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Buhari, Tinubu, other APC chiefs' mind games heighten ahead of primaries

By **TUNDE JOSHUA**,
Politics Editor

Buhari fired the first salvo when he enjoined APC governors to allow him to choose his successor like they do. This demand ruffled feathers in some quarters, including presidential aspirants who are pushing for the primary election instead of consensus candidacy. Reactions followed immediately.

Tension in the APC has reached a crescendo and uneasy calm is pervading the entire Buhari House edifice, the party's national secretariat, over uncertainty over where the presidential ticket pendulum swings.

Millions of the party faithful were thrown off balance by Buhari's plea that APC governors should allow him to nominate his successor from the 23 screened aspirants. Many were more confused than they were before the 'unfriendly' Villa meeting.

The President blackmailed the governors and subsequently sowed a seed of discord among them as to whether they should give an express permission to his request or requested reciprocal respect by the president.

The division is obvious as some governors seeking re-election are ready to do the president's bidding while a few others putting up resistance are cautious of being hunted by their past deeds in government by avoiding the 'Okorocho's treatment'.

Buhari's insistence also is causing rift in the party's hierarchy as two National Vice Chairmen (North West and South West) have been challenging not only seeming autocratic posture of APC national chairman, Abdullahi Adamu but by extension the undemocratic decision of Buhari to foist a candidate on the party.

More than four days after concluding the screening, the John Odigie-Oyegunle panel on Friday released the result of the exercise, creating more tension and confusion by just saying 13 aspirants were cleared.

Despite this, there is tension over non-mentioning of the 10 uncleared aspirants; not forgetting that there are petitions against a few of them including Tinubu bothering on his nationality and educational certificates.

Although Buhari has not named his anointed successor, the camp of a few of the aspirants, particularly, Asiwaju



Buhari

Bola Tinubu is already charged and supporters ready to throw caution to the winds.

Tinubu himself obviously gave in to emotion on Thursday in Ogun State when he lamented like someone who knew he 'has lost the battle'.

His outburst on how he crowned Buhari in 2014 as well as Ogun State Governor Dapo Abiodun sounded defeatist and he seems to be poised for the worse, after all an adage says "he who is down needs fear no fall again".

A majority of Tinubu's supporters do not entertain any fear of endorsement from Buhari but asked that the party leadership should allow cleared aspirants to test their



Tinubu

popularity among the delegates.

Tunde Hammed Aresa, Deputy Coordinator, Osun States' Chapter BATIC MOVEMENT of Nig, one of the numerous Bola Tinubu support groups said President Buhari if Buhari is a democrat, he should come out and work for his anointed but allow aspirants to battle it out at the primary.

He said: "all we have asked the President and anyone preaching consensus to do is to come to the Convention and beat Tinubu, if you can."

"The fear of Buhari and his cabal is that should a primary election be held, the chances that Tinubu would win are more likely than not, and they

don't want him to be president.

"The Asiwaju Camp is not a begging camp, We don't want handouts, We don't want consensus even if it is favourable to the Jagaban Borgu.

"We are ready to put out our heads for the one whose commitment and loyalty to APC is unrivaled, has been productive, has been nationalistic and the results are visible.

"Why would Mr President be soliciting for Governors' collaboration to personally pick the party's candidate to flag the ticket in a general election as his successor? What is democratic in that kind of process? A general election candidate for the whole country of over

200 million people, to be picked by only one single person for personal self interest of yours and that of some clique.

"Why would Mr President want to allow himself to be dragged by some few people to be involved in indecent undemocratic process of electing new leader to govern the country, despite many capable hands are ready to challenge one another in a well composed free and fair democratic practice.

"The attempt to handpick a successor by the Mr President would be tantamount to autocracy, oppression and dictatorial. If Mr President could allow the contenders after being adequately screened to slug it out under free and fair primary election, like it was done during his time amongst other contestants in 2014, it will definitely be acceptable and democratically satisfactory to all parties involved and both local and international watchers, this will give more respect to the President in the eyes of international community.

"Nigerians knew who they want as their next President, and ideal process of electing the most popular and generally accepted candidate would henceforth ensure peaceful governance and reduce acrimony among the politicians and also reduce insecurities in the country, because the people got good deal for what they preferred.

"Attempt to be undemocratic in the forthcoming party primary election would spell doom for the ruling party".

While a clearer picture is being awaited on the list of aspirants uncleared, consensus talk is still ongoing to get the buy-in of a few that could be compelled to bow to the 'anointed candidate.'

Delta police arrest suspected armed robbers, other criminal elements

Delta State Police Command has arrested some suspected armed robbers, cultists, and drug dealers.

The Command's spokesperson, DSP Edafe Bright, made this known in a press release on Friday.

Bright said the Command's Safe Delta Tactical Squad that was deployed to head-bridge the boundary between Delta and Anambra States during a stop and search operation, arrested one Innocent Uboh, a native of Ogume in Ndokwa West LGA of the State, with

1124 rounds of cartridges, twenty (20) bottles of codeine, and other illicit drugs allegedly belonging to a man identified as Monday Adibeli.

He added that the alleged owner, Adibeli who is 61 years old was traced to Ogume, his home town and apprehended by the police. The Police PRO said Investigation is ongoing.

He further disclosed that a criminal hideout at Okwagbe Community in Isoko North LGA of the state was also raided by Crack Surveillance

Recover cartridges, pistol, others

Operatives on 1st June 2022, leading to the arrest of three suspected drug dealers, Alex Johnholt, Abe Ujiro, and Omoro Joy.

"During the raid, three suspects namely; Alex Johnholt 'm' age 32yrs, Abe Ujiro 'f' age 25yrs, Omoro Joy 'f' age 26yrs were arrested. One hundred and five {105} wraps of SK weeds, six {6} wraps of loud, sixteen {16} wraps of substance suspected to be cocaine, four {4} wraps of Indian hemp, four {4} litres of monkey tail, sixty

(60) packs of razlers, one Indian hemp grinding device were recovered from them. suspects will be arraigned in court as soon as investigation is concluded," DSP Bright said.

In another development same day, police officers attached to the Bomadi Divisional Patrol team intercepted a motorcycle rider carrying three passengers during a stop and search operation along Bomadi/Oboro Road.

"The team subjected

them to a search during which one English Pistol was recovered from one of the passengers named Destiny Ebibo 'm' age 22yrs of Oboro Community but stays in Abraka.

"One red beret suspected to be of the Icelanders confraternity was also recovered from the other suspect named George Terrence 'm' age 22yrs of Okpokunou Community. They have been taken into custody and investigation is ongoing," he added.



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Court restrains bank, others from paying former deputy governor

By **ATHAN AGBAKWURU**,
Owerri

A High Court sitting in Owerri, the Imo State Capital, presided over by Justice M. E. Nwagboso, has issued an order restraining five commercial banks in the country from debiting the state funds in order to pay former Deputy Governor Eze Madumere, pending the determination of a suit before the court.

The state government in its application stated that the state's fund domiciled with the affected commercial banks are for the salaries, pensions and gratuities of Imo workers and

retirees respectively.

Justice Nwagboso, stated that the order followed an exparte motion filed by the Attorney-General of Imo State against the affected institutions and individuals which includes Zenith, Access, UBA, Union and First Bank.

The judge said, "The defendants are restrained from paying out or transferring out any funds from the account of Imo State Government or from the federal account allocation committee or any other funds housing Eze Madumere State." Justice Nwagboso later adjourned the matter to June 12, 2022 for further hearing. Meanwhile, the State Government



Eze Madumere

of Appeal and therefore urged the bank to open its doors to customers immediately as it would amount to contempt of court for any of the parties to the suit to resort to self help while the case is pending.

The State Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Declan Mbadiwe Emelumbe, said that the Appeal Court will commence hearing on the matter on Tuesday next week based on an appeal lodged by the Imo State Government against the judgment of a lower court.

Emelumbe maintained that although the judgment was obtained by the former Deputy Governor, Prince

Madumere, upon which a garnishee order was used to seal Zenith Bank, the subsequent appeal has vitiated the earlier order. He therefore advised all parties in the case to adhere to due judicial process and refrain from self help while the matter lasts.

Our correspondent reliably reports that all branches of Zenith Bank in the state were yesterday under lock and key following the enforcement of a court order charging the bank to pay the deputy governor his entitlements as erstwhile deputy governor of Imo, after court reversed his impeachment by the state House of Assembly.

Plans to extradite me politically motivated, Kyari claims

By **PAUL MICHAEL**,
Abuja

Suspended and embattled Deputy Commissioner of Police, DCP Abba Kyari, has pleaded with the Federal High Court sitting in Abuja to disregard a suit by the Government to extradite him to the United States of America (USA) to face trial over alleged involvement with Internet fraudster, Ramon Abbas, also known as Hushpuppi.

In a counter-affidavit deposed to by his younger brother, Mohammed, Kyari who is currently in prison custody for drug related offences, described his arrest and subsequent detention as a "political undertone", noting that plans to send him to the US for prosecution was for the purpose of punishing him for defending the country.

He said efforts to extradite him to the U.S was to undermine the crackdown on various crime gangs by the

respondent in Nigeria and overseas.

He said, "I know as a fact that the specified offences are of a political character and were, in fact, made for the purpose of prosecuting and punishing the respondent on account of his race, nationality and was not made in good faith nor in the interest of justice.

"A copy of the letter written by the respondent to the Interpol on January 28, 2020 and to the Inspector General of Police on March 3, 2020 in respect of the sting investigation being carried out by the respondent are herewith attached as Exhibit 1a and 1b respectively. This was five months before the arrest of Ramon Abbas and others by the FBI.

"The request for the extradition is not supported by any document or verifiable evidence. The request is directed to undermine the crackdown on various crime gangs by the

respondent in Nigeria and internationally and has political undertone.

"The request is for purposes of persecuting or punishing the respondent on account of his defence for the country.

"The respondent is confronted with series of charges to break him down because of his achievements and various national honours. A copy of the charge framed against the Respondent by the NDLEA is herewith attached as Exhibit 2.

"The offences are trumped up and the Respondent is seriously committed to defending himself."

Meanwhile, in an affidavit deposed to by one Bello Abubakar Sholadoye on behalf of the Federal Government through the office of the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, he told the court that the AGF "was in receipt of extradition request vide a diplomatic channel for the extradition of the Respondent fugitive

wanted to stand trial in the USA.

"That the AGF is satisfied that there is no bar to the extradition application."

application."

Presiding Judge, Justice Inyang Ekwo adjourned the matter till Friday to enable

Mr Pius Akutah (FG's Lawyer), respond to Kyari's preliminary objection against his planned extradition.

Don't be aggrieved by outcome of primaries, NRM tells aspirants

In the wake of the emergence of Nazi Okwudili Nwa-Anyajike as its presidential candidate, National Rescue Movement (NRM) has urged its presidential aspirants not to feel aggrieved by the outcome of the primaries.

According to the party, "Whoever that emerges should not see himself or herself as a winner, but the representative of the Youths and Women Community, and our party flag bearer."

NRM National Chairman, Hon. Isaac Chigozie Udeh appealed while addressing 241 accredited delegates to the party's Special National Convention in Abuja.

The National Chairman told the gathering that "NRM

was poised to rescue Nigerians and our Country from the stagnant state we have found ourselves today; State of insecurity across the country, state of the failed education system, state of the state of a failed economy, state of the failed energy system, state of persistent hardship in the land and a failed leadership structure."

Hon. Udeh also disclosed that the party made it mandatory for persons between ages 35-55 to aspire for the President to allow for youth participation in the process in what he described as "Youth o'clock in NRM."

"On that note, I want to inform all of the Aspirants to know that there will be no loser in today's Presidential Primaries

because all of you are from one community in this contest," he added

On Zoning, he pointed out that the party "believes in one united and prosperous Nigeria. What we believe in zoning is quite different from other political parties zoning formula that is why we zoned our Presidency to the largest community known as youths and women community."

Those present at the Special National Convention include the NRM Board of Trustees (BOT), nine presidential aspirants and a delegation from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

Meanwhile, Iiyasu Samaila Adamu, Northwest Zonal Vice Chairman of the NRM, has congratulated the presidential candidate.

Energy poverty prevalent in Africa, says Sylva

‘900m lack clean cooking fuel in sub-Saharan part of continent’

By PAUL MICHAEL, Abuja

Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Chief Timipre Sylva, has said energy poverty is prevalent in Africa. He noted that that many Africans do not have access to clean energy.

Sylva said this while delivering a key note address at Nigeria-Africa Natural Resource and Energy Summit, organised by the Ministry of Mines and Steel Development at International Conference Centre, Abuja.

According to the Minister, about 760 million people lack access to electricity worldwide, with 3 out of 4 of them living in sub-Saharan Africa. He further stressed that one-third of the world's population – about 2.6 billion people – have no access to clean cooking

fuels, with over 900 million of these in sub-Saharan Africa.

He noted that only 48% of sub-Saharan Africa population have access to electricity, while only 18% have access to clean cooking fuels, compared with a global average of 90% and 70%, respectively.

“Energy is an indispensable ingredient for human development and socio-economic prosperity. It is central to jobs creation, security, health, and other challenges facing humans.

“This is why access to energy is prominently addressed in the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development Goals. In particular, SDG 7 focusses on access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all, as a fundamental right.

“As at today, energy poverty is still much prevalent

in the world, especially in Africa where millions of people still do not have access to electricity or clean cooking fuels.

“Based on the UN data, about 760 million people lack access to electricity worldwide, with 3 out of 4 of them living in sub-Saharan Africa. Furthermore, one-third of the world's population – about 2.6 billion people – have no access to clean cooking fuels, with over 900 million of these in sub-Saharan Africa.

“On the average, only 48% of sub-Saharan Africa population have access to electricity, while only 18% have access to clean cooking fuels, compared with a global average of 90% and 70%, respectively,” he started.

Chief Sylva also said Natural Gas could play a major role in energy transi-



Chief Timipre Sylva

tion, adding that Nigeria has already made strong commitment to embrace energy transition.

“In particular, Natural gas is widely seen as a low carbon emitting energy source that could play a major role in the energy

transition quest. Natural gas is known to emit 30% less CO2 compared to oil, and almost 70% less compared to coal, for an equivalent amount of energy supply. It is well positioned to become the dominant fuel for generating power worldwide.

“Nigeria has already made a strong commitment to embracing energy transition, pledging to significantly reduce its greenhouse gas emissions under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. This is in addition to the commitment Nigeria made through His Excellency President Muhammadu Buhari, at COP 26 in 2021 to attain carbon net-zero by 2060.

“Nigeria needs affordable, reliable and sustainable energy resources to eradicate the prevalent energy poverty in the shortest time possible, and propel economic growth. The only viable option currently on the table is natural gas, consider-

ing our vast proven gas endowments, put at 209 tcf, with 600 tcf potential reserves. We cannot ignore this resource, especially when energy poverty is viciously starring at us,” he said.

He called on African countries to stand together to weather the climate change storm, while avoiding losing all recent gains in the quest to pull the continent's vast population out of energy poverty, and economic poverty.

The summit with the theme, “Towards a Greener Africa”, is the first of its kind in the country and it was organised to achieve the following goals: financing of sustainable African natural resources and energy projects, promotion of trade and knowledge sharing between African nations, policy and strategy development for the natural resources sector as the world looks toward a greener future and showcasing the best of Nigeria to the continent.

Africa needs huge energy generation to drive development, says Adegbite

•Akinlade stresses cleanliness

By PAUL MICHAEL, Abuja

Minister of Mines and Steel Development, Architect Olamilekan Adegbite, has said that Africa as a continent would require a huge energy generation to successfully drive its development in an era where the world drifts away from fossil fuel to clean and renewable energy sources in a bid to fight against climate change.

Minister Adegbite said this on Wednesday while delivering a welcome address at the Nigeria-Africa Natural Resources and Energy Investment Summit, held at the International Conference Center, Abuja.

The summit with the theme, “Towards a Greener Africa”, was the first of its kind in the country and it was organised by the ministry to achieve the following goals: financing of

sustainable African natural resources and energy projects, promotion of trade and knowledge sharing between African nations, policy and strategy development for the natural resources sector as the world looks toward a greener future and showcasing the best of Nigeria to the continent.

Speaking at the event, the Honourable Minister welcome the various African nationals to the summit and stated that the transition to clean and renewable energy sources comes with many challenges and opportunities for Africa to reach its developmental goals.

According to him, the summit provides the opportunity to share views on natural resources and energy market developments, attracts private and Foreign Direct Investment, formulates favourable policy and strategy development for the natural resource sector as well as exposes opportunities within the Nigerian Mining Sector.

“I want to begin by expressing my profound appreciation to all of you who have travelled to Abuja to attend this summit. This is the inaugural edition of the Nigeria-Africa Natural Resources and Energy Investment Summit, which is themed ‘Towards a Greener Africa.’

“I am delighted to see various African nationals gathering here today to deliberate and create a framework within which future cooperation and

collaboration can take place.

“Today's convention is indeed important. Africa requires a huge amount of energy generation to drive its development, even as the world shifts away from fossil fuel to clean and renewable energy sources, in the fight against climate change. In the midst of this energy, transition lies many challenges and opportunities for a continent yearning for development.

“I believe this should spur us as a continent of diverse people to co-operate and collaborate more, initiate innovative solutions to the challenges that are peculiar to us, come up with technologies and products that will lead to the growth and industrialization of Africa into a more environmentally friendly manner while encouraging the development and financing of green energy projects.

“Our meeting today provides the opportunity to share views on natural resources and energy market developments. Additionally, the morning session will focus on Maximizing Mineral potential and At-

tracting Private Investments. Our esteemed speakers will discuss the opportunities within the Nigerian Mining Sector, the underexplored minerals which are key to clean renewable energy, the success stories, and the strides towards driving Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into the Sector.

“As I welcome you all, I would like to state a Declaration of Cooperation that: ‘Participating countries in the Declaration of Cooperation would strengthen their cooperation, through joint assessment and viewpoints, with the aim to financing sustainable African Natural Resources and Energy Projects that are key to the transition, for the benefit of producers and consumers and to regularly review at technical and ministerial levels the status of our cooperation.’

“Our joint meetings and activities will support us in formulating favourable policy and strategy development for the natural resource sector as the world looks towards a greener future. A policy that is less subject to extremes, both today and in the future.

Lagos postpones basic education examination

By OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH

Lagos State Examinations Board has announced the postponement of the year 2022 Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) by one week.

