

Akeredolu seeks global help for Nigeria to fight terrorism

By **FRIDAY OMOSOLA**, Akure

Ondo State Governor Oluwarotimi Akeredolu has appealed to the international community to help Nigeria in the fight against

terrorism. He said the country must now accept that it was dealing with terrorism, stressing that the June 5th attack in Owo, Ondo State was perpetrated by terrorists. The governor spoke while receiving members of Council of the All Saints Church, Jericho, Ibadan who came on a condolence visit to him led by its chairman, Dr. Onnuola Adewunmi. He remarked: "We have terrorists in Nigeria. We need the world to assist Nigeria. If Nigeria does not want it, Ondo State wants it. They

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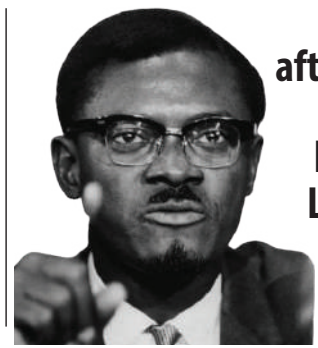
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30	H.E. Babatunde Fashola	Member	73	Princess Ada Ogbo	Member
31	Dr. Sunday Dare	Member	74	Alhaji Umar Kaila	Member
32	Engr. Abubakar D. Aliyu	Member	75	Hon. Haruna Sultan	Member
33	Air Marshall Saadique (Rtd)	Member	76	Mrs. Vejide Ogundipe	Member
34	Air Wing Marshal Peterin (Rtd)	Member	77	Adokeyejo Adedipe	Member
35	Lt. Gen. H. Burattal (Rtd)	Member	78	Hon. Princess Mar'iam Grucha	Member
36	H.E. Senator Ibaakunle Amosun	Member	79	Sen. Sadi Aliyu Abdulaziz	Member
37	Abubakar Malami, SAN	Member	80	Sen. Bello Mandirya	Member
38	Senator Hadi Sirika	Member	81	Sen. Peter Nwaoboshi	Member
39	Prof. Ali Iba Pantami	Member	82	Sen. Kola Balogun	Member
40	H.E. Timipre Sylva	Member	83	Sen. Frank Ibezim	Member
41	Alhaji Adarun Adarun	Member	84	Sen. Ishaya Abba	Member
42	Prince Ademola Adegoye	Member	85	Mallam Aliyu Ahmed	Secretary
43	Chief Cbenga Familoni	Member	86	Prince Tona Famodera	Assistant Secretary

INAUGURATION
The National Campaign Council will be inaugurated on Thursday, 23rd of June, 2022 by 2:00pm at the APC National Headquarters, Abuja.



H.E. Senator Abdullahi Adamu
National Chairman



Senator Iyiola Omisore
National Secretary

Hardship as fuel scarcity worsens, IPMAN pegs price at N180 per litre

By **EDU ABADE, GABRIEL OMONHINMIN, JOHNMARK UKOKO** (Lagos), **CHRIS EZEONOH** (Port Harcourt) and **CHARLES ONYEKWERE**, South-East Correspondent

Petrol and diesel queues have resurfaced in Lagos and other cities across the country, as motorists thronged filling stations to fill up their tanks. The development comes just a few days after similar scarcity was witnessed in Ibadan, Oyo State and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja.

It has created apprehension as motorists engage in panic buying reminiscent of the February 2022 scarcity which lasted several weeks due to alleged importation of toxic petroleum products.

The Trumpet sighted queues in most filling stations visited on Monday and Tuesday, although some fuel attendants blamed the scenes on panic-buying by motorists.

Most filling stations on Ikorodu Road and Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, A p a p a - O s h o d i Expressway, Airport Road, and other parts of the former federal capital's metropolis showed that most of the filling stations were not selling fuel. The few ones selling were dispensing fuel from one or two pumps in spite of the fact that they have many sales points, thereby

leading to long time motorists spend before they are attended to.

Also at a media briefing on Monday, June 20, 2022, at Ejigbo in Lagos, IPMAN Chairman and executives, in conjunction with some senior members of the unit, ordered independent marketers to sell petrol at N180 per litre. It insisted that the association had earlier explained its predicament with the current price of petrol in private depots.

"We explained that with the current price, there is no way we can sell less than N180 per litre. On this note, members are hereby advised to sell at a sustainable price in their localities. Just make sure that the price is on your pump. Kindly contact the secretariat should you have any authority challenging your operations," they said during the briefing.

Consequently, long queues have emerged at filling stations in Abuja, Lagos and other cities across the country since Sunday, June 19, 2022.

Last week, the South West zonal Chairman of the Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria (IPMAN), Dele Tajudeen, threatened to direct its members to increase the pump prices of petrol and diesel.

Tajudeen alleged that his members had been unable to buy the product from any of the government owned depots for the past six months. This forced them to buy from private



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depots owners, who have continued to take advantage of the situation.

He predicted that the scarcity might linger, as available statistics showed that the country was experiencing extreme low crude oil production for export.

Nigeria's oil output dropped to 1.02 million barrels per day in May 2022, from 1.8 million, the lowest figure ever recorded.

The large number of commuters gathered at various places and the major motor parks in Lagos and Ogun states on Monday and Tuesday, is a clear indication that the country is back to the dark days of fuel scarcity.

Almost all commercial activities in the South West are gradually grinding to a halt.

For instance, a trip that usually costs commuters between N100 and N150 from Mile 2 to Ojota, is now between N400 and N500.

A commercial bus ride from Ipodo Bus-Stop Ikeja to Obalende, Tafawa Balea

Square and CMS that usually costs N1,000 is now N2,000 per passenger. The fare from Oshodi to Sango in Ogun State usually costs between N400 and N500 but is now N1,000.

Also, a bus ride from Sango under the bridge to Abeokuta, the Ogun State capital that usually costs between N3,000 and N4,000 is now N8,000.

Checks by The Trumpet in Lagos and Abeokuta showed that major filling stations were either closed for lack of fuel or those that have had long queues.

Thousands, especially civil servants and other office workers were stranded in various places and bus stops in both states. Most workers who want to get to their offices at all costs were sighted walking long distance and depressed.

At Ojota Motor Parks several passengers traveling to Ile-Ife and Osogbo were stranded, while the story was the same from Ibadan to Ado-Ekiti and Akure.

Tajudeen had warned

if this ugly situation continues, IPMAN will be left with no other option, than to ask it members to increase the pump prices of fuel and diesel, saying: "Because some of our members who manage to get the products go through a lot of pains in the hands of the people selling the products in the black market."

When The Trumpet visited the NNPC Mega Station in Oke Mosan area of Abeokuta, a reliable source revealed that for about four days, the station had not dispensed fuel.

Another NNPC station at Oke-Aro on Akute Road, in Ifo Council of Ogun State was dispensing fuel, but at exorbitant price to buyers.

The mobile filling station at Hacckuli area along Oke-Aro Toyin Junction in Ogun State also sold fuel throughout Monday at higher price.

However, in Port Harcourt, the fuel situation in places monitored around the state capital and environs was still stable as of the time of filing this report.

Filling stations visited around Eleme area where the Port Harcourt refinery is located were selling fuel at the approved price of N165 per litre. This is despite the fact that the refinery is currently undergoing repairs and had not started refining petroleum products.

But Peworth Filling Station in New Town area slightly adjusted the pump price to N170 per litre, a

situation that might have emanated from rumours from other parts of the country.

A pump attendant at the filling station told The Trumpet that the rise in the price followed increase in the cost of the last delivery they got.

At other places monitored like Azuabie along Peter Odili Road, Trans-Amadi in Port Harcourt, the story is the same.

Feelers from Bori in Ogoni, Oyigbo and environs, were that the price was hovering between N165 and N170 per litre as at Tuesday, but there were no queues.

A citizen, speaking to The Trumpet, accused the Federal Government of unleashing hardship on Nigerians. He said a rumour of planned increase in the price of petroleum products was an alibi by government to again raise the price in the long-run to worsen the economic condition and suffering most Nigerians were already going through.

He enjoined Nigerians to 'shine' their eyes in the 2023 general elections and vote a candidate who would feel the pains that ordinary citizens are going through in the midst of plenty.

But to douse the tensions, Nigerian Ports Authority has disclosed that no fewer than 24 ships laden with petroleum products and assorted food items were being expected in Lagos from June 20, 2022 to July 28, 2022.

It revealed that the ships also contain bulk sugar, container, bulk gypsum, bulk wheat, general cargo, base oil, bulk salt, bulk fertilizer, petrol and frozen fish. It added that about 20 ships were already discharging bulk wheat, general cargo, containers, fuel, base oil, frozen fish and urea.

The NPA added that four additional ships had also arrived the ports and were waiting to berth with containers, bulk wheat and petroleum products.

However, the Federal Government says the fixed pump price of Premium Motor Spirit, PMS, remains N165 per litre as stipulated in the petroleum product pricing template.

The government also advised Nigerians against

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still attacked somewhere in Ogun State recently. There are terrorists lurking in our forests."

The Chairman of the South-West Governors' Forum disclosed that the time was ripe for the people to be trained on basic civil-defence, noting that they must be prepared. He also harped on the need for Churches to install CCTV as part of security measures to prevent recurrence of the Owo terror attack.

Adewunmi, who commiserated with the governor and the people of the state over the Owo massacre, assured that the church would intensify prayers for the state.

"Sir, you could trust

that your church has always been praying for you. You could trust that your church has always supported you in prayers on numerous occasions. This one really overwhelmed us, that such a heinous crime could be committed in our land," he added.

He prayed for improved security in the country and restoration of the lost values in the land. The team also presented a token for the victims of the attack and prayed against such calamity in the state again.

Relatedly, the leadership of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) in Ondo State, has commended Akeredolu for showing leadership

with empathy, courage and love since the Owo terror attack.

The Christian leaders said the governor's actions, from the day the attack occurred till date, have shown his love and care as the Chief Shepherd of the good people of the state.

The CAN leaders spoke on Tuesday during their solidarity visit to the governor in Akure.

They were led by the CAN Chairman, Rev. Fr. Anselm Ologunwa.

He said churches in Ondo State are not unmindful of the bold steps taken by the state government in ensuring security of lives and property.

"In a great way, through the financial supports

given, your several visits to the Catholic Bishop of Ondo, Most Rev. Jude Arogundade and the victims in Owo with your presence at the funeral mass, you have shown empathy, courage and utmost leadership in these trying times we found ourselves in the Sunshine State.

"This is demonstrated in your determination and birthing of the Amotekun Corps against all odds to respond to the security challenges in the region. This feat has earned you a reputation of a fearless and dogged fighter for justice among the three geopolitical zones of Southern Nigeria," he noted

The CAN Chairman



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Arabic teacher allegedly sexually assaults pupils

By ALEX OLIS

Anurse, Mrs Oluchi Nwoke-okoi, has told an Ikeja Domestic Violence and Sexual Offences Court how an Arabic teacher, Farouk Adam, allegedly fingered his nine Islamic pupils, ages seven to 13 years.

Farouk is facing a nine-count-charge bordering on sexual assault.

Nwoke-okoi, a registered nurse and midwife, while being led in evidence by the state prosecutor, Mrs Olufunke Adegoke, said she was a staff of Women At Risk Foundation (WARIF) and had 15 years experience in midwifery.

The witness told the court that she attended to nine survivors and conducted vagina examination on seven of them after their

mothers brought them to WARIF centre on Feb. 20, 2019.

"The survivors and their mothers were brought to the centre by police officers. We took time to question each of the survivors and also conducted vagina examination on them.

"Seven of the survivors said that the defendant, who is their Arabic teacher, on several occasions, inserted his fingers into their vaginas.

"The 8th survivor said the defendant only touched her breast while the 9th survivor told us that she was afraid to attend the Islamic class after her sister told her that the defendant inserted his fingers into her vagina.

"Vagina examination was carried out on them. Based on their histories and the vagina examination,

the result shows absence of hymen. Conclusion is suggestive of sexual assault of minor," she said.

The witness told the court that the youngest of the survivor was seven years while the oldest was 13 years.

In a cross-examination by defence counsel, Mr A.O. Okonkwo, Nwoke-okoi said she was certified by the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria (NMCN), adding that the vagina examination she carried out on the survivors was not outside her practice.

She further said that vigorous scratching could not tamper with hymen.

"I have a license to practice as a registered and certified midwife and the vagina examination I carried out is not outside my practice.

"Laceration of the vagina means bruises, injuries or scars on the vagina. In some cases, when the vagina is tampered with, there may be laceration or not.

"In the case of sexual assault, laceration can be seen when the survivor struggles or when penis, fingers or object is being forced into the vagina.

"In the same vein, hymen cannot be intact when the finger, penis or object is inserted into the vagina. It is not in my power to decide whose fingers penetrated the vaginas of the survivors and I disagree that scratching can tamper with hymen," the nurse said.

The prosecuting counsel informed the court that the witness was the last prosecution witness in the case and prayed the court to order the defendant to open

his defense. The alleged offence contravened Section 261 of the Criminal Laws of Lagos State, (2015).

Justice Abiola Soladoye adjourned the case until Oct. 5 for the defendant to open his defense.

Motion to override Buhari on statutory delegates suffers setback

By TUNDE JOSHUA, Abuja

An attempt by the House of Representatives to override President Muhammadu Buhari for withholding assent to a bill allowing for participation of statutory delegates in primary elections of political parties suffered a setback on Tuesday.

The lower chamber stepped down a motion on need to invoke section 58 (5) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 to pass the amendment to the Electoral Act, 2022, providing for statutory delegates' participation in nomination of candidates for elections.

It took the intervention of the deputy speaker, Idris-Wase, who presided over plenary to rein in the motion sponsored by Ben Igbakpa (PDP, Delta).

The Delta State lawmaker had recalled that the National Assembly had in May 12, 2022 transmitted to the President for assent, bill for an act to amend the Electoral Act, 2022 which amended Section 84 (8) to allow Statutory Delegates to participate in political parties congresses and conventions.

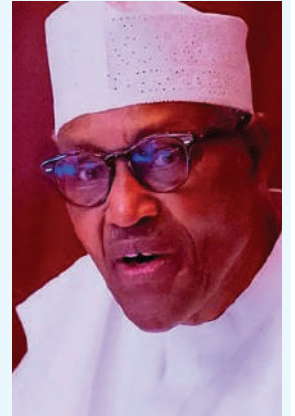
He said by virtue of the provision of Section 58 (4), the President has 30 days to assent to the aforementioned Electoral Amendment Act, 2022 or formally communicate to the National Assembly his decision to decline assent.

Igbakpa noted regrettably that the time frame for the President to assent or decline assent to the bill has elapsed since 11 June, 2022.

"The actions or inactions of the President to perform his constitutional duty is an affront to Section 4 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 which empowers the National Assembly to make laws for peace, order and good government of the Federation or any part, thereof.

"The continued inaction of the President in either assenting or vetoing the Bill has left a lacuna in Nigeria's constitutional democracy which portends danger to the 2023 electoral process and other subsequent staggered elections of some states thus, leaving the Congress of Political Parties in the hands of Ad-hoc delegates to the detriment of statutory delegates.

"Section 58 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 empowers the National



Buhari

Assembly to override the President when he vetoes a bill or fails, refuses and, or neglects to act thereto, through a two-third majority vote," he noted.

He prayed the House to invoke section 58 (5) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended) with respect to the bill for an Act to Amend the Electoral Act, 2022 to allow statutory delegates to participate in political parties congress and convention.

According to section 58(5) of the Constitution, where the President withholds his assent and a bill is "again passed by each House by two-third majority, the bill shall become law and the assent of the President shall not be required."

Intervening, the deputy speaker rejected Igbakpa's submission arguing that he can not come with a motion to override a bill asking him to follow the right procedure by writing to the Speaker.

"You don't come with a motion to override a bill. What you are supposed to do is to ask the rules. If you are interested, write to the speaker seeking for that to happen then we go through the normal procedure as enshrine in our standing order.

"We wish to kindly beg you to step down your motion because that is not the right procedure and liaise with Chairman of House Rules to do the needful.

"My guide is that the procedure followed is not the right procedure. For you to override on any bill, you need two third of members. Not members sitting but two third members of the National Assembly.

"This is why I am guiding you and guiding the House, so, the motion is stepped down by the leave of the House."

Hardship as fuel scarcity worsens, IPMAN pegs price at N180 per litre

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panic buying PMS, also known as petrol, saying that the country currently had over 2 billion litres of PMS in various depots.

This was made known by the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority, the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Ltd., and the Pipelines and Product Marketing Company after visiting jetties in Apapa, Lagos.

Those visited by the top officials of the agencies were NIPCO Depot and TotalEnergies Depot.

IPMAN, had on Monday advised its members to adjust the pump price of PMS to a minimum of N180 per litre.

The marketers had said the move was necessitated by the increment in the ex-depot price of PMS by some private depots where they were buying the product from.

However, Ugbugo Ukoha, Executive Director, Distribution Systems, Storage and Retail Infrastructure, NMDPRA, maintained that petrol was a regulated product and urged marketers to comply with the pricing template.

Ukoha said the conflict between Russia and Ukraine had led to an increment in the cost of Automotive Gas Oil

(diesel), which was a critical product used in transporting petroleum products from the depots to the retail outlets.

He said: "So, when we observed that this poses a big challenge in the movement of other products, we made the representation to the Minister of State for Petroleum and Mr President graciously approved that the freight rate for trucks be increased.

"There's a N10 addition, which we will apply to the different routes to enable trucks to move to docks easily with less burden.

"With these kinds of efforts from government, we can only continue to appeal to operators within this industry to play by the rules.

"PMS is a regulated product and the prices are fixed. The ex-depot price is known.

The pump price remains N165 and the authority is ever ready to enforce those rules.

"So, we will continue to urge Nigerians to keep within these operating rules."

Ukoha further said the focus of the stakeholders in the next few days would be to close the supply gaps and resolve the ongoing scarcity of petrol as soon as possible.

Also, Adetunji Adeyemi,

Group Executive Director, Downstream, NNPC Ltd., said the purpose of the visit to the depots was to get first-hand information on the challenges responsible for the current scarcity.

Adeyemi said despite the challenges globally in terms of the supply chain, NNPC had continued to provide petroleum products, specifically PMS to Nigerians.

"Today we have about 2 billion litres of PMS in-country, which is about 34 days sufficiency. So, there is sufficient petrol in the country.

"We are working with the entire stakeholders and players in the downstream sector to ensure that this product gets to the distribution channels and also the stations.

"We want Nigerians to continue to enjoy free flow of petroleum products," he said.

Isiyaku Abdullahi, Managing Director, PPMC, said the company had been supporting transporters and marketers with diesel in form of palliative to ensure the smooth distribution of PMS and ameliorate the suffering of Nigerians.

Abdullahi said three vessels carrying about 60 metric tons of PMS were currently discharging

at the Apapa jetty, which would be further transported to Lagos and other parts of the country to restore normalcy.

