87,297.21	93,844.50	6 x 2	67,975.12	73,073.25	6 x 3	54,074.55	61,200.90	7 x 2	53,017.79	56,993.61
7 x 3	166,172.00	179,229.37	6 x 3	101,962.78	109,609.99	6.5 x 3	89,455.78	96,164.94	8 x 2	60,591.76	65,136.14
7 x 4	197,125.00	211,909.37	6.5 x 3	110,459.64	118,744.11	7 x 2	64,224.63	69,041.48	9 x 2	80,454.83	86,488.95
8 x 2	99,768.24	107,250.85	7 x 2	79,304.29	85,252.11	7 x 3	96,336.94	103,562.21	10 x 2	86,147.92	92,609.02
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9 x 4	224,478.54	241,314.43	8 x 4	181,266.93	194,841.95	8 x 5	208,805.79	224,469.23	6 x 4	100,634.10	110,944.41
10 x 4	299,302.72	321,752.57	8 x 5	226,238.74	254,477.52	8 x 6	250,284.32	26,911.09	7 x 4	120,404.56	129,434.90
14.5 x 4	520,790.19	559,849.45	8 x 6	271,900.48	292,008.02	9 x 2	93,773.60	100,872.44	8 x 4	137,692.17	148,019.082
7 x 5	218,243.02	234,629.74	9 x 2	101,962.78	109,609.99	9 x 3	141,108.54	151,691.68	10 x 4	172,301.37	185,224.22
8 x 5	299,304.72	321,752.57	9 x 3	152,944.01	164,414.81	9 x 4	187,921.52	202,015.71	14.5 x 3	187,057.43	201,086.73
8 x 6	359,165.65	386,103.08	9 x 4	203,925.29	219,219.69	9 x 5	281,288.07	303,022.10	14.5 x 4	249,838.03	268,575.88
9 x 5	404,061.37	434,365.97	9 x 5	305,373.04	328,276.02	9 x 6	337,805.68	363,141.11	7 x 5	141,001.98	161,793.93
10 x 5	448,957.08	482,628.86	9 x 6	367,065.92	394,595.86	10 x 3	156,602.81	168,348.02	8 x 5	172,116.65	185,025.40
11 x 5	493,852.78	530,891.74	10 x 3	169,651.36	182,375.21	10 x 4	208,808.58	224,469.23	9 x 6	278,649.91	299,548.66
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11 x 6	592,622.16	637,068.82	10 x 6	424,845.04	456,708.42	11 x 5	358,396.62	385,276.37	HP7.25 X 6	218,226.87	234,593.89
HP 7.25 x 6	317,178.40	340,337.5	11 x 5	389,441.887	418,650.01	11 x 6	412,916.45	443,885.19	FP14.5 X 6	379,943.00	408,438.72
FP 14.5 x 6	560,500.00	602,537.50	11 x 6	447,303.49	480,851.24	14.5 x 2	151,178.45	162,516.84			
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Russia's Bivol retains WBA light-heavyweight title

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

Russia's Dmitry Bivol defeated Mexican Canelo Alvarez to retain the WBA light-heavyweight title in Las Vegas on Saturday, 7 May, 2022.

The duo fought through the entire 12 rounds without a knockout and this resulted in the Russian being declared the winner by a unanimous decision.

Coincidentally, the judges equally scored the bout 115-113 with the Russian who achieved his 20th win in 20 fights, retaining the title.

Bivol proved too difficult for the Mexican who is acknowledged as the world's foremost pound-for-pound fighter.

However, in the course of the duel, Canelo tried finding a weak spot to get at the Russian who exhibited



discipline to block his head and constantly threw jabs to keep his challenger in check.

The champion, who was evidently amazed to have gotten the better of the judges' scores to retain the WBA title, stressed that though he has proved himself as the best in his ranks, his challenger is a

great champion.

"I'm glad I proved myself today, I'm the best in my division and I keep this belt," he said after retaining the belt.