The examination, otherwise known as the “Junior WAEC” which is for the JSS3 students in both the public and private secondary schools in the state was earlier scheduled for between Wednesday, June 1 and June 8 will now take place from Wednesday, June 8 to Wednesday, June 15, 2022.

A statement signed by the Director, Lagos State Examinations Board, Mr. Supo Gbadegesin, said the postponement was due to the inability of some registered Approved Private Junior Secondary Schools to upload the bio-data of their candidates for the printing of their Optical Mark Readers (OMR) Sheets.

Gbadegesin added that by Tuesday, 31st May,

2022, most of the Public Junior Secondary Schools had received their Optical Marks Readers Sheet.

He pointed out that it was necessary to shift the dates of the examinations to accommodate other schools that were yet to upload the data of their candidates into the Board's database so that the students would not be denied the opportunity to write the examinations.

The Director also noted that the postponement would further enable the Board to address some unforeseen logistic problems that recently arose.

While apologising for the postponement and any inconveniences it might have caused, Gbadegesin assured all stakeholders and concerned schools that the new dates remain sacrosanct.

He said any school that now fails to comply with this directive does so at its own risk, according to him the board would not shift the exam dates again.



Olamilekan Adegbite

Canadian varsity produces all-Nigerian law programme graduands

By OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH

University of Calgary (UCalgary) in Alberta, Canada has churned out only Nigerians for its master of laws (LL.M.) programme.

A dean of Law at the University of Calgary, Canada, Ian Holloway, went on Twitter to celebrate the nine Nigerians who gradu-

ated on the same day from the school.

Holloway also applauded the fact that all the LL.M. graduands are Nigerians, he shared the good news on the social media platform, posting a photo of a list containing their full names.

The University of Calgary is a public research institution. The institution started

in 1944 as the Calgary branch of the University of Alberta which was founded in 1908.

It became an autonomous university in 1966 after its separation from the University of Alberta.

The institution has 14 faculties and over 85 research institutes and centres. It offers more than 250 academic programmes

including medicine, law, and engineering.

The successful graduands are: Oluchi Jennifer Chikioke, Ola Eke-Okoro, Maryam Wuraola Lawal, Toritsemofe Alexandra Mene, Emmanuel Uche Odum, Ifedayo Isaac Olanipekun, Ifeoluwa Tolulope pop, Olaitan Adeniyi Oyekunle, Olashogun Olayinka Tokode.

Lagos crushes over 2,000 impounded motorcycles

By BENJAMIN OMOIKE, METRO EDITOR/LAGOS BUREAU CHIEF

Following the total ban on Motorcycle operations across six Local government areas of Lagos, the state government on Friday, crushed no fewer than 2,228 impounded motorcycles for failing to comply with provisions of the traffic law.

The over 2,000 motorcycles were among those impounded by the Lagos State Taskforce and other enforcement agencies saddled by the government with the responsibility of ensuring compliance with the traffic law across the state.

Meanwhile, over 259

motorcycles were impounded within 48 hours after the total ban across six local governments, and 18 suspected riders, as well as passengers, were apprehended during the enforcement exercise.

As gathered, the state government has concluded plans to prosecute both passengers and riders by arraigning them before the Lagos mobile court for violating the state laws.

The Chairman of the Lagos State Taskforce, Shola Jejeloye, disclosed that the state government will not relent in its efforts at ridding the metropolis of disobedient Okada riders.

Jejeloye explained that the over 2000 motorcycles being

crushed were in continuation of the exercise and that it was often done as stipulated by the law and served as a deterrent to others still plying restricted routes across the state.

The Chairman stressed that the agency would further intensify its effort in ensuring that all impounded motorcycles were crushed after following due process of Traffic Laws, as enshrined in Lagos State Transport Sector Reform Law of 2018.

According to him, the law said that no two persons shall ride, drive or propel a motorcycle or a tricycle on a major highway within the state, and any person in

contravention of this provision commits an offence and will be prosecuted.

Jejeloye added that the agency's efforts have been doubled since June 1, when the ban took effect. "Although the compliance rate is very high and encouraging, okada operators are not to be trusted. Their style of operation is synonymous with gorilla warfare- when we retreat, they advance, and when we advance, they retreat, but enforcement of the ban has come to stay.

"We will ensure not a single offender operating his okada on the Highways will be spared. We will keep watch and continue patrolling

the affected parts of the State to ensure they do not get back on our toads."

The chairman stated that in the past, he had made a series of appeals verbally and through the mass media on the dangers of Okada operations in the state, but

the perpetrators remained hell-bent on carrying on with their dare-devil style of riding against traffic, speeding recklessly, damaging vehicles of other road users; and endangering their lives, passengers, pedestrians and other road users.



Waste management: Oyo govt terminates PSPs' appointment, sets June 10 as renewal deadline

By BENJAMIN OMOIKE

The Oyo State Government has terminated the appointment of waste collectors, setting June 10, 2022, as deadline for re-application of renewal of contract.

Revealing the new devel-

opment in a meeting held with the Waste Collectors (Private Sector Participants) and Stakeholders, the Honourable Commissioner for the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources, Mr Abiodun Oni, reiterated that the new initiative was conceived to

actualise the vision of keeping Oyo State clean, while also harnessing other opportunities that are inherent in proper waste management system.

"We are tired of using the same approach without getting results," he said.

The Commissioner further narrated instances where the State had heaps of refuse in open spaces, thereby, causing embarrassment and posing threats to the health of residents in the State.

He further assured residents that the State Government was taking holistic measures to ensure that the State experiences a turn-around in the

environmental sector.

He also announced that the State Governor, Engr Seyi Makinde, has approved the appointment of a new Waste Management Consultant, Mottainai Recycling Africa, who will see to the day to day running of the disposal mechanism in the State.

Speaking further on this development, the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry, Mrs Modupe Adeleye, revealed that the action taken on the re-application of the PSP operators was intended to move the State forward and ensure a cleaner and healthier environment.

She enjoined all the stakeholders to work with the State Government in actualising this agenda.

In another development, the State Government has again embarked on enforcement to caution traders towards improving sanitation within the environment and also checkmating traffic congestion.

Hon. Oni, while calling on the traders to remain law abiding and be peaceful when carrying out their legitimate businesses also stated that this present administration is poised at maintaining and sustaining the State ecosystem

towards ensuring a clean and green environment that would be attracting investors to thrive in the State

Similarly, the Oyo State Government has sealed a filling station for violating the Environmental laws and failure to carry out the state's weekly sanitation exercise.

The filling station located at Gate in Ibadan was also accused of accommodating a filthy drainage lane which environmental officers alleged exposed residents to health hazards and could also pose an environmental threat to people's health if not timely addressed.



Facebook romance turns nightmare as lady gets beaten mercilessly by unknown lover she travelled to meet

Words have it that a lady travelled down to Warri to meet one Patrick Fregene in Ugboroke, Delta State, a man she barely knew and had only recently met on FACEBOOK.

The purported romantic visit, however, did not go as expected, as he beat her and locked her up in the room for days, for reasons unknown.

"She's lucky he did not use her for a money ritual," the Facebook user said."

"It's a lesson for stupid ladies that form big girls on social media," – exactly the words of the user.

"According to information, she travelled upon his invitation. The man seems to be an abuser of some sort or a mentally unstable person. Upon her arrival, he locks her up in his house while he beats her every now and then.

"The lady got rescued after the intervention of the abuser's elder brother, who discovered that someone was

whimpering in his brother's apartment upon a visit he made. He broke the door down only to find a badly beaten lady crying for help.

"She was taken to the hospital for treatment

afterwards, as words got out on the incident as well as a caution to ladies. Be careful not to meet up with unfamiliar faces or travel to meet unknown persons in the name of Facebook romance."



Aggrieved Nigerian man Obinna, 41, shoots wife, kills mother-in-law, commits suicide in US

By BENJAMIN OMOIKE

A 41-year-old Nigerian, Obinna Igbokwe, on Wednesday night in Texas, United States, shot his wife, Tangela Igbokwe, killed her mother and fled to North Texas with their three-month-old son, Mansa, before finally killing himself.

Igbokwe lived in Spring, Montgomery County of Dallas, Texas.

According to the U.S. police, Obinna Igbokwe and his wife argued over the custody of the couple's three-month-old son Mansa.

The argument, according to the police, led to the shooting. Igbokwe shot his wife and her mother point blank, in the head.

The wife, who survived the shooting is, however, said to be in critical condition in the hospital.

But her mother, Linda Larkins, who was also shot in the head was pronounced dead at the scene.

Police authorities said

the suspect's 14-year-old son might have witnessed the shootings and went next door to get help.

Obinna Igbokwe reportedly took their son and fled in a 2008 white Honda Accord.

The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office deputies thereafter raised an AMBER Alert, which was, however, discontinued after the suspect shot and killed himself.

The shooting happened in the 30120 block of Aldine Westfield Road around 7.30 p.m.

According to the Corsicana Police Department, Igbokwe dropped off the child in a car seat at a hotel and said he would be right back, but never returned.

Since he did not return, police said they were contacted and learned the man left in a white passenger car.

At about 1.05 a.m., Ennis Police Department officers said they located the white Honda Igbokwe was driving and attempted to stop the vehicle.

After a short pursuit, the Honda stopped in a parking lot, where officers observed and heard a single gunshot come from the interior of the Honda.

Law enforcement officers began life-saving measures and summoned medical personnel, but due to the severity of the injury, authorities said Igbokwe succumbed to his wounds at a Dallas hospital at about 5.20 a.m.

Authorities said Mansa is safe and unharmed and has been reunited with his family.

"Our hearts are with the family affected by this tragic and horrific crime and we are working with the victims to ensure they receive support and assistance," a Facebook post from MCSO said.

This investigation is being completed across multiple jurisdictions and involves the Corsicana Police Department, Ennis Police Department, Ellis County Sheriff's Office, and the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office.

I will give quality representation to my Senatorial District - Joel-Onowakpo

*Hon Joel-Onowakpo Thomas is the candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC) of the Delta Senatorial District in the forthcoming general election come 2023. The former Delta State Board of Internal Revenue Chairman and ex-State's coordinator of the Federal Inland Revenue Service, in an interview with **The Trumpet** Newspaper correspondents, **Kelvin Ohoror** and **Oviri Kelvin** bares his mind on his visions at the Red Chamber to make the Delta South Senatorial District a better place if given the mandate come 2023.*

You are seeking to represent the good people of Delta South Senatorial District and we have four ethnic groups in the district. How do you intend to cope with this ethnic diversity?

No matter how diverse human beings are, it still boils down to interest, whether black or white, Christian, Muslim or Hindu. Whatever it is, it boils down to interest. The interest boils down to how people's interests are taken care of, and how they are appreciated. Are they able to provide food, quality health care, and good schools for their children? Are they protected in their environment? Despite these diversities, what the people need generally is good governance. Once you can deliver good governance to them, everything is history. Good governance and effective representation are what I seek to offer them.

If given the mandate, what are the people of Delta South Senatorial District expecting from you?

You know the position of the legislator is not like the executive position. It is basically for making laws to provide a better benchmark and framework for the executive arm of government.

So I must look at the Niger Delta and the Delta South Senatorial District. What are the pressing issues that will make it a better place for all of us? Do we have Ministries that are supposed to do certain things that they are not doing? Then, I will take them up and ensure they do what they ought to do. Is there a gap in the law that is supposed to provide the basic framework to ensure the government performs? We will now begin to push for those laws along with my colleagues in the National Assembly to ensure that those laws are provided.

Our environment, as you know, is very peculiar, partly water, swamp and land. All these things make us unique with vast cultural diversities. I have to ensure my senatorial district has the best representation. In the area of primary healthcare, you see people complaining of liver problems, kidney problems, and all sorts of illnesses which did not start on their own. It started from minor symptoms that you can go to the primary healthcare centre and they can be treated. But because of the deficiencies in the Primary Health Center, it aggravated to that level. Then, in the riverine areas, what do we need to do to make life much better for the people? Do we have the needed roads? Do we have the needed infrastructure that ought to be in those places? These are the things I will look at to make sure that at best we provide them for our people.

Like I said earlier, I have seen someone with an open mind, who has been able to do so many things in Delta Central Senatorial District, the Deputy Senate President Senator Ovie Omo-Agege. What he has been able to do alone in Delta Central is something some Governors cannot do for 8 years. That is what I expect the people of Delta South Senatorial District to see. Look at the Maritime University Okerenkoko, it has not even taken off, is something that is supposed to benefit our people. The seaport in Warri, is it functioning? It is something that brings about economic change to the District. What is preventing it from functioning? Even though the Federal Government said vessels can go to those places. What has happened to the refinery in our area? What kind of leverage is it providing for our youths? The Niger-Delta Development Commission (NDDC), what is it providing for our people? Our roads are bad. These are things being a legislator gives you an overview to see. And you begin to attract them to your place.



Hon Joel-Onowakpo Thomas

All along in your political journey, you have been operating from the executive position right from when you were the Local Government Council Chairman, Chairman Delta State Board of Internal Revenue and States Coordinator, Federal Inland Revenue Service. Now you are crossing to the legislative arm, How will you convince the electorates that you are going to serve them well?

When I joined the Delta State Board of Internal Revenue in 2009, I was a tax practitioner. When a tax practitioner becomes a tax administrator, he is an excellent person to be a legislator. For that position, for example, if you are a lawyer and they now made you a judge, you will discover that there is nothing a lawyer will tell you as a judge that you have not done before. My experience as a tax practitioner will become handy as a tax administrator. Now, to be more specific to your question. You need to be abreast with executive duties to know the lapses rendering this organ of government from functioning effectively. The truth is that most executives operate within the perimeter of the law. And when you operate within the perimeter of the law, you observe that there are hindrances provided by the law that enable them not to perform to an optimal level. That is why they continue to review the laws to accommodate those gaps that are there.

Having been in the executive position, starting from the position of the Chairman of Isoko South Local Government Council, Delta State, Chairman, Board of Internal Revenue, States Coordinator, Federal Inland Revenue Service, I know there is a lacuna in the law that needs to be provided to make the executive perform at the optimal level. My focus mainly will be on primary healthcare because the diseases that kill our people are not the diseases that take the rich out of the country. It is small, small ailments which standard primary healthcare can take care of. If we can provide the benchmark and framework for taking care of these things in a structured pattern and strengthen the primary healthcare system in Delta South Senatorial District, with the laws that are there in proper perspective, the prevalence of High Blood Pressure, Diabetics and stroke will be limited. Also, having held executive positions, I am more

experienced to know what my people need, and the laws that need to be provided for the executive to perform optimally.

What is your take on the issue of resource control and restructuring?

The issue of resource control and restructuring has been there for a while now. This present administration did their best as much as possible to move resource control from where it was to a new dimension. The hindrances that prevented this present administration of President Muhammadu Buhari are still the same people who are preaching and calling for resource control. Resource control is allowing people to be in charge of their resources. But if you want to be in charge of your resources it also behoves you to provide the benchmark on how the resources will be managed. If you are pressuring the Federal Government for resource control and you at the State do not want the Local Government to have control over their resources, then you are paying lip service to it. As the issue of the local government autonomy, judiciary, national assembly, and state assembly are processes of resource control.

If you ask me what my position on resource control is, I support it 100 percent because it will create competitiveness among States. I am also aware that States in the federation have enormous resources that can support their existence, just that we are not willing to tap into them. I said something during my primary election that I will liaise with my colleagues in both Chambers of the National Assembly to strengthen the States to be more sustainable. So that in their own way they can provide some basic things that can eliminate poverty, because if we are unable to tackle poverty we are going nowhere in this country.

Looking at your Senatorial District since 1999 till date, it has been occupied by PDP. How do your party, APC, plan to wrestle power from them?

If you look at it from that perspective, for someone who has been in a position for so many years, there is the inability to push that person away. Let me remind you what happened in 2015, PDP that has been in power was removed by APC. There is still a gap, people are dissatisfied, there are gaps, people feel cheated, people feel they are not getting their fair share and

the clamour for change is greater now than ever.

People want to experiment with something new, this desire for change and greater participation in governance in the Senatorial District is one of the things that will create the catalyst for change and I believe the time has come and the people are well prepared for that change. I am talking to people in the Senatorial District and the major thing they are looking at is, can he provide our needs? I am going to provide them with effective representation and my antecedent corroborates that. I am one person if they allow being in that position, everybody in the Senatorial District will get their fair share. And I believe they are ready. The people I have talked to are ready for that change. I am happy that I am not contesting against an incumbent. The truth is that without trying to undermine my opponent, PDP will not be a match for me. Why do I say so in this election, we are not looking at political party. We are going to be looking at individuals and their antecedents.

The National Assembly that we are going to is not a place for just anybody. If you send somebody that does not have the ability and the connection to deliver on the expectation of the people, then we have lost it entirely. For me, without trying to pride myself on the way of blowing my own trumpet, I have been in government, private sector and public sector and I was very successful. I am the right candidate for the position.

The Delta South Senatorial District comprises four ethnic groups, do you have a good reach to the people?

I think it is a little bit premature for me to begin to talk about how deeply the politics of Ijaws, Itsekiris and the Urhobos. It is too early for me. Politics is all about strategies and you must keep certain things to yourself. What I want to say is that I have served on the executive board that covers the whole state, and I have made my mark. I covered from Delta North to Delta Central and Delta South, I dominated it. Not only that, in the Federal Inland Revenue Service, I dominated six States; Rivers, Edo, Delta, Akwa-ibom, Bayelsa and Cross River States. So, in terms of reach, and relationships built over the years, I want to say that I am firmly rooted and I have no doubt that these relationships will pay off.

Looking at the past election, do you think this new electoral law offers some hope?

The new electoral law? Yes! BVAS offers some hope, the second thing is that in this election everybody is fighting for his head, there is no sitting governor who is going to say he is returning, and the commissioners are not thinking about whether they are going to retain their positions because it is going to be the end of the tenure. This race is very open, some of the things that occurred the last time and they got away with in 2019, they can't get away with it this time around. I think I want to rest it at that.

PDP is known for buying votes. How do your party intend to curb vote-buying during the general election?

When there is poverty, people will begin to sell their conscience for a pot of porridge. It is difficult to prevent people from taking the money if they are offered. But what I want to say is that the environment that will occur in the 2023 election will be different from 2019, simply because they are bringing BVAS. Secondly, if you see people buying votes you have the right to report them according to the law. We only need to become more vigilant, we also need to educate our people.

Despite insecurity, INEC to continue voters registration, releases election guidelines

By **TUNDE JOSHUA**, ABUJA

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), on Friday promised to continue voters registration which was suspended on the account of insecurity in troubled areas of the country.