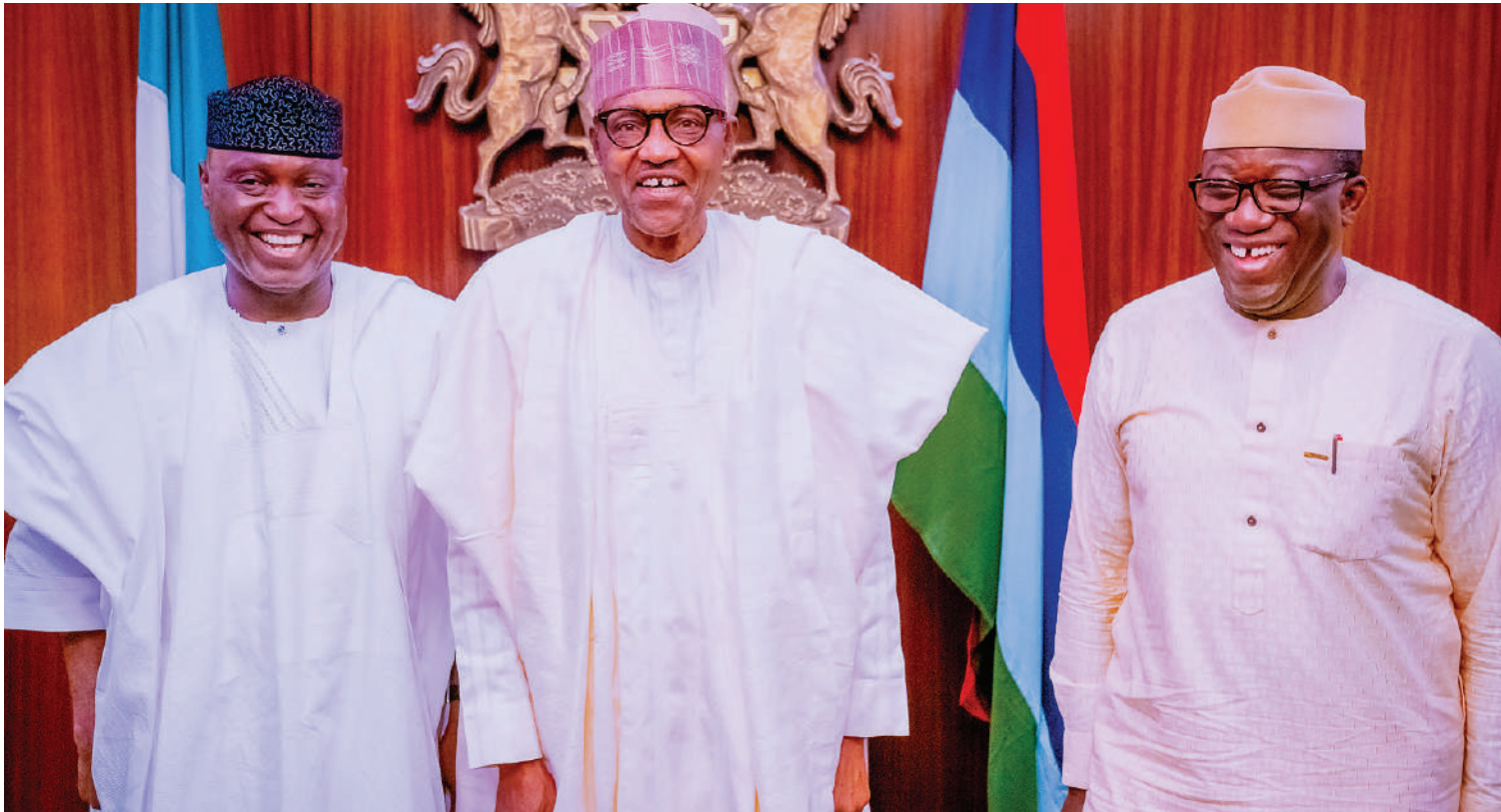
On their parts, Suresh Kumar, Managing Director, NIPCO and Ernest Umunna, Site Manager, TotalEnergies, assured Nigerians of product availability at their depots.

They also promised to carry out 24-hour trucking operations to ensure that the scarcity situation in Lagos was resolved within the next few days.

As fuel scarcity bites harder across other parts of the federation, there is no queue or scarcity in the entire filling stations in the South-East States. The Trumpet investigation across Imo, Abia, Enugu, Anambra, and Ebonyi States, revealed that price of petrol remained the same.

A visit to some of the filling stations in Abakaliki, the Ebonyi state capital, revealed that fuel sells between ₦160 and ₦170 per litre.

An attendant at an Oando Filling Station, who spoke with The Trumpet, disclosed that there was no fuel scarcity. Some of Transporters who spoke to The Trumpet also revealed that the price of transportation remained the same.



Governor-Elect Biodun Abayomi Oyebanji (left); President Muhammadu Buhari; Chairman, Ekiti State Governor, Dr Kayode Fayemi; at the State House, Abuja.

Obaseki greets Ize-Iyamu, wife on birthday

Edo State Governor Godwin Obaseki has felicitated with Pastor Osagie Ize-Iyamu and his wife, Idia, on their birthday.

In a statement, Obaseki prayed that God will strengthen the clergyman and politician to continue his service in the Lord's vineyard and other areas of human endeavour.

"I heartily congratulate you, my brother, Pastor Osagie Ize-Iyamu and your dear wife, Idia, as you celebrate your birthdays.

"As a clergyman and politician, you continue to serve the people and I pray that God will strengthen you to continue your service in God's vineyard and other areas of human endeavour.

"I also congratulate your wife, Mrs. Idia Ize-Iyamu, a minister of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and a Professor at the University of Benin (UNIBEN), who shares the same birthday.

"I pray that God will grant you both more years of service to humanity," the governor added.

Sanwo-Olu visits Alausa press crew, orders probe of attack on journalists

Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu has paid a surprise visit to the Bagauda Kaltho Press Centre, Alausa, Ikeja to sympathise with journalists following an attack on his press crew's vehicle on Sunday.

He reassured journalists, especially members of the Lagos State Governor's Office Correspondents (LAGOCO), that their safety and welfare are paramount to him.

The vehicle was attacked by hoodlums between Ebute-Ero and Adeniji, Iga-Iduganran, during All Progressives Congress (APC) presidential candidate Asiwaju Bola Tinubu's visit to the palace of the Oba of Lagos, Oba Rilwan Akiolu.

Sanwo, who condemned the attack, urged the journalists not to be deterred by the hazards of their job. "Your job is risky, very risky but don't be deterred by the hazards of the job. You must have the courage to persevere," he advised.

Meanwhile, he has ordered an investigation into the attack, saying the culprits must be fished out and made to face the law.

Sanwo-Olu in a statement issued earlier by Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Mr. Gbenga Omotoso, said the state government would pick up the hospital bills of those injured in the incident.

"Lagos State Government condemns the incident. We hold the media in high esteem and the government has always ensured that they have a conducive environment to perform their duties. Nobody or group will be allowed to destroy our cordial relationship with the media. Lagos has no room for hooligans," he said.

Why court ordered INEC not to end registration of voters

Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has been stopped from ending voter registration on 30 June 2022.

Honourable Justice Mobolaji Olajuwon of the Federal High Court in Abuja granted an order of interim injunction following the hearing of an argument on motion ex parte by Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP).

SERAP and 185 concerned Nigerians had early this month filed the lawsuit against INEC asking the court to "declare unconstitutional, illegal, and incompatible with international standards the failure of the electoral body to extend the deadline for voter registration to allow eligible Nigerians to exercise their rights."

In the suit, SERAP had asked the court for "an order restraining INEC, its agents, privies, assigns, or any other person(s) claiming through it from discontinuing the continuous voters' registration exercise from the 30th June 2022 or any other date pending the hearing and determination of the motion on notice."

The suit is adjourned to 29th June, 2022 for the hearing of the Motion on Notice for interlocutory injunction.

The suit followed the decision by INEC to extend the deadline for the conduct of primaries by political parties by six days, from June 3 to June 9. But the commission failed to also extend the online pre-registration which ended May 30 2022 and the Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) ending 30 June 2022.

In the suit number FHC/L/CS/1034/2022 filed at the Federal High Court, Lagos, and transferred to Abuja, SERAP is asking the court to determine "whether the failure of INEC

to extend the deadline for voter registration is not a violation of Nigerian Constitution, 1999 [as amended], the Electoral Act, and international standards."

SERAP is asking for: "a declaration that the failure of INEC to extend the deadline for voter registration is a violation of eligible Nigerians' rights to participate freely in their own government, equality and equal protection."

"an order of mandamus to direct and compel INEC to extend voter registration by a minimum of three months and take effective measures to ensure that eligible Nigerians are able to register to exercise their right to vote in the 2023 general elections."

The suit, read in part: "Enforcing unrealistic voter registration deadline while extending the deadline for party primaries would deny and abridge the constitutional and international human rights of eligible voters.

"INEC mandates ought to be exercised in a fair, just and non-discriminatory manner. The extension of voter registration would ensure that Nigerian voters are treated equally and fairly. The future of Nigeria's democracy depends on it.

"Voters are also critical stakeholders in the electoral process. Treating all eligible Nigerian voters fairly would advance the people's right to vote and to participate in their own government.

"INEC must not only be independent and impartial in the exercise of its constitutional and statutory responsibilities, but must also be seen to be independent and impartial."

"Extending the voter registration exercise would also bolster voter confidence in the electoral process.

"One of the people's most

sacred rights is the right to vote. The commission has a constitutional and statutory responsibility to ensure the effective exercise of the right of all eligible voters to participate in their own government.

"Extending the deadline for party primaries without providing adequate time and opportunity for eligible voters to register and participate in the 2023 general elections would amount to an unfair and discriminatory treatment of Nigerian voters, and violate other human rights.

"Extending the voter registration deadline would provide more time for eligible voters, including young people, the elderly, people living with disability, as well as those resident in states facing security challenges and living in IDP camps to participate in the 2023 elections.

"Extending the deadline for voter registration would be entirely consistent with constitutional and international standards, and the Electoral Act. Any such extension would also not impact negatively on INEC's election calendar and activities.

"The public perception of the independence and impartiality of INEC is essential for building public confidence in the electoral process, and ensuring the credibility and legitimacy of the 2023 elections.

"Where Nigerians have doubts about the independence and impartiality of INEC, they are more likely to have less confidence in the electoral process thereby undermining democracy.

"Extending the deadline for voter registration would also be justified, given reports of challenges in the voter registration exercise, especially for young people, the elderly, persons living with disabilities, and those resident in states facing

security challenges and living in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps.

"The will of the people is expressed through democratic elections. This requires that people should be afforded adequate time and opportunity to register to vote. Extending the voter registration deadline is crucial for promoting the independence and impartiality of INEC and building public confidence in the electoral process.

"The Nigerian Constitution 1999 (as amended) provides in Section 14(1)(c) that, 'the participation by the people in their government shall be ensured in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution.'

"Section 9(6) of the Electoral Act 2022 provides that 'the registration of voters, updating and revision of the Register of Voters under this section shall not stop not later than 90 days before any election covered by this Act.'

"Similarly, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance guarantee the right to political participation.

"These human rights treaties also require states parties including Nigeria to ensure the independence and impartiality of national electoral bodies responsible for the management of elections, as well as to promote the establishment of the necessary conditions to foster citizen participation.

"The right of people to participate in their government is a fundamental feature of any democratic society, and any undue restriction of the right would strike at the heart of representative government."

Three roasted, others sustain first degree burns in Bayelsa auto crash

By **AHERHOKE OKIOMA**, Yenagoa

Three persons were burnt to ashes and three others sustained first degree burns in a ghastly motor accident along East/West Road near Opokuma Junction. Three others including a Police Constable survived with various degrees of minor injuries.

The *Trumpet* gathered that the incident, which occurred at about 5:15pm on Monday, shut down vehicular movement along the ever busy road. It was gathered that two cars, a Toyota Camry with registration number LS 529 KY and a Mazda 323 with registration number GBB 532 XA had a head on collision which resulted in a heavy fire explosion.

Eyewitnesses said that the Camry car was loaded with petroleum products which resulted into heavy explosion and fire. The *Trumpet* gathered that two men and one female were killed and burnt beyond recognition. Three others however survived. A Senior Officer of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) in Bayelsa confirmed to The *Trumpet* that the injured victims were rescued and rushed to an undisclosed hospital at Yenagoa for treatment.

"The two cars were burnt and the victims in the Mazda were burnt beyond recognition as the Camry was loaded with adulterated Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) which sparked the fire. The Station Officer Kolokuma Opokuma Local Government Area with the assistance of other motorists cleared the obstruction on the road for free flow of traffic."

The FRSC however attributed the cause of accident to over speeding and lost of control. Also confirming the incident, the spokesman of the Bayelsa Police Command, Asinim Butswat, said though the details of the accident were not immediately available, "but three persons were burnt to death and three sustained first degree burn. Three others and a Police Constable were also injured."

Man narrates how 'enemies' poisoned, killed his 400 cows

By **AHERHOKE OKIOMA**, Yenagoa

Bayelsa-born hotelier turned mechanized farmer, Chief Joshua Oruge, has narrated his worst experience in his over two decades of foray into the business.

Oruge, who hails from Nembe Local Government Area of the state, took a group of journalists to his twenty-five hectares of farm land located at Imbetuma Island owned by Owe Family in Nembe Ogbolomabiri which he uses for mechanized mixed farming comprising cocoa and cashew plantations, cattle rearing, poultry and fisheries.

He recalled that he was into hotel business but was moved to venture into commercial farming in 1996 because he realized that Bayelsa is blessed with arable environment that had been underutilized over the years. He stressed that the major reason he went into farming was to curb Bayelsa's total dependency on importation of foodstuff from neighbouring states.

Conducting the media practitioners round the large farm, Oruge relived his 2012 worst experience in his farming busi-

ness where he lost 400 cows to unknown enemies who allegedly poisoned the water pit he dug for his cattle to drink from.

Pointing to the burrowed pit, Oruge said: "that is the pit where my cows used to drink from. But in 2012, an enemy came and poisoned the water and my 400 cows died in a period of three days out of 600 cattle that I had. That was how I lost the courage to continue with cattle rearing following the huge loss that almost took my life."

"Because of the fear of possible repeat of what happened to my cows, I also decided to stop my poultry business which used to produce a hundred crates of eggs per day. Consequently, I decided to go into plantation of Cocoa and cashew in year 2016 with 60,000 cashews and 60,000 cocoa stands and we have started harvesting already."

He also conducted the journalists round his fish ponds where he nurtures the popular catfish, tilapia and the one referred to in Ijaw language as Abah which means 'Governor's Fish.'

According to the commercial farmer, he has stocks of 70,000, 60,000 and other 60,000 catfish

fingerlings respectively in his three ponds. Oruge hinted that the farm, which goes by the name "God is my Life; Sea Never Dries Group of Farms, has about forty workers on its payroll.

He, however highlighted some of his challenges to include paucity of funds to properly maintain both the aquatic lives as well as the arable crops, revealing that he had sunk over N2 billion into the farm since its inception without any financial grants or loans from the state, federal government, the Bank of Industries or any international agency.

Oruge, who is the Chairman of Chief Joshua Robert Oruge and Sons Enterprises, further lamented that his application to the Bayelsa State Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources for a loan facility from the Central Bank agric funds never saw the light of the day, alleging that funds meant for farmers were not being channelled to the appropriate quarters.

He therefore called on the state and federal governments, and the international donor agencies to come to his financial aid, adding

that if properly harnessed through partnerships with the mentioned bodies, the farm has the capacity of becoming the food basket of Bayelsa State and beyond as well as create many job opportunities for the unemployed youths. The Azagbene and Nembe born farmer also called on more Bayelsans to venture into commercial farming in order to tackle the menace of food security bedeviling the nation and the state.

Another challenge faced by the farm, according to him, is the issue of intruders coming to steal his crops and fishes, noting that some thieves take advantage of the large nature of the farm to steal cocoa and cashew nuts unnoticed while others come with impunity and threats to the workers on ground and do away with the fruits and nuts, calling on the state government to provide adequate security for his workers and the farm. He also revealed that plans were on to resume his poultry business, noting that parts of an abandoned market square in Nembe Ogbolomabiri had been given to him by the community to be used for hatcheries as well as warehouse for fish feeds.

AMATO laments seizure of trucks by customs

Association of Maritime Truck Owners (AMATO) has lamented the seizure of some 100 vehicles belonging to its members by Nigeria Customs Service (NCS).

National President of the association, Remi Ogungbemi, raised the alarm on the seizure of the trucks at the just concluded second edition of the Port Industry Town Hall Meeting organised by the Journal NG in Lagos.

Ogungbemi, who said the trucks are being held in the custody of Customs at the Lagos and Eastern ports, said appeals to the concerned authorities for the release of the containerised trucks have not yielded any positive response.

"Over 100 of our trucks are in the custody of customs. Our members are suffering for the ignoble and unpatriotic activity of

some importers and their cohorts in the maritime industry, who failed to declare the contents of the containers to the Customs, which is the reason for the arrest and impounding of the containers with our trucks.

"We have written to the Comptroller General of Customs for the revalidation of the circular sent to us on the subject matter, but no favorable response," he said.

It would be recalled that the group, had in letter of appeal addressed to the Comptroller General of Customs, dated January 24, 2022, canvassed the revalidation of the format approved in 2017 to enable its members to remove all their trucks under Customs detention so that they could start on a clean slate with the usage of



Remi

the format.

The letter titled: Passionate Appeal For Revalidation Of Circular 001/2010 following an earlier circular on Directive On The Reprieve For Trucks Used As Means Of Carriage Offending Containerised Cargo.

"We plead that you kindly revalidate the circular to enable us remove all our trucks under Customs detention so that we can start on a clean slate with the usage of the format you have approved for usage and thereafter, if anyone among us or the agents fails to comply, then it can be considered to have criminal intention," part of the letter reads

Responding at the event, Acting Controller in charge of Non-Intrusive Inspection, Paul Ekpeyong, cited the truck owners' inability to ascertain the true nature of goods in the containers they are conveying to the final destination as reasons for the seizures.

He said most truck owners contact roadside drivers without carrying out background checks on the content of their goods, adding that the drivers convey items contrary to the specified contents the trucks were licenced to carry, which lead to their seizure.

"Truck owners should subject their drivers to roadworthiness tests and check their licences and their drug use before giving them trucks. We arrested a truck, which was specifically for loading beer, but the driver went to load bags of rice," he said.

DSS arrests INEC official over alleged extortion



Geraldine Ekelemu

By **CHRIS EZEONOH**, Port Harcourt

Department of State Security (DSS) has arrested an official of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Port Harcourt over alleged extortion of unsuspecting members of the public in the ongoing registration for the Permanent Voters Card, PVC.

Resident Electoral Commissioner, REC, in the state disclosed this Tuesday in a statement signed by Public Affairs Officer of the commission, Geraldine Ekelemu.

"The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Rivers State can confirm that one of its security guards attached to its Obio/Akpor area office has been arrested by agents of the Department of State Security on allegation of extortion of money from members of the public", the statement said.

The commission maintained that it has zero tolerance to acts of extortion by its staffers and would ensure that the security agencies investigate the incident and any other allegations of illegality by its officials to

ensure that every infraction is redressed and punished.

"Members of the public are therefore advised to avoid acts of desperation that could render them vulnerable to fraudsters taking advantage of them. They are also encouraged to report attempts at extortion to INEC or the security agencies.

"All INEC offices in Rivers State are open and attending to potential registrants while registration is also ongoing in designated locations in some wards on a rotational basis", the statement added.

Why PDP lost Ekiti governorship election

By **TUNDE JOSHUA**, Abuja

Leaders of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) have been fingered as being responsible for its failure to win the Ekiti governorship election held last Saturday.

The PDP's candidate Olabisi Kolawole came third scoring 67,457 votes behind Biodun Oyejani of the All Progressives Congress (APC) who won the election with 187,057 votes and Segun Oni of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) who got 82,211 votes.

As expected of the national body of a political party to stage a campaign in support of its candidate, PDP leadership abandoned Kolawole at the needed period.

The party constituted a bogus national campaign council for the Ekiti governorship election nine days to the poll but never inaugurated the committee members. Neither did the party fund the Ekiti campaign. Infact, the party leadership was not at any time on ground in Ekiti to campaign for Kolawole.

Chairman of the aborted campaign council, Governor Seyi Makinde of Oyo State is also one of Wike's allies in the PDP Governor's Forum. He was said to have travelled overseas when the national assignment he supposed to superintended was going on.

The Trumpet attributed this to the unsettled crisis consequent upon the last national convention which produced Atiku Abubakar as presidential candidate.

Kolawole unfortunately suffered the rift created by the convention between the Atiku and Nyeson Wike camp within the party's National Working Committee.

Recall that former governor of Ekiti State, Ayodele Fayose openly identified with Wike ahead of the presidential primary and went ahead to deliver the entire Ekiti delegates votes to the Rivers governor.

The Trumpet learnt that the anti-Wike forces within the NWC which include the national chairman, Dr. Iyorchia Ayu saw the Ekiti election preparation as opportunity to get at Fayose who is the sole promoter of Kolawole.

The immediate past deputy National Publicity Secretary of the party, Prince Diran Odeyemi put the blames for the party's failure on Atiku Abubakar and the national chairman, Iyorchia Ayu.

Odeyemi who lamented the unexpected low performance of PDP candidate, Kolawole berated governors of the party for abandoning the candidate

as well as teeming party members before and during the poll.

In a statement signed and made available to our correspondent, Odeyemi said Ayu, PDP governors including Atiku's absence in Ekiti before the election to campaign for Kolawole before the poll, created negative perception problem and contributed significantly to the party's poor outing in the election.

"Atiku, Ayu and PDP governors left the people of Ekiti, majority of whom support PDP in the cold. They looked up to these personalities but they never showed up before

or during the poll.