"He's a great champion, I respect him and all his team.

"If you don't believe in yourself what do you do? You achieve nothing. I believe and my team

believed in me.

Canales' loss to Bivol is his second in his career which happened 9 years after he lost to Floyd Mayweather.

Tentatively, the Mexican has not given up just yet as he has insisted on a rematch which Bivol is not against but needs time to revel in his title.

Costa Rica 2022: Falconets will be world's best, Musa assures Nigerians

Falconets Head Coach Christopher Musa has assured Nigerians the team will make them proud with a successful outing in the World Cup by putting in their best.

Musa, in a statement to the FIFA media, after the world cup draws, reiterated to Nigerians to expect nothing but the best from the U20 female team in Costa Rica 2022 world cup event.

"We're coming to the World Cup to do our best, but also to do our country proud and be the best in the world," Christopher Musa assured.

Meanwhile, France, Canada, and the Korean republic are optimistic about edging their opponents in the game including Nigeria.

The teams which fall in the same Group C as Nigeria have their coaches foretelling a favourable outcome in the tournament.

According to France's coach, Sonia Haziraj, who agreed that the tourney will

be a tough one among the 16 competing teams, however, vowed that France is prepared to weather the storm to dislodge any team that comes along their way to victory.

"It's a tough group but, then again, they all are. You've got 16 top teams and we know that if we want to go all the way in the competition, we need to beat the best. We're prepared for that, though. We need to make sure the players are all pulling in the same direction and that they're ready to go the distance at this World Cup," Haziraj boasted.

Following this, Cindy Tye, head coach of Canada revealed that the Canadian ladies are anxious to meet with their opponents on the competitive ground to take on them squarely.

She said, "The girls can't wait to face their opponents. We'll be coming up against different styles of play, which will be a real challenge for us. We can't wait to take it on, though."

Tunisia's Ons Jabeur creates history, wins WTA 1000 event

■ Teenager defeats Nadal, Djokovic to reach final



Tunisia's Ons Jabeur has created history by becoming the first African in the Madrid Open to win the WTA 1000 event.

The highest-ranking African tennis player though trailed her opponent in the early hour of the game recovered to win 7-5 0-6 6-2

against American Jessica Pegula.

Jabeur, with this win, which is her biggest in history, becomes her second major career achievement following her first in Birmingham last year.

The win by 27 years old Jabeur, will see the world

number 10 rise in the WTA world ranking to number 7 next week when the new ranking will be released.

Meanwhile, a promising tennis teenager, Spain's Carlos Alcaraz has shocked the world by dismantling an assemblage of tennis oracles to reach the finals of the Madrid Open.

Alcaraz in successive wins, saw off world number 4 Rafael Nadal and world number 1 Novak Djokovic in the quarterfinal and semifinal respectively, to send a strong signal to defending champion German Alexander Zverev ahead of Sunday's final.

The 21 years old Spaniard, becomes the first tennis player in history to defeat a 21 Grand

Slam holder and 20 Grand Slam winner in succession on clay court.

However, Tunisia's Ons Jabeur is the only Arab player that has broken into the WTA top 10 ranking in history.

The youngest-ever finalist in the Madrid Open, Alcaraz, stressed that the wins against the tennis demigods reposed his confidence ahead of the final.

He said, "This gives me a lot of confidence to play the final.

"I know that I played a really good game, and for the rest of the season I think I can play against the best players in the world and beat them as well, so it gives me a lot of confidence," Alcaraz bragged.



Etebo, Troost-Ekong, Sam Kalu, Dennis relegated with Watford

Oghenekaro Etebo, William Troost-Ekong, Samuel Kalu, and Emmanuel Dennis have been relegated to play in the English Championship after relegation struggling-side Watford was defeated by Crystal Palace at Selhurst Park Stadium.

Watford occupy the 18th position on the Premier League table with 22 points from 35 games and trail a 35-point Everton in 18th position with two games left to play.