Chairman of the Commission, Prof. Mahmood Yakubu gave this assurance at a special meeting of the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) to review security arrangements for the Ekiti Governorship Election held at INEC headquarters, Abuja.

This is as the Commission released regulations and guidelines for the 2023 general election.

The National Security Adviser (NSA), Maj. Gen Babagana Monguno (rtd) and Co-Chair of ICCES, Heads of various security agencies and National Commissioners were at the meeting.

Also at the meeting were the Resident Electoral Commissioner for Ekiti State, Dr Adeniran Rahmon Tella, the state Commissioner of Police, Moronkeji Adesina, Secretary to the Commission and Senior officials of the Commission.

Though INEC set June 30 deadline for suspension of the Continuous Voters Registration (CVR), the commission is reconsidering its stand because of the continued surge of

Nigerians in listed areas to get registered before the deadline.

The INEC chairman said "Nigerians may recall that the ongoing CVR started a year ago. For the first time, the Commission introduced online pre-registration as well as physical registration at designated centres.

"As the deadline for the suspension of the CVR i.e. 30th June 2022 approaches, long queues are building up, especially in some states in the South East, Lagos, Kano and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). The Commission had anticipated the last-minute surge and therefore established additional centres and deployed more machines to register citizens.

"Unfortunately, the security situation in many parts of the country has not allowed full deployment as planned. In some states of the Federation, INEC registration officers were attacked resulting not only in the unfortunate destruction of buildings and loss of equipment but even worse, the death of a staff. This has forced the closure of some of the registration centres.

"However, in view of the surge, additional machines will be deployed to some of the most congested areas to ease the surge. Similarly, the Resident Electoral Commissioners (RECs) have been directed to liaise with the security agencies and stakeholders on the possibility of

reopening some of the centres earlier closed because of insecurity, but in doing so, they must always bear in mind the safety of registrants and registration officials.

"Furthermore, the RECs are directed to do more to provide information, increase awareness of the processes and more promptly respond to genuine complaints by citizens."

He said the Commission appreciated the support of partners and critical stakeholders in mobilising citizens to register while looking forward to such partnership to encourage registered voters to collect their PVCs and for increased voter turnout on election day.

Yakubu said with the coming into force of the Electoral Act 2022, it has become necessary to review the Commission's Regulations and Guidelines to govern the conduct of elections, adding that the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended), the Electoral Act 2022 and the Regulations and Guidelines constitute the electoral legal framework.

He said "on several occasions, the Commission has assured Nigerians that we are finalizing the Regulations and Guidelines for the elections. I am glad to announce that the document is ready and will be presented to Nigerians shortly. The soft copy will be uploaded to our website with the link shared

on our social media platforms.

"With the release of the Regulations and Guidelines today, and the publication of the Strategic Plan (SP) 2022-2026 and Election Project Plan 2023 earlier, the Commission has virtually concluded the planning processes for the 2023 General Election nine months ahead of the election.

"In the next couple of weeks, the training manual will also be presented to Nigerians. Going forward, the Commission will focus on election administration: logistics, training, voter education, technology, sensitization against vote-buying, inclusivity measures and, above all, security. ICCES will continue to play a critical role and the Commission appreciates the support of all security agencies."

With only 15 days to the Ekiti governorship election, the Commission said all the major activities that are supposed to be carried out at this stage have been successfully undertaken.

"I led a team of INEC National Commissioners to Ekiti State early this week to assess the Commission's preparations for the elections. We visited our offices in several Local Government Areas, held meetings with our staff, had an audience with the Council of Obas to solicit the support of their Royal Majesties for peaceful elections and met with the security agencies.

2023: Coalition for Peter Obi warns INEC against disenfranchising millions of Nigerians

By **TUNDE JOSHUA**, ABUJA

Coalition for Peter Obi (CPO) made up of 17 support groups for the Labour Party's presidential candidate has warned the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) against disenfranchising millions of Nigerians ahead of the 2023 general elections.

CPO also called on the electoral body to extend the deadline for the collection of Permanent Voters Card (PVC).

The 17 groups have embarked on massive voter education campaign, supporting citizens to register and collect their PVC, online and at various INEC offices.

The Coalition stated that reports from around the country show that INEC lacks the capacity to register the millions of Nigerians,

especially youths, arguing that there have been complaints that Nigerians spend hours waiting to be captured.

The Coalition in a statement signed by its Chairman, Mr Marcel Ngogbehei, encouraged its members to embark on voter education, providing clear information on PVC registration and supporting the logistics to distribute millions of Permanent Voters Card (PVC) that are currently in INEC custody. The Chairman listed the various groups involved in the Voters Sensitisation Exercise and asks the general public to volunteer or support with money and logistics, adding that this is a collective task.

Mr Ngogbehei lamented the lackadaisical attitude of some INEC staff in various states, but also praised the dedication of staff in many locations, and further stated.

"CPO estimates that one INEC machine can

only register 1 person in 10mins, an average of 900 persons per month. Therefore, a Local Government Area with 2 INEC machines can only register 1800 persons per month if operating at 100% capacity, but with the present capacity, INEC needs 4 years of continuous voters' registration exercise to capture the millions of eligible Nigerians.

"INEC is hereby advised to expand its logistics operations, establish mobile registration centres, strategically move registration centres to highly populated areas like markets, partner with market leaders to encourage PVC collection, send text messages to voters on their PVC collections, allow people to book online for PVC collections and consider senior citizens in their 80s or 90s that have mobility challenges.

"INEC should start now to consider their

stakeholders and implement strategies that will provide better customer value unless they intend to disenfranchise millions of Nigerians who are eager to exercise their civic rights in the general elections.

"The Electoral body should do everything possible to cater for thousands that are currently stranded trying to register in the various locations or in the alternative, expand its logistics and extend the deadline by 6 months.

"Nigerians must be allowed to freely express their civic rights at this critical time of our nation's history.

"As a Coalition for Peter Obi's presidential ambition, we have embarked on voter education, PVC registration and support logistics to distribute the PVC across the length and breadth of this country and calls on the public to support the various groups"

Akpabio, huge asset waiting to be exploited for Nigeria's benefit - Akume

By **TUNDE JOSHUA**, ABUJA

All Progressives Congress (APC), presidential aspirant, Senator Godswill Akpabio, was on Thursday, described by Minister Special Duties and Inter Governmental Affairs and former Governor of Benue State, Senator George Akume, as a "huge asset waiting to be exploited for the benefit of Nigeria and Nigerians.

"When he talks about being a detribalised Nigerian, it is not a vain glory thing. We all see it in you. We pray for you because we know you can do it. We pray for you because you are in the right place and with the right people. We pray for you because we want Nigeria to be on the march again", he stressed.

Akume further said "I will do whatever I can, to convince others to support your aspiration for the benefit of the people of this country. Your experience in public offices over the years is something we can always celebrate. You are a great Nigerian and leader in whom Nigerians have absolute trust".

Akume stated this while receiving the members of the Godswill Akpabio Campaign

Organisation, who visited to intimate him of Akpabio's presidential ambition and to also solicit his support and those of the delegates, in the upcoming presidential primaries of the party.

According to the former Benue State helmsman, "it is my honour and privilege to welcome the uncommon presidential aspirant and his team to my residence because everything he does is uncommon. When he defected to the APC, he called it an uncommon defection. You needed to see the tsunami in the stadium on that day".

He stated further that "as a former Governor of Akwa Ibom, you would wonder about where he got the intellect, the capability and the strength to do all what he did as their governor. He performed creditably well. I've known him for many years now, we have collaborated and worked closely. Anybody who has been to Akwa Ibom before him and after him can tell the difference."

Akume said, "I see in you a huge asset, waiting to be exploited for the benefit of our country. We meet often and talk about Nigeria. Sometimes we say, those of us who are in the minority in this country are the glue for



Akpabio

the continued unity of this country."

On Akpabio's three-point Minister said, "when he talks about security, it is good to listen to him. I know what President Muhammadu Buhari, has done since he came into office. Akpabio, as president, will do more with his plans to deploy technology into fighting the menace".

"Without Unity, there can be no country we will call our own. I know you and your antecedents in the area of insecurity.

As regards your plans to improve the



Akume

economy through agriculture, let us not forget that when we came in, the economy was in shambles. The current administration has done a lot in terms of revamping the economy. We trust that the Uncommon President will set things straight."

Earlier in his speech, Presidential hopeful, Senator Akpabio, intimated Akume of his three-point agenda of fighting insecurity, uniting the country through national integration and education and improving the economy through agriculture.

Uneasy Calm in Warri Kingdom Over Unsubstantiated rumours

By **GABRIEL OMONHINMIN**

Uneasy calm is now enveloping the ancient kingdom of Warri, nine months after the coronation of Prince Utieyinoritsola Emiko as the 21st Olu of Warri Kingdom and Ogiame Atuwatse III, as a result of the intrigues that characterized his selection process and eventual installation on Saturday, August 21st 2021.

A very reliable source close to the Olu of Warri Palace, who pleaded anonymity because of the possible consequences, alerted Trumpet Newspaper, about the alleged invitation by the Economic and Finance Crime Commission (EFCC) to the Olu of Warri, Ogiame Atuwatse III. Sadly, he said, "This is the first time in the history of Warri Kingdom that a sitting Olu of Warri, is being invited by an anti-graft agency to come and answer questions involving fraud.

He explained that Ogiame Atuwatse III was allegedly called by EFCC to state what he knew about a purported diversion of huge sums of money from the bank accounts of late Captain Idahosa Wells Okunbor, who died on August 8, 2021, in a London hospital, and who happens to be the late father In-Law to the Olu of Warri.

He further alleged that part of the missing money was what the Olu of Warri used to finance his coronation on Saturday, 21st August 2021, maintaining that, Ogiame Atuwatse III, has indeed appeared before an EFCC panel over this allegation twice in Abuja, thus creating apprehension among the inner circle of the Olu of Warri kitchen cabinet in the palace.

The source continued, "The widow and second wife of the late billionaire businessman, Mrs Nosa Okunbor, after the burial of Captain Okunbor, was the person that discovered that one of her late husband's bank accounts have been tampered with and large sums of money fraudulently withdrawn from the bank account, thus causing her lawyer to do a petition to EFCC prompting the agency to investigate the matter."

He stressed that the Olu of Warri Palace is presently doing everything within its powers, to make sure that this information is not made public.

Trumpet Newspaper immediately contacted Chief Mene Brown, a High Chief in the Warri palace, who is a close confidant of the Olu of Warri, Ogiame Atuwatse III for comments. Chief Brown in his response said,



HRM Ogiame Atuwatse III

"The allegation is false, wicked and reckless, stressing that "As a Chief in the Olu of Warri Palace, I do not have the authority to comment on issues like this, which have no direct bearing with His Royal Majesty, Ogiame Atuwatse III and the Warri Kingdom.

The matter in question only concerns the immediate family of the Olu of Warri's Olori Ogiame Atuwatse III. Stressing, "The best I can say, is that the Olu of Warri and the Palace of Warri Kingdom is not involved nor connected with the happenings in the

The best I can say, is that the Olu of Warri and the Palace of Warri Kingdom is not involved nor connected with the happenings in the late Captain Okunbor's immediate family or Business Empire

late Captain Okunbor's immediate family or Business Empire.

He continued, "As far as I know, it is a business colleague of the late business Mogul, Dr Olatunde Ayeni, whom the late Captain Okunbor bought out of a particular business concern, they both had an interest in before his death, is the person that is alleged to be making trouble writing all manner of petitions to the EFCC after the death of his supposed friend, even though, the late Captain Okunbor left some other businesses he had interest in for Dr Ayeni to continue to manage on his own.

The Warri High Chief said, "I am however aware that EFCC has waded into Dr Ayeni's petitions and found nothing to substantiate. In all this, HRM Ogiame Atuwatse III and the Warri Palace have nothing to do with all these allegations."

Our source, however, still maintained that Chief Brown, who is the one leading the cover-up game and should not be taken seriously, since he is known as the man Friday to the present Olu of Warri, Ogiame Atuwatse III, who wants everything done to cover up the mess. He went further to paint a gloomy picture of the current situation in the Warri Palace, which he says is very depressing despite the front they are all putting up. He stressed that although Ogiame Atuwatse III and some of his chiefs as Brown, the Palace Secretary Ikomi and Johnson, are desperately trying to cover up the ugly happenings in the Warri Palace, very soon the whole thing will be exposed. He said Ogiame Atuwatse III is presently jittery that is why he has now renewed his efforts for reconciliation, thus contacting all the persons they thought they had earlier conquered. That is why Ogiame Atuwatse III, is doing everything possible to reach out to his estranged Uncle, Prince Bernard Emiko and his cousin, Prince Oyowoli, the eldest son of the 20th Olu of Warri, Ogiame Ikonwoli I, who was cheated out of the throne. Both Princes he stressed are still maintaining their distances from the Ogiame and the Warri Palace. Prince Bernard Emiko, he said, has continually blocked and refused to pick up calls from Ogiame Atuwatse III.

He stressed that Chief Ayiri Emami, who was allegedly disrobed as Ologbotse of Warri Kingdom is now being pressured at the instance of the

Cont'd on page 10

Uneasy Calm in Warri Kingdom

Cont'd from page 9

Olu of Warri, Ogiame Atuwatse III, by his very close friends to withdraw his cases in courts with about the selection and installation of Prince Tsola Emiko as the 21st Olu of Warri. He explained further that Ogiame Atuwatse III is very worried, and presently not too sure about the outcome of the court cases filed by Chief Ayiri Emami in his capacity as the Ologbotsere of Warri Kingdom and as the then Chairman Warri Council of Chiefs. He said, if this matter is allowed to go through all the gamut of the court processes, Ogiame Atuwatse III might lose his throne.

Our source said the Ogiame's worry is based principally on the fact that he knows that the 1979 Chieftaincy Edicts of the defunct Bendel State, which expressly stipulates the procedure and processes to be followed before an Olu of Warri can be enthroned was out rightly violated, during his selection and eventual installation as the 21st Olu of Warri kingdom. And now that the pomp and pageantry that follows the Olu of Warri coronation is over, reality has now begun to set in that the court decisions no matter how long it takes, may not favour him. Hence Ogiame Atuwatse III is presently making an effort to reach out to all the aggrieved persons in this matter.

Trumpet Newspaper source, further stressed, that on the 22nd of May, 2022, Chief Ayiri Emami, the allegedly suspended Ologbotsere of Warri Kingdom close friends, for the very first time since after the coronation of Prince Tsola Emiko as the 21st Olu of Warri, in a deliberate effort to broker peace between the two of them, arranged a meeting in Lagos in the late Captain Okunbor expensive house in Banana Island, where Chief Emami and Ogiame Atuwatse III met for the very first time in months. And before the arrival of Ogiame Atuwatse III in the meeting venue, Chief Emami told whosoever cared to listen, that he will not accord Prince Tsola Emiko the respect of a seating Olu of Warri. True to his promise, Chief Emami never did. Even though Ogiame Atuwatse III was very polite and civil to him during the brief perperiodey met and spoke. Ogiame Atuwatse III was said to have asked after the well-being and family members of Chief Emami.

Despite this, Chief Emami never accords the Olu of Warri the respect of his throne. And when, it became clear to all people present at the peace meeting, that Chief Emami was not ready to go back on his

words, the peace meeting was abruptly called off and rescheduled for another day.

In the first peace meeting, Prince Yemi Emiko, who is alleged to have skewed everything in favour of Prince Tsola Emiko to become the 21st Olu of Warri, was not present.

In the rescheduled peace meeting that took place on the 23rd of May, 2022, Prince Yemi Emiko was present, when the close associates of Chief Emami were trying to pressure him into withdrawing his cases in courts concerning the Olu of Warri. People at that meeting were shocked and speechless when Prince Yemi Emiko, who is now aggrieved, told Chief Emami never to attempt to withdraw any of his cases in courts. Saying "Your cases and Prince Oyowoli are the only options left for us, to checkmate the present Olu of Warri, Ogiame Atuwatse III, who is apparently getting out of control since he ascended the throne."

Our source explained further, that "the Palace of the Olu of Warri that cost the Itsekiri people a lot of money to build, is gradually decaying and falling apart due to lack of use and maintenance. The roofs in the Palace are presently leaking, especially now that we are in the rainy season. The Warri Palace, unlike when Ogiame Ikonwoli was still alive and resident in the palace, was very well kept, as all the facilities in the palace were well maintained then.

"But now, most of the rooms in the Palace are locked as Ogiame Atuwatse III is not living in the palace and he is not likely in the foreseeable future to move into the palace, he stressed. As his late father, the 19th Olu of Warri, Ogiame Atuwatse II, has so many personal houses and properties all over Warri Kingdom.

"The present Olu of Warri, he added has this personal forbear for the Olu of Warri Palace built



HRM Ogiame Atuwatse III

by the Itsekiri people, because his mother, Iya Oba Gladys and him, still harbour this erroneous belief whether true or false, that it was when his father moved into the Warri Palace that he strangely came down with the illness that eventually resulted in his demise."

I am however aware that EFCC has waded into Dr Ayeni's petitions and found nothing to substantiate. In all this, HRM Ogiame Atuwase III and the Warri Palace have nothing to do with all these allegations

The source concluded that the drama in the Olu of Warri palace has intensified in all fronts, as highly respected Chief and member of the Ginuwa I Ruling House, Akoma Dudu-Dimeyin, who at the inception of the crisis that led to the installation of the present Olu of Warri, said the Ginuwa I Ruling House has no such powers to purportedly suspend Chief Ayiri Emami as the Ologbotsere of Warri Kingdom. He was immediately coaxed into appearing before Ogiame Atuwatse III for the revalidation of his Chieftaincy title some time back. As if that was not enough humiliation, he is again presented with some documents to sign which he refused. Chief Akoma's refusal to sign any document has not only unsettled some members of the Olu of Warri palace but has also heightened the tension and anxiety among the Ogiame Atuwatse III inner kitchen cabinet members and some Chiefs, who are members of the Olu of Warri Council of Chiefs.

Troops neutralise 14 terrorists, arrest 15 others

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

Recover stolen crude, AGO

Troops of the Nigerian military in conjunction with the Civilian Joint Task Force operating in Borno State, have killed no fewer than 14 terrorists and arrested 15 others.

This was disclosed by the Director of Defence Media Operations, Major General Benard Onyeuko, during a press briefing on the operations of the Armed Forces of Nigeria, Police and other security agencies at Defence Headquarters, Abuja.