"Atiku, Ayu and PDP governors left the people of Ekiti, majority of whom support PDP in the cold. They looked up to these personalities but they never showed up before or during the poll.

"The National Campaign council constituted by Ayu was put in place just four days before the poll and no member of the committee showed up in the state whereas APC presidential candidate, Senator Bola Tinubu the entire NWC of APC and some Governors were in Ekiti campaigning for Biodun Oyejani. Nothing

of such happened under Ayu-led PDP national working committee, this is sad.

He challenged the leaders to be committed to PDP winning Osun poll to save the party from extinction in 2023.

"Now that the chances of PDP retaining Ekiti has been thrown out by the Ayu-led national leadership of the PDP, we need to remind Atiku, Ayu, and other leaders of PDP that the fate of our party in 2023 election now rest on the outcome of Osun poll, they must do all want they can to ensure victory to our candidate Sen Nuru-

deen Ademola Adeleke," Odeyemi declared.

One of the founding fathers of PDP, High Chief Tom Ikimi largely blamed Fayose largely for PDP misfortune in Ekiti.

He said the non-inclusive politics being played by Fayose has cost the PDP chances of winning election twice in Ekiti State.

The former Foreign Affairs minister in a reaction to the Ekiti election said "am not afraid to say that our problem in Ekiti have been caused by the activities of our immediate past governor, Fayose."

He said ruin Ekiti PDP when he left office. He said

in 2018 instead for Fayose to allow the will of the majority, he insisted on foisting his deputy then (Olusola Eleka) on the party against persuasion to let the party field aote acceptable candidate.

This action of Fayose, he said led to the defeat of PDP by the incumbent Kayode Fayemi.

Ahead of the last election, Chief Ikimi said "the build up to the choice of candidate in Ekiti was a big struggle. All kinds of meetings, peace talks and interventions were made until they put away Segun Oni who went to SDP and the outcome is clear".

Policemen detained after returning N400,000 extorted from man

By **ALEX OLISE**, Crime Correspondent

Lagos State commissioner of police CP Abiodun Alabi has confirmed the arrest and detention of two policemen and disciplinary action being taken against them after they were made to return the sum of N400,000 extorted from a man.

Their arrest followed the cry of the victim which made police authorities to launch an investigation, leading to the arrest of the duo.

The two, Eshue Augustine and Abebe Saturday, attached to Anthony Police Division of the Lagos State Command, were said to



have collected the phone of the man, who gave his name as Ken, with the

Twitter handle @Kendulite, logged into his app and led him to a Point of Sale

(POS) stand to withdraw the money.

It was gathered that the man was stopped on the road in his car and the policemen arrested him for an undisclosed offence.

He therefore wrote about the incident on his Twitter handle which got the attention of the state police command. He was invited to the command by police spokesperson Benjamin Hundeyin, a Superintendent, SP after he asked him to send his phone number. At the station, he was able to identify the policemen.

Following the identification and the confession of the policemen, they were

made to return the money to the man after which they were detained and disciplinary action was said to have commenced against them.

Announcing the return of his money on Monday, he tweeted: "Special thanks to you, Ben Hundeyin who worked tirelessly since I complained and now, I have my full money back. God bless you."

Also tweeting on the matter, Hundeyin disclosed on his Twitter handle: "I sincerely apologize on behalf of the Force for their corrupt practice. It doesn't stop there. Disciplinary action has commenced."

Displaced motorcycle riders linked to attack on Tinubu's convoy in Lagos

•Activities of gangsters soar

By **ALEX OLISE**

Last Sunday's attack on the convoy of All Progressive Congress (APC) presidential standard bearer Asiwaju Ahmed Tinubu has been linked to displaced motorcycle riders who have now turned into hoodlums following their ban in Lagos State, The Trumpet has learnt.

The attack is also said to be part of a conspiracy against the former Lagos State governor ahead of the 2023 general elections. The attack on the official state government press crew bus occurred at Lagos island where the hoodlums had laid an ambush.

Lagos island is one of the areas most affected by the recent ban on motorcycles announced last month by Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu.

Residents who spoke with The Trumpet said the attack was unusual because Tinubu popularly known as "Jagaban" is one politician loved by many in Lagos

island and unfortunately it happened when teeming supporters of the ruling party came to welcome him back to the state after defeating other aspirants in Abuja in a keenly contested primary election to clinch the party's ticket.

The Trumpet learnt that Lagos State Commissioner of Police (CP) Abiodun Alabi has ordered an investigation into the attack.

The activities of gangsters across Lagos is giving the state police command serious concern especially just a few weeks after the ban on motorcycles.

Last week, a large number of motorcycle riders attacked a team of policemen in the Ikorodu area, trying to stop them from enforcing the ban.

However, investigation by The Trumpet reveals that if urgent steps are not taken to address the current upsurge in gangsterism across the state, residents will continue living and operating their

various businesses in fear.

Residents of Lagos are currently living in fear following renewed cases of armed robbery attacks that have resurfaced in many parts of the state.

The most affected are passengers of commercial buses who are now the most targeted. With the ban on motorcycles, everybody now resorts to using buses which means more business for criminals who understand the Lagos terrain.

Gangsters now station themselves in strategic busstops and black spots to attack passengers and in the process steal their money and phones. Any passenger who resists risks death or serious injury because the criminals carry out such operations with dangerous weapons like cutlasses and short guns.

Many passengers who shared their experiences with The Trumpet said the insecurity will definitely affect their going out and coming back home.

Investigation carried out

by The Trumpet during the weekend revealed that many motorcycle riders who before now were criminals may go back to their old nefarious trade of robbery since there is no other means of survival. An Okada rider caused chaos in the public at Oshodi during the weekend when he openly rained curses on those that arrested his motorcycle which he claimed was the only means of livelihood for him and members of his family for the past fifteen years since he came to Lagos.

Also feeling the heat of the current insecurity are drivers especially those in traffic during night hours as they risk attacks.

Nollywood actress Yvonne Jegede escaped an armed robbery attack along the busy third mainland bridge in Lagos. She shared her experience with associates and fans on Facebook, thanking God for sparing her life.

A visit by The Trumpet to about fifteen police stations in Lagos revealed more cases of armed at-

tacks are lodged on their counters, meaning that the days ahead are not the best as many motorcycle riders are roaming the streets without any tangible thing to do.

This means the crime rate will definitely be on the rise. The renewed upsurge in crime continues despite claims by police authorities that banning motorcyclists will help their operatives in tackling criminals in the state. Most of the motorcycle riders are foreigners from neighboring countries who came to Lagos to work as Okada operators. A majority of them people are now stranded.

However, the CP has continued to assure residents of the command's readiness to provide the needed security across the state. Statistics have revealed that police operatives in Lagos are currently below forty thousand to protect over twenty million people in the state. The displaced motorcyclists are over two million in Lagos.

Minister confirms production of 625,000 passports

Minister of Interior, Rauf Aregbesola, has said the enhanced passport of the Nigeria Immigration Service is today the real deal. He said it is a product of the latest technology in passport administration and issuance.

He confirmed that 625,000 passport have been issued in 2022 alone.

He spoke at the Rollout of the Enhanced e-Passport for Delta and Edo States, which held at the Passport Office Headquarters, Benin, Edo State yesterday.

"Our enhanced passport is the real deal in passport making. Today's event is unique in many ways. The most important is making the enhanced ePassport available to the good people of Edo and Delta States.

The enhanced ePassport comes in various categories, including the 64-page-10-year validity Passport which is quite convenient for frequent travellers. It is a product of the latest technology in passport administration and issuance.

"This year alone, we have received about 750,000 applications out of which we have provided 625,000. The difference could have been due to many reasons, including failure of applicants to provide the correct information about themselves and matching their data with NIN. We could not contact them because they applied through touts who provided their own addresses or wrong ones altogether. But 625,000 is a huge and unprecedented figure, in less than half of the year, by any stretch of the imagination," the Minister stated.

Speaking further, the Interior Minister noted that President Muhammadu Buhari was indeed worried about the hassles Nigerians go through in securing the passports, noting that the role of the Nigerian Immigration Service is to make Nigerians desirous of getting the passport do so with ease and without stress.

He said, "President Muhammadu Buhari's charge to us is explicit. Make life easy as

much as possible for every person you have to relate with and remove every hurdle hitherto in their way on getting business done."

He continued, "Last week, President Buhari expressed concern on report that some Nigerians, especially those abroad, were unable to obtain their Nigerian passports. I share this concern as well.

"I am asking therefore that the NIS do everything within its power to make this a thing of the past.

Every Nigerian desirous of the travel document should be able to collect it within the stipulated time, without any stress whatsoever," Ogbeni Aregbesola instructed.

Also speaking at the event, the Governor of Edo State, Mr. Godwin Obaseki stated that the state government was ready to partner with the Federal Government and the Nigeria Immigration Service in delivering on its mandate to Nigerians, promising to building a Deserving Passport Centre in Auchi for the Service.

"Let me reiterate here like I told the Honourable Minister, the State Government of Edo will partner with the Federal Government and the Nigeria Immigration Service in helping them to deliver on their mandates to Nigerians.

"We would build in six months by God's grace, a passport centre in Auchi for the Nigerian Immigration Service so that they are able to service our citizens from that side of the state," Governor Obaseki promised.

Meanwhile, the Acting Controller General, Nigeria Immigration Service, Idris Isah Jere, has assured Nigerians of the determination of the service to smoothen its service to Nigerians.

"Nigerians can be rest assured of getting a non-judgmental Service at this Centre in Benin. Our officers are well-trained and ready to discharge their duty professionally.

"Applicants are advised to ensure their NIN details are exactly the same with their

passport application details to avoid a situation where the applications are unable to be processed due to a mismatch of data.

After the cutting of tape which signifies the rollout of the new enhanced passport, service personnel conducted the Governor and the Minister on a tour of the production facility which will serve both Edo and Delta State.

The entourage of the Minister later proceeded to the Palace of Oba of Benin, Omo N'Oba N'Edo Uku Akpolokpol, Ewuare II, to intimate him of the new development in passport production for Benin, Edo State, Warri and Asaba, Delta State.

The Oba used the opportunity to thank President Muhammadu Buhari, for taking special interest in Benin, citing the new enhanced passport production centre in the city and the relocation of artifacts to their origin and in custody of the traditional rulers of those places.

Why I dumped APGA for LP, by Umeh

● APC, PDP members set to join Labour Party

By CHARLES ONYEKWERE, SOUTH-EAST CORRESPONDENT

Former National Chairman of All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), Chief Victor Umeh, has given insight for joining Labour Party (LP).

Addressed a press conference at the Secretariat of the Anambra Council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Awka he said that he dumped APGA because of an alleged conspiracy against him by some party members in the state.

Umeh emerged the LP candidate for Anambra Central Senatorial District in the 2023 general elections, after leaving APGA.

"During the last senatorial primary election, which I contested under APGA, it was glaring that some people within the party perfectly wheeled conspiracy to pull me down. That was why I decided to leave APGA," he said.

He further said that he joined LP on the advice of the party's presidential candidate, Mr Peter Obi. He expressed delight over his movement to LP, saying that the decision had reunited him with Obi.

He recalled how Obi and himself steered the ship of APGA to victory and opined that a similar fate was about to repeat itself in LP.

"Nigerians from all shades of opinion want Peter Obi as President in 2023 and what is happening in LP is divine. What is driving him are statements he makes on the management of the resources of the country.

"These truly represent his conduct on the ways public resources should be managed," Umeh said. He urged Obi's supporters to ensure they obtained their permanent voter card (PVC) ahead of the elections to enable the country witness a progressive era.

Relatedly, LP Chairman in Oji River Local Government Area of Enugu State, Mr Ginger Ibeneme, has said that over 3000 members of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP), are set to join the labour movement.

In a statement in Enugu, the party leader said already some high profile defectors have already joined the party. In the build up to the 2023 general elections, Ibeneme said the party has already set up offices and ward executives established throughout the 20 wards of Oji River Local Government Area.

Kassim Afegbua not our member, says Edo PDP

By ISAAC OLAMIKAN

A new twist has been added to the crisis engulfing the Edo chapter of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) as the opposition political grouping's leadership on Tuesday said Prince Kassim Afegbua, a former Presidential Campaign spokesman has long been expelled and was no longer a bonafide member of the PDP in the state.

In a statement, the State Publicity Secretary of the PDP, Ogie Aigbe Vasco, said Afegbua was expelled for anti-party activities.

He said, "The Edo State Chapter of the PDP wishes to notify its members, supporters and critical stakeholders that Prince



Kassim Afegbua

Kassim Afegbua, a former Presidential Campaign spokesman of our dear party, has long ceased to be a bonafide member of the PDP in Edo State.

"Our attention has been drawn to the numerous media showmanship being put up by a former member of the PDP family in Edo State, Prince Kassim Afegbua in

the past few days. Though it is his right as a Nigerian to air his opinions on issues affecting the PDP, but he should not do so with the carriage and comportment of a registered and bonafide member of the PDP.

"For the records, we bring to the attention of all that for anti-party activities, the Edo State Chapter of the PDP suspended him from party activities for one month on the 3rd of August, 2020. This suspension followed a recommendation from the executive of his Ward 5 in Etsako East Local Government Area.

"He persisted in his anti-party activities into the gubernatorial election in 2020. Subsequently, a six-man Disciplinary Committee was set up to investigate

the allegations against him.

"The committee's recommendations in the report submitted in May 2021 are reproduced below:

"That Kassim Afegbua has displayed gross disobedience to party rules and regulations as contained in PDP Constitution in Chapter 10 Section 58(1) b, c, f, I, m.

"That until Kassim Afegbua appears before the various Disciplinary Committees, he is hereby expelled from PDP in accordance with Chapter 10, Section 59 (1) (g).

"Following from the above, we reiterate Prince Kassim Afegbua's expulsion from the party. He is not a member of the PDP Edo State family and should stop deceiving himself to be one."

Protest rocks Enugu over INEC's alleged disenfranchisement

By CHARLES ONYEKWERE, SOUTH-EAST CORRESPONDENT

Thousands of Enugu youths on Tuesday, took to the streets to protest against what they described as deliberate attempt by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), to disenfranchise them from voting in the upcoming general elections.

The youths that have been trooping at the vari-

ous registration points in Enugu, including the popular Michael Okpara Square, marched to the INEC office to demand for more machines to ease the registration.

"There has been calls for us to come out and register and get our Permanent Voter's Card (PVC) but our efforts to get these cards is being frustrated," one of the protesting youths said.

"When we started coming to this place to register, they

come with 10 machines and after some time, it reduced to 7, to 5 and today, its just one serving thousands of people here. We want INEC to increase the number of machines.

"When we got to their office, they said that the machines available were distributed according to the number of local government areas in Enugu State.

"INEC said they only have 5 machines in their office and we pleaded with

them to give us 3 of the machines, they refused to but promised to increase the number by tomorrow," the youth said.

Another angry youth, Maria Adekunle, said this is a plot to deny them the opportunity to vote as the registration is going on smoothly in other states and very soon, the electoral umpire will tell them that registration has ended.

Ezeaputa Ike, a lawyer who addressed the press

said INEC can do better as the process is easier in other states unlike what's happening here.

The angry youths that were chanting "PVC is our right! Give us our right," expressed their dissatisfaction and conducted themselves properly, after they were addressed by an INEC official, they went back to Okpara Square to continue to try their luck and register to vote in 2023 election.

Buhari seeks confirmation of seven ministerial nominees

Stories by **TUNDE JOSHUA**,
Politics Editor

President Muhammadu Buhari has taken steps to replace cabinet ministers that resigned their appointments to seek electoral positions.

The president on Tuesday sent to the Senate, names of seven persons for confirmation as ministers.

Those who resigned their appointments to contest the presidential primary election of the All Progressives Congress (APC) include former ministers Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi of Transportation, Ogbonmaya Onu (Science and Technology), Emeka Nwajuba (Education), Godswill Akpabio (Niger Delta Affairs), Tayo Alasoadura (Niger Delta Affairs minister of state) and Damson Ogar (Mines

and Steel).

The confirmation request was contained in a letter addressed to Senate President Ahmad Lawan and read on the floor at the start of plenary on Tuesday.

Buhari, in the letter, explained that the confirmation request was in accordance with the provisions of Section 147 subsection 2 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended.

The nominees for confirmation include: Henry Ikechukwu Ikoh - Abia State; Umana Okon Umana - Akwa Ibom State; Eku-mankama Joseph Nkama-Ebonyi State; and Goodluck Nana Opiah - Imo State.

Others are Umar Ibrahim El-Yakub - Kano State; Ademola Adewole Adegoroye - Ondo State; and Odum Odi - Rivers State.

PDP replaces Abaribe with Aduda as minority leader

Peoples Democratic Party has appointed Senator Philip Aduda as new Minority Leader of the Senate in replacement of Enyinnaya Abaribe.

Senator Abaribe, the former leader of the minority caucus in the Senate, resigned his position following his defection from PDP after he lost a bid to secure the party's governorship ticket in Abia State.

He later joined the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) on which platform he has been listed as governorship candidate for Abia State.

The new Minority Leader, Senator Aduda has been the Senate Minority Whip before his elevation.

This put to rest, speculation in the past two weeks that

Senator Uche Ekwunife has been pencilled down for the position of Minority Leader.

In his stead, the party nominated Senator Chukwuka Utazi as the new Minority Whip.

The nominations were contained in a letter signed by the National Secretary of the PDP, Senator Samuel Anyawu.

The letter was read at the start of Tuesday plenary by the Senate President Ahmad Lawan.

Also, the PDP in its letter to the Senate President, Ahmad Lawan, explained that Senator Utazi's nomination as the new Minority Whip, was as a result of the elevation of Senator Aduda to the position of Minority Leader.



President Buhari

Alimekhena, Gumau, Kaita defect, APC senators now 67

Defection of three senators, Ahmad Babba Kaita (Katsina North), Lawal Yahaya Gumau (Bauchi South), and Francis Alimikhena (Edo North) from the All Progressives Congress (APC) has depleted the membership of the ruling party in the Red Chamber.

The defection by the three lawmakers reduces the total number of APC Senators from 70 to 67 in the upper chamber.

Whilst Babba Kaita and Alimikhena defected to the opposition Peoples Democratic Party, Gumau, on the other hand, defected to the New Nigeria Peoples Party

(NNPP).

The notice of their resignation and defection was contained in three separate letters read during plenary by the Senate President, Ahmad Lawan, on Tuesday.

Babba Kaita's letter reads, "As Senator representing Katsina North Senatorial District, I write to formally notify you of my resignation from the All Progressives Congress (APC), and registration declaration for the Peoples Democratic Party.

"My resignation from the APC was born out of the marginalisation of critical stakeholders by the State

Government and Leadership of the Party in Katsina State, where small people like me do not have a chance.

"I have since been joyful and graciously accepted into the fold of the Peoples Democratic Party in Katsina State."

On his part, Senator Alimikhena, explained that his decision to resign from the APC was as a result of "continuing and multifaceted crisis that has bedeviled the APC", especially in his Senatorial District, "that has created parallel executives that has undermined internal discipline, cohesion and focus."



Enyinnaya Abaribe.

Wike's vituperation denied him PDP vice presidential ticket, says Niger ex-governor 'Babangida Aliyu a PDP destroyer'

Rivers State Governor Nyesom Wike might have lost the vice presidential ticket of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to his tough nature and being outspoken.

A chieftain of the PDP and former governor of Niger State, Alhaji Babangida Aliyu said that the party's presidential standard bearer was not comfortable with the choice of the Rivers helmsman as running mate because "Wike talks too much and does not compliment Atiku."

Speaking on Channels Television's Political Paradigm programme, the former governor said: "You do not go around choosing people that will not complement you. You choose people who will compliment your office. People that are ready to take over from you and will make you comfortable."

"Unfortunately, I don't know if it is his power. Sometimes when you speak too much. When you insult your way to power, it does not always happen."

"I can't count many people who he has insulted. People will say he is always speaking his mind. But there are times you don't need to speak your mind."

But Wike said Babangida Aliyu is one the few destroying the party.

Wike on Tuesday reacted by accusing the former governor of betraying PDP in 2015.

"In 2014/15, the same Aliyu Babangida was one of the those who, with other governors, were going round to bring down PDP. And of course he was happy he did that," he said.