Doing a summation on the three outstanding games left even when Watford decide to win all, the total 9 points cannot leapfrog them ahead of Everton or Leeds United on 17th position with 34 points.

Watford gained promotion to the Premier League this season from the Championship after

being relegated from England's foremost football tournament in the 2019-2020 season. Before being relegated, the Hornets spent five consecutive seasons in the Premier League when they gained promotion in 2015-2016.

However, having finished 19 on the league table in 2019-2020, spent only one season in the Championship, finishing second on the league table to gain automatic promotion to the top tier league in the 2021-2022 season.

Watford and Norwich will have to fight their way back to the Premier League next season as they have usually done.

Watford, relegated four times from the Premier League after gaining promotions in different seasons, first got a shot at the English Premier League in the 1999-2000 season.

Enugu Rangers, Abia Warriors record home wins

Enugu Rangers and Abia Warriors have recorded home wins on Matchday 27 to move up the Nigeria Professionals League (NPFL) table.

Rangers dismantled fellow Eastern brothers Heartland at the Nnamdi Azikiwe Stadium, Awka, on Saturday with a resurgence from a goal down to win the match 3-1 at full time.

Heartland opened the goal chart in 13 minutes through Philip Clement but an equaliser from Chidiebere Nwobodo in the 22nd minute for the Flying Antelopes and

a 40th-minute strike from Shedrack Asiegbu posed by a defensive blunder from the visitors ensured the home team led the game at halftime.

A few minutes to stoppage time, Eso Archibong rounded up the victory for Enugu Rangers which leapfrogged Remo Stars that were defeated by Abia Warriors in the third place on the NPFL table.

Meanwhile, Abia Warriors at the Enyimba Stadium, Aba, hammered a rigid Remo Stars to shape with a 2-0 win

to revel briefly on the 12th position on the NPFL table on Saturday before Sunday fixtures were played.

The visitors were determined to frustrate the effort of coach Imama Amapakabo's boys by cutting out their attacks by keeping the attackers in the check. This paid off in the first lapse as the first half ended in a barren draw.

Abia Warriors, in a shocking surprise after a brief break, broke the deadlock 16 minutes after the second-half's kick-off through Yakub

Hammed.

The home team finally sealed the victory 10 minutes to the additional time when Valentine Odoh headed a cross from Paul Samson past goalkeeper Kayode Bankole to make it 2-0.

Enugu Rangers after the win, parade 45 points from 27 matches and travel to take on Remo Stars next week's Sunday in a cracker while Abia Warriors will be entertained by Dakkada at the Nest of Champion Stadium in Akwa-Ibom on the same day.

Flying Eagles faces Black Satellites as WAFU B tournament begins in Niamey



For Nigeria, the race to next year's Africa U20 Cup of Nations begins on Sunday when the seven-time African champions take on against arch-rivals Ghana in a potentially -intense opener to Group B at the WAFU B U20 Championship in Niamey.

Both West African giants will flex muscles at the Stade General Seyni Kountché in the Nigerien capital from 5pm, with the winner certain

to be on firm footing for a place in the semi-finals from a pool boasting only three teams. Burkina Faso is the other team in the group, and they will take on the Flying Eagles on Wednesday next week.

Ghana are the defending champions of both the WAFU B U20 Championship and the Africa U20 Cup of Nations. In Porto Novo at the end of the year 2020, the Black Satellites defeated their counterparts from Burkina Faso 2-1 in the final to lift the

trophy and then went ahead to defeat Uganda 2-0 in the final of the Africa U20 Cup of Nations in Mauritania a few months later.

However, the global coronavirus pandemic obliterated the global finals that were slated for Indonesia.

Head Coach Ladan Bosso returned to Niamey on Friday after attending the third-day fidau prayers for his late mother. Bosso believes his boys are in good spirit following a 1-0

win over the Niger Republic U20 team and another 4-0 win over a Nigerien top League team in their last two preparatory matches in Niamey.