During the briefing, which covers operations of the Forces from 19 May - 2 June 2022, Onyeuko stated that troops of Operation Hadin Kai repelled attacks by terrorists at Firm Base Arege in Abadam Local Government Area of Borno State.

He added that during the attacks, troops responded with superior firepower and inflicted heavy casualties on the terrorists while others fled in disarray.

"Troops also neutralised 14 terrorists and arrested 15. Accordingly, all arrested terrorists, rescued families and recovered items have been handed over to the appropriate authorities for further action," he started.

According to him, "troops recovered 10 AK 47 rifles, 5 AK 56 rifles, 2 FN rifles, 227 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition, 7 AK 47 magazines, 1 PKM gun, 1 AA gun, 164 rounds of



Lieutenant General Yahaya

AA ammunition, 111 Shilka ammunition, 1 gun truck, 1 shilka barrel, 2 Dane guns, 2 Improvised Explosive Device, 1 car engine, 4 trollies and one water pump machine. Troops also rescued 100 terrorist family members which included 33 women."

Onyeuko also said that the troops on fighting patrol along Ashigashiya, Kodele, and Apagaluwa in the Gwoza Local Government Area of Borno State had earlier encountered terrorist herders who engaged troops in a fierce gun battle. Adding that the terrorists fled due to troops' superior fire power while troops recovered 40 sheep during exploitation.

The Major General also said troops of Operation Hadarin Daji sustained aggressive and clearance operations to deny terrorist and other criminal

elements further freedom of action.

He said following credible information about terrorists heading towards Dampo village in Bakura Local Government Area of Zamfara State, troops mobilized and laid in wait at the bandit crossing point on 22 May 2022.

He said this led to a gun battle between the bandits and troops, making the bandits flee in disarray due to the superior firepower of the troops.

According to him, 292 cattle and 1 camel were recovered following the bombardment.

Also, on 21 May 2022, following credible intelligence report, troops arrested a notorious foreigner Jabe Buba a terrorist informant at Garuwa village in Tambuwa Local Government Area of

Sokoto State. Pictures and video of him posting rifles in the forest were found in his phone and cash of One Hundred and Thirty Thousand Naira (N130,000.00) was recovered from him," he added.

Onyeuko added: "Troops recovered 9 AK 47 rifles, 100 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition, 458 rustled cattle and 20 motorcycles. Troops also rescued 152 civilians, neutralized 18 bandits and apprehended 25 bandits. Accordingly, all arrested, rescued civilians and recovered items have been handed over to the appropriate authorities for further action."

More so, the troops of Operation Whirl Stroke reportedly conducted several operations within the period under review.

The Media Director stated further: "On 24 May, troops responded to a distress call on kidnapping incident along Zakibia-Ugba Road. Own troops made contact with the criminals. After a gun battle, the leader of the group, one Mr Odada and 2 other members of the kidnappers who were all dressed in military uniforms were neutralized.

"The victim, one Mr Chimaobi Omemma, a businessman was rescued. Items recovered include 1 AK 47 rifle, 3 fully loaded magazines (90 rounds of 7.62mm special), 1 Toyota Corolla vehicle and an ATM card bearing Felix Terzenqwe. All recovered items are still in

custody."

He further stated that on 29 May 2022, a distress call was received of a group of bandits terrorizing locals at Bowa in Doma Local Government Area of Nassarawa State.

"After a hot pursuit, one Mr Adamu Akure was captured at Ijiwo junction in Rukubu. Items recovered include 1 locally made pistol and several cartridges amongst others. The arrested criminal is presently under interrogation. Also, a notorious gun runner, Mr Morris Ayitu was arrested after a raid at his residence in Abirisi in Guma Local Government Area. Also arrested are his wife and an accomplice, Mr Julius Aseni," he added.

Also, troops of Operation Octopus Grid, a subsidiary of Operation Delta Safe, operating in the creeks of the Niger Delta, discovered and destroyed 40 illegal refineries, 165 metal storage tanks, 72 ovens, 23 dug out pits, and 5 wooden boats.

"Also, recovered are One Hundred and Seven Thousand Four Hundred (107,400) litres of crude oil, Four Hundred and Fifty-Six Thousand Four Hundred and Fifty (456,450) litres of AGO, Six Thousand Two Hundred and Fifty (6,250) litres of PMS, 6 trucks, 3 outbound engines, and 1 AK 47 rifles. Troops also apprehended 21 criminal elements. All recovered items and apprehended criminals were handed over to the appropriate authorities for further action," Gen Onyeuko concluded.

Explosive device blows up planters

Two suspected members of the proscribed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) have reportedly sustained fatal injuries after being blown up by an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) planted by IPOB and its armed wing, Eastern Security Network (ESN).

A statement by Brigadier General Onyema Nwachukwu, Director Army Public Relations, said the incident occurred along Eke Ututu - Orlu Road in Orsu Local Government Area of Imo state on 1 June 2022.

According to him, IPOB members have planted IEDs along troops' patrol routes on several occasions but the efforts have failed to bring harm to the troops.

"An Improvised Explosive Device (IED) planted by members of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and its armed wing, Eastern Security Network (ESN) has exploded, causing severe injuries to two members of the outlawed group. The incident occurred along Eke Ututu - Orlu Road in Orsu Local Government Area of Imo state on 1 June 2022.

"The dissidents, inadvertently stepped on the IED which they had earlier planted along several routes in Orlu, Orsu Local Government Area, while they were attempting to evade troops' onslaught against terrorists in the area.

"The outlawed group have severally planted IEDs along troops' patrol routes in failed effort to bring harm to the troops.

"We urge all peace-loving people of the South East to please inform troops of possible areas where these explosives have been buried for proper evacuation and disposal," he said.



Brigadier General Nwachukwu

Police to launch short code for free emergency calls, says IGP

Pledges adequate security for free, fair 2023 polls

Launches POSSAP

Inspector-General (IGP) Usman Alkali Baba has said that the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) shall soon launch a short code for free emergency calls and sharing of vital information between it and the public.

IGP Baba disclosed this on Thursday while addressing Police Commanders at the Strategic Police Managers and the official launch of the Police Specialized Services Automation Project (POSSAP) held at the Force Headquarters, Abuja.

According to the IGP, the police have "secured the approval of the National Communications Commission (NCC) for the allocation of a national Police Short Code for free emergency calls and information sharing between the Police and citizens. The acquisition of the short Code which is '933', is a landmark initiative by the Force leadership to bridge the age-long emergency

communication gap between the Police and members of the public."

He added that the short code shall be formally launched soon by the police and shall be accessible by the public.

The Police Chief also stated that the aim of the meeting was to review the internal security and re-evaluate policing strategies in line with evolving new approaches. He assured that appropriate security measures are in place to ensure free, fair and credible polls in 2023.

He said, "We have similarly, strengthened 'Operation Restore Peace', the Special Anti-Secessionist Operation in the South East with the deployment of more special operational Units and assets of the Force.

"In order to enhance the attainment of our internal security mandate, I am also elated to confirm that we have secured the approval of the National Communications

Commission (NCC) for the allocation of a national Police Short Code for free emergency calls and information sharing between the Police and citizens. The acquisition of the short Code which is '933', is a landmark initiative by the Force leadership to bridge the age-long emergency communication gap between the Police and members of the public. The code will soon be formally launched.

"Furthermore, as part of our police modernization vision, the Force has established an Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) Unit within the Department of Operations (Airwing Section) of the Force.

"To aid the take-off of the new Unit, we have procured five (5) Drones and Officers to man the Unit have also been exposed to specialized training in South Africa and certified as Drones Operations specialists.

We are currently leveraging

on the expertise of the NPF-UAV Unit to support special police operations, particularly, for surveillance operations along the Abuja-Kaduna Highway and railway corridor. They were also optimally utilized in the recent Nigeria Police special anti-banditry operation in Sokoto with huge success

"In order to address the welfare concerns of the Force, the Police Insurance Section is being re-positioned for better operational efficiency. In furtherance of this, I have approved the establishment and incorporation of the Nigeria Police Insurance Company (NPIC) to effectively manage the Police insurance policies, and maximize the welfare interests of police personnel who are constantly being exposed to occupational hazards.

"Consequent to these operational and administrative initiatives, I am

glad to note that the Nigeria Police's service delivery and operational efficiency have significantly improved. This is evidenced by the fact that between January 2022 to date, the Nigeria Police have arrested a total of three hundred and twenty-eight (328) Terrorists/Bandits; three hundred and twenty-five (325) Armed Robbery Suspects; three hundred and thirty-nine (339) Kidnapping Offenders and two hundred and forty-seven (247) suspected cultists.

"Also, within this period, we have safely rescued three hundred and seven (307) kidnapped victims and recovered five hundred and ten (510) firearms of various descriptions, and eight thousand, nine hundred and six (8,906) ammunition of various descriptions and calibre including rocket-propelled grenades and other Improvised Explosive Devices."

Tragic killings across the country

Nigeria is on the edge of a dangerous precipice occasioned by a surge in tragic and wanton killings in the land. Killing of innocent persons across the country has become the norm rather than the exception. The most recent is that of a pregnant mother Hariri Jubril and her four little children in Anambra State. Two weeks before, Deborah Yakubu was set ablaze by some of her College of Education classmates in Sokoto. These incidents left the nation in shock. 'Shock' is the wrong word. We are no longer "shocked" at the news of killings. We are merely "troubled" or "disturbed" or, worse, "nonchalant". Sadly, we quickly recover from these emotions and carry on with our lives. This may seem trivial. It is not. It is a big tragedy – we are losing our basic humanity or humaneness. And the federal government appears overwhelmed!

How did we descend into such barbarity? How human are we when we shrug our shoulders at the news of a girl being burnt alive by her own classmates? How human are we when we sleep normally at night after seeing a video of a woman and her fiancé having their heads chopped off while still alive? How human are we if we can continue to enjoy our meal after seeing the corpses of a woman and her four little children slain in the street for the crime of being different? How do gloss over the deaths of scores of people in a Boko Haram attack? Is Mr. President able to sleep with so much blood being shed in the land under his watch?

The deaths of fellow Nigerians, our own brothers, and sisters, have become nothing but numbers – 30 people killed here, 12 people killed there. We have lost our humanity, and we are out of touch with what it means to be human. The English poet Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) believed that there was a beast in every one of us that needed to be tamed if society were to attain civilisation. Unfortunately,

the beast in all of us is threatening to take over the souls of Nigerians. The mark of this beast is not 666. It is lack of empathy, sympathy, fellow feeling, and goodwill. Its mark is a totally anaesthetised attitude towards horror and terror. This beast looks upon the death of a fellow human being with indifference. It makes the appropriate "noises" such as "oh no!", "how unfortunate" and, for perhaps a few days, "justice must be served!". Its "duty" done, the beast goes on as usual. This is what we have become. Beasts. This is the tragedy of Nigeria. The killers themselves are unusual – they are the greater beasts. They maim and deface or burn the corpses – an indication that the anger levels are too high. It is not only the Nigerian citizen who

has become anaesthetised to tragedy. It is the Nigerian system in its entirety. Nigeria has become a failed state. When systems of government fail, the citizens rebel. It leads to anomie, anarchy, and general lawlessness. Our politicians carry on with their campaigns as though Nigerians are not dying daily. In fact they use these deaths to promote themselves, promising to end it all if they are elected. In the meantime they have surrounded themselves with police and armed personnel while ordinary Nigerians sleep with only one eye closed.

The government must rise to its obligations and address the dehumanization of Nigerians and the endless killings. The government should seriously consider allow the establishment of State Police. The federal security forces are overwhelmed and often are not familiar with the terrain to which they are posted. State police would be at home on their turf since they are from the same area. They will be far more efficient at identifying criminals and perpetrators of violence. They would also have the added advantage of familiarity – local people will feel freer with them and would be more forthcoming with information.

The government should call on religious and community leaders to emphasize the sanctity of human life and the importance of peace, unity, brotherhood, and good neighbourliness. The government should involve traditional and religious leaders in forming vigilante groups that would be responsible for fishing out criminals and handing them over to the authorities.

Finally, the judiciary needs to get serious. It must show that it is impartial and will not allow any crime to go unpunished. Extra-judicial killings happen as a consequence of a failed judiciary. In Nigeria justice is given only to the highest bidder. The judiciary needs to restore the faith of Nigerians in the system. The current situation where everybody is a law unto himself has got to end. Nigeria deserves better.



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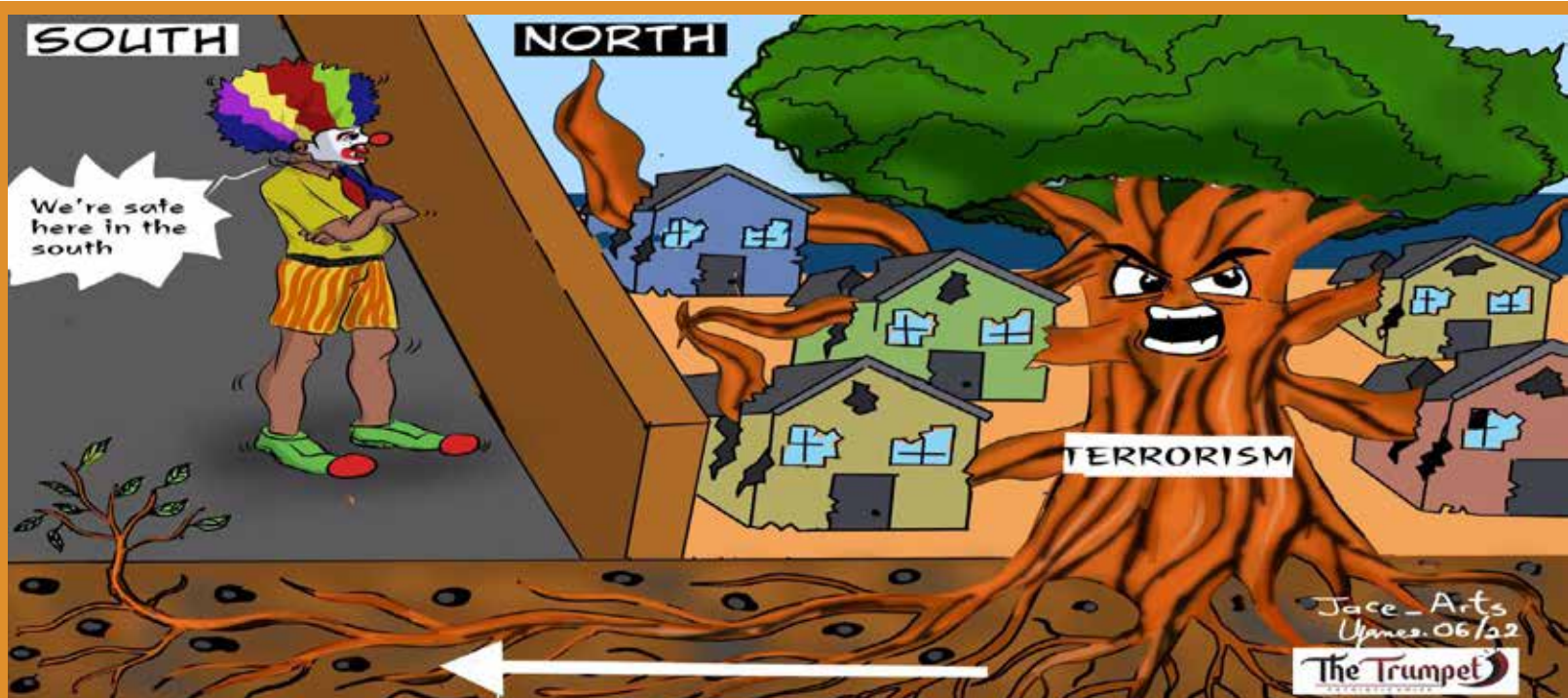
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Holy spirit, the father's promise poured upon believers

The study of the Holy Spirit is called pneumatology in theology. Pneumatology is derived from Greek. The Holy Spirit is not only a New Testament (NT) occurrence. He manifested in varied forms in the Bible. In the Old Testament (OT), as well as in the NT, it appeared in seven ways. As a dove (Genesis 8:8-12), fire (Exodus 3:2; Isaiah 6:1-13), oil (Exodus 30:17-33; Songs of Solomon 6:1-13), water (Exodus 40:1-33; Psalm 78:1-20), breath (Genesis 2:1-7; Ezekiel 37:1-14), wind (Job 37:1-24; Isaiah 40:1-17; Jeremiah 49:28-39), and rain (Hosea 6:1-11; 1 King 8:22-36; 1 King 18:41-46). He is often called the silent or shy partner in the Trinity.

The Holy Spirit was promised to be poured upon men and women by God through the prophets of old. "Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption. And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities" (Psalm 130:7-8). Nevertheless, believers are asked to 'wait' till the time the Holy Spirit will be poured upon them. "I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in His word do I hope. My soul waited for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning; I say, more than they that watch for the morning" (Psalm 130:5-8).

This promise was succinctly prophesized by Joel, "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your daughter shall prophesy your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions" (Joel 2:28). This prophecy was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2); and will be further fulfilled during the tribulation (Acts 2:16-21) and during the Millennium (Isaiah 32:15; 44:3; Ezekiel 36:26-27; 39:29; Zechariah 12:10).

Jesus Christ himself promised his

disciples the Holy Spirit. Unlike all the prophets of old, it was only upon Jesus Christ that the Holy Spirit was poured out or poured upon in full measure, or in fullness (Isaiah 11:1-2; 42:1; 61:1; Matthew 3:16; 12:18; John 3:34). Therefore, all believers who desire the Holy Spirit and its power are entitled to receive it 'unto full measure' as manifested on the day of Pentecost. In the early Church, the acts of the Apostles were due to the empowerment and enablement given to them by the Holy Spirit's power. All this happened at Pentecost; the day the Church was established by Christ Jesus. Pentecost (Greek, Pentecostos means fiftieth) was held on the fiftieth day after the Passover Sabbath. Whit Sunday is the corresponding Christian Festival. A similar occurrence, the 'rushing of a mighty wind' and the appearance 'unto them tongues parting asunder, like as fire; and it sat on each of them' (Acts 2:2-3), also took place in 1 King 19:11-12.