Gov. Nyesom Wike

Falana writes Gbajabiamila on Electoral Offences Commission Bill

By **TUNDE JOSHUA**, Abuja

A Senior Advocate of Nigeria and human rights lawyer, Femi Falana, has requested in details the extent to which the House of Representatives has gone in the parliamentary process of enacting the Electoral Offences Commission Bill which has been passed by the Senate.

His demand for explanation was directed to the Speaker, House of Representatives, Femi Gbajabiamila in a personally addressed letter titled 'Request for Information on Electoral Offences Commission Bill.'

The bill was introduced at the National Assembly in 2021 to take care of deficiencies and infractions in the nation's electoral processes which includes but not limited to vote buying, disruption of voting process and falsification of election results.

Though the Electoral Act criminalized vote buying and other electoral offences, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) does not have punitive power under the law to prosecute electoral offenders, hence the need for such Commission.

Falana in the letter to the Speaker said: "as you are no doubt aware, the Independent National Electoral Commission was empowered to prosecute electoral offenders under section 150 of the repealed Electoral Act 2010 as amended. But the INEC was unable to discharge the

statutory duty due to alleged lack of wherewithal. Hence, its failure to prosecute even one per cent of the 870,000, 900,000 and 1,100,000 million electoral offenders arrested during the 2011, 2015 and 2019 general elections respectively.

"In order to stop the increasing wave of electoral impunity the Senate passed the Electoral Offences Commission Bill on July 14, 2021 and forwarded same to the House of Representatives. But the Bill has been ignored due to reasons best known to the members of the House of Representatives under your watch. Hence, section 145 of the Electoral Act 2022 has vested the Independent National Electoral Commission

with the statutory duty to prosecute electoral offenders in the Federal Capital Territory and the 36 States of the Federation.

"Even though sections 114-121 of the Electoral Act have made adequate provisions for electoral offences the Independent National Electoral Commission does not have the capacity to arrest, investigate and prosecute electoral offenders. In the atmosphere of official impunity the leading members of the political class have engaged themselves in the dollarisation of the electoral process, vote buying, intimidation of political opponents, killing and thuggery, ballot snatching e.t.c

"In view of the foregoing,

we are compelled to request the Honourable Speaker to furnish us with information on the Electoral Offences Commission Bill passed by the Senate and forwarded to the House of Representatives since July last year. As this request is made pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, 2011 you are requested to provide the requested information within seven days of the receipt of this letter.

"Take Note that if you fail or refuse to accede to our request we shall not hesitate to file an application for mandamus at the Federal High Court to compel you to disclose the requested information."



Femi Falana

'Ekiti election, another Buhari legacy on credible polls'

By **TUNDE JOSHUA**, Abuja

Buhari Media Organisation (BMO) has described the just concluded Ekiti governorship election as yet another proof of President Muhammadu Buhari's determination to leave a legacy of a successful electoral process.

The group said in a statement signed by its Chairman Niyi Akinsiju and Secretary Cassidy Madueke that the President's disposition was instrumental to the success of the election.

"Like the last off-season governorship election in Anambra State, last weekend's election in Ekiti has also proved to be a badge of honour for President Buhari.

"We are elated to see the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and security agencies receiving rave reviews on their performance on the management of the exercise before, during and after.

"We particularly find it interesting that the logistics for the election arrived early and the deployment of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) was largely hitch-free to the extent that YIAGA Africa, a notable civil society group, rated INEC highly.

"On the deployment of security personnel, the election observers noted in their reports that security forces were observed at 99% of

polling units, adding that they were professional and non-partisan in almost all of the polling units.

"We see this as a testament to the President's determination to clean up the electoral process with a view to ensuring that elections in the country are not only free but are also seen to be credible and fair by all concerned," the statement said.

"Beyond the successful conduct of the election, its outcome is also one that is pleasing to all supporters of this administration.

"Just like President Buhari said in his immediate reaction after the results were announced, we also see it as an indication of confidence

in the ability of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) to deliver quality governance.

"We also hail the maturity of the flagbearer of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Olabisi Kolawole, for accepting that he was truly defeated in the election.

"It is not something we see when the opposition loses, but we view it in line with the credibility of the process to produce Biodun Oyebanji as the Governor-elect."

The group urged Nigerians to continue to trust in the ability of President Buhari to clean up the electoral process in line with his admonition that elections should not be seen as a do-or-die affair.

'Nigeria needs improved talks to curb IFFs'

By PAUL MICHAEL, DEFENCE EDITOR, ABUJA

Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) has called for better negotiation skills in dealing with expiring international trade agreements as well as in establishing new ones.

Chairman of ICPC, Professor Bolaji Owasanoye (SAN), made this call in his opening remarks at a workshop on mitigating illicit financial flows with the theme, 'Capacity Building for Nigeria's Negotiators for Improved Terms of Engagement with the Rest of the World'.

In his paper titled 'From Gunboat Diplomacy to the Negotiation Table' at the workshop, which was held at the Commission's headquarters, Prof Owasanoye argued that globalization has made interactions with diverse global communities inevitable.

He added, however, that the rules of engagement are more often than not, unfavourable to poor economies of the global south who lack the development and technological advancements of the global north.

According to him, "This has often led to poorly constructed trade agreements which have ultimately been disadvantageous to the growth of the country and also opened

loopholes to encourage illicit financial flow."

Prof Owasanoye illustrated the archaic practice of European super powers using their military might to cohesively reach one-sided agreement with economic minions.

This "Gunboat diplomacy" according to him, eventually forced nations without capacity to depend on imperialists for raw materials and overseas markets.

"This inimical approach was eventually countered by the Hague Convention (No 2) Respecting the Limitation of the Employment of Force for the Recovery of Contract Debts of 1907 and then replaced by diplomatic protection whereby states exchanged notes on how investors should be treated by other governments," he added.

The ICPC boss enumerated several reasons why there was need to focus on capacity building to improve negotiation skills especially in the trade and investment sector.

In his words, "Nigeria requires trade and investment to grow the economy. To attain this desire, we must have the potential to harness capital and technology in a manner that is not inimical to development."

He further pointed out that the pillars of international trade agreements were erected years ago and they tended to confer undue advantage to colonialists while Africa – itself



Dr Adeyemi Dipeolu

largely under colonial rule – had little to no say and thus at a disadvantage. These pillars, in his opinion, do not work for Nigeria.

The Chairman stated that Nigeria must align with one of the ideals expressed recently by President Thabo Mbeki which champions the need to 'build capacity to combat illicit financial flows at national and continental levels'.

In conclusion, Professor Owasanoye stated that participants for the workshop were drawn from middle level officers in public sector agencies that undertake negotiations due to

the diverse range and complexity of issues under consideration in the workshop.

He acknowledged the invaluable support of Ford Foundation as regards the project and said that "the foundation continues to demonstrate unquestionable commitment to the development of Nigeria through support for the civil society and selected government institutions."

In the same vein, the Chairman Inter-Agency Committee on Stopping Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs) from Nigeria, Dr Adeyemi Dipeolu, lauded the initiative of the Commission in organizing the workshop stating that negotiations happen in various day to day activities from the most mundane to the extremely significant occurrences.

Dr Adeyemi, who is also the Special Adviser to the President on Economic Matters in the Office of the Vice-President, suggested that it was essential for Nigeria to develop a crop of officials who are skilled in international negotiations in general as well as key thematic sectors.

He added that the cost of improper discussions has implications of varying degree.

In his opinion, "The consequences of poor negotiations can range from paying twice as much as your neighbour for the same item to costing your country a billion dollars in a mining concession."

While concluding his presentation, Dr Dipeolu said public officials who are involved in negotiations must develop a personal repertoire of strategy and tactics.

This, he suggested was achievable via early and continuous exposure to negotiation scenarios which would in turn build experience via constant participation.

EFCC charges MacMillan Nigeria publisher with \$156,700 fraud

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has charged Macmillan Nigeria publisher, Adesanya Iyiola Adelekan and one Bola Fasasi over an alleged \$156,700 book fraud.

Fasasi was arraigned on Monday in Lagos by the EFCC. Adelekan was said to be at large.

The defendants are facing an amended six-count charge bordering on obtaining money under false pretences before the Ikeja Special Offences Court.

According to the EFCC in the charge sheet, "Macmillan Nigeria Publisher, Prof. Adesanya Iyiola Adelekan (now at large) and Fasasi Bola, sometime in 2018, obtained books worth \$156,711.87 for sale by false pretences from BHS Book Printing SDN BHD of Selangor, Malaysia."

The Commission said that under false pretences, the defendants promised to sell the books and remit the proceeds within two weeks of receiving the bill of lading.

"Macmillan Nigeria Publisher, Prof.

Adesanya Iyiola Adelekan (now at large) and Fasasi Bola, sometime in 2018 within the jurisdiction of this honourable court, conspired among yourselves to obtain goods by false pretences, property of BHS Book Printing SDN BHD of Selangor, Malaysia," it added.

However, Fasasi, pleaded not guilty when the charges were ready before to him.

Justice Mojisola Dada remanded Fasasi in Ikoyi Correctional Centre and adjourned the case until July 8 for a bail application hearing.

Yahoo boy to wash toilet in Osun

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Ibadan Zonal Command of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, (EFCC) has secured five convictions before the Federal and State High Courts in Oyo and Osun states.

Among the convicts is Amusa Abdulkhakeem Oluwasegunfunmi, a final year student of Transport Planning Management at Tai Solarin University, Ijebu Ode, Ogun State, who was sentenced to eight months community service for fraudulent impersonation.

According to a statement by EFCC on Tuesday, others also convicted are Amusa Abdulkhakeem Oluwasegunfunmi, Ajisafe Sodiq Olaide, Lawal Samuel Morenikeji, Osuolale Abdullahi Abiodun, and Olamilekan Ridwan Taofeek.

They were convicted on separate one count charges each for offences relating to

cyber-fraud.

Upon their arraignments, they pleaded "guilty" to the charges preferred against them by the EFCC.

Following their pleas, the prosecution counsel urged the courts to convict and sentence them accordingly.

"Consequently, Justice Ayo-Emmanuel of the Federal High Court, Osogbo, Osun State convicted and sentenced Oluwasegunfunmi to eight months community service for fraudulent impersonation, contrary to section 22 (2) (b) (1) of the Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention etc.) Act, 2015," the statement said.

According to the statement, the sentence requires him to clean the toilets at Ataoja School of Science, Osogbo, Osun State, for eight months.

"Also, the court ordered that the convict's attendance register be kept by the School

Principal and submitted on completion of his term," it added.

Similarly, Justice Iyabo Yerima of the Oyo State High Court, Ibadan, sentenced Ajisafe Sodiq Olaide to six months community service for obtaining money by false pretence, contrary to Section 419 of the Criminal Code Cap 38 Laws of Oyo State, 2000.

In the same vein, Justice Omolara Adeyemi of the Oyo State High Court convicted and sentenced Lawal Samuel Morenikeji to six months community service; Osuolale Abdullahi Abiodun and Olamilekan Ridwan Taofeek to one week community service as their offences violate Section 484 of the Criminal Code Cap 38 Laws of Oyo State, 2000.

The courts ordered that the convicts retribute their victims and forfeit all items recovered from them to the Federal Government.

Man convicted for employment scam in Sokoto

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

One Abdullahi Paiko Aliyu, who claimed to be a staffer of the Office of the Auditor General of the Federation, has been sentenced to seven years imprisonment for employment scam by Justice Mohammed Mohammed of the Sokoto State High Court.

Aliyu has been under trial by the Eco-

nomical and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) on a two count charge bordering on obtaining money by false pretences of over N14 million

When the charge was ready to him, Aliyu pleaded guilty. He was, therefore, convicted and sentenced. Justice Mohammed also ordered the convicted to make full restitution of the said amount N14,300,000 to victims of the crime through the EFCC.

Before he met his Waterloo, the convict had defrauded unsuspecting members of the public under the guise of securing them employments in Federal Agencies, including the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS), National Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC), Nigerian Maritime and Safety Agency, (NIMASA), and the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA).

Shun election malpractice, ICPC tells corps members

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Ondo State office of the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) has enjoined corps members to avoid all forms of election malfeasance.

ICPC Resident Anti-Corruption Commissioner (RACC) in the State, who was represented by Mr Jenmi Ganiu, said this during a sensitization programme organized for the ICPC/NYSC CDS Group at the NYSC Zonal Office, Oda Road, Akure South Local Government, Ondo State.

He informed the corps members on the economic risks attached to election manipulation and emphasized that most of the challenges facing the economy were as a result of political and electoral corruption.

According to him, ICPC does not overlook any act of corruption, adding that anybody found involved in election manipulation will face the consequences.

The RACC therefore charged the corps members to immediately report any corrupt activity perceived during the election period to the Commission.

The NYSC State Coordinator, Mrs Ani Victoria Nnenna, who was represented by the Zonal Inspector, assured the Commission of NYSC's maximum cooperation.

She advised the corps members that would be serving as election adhoc staff to be persons of integrity.

The President of Anti-Corruption CDS group, Mr Faleke Anu Olalekan in his remark promised that they would shun all election manipulation and corruption

Reconstituting NDDC Board: Matters arising

The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) was established in 2000 by an Act of Parliament to undertake development projects in the Niger Delta area believed to be the goose that lays the golden egg in Nigeria. Since the commission was established, it has undertaken various development projects but sadly, many people feel that the colossal amount of funds committed to the Commission does not correlate with the projects it has undertaken. In fact, it is believed that the projects undertaken by the commission pales into insignificance compared to the amount of funds allocated to it.

The operations of the Commission have been hampered by a myriad of problems ranging from leadership tussle, mismanagement of funds and general politicization of its processes. There are growing concerns in the Niger Delta area that the Commission has completely derailed from its original mandate. From the attitude of the federal government towards issues affecting the Commission, it is obvious that the Buhari administration does not have a true, complete picture of what is going on there. The direct consequence of this situation is a general feeling of unease in the whole region.

Currently, the Commission is run by a Sole Administrator which is against the Act establishing it. Various groups in the Niger Delta region are calling on President Muhammadu Buhari to appoint a Board for the Commission. It is not clear why the President has refused to comply with the provisions of the Act establishing NDDC. Niger Deltans are insisting that the President should comply with the law setting up the Commission and redeem himself of the toga of dictatorship which the continued refusal to inaugurate the board inevitably confers on him.

On the 24th of June 2021 while receiving the leadership of the Ijaw National Congress

(INC), the President promised to inaugurate the Board of the Commission as soon as the Forensic Audit was submitted. The Forensic Audit was submitted to the President on 2nd September 2021, yet, surprisingly, the President has refused to keep his promise. Intriguingly, no statement has been released by the Presidency on the subject. There are far-reaching effects and consequences of the federal government's refusal to inaugurate the board.

The Niger Delta Rescue Mission (NDRM) has vowed not to support the All Progressives' Congress in the 2023 general elections. If the NDRM makes good its threat, it will surely have consequences in the performance of the party in the elections across the Niger Delta region. The President cannot afford to

cut his nose to spite his face by adamantly refusing to inaugurate the NDDC board as provided by the enabling Act.

It is illegal for the federal government to continue to administer the Commission with a Sole Administrator Mr Effiong Akwa in flagrant disregard of the Act setting up the Commission. If the President and the APC government want to live by the tenets of integrity and democratic principles, then they must obey the laws of the land and immediately inaugurate the NDDC board. Nigeria is not under a military rule noted for acting by fiat without regard to established rules in the land. It is only one year to the end of the Buhari administration and he must leave a positive legacy all around the country in order to be judged aright by implacable posterity.

It is regrettable that under the combined two years of 2019 and 2020, N799,000,000,000 (Seven Hundred and Ninety-nine Billion naira) was approved by the National Assembly for the Commission. Yet, under the Sole Administrator contraption, over 600,000,000,000 (Six Hundred Billion naira) payments have been made for emergency contracts without due process. Is this a deliberate act to allow individuals to siphon funds away for the forthcoming elections? The 2020 budget was passed in December and N400,000,000,000 (Four Hundred Billion naira) was voted for the Commission, but it spent over N190,000,000,000 (One Hundred and Ninety Billion) before the budget was passed thereby violating the procurement Act.

Of these monies spent, no remarkable project or infrastructure has been undertaken in the Niger Delta region. It is therefore obvious that the NDDC under a Sole administrator has been a conduit pipe for wasting huge amount of funds. Once again, the federal government should, as a matter of urgency, inaugurate the NDDC Board to demonstrate responsibility, fairness, and transparency.



THE TRUMPET

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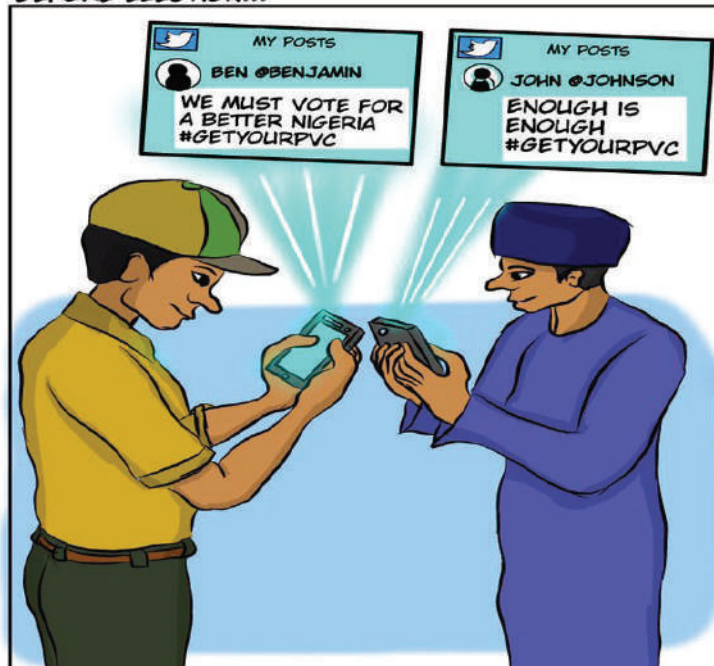
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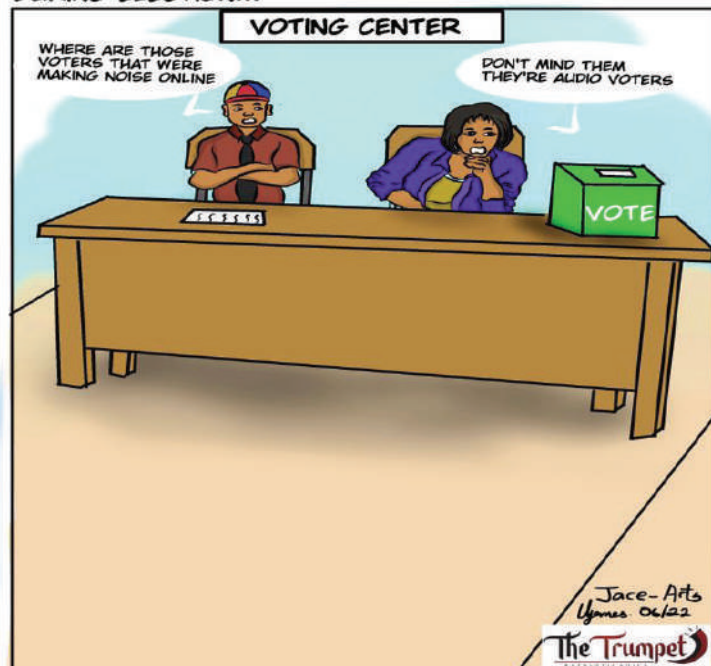
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BEFORE ELECTION...



DURING ELECTION...



Racing towards doomsday: Nigerian sand-clock

In the wake of the World War II, a truly world wide conflagration that cost humanity trillions of dollars in current world value and about 50 million lives, and which arguably was mankind's most devastating and destructive war to date, there emerged, as if in compensation, a bonanza of developmental benefits on an unprecedented scale. A flowering of human achievements released streams of novel benefits in science and technology, in politics and in civil society. These quickly and radically transformed global societies as we knew it.

Today, 77 years on, the world is on an ever expanding multi-faceted frontier, across all areas of human endeavors, in genetic science and modern medicine, in space exploration and in clean energy generation and consumption to name but a few.

Every where, these surges are upgrading and empowering life with modern miracles of health care, faster and more efficient modes of transportation and novel in-your-hand entertainment and communication facilities via digital technologies. Mankind has now firmly entered into the Age of Aquarius.