Team Secretary Aliyu Ibrahim Lawal told NFF media that officials of the Nigeria Embassy in Niamey have been very supportive of the team and are making efforts to mobilize Nigerians living in the Nigerien capital to come and support the Flying Eagles at the big match.

The tournament opens on Saturday with hosts Niger Republic slugging it out with the U20 boys of Cote d'Ivoire from 5pm, while Togo and Benin Republic clash from 8pm. Both matches come up at the Stade General Seyni Kountché.

Only the two finalists will qualify to represent WAFU B at next year's Africa U20 Cup of Nations to be hosted by Egypt. Indonesia will host the 2023 FIFA U20 World Cup finals.

'Mbappe's move to Madrid not influenced by money'

Jerome Rothen, a sports journalist with RMC, has said Kylian Mbappe's proposed move to the Estadio Santiago Bernabeu is not being induced by a promise of higher pay by Fiorentina Perez but the desire of the player to join a successful club.

Real Madrid, last year, signified their interest in the player by tendering a record bid that was rejected by Les Parisien who insisted Mbappe was not for sale.

With Mbappe's contract due to end this summer, Paris Saint-Germain are battling to see the prolific forward pen a new two years deal with the club.

Though the player is weighing his options, Le Parisien railroaded a report confirming that Mbappe has agreed to stay in Paris which was rebutted by his mother, Fayza Lamary.

Corroborating Lamary's claim, Rothen avowed that

Mbappe is in pursuit of a good sporting project stressing that the PSG forward will be leaving money behind should he make a switch to Spanish giants.

"Mbappe has remained open to the possibility of an extension, so PSG could offer him something substantial, but money isn't his priority, it's the sporting project," Rothen told Marca.

"He wants these answers and he is waiting for them. He doesn't have them.

"His plan, if nothing changes at PSG, is to leave. I hope that the PSG leaders are aware of that.

"What is certain, and the fans should know this, is that PSG means a lot to him and he does have strong connections to the club," he added.

However, France President Emmanuel Macron recently advised that Kylian Mbappe will continue to be a great player if he remains in Ligue 1.



Jocular Macron, a fan of Olympique Marseille, said that if the PSG forward was making a move to join his favourite club he would have ensured the move was made possible.

"Unfortunately, you can't speak about Kylian Mbappe going to OM. If he was willing to come I would have fought to make that happen... but he said 'not so

fast' (laughing). So it's better to fight for him to stay in Ligue 1 because he continues to be a great player," Macron said, according to a Diario AS report last month.

The French President is constantly in touch with Paris Saint-Germain prolific striker to convince him to jettison the move to the Estadio Santiago Bernabeu for a stay in France with PSG.

Boehly consortium's £4.25bn bid accepted, set to take over Chelsea

Todd Boehly consortium has emerged as the successful bidder to take over Chelsea football club from Russian-Israeli billionaire, Roman Abramovich, after edging out Pagliuca consortium, Broughton consortium, and others with its £4.25b bid accepted.

Following the series of criticism by the UK Parliament over Abramovich's link with Vladimir Putin, the Chelsea CEO had to put the club for sale on March 2, 2022.

The move by the Russian billionaire did not augur well with the UK government who went ahead to sanction Abramovich on March 10 and froze all his assets in the UK including the West London club.

Doing that, the club was restrained in so many ways but the UK government had to issue an operational licence to the club to allow them to feature in all competitions until May 31.

Abramovich contracted Raine Group to oversee the sale and the UK government proficently monitor the bidding process to ensure he does not benefit from sales including the £1.5b the club owes him.

Going by the disposition of the UK government and to assure the global community he empathises with the war-torn Ukrainians, Abramovich insisted that the proceeds from the sale will be donated to the charity foundation.

Contrary to Abramovich's claim, a recent report alleged that the Russian billionaire is covertly plotting to reclaim the £1.5b he loaned Chelsea which he has refuted in a statement released by his spokesperson, according to a Sky Sports report.

The statement read: "Firstly, Mr. Abramovich's intentions in relation to gifting the proceeds from the Chelsea sale to charity have not changed.