The Holy Spirit is the power of the Church and the Christian faith. He made 'mission' possible. It was the drive that made the Apostles to witness for Jesus Christ boldly, especially the fact of His life and ministry (i.e. the Gospel) cum His Resurrection. In spite of opposition by the Sadducees and High Priests, in the face of martyrdom, the Apostles remained resolute in discharging the Great Commission entrusted them by Jesus Christ. "But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, "These who have turned the world upside down have come here too" (Acts 17:6). It made it possible to proclaim the universality of the Gospel and establish the 'Catholic and Apostolic Church.' With the Holy Spirit believers can "turn the world upside down" (Acts 17:6) for Jesus Christ.



Dr. Karo Ogbinaka

Importantly, the Holy Spirit made it possible for the Apostles to witness to the growing of the Church and Christianity exponentially. Accordingly, Rev F. Marshall, outlined the results of growth brought about by the Holy Spirit for the Church thus: (i) There were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:4); (ii) "And the Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved" (Acts 2:47); (iii) Many of them that heard the word believed; the number of the men came to be above five thousand" (Act 4:4); (iv) "And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women" (Act 5:14); (v) "When the number of the disciples was multiplying ..." (Acts 6:1); (vi) "And the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; a great company of the priests was obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7).

Consequently, the Holy Spirit brings about an 'increase', 'adding', and 'multiplying'

of disciples and converts in the Church. Believers must therefore 'wait' to receive the 'pouring upon' or baptism of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, take assurance of Jesus Christ's promise to all believers, "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I go, I will send him to you ... when the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak of his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak" (John 16:7-15). Again, Jesus assures that: "And behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you, but stay (i.e. wait) in the city until you are clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). This promise was fulfilled and recorded in Acts 2:1ff, "When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place ... And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance."

The Holy Spirit is still with us. It is still for all who are ready to 'wait' and receive Him. He is the power of all believers and the church of God. John Maxwell rightly notes, "Leaders can never empower anyone else until they are first supernaturally empowered themselves. The term 'filled with the Holy Spirit' is used five times in Acts (2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9). Whenever someone is filled with the Holy Spirit, something happens. Empowered leaders express God's power, then others." Christians are empowered when they receive the promised Holy Spirit through Christ Jesus.

Be blessed and Shalom!

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Can you judge others with the word of God?

There are many verses these days people use to justify themselves to continue in sin. Some say all have sinned and come short of the glory of God so nobody is righteous, but they don't normally bother to complete the statement that God has now called all to repent from their sins. Some say King David whom God called a man after His own heart was a sinner but I proved through the scriptures in one of my past articles that King David was a righteous man but only fell into sin in a rare moment in Uriah's wife saga.

Why am I bothering to highlight these areas of human beliefs? Answer: Because I have come to realise through my interactions with people that many don't understand the ways of God and believe that the Grace of God is covering them in their sins and the Grace will still plead for them on the last day.

My brothers and sisters, let it be known that God is Holy and the Grace of God is to help us live Holy lives and not continue in sin. Any sin you know is sin and you continue doing it without remorse is rebellion against the Word of God and God will not accept rebels into His Kingdom.

If you are really serious with yourself, you can restrict yourself to obeying the Word of God and live a Holy life. Jesus Christ lived a Holy life and the Apostles too, so you can also live a holy life if you are serious about obeying God on earth and going to Heaven.

Now, I want to look at another verse where people also hide to continue in sin. The verse is about judgement and the bone of contention here is whether a human can judge another for any reason.

Matthew 7:1 - 5 started with "Judge not, that ye be not judged, for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

This statement of Jesus Christ has been interpreted in many ways and sometimes people say that nobody has the right to judge another person hence everyone should be



Dr. Agbodo

left alone to live the life they want and wait for the final judgment of God on the last day. But my position has always been that it is wrong for someone to judge a person or situation by personal opinions but judgement can be made if the judgement is tied to the word of God.

If you don't judge people or a situation, how will you know who or where to go and preach the Holy message of God?

Somebody telling lies can be judged with the word of God and told to stop telling lies because all liars will go to Hell Fire. Someone can be told to stop fornication and adultery based on the judgement of the word of God.

So, judge not in Matthew 7:1 refers to judge not with your own opinion but judge only with the word of God.

If we don't judge one another to ensure that we are all on the path of Godliness and holiness, then many will go astray.

Apostle Paul judged the activities of the various Churches that were set up then among the Gentiles and wrote to them based on his judgement according to the Word of God.

Every judgement Apostle Paul delivered on the various Churches was based on the Word of God and not his personal opinions.

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ even clarified His statement in Matthew 7:1 in John 7:24 when He said: "Judge not according to the appearance but judge righteous judgement. Jesus Christ encouraged us to judge one another in love and according to the righteous judgement of the Word of God. Therefore, anybody hiding under the canopy of Matthew 7:1 to say that a brethren cannot point to the wrongdoings of another brethren to help them recover in righteousness is wrong because Jesus Christ said we can pass righteous judgments.

God wants us to be our brother's keeper hence it is not wrong to watch over the shoulder of your fellow humans to bring them back to the right path of righteousness if they have strayed.

God said in the scriptures that "at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man" - Genesis 9:5. Therefore, if you don't tell your friends, neighbours and others you meet every day about their wrongs either directly or diplomatically, if they perish in sin, God will hold you partly responsible for their blood. That is why we need to join in spreading the gospel because if you don't join in spreading it and people within your reach are not made to understand the true meaning of the gospel of Christ and perished in their sins, God will partly hold you responsible and you will be punished for it.

There is so much sin in the world today and people need help so that they can change to live a holy life. If you look at the world today and based on the judgement of the word of God and you don't see the need to intensify the spread of the gospel of the living God so that those already on their way to Hell Fire can be saved, then you are not a serious Christian and only serious Christians will go to Heaven.

If you truly love your neighbour or other humans the way you love yourself as commanded by Christ, why are you not spreading the gospel either directly or even through sharing the word of God online?

Some people will read a godly message online for example on Facebook and all they need to do to get that same message to others is to press the share button but they will not do so. Are we serious about spreading the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? If we are serious, why are we not concerned about the spread of sinful acts in the world and contribute our quota to eradicate sin through the spread of the gospel of righteousness and holiness?

However, we must note that the first judgement anyone must judge is to judge himself or herself in line with the commandments of God to know if he or she is saved or not because if you have not accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour, you cannot enter the Kingdom of God no matter the good deeds you have done on earth. After you have judged yourself, then judge your family members, neighbours, colleagues, associates and other humans with the word of God and know if they are on their way to Heaven or Hell Fire, and ensure that as many that are living in sin are reached with the right gospel of Christ so that they can be saved.

God will require the blood of every human you could have reached with the gospel from your hands if that person dies in sin without your reaching him or her. It is that serious.

So, judge righteous judgements and let everyone around you and within your reach get the gospel of Jesus Christ so that they can be saved from death, the devil and all works of darkness because many are suffering in ignorance and others are suffering from wrong doctrines and teachings and desperately need the gospel of holiness and righteousness to be saved. Prove your love for God and humanity and spread the gospel to someone today because many are dying of ignorance and from the deceits of the devil through false beliefs and twisted gospels.

God bless us in Jesus Name.

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Nigeria gets 5th Cardinal appointment of Roman Catholic Church

By GABRIEL OMONHINMIN, Culture and Religion Editor

A Cardinal in Latin, Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae cardinalis, literally "cardinal of the Holy Roman Church", is a Senior Member of the clergy of the Catholic Church, immediately behind the Pope in the order of hierarchy. Collectively, the members constitute the College of Cardinals and are appointed for life.

Their most solemn responsibility is to elect a new Pope in a conclave, always from among themselves (with a few historical exceptions), when the Holy See is vacant. During the period between a Pope's death or resignation and the election of his successor, the day-to-day governance of the Holy See is in the hands of the College of Cardinals.

The right to participate in a conclave is limited to cardinals, who have not reached the age of 80 years by the day the vacancy occurs. In addition, cardinals collectively participate in papal consistories (which generally take place annually), in which matters of importance to the Church are considered and new cardinals may be created. Cardinals of working age are also appointed to roles overseeing dicasteries of the Roman Curia, the central administration of the Catholic Church.

With the revision of the Code of Canon Law promulgated in 1917 by Pope Benedict XV, only those who are already Priests or Bishops may be appointed cardinals. Since the time of Pope John XXIII, a Priest who is appointed a cardinal must be consecrated a Bishop, unless he obtains a dispensation.

On Sunday, 29th May 2022, the 59 years Old Catholic Bishop of Ekwulobia, Anambra state, Peter Okpaleke, was appointed a Catholic Cardinal. His appointment was announced by the head of the Catholic Church Worldwide, Pope Francis.

Bishop Okpaleke was one of the 21 new Cardinals from around the world announced by the Pope on that Sunday. With this appointment, Bishop Okpaleke is now the fifth Cardinal from Nigeria to be so appointed by the Catholic Church.

Nigeria has since independence produced five Cardinals in the Catholic Church. The first Catholic Cardinal from Nigeria was Dominic Ignatius Ekandem, who died in 1995 at the age of 78 years. He was followed by Francis Anizoba Arinze, who will soon be 90 years on November 1, 2022. He is an expert on Christian/Muslim dialogue, having spent most of his professional life in Rome, and is now retired.

Anthony Olubunmi Okogie is the third Cardinal from Nigeria and the second alive. He will be 86 years on June 16, 2022. He is retired and was the Archbishop of Lagos Archdiocese for 39 years.

On October 24, 2012, Pope Benedict XVI appointed the then Archbishop of Abuja Archdiocese, John Onaiyekan, who is now 78 years old and five others as Cardinals.

Archbishop Onaiyekan was before Bishop Okpaleke was appointed a



Cardinal Peter Okpaleke

Cardinal, the youngest of the Nigerian Catholic Cardinals. He is known for his peace and reconciliation work across the increasingly bitter Christian/Muslim divide.

The unique thing about Bishop Okpaleke's appointment is that he is still young and falls within the age of a working Cardinal. Working Cardinals not only participate actively in a conclave they can be appointed as a Pope if there is a vacancy in the Holy See today. Pope Francis after the announcement of the new appointments at Regina Coeli on Sunday, May 29, 2022, said, "On Saturday, 27th August, I will hold a Consistory for the creation of new Cardinals. Let us pray that they will help me in my mission as Bishop of Rome for the good of all God's people."

The College of Cardinals currently consists of 208 Cardinals out of whom 117 are electors and 91 non-electors. But with the new additions, the number will grow to 299 Cardinals, of whom 131 will be electors.

Of the 21 newly appointed Cardinals, eight are from Europe, six from North America, and four from Central and Latin America.

Cardinal Peter Ebere Okpaleke, who was born on March 1, 1963, is from

Amesi, Aguata Local Government Area of Anambra State, Nigeria.

He had his primary school education at Amesi, and in 1983, he entered the Bigard Memorial Major Seminary in Ikot-Ekpene and Enugu, where he studied philosophy and theology from 1983 to 1992.

He thereafter went to study Canon Law in Rome at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross.

He was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Awka on August 22, 1990. On the 7th of December, 2012, Pope Benedict XVI appointed Okpaleke Bishop of Ahiara, Nigeria. He was consecrated as a Bishop on May 21, 2013, but there was opposition to his appointment on the basis that he was not from the Mbaise ethnic group. As expected, the Pope insisted that he remains the Bishop and the church will not tolerate such ethnic bigotry.

Tribalism in the Catholic Church

The division amongst the Igbos is so deep that it is now affecting even religion, specifically the Catholic Church, known as the Holy Roman Catholic Church.

In the Catholic Church, the powers to appoint a Bishop are exercised by

the Pope. Once the Pope exercises this power, it is not subject to any form of debate or negotiation. Once the Pope has spoken, the decision is final. This is the premise of the statement attributed to St. Augustine - Roma locuta est, causa finita est (Rome has spoken, and the case is closed).

To put it in context, the Catholic Church thrives on the principle of 'sensus ecclesiae' which connotes universality. In line with 'sensus ecclesiae', there were times when we had Nigeria's Priests and Bishops who were Irish because the Catholic Church is one and universal. Recall the days of the missionaries in Nigeria and you will realize that those Oyibo Priests were not serving in their local governments or state of origin. Nor in their villages of birth.

Now, pause for a moment and ask why an Igbo Catholic Priest was appointed by the Pope to become a Bishop in an Igbo Catholic Diocese in 2012 and the entire Diocese rejected his appointment and refused to allow him to take canonical possession of a Diocese validly entrusted to his pastoral care by the Supreme Pontiff.

Surprisingly, the reason was that the then Bishop Okpaleke is from Awka Diocese in Anambra State and not from Ahiara Diocese in Imo State.

The rejection was bold, daring and not even pretentious; it was so scathing and embarrassing that his Episcopal ordination was held outside the Diocese he had been appointed to lead. Despite his ordination, he was refused entry into the Diocese and never took charge of Ahiara Diocese even for one day. The Ahiara Diocese made a loud statement and they were clear - they would rather stay without a Bishop rather than have a Priest that is not from Ahiara Presbyterium. They didn't mince words about it and remained defiant.

After a while and in a bid to calm the tension and for peace to reign, Bishop Peter Ebere Okpaleke had to resign his appointment as the Bishop of Ahiara Diocese in February 2018, an office he never really assumed. One can imagine how he survived those difficult moments of his life. He would have relied greatly on the Holy Spirit as epitomized in his episcopal motto - 'Veni Sancte Spiritus' (Come Holy Spirit!).

Regardless, he remained a Bishop, albeit, a Bishop without a Diocese. To reiterate, Bishop Okpaleke was without a Diocese because even as an Igbo man, the Igbo Diocese he was appointed to oversee rejected him because he was not from that particular part of Igbo land. It is also important to emphasize that there is no provision in the Canon law that stipulates that only Priests from a particular Diocese must serve as Bishop of that Diocese.

In March 2020, a new Diocese had to be created in Anambra (Ekwulobia Diocese) and he was appointed as the first Bishop of the newly created Diocese. His Episcopal installation took place on April 29, 2020, and he has been serving in that capacity before his new appointment as Cardinal.

On Saturday, 27th August, I will hold a Consistory for the creation of new Cardinals. Let us pray that they will help me in my mission as Bishop of Rome for the good of all God's people



Cashless transactions hit N117.33tr as economy grow by 3.11%

•Payment of company income tax rises to N532.48b

By **EDU ABADE**, Business Editor

A recent report of the Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System (NIBSS) has indicated that between January and April 2022, about N117.33 trillion payments were processed through various electronic channels.

This is N35.79 trillion higher than the N81.54 trillion processed in the corresponding period of 2021. Nigeria recorded N27.22 trillion in electronic payments in January 2022, N27.76 trillion in February, N32.52 trillion in March and N29.84 trillion in April 2022, amounting to N117.33 trillion.

The NIBSS monitors cashless transactions through the Nigeria Instant Payment System (NIPS) and Point of Sales (POS) terminals in Nigeria. The COVID-19 pandemic might be partly responsible

for the rise in the value of cashless transactions. At the peak of the pandemic, the lockdown and movement restrictions compelled Nigerians, especially the youths, to purchase goods via e-commerce channels and pay electronically.

In addition, increase in the value of electronic transactions indicates progress towards attaining the Central Bank of Nigeria's (CBN) policy goal of a cashless economy. Transaction charges per electronic transaction make some people prefer payment through cash.

Hence, reducing transaction charges will likely increase electronic payments and, in turn, reduce exposure to risks such as robbery associated with carrying bulk cash and lowers the frequency of printing new currency notes to replace damaged ones.

Also, data released by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) showed that Nigeria's economy grew in real terms by 3.11 per cent in the first quarter (Q1) of 2022. The growth rate is 2.6 per cent points higher than the 0.51 per cent growth rate recorded in Q1 2021, but 0.88 per cent points lower than the 3.98 per cent recorded in Q4 2021.

Although there was marginal decrease in real output growth, the quarter growth made it the sixth quarter of uninterrupted positive growth since the country exited the COVID-19 induced recession in Q4 of 2020.

A report by the Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa (CSEA), which validated the NBS' data, revealed that the non-oil sector grew by 6.08 per cent and contributed about 93.37 per cent of total output in the period under review. However,

the oil sector contracted by 26.04 per cent, and its share dipped to 6.63 per cent in Q1 2022 from 9.25 per cent in 2021.

Persistent vandalism and illegal refineries are partly responsible for the declining contribution of the oil sector, while the electricity sector contracted by 11.2 per cent, partly due to the frequent collapse of the transmission network in the period under review.

For the Nigerian economy to have high and sustainable growth, the non-oil sector growth needs to be sustained to compensate for the contraction in the oil sector. Also, the country's electricity generation and distribution need to be improved. The unreliable electricity situation partly contributes to the high cost of doing business and indirectly hinders growth.

Meanwhile, Company Income Tax (CIT) revenue in Nigeria increased in Q1 2022 to N532.48



Emefiele

billion, a growth of 53.09 per cent on quarter-on-quarter basis from N347.81 billion in Q4 2021 and 35.61 per cent on year-on-year basis from N392.65 billion in Q1 2021. By disaggregating CIT revenue into foreign CIT and local payments in Q1 2022, domestic payments amounted to N209.13 billion.

It constitutes about 39.27 per cent of total CIT, which is qualitatively similar to 38.79 per cent recorded in Q1 2021 but lower than 88.49 per cent recorded in Q2 2021, 57.13 per cent in Q3 2021, and 74.42 per cent in Q4 2021.

The distribution of CIT between local and foreign CIT payments reflects the quarter that local organisations are more likely to remit their CIT payments relative to foreign organisations.

Furthermore, the data shows that Manufacturing, Information and Communication, and financial and insurance sectors were the top three contributors to the local CIT payments.

Customs to generate \$176b in 20 yrs from e-project, says Ali

•Navy hands over rice, PMS to NCS, NSCDC

By **EDU ABADE**, Business Editor

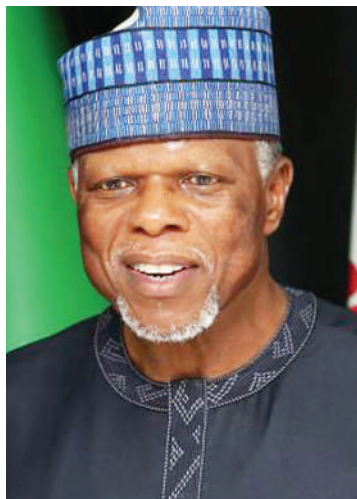
Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) has disclosed that it will generate \$176 billion revenue in the next 20 years through the implementation of the e-Customs project.

Comptroller-General of Customs, retired Col. Hameed Ali (rtd), stated this in Abuja during the signing of the e-Customs concession agreement between the NCS, Africa Finance Corporation (AFC) and China's Huawei Technologies Limited.