Yet in certain parts of the world, specifically in its third world theaters, the trend is of an ever increasing developmental gap between them and the rest of the industrialized world. In Sub-Saharan Africa we seem to be standing still at a time when everyone else is accelerating forward, and appear cold and indifferent to the ground swell of socioeconomic evolutions exploding all around us.

Our basic infrastructures are essentially stone age. Public utilities are all but nonexistent,

the education sector is less than third rate, a far cry from its post colonial era of excellence. The judiciary and the legislature routinely fail in their fundamental role as counter weights against the excesses of the executive in the tripartite structure of state power. Basic health care delivery systems are retrogressing exponentially, with as much momentum and determination as those of other countries are surging forward.

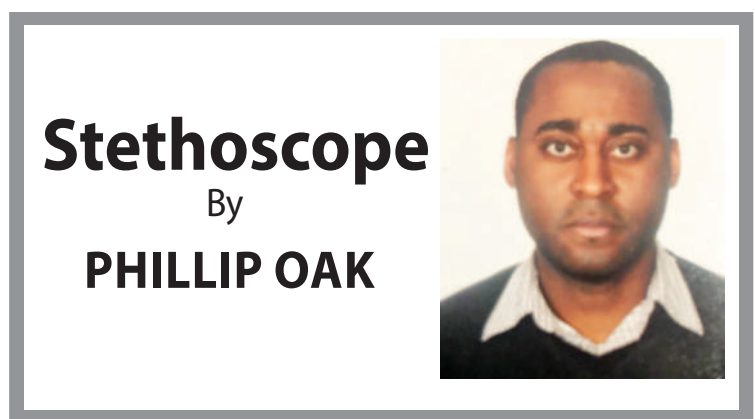
And nowhere is this sorer a truth than in Nigeria, the Giant of Africa, a country endowed with enormous human and material resources and to which so much was given at its inception and therefore so much more expected.

With a land area of over 300,000 square miles, a total population, using the most recent World Bank data, of 216 million, and with an abundance of agricultural, crude oil (its the 12th largest petroleum producer in the world with the 10th largest reserve) and mineral resources the country should have no other destiny but that of being an African powerhouse on the global stage. But alas, egregious corruption and mismanagement have brought us to this precipice where we now perch on the verge of total self destruction.

6 years of government under the current administration has not only failed to bring about the fulfillment of the election campaign promises of improved national security, the resurrection of dilapidated infrastructure and curtailing of public office corruption but instead it has overseen the worst deterioration of these indices in recent history. The country is now rated 0.539 in the Human Development Index (HDI), a measure of a country prosperity derived, not from bare

economic improvement indicators but from estimates of its human populations' wellness. Nigeria's position amounts to a place in the low HDI category of countries. According to current World Bank data in 2018 40 percent of Nigerian lived below the poverty line. While another 25 percent (53 million) were vulnerable. The number of Nigerians living below the international poverty line is expected to rise by 12 million in 2019-23.

As if that was not enough wholesale banditry and the wanton taking of lives are now the order of the day. Just recently the macabre massacre of 50 innocent worshippers in an Owo town catholic church in a sneak attack from a band of terrorist ostensibly now identified by the government as members of the international terrorist organization ISWAP stands as a morbid parable of the terminal decay the country now finds itself in. Following that meaningless and crass crime there was no significant reaction from the government over an obviously alarming breach of National Security. The ongoing presidential primaries went on as usual as if it was a herd of cattle that had just been slaughtered. The Vice President paid a perfunctory visit to the church and a few security sessions were held in Abuja and that was that. No storied outraged outcry, no security lockdowns marshaling elite security forces in a massive manhunt of the perpetrators. In a country like Nigeria, a dominant regional power with preeminent military and security forces not a leave was stirred in pursuit of these blood soaked miscreants. These sort of atrocities have become common place. It was business



Stethoscope

By

PHILLIP OAK

as usual and to all intents and purposes the perpetrators waltzed away scotfree locked and loaded to strike another day.

This morbid example of our current reality as a nation, the apparent abject absence of government in the affairs of the common man, foretells a very bleak future indeed if nothing changes fast. The lowly Nigerian's situation and deprivations are getting worse, his future ever more uncertain and the value of his life and property ever more precarious. The country is at the closest in decades to internecine war. This situation is as painful as it is inexcusable. Because there is no other cause for it but the willful intransigence of her nationals to collectively move forward.

Era after era Nigeria's GDP gets a boost from massive international crude oil price hikes with massive amounts realized from oil revenues, such as the "missing" 12 billion dollar windfall in petroleum revenues under the military dictatorship of General Ibrahim Babaginda. And now, post the Corona pandemic, a barrel has gone from a below 0 dollar value during the hey days of the pandemic in 2020 to being well over 100 dollars per barrel today. The country produces over 140

million barrels per day on average yet this significant uptick in income is certain to translate very poorly into any real world benefits for the poor man on the street. He will likely remain without power, water or good roads, basic amenities with which to make ends meet. What he does have is the growing burden of the national debt which now stands at 221.25 billion US dollars, giving a debt to GDP ratio of 23.3 percent. And given the long term nature of these loans and the fact that we are already servicing our debt with well over 76 percent of our GDP his future generations have effectively been mortgaged for centuries to come. We "stand accused of foolish blunder in choosing to plumb this path of fallow surrender" (Phillip Desaint: Calabash of Colors) yet we do not seem to have what it takes to see the danger and follow the safer paths already settled by others. Not to seek immediate solutions to sustained developmental improvements both in terms of human resources and our infrastructure will tantamount to our having set up a sand-clock towards Doomsday.

•Nigerian-born Dr. Oak writes from Canada

Research links heart trouble to lifestyle

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Many sicknesses could have been averted if parents, teachers and health workers adequately educate our youths about the food they eat and what they drink in their youthful age. It has been observed that many of the heart problems of middle and old age such as high blood pressure, hardening of the arteries, heart disease, and stroke results from the way a person has lived and what he ate, drank, and smoked when younger. However in order to really understand this subject matter, we want to examine what

High Blood Pressure is all about, signs of high blood pressure, what to do to prevent or care for high blood pressure, what fat people should know and do; and also advice younger persons who wants to stay healthy when they are older. What is Blood Pressure? Blood pressure simply is the pressure exerted by the blood against the wall of the arteries and veins; it varies during the heartbeat cycle, and according to a person's age, health and physical condition. High blood pressure results in

heart failure, that is, reducing pumping efficiency of the heart. High blood pressure can cause many problems such as heart disease, kidney disease, and stroke. Fat people are especially likely to have high blood pressure. Signs of High Blood Pressure: (1.) Frequent headaches; (2.) Pounding of the heart and shortness of breath with mild exercise; (3.) Weakness and dizziness; (4.) Occasional pain in the left shoulder and chest. All these problems may also be caused by other diseases. Therefore, if you suspects you have high blood pressure, you should see a health worker and have your blood pressure measured. What to do to prevent or care for High Blood Pressure: (1.) Overweight people should lose weight. To be very fat is not healthy. Too much fat helps cause high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, gallstones, diabetes, arthritis in legs and feet, and other problems. Fat people should lose weight by: (1.) Not eating grease, fatty, or oily foods. (2.) Not eating sugar or sweet foods. (3.) Getting more

exercise. (4.) Not eating so much of anything, especially starchy foods, like corn, bread, potatoes, rice, yam, cassava. However, they can eat more fruit, vegetables, and lean meat. To lose weight, fat people should eat only half of what they now eat. Another way to prevent or care for high blood pressure, is to avoid fatty foods especially pig fat, and foods with a lot of sugar or starch. Always use good vegetables oil instead of pig fat. Food should be prepared and eaten with little or no salt. When your blood pressure is very high, the health worker may give you medicines to lower it. Many people can lower their blood pressure by losing weight if they are fat, and by learning to get enough rest. As earlier said that younger people should be educated on importance of lifestyle; therefore younger people who want to stay healthy when they are older should endeavor to: (1.) Eat well -- enough nutritious foods, but not too much rich or greasy food. Avoid getting overweight or fat. (2.) Do not

drink a lot of alcoholic drinks. (3.) Do not smoke. (4.) Keep physically and mentally active. (5.) Try to get enough rest and sleep. (6.) Learn how to relax and deal positively with things that worry or upset you. In a nutshell, High Blood Pressure and hardening of the arteries (arteriosclerosis), which is the main causes of heart disease and stroke, can usually be prevented or reduced by doing the things recommended above. The lowering of high blood pressure is important in the prevention of heart disease and stroke. Persons who have high blood pressure should have it checked from time to time and take measures to lower it. Finally, those who are not successful in lowering their blood pressure by eating less (if they are overweight), giving up smoking, getting more exercise, and learning to relax, should consult their doctor for medicines to lower blood pressure.

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Police arrest suspected kidnappers in Adamawa

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

Adamawa State Police Command has apprehended 13 suspected kidnappers and confiscated several weapons including AK 47 rifle, dane guns, three motorcycles, and N358,500 among others.

At a press conference at the police headquarters, Monday, the Commissioner of Police, CP Sikiru Kayode Akande, appreciated the Adamawa state government, sister

security agencies, journalists, and all stakeholders for their contributions which led to the success.

The police commissioner assured that the Force would not rest on its oars until all criminals were brought to book, urging the public to maintain their unflinching support to the command.

According to him, the suspects were arrested in different raids across the State.

"The command appreciates members of the general public and

further assures that all the suspects will be diligently prosecuted on completion of the investigation.

"The police will not relent in the manhunt of those suspects at large until they are apprehended and brought to book. We are reassuring all that measures are in place to ensure peace and stability in the state," Akande added.

He assured the general public that all those apprehended will be duly and diligently prosecuted upon completion of investigation.



CP Akande

Kidnappers release NFF ex-secretary, two others

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

Bauchi Police Command has confirmed the release of a former Secretary of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF), Alhaji Sani Toro, erstwhile Assistant Coach of the Super Eagles, Garba Yila, and Alhaji Isa Jah by their abductors.

Spokesman of the Command, SP Ahmed Wakil, who confirmed their release to journalists in Bauchi on Tuesday, said there is no details yet on how they were released.

Meanwhile, a close associate of Toro, Mr Aliyu Gumau, who spoke to news men said that all of them were released Tuesday morning around 5 am.

"They were returned to Abuja to rest and have some medical examination but they are in good health, we appreciate Allah for that.

"They have since been reunited with their families in Bauchi," he said

The trio were abducted on Saturday while coming back from a wedding in Abuja around Akwanga in Nasarawa State.

NDLEA arrests 17,647 alleged drug offenders, 10 barons

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

Jails 2,369, UNODC calls for more support

National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has said a total of 17,647 offenders and 10 barons have been arrested in the last 17 months. It disclosed that it secured conviction of 2,369 while 11,000 drug users were rehabilitated within same period.

Chairman/Chief Executive of NDLEA, Brig-Gen Mohamed Buba Marwa (Rtd) disclosed this on Monday in Abuja during a press briefing to begin activities to mark this year's UN Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Drug Trafficking.

The event with theme, "Addressing Drug Challenges in Health and Humanitarian Crises, will be concluded on Monday 27th June, 2022.

According to Marwa, "For us at the Agency, we are abreast of time and trends as shown by the priority accorded treatment and care. In 2021, about 8,000 drug users were counselled and rehabilitated, in most cases through brief interventions. We continued the effort in the first five months of 2022, whereby an additional 3,523 were also counselled and treated in NDLEA facilities.

"Simultaneously, we have

continued to shut the tap of illicit flow of drugs with the arrest of over 17,647 offenders including 10 drug barons between January 2021 and May 2022, more than 2,369 convicted and jailed within the same period while 154,667.339kg drugs have been seized in the first five months of this year alone."

The NDLEA boss said changing dynamics have forced a paradigm shift that encompasses a balanced approach to tackling the drug problem in the country.

He added that this has brought to the fore the imperative of looking at the drug problem through the lens of public health and also tackling such as a broader social problem rather than through the conventional, narrow, criminal matter approach.

"It has, therefore, also become prudent to initiate mechanisms and measures that are proactively extenuating. In our case, the National Drug Control Master Plan (NDCMP) 2021-2025, launched last November, has incorporated components that tend to the health concerns of drug abuse. Some of the activities

lined up for this week are reflective of the realignments in our approach to the illicit substance problem," he stated.

While stating that the Agency's Drug Demand Reduction Department has been galvanized and working non-stop to ensure that the health aspect of the drug abuse calculus is getting adequate attention, Marwa said a number of other measures are being taken to strengthen the process.

According to him, "the Agency's policy of Drug Integrity Test is predicated on getting help to drug users suffering in silence because they cannot seek the needed health treatment due to social stigma and discrimination.

"This is why in a short while from now, we will be unveiling the NDLEA Call Centre that will be manned by professionals and experts in counselling, psychotherapy, psychology, psychiatry and more to offer help to drug users who will make use of our toll-free lines to seek counselling 24/7.

"This will also enable those afraid of stigmatization to be able to seek help without necessarily being seen or

identified by anyone.

"Even as we rev up our drug supply reduction offensive, it is certain that we are not relenting on getting help to those suffering from drug use disorder.

"The forthcoming sensitization training on Drug Prevention, Treatment and Care (DPTC) for Governors Wives will bolster the effort to ensure that the consequences of drug abuse are nipped in the bud and prevented from snowballing into a public health problem that would overwhelm our society in the long run. This years theme will go a long way in directing our attention to an area that requires collective effort to stave off future catastrophes."

While appreciating President Muhammadu Buhari for the support so far given to the Agency to fulfill its mandate, Marwa also recognised immense contributions from international partners such as EU, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and other stakeholders in the fight against the drug menace.

In his remarks, Country Representative of UNODC, Mr Oliver Stolpe urged

governments at all levels in Nigeria, candidates for political offices and international partners not to lose sight of the public health crisis caused by drug use in the country.

He said, "Based on the 2017/2018 data, we estimated that close to 6 million persons in Nigeria could be living with a drug use dependency. This creates a massive public health challenge.

"Our key policy asks on this World Drug Day to the Federal and state governments, to the international development partners as well as to the candidates for political office is not to lose sight of the public health crisis caused by drug use.

"What is being invested right now is nowhere near sufficient to cater for the needs of millions of persons living with a drug use dependency and even less so to mount drug use prevention programmes reaching both children in and out of school and providing them and their families with the knowledge and skills to avoid engaging in dangerous drug use and developing drug use disorders."

IGP approves training for PPROs, lauds UN, others for partnership

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

Inspector-General IGP Usman Alkali Baba has approved a strategic training and retraining for all Police Public Relations Officers (PPROs) across the country

This was contained in a statement by the Force Public Relations Officer, CSP Olumuyiwa Adejobi, on Monday.

According to the statement, the training is being organized under the Police Reform

and Transformation Office (PORTO) at the Presidency, by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and CLEEN Foundation.

IGP Baba expressed high hopes that the groundwork being laid by the programme would usher in a new and positive era in the Police.

The statement reads, "The Inspector-General of Police, IGP Usman Alkali Baba, psc(+), NPM, fdc, in continuation of his policing agenda to ensure the strategic

training and retraining of all Police officers, has approved a strategic communication training for all Police Public Relations Officers (PPROs) nationwide.

"The training which is the second batch in the series holds with the Force Public Relations Officer, CSP Olumuyiwa Adejobi, mnipr, mipra, 31 PPROs serving at Zonal and State Commands in the Northern part of the country and Staff Officers of the Force Public Relations Department.

"The 3-day Strategic Communication Training Programme which would hold from Monday 20th to Wednesday 22nd June, 2022, is being organized under the Police Reform and Transformation Office (PORTO) at the Presidency, by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and CLEEN Foundation.

"The programme aims to build the capacity of Police PROs to combat the trend of fake news as well as

tackle disinformation and misinformation strategically in order to produce fact based communications for public consumption.

"The Inspector-General of Police commended the organizers of the programme for their foresight and the smooth partnership which has birthed and sustained the programme. The IGP equally expressed high hopes that the groundwork being laid by the programme would usher in a new and positive era in the Nigeria Police Force."

Newspaper owners urge IGP to investigate attack, protect journalists

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

Society of Digital Newspaper Owners of Nigeria (SDNON) has called on the Inspector General of Police, IGP Usman Alkali Baba to investigate last Sunday's attack on Journalists who were in the convoy of the All Progressives Congress (APC) presidential candidate, Ahmed Tinubu in Lagos.

Some journalists who were conveyed in a coaster bus, were attacked after Tinubu visited the Oba of Lagos, Rilwan Akinolu, on Sunday.

In a statement by the national president of the Society, Otumba Femi Davies on Monday, the group expressed concern over the increased attacks faced by Nigerian Journalists in the course of performing their official duties.

It added that the safety of Journalists must be taken seriously due to the impact they make in the society.

The statement reads, "The attack shows the growing concern about the increased hazards being faced by Nigerian journalists in the course of performing their official duties recognized by the constitution.

"As a union, we will not continue to fold our arms and watch this unnecessary clamp down on the media because if you want democracy to thrive, you must have respect for freedom of the press, and free speech and be protected in the cause of discharging the constitutional duties, which is very critical for the survival of democracy.



ATMs, banks: Dirty, torn Naira notes

By DANIEL IGHAKPE

On several occasions in the recent past, I have experienced the annoying incidence of receiving torn and dirty Naira Notes from the ATM. This has prompted me to write on this matter.

It has now become a regular occurrence for a person to make a withdrawal from the ATM and the ATM dispenses dirty and torn Naira notes. On one occasion, I visited the UBA branch located on 23 road, Festac Town, to make a withdrawal. When the ATM dispensed the money, I received a bad note, which was torn. I complained to the bank staff who was present at the ATM centre, but he claimed nothing was wrong with the money. I then

tried to use it for transportation, and the transporters refused to collect the money, except for one who reluctantly accepted it eventually.

On more than one occasion, I have experienced receiving bad, dirty and torn Naira notes from other banks ATMs, like GTBank, along 23 road in Festac Town. The experience can be very annoying, and for example, with the most recent occurrence just some days ago, on a Saturday morning, I complained to the security guard about receiving a torn Naira note - the tear being on the number area of the #1,000 note. The security guard asked me to come back on Monday to resolve the issue.

So, I would like to use this medium to complain about bank

ATMs dispensing , bad, dirty and torn Naira notes. Imagine a scenario where someone needs to use the money he withdraws from an ATM for some urgent expenses, such as for food, medications, transportation, or something else. He withdraws the money successfully, but finds out that the money is bad, dirty and torn. He tries to spend the money, but it is rejected by several people. Suppose it is during the weekend, and he has no other money in his bank account or at hand. What should the person do? How can he wait till the beginning of the next working week to report the bad currency note issued by the bank's ATM? What happens to the urgent need that he wanted to use the money

for, when several people are rejecting the bad money that the ATM dispensed?

Please, this is calling on the banks, particularly the officials who have the responsibility of loading the banks' Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) with cash, to kindly and considerately take extra care to ensure that they load their ATMs with clean, non-mutilated, useable, Naira notes, to help reduce/eliminate the frustrating incidence of receiving bad, dirty and torn notes from the ATMS, which are usually rejected by people. Thank you!

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Firms relish benefits of W'Africa Food, Beverage exhibition

By EDU ABADE, Business Editor

Exhibitors at the just concluded Food and Beverage West Africa exhibition in Lagos relished the benefits and opportunities of the event, as over 200 firms from five continents of the world showcased their products in the Nigerian market.

Chairman of the Food and Beverage Marketers, Onitsha, Anambra State, Chief Victor Nwawuzie, who declared the exhibition open, expressed satisfaction over the high number of participants, adding that the event had added value to their businesses since inception.

"The trade show has brought foreign companies to our doorsteps and by this, we have been able to cut reduce travelling expenses. The manufacturers are with us. We thank the organisers for creating this platform where the manufacturers from across the world can converge in Nigeria to meet local traders for business talks. Nigeria is a big market waiting to be explored," he said.

Also speaking at the event, Managing Director of the BtoB Events, Jamie Hill, expressed enthusiasm over the number of firms that displayed their products during the event, adding that it was also an avenue for local firms to network with their bigger counterparts in the industry.

"When it comes to big business for the Food and Beverage West Africa Exhibition in sub-Saharan Africa region, which is the largest food and beverage trade exhibition, the right place to be now is Nigeria.

"We are humbled and honoured to host the fourth edition exhibition here again. We have over 200 exhibitors from across between 40 and 50 countries, spanning five continents around in the world.