"Since the initial announcement, Mr. Abramovich's team has identified senior representatives from UN bodies and large global charitable organizations who have been tasked with forming a Foundation and setting out a plan for its activities. The lead independent expert

has had conversations with Government representatives presenting the structure and initial plans.

"Mr. Abramovich has not been involved in this work and it has been managed independently by experts with years of experience working in humanitarian organizations.

"Secondly, Mr. Abramovich has not asked for any loan to be repaid to him - such suggestions are entirely false - as are suggestions that Mr. Abramovich increased the price of the Club last minute. As part of Mr. Abramovich's objective to find a good custodian for Chelsea FC, he has however encouraged each bidder throughout this process to commit to investing in the Club - including in the Academy, Women's team, necessary redevelopment of the stadium as well as maintaining the work of Chelsea Foundation."

"Following sanctions and other restrictions imposed on Mr. Abramovich by the UK since announcing that the Club would be sold, the loan has also become subject to EU sanctions, requiring additional approvals.

"That means that the funds will be frozen and subject to a legal procedure governed by authorities. These funds are still earmarked for the Foundation. The Government are aware of these restrictions as well as the legal implications.

"To be clear, Mr. Abramovich has no access or control of these funds and will not have any access or control of these funds following the sale. Despite the changing circumstances since his initial announcement - he remains committed to finding a good custodian for Chelsea FC and making sure the proceeds go to good causes," the statement said.

Meanwhile, the operational licence issued by the UK government to Chelsea expires on the 31 while the fixtures for the next season's campaign take place on June 8, 2022.

Sequel to this development, Chelsea will have to be sold on or before the licence expiration date for the club to be eligible to feature in the next footballing season.

'I may not good enough to help Man City win Champions

Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola said maybe he is not good enough to help the club win European clubs' most coveted trophy, UEFA Champions League, insisting that a new manager could do the magic.

Guardiola lamented after the stunning second-half display by Real Madrid to dump the Manchester club out of their second consecutive final.

However, he stated that the club owner, Sheikh Mansour, did not invest in the club to win the champions league alone but to ensure the club is successful in all competitions.

City are in search of their first European

success and had invested in bringing in players to boost their chances of getting it and also Pep Guardiola from Bayern Munich to steer the vision but the trophy has been elusive.

Guardiola, who last tasted the European success in 2011 with Barcelona, defended the crop of players in City stating that they are good enough to win the UEFA Champions League.

"The owners didn't buy this club and invest in these incredible facilities just to win the Champions League, they did it to be there in all competitions, every season," Guardiola

to Sky Sports.

"We want to win the Champions League, maybe I am not good enough to help the team to do it. Nobody knows what would happen with another manager and other players.

"The people say if this group of players or Guardiola don't win a title, then they're failures, I completely disagree. We know how difficult everything is.

"No, I am always starving. I cannot spend a year just thinking about how happy I am. If we had won the Champions League it would be the money we spend, not how hard we worked.





NGOs charge UK, USA to track use of returned Abacha loots in Nigeria

Decry difficulty in recovering stolen assets in Britain

By **PAUL MICHAEL,**
Abuja

Some Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in a melody, Spotlight on Corruption and African Network for Environmental and Economic Justice (ANEJ) have called on the United Kingdom (UK) and United States of America (USA) to track the usage of returned loots and assets in Nigeria to ascertain compliance with Global Forum on Asset Recovery Principles.

Recall that the UK's National Crime Agency has recovered \$23.5 million of funds stolen from Nigeria by family and associates of former Head of State, the late General Sani Abacha.

The looted funds were reportedly laundered through an intricate web of western bank accounts and substantial sums ended up in the UK.

While reacting, the NGOs described the news as a welcome development, saying that the \$23.5 million is just a small portion of a larger pot of \$182 million frozen in UK bank accounts as a result of action by the US Department of Justice.