Ali said the e-Customs concession project would ease the cost of doing business, boost revenue, enhance productivity and stop all arbitrariness in the service.

He said: "The \$3.2 billion e-Customs projects to be financed by the AFC and managed by Huawei Technologies Limited under a 20-year concession window, when fully implemented, will quadruple the Customs' current N210 billion monthly revenue collection.

"We will be making \$176 billion within the next 20 years. I



Col. Hameed Ali (rtd),

appreciate our partners, Huawei Technologies Limited. We had to go to China a couple of times and today we are going to be fully digitised. I thank the AFC for financing this project on behalf of Nigeria.

"The success of this project will be on the global map. We are going to hit the ground running. The journey has been long and

torturous, but we've eventually signed the dotted lines. I appreciate the Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission (ICRC) for the commitment to the success of see the project."

Acting Director-General of ICRC, Michael Ohiani, described the project as revolutionary and that it would bring digital smart processes and procedures to customs operations, adding: "This is a migration from analogue to digital. We urge the concessionaire to stick to the rules of engagement, as we will be monitoring the project every step of the way."

Also, representative of Huawei Technologies Limited, Kelvin Yang, said the company would ensure that the aim of the concession agreement was achieved, promising to make it a world standard project.

Meanwhile, operatives of the Nigerian Navy Ship Victory (NNSV) handed over 252 bags of smuggled imported rice to the NCS in Calabar, Cross River State.

Base Operations Officer of NNSV, Lt. Commander Clement Ayogu, who handed over the rice to the NCS at the Navy

jetty, said the operation was carried out on April 16, 2022.

Ayogu said the handover was done on behalf of the Commander of NNSV, Commodore Ifeanyi Okpala, as directed by the Flag Officer Commanding, Eastern Naval Command of the Nigerian Navy, Rear Admiral Ibrahim Dewu.

He said that the bags of rice worth over N9 million were intercepted off the Calabar Fairway buoy along the Enugu creeks.

"On sighting our gunboat, the perpetrators ran away. After a thorough investigation of the matter, we are handing over the 252 bags of rice to the Nigeria Customs Service.

Niger State, ITF sign MoU on training of civil servants

By **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

Niger State government and the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to train civil servants and improve performance.

Director-General of ITF, Joseph Ari, who spoke in Minna, said the signing of the MoU was due to the mutual agreement between the state and the fund.

Ari, who was represented by the Area Manager of ITF in Niger State, Gyang Davon, said the partnership was geared towards improving the capacity of civil servants, adding that civil servants were the key drivers of the image and structure of government operations.

"We have been working in synergy with the office of Head of Service and he has shown interest in the development and welfare of civil servants. This partnership is to train civil servants to be able to compete favourably with their colleagues in other states.

"It is to enhance their capacities, broaden their skills and knowledge. The training will cut across all cadres of civil servants in the state," he stated.

Speaking, Niger Head of

Service, Hajiya Salamat Abubakar, who commended the ITF for the collaboration with the state government to develop the capacities of the civil servants, assured the civil servants that her office would ensure the sustainability of the partnership to enable the civil servants to compete globally.

Earlier in his welcome address, Permanent Secretary, Human Resources Development, Niger State Head of Service, Mallam Isah Ibrahim, said the MoU was aimed at developing the capacities of the state workforce across all cadres.



Joseph Ari

ECOWAS commits to common stance on AfCFTA position, policy protocol

By **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has expressed commitment to a common regional position on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) on competition policy among member states.

The ECOWAS Commission, ECOWAS Regional Competition Authority (ERCA) organised the first virtual regional meeting on the AfCFTA draft protocol on the competition policy with ECOWAS member states on Friday, May 27, 2022 to adopt common positions, consistent with regional and national competition framework in West Africa.

A statement issued by the APO Group and made available to The

Trumpet on behalf of ECOWAS, revealed that opening remarks were made by Executive Director of ERCA, Dr. Simeon Koffi, Acting Director of Trade, ECOWAS Commission, Kolawole Sofola and an official of Ghana's Ministry of Trade and Industry, Michael Opoku, who chaired the meeting.

As part of the second phase of negotiations on the AfCFTA, a draft protocol on competition policy was proposed by the AfCFTA Secretariat. The meeting considered offers from ERCA and four competitions with experts from the ECOWAS Region and members of ERCA's consultative competition committee.

Following deliberations at the meeting, they adopted the amendments, which will form

the basis for regional position on key provisions of the draft protocol to be presented at the upcoming fifth meeting of the committee on the competition policy, which will end on June 7, 2022 in Accra, Ghana.

The protocol on the competition policy, being an integral part of the agreement of the AfCFTA, would contribute to the attainment of AfCFTA's objectives, leading to industrial and agricultural development and enhanced competitiveness.

After a meeting in April 2021, it was agreed that addressing the divergent positions of the parties required prior coordination of positions within the regional entities, such as the Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

Manufacturing sector struggling to survive fiscal, monetary policies

Stories by **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

Director General of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), Segun Ajayi-Kadir, has lamented that local manufacturers are finding it increasingly difficult to cope with the several strangulating fiscal and monetary policy measures of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).

Ajayi-Kadir, therefore, charged the apex bank to reconsider its stance regarding the fiscal and monetary policy measures and reforms that have negatively

impacted the manufacturing sector.

He said in response to the domestic economic conditions in the first quarter (Q1) of 2022 and other challenges, especially those associated with the prevailing international financial and economic environment, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) recently reviewed its previous decisions by deepening the MPC.

He disclosed that the MPC reviewed its previous decisions by increasing the Monetary Policy Rate (MPR) to 13.5 per

cent from 11.5 per cent, which was fixed since September 2020.

He argued that although the rationale for increasing the MPR stems from the need to curb the rising rate of inflation that recently peaked at 16.8 per cent, the CBN should ensure relative stability and sustain economic growth in the face of uncertainties in the global economy.

"The implication of CBN's actions for the economy and manufacturing sector will lead to another level of increase in interest rates on loan-able funds,



Segun Ajayi-Kadir

which will enhance the intensity of the crowding effect on private sector businesses, as firms have lesser access to funds in the credit market.

"It will spur an upward review of existing lending rates dependent on obligations of manufacturing concerns, which will increase costs. It will intensify demand crunch emanating from the heavily eroded disposable income of Nigerians, as well as constrained access of households and individuals

to cheap funds."

Ajayi-Kadir added that the CBN action will exacerbate the intensity of idle capital assets, worsen the already declining profit margin of private businesses and heighten the mortality rate of small businesses.

"It will also further reduce capacity utilisation, increase unemployment, crime and insecurity, as banks' capacity to support production and economic growth has been constrained. This will restrict the pace of full recovery of the real sector, make manufacturing performance remain lackluster and lead to learner contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP)," he added.

He stressed that the increase in MPR has widened the journey further away from the preferred single-digit interest rate regime is not friendly considering the myriad of binding constraints as already limiting the performance of the sector.

He added that MAN was concerned about the ripple effects of CBN's decision and its implications for the manufacturing sector, which is finding it difficult to survive.

Experts warn farmers against wrong use of agrochemicals

Some agriculture experts have called for increased awareness and advocacy against the wrong use of agrochemicals.

The experts, who made the call in Lagos, said the misuse of agrochemicals by local farmers have resulted in negative implications on the environment and human health.

Principal extension specialist at the National Agricultural Extension and Research Liaison Services (NAERLS), Dr. Fadlullar Issa, said it was expedient to raise the awareness level of the farmers on the dangers of inappropriate use of agrochemicals.

"To sensitise farmers against wrong use of agrochemicals, we must embark on a sustained awareness campaign. This is necessary because we have a dearth of extension service agents in Nigeria.

"The sensitisation is necessary and should be the sole job of extension service workers. In some states, the ratio of one extension officer to farmers is one to 6,000. Essentially, they cannot cover that number, hence the need for the media to join in the advocacy campaign against wrong application of agrochemicals."

He also expressed concern that the misuse of agrochemicals was a major challenge in the

Nigerian agricultural sector and that there were consequences for not adopting the recommended practice of the substances.

"When we overuse or underuse agrochemicals in crop cultivation, it has negative implications on human health. The misuse of agrochemicals also has consequences on the environment. This has been scientifically proven to cause skin irritation, eye problems, breathing difficulty and even death.

"Some people have gotten some permanent ailments because of this agrochemical misuse in crop cultivation," he added.

On his part, Dr. Tunde Babalola, an agriculture expert, who said sensitisation of the farmers should not be left in the hands of government alone, restated the need to intensify the campaign against the misapplication of agrochemicals through private and government partnership.

"The government has an ongoing programme, which is extension services to educate local farmers on appropriate application of agrochemicals in crop farming. Agricultural extension needs to intensify its reach to farmers to curb the inappropriate use of agrochemicals. Our local farmers need more orientation on the negative implication of

agrochemicals abuse on human health and the environment.

"The government needs to find extension services more for local farmers to be kept abreast of the dangers of agrochemical abuse. As such, a media approach to reach the farmers should also be embarked upon to prevent misuse of fertilisers and herbicides," he stressed.

Babalola also pointed out that media advocacy on the dangers of the wrong use of the agrochemicals should be prioritised, maintaining that just as there were media campaigns and advocacy against poliomyelitis, HIV/AIDS and the COVID-19 pandemic, there should be serious awareness and campaign against wrong use of agrochemicals.

"Some of the advocacy programmes are most times sponsored by non-governmental agencies, individuals and stakeholders and so, such should be replicated in the fight against misuse of agrochemicals.

"These can be spread faster than what the government is doing to sensitise the farmers through its extension services. We can also advocate responsible use of fertilisers and other agrochemicals for young farmers through social media advocacy," he stated.

Food & Beverage West Africa show holds June 14

No fewer than 220 exhibitors from five continents are expected to participate in the Food and Beverage West Africa show. The event holds between June 14, 2022 and June 16, 2022 at the Landmark Centre, Victoria Island, Lagos.

Its organisers, BtoB Events, assured that the show will be the biggest food and beverage fair in Nigeria, adding that the event will focus on promoting

the Nigerian food and beverage products.

Speaking on the event, Managing Director of BtoB Events, Jamie Hill, said: "After the huge success of FAB West Africa 2021, I cannot wait to bring the largest edition of the Food and Beverage West Africa exhibition back to Nigeria. This exhibition will be the first exhibition to utilise the new third hall at the Landmark Centre, perhaps making it the largest food and beverage exhibition on the African continent.

"This year's exhibition has seen an incredible increase in demand for exhibition space and will host exhibitors from across 40 countries and five continents. The previous edition in September 2021 was a huge success, despite certain COVID-19 and travel restrictions.

"So for 2022 and the first edition since international travel was relaxed, we have seen a surge in demand for exhibition spaces. This exhibition will sell out so interested exhibitors should book

their spaces."

The sponsors and partners for this year's edition include Just Food, NASCO Group, Mamuda, Casa De Campo, Great Grey, SE Group-Abbad Pack, Indonesian Trade Promotion Centre, National Association of Nigerian Traders-NANTS, Nigerian Hotel & Catering Group and Oke-Arin Traders' Association, Lagos.

Others are the Onitsha Main Markets Traders Union (OM-MATU), Ogbaru Main Market Traders Association (OMMTA), Eziukwu Market Food & Beverage Dealers Association, Aba, Balogun Business Association of Nigeria, the Association of Food Vendors in Nigeria (AFVN), NASON, REFSPAN and Conference of Agri-Businesses in Nigeria (CABIN).

The Trumpet recalled that BtoB Events had previously overseen eight exhibitions across Africa and was responsible for the launch of West Africa's largest beauty exhibition, Beauty West Africa and the West Africa Automotive Show.



Jamie Hill

'Investment in FGN securities profitable, risk-free'

Debt Management Office (DMO) says it is advisable for Nigerians to invest in the various federal government securities, as they are profitable and risk free.

Director-General of DMO, Patience Oniha, said this virtually, saying apart from raising funds to finance government projects, the various Federal Government of Nigeria's (FGN) securities also offered attractive investment opportunities for Nigerians.

Oniha maintained that the Federal Government issues the bonds through the DMO and make periodic interest payments to the investors, while the principal is paid at the end of each tenor.

She also explained that the Federal Government has various investment platforms like the FGN Bond, FGN savings Bond, Treasury Bills, the Green Bond, the Sobering SUKUK and Eurobond,

among others.

"One function of the FGN securities is to raise capital to finance budget deficits and also to raise funds to execute critical infrastructure projects. They are backed by full faith and credit of the Federal Government of Nigeria and default risk-free," she stressed.

She further stated that the FGN securities also contribute to the development of the domestic capital market, adding that they serve as benchmark for other private institutions to issue their securities.

"They enhance the savings and investment opportunities of the populace thereby promoting financial inclusion. They also attract foreign investors into the domestic financial market to refinance maturing domestic debts and diversify sources of funding for the Federal Government.

Titan Trust Bank takes over UBN

Strong indications emerged during the week that Titan Trust Bank (TTB) has taken over Union Bank of Nigeria (UBN) as it closed the deal that will enable it to acquire majority shareholding in Union Bank.

This was revealed through regulatory filings sighted by The Trumpet on Thursday, June 2, 2022 in Lagos.

In a regulatory filings, almost half a year after an agreement was reached by both parties, the lender, backed by a former Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Tunde Lemo, set out to acquire 89.4 per cent interest in Union Bank from a pool of stakes from exiting major investors including British Virgin Islands-based Atlas Mara and Union Global Partners Limited.

It was learnt Titan Bank later

increased the stake to 93.4 per cent, even as it failed to mention this fact in a statement it issued during the week.

A document sighted by The Trumpet further revealed that a name change could follow and "with the completion of the transaction, TGI Group, parent company of TTB, will now become the majority shareholder and core investor in Union Bank."

However, the ownership transfer excluded Union Bank UK, a subsidiary of Union Bank of Nigeria, which also has been sold, with the proceeds of divestment to all the shareholders as of March 4, 2022.

It was also learnt that in the spirit of the change of ownership, most members of Union Bank's board and some top executives have exited the bank.



Be more professional, Women estate surveyors urged

Women estate surveyors have been asked to be wary of professional misconduct, technicalities of establishing partnerships and develop expertise in proposal writing. This is in a bid to become more relevant in the profession.

The call was made at a lecture series and interactive sessions entitled, 'Beneath the Glamour, Operating a Successful Practice' organised by the Women Wing of the Nigerian Institution of Estate Surveyors and Valuers (NIESV), Lagos branch.

The forum brought together women practitioners across the state including the chairman of Lagos branch of the institution, Mrs Olabisi Demola-Alade and a past president of NIESV, Mr Bolarinwa Patunola-Ajayi.

In her presentation on estate surveyors and valuers and professional ethics, the Partner, Mark Odu & Company, Bridget Oranye, said women practitioners must be observant of the general ethics that cover the way they should act while conducting the business of estate surveying and valuation.

She stressed the need for women to imbibe the virtue of honesty and devotion to the institution in professional practice.

"You are expected to be honest, trustworthy, loyal, respectful, adhere to the law of the land, avoid harm to others and be accountable. All these are embedded in our code of conduct from the registration board of the institution," she said.

Oranye, who is also the NIESV National Women Coordinator, charged practitioners to familiarise themselves with the Act, which sets up the institution, the green book and the constitution to avert professional pitfalls.

The Partner, Estate Links/Gbenga Olaniyan & Associates, Mrs Adejumo Akure, who spoke on the technicalities of partnership, explained that it was important for practitioners going into partnership to define the reason for it and ensure complementary of strengths rather than excluding men in the business partnership.

Akure said there was need for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis, which is a strategic planning and management technique to help identify threats related to business



Bolarinwa Patunola-Ajayi

competition or project planning. A lecturer in the Department of Estate Management and Valuation, Lagos State

University of Science and Technology, Ikorodu, Mrs Olubunmi Adeowo, stated that there are things that are

very essential, especially for solicited briefs when writing briefs on property management and valuation.

Speaking on acceptable briefs and proposals, she noted that some of these are the open statement, description of the objective of the valuation report, the targeted audience and budgeting for the particular job, ability to adapt as well as description of the success rate.

The coordinator, NIESV women wing, Lagos branch, Mrs Olufowobi Olawunmi, said: "There is a need to organise more programmes that will enlighten female surveyors so that they can excel in the profession."

Olufowobi disclosed plans to bring more women estate practitioners into the association to train and educate them.

She stated that every practitioner that studied estate management can excel and supersede the performance of her male counterpart.

On her part, the Director of Estate, Lagos State Ministry of Housing, Mrs Olayinka Patunola-Ajayi, who moderated the sessions observed that for most successful women in the business, what the society sees is the glamour and not the roughness that they must have experienced.

The Ikoyi 21-Storey Building Collapse, what has changed?

By GENESIS ERIRIOMA

In the Lagos State real estate market, Ikoyi quickly comes to mind as the apex of Nigerian residential real estate. Dotting the skyline and landscape are Luxury developments, the prices of which constitute the highest entry point to any real estate market in Nigeria.

It was indeed a sad surprise that a 21-storey block of residential apartments, Gerard Road, Ikoyi, Lagos, the third in a set of three, collapsed on the 1st of November, 2021. The construction, which was targeted to finish in 2022, was already at 80% completion and priced between \$1.2M and \$5M per unit. It was 65% sold out. According to authorities, the project was not insured as required by the Lagos State Physical Planning Permit Authority (LAPPPA) meaning that compensation for the victims and subscribers will be a very difficult task.

According to reports, a lack of concrete cube test results for each stage of construction

meant that Prowess Engineering, the engineering firm initially involved in the project could no longer guarantee the building's integrity and subsequently pulled out of the project. Again, the original approvals for the structure were originally for 8 floors. This would later be changed to 15 and finally, 21 throwing caution to the wind and the initial calculations supporting the structural integrity of the building out of the window.

The steep decline in the currency's exchange value also meant that building materials would have become more expensive as the project progressed and it's nothing to be unexpected in the Nigerian construction industry. The unanswered question, therefore, remains – what compromises were made that led to the devastating collapse?

Since the collapse last year, the demolition of the other two high-rise buildings adjacent to the collapsed 21-story skyscraper has not been ordered by the authori-

ties. While there have been other building collapses in Nigeria over the years, one in an exclusive neighbourhood as Ikoyi, which would normally be home to the highest-end buildings, should represent a turning point in the sector. Outcomes expected immediately by experts were:

(1) Changes in demand in the local real estate market. Location, price, and finish have traditionally trumped quality and even size in real estate demand. With the collapse, a shift in demand for quality was expected. However, due to economic realities, low-grade real estate items continue to be in high demand.