"I am impressed with the local exhibitors who attended the event from Nigeria. We will do everything possible to support our local business. We want them to compete with the big players globally.

"Hopefully, we expect them to grow their businesses and begin to also export to other countries. This, really, will drive the economy for Nigeria and move things forward as we move away from the COVID-19 pandemic," he said. One of the firms, a leading exporter of organic and conventional dates, Sharmeen Foods Company Limited from Pakistan, spoke about their products for display at the event.

Deputy Manager, Key Accounts (Export), Syed Ziyad Hussaini, said: "In this year's show, we have wide range of products from pitted dates, chopped dates, organic pitted dates, fruit bar, dairy biscuits etc. all our entire products are date-based.

'Bayelsa an emerging food tourism destination'

By AHERHOKE OKIOMA, Yenagoa

Senior Special Assistant (SSA) to the Bayelsa State Governor on Tourism, Piriye Kiyaramo, has said sustainable gastronomy practices can play positive roles in sustainable development of the country.

Kiyaramo, who spoke to journalists at the Ernest Ikoli Press Centre of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) in Yenagoa in commemoration of this year's sustainable gastronomy day, described Bayelsa State as an emerging gastronomy tourism destination to watch in the South-South region due to the availability of several local cuisines.

He noted that the predominance of traditional cuisine in rural areas was an opportunity for sustainable development, since food could be offered to tourists to meet their culinary, cultural, historical and leisure needs during their trips.

He added that sustainable

gastronomy practices in rural communities are beneficial in terms of business and health wise because sustainable gastronomy practices will reduce greenhouse gases in resources used in transporting food, as well as boosting the local economy by supporting local farmers.

Kiyaramo maintained that quality local foods constituted tourist resources, which contribute to the development of tourism, while their promotion and commercialisation come with positive economic impacts on local communities in creating wealth and improving rural livelihoods, as well as enhancing the appeal and image of the destination.

He restated that the use of food for expression and connection with the local culture and biodiversity of destinations, make food or culinary tourism experience a delight to tourists, just as he advised customers to be mindful of the sources of the food they choose for health reasons.

He explained that gastronomy or culinary tourism refer to travel motivated by the pursuit of enjoyment of unique and memorable food and drink experiences in far and near destinations, including travelling to new towns and neighbourhoods to eat or drink at special grocery stores or restaurants.

Stressing that gastronomy tourism had become a way of promoting understanding among different cultures, while bringing people and traditions closer together, he noted that gastronomy or food tourism has started emerging as an important protector of cultural heritage, which helps to create job opportunities, especially in the rural areas.

Kiyaramo, who is popularly known as 'Mr. Tourism,' restated that traditional foods and cuisines were excellent ways of attracting tourists to rural destinations, saying that eating local cuisines has become an integral part of the travel experience, as food is



Piriye Kiyaramo

used to meet both entertainment and cultural needs.

He also stressed the need for host communities to substantiate authenticity by offering gastronomic products and experiences that faithfully communicate an intimate link between food, place and the local communities to enhance the appeal and image of the destinations.

Nigeria needs diversified, resilient economy, ICAN insists

By CHARLES ONYEKWERE, South East Correspondent

Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN) has declared that Nigeria is in dire need of a more diversified and resilient economy to survive its present economic downturn.

The 58th President of ICAN, Tijani Musa, stated this during the investiture of the eighth Chairman of Abakaliki and District Society of ICAN, Mrs. Chima Ijeoma Okikechi at the Osborn La-Palm Resort in Abakaliki, Ebonyi State.

Musa, who explained that corruption had eaten deep into the fabrics of the national economy, urged accountants to rise up and play significant roles in building

an invincible and sustainable economy.

"Corruption does not know religion or ethnicity. A major lesson learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic was the need for more diversified and resilient economy and that should not be easily forgotten. Chartered Accountants need to rise up and play significant roles in building an invincible and sustainable economy.

"The 70 District Societies also mentor prospective Chartered Accountants and embark on various Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSRs) and capacity building," he said.

He charged the new Chairman and her team to give their

best towards the growth of the profession and collaborate with relevant stakeholders to proffer lasting solutions to the current economic stress confronting the country.

"We are gathered today to inaugurate the new Chairman and executive of Abakaliki and District Society and it is imperative to inform you that there are 69 other district societies in the 36 states of the federation, including the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja and five international districts in the UK, USA, Canada, Malaysia and Cameroon," he added.

Speaking, Okikechi, who pledged to do her best to develop ICAN in the state, enjoined her

team to work with a sense of purpose to achieve the organisation's vision and mandate during their tenure.

Her words: "The little time I have been in the Executive Committee of Abakaliki and District Society has shown that this is an enormous task, but I accept to serve in this capacity for the good of our district and ICAN at large.

"There is no mountain of responsibility that cannot be surmounted with a team spirit. I, therefore, urge members of my team to work with one mind, so that our tenure will be second to none in terms of positive achievements. This is a call to service."

Nigeria Customs VIN valuation still causing hitches in clearance of vehicles

Following the deployment of its controversial policy on Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) valuation on May 20, 2022, which it introduced in early March 2022, the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) met stiff opposition and resistance by freight forwarders and other stakeholders.

The *Trumpet* recalled that the freight forwarders argued that the VIN valuation made the cost of cleaning imported vehicles to rise by about 309 per cent and they subsequently shutdown the nation's ports in protests against the policy.

Part of their arguments at that time was that the VIN valuation failed to consider the depreciation value of accidented vehicles and the legal notice of 30 days given by the Nigeria Custom Service which talks about rebates.

After wide consultation with the freight forwarders, importers and other stakeholders, management of the NCS announced that it has taken cognisance of the stakeholders' complaints, hence the revised VIN valuation was redeployed.

However, under the new implementation, there was standard VIN and non-standard VIN for which the NCS had directed that any vehicle with non-standard VIN should be routed through the Customs Area Controllers, being the categories of cars that fall under the 846 Code.

Any importer whose vehicle falls under the non-standard VIN is required to write a letter of application to the Customs Area Controller of the affected command, who would now direct the valuation officer to issue valuation on such vehicles.

Speaking on the development, Chairman, Association of Nigeria License Customs Agents (ANLCA) at the Tin Can Island Port, Alhaji Mohammed Mojeed, said freight forwarders were disappointed at the entire process.

"We are disappointed because what we expected is not what we see now. We didn't expect to still be going through the area controllers for the 846 Code, because we believe that the moment we insert our VIN number, we should get the real value. That is what we were told at the initial stage.

"We understand that there is no new innovation that would not have initial challenges. We, however, appeal to the management of NCS to look into our complaints with a view of resolving them to ensure that the policy delivers value and its set target," he said.

Market capitalisation of tier-1 banks declines by N129b

Stories by JOHNMARK UKOKO

Market capitalisation of five banks depreciated by 5.46 per cent to close at N2.23 billion as investors in them lost N128.61 billion in the trading week.

Referred to as the tier-1 banks, they are First Bank, UBA, GTBank, Access and Zenith (FUGAZ).

After four trading days of the week, all of the five tier-1 Nigerian banks suffered negative market sentiments with First Bank of Nigeria Holding Plc leading the decline, as data released by the Nigerian Exchange (NGX), showed that the market capitalisation of the banks dropped N223 trillion, depreciating by 5.46 per cent during the week.

A summary of the performance of each bank showed that FBNH's share price declined by 8.06 per cent to close the last week at N9.70 Kobo, with its market capitalisation at N348.18 billion during the trading week.

FBNH share price stood at N9.70 Kobo with its market capitalisation at N348.18 billion at the end of the week, amid sell-offs and buy-interests at

the end of the trading week.

FBNH Plc first quarter (Q1) 2022 result showed that interest income grew by 39.67 per cent year-on-year to N109.45 billion recorded in the same period of 2021, similarly profit after tax free significantly by 107.63 per cent by year-on-year to N32.44 billion during the period under review.

United Bank for Africa (UBA) Plc depreciated by 2.60 per cent as its market capitalisation closed the week at N256.50 billion, losing N6.84 billion week-on-week with its shares price standing at N7.50.

UBA Plc released its Q 1, 2022 financial report, revealing that net interest income appreciated by 14.10 per cent to N84.87 billion from N74.39 trillion from N8.54 trillion in December 2021, in addition, the company's profit after tax rose by 8.76 per cent to N38.16 billion in the same period of 2021.

Guaranty Trust Holding (GTCO) Plc depreciated by 27.016 billion after its market capitalisation declined to N619.53 billion from N647.49 billion at the end of the trading week.

The decline was attributable to the decrease in its share price



CBN Gov. Godwin-Emefiele

from N22.00 traded at the end of last week to N21.05 as of the close of business, reflecting a decrease of 4.32 per cent.

The Q1 2022 financial results revealed that the group reported a growth of 9.10 per cent in net interest income from N52.43 billion recorded in the corresponding period, however, post-tax profit depreciated by 5.13 per cent to N43.21 billion in the period.

Access Bank Plc share price depreciated by 5.10 per cent to close the week at N9.31 and the market capitalisation lost N17.76 billion to stand at N330.57 billion at the end of the week.

The depreciation was attributed to the 6.35 per cent decline in its share price from N21.40 traded at the end of last week to N22.85.

The bank's Q1, 2022 financial result for the period ended March revealed that Net interest income for the period grew by 20.89 per cent to N100.54 billion from N83.17 billion in the corresponding period of 2021.

However, profit after tax for the period reported a growth of 9.68 per cent from N53.66 billion in the current period.

The Nigerian Exchange Limited (NGX) closed negative week-on-week as it depreciated by 2.68 per cent to close at 51,768.08.

The tier-1 banks make up over 700 per cent of the NSE banking sector index hence, strongly influencing the growth or otherwise of the index, as NGX banking index dropped by 5.20 per cent from 415.33 to close at 393.72 points.

OPEC at 60, unveils book in Iraq

Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has launched a book titled: OPEC 60 Years And Beyond, A Story Of Courage, Cooperation And Commitment to mark its 60 years of existence.

To celebrate the occasion, OPEC and Iraq's Ministry of Oil unveiled the historical book in Iraq on the sidelines of the 60th edition of Energy Forum to mark the 60th anniversary of the 13-member organisation, which has Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela as its founding members.



Secretary General of OPEC, Dr. Mohammad Barkindo

At the anniversary ceremony, OPEC said the launch of the book took place in the Baghdad, the Iraqi capital adding that the organisation was founded there in September 1960.

The publication was written by the OPEC Secretariat to commemorate the organisation's 60th anniversary and was published to highlight OPEC's objective and achievements in the past six decades and populate it to wider readership.

The first section of the book conducts a thorough review of OPEC's history, including

key events that predated its establishment, while the second part explores important topics for the organisation's mission and work.

The two sections, which involve international dialogue and sustainable development are divided into analysing the 60 years cutting across issues.

At the launch, Iraq Minister of Oil and head of its delegation to OPEC, said: "It is a great privilege to launch the special book commissioned for the 60th anniversary of OPEC founding.

The Iraqi Minister of Oil, Ihsan Abdul Jabbar Ismael, who recalled how OPEC was founded in September 1960 in Baghdad, said the organisation came into existence, as a result of the vision of its founding members, adding: "The fact that our country is the birth place of OPEC is an enormous source of pride for all Iraqis.

"We are proud of our role as a founding member, as a constructive force throughout the organisation's history. We are pleased that the Iraq government has sponsored this book and hope it will be useful reference tool for the future generation, who seek to acquaint themselves better with our organisation."

According to the minister, the book represents an effort to showcase the milestones in a meticulously researched book on the organisation's accomplishments throughout its history.

Speaking, Secretary General of OPEC, Dr. Mohammad Barkindo,

who said the organisation had done well over the years, commended OPEC for its achievements in the last six decades, noting that surviving 60 years was a monumental achievement for OPEC, especially when it involved the most volatile oil commodity.

"As an organisation, we have come a long way and have witnessed many ups and downs. We have seen seven major market cycles, including the latest in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and we have evolved as an integral part of the international energy community and we have seen reasons of column inches written about OPEC.

"It is, therefore, important to stress that in terms of OPEC's history, the organisation was far more than an appendage to the history of oil. It is a story of a family of nations of people, of feelings and emotions of countries rich in culture and heritage. It is also the struggle of a group of developing countries to exercise the inalienable right of all countries to exercise permanent sovereignty over their natural resources in the interest of their national development.

"The history of OPEC underscores the adversities the organisation has faced, the challenges overcome, the achievements made and the value placed on dialogue and cooperation with other industry stakeholders including producers and consumers," he stated.

Concerns mount over booming illicit drug smuggling at Nigeria seaports

Stories by **ADAKU WALTER**

Trafficking of hard and illicit drugs has become a serious social problem in Nigeria as government battles with their importation, smuggling and influx into the country. Perpetrators now leveraging on movement of vessels to ply their trade through the nation's seaports.

Illegal drugs often smuggled by merchants and traffickers through the nation's seaports include cocaine, hashish, cannabis sativa, codeine syrup, heroin, opioids, colorado and Tramadol, among others.

Following the development, stakeholders have called for intensified efforts at ridding the country of this menace in the maritime industry, just as the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) intercepted a 20ft container laden with 150 cartons of 250mg prohibited Tramadol tablets at Apapa port last week.

Importers of the products made false declaration of the items in the container as containing static converter and switches. However, each of the cartons contained 72 rolls with each roll containing 10 packets and each packet containing 10 sachets, while each sachet has 10 tablets.

Customs Area Controller of the Apapa command, Comptroller Yusuf Malanta, said the illicit drugs were tracked from the port of loading in Singapore to Hong Kong, China and several other ports of call to the port of destination in Apapa where Customs officers eventually intercepted them.

The Apapa Command had also in the first quarter of 2022, intercepted hard drugs including Tramadol, codeine syrup, and other contraband valued at over N1.143 billion, just as the Western Marine Command of the Nigeria Customs Service seized 32 sacks containing 2,520 pieces of cannabis sativa, weighing 1,437 kilogrammes with a street value of N168 million on a wooden boat on the Lagos waterways between February and May 2022.

Also, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) last Wednesday, stated that 4,349.25 kilogrammes of assorted drugs were seized on the Lagos inland waterways between January and May, 2022.

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of NDLEA, Buba Marwa, gave the figures during a Port Industry Town Hall meeting organised by Journal NG Help in Apapa, Lagos, with the theme: *Towards A Drug-Free Port Environment*.

Marwa, who was represented at the meeting by the agency's Commander at Apapa Port, Ameh Inalegwu, said the figure was in addition to the two commercial vessels that were seized in November 2021 in connection with importation of illicit drugs.

He said the seizure of 74.119 kilograms or 451, 807 tablets of 'jihadist drug' known as Captagon in Apapa port, held everybody spell bound.

In his presentation titled: *Evolving A Drug Free Port*

Environment: Call For Concerted Efforts, Marwa said the maritime industry is at the heart of these components, saying that several arrests and seizures have been made aboard vessels laden with large quantities of illicit drugs at the ports.

He said apart from cannabis sativa that is known to be cultivated in commercial quantities, the seizure of pharmaceutical opiates like Tramadol being exported from Nigeria raises questions such as "how did these large quantities of drugs get into the country?"

Marwa explained that a huge chunk of the drugs come into the country through the water ways, adding that the NDLEA had equally resolved to maintain a strong presence at the ports, which explains the monumental drug seizures and the series of engagements of stakeholders, ranging from bonded terminal owners and operators, shipping companies and agencies, as well as other critical stakeholders in the maritime sector.

Also, Registrar of Council for the Registration of Freight Forwarding in Nigeria (CRFFN), Sam Nwakohu, in his paper on the *Imperatives of Freight Forwarders Compliance in Fight Against Illicit Drugs*, said the fight against

drug trafficking was a huge challenge in the country's maritime domain despite government's battles with importation and smuggling of hard substances into the country.

He said several arrests made by the security agencies have unraveled a mixture of barons, importers, couriers and freight forwarders, who are the agents, shippers and haulage operators, who should be accountable for drug smuggling into the country.

"I refrain from unraveling the identity of some freight forwarders and clearing agents, who were arrested in connection with the seizures, because the cases are already in court. Packages of narcotics are either concealed within cargoes in containers or the structure of the container itself. Some of the drugs were also hidden in the walls or below the floor of containers and vessels.

"Reefer containers used for goods that need to be temperature controlled during shipping have been discovered to provide opportunities for hiding packages in the refrigeration units. Packages are alleged to be placed by some rogue employees working for shipping companies or terminals," he said.

The CRFFN boss, however, noted that the increasing number



Yusuf Malanta

of freight forwarders, including clearing agents and haulage operators, who are arrested in connection with drugs and other prohibited imports shows that the need for compliance by freight forwarders and other stakeholders cannot be overemphasised.

Assistant Comptroller General of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) in charge of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and Modernisation, Aliyu Saidu, stated that ships have become the only option for smuggling drugs since they were the only mode of transport that remained largely unaffected.

Saidu, who was represented by the Acting Controller in charge of Non-Intrusive Inspection, Paul Ekpeyong, said the smugglers, upon discovering that perishable goods were more likely to receive casual and hasty inspections due to their nature, started using refrigerated containers and bulk cargoes, especially fertilisers to peddle drugs into the country.

On the consumption of drugs by port users, National President of the Association of Maritime Truck Owners (AMATO), Remi Ogungbemi, said truck drivers consume drugs and alcohol, which is peculiar to the nature of their job to enable them to confront and resist the hostile forces of the port environment.

He blamed the indiscriminate drug intake by truck drivers on oppression, extortion and dehumanisation by different security agencies and hoodlums as well as the unjust hijacking of trucks by road traffic enforcement agencies.

Terminal operators suffer high operational costs over hike in diesel price

There are indications that terminal operators in Nigerian ports are suffering high operating costs due to the astronomical hike in prices of Automated Gas Oil (AGO) otherwise known as diesel.

Findings at the nation's port showed that the terminal operators do not enjoy power supply, hence all machines and equipment inside the various terminals are diesel driven.

At the weekend, diesel prices

have gone to N780 in some stations, while some other major petroleum marketers still sell the product for N750. Meanwhile there are projections that the price of diesel would rise further to N1,500 per litre.

Speaking to *The Trumpet*, an insider source at one of the terminals in Lagos lamented that in the face of these challenges, which had affected cost of doing business, the terminal operators were not permitted to

add a penny to the charges they collect at the port.

The source who pleaded anonymity said: "The cost of diesel in Nigeria today has skyrocketed and everything you see inside the port today is diesel driven, there is no single electricity inside the port, everything is driven by diesel.

"With all of these, we are not expected to add a dime to our charges and yet we have not reviewed our charges for over

ten years now, this is a challenge.

"When the government wants to collect their money (Throughput fees and Lease fees) from terminal operators, they collect it in dollars through the NPA, we know how much the dollars was to the Naira back then and now.

"With the little profit terminal operators make, they are also expected to increase their workers' salaries every two years, but yet they cannot increase their rate of charges on operations," he stated.

Group seeks reduction in age limit of imported used vehicles

• Customs not ready for AfCFTA, says AMDAN boss

• Seeks policy to protect freight forwarders from foreign dominance

A group, the Advocacy for Maritime Development Association of Nigeria (AMDAN), has decried the increase in duty on imported used vehicles manufactured in



Alabi

2012 and demanded that it should review the policy upwards to include those manufactured in 2013.

It also urged the Federal Government to reduce the age limit for imported used vehicles to 2010 to enable Nigerians in the middle class to afford cars.

It would be recalled that the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) announced changes in the age limit of vehicles being imported into the country from 15 years to 12 years, warning that any importer vehicles older than 12 years would be impounded.

President of AMDAN, Oluwasegun Alabi, stated this while fielding questions from journalists during a roundtable of the Association of Maritime Journalists of Nigeria (AMJON) in Lagos, saying the system had put most importers out of business as most Nigerians could not afford such

vehicles due to their exorbitant prices.

He noted that in the past weeks it has been difficult, especially for those still bringing in underage vehicles, which the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) valuation policy does not recognise any vehicles manufactured before 2013.

"If you bring in a 2008 vehicle and in the VIN, the minimum age starts from 2013, you will pay 2013 duty for a 2008 vehicle. That is the problem we are still having, because there is no place for 2008 vehicles on the VIN platform, hence they still need to get manual valuation, which is not good," he said.

He disclosed that the group has sent its position paper to the Federal Government on the need to ensure that underage vehicles get the right duty.