According to a statement jointly issued by them, "Spotlight on Corruption and ANEEJ have worked together to seek court documents in the UK relating to these cases. There are

ongoing controversies around the remaining \$160 million, not least because of reports that, due to legal agreements made before the UK High Court, the money will be returned to one of the original people involved in hiding the proceeds of Abacha related corruption overseas."

They, however, called on the UK and US governments to ensure all returned looted funds are being used in accordance with the Global Forum on Asset Recovery Principles.

"This is a huge opportunity for the UK and US Government to carry out a reality check on how other asset returns to Nigeria have complied with the Global Forum on Asset Recovery Principles and make sure mistakes are not repeated.

"In playing a key role in international co-operation on efforts to recover the Abacha loot, the UK must ensure these processes live up to the commitments it recently made in its new Framework for Transparent and Accountable Asset Return.

Information on the last return of Abacha related funds – \$308million – from Jersey, is not easily accessible to the general public – this runs contrary to the agreement signed between the Nigeria, US and Jersey Government.

"We urge the UK and US Governments to



UK Prime Minister, Boris Johnson

send a strong message by working with the Nigerian government to ensure that any return

both of these funds and future funds meets with internationally agreed principles for asset

return. This means that civil society should be consulted in decision making about how the funds will be returned and what they will be spent on.

"Every asset return is a major opportunity to send a strong message that there will be no impunity for corruption and that those most harmed by corruption – the poorest in Nigeria – properly benefit in transparency and accountable ways from funds stolen from them," David Ugolor, Executive Director of ANEEJ said.

On his part, Joseph Sinclair, a legal associate at Spotlight on Corruption decried the difficulty in recovering stolen assets in UK.

He said, "The hunt for Abacha's loot has exposed real challenges in recovering stolen assets, with UK law enforcement unfortunately lagging its counterparts in the US and Europe in tracking down these funds.

"UK law enforcement has been slow to take action, and efforts to return the funds have been bogged down in UK court proceedings while other countries have got on with returning stolen assets, including nearly \$1 billion (\$828 million) from Switzerland since 2006, and \$311 million from the US and Jersey in 2020.

"The lessons from why this process has been so slow and painful in the UK need to be learned."

Police say Philippines peaceful on high alert ahead of election

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH** with agency report

Philippine police said on Sunday that the country's overall situation ahead of the May 9 general election remained relatively peaceful, despite some shooting incidents and other poll-related offences that they consider to be isolated.

The Philippine police said they were on high alert as last-minute preparations continued for the country's general election.

On Monday, Filipinos will elect President Rodrigo Duterte's successor, as well as a vice president, 12 senators, hundreds of congressmen, and thousands of governors, mayors,

and provincial and municipal councillors.

The presidential race is a rematch between Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr., the country's late dictator's son and namesake, and incumbent Vice President Leni Robredo, a human rights lawyer who narrowly defeated him in the 2016 vice presidential election.

Three months of divisive campaigning ended on Saturday, with Marcos and Robredo making final bids to influence undecided voters with patriotic, uplifting messages.

Duterte did not endorse a presidential candidate, but his party backs

frontrunners Marcos and his running mate, Duterte's daughter Sara Duterte-Carpio.

Armed Forces chief Lieutenant General Andres Centino told a media briefing with police officer-in-charge Lieutenant General Vicente Danao and senior election commission officials that "We are ready for any contingencies".

"We are committed to ensure that we have a secure, accurate, free and fair elections tomorrow."

Political violence, cheating allegations and vote-buying ruin previous elections in the Philippines, but the police said they have recorded far fewer poll-related

offences than in the 2016 general election and 2019 mid-term polls.

"Hopefully we can maintain this tranquility up to the last day of our electoral process," Danao said.

Guia Morris, principal at Jacinto Zamora Elementary School in Manila, said they have spent weeks cleaning and disinfecting the rooms where voting will be done.

"The teachers are all prepared, and they attended orientation and seminars about the election," she said.

Voting will be longer than usual to accommodate COVID-19 safety measures.