(2) Changes in supply in the local real estate market. The collapse raised questions about both new and existing real estate assets. In the short term, structural integrity tests were supposed to become commonplace and structural integrity given more emphasis in general. The winners will be the construction businesses

and developers already known for high quality, who will be able to charge more for the quality assurance they provide.

(3) A variant of this case for stricter regulatory compliance will be self-imposed enforcement by construction and real estate professionals. This is what may foster longer lasting change.

On the part of the government, major changes in the regulation of construction and real estate industry which could play out in stricter regulations enforced for property development for a short period - and then business continues as usual in the long run were expected.

Also, a review of practice qualifications for construction and real estate professionals by the various regulatory associations with stricter regulation and enforcement was expected immediately but about 7 months later, everyone seems to be silent and everything continues as usual.

Nigeria real estate market outlook 2022

By **GENESIS ERIRIOMA**

2022 being a pre-election year, has made markets around the world continue to adjust to the pandemic. Each market is however peculiar and has had to adjust in its own way

and the real estate market is no different from other markets.

Many analysts believe that in approximately 20 years, the value of global investable real estate will grow by an average of 5.2% yearly projected to exceed \$85Trn.

The investment motivation for owning real estate remains attractive, regardless of macroeconomic shocks and political forebodings that characterize the investment terrain.

Nigeria which is believed to be world's largest black

population according to a population projection of 200million people will be having general elections in 2023 with the effects of the pandemic, being a huge stumbling block to economic growth, leading to the Third Quarter (Q3) foreign trade balance recording approximately negative N3Trn. The present administration is also plagued by weakening non-oil revenues due to insecurity and inflation despite the fact that there was a slight recovery by the Fourth Quarter (Q4) of 2021.

To cushion the effects of all these, the government took to raise record sums in the bond market – N2.6Trn by some estimates. Despite the President signing the Petroleum Industry Bill in a bid to improve energy governance, the perception of corruption remains a major source of concern.

The usual grand announcements of government led expenditures on social projects are expected in 2022 as the authorities rediscover the sensitivities of the average citizen. Millennials and Generation Z now influence spending over

\$600Bn globally and are increasingly confident in real estate investing, an important fact not lost on brokers in Nigeria's real estate market.

In the market, property agents report growth in tenant requirements for apartments in cities – out with the swimming pool and in with an income generating short stay apartment. And this population is on the increase. Data gleaned from the United Nations suggest that Abuja will be the fastest growing city in Africa, projected to grow 6% by the end of 2025. Interestingly, the city of Lokoja in Kogi state ranks fourth on the list with a projected 5.93% growth by the end of 2025.

This will make the demand for infrastructure and housing even more apparent. Lagos State, believed to be the Commercial capital of Nigeria didn't make the top 5. Recently, the Edo state government signed up the Persianas Group, developers of the Palms Grade A mall in Lagos to develop a retail centre in Benin city and made significant progress with the German govern-

ment on the return of 7,000 artefacts taken from the Benin Kingdom. Luxury lifestyle brand - Montblanc opened its first standalone boutique in Nigeria.

The prices for land and residential apartments in Nigeria's leading cities which include, Kano, Lagos, Abuja, Lokoja, Port-Harcourt etc have moved up drastically. Second-tier cities have not been too far behind with developers launching small sized gated communities. Warehousing has now become even more critical to the functioning of the economy of Nigeria. Also, flexible terms and smaller space requirements have come to characterise the high grade office market.

Recently, a private equity firm, Development Partners International (DPI), focused on Africa, sold a portion of its stake in fast food chain, Food Concepts - the parent company of Chicken Republic, for an undisclosed amount. The Federal Executive Council approved \$17.47Bn for the purchase of office block - Kanti Towers, Victoria Island, Lagos by the Nigeria Maritime Administration and Safety Agency as its new headquarters. Also, Equinix a digital infrastructure company announced its intention to acquire Nigeria's data centre and connectivity giant, MainOne for the sum of \$320million. In another development, Ketron Investments bought out retailers - Shoprite and Purple raised a N5bn Sukuk Bonds Issue, achieving 100% subscription. Local investors across residential, retail, and healthcare have demonstrated a growing and strong confidence in the real estate market in Nigeria.

The migration to e-commerce and remote working is expected to last long after the pandemic has passed, altering the frequency and use of workplaces while enabling digital shopping and growing the digital economy of Nigeria. It is however expected that the demand for warehouses, distribution centres, and other properties that allow eCommerce growth will continue to rise. In places where white-collar occupations are on a steady increase, there is also an upsurge in the demand for office space and living spaces.

Evercare becomes Nigeria's first EDGE - certified hospital

Evercare Hospital Lekki, recently made history as the first hospital to receive final EDGE certification as a resource-efficient and environmentally friendly designed building healthcare project in Nigeria courtesy of International Finance Corporation (IFC) EDGE.

EDGE helps property developers to build and brand green in a fast, easy, and affordable way. EDGE is supported by free software that encourages solutions to reduce energy, water and the energy used to make building materials by at least 20 per cent, which is the standard for EDGE certification.

SpecSintali-SGS, an environmental certification body and global certification partner for IFC's EDGE green building programme, said that Evercare Hospital Lekki's resource-efficient design achieved 38.81 per cent reduction in energy usage, 20.50 per cent in water consumption and 42.07 per cent in materials' embodied energy compared to a local benchmark.

The programme has been supported by Austria, Canada, Denmark, ESMAP, European Union, Finland, Global Environment Facility (GEF), Hungary, Japan, United Kingdom and Switzerland.

EDGE has certified projects in Lagos, Abuja, Maiduguri and Benin City. Over the past four years, EDGE has supported several forward-looking pioneers of green buildings to lead a profitable transformation of the country's real estate sector.

The hospital facility located in Lekki is a modern, 165-bed purpose-built multispecialty, tertiary care private state-of-the-art hospital, located in Lekki, Lagos. It is part of the Evercare Group of hospitals, which provides integrated healthcare delivery services in emerging markets across Africa and South Asia,



Corinne Figueredo

including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Kenya.

The hospital offers care across a range of speciality medical and surgical services and is delivering high quality and accessible healthcare to communities in Lagos.

"We are excited that Evercare Hospital has achieved final EDGE certification. This milestone is testimonial to the hospital's vision for leading sustainable change in Nigeria's health care industry.

"It also shows that it is possible for hospitals, which consume 2.5 times the energy of an equivalent commercial building, to provide enhanced care for its patients as well the planet," according to Global Manager, IFC EDGE Green Building Market Transformation Programme, Corinne Figueredo.

"Hospitals are where people go to get better and the comfort and ambience of it can fast track healing in a placebo-like effect. We are happy to work with EDGE

towards ensuring that our hospital provides quality and advanced medical and healthcare services to Nigerians in an environmentally friendly environment.

"This is because we believe that medical facilities can provide state-of-the-art treatment while minimising energy and water use if the right decisions are made at the design stage. Additionally, this will help us cut operational costs. Working with EDGE, we have been able to target those areas where technologies can significantly reduce energy bills and help facility managers stay within tight budgets." Rajeev Bhandari, CEO Evercare Hospital said.

EDGE adopters include Alphamead Development Company, Echostone, Alliance Capital, Greenage, Modern Shelter, MISA, American University, Karmod Nigeria, Sachela Limited, Student Accommodation and Stanbic IBTC.

Mompha for plea bargain with EFCC over alleged N6b fraud

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

A special offences court sitting in Ikeja, Lagos State has adjourned the money laundering trial of internet celebrity, Ismaila Mustapha, popularly known as Mompha to June 10 for plea bargain agreement with the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

At the said date, it is expected that both the EFCC and Mompha would have reached a final agreement in the proposed plea bargain over alleged N6billion money laundering charge against the suspect.

A statement by the EFCC said Justice Mojisola Dada on Thursday fixed the date in anticipation of the final agreement between

the prosecution and the defence team of both parties.

At the proceeding on Thursday, Kolawole Salami who held brief for Gboyega Oyewole (SAN) informed the court that discussions were ongoing on plea bargain with EFCC.

The counsel prayed the court for extension of time for both parties to reach a conclusion.

He added that a meeting was held at prosecution's office at 4:00 p.m. to discuss the terms of the proposal.

EFCC counsel, Mr S.I. Suleiman, confirmed the position of the defence counsel and also prayed for an adjournment.

Justice Dada gave the date after defence and prosecution counsels prayed for extension of time.

It would be recalled that Mompha and his company, Ismalob Global Investment Limited was arrested on January 10, 2022 by EFCC, and subsequently arraigned him on a 8-count charge bordering on the offences of conspiracy and money laundering to the tune of over N6billion, along with his company.

The counts include conspiracy to launder money obtained through unlawful activities, and laundering of money obtained through unlawful activities.

He was also charged for retention of proceeds of criminal conduct, use of property derived from unlawful act, possession of document containing false pretenses and failure to disclose assets.



Mompha

ACTU needs management buy-ins to function effectively, says ICPC

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) has said that the Anti-Corruption and Transparency Unit (ACTU) requires management buy-ins to guarantee the enabling environment for it to function effectively.

Chairman of the agency, Professor Bolaji Owasanoye, SAN, who spoke recently at the inauguration of ACTU of National Iron Ore Mining Company (NIOMCO) Limited, Itakpe, Kogi State, held recently by the Kogi State office of the Commission, said without the support of management, ACTUs would not succeed in curbing corruption in Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of government.

The Chairman, who was represented by the Commission's Resident Anti-Corruption Commissioner in Kogi State Office, Mr Ulu Okoro James, appreciated the Chief Executive of the Mining Company, principal officers, members of the ACTU and staff of the company for receiving the ICPC team and making the inauguration/induction possible.

While speaking on the establishment of

ACTU, Owasanoye said, "Anti-Corruption and Transparency Unit (ACTU) derives its power from sections 71 and 70 of the Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act 2000, where the Chairman of the Commission is vested with the power to issue administrative orders to be called 'Standing Orders.'"

He further explained that the ACTU is an initiative of the ICPC approved by the Federal Government since October 2001 to serve as an in-house check mechanism for corruption prevention in MDA's.

Earlier in his remarks, Mr Augustus Nkechika, Sole Administrator/Chief Executive, NIOMCO welcomed the Resident Anti-Corruption Commissioner of ICPC, Kogi State, and his team to the Company, and to the inauguration.

He assured the ICPC's Resident Anti-Corruption Commissioner of full cooperation in carrying out its mandate on prohibition and prevention of corruption in his organization.

He also assured the chairman of ICPC that the unit (ACTU) will succeed in its assignment.

He wished the commissioner and his team journey mercies on their way back to their destination.

Mr Dennis N. Okoro administered the oath of office to the new members of ACTU.

A lecture titled 'An Overview of the Standing Order for the Operations of the Anti-Corruption and Transparency Unit (ACTU) in MDAs' was delivered by the Resident Anti-Corruption Commissioner.

The lecture highlighted the Establishment, Status, Composition, Tenure of office, and the duties of the ACTU members in MDAs.

A second lecture titled 'Preliminary Investigation' aimed at equipping the members with knowledge for conducting preliminary investigation once a report of wrongdoing is forwarded to the ACTU for action was delivered by Assistant Commissioner Mr Kwasau G. Y.

In his vote of thanks, Barr T. D. Akpur, ACTU Chairman, NIOMCO on behalf of the management of the unit expressed gratitude to ICPC for reposing confidence in them and assured the Commission that they would do their best to uphold the ideals of the Anti-Corruption agency and he also stated that they would do their job without fear or favour.

INTERPOL grants EFCC direct access to 114m criminal records

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Abdulrasheed Bawa, has, in Lyon, France, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Interpol National Central Bureau for Nigeria.

According to the Commission, the agreement on Direct Access to and Use of Interpol Information Systems, grants the EFCC unrestricted access to nine key global databases containing 114 million records of 195 countries, hosted by the Interpol on its i24/7 secure global records and communication system.

"Access to the Interpol databases is a significant boost to the EFCC as it enhances the Commission's operational capabilities by giving it an unparalleled global reach against suspected criminals and wanted persons attempting to flee from the long arm of the law," Uwujaren started.

According to him, "with the global criminal databases the EFCC now has unhindered access to, include: Nominal Database containing records of personal data and the criminal history of people subject to request for international police cooperation; Stolen and Lost Travel and Identity Documents (SLTD) Database containing information on travel and identity documents reported as stolen, lost revoked, invalid or stolen blank; and Travel Documents Associated with Notices (TDOWN) Databases, containing records of all extracted information from all Interpol Notices."

He listed other area of access to include, "Stolen Administrative Documents (SAD) Database, which has records of stolen official documents that serve to identify objects, for example, vehicle registration documents and clearance certificates for import/export; Digital Interpol Alert Library Doc (Dial Doc) containing records of newly detected forms of travel documents counterfeiting; Edison, a Forensic database that contains genuine travel documents; and Fingerprints Database grants authorized users in member countries access to view, submit and cross-check records in the fingerprints database via a user-friendly automatic fingerprint identification system (AFIS)."

Others include, "iARMS contains over a million records of lost, stolen, trafficked or smuggled firearms. iARMS can identify firearms trafficking patterns and smuggling routes and Stolen Motor Vehicles (SMV) Database contains extensive identification details from all types of motor vehicles and identifiable spare parts reported as stolen," the Commission said.

EFCC nabs 131 suspected cyber fraudsters in Ibadan, P'Harcourt

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Operatives of the Ibadan Zonal Command of the EFCC on Wednesday arrested thirty-nine (39) suspected internet fraudsters in a sting operation carried out in Ibadan, Oyo State.

The suspects who claimed to be undergraduates of different tertiary institutions in Ibadan were arrested at Apete area of the Oyo State capital, following useful intelligence on their cyber-fraudulent activities.

A statement on Friday by EFCC spokesperson, Wilson Uwujaren, stated however, that following analyses carried out on the devices of the suspects, incriminating documents, and messages of their fraudulent bank transactions were recovered from thirty-four (34).

According to him, the names of the suspects are, "Okeowo Abiodun Akeem, Yekini Ismail Omokayode, Odediran Abdulfatahi Dolapo, Isiaka Olumide Hammed, Obioma Honour Umaduabuchi, Olorunsola Eniola Johnson, Olabiye Ifeoluwa Joseph, Razaq Adams Lekan, Oladimeji Abdulrahmon Olamide, Oyelaran Olayiwoola Jeremiah, Patrick Simon, Adefowora Omotayo David, Adediran Qudus Wale, Onipede Damilola Zacheaus, Ajayi Ifedolapo Oluwatofunmi, Oluwole Ayomide Oluwasegun, Usman Mubarak Oluwadamilare, Dapo-Ajayi

Temitope Faith, Diyaolu Olamide Samuel, Ugbama Daniel Efemena, and Ayoade Taofeek Adekunle."

Others are, "Egberongbe Adebayo Adedamola, Ajadi Ayinla Ibrahim, Ajeigbe Christian Toluwase, Alabi Daniel Oluwatosin, Olawooyin Taofeek Olakunle, Oguntuase Tope Francis, Salami Adam Akanfe, Olanrewaju Michael Damola, Kareem Afeez Alabi, Onuma Chidubem Williams, Rasaq Sodiq Olamilekan, Okusanwo Mayowa Daniel and Wahab Adebayo Abdullahi," he added.

He said five exotic cars, mobile phones, laptops are among the items recovered from the suspects.

In a similar operation, the Port Harcourt Zonal Command of the EFCC has arrested 92 suspected internet fraudsters in a sting operation in the early hours of Wednesday, June 1, 2022, in Rivers State.

Uwujaren said the suspects were arrested for alleged internet fraud activities at locations including Choba and Ada George axis of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, following an intelligence report.

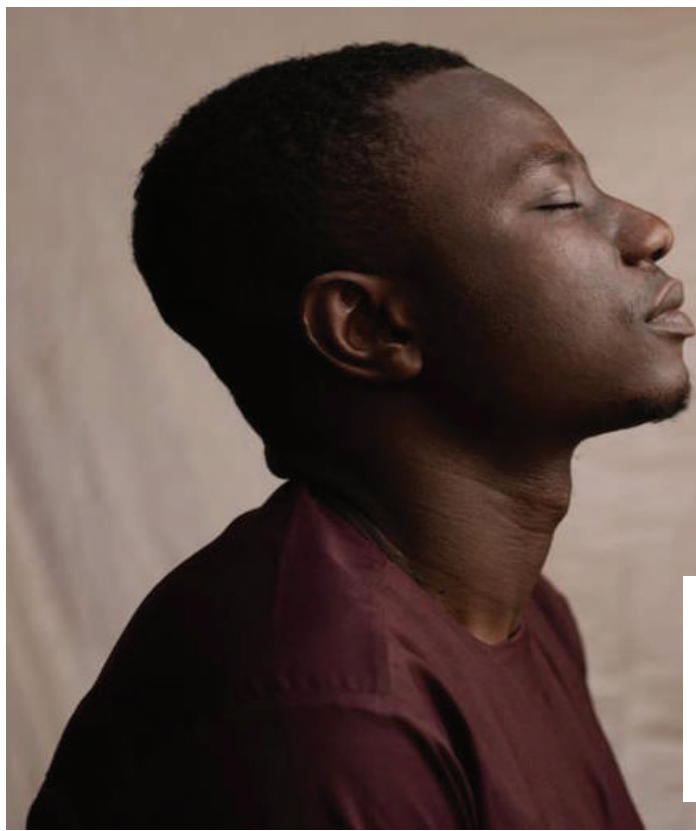
He said, "Analyses of the devices recovered from the suspects established that 64 of the suspects have incriminating items in their phones and emails.

"The Sixty Four (64) suspects are: Lawrence Philip, Edewor Victor, Triumph Amgbu,

Elvis Ogheze, Maduakolam Lius Fred, Edet Victor Akpan, Joshua Fidelis, Henry Wisdom, Isiah Ejarat, Destiny Waaogho Erigga, David Alli, Goodluck Edowru, James Otu, Asoulu Dare, Jerry Thankgod, Anawanti Finder, Edowuru Famous, Felix Osaro, Ukaegbu Franklin, Clinton Paul, Stansley .O. Tallick, Prosper Osadebameh, Prince Onyebuchi Ifeanyi, Gift Henry, Miracle Danien, Anyaeri Chidiebere, Udechukwu Ezenna, Udechukwu Victor, Favor Kelechi, Ernest Chidubem, Endurance Erebo, Chigozie Emeonye and Precious Enomah.