Alabi charged the government to reduce the age limit of imported

fairly used cars to 2010 due to the high cost of the locally manufactured cars, as well as urged the government to provide a level playing ground for e imported and locally manufactured vehicles for members of the public to make their choice base on their purchasing power.

Alabi also frowned on the level of preparedness of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) towards the commencement of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement, saying the agency was not ready yet for the initiative.

Meanwhile, he also decried the lack of sustainable policies and legislation on indigenisation of the freight forwarding sector, as well as government's support, which he said, have given room for foreigners to dominate the business, while locals were being sidelined.



Sokoto girl scores highest mark as FG releases common entrance results

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH**, FOREIGN AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

Federal Government has released the result of the 2022 National Common Entrance Examination (NCEE) into all Federal Government Colleges (unity colleges) in the country. (NCEE is for admission into the first year of Junior Secondary School (JSS 1) of Federal Unity Colleges. It is administered to final year pupils of primary schools.

Minister of Education, Mr Adamu Adamu announced the release of the result on Monday at Abuja.

The examination was written on Saturday 7th May, 2022 in Nigeria, as well as Benin Republic and Togo with 1,738 pupils registered for it (34,030 males and 37,708 females)

It was conducted by the National Examination Council (NECO) for 68,638 pupils from various schools across the country while 3,100 were absent.

The minister represented by the Permanent Secretary of the ministry, David Adejo, revealed that Miss Ajidagba Akanke, an indigene of Sokoto State, scored the highest mark of 201. Akanke sat for the examination at the Oshodi

Junior Secondary School, Tolu Complex in the Apapa area of Lagos State.

Adamu stated that the ministry was working to ensure that all admission processes were concluded by July 1, 2022.

The minister said, "this year's edition was written on Saturday 7th May 2022 in Nigeria, as well as Benin Republic and Togo.

"Major highlights of 2022 NCEE, I wish to bring to our attention include, a total number of seventy-one thousand, seven hundred and thirty-eight (71,738) pupils registered, with 34,030 being males and 37,708 being females.

"96% (sixty-eight thousand, six hundred and thirty-eight - 68,638) pupils sat for the examinations, 4% (three thousand one hundred - 3,100) were absent.

"The state that registered the highest number of candidates is Lagos State with 19,518, out of which 18,787 sat and 731 were absent.

"FCT was second with 8,623 candidates that registered, out of which 8,317 sat while 306 were absent.

"Anambra State came third with 5,335 candidates that registered, out of which 5,070 sat and 265 were absent.

"Zamfara State was fourth with 4,500 candidates registered, out of which 3,745 sat and 755 were absent.

"The candidate that scored the highest marks is Ajidagba Mariam Akanke, an indigene of Sokoto State with registration number 542121DG. Her centre was Oshodi Junior Secondary School, Tolu Complex, Apapa, Lagos, and her score is 201.

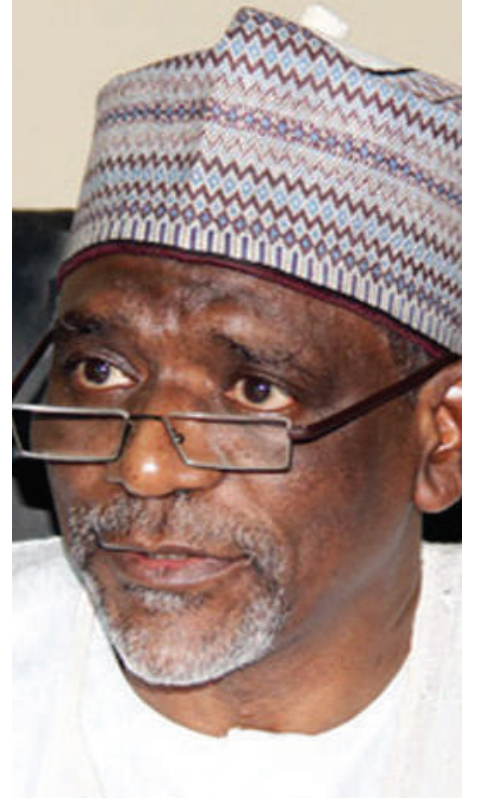
"Obot Abundance Idara an indigene of Akwa Ibom State, with registration number 550470BF came second. Her Centre was State College Ete, Ikot Ekpene Centre, and she scored 200.

"The lowest score was 01 mark, and this was scored by fifteen candidates from various states.

"The state that registered the least number of candidates is Kebbi State, with 74 candidates."

He added that the admission criteria for selection of qualified candidates into Federal Unity Colleges remain the same. The criteria are 60% merit, 30% equality of state and 10% Exigency.

The minister called on parents/guardians to visit NECO website: www.neco.gov.ng for details of the results of their children/wards.



Minister of Education, Mr Adamu Adamu

GCUOBA mentors pupils on technology education

Importance of connecting education with technology has been underlined by Lagos Branch of Government College Ughelli Old Boys Association (GCUOBA).

To this end, about 35 pupils and 13 teachers drawn from six Lagos schools and Government College Ughelli (GCU) were target audience

at a capacity-building/coaching and mentoring session, which recently held in the state capital, Ikeja.

Ten students and five teachers from GCU attended the event, which took the form of an education and technology symposium.

Five Lagos schools - Kings College,

Holy Child Ikoyi, Downen Lekki, Starfield Iju and Falomo High School, participated.

In his welcome address, the President of the Lagos branch, David Binitie, described GCUOBA as "an active Association of Old students of the school with a long history and rich tradition of excellence."

With the theme: "Connecting Education and Technology: Options that work", he stated that the Association thought it necessary to do something to help the youths attain success in life.

Similarly, the event's Organising Committee Chairman, Victor Eromosele, said, "We are starting a long journey through strategic intervention with a view to building human capacity and motivating the teenagers to be 21st century global achievers."

The Chairman, Babajide Duroshola, who was represented by the Country Director, Technical Talent Andela Nigeria, Seni Sulyman, posited that Africans have the responsibility to bring about the needed change in the continent.

He urged the students to develop interest in technology and create solutions that would address societal challenges while directing aspiring coders to the relevant websites.

The Executive Director, Paradigm Initiative, Gbenga Sesan, shared his personal experiences and how he achieved success.

He said, "If you are desperate enough, you will learn and urged the students to embrace digital communication early.

On his part, UK-based inventor of electronic imaging instrument used globally and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Advanced Micro Peripherals, Engr. Lee Foss, who is a GCU old boy, shared his childhood experience and how to connect the relevant dots.

He extolled the virtue of peer-to-peer learning in honing creative skills and converting curiosity to productive inventions.

Chigoziem Nwobodo, who represented the Principal Consultant, Lonadek, Dr Ibilola Amao, urged the students to be self-confident and not limit their imagination.

Six of the best performing students received awards and were decorated with the event's "Best in Class" medals.

Why Kaduna sacked NUT president, 2,356 other teachers

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH**

For allegedly refusing to sit or failing a competency test conducted by it,

Kaduna State Universal Basic Education Board (KADSUBEB) said it has sacked 2,357 teachers.

KADSUBEB had in a statement issued by spokesperson, Hauwa Mohammed, said the board conducted a competency test for over 30,000 teachers in December 2021.

She said 2,192 primary school teachers including the National President of the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) had been dismissed for refusing to sit for the competency test, while 165 teachers out of the 27,662 teachers who sat for the test were sacked due to poor performance.

According to the board, "Following the state government's resolution for continued assessment of teachers to ensure better delivery of learning outcomes for pupils, KADSUBEB conducted another competency test for the teachers in December 2021.

"The services of teachers who scored below 40 percent are no longer required and their appointments have been terminated from the public service for their poor performances. Teachers who scored 75 per cent and above were recognised as those who passed the test and qualified for attending courses in leadership and school management."

Hauwa said qualified teachers will be included in Teacher Professional Development (TPD) programmes to enhance their capacities to deliver quality teaching to pupils.

"Teachers who scored between 40 and 74 percent did not meet up with the minimum pass mark, they will be given a second chance to improve their capacities.

"KADSUBEB has initiated viable training programmes for teachers under its statutory TPD with support from the state government and development partners.

"The training programmes will be conducted during the end of term vacation and in their respective schools, to minimise disruptions of teaching and learning. They are also encouraged to complement the government's efforts and seek personal development for their own good.

"The board is assuring teachers and

the public that it remains committed to ensuring their continuous professional development and the improvement of the learning outcomes of pupils and students," she said.

However, Kaduna State Chairman of the Nigeria Union of Teachers, Ibrahim Dalhatu, has described the competency test conducted by the state government as well as the sack of 2,357 teachers as illegal.

He said the teachers' union in the state had earlier secured a court order restraining the board from conducting the test but they went ahead to conduct it without recourse to the rule of law.

According to him, the NUT in the state asked the teachers not to write the examination after learning that the intent was to sack them but some went ahead to write the examination out of fear.

"We asked the teachers not to write the examination after learning that the intent was to sack them. We warned that any teacher who participates in the illegal examination would not be protected by the union if victimised but some of the teachers went ahead to write the examination out of fear."

"We are not against the conduct of the competency test if due process is followed, but it should not be used as a basis for sacking teachers. The competency test should be used to determine teachers' capacity gap and tailored specific training programmes to improve their capacities," he said.



Mrs Hauwa Mohammed

What makes artiste is ability to be consistent - L.A.X

Damilola is the son of industry guru, Dr. Taiwo Afolabi, MD /CEO, SIFAX Maritimes, and one of Nigeria's fast rising musicians with stage name L.A.X. it is a name he got in school while rocking designer shoes named 'Lacrox' which gave birth to his musical logo. Demola Afolabi's hit single, 'Ginger,' became a national anthem. In this chat with OMONIYI ALLI, the Innovation Management and Entrepreneurship Master's degree holder from Manchester University speaks on the industry, his music and personality among others.

Q: As a son of a popular figure in the maritime world, how has that affected you as a person and your music?

A: When I started singing, my dad did not know about it, nobody in the family knew about it. I started singing when I was in school at that time, I was also using my pocket money to shoot video, to do everything musically until my dad saw my video on TV. It wasn't a really nice experience, he didn't really like it but so far my dad has being really cool. If you are talking about people seeing me outside when it comes to my dad, it is always difficult because when I go to a studio to record, they will be like, you have to drop something because your dad is very influential and I'm just trying to be my own boss, I'm my own self, it's not all about my dad.

Q: How will you describe your first time experience on stage professionally?

A: To be honest, I have been a performer since when I can remember because when I was young, I always went for birthday parties and have never lost in any competition. Trust me, I have always been the winner.

The day I lost was on my birthday; I didn't really loose but I think it was because it was my birthday. Have being a performer since I was young, but when I started music, the only reason why I'm nervous when

I'm going on stage is the acceptance and when I get on stage and the ac-

ceptance is 100%, then my ginger level is high.

Q: If you are to collaborate with any international artiste, who would that be and why?

A: I think I love Beyoncé because she has a crazy fan base and she is just beautiful.

Q: A lot of your musician colleagues have delved into acting. Will you?

A: The only time I will act is when I'm doing my own movie, one man movie from beginning to the end.

Q: How will you rate the entertainment industry?

A: Nigeria entertainment industry is growing higher, everybody is listening to our music worldwide. I get calls from China for shows. I never believe that they are listening to Nigerian music. I went Malaysia last week and most of the people that came for the show were actually

Asians singing Ginger and Caro and it was amazing. I think things are changing, we just need to have a better structure in Nigeria and that will be when we have a better government.

Q: What is your reaction when you watch your own musical video?

A: I criticize myself, like my videos. I just feel comfortable in my videos because when I started my videos, I will be saying 'why did I do this like that. When I wake up, I spend



close to 30 minutes rehearsing with my mirror, but now I know how to take care of myself when I'm shooting video.

Q: Where do you see yourself in years to come?

A: Where God put me, where me I want to be greatest.

Q: If you are to write a song about yourself, what will be the title and why?

A: If I am to write a song about myself, it will be surely be titled 'Girls'

because I love girls not as a Casanova but because I like to talk about my feelings for girls.

Q: If you are not doing music, what other profession will you have ventured into?

A: I will be a business man. While growing up, I always wanted to be like a boss. It is so funny that times, I just sit in front of a table and chair and I will rehearsing like, hello secretary!! Get me the file right now.



Relationship



Ladies, major signs your boyfriend is possessive

By **OMONIYI ALLI**

Hi guys, so we decided to take our discussions to a wider audience.

Here, we would be addressing relationship issues, giving advice on solving problems and answering questions. So if you have any questions or issues you need to talk about or topics you would want us to talk about, send emails to entertainment@thetrumpet.ng

Ladies, maybe you're not sure; there are few things your boyfriend does that makes him come off as jealous and overly possessive but just as you're about to draw your conclusion, you begin to wonder if you're not reading too much meaning into his behavior. While jealousy and possessive are not always a bad thing in a relationship; sometimes they are even cute. But the line is crossed when it moves from being a sign of love or an indication of your partner discomfort some inappropriate behavior between you and someone else to a tool of dominance and control that your partner is trying to wield against you. Sometimes it's not easy to discern between what a momentary act-up is and what a major red flag is. So we decided to help you so that you wouldn't see the signs and remain stuck in that relationship. So, Ladies, here are five major signs that help you know if your boyfriend is the jealous and possessive type:

1. He Stalks You

When you find out that your boyfriend or your partner is always trying to find out where you are, always keeping tabs on what you're doing.

He's always calling you out of the blue, paying unnecessary attention to background sounds of where you are. He's always asking for the specifics

of where you are, who you are with and even asking to speak with them even when it's inappropriate so he can be sure that you're not lying or he's always showing up at your place or showing to pick you up from places when you have clearly told him that you have other plans. If he's always trying to be around you without any regard for what you want, there's a problem girl. Run and don't look back.

2. He Wants To Be Involved In All The Decisions You Take

If you find out that your boyfriend or your partner feels he must have a part in every decision you take and it's unacceptable that you could or might want to do something on your own without him getting involved or without his knowledge. He doesn't seem to have any boundaries where you are concerned and isn't interested in being consulted before telling what should be done on every matter. He doesn't like it when you do anything without telling him first and before you know it the dynamics of everything have so changed that you find yourself asking him for permission over almost everything. And when you do something or go somewhere without seeking his approval, he sulks and acts like you've committed a crime. Then it is time to hit the road and be done with him.

3. All Your Friends Are Not Good Enough

If in any way, your boyfriend is always findings fault with all your friends, always pointing out their flaws and all the ways he thinks them not good enough friends. He always seems to be pouncing on their shortcomings to tell you that no one can be trusted except him. Then he is not the one girl. He shouldn't make you feel that all your friends are criminals and he is the only saint. No. Your man should be friends with

your friends. If he is not, then you should tell him bye-bye and move on from him.

4. He's Pushing For More Commitment Than You're Ready For

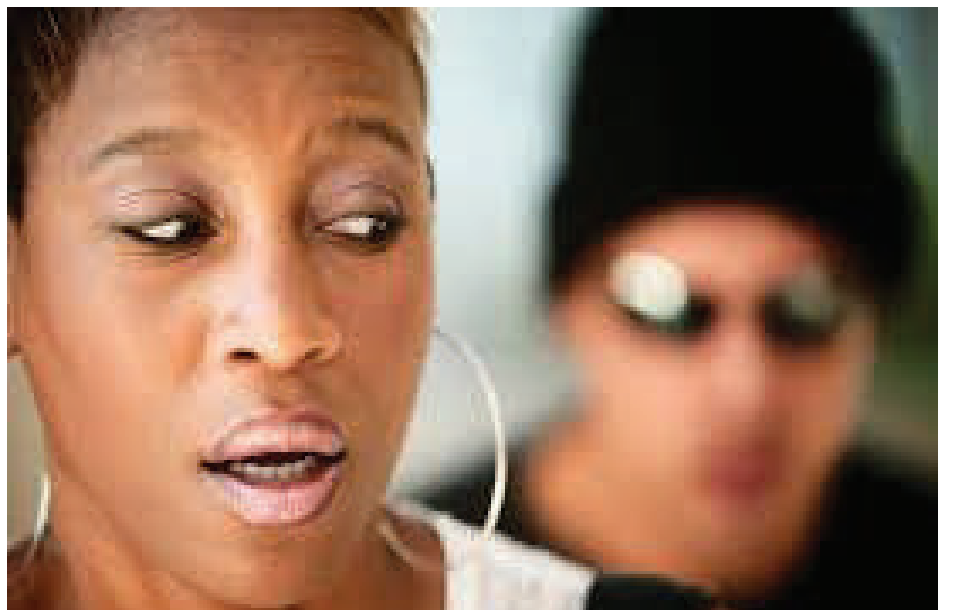
If you feel like you guys are just beginning to get closer but he's already asking you for all your secrets, asking why you've not told the whole world about you. He wants to know all your passwords, he wants you to declare to him everywhere you go. When you tell him you'd much rather prefer if things naturally and gradually, he blackmails and threatens until you reluctantly or guiltily give in. Then he is a serial killer. That's home serial killers think. Why would he want to know all of your passwords and secrets? No. In a relationship there should be trust and he should be able to trust you and you should be able to trust him.

5. He seems To Like it When You're Down

Whenever you get a disappointment or someone lets you down and he's quick to come to console you and try to lift your spirits up, it can be

cute. But if for some how you get a nagging feeling that he's secretly happy and he tries to use your disappointment as an occasion to let you know that no one in your life or the world can be trusted, except him of course. Then it is not cute. Whenever you have conflicts with your friends, family or people that are dear to you, he's never trying to encourage you to make up with them because he's quick to tell you why you shouldn't trust or have too much to do with them. Then you should run girl. He should be your rock and your biggest supporter. If he isn't these two things then he is not the one.

It is worthy to note that there is line between what is tolerable and what dangerous behavior is. There is a degree of this kind of behavior that is harmless irritation and what is indicative of major insecurity in your partner. If your boyfriend is constantly jealous and possessive, then it is behavior that must addressed immediately. Do not, in anyway overlook it. Because when the time comes when you can't bare it again, we would have done our jobs.





NFF charges Falcons on 10th AFCON trophy

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

President of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) and FIFA Council Member, Mr Amaju Melvin Pinnick has stated that he believes with hard work, diligence, focus, team spirit and oneness of purpose, Super Falcons will successfully retain their African title at the 12th Women Africa Cup of Nations holding in Morocco from 2nd to 23rd July this year.

Pinnick spoke on Monday in Abuja during a meeting he held with the nine-time African champions, where he asseverated the need for unity and indivisible team spirit in the squad as Head Coach Randy Waldrum and his assistants prepare the ladies for the task of winning a World Cup ticket and retaining their continental crown.

"Nothing can undermine a team that is fully focused,



united in aspiration, and walking on the same wavelength," Pinnick told Falcons.

"I want you to go to Morocco as one indivisible force, allowing your passion to be fueled by patriotism and be good ambassadors of our great nation.

"You all have a responsibility to be good role models and great motivators to our younger players [in the youth teams].

"Beyond all, you must

be bacon of discipline and dedication and exhibit exemplary conduct on and off the pitch.

"We won the trophy at the last tournament in Ghana and I believe we have the team to retain it.

"The NFF will continue to support and encourage the team with the best of preparations, conducive environment and a comfortable stay at the championship in Morocco," NFF President assured.

Meanwhile, the camp of the nine-time African champions swelled to 28 on Monday, following the arrivals of defender Ashleigh Plumtre, midfielder Halimatu Ayinde and forward Francisca Ordega.

Midfielder Ngozi Okobi-Okeoghene and forwards Vivian Ikechukwu and Ifeoma Onumonu were being expected on Tuesday evening, while forward Anam Imo is expected to hit the town on Wednesday.

It's Barca or never, Lewandowski tells Bayern

Bayern Munich Robert Lewandowski's time is up in Germany as the Pole has refused to back down from a move to Barcelona despite the appeal by the German topflight club to rescind his decision.

Lewandowski, who has one year left in his contract in Munich and is determined to complete a move to the Camp Nou, wants to explore new challenges under Blaugrana head coach Xavi Hernandez.

According to reports from Germany, Chelsea and Paris Saint-Germain are on his trail believing they can make a higher offer for a player Bayern Munich valued from €50m upwards.

In another report from Spain, Barcelona are willing to start the negotiations from

€30m for the 33 years old but need to deal with the unwillingness of Bavarians, who are in the position to consent to the player's exit.

The German league giants believe Lewandowski can be convinced to jettison the switch to Spain with the club sporting director, Hasan Salihamidzic, last week Wednesday, appealing to him to rescind his decision during a meeting in Mallorca, a Spanish media reported.

Also in the said report, Lewandowski spelt it out to Salihamidzic in the presence of his representative, Pini Zahavi, that he is determined to wear the Barcelona jersey.

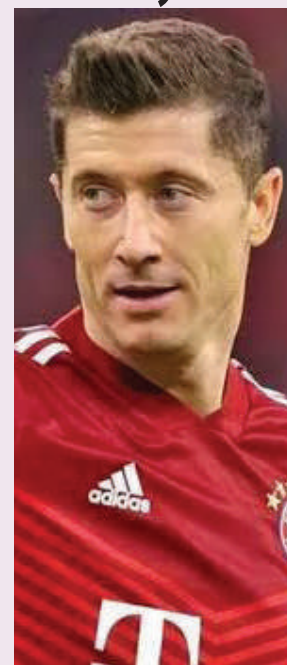
Meanwhile, Bayern have almost completed the deal to bring in Liverpool Sadio Mane to the club, who is due

for medical on Wednesday in Germany.

The 2021 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) winner's inclusion into the Bavarians squad will definitely complement the attack with Lewandowski as the helmsman.

Speculatively, it is believed that the plans of the club for the 2022-2023 season have been threatened by the tension created by Lewandowski's imminent exit.

Also, Barcelona's head coach wants the deal expedited so that the Polish striker, who won the 2021 FIFA's best striker award and a consecutive UEFA Champions League golden boot awards for two seasons, can join the pre-season tour of the Catalans.



Lukaku seals Inter loan move

Chelsea striker, Romelu Lukaku, has finally completed a loan move to Inter Milan after both clubs agreed on a £7.7m deal through a 3-hour video call as reported by the Italian media, La Gazzetta dello Sport.

The Belgium international has been eager to return to Italy following his poor outing in England for Chelsea, scoring 15 goals in 44 appearances in all competitions.

Prior to this, the new Chelsea CEO, Todd Boehly, was against consenting to the deal but head coach Thomas



Tuchel advised that it is better to allow the former Inter goal-poacher return to San Siro.

However, with this development, Chelsea will have to find a replacement with Manchester City forward, Raheem Sterling, among the list of targets pencilled down by Tuchel.

From the report of La Gazzetta dello Sport, the Nerazzurri owner, Steven Zhang, agreed to the loan deal

worth an initial £6m fee with an added £1.7m in potential bonuses.

Yesterday, Inter had stressed they would not break the bank for the loan deal for a player who is not needed in the squad.

The Italian club praised their attackers, dignifying them to have led the front line that produced tangible results since the departure of the Belgian to Stamford Bridge in a deal worth €113m last season.

Lukaku has been insistent on returning to Italy even when the season was yet to come to a close with reports from England revealing the player called the Nerazzurri boss, Simone Inzaghi, on his birthday in April to appeal for a return to San Siro.

"Lukaku, who expressed his desire to return to Inter 'in the near future' in a controversial interview in December, has been working to push through a return to the San Siro for over two months," Football365 reported.

"It's claimed the Belgium international bypassed his agent Federico Pastorello to call Inter boss Simone Inzaghi on his birthday at 8.30am on April 5 to wish the coach many happy returns and ask: 'Mister, what can I do to return to Inter?' the report said.

Former NFF scribe Toro, Eagles ex-coach freed from kidnappers

Former Secretary-General of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) Hon Sani Toro has regained freedom from the hands of his abductors.

Toro, who was kidnapped on his way from Abuja after attending the wedding of the son of former NFF President Alhaji Aminu Magari, was released, a source revealed according to a Vanguard report.

The source revealed that there was a negotiation with the kidnappers, who demanded a ransom of about N150m but reduced it to N30m.

According to the source in the Bauchi State Sports Council, who pleaded anonymity with Vanguard, he is neither aware of how much was paid nor if a ransom was paid.

As on Monday, the source had hoped the former NFF scribe would be released on the night of Tuesday or Wednesday after the ransom was reduced.

"Insha Allah things are under control. Negotiation is on, God willing, this issue will soon be over," the source said

according to Yusuf Busari.

"The ransom has come down to N30m from N150m. Hopefully, by tomorrow (today) or next, things shall be concluded yesterday," the source added.

The Trumpet gathered that the former Assistant Coach of the Super Eagles, Garba Yila, who was kidnapped alongside Toro, also regained freedom.

Corroborating the report of the release, the Bauchi State Police Command on Tuesday morning has confirmed the release of the duo.

Although the command Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), SP Ahmed Mohammed Wakil, who made the confirmation, never gave any clue if a ransom was paid for their release.



Giggs resigns as Wales manager

Former Manchester United player, Ryan Giggs, has resigned from his position as head coach of the Wales senior men's national football team with immediate effect.

Giggs has reportedly, been on leave since November 2020, paving way for Robert Page to manage the Dragons into qualifying for the 2022 FIFA World Cup in his absence after 64 years.

Manchester United is slated to face assault and domestic violence charges against his former girlfriend Kate Greville on August 8. He was also accused of inflicting bodily injuries on Emma Greville, the younger sister of the plaintiff.

Although the 48 years old Welshman has denied the allegation purported to have happened between August and November 2020, the accused alleged that he was also coercive during the trying period.

In his resignation statement, Giggs gratified the national team, noting that he took the best decision to avert any further speculation surrounding the position of the head coach of the Wales national senior men's football team.

He said he has pleaded not guilty to the charges against him before the Manchester Crown Court and his stand is widely by the media.

"After much consideration, I am standing down from my position as manager of the Wales men's national team with immediate effect," he said.

"It has been an honour and a privilege to manage my country, but it is only right that the Wales FA, the coaching staff and the players prepare for the tournament with certainty, clarification and without speculation around the position of their head coach.

"As has been well publicised, I have pleaded not guilty to the criminal accusations being heard at Manchester Crown Court," he added.

Following this, Giggs, confident in the judicial system to clear his name, stressed that he does not want his case to jeopardise or affect the country's world cup preparation in any manner.

"I do not want the country's preparations for the World Cup to be affected, destabilised or jeopardised in any way by the continued interest around this case," the Welshman said.

"I have been fortunate enough to have enjoyed some unforgettable moments during my three years in charge of the national team," he reminisced.

However, the former Red Devils captain under Sir Alex Ferguson commended the Football Association of Wales (FAW) and Dragons for the support and assistance rendered during his travail.

Conclusively, Giggs wished the Wales national team success in the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar, promising to resume coaching in the future.

Ex-Eagles star commends FC Ebedei Stadium

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

Ex-Super Eagles midfielder, Ebenezer Oluwafemi Ajilore, has commended the standard of FC Ebedei Stadium, Sagamu, Ogun State, stating it equates to that of many stadia in Europe.

Ajilore during a visit to the football academy where he started his professional career before his sojourn to Europe at Danish FC Midtjylland in 2004, noted that the academy has contributed a lot to take youths away from the streets while inadvertently curbing crime.

The midfielder, who got his call up to the senior men's national football team in 2008 and earned five caps during the period until 2011, applauded the CEO of FC Ebedei Academy, Barr Churchill Oliseh for the laudable strides and values added to give quality to FC Ebedei Stadium.

"I feel highly privileged to have passed through this academy and I owe my successes and all that I have achieved in life to FC Ebedei and club President Barrister Churchill Oliseh, who's like a father figure to many of us," Ajilore said according to Niyi



Busari's report.

"The visit to my boyhood club is memorable for me, and also to have a view of the FC Ebedei Stadium and of course the players who for me are the next football stars of tomorrow," he recounted.

The Olympian, who was among the Nigeria U23 squad that won a silverware at the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, China, advised the youngsters to be focused on the training, adding that they are the future of Nigeria's football.

Furthermore, Ajilore said the playing turf was standard and stressed that the academy has provided a platform for the trainees to pursue their professional careers.

He continued: "I had a pep

talk with them, all geared towards motivating and encouraging them to make the best use of the FC Ebedei platform, they keep focus, believe in themselves and give their best in training and matches.

"The facility I have seen at FC Ebedei is world-class and the same as what you find in some parts of Europe. The playing turf is standard and it's practically what I have played on with some of the teams I featured for in Europe. As a player, you can't ask for more than this quality.

"Such good facility brings out the best in players as they would want to give more in their training and matches.

"A big kudos to Barrister

Churchill Oliseh for thinking this big by investing into this multi-million Naira project. FC Ebedei is a platform that has helped a lot of youths in Nigeria.

"The academy has taken many youths off the streets, which in the long-run has helped to curb crime as many of these youngsters are no longer idle but engaged as they pursue a career in football," he reiterated.

The Trumpet reports that Ajilore, who also played in the Dutch league for FC Groningen in five seasons within which he featured for Danish topflight club Brøndby IF on loan, ended his career in 2016 at the Danish third tier league with Middelfart Boldklub.

WAFU B U17: Eaglets crush Côte d'Ivoire to reach final

■ Qualify for U17 AFCON

Nigeria Golden Eaglets on Tuesday broke the tusks of the Baby Elephants of Côte d'Ivoire through a 3-1 bashing in the semi-final of the WAFU B U17 tournament in Cape Coast Stadium, Ghana.

The victory also resulted in the Nigeria U17 football team, picking one of the two tickets to the 2023 CAF U17 African Nations Cup (AFCON) in Algeria.

In the early kickoff, Côte d'Ivoire's Yan Diamante got a penalty decision which he quickly converted to put the Young Elephants on the lead.

The goal did not deter the Golden Eaglets because have been charged earlier by head coach Nduka Ugbade to go all out against the Ivorians to secure the qualifying ticket

to the continental tourney in Algeria.

In response to the Ivorians' goal, Emmanuel Michael, adjudged as the best free-kick taker in the tournament, scored a brace from two free-kicks to reverberate the team's spirit to prep a comeback win.

To worsen the plight of the Young Elephants, who were trying to fix back one of their broken tusks by Golden Eaglets' 2-1 lead, unfortunately got both totally ripped off by Abdullahi Idris' header to hand Nigeria their third goal.

For the second time in less than one month, Nigeria underscored its stature in youth football on the African continent as five-time world

champions Golden Eaglets reached the finals of the 2023 Africa U17 Cup of Nations in style.

In Friday's final, the Eaglets will take on the winner of the second semi-final between hosts Ghana and Burkina Faso.

However, victory over the

Ivorians means they will be one of the eight participating teams at next year's Africa U17 Cup of Nations in Algeria.

Defender and deadball prodigy Emmanuel Michael was presented with the Man-of-the-Match award, for the third consecutive match.



Liverpool sign £6.5m Ramsay from Aberdeen

Liverpool have signed Scottish teenage right-back Calvin Ramsay from Aberdeen for about £6.5m as a backup to Trent Alexander-Arnold at Anfield.

Ramsay, overwhelmed with the move to Merseyside said that it is a dream to play for one of the biggest clubs in the world.

The right-wing defender, who became the highest record sale for the Scottish club in a deal worth about £6.5m, has subjected Aberdeen to an intensive search for a replacement.

Reportedly, the 18-year-old praised Arnold's fast growth from the academy to establish himself as a figure in the first

team, adding that he is eager to learn a lot from him.

According to the teenager, the progression that has made him play for Aberdeen and now Liverpool is an impressive development.

Ramsay further drew inference from Arnold's achievements at Liverpool and stressed that it will serve as a motivating factor to catapult him to work harder into the club's first team.

"I'm just buzzing and it's a dream come true really to be here," Ramsay told the club website.

"It was a dream come true to play for Aberdeen, and now

to be at one of the biggest, if not the biggest club in the world, it's a massive achievement and I'm looking forward to trying to show the fans what I've got.

"Hopefully I can come in in pre-season, show everyone at the club, the staff, and players what I've got and then we'll see what happens from there.

"There's been a lot of young players that have played, the likes of Trent and Harvey [Elliott] as well, there's a lot more.

"There's obviously a pathway here that's one of the reasons I chose it as well. It's not just a massive club, they give young players chances in the first team.

"So if I can come in during pre-season, put my mark down, then there's no reason why I can't push to get in the first-team squad," he stated ambitiously.

Meanwhile, Aberdeen have identified Tranmere Rovers Josh Dacres-Cogley as a possible replacement for Ramsay but a £400,000 price tag slammed by the Super White Army has given the Dons a room to reconsider the offer.

The Dons, poised to take the player away from Prenton Park, using a slice of the fund from Ramsay's deal to finance the process, believe the 26-year-old is lesser than Rovers' asking price.

Arsenal close in on Raphinha

Arsenal are closed to signing Brazilian striker Raphinha from Leeds United recent reports from the South American country reveal.

The Brazilian, who joined Leeds United circa £18.60m deal from French side Rennes, performed brilliantly from two seasons ago and battled to retain the Premier League status of the West Yorkshire club to evade relegation last season.

Raphinha's performances, with 17 goals and 12 assists for two seasons, caught the attention of top European clubs with Tottenham, Barcelona and Arsenal rumoured to be on his trail.

Barcelona were the favourite to sign the player away from England but the asking price of about £50m by Leeds has resulted in the withdrawal of the Catalans from the chase, reported Football365.

Reportedly, Catalans do not have the money handy to sign the striker and would ensure they capitalise on the funds from their outgoings to fund the deal.

According to reports from Leeds, the Spanish club had earlier tendered a bid which was considered too low to make the player switch allegiance from Elland Road to Camp Nou.

Sequel to the above, Leeds United have expected an improved second bid from Barcelona but the latter are yet to make another offer for the Brazilian.

According to Goal, Arsenal have overtaken Barcelona to land the player in the Emirates Stadium with a better offer and would in the coming weeks ratify the deal.

Goal's report added that

the exhausted Raphinha has decided to turn his attention toward the offer and will no longer wait for Barcelona's offer.

Meanwhile, former Gunners midfielder, Jack Wilshere, has commended the Whites' striker for adapting to the English style of football in the nick of time.

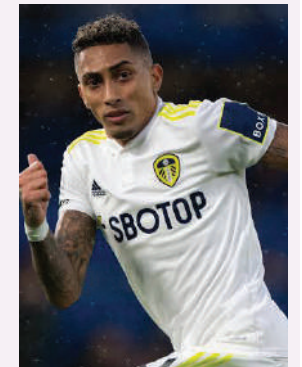
Wilshere, who spoke to talkSPORT dignifying the Brazilian to have struggled in the trenches to pull the Leeds United out of relegation, stressed that it will cost Arsenal a lot to bring him to the Emirates stadium.

"For someone who's only been in England for two years, he's got a lot of experience," Wilshere told talkSPORT.

"He came to England and just clicked straight away. He was in a relegation battle last year so he knows he's up for a fight.

"I think he'd be a good one for Arsenal. He'll be expensive, of course, he will," he stated.

Raphinha, 25, has amassed 62 goals from 245 appearances in his club career and got his first international call-up to the Brazilian national team last year where he has earned 9 caps netting 3 goals.



NFF election: FG moves to checkmate tenure extension

Minister of Youth and Sports Development, Sunday Dare, has urged the Taskforce of Professional Football Players Association of Nigeria (PFAN)/ Project 2022 and Concerned Congress Members of Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) to stealth their swords to allow the September congress hold.

Dare in Abuja told the members of both associations to withdraw all pending court cases barring the NFF from holding its elective congress this year.

Prior to this, a member of the Nembe City Seigha Obiene in 2021 has approached the Bayelsa State Federal High Court with suit number, FHC/YHG/CS/133/2021 seeking the court to declare the 2018 elective congress in Katsina that ushered in new executives as null and void.

Obiene, whose ex-parte

order was granted by the court, alleged that five members of the NFF Congress illegally participated in the 2018 elective congress that ushered in NFF President Amaju Pinnick for the second term in office.

Until now, the possibility of holding an elective congress on the expiration of the tenure of the present NFF board has been shadowy but recently, the Minister has directed the sports federation to commence the process of holding this year's elective congress.

In a letter by President Muhammadu Buhari addressed to the federation, he ordered that the statute that guides the process of electing new executives be amended to accommodate all football stakeholders, who hitherto have been disenfranchised, in the electoral processes going forward.

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

— Leo Tolstoy



61 years after murder, Belgium hands over Lumumba's remains to relatives

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH** with agency report

African hero Patrice Lumumba's remains, kept by Belgium since it murdered him 61 years ago, have been handed over to his relatives during a ceremony at Egmont Palace in Brussels.

The slain revolutionary Pan-Africanist was the first Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Belgian authorities on Monday, ten days before the DRC's 62nd independence anniversary on 30th June, returned a gold-capped tooth belonging to the man who actualised Congolese independence.

Lumumba was an icon of the struggle against colonialism in Africa.

During the private ceremony the federal prosecutor handed over a case containing the tooth to Lumumba relatives. The tooth was placed in a casket that was later draped in the flag of DR Congo.

Lumumba became his country's first prime minister after it gained

independence in 1960. He was executed on January 17 1961, aged 35.

His body was dissolved in acid and never found but the tooth was kept as a trophy by one of those involved in his assassination, a Belgian police officer.

The tooth was seized by Belgian authorities in 2016 from the daughter of the policeman, Gerard Soete, after Lumumba's family filed a complaint.

His son, Roland Lumumba, last week said that the return of the tooth meant his

family would be able to finish their mourning.

Belgium's prime minister Alexander De Croo told Congolese officials and Lumumba's family that the restitution came way too late.

“It is not normal that Belgium held onto the remains of one of the founding fathers of the Congolese nation for six decades.”

De Croo, also offered apologies for the role played by his country in the assassination.

The casket containing the tooth was set to be flown back to the DRC where it will be officially



laid to rest at a memorial site.

Congolese Prime minister Jean-Michel Sama Lukonde said

the return of the relic will be essential for the country's national memory.

The government of the

DRC has declared three days of official mourning before the official burial of the tooth in Kinshasa at the end of this month.

Colombia elects leftist president, alongside first black female VP

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH** with agency report

Everything changed in Colombia at the weekend when Gustavo Petro, a senator and former guerrilla, was elected the country's first leftist president, galvanizing millions of poor, young, struggling people desperate for someone different.

For more than two centuries, Colombia was considered a conservative stalwart in Latin America. Even

as leftist governments came and went across the region, a center-right political establishment remained in control, a continuity that cemented the country's role as a key United States ally.

Petro's victory underlines an ongoing shift of South American politics to the left, which has seen leftist leaders secure victories in Peru last July, and in Chile and Honduras this year.

Petro, 62, a former mayor of the capital, Bogota, and current senator, has pledged

to fight inequality with free university education, pension reforms and high taxes on unproductive land. He won 50.5% to Hernandez's 47.3%.

His victory, unthinkable just a generation ago, was the most stunning example of how the pandemic has transformed the politics of Latin America.

The pandemic hit the economies of this region harder than almost anywhere else in the world, kicking 12 million people out of the middle class in a

single year.

Petro's running mate Francia Marquez, a single mother and former housekeeper, will be the country's first Afro-Colombian woman Vice President.

Petro, who described his victory as one “for God and for the people”, wrote on Twitter: “May so much suffering be cushioned by the joy that today floods the heart of the homeland”.

Colombia has been America's most reliable ally and the largest beneficiary of USA aid in Latin

America. The new government under Petro could lead to significant changes in bilateral relations, especially if Petro follows through on his proposed policies on the war on drugs and the question of Venezuela.

The US has attempted to cut off Venezuela, run by the authoritarian regime of President Nicolás Maduro, from the world economy. Colombia has been an enthusiastic supporter of America's policy of “maximum pressure” on Caracas.

Petro has stated that he will restore diplomatic relations with Venezuela and hold dialogue to address violence along the long border between the two countries. He has also said he would allow the restarting of trade across the border.

Baby dies in Tanzania after being snatched by monkey

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH** with agency report

A one-month-old baby has died after monkeys invaded a home and snatched the infant from the mother

during breastfeeding in Tanzania.

Residents have been left in shock after a troop of monkeys snatched a breastfeeding infant from his mother in Mwamgongo village in

Kigoma, northeastern Tanzania. The village borders Gombe National Park.

Kigoma Regional Commander James Manyama said the villagers attempted to

rescue the infant by using force against the monkey, the baby got injured on the head and the neck.

The baby identified as Luhaiba was then rushed to a nearby hospital but died while receiving

treatment.

It is not clear what species of monkey attacked the mother, Shayima.

The police have urged citizens to continue to be vigilant.