"Others are Ohiaekurh Daniel, Ordina-chukwu Daniel Obinna, Light Gospel Nwosu, John Junior, Udosina Obi Mike, Samuel Promise, Aremo Folarin, Treasure Mike, Confidence Paul, Precious Paul, Ndubusi John Kingsley, Emmanuel Matthew Agoke, Aso Gideon Apata, Favor Ootogbo, Favor Shadrack Moses, Vincent Athanasius, Ifaifidon Junior, Kelly Didi, Emmanuel Odunor, Samuel Dickson, Victor Akpan, Godwin Oluwafemi Ozeknome, Norbert Atuna, Sam Uba, Emmanuel Bobo Ojuru, Kelechi Ben, Matthis Ibidabo, Kelvin Mathew Agoke, Chidera Chibuzor Anieze, Moses Shedrack and Collins Christopher."

He said all the indicted suspects will be charged to court as soon as the Commission concludes ongoing investigation.



Why polygamy is no longer fashionable in Africa

Olaniyi Olajide Ayeni studied Forestry and Wood Technology, but he later became a poet to practise his passion. In this interview he spoke about his latest works and collection of poems; "Whispers of Rainbow," Ayeni, an author and human resources management consultant, speaks on his passion and issues affecting Africa and her tradition.

You read Forestry and Wood Technology, how did you become a poet and a writer of literary works?

I want to project passion for writing because I wanted to project my ideas on the subject matters I write on. I want my writings to serve as an awakening call for my African brothers.

You also became a human resources consultant; it appears you are not inclined to practising what you studied, what happened?

I studied a rich course that is in fact practicable in Nigeria, but the course I studied should not and will not limit me to work on other things I have passion for or hinder me from showcasing other talents that I possess.

So, let's talk about your works, why are you so passionate about Africa?

First of all, I am a patriotic African man and I should naturally be passionate about my fatherland. Additionally I believe we are too blessed with both human and natural resources to be where we are currently.

Why is Africa in a sorry state with all that we have at our disposal?

Questions like this drive my passion for my dear continent. "Shoulder high, too tall," "War never end," "Diversified Unity," "Chained," and

"Identify Crisis," "Whispers of Rainbow," are inspiring whatever we in your work, what inspired them? First of all I am a patriotic African man and I should naturally be passionate about my fatherland. Additionally I believe we are too blessed with both human and natural resources to be where we are currently.

Talking about Africa, where do you think we got it wrong?

Getting it wrong at the beginning wasn't our fault we were deceived and made to suffer. We suffered from colonialization for over 200 hundred years and we still haven't recovered from that horror that happened to our ancestors, which I believe laid, the foundation for our suffering. Numerous generations without transitioning to our own values and system of education,

we were made to adopt an alien system which up till today we still don't know how to go about it. Such alien value includes the government we currently practice. Decades after independence from our colonial masters we African still continue to put ourselves in arms way by not choosing and backing the wrong leaders when time comes for us to choose one.

Are you saying proper development is still far from this continent?

It's obvious that Africa is underdeveloped, from our infrastructures to our system of education, to our educational system and in fact all sectors. To say we are far from development would be rather too harsh; we just need to start taking the right steps, making right decisions putting the right people with good and innovative mindset in power.

How can we have that desired social change in our continent?

Politics and government have power and control over everything if we get the right people in power and be good people ourselves I believe we will be on the right path to the social change we desire. Young people with bright ideas, technocrats needs to get involved in government.

You wrote the poems like someone that has traversed Africa. How many African countries have you been to or read about and what are your observations?

Well as a travel curator, I have visited a couple of African countries and I realized that we are all almost suffering from the effects of two things; effects of colonialization and bad governance as well as separatist and inter-tribal conflicts with countries that are heterogeneous. We need to stop fighting ourselves and get together as one to fight the common enemy we all have.

Do you think Africans in the Diaspora have a role to play, if yes, can you be specific?

Yes! Yes, I believe Africans in the Diaspora need to come to effect the new innovations they are living in and continue to create wealth in their

motherland if they can.

It seems you believe so much in Africa and its endowment. How close are you to African culture?

Close enough to know we have a rich culture. I am a Yoruba from Ekiti State, blessed with rich tradition; I have been close to other traditions too across Yorubaland and beyond. I have been a witness of the annual Calabar festivals, which I was actively involved, the Olojo festivals at Ile Ife and numerous others.

What is the problem with the black or do you see the colour as a blessing?

The colour of our skin doesn't make us any less it's in fact a blessing to us. It makes us stronger, we have a strong skin and it makes us healthy infant.

How would you describe African leaders?

I want to be kind with words but I can't help it. They are very clueless and selfish people who don't have the interest of their people at heart.

A lot of them are after their own pocket and personal gains. They do not want to leave the corridor of powers.

What kind of African or Nigerian songs inspire you?

Both the new bees and oldies serve as a source of inspiration to me, but I want to say that Fela's songs stands out as they mostly align with my own ideas.

You didn't do a poem on polygamy. Is polygamy a kind of positive or negative part of African culture?

Polygamy is both a curse and a blessing. The main reason why our ancestors were polygamists was because of their farm work. But in present day, it has been abused that we Africans now give birth to numerous children we can't cater for thereby increasing crime rate, overpopulation and high rate of unemployment. A huge number can be a blessing, I know if we get things right that gives us advantage of a large population.

Would you recommend that Africans should go back to the era of traditional

government or continue with democracy that was imported into the continent?

Our traditional government has been bastardized. There are so many discrepancies in our traditional institutions. If we can modernize it and practice a constitutional system of government with respect to tradition it will do us more good than democracy that we do not seem to know how to go about.

Have you been to Ile Ife in Osun State and Oyo Town in Oyo State. If yes, what can you say about them?

The historical town that houses the origin and most important traditional institutions of the Yoruba people is Ile Ife, orisun Yoruba.

The monarch Ooni, is the son of the founder of the Yoruba people, Oduduwa. Ile Ife and Oyo are the two indigenous towns that are blessed with great traditions and culture. The cultural festival, traditional museum and houses are second to none throughout the region. They are the two great and historical settlements of the Yoruba people.

How would you like to be remembered?

I want to be remembered as a man that impacted many lives positively.

Are you considering doing a movie on Africa?

If it is a movie that will tell our own side of the story and one that will project my ideas why not? I will gladly be willing to be part of one.



Femi, Made Kuti return for 'Father & Son': The Experience' after Grammy nomination

Weeks after the first Grammy nomination experience for Made Kuti, the grandson of late Fela Anikulapo Kuti, has decided to return to his father, Femi Kuti's Afrikan Shrine for a 'Father & Son' experience.

Shortly after the father and son's Legacy+ album made it to Grammy, Made had embarked on a tour outside the shores of Nigeria with Femi Kuti and his Positive Force band.

However, both father and son are currently gearing up for a joint concert tagged 'Father & Son: The Experience,' and organised by FK Management.

"It has become a usual feature in recent times to see a feature of Made on a Femi Kuti set whilst the latter is

on tour, and Femi has also featured in all Made's concerts in and outside the New Afrika Shrine. This concert will be their first co-headlined show since their joint

Grammy Nominations. A show that seeks to bring to the home of Afrobeat the old and the newly converted followers of Afrobeat," Funke Kuti, CEO FK Management said in a brief chat.

Kuti was quick to reveal that the concert is scheduled to hold at the new Afrikan Shrine on June 5, 2022 with an expected 2000 attendees of mainly males and females between the ages of 25-34.

The Father and Son concert will be heralding the opening activities for the commencement of 2022 Felabration.



KAP Film and Television Academy graduate first set of trainees

The first set of trainees and certified affiliates of the School of Cinematic Arts (SCA) at the University of Southern California (USC) from Kunle Afolayan Production (KAP) Film and Television Academy have graduated.

Founded by award-winning filmmaker Kunle Afolayan, the KAP Academy, in partnership with USC and content streaming giant, Netflix, has executed the programme in post-production – the first in a series of training workshops in Africa.

Toye Peter, Ifeanyi Passion, Todumu Adegoke, Adesuwa Omon, Ugbede Peter, Oyinbra Fegha, Emeka Egbueui, Unyime Patrick, Temitope Folarin and Candace John-Jumbo were awarded a diploma in post-production editing (Picture Cropping,

Editing and Sound Design).

The convocation which held at KAP Hub, Ikeja, Lagos, the Academy had in attendance notable personalities that includes Tunde Kelani; filmmaker Mr. Mahmood Ali-Balogun; actress Joke Silva; Professor Duro Oni; Executive Director, Urban Vision Limited, Tola Odunsi; and comedian Babatunde Adewale amongst others.

Speaking at the event, Afolayan said he is optimistic that the Nigerian film industry is about to witness a turnaround with professionals who will take the film industry to higher grounds.

The Academy stated that the graduates are film editors with previous experience who now have a global professional mindset.

Suga Suga movie goes to international audience via Amazon Prime video

Louiza Williams' debut effort in movie production has enjoyed wide critical acclaim. Following early screenings of the film, feelers from film critics and industry experts suggested a project that was rich in content and production. Positive reviews translated to excitement in Nollywood and Nigeria's cinema scene.

Upon release in April of 2021, the film justified the anticipation and excitement that heralded it by performing strongly on release date and the following weeks with moviegoers seemingly unable to get enough of Suga Suga.

Perhaps we should not have been surprised at the high quality of the film given that the Producer is an alumna of the prestigious New York Film Academy. Speaking on her reinvention as a movie producer in November 2021, the astute multiple award winning artiste and business brand manager noted that "...there are modern, relatable, and impactful stories that are yet to be told by Nollywood." It is little wonder then, that her first effort at film production offered a refreshing perspective and handled seemingly well trodden themes of love, family,

adversity, and redemption with depth and nuance uncommon in the industry.

The outstanding production of Suga Suga by Louiza Williams has not gone unnoticed by the international movie scene as Amazon Prime Video (Amazon's video content streaming and distribution platform) have now agreed a Content Acquisition Contract to place 'Suga Suga' - on their streaming platform.

With a star studded cast led by Taiwo Obileye, and directed by Richard Omos Iboyi, Suga Suga is sure to thrill international audiences and shine positive light on Nollywood.

With this international partnership with Amazon Prime Video and given Louiza Williams' background in music, we can rightly say her maiden project in the movie industry has been a hit.

Riding on her versatility strength, Williams has now set her sights on Reality Television production with 'The Game Reality Show' set to hit screens in June of 2022.



'April Showers' on Amazon, inspiration to shoot another movie soon, says producer Sandra Bremaud

Sandra Bremaud, CEO of SBEDYNASTY Production and producer of 'April Showers' says her movie's appearance on Amazon was a delightful surprise after been contacted by Blue Pictures that the new movie made the selection of films to be featured on Amazon as a lot of filmmakers believed Netflix Original as the only destination for movies.

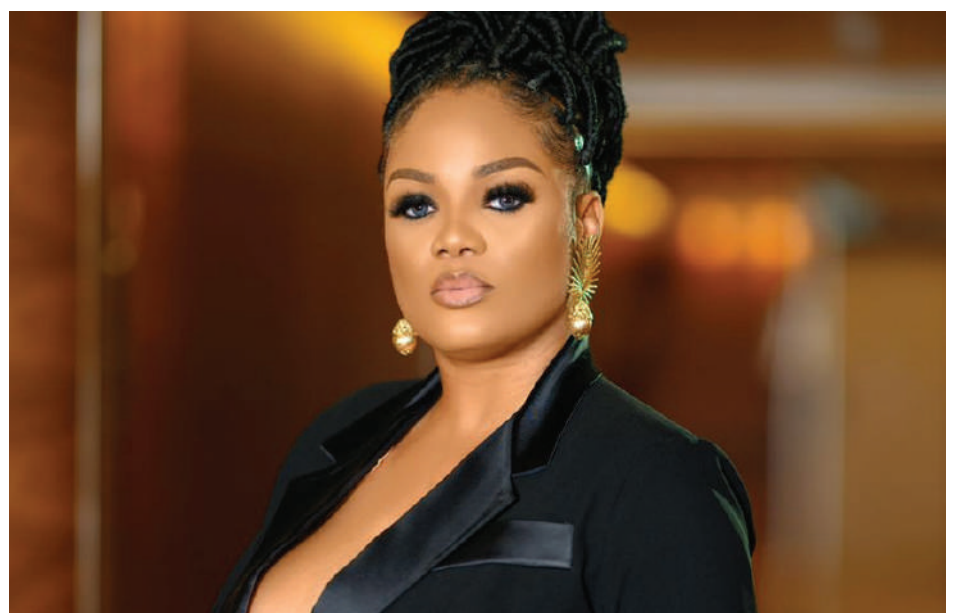
Speaking about the inspiration for the movie, the married mother of two, claims society's lack of appreciation for hardworking, intelligent women who are making giant strides in their fields of work was what galvanized her to undertake the project.

"I felt we aren't cheering them enough, they are not being celebrated enough but are instead tagged, labeled and stigmatised. Sometimes, you hear people advise wealthy women "Don't buy that house, men will run away from you," or "You are overdue for marriage", "she explains.

Bremaud, who first made her name as an astute CEO of Twilight Systems Nigeria Limited, a company focused on the importation of lighting fittings and fixtures, mostly chandeliers, affirms that 'April Showers' on Amazon is all the encouragement she needs to forge ahead and shoot another movie soon.

Speaking of her experience as a producer, she says: "What I have learnt so far is, it doesn't matter if you are a new or old producer; surrounding yourself with the right team will always play a major role."

Addressing the often-asked question of whether female filmmakers are as good as their male counterparts, she says: "The movie industry is big enough for everyone to thrive in. People should bring in their A-game, and give honour to which honour is due, female or male. Every filmmaker has what works for him or her."





Pillars, Safety Babes tower in H'Ball Premier League

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

Defending champions Kano Pillars have finished top at the close of Prudent Energy Handball Premier League held at the MKO National Stadium, Abuja.

Phase 1 of the tournament which ended yesterday, Thursday, witnessed a lot of inspiring performances from the league leaders who burrowed through all matches to remain the only side unbeaten.

In their last game against Seaside and occupant of the third position on the league table, the towering Kano Pillars recorded a 40-33 win in Phase 1 of Nigeria's handball tournament to reaffirm their dominance.

However, other results in the men's category, saw Rima Strikers finish fifth with 23 points as they defeated Owena Kings 36-24 while De Defenders in the eighth position narrowly edged Police Machine to record a heartwarming 25-24 win with 21 points.

Sixth-placed Tojemarine capped their phase 1 campaign on a positive note



with 22 points, crumbling Benue Buffaloes 37-31. They finished a point higher than fellow Lagos team, Seaside Boys who ended on 7th.

Shockingly, Safety Shooters leapfrogged Niger United to secure second place on the Premier league table after a 26-23 win against the latter.

According to the Handball Federation of Nigeria (HFN) in the women's category, Safety Babes had a perfect finish to end the Phase 1 as they defeated Plateau

Peacocks 32-28, ensuring that they won all their matches to top the league table with 27 points while Imo Grasshoppers and Bendel Dynamos played out a 21-21 draw.

HFN added that Debutant Rima Queens finished phase 1 in the second position after they defeated Seaside Babes with an emphatic 32-18 victory while Defender Babes clinched the third spot as they ended the first phase with a thunderous 40-26 victory over Adorable Angels

of Ilorin.

The second phase and concluding instalment of the Prudent Energy Handball Premier League 2022 will hold in Lagos later in the year wherein the league winners will be crowned in both the male and female categories respectively.

The Trumpet reports that Dikko Ibrahim of Kano Pillars and Idowu Abdulrazaq of Defender Babes won the 'Most Valuable Player award' in the men and women categories respectively.

United will return to glory days - Ronaldo

Old Trafford is home to Cristiano Ronaldo, who joined the club for a second time in 2019, netting 24 goals that qualified him as the highest goalscorer for Red Devils in all competitions this season.

The 37-year-old performance during the season ensured the club snapped victories in certain fixtures [a hat trick against Norwich] to register maximum points eventually under Ralf Rangnick.

However, to the end of Rangnick's rein, the club now parade a new coach who is determined to return Manchester United to the glory

days of Sir Alex Ferguson. In doing so, Erik ten Hag plans to rejig the squad to usher in a new breed of players.

Ten Hag believes that to actualise this dream, the importance of key players like Portuguese Ronaldo can not be overemphasised which he affirmed during his maiden press briefing at Manchester United.

Meanwhile, silverware-seeking Ronaldo in his second spell at Old Trafford is committed to United and harps on the need to return the club to its glory days.

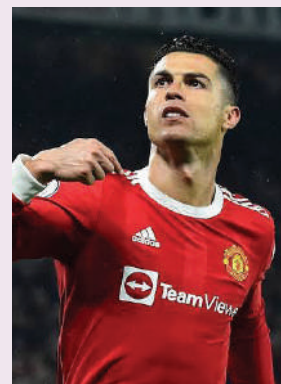
He said, "It's still my motivation to carry on

working hard, to still love the passion for the game, and of course, Manchester and my teammates help me all the way so I have to appreciate all the people who help Cristiano.

"It's always nice to score goals for this club. When it is a hat trick it's even more [nice].

"But the most important thing for me is to try to win the games and try to win some championship or some cup but I believe that Manchester will be where they belong. Sometimes it takes time, but I still believe," he added.

The Trumpet reports that Cristiano Ronaldo has scored



142 goals and featured 330 times in all competitions for Manchester United. He has covered a total of 25,534 minutes on the pitch for the Red Devils while committing two straight Red card fouls and 47 Yellow cards'.

French Open: Nadal reach final, eyes fourteenth title



World number 5 Rafael Nadal has reached the French Open final, edging German Alexander Zverev out in a walkover win after two sets.

Nadal, who defeated top seed Novak Djokovic in the quarter-final to reignite a campaign for his fourteenth

French Open title at Court Philippe Chatrier, recorded a 7-6 (10-8) 6-6 victory over the world number 3.

Unfortunately, Zverev, featuring in a second semi-final at Roland Garros, sustained a leg injury in the second set after both players tied at 6-6.

The German, who hampered the prospect of tennis sensation and Madrid Open champion, Carlos Alcaraz, at Roland Garros in a four-set win, fell to an unfortuitous defeat to end his shot to secure his first Grand Slam diadem.

In a post-match interview, Nadal noted that it was a dream come true to reach the finals at Roland Garros once

again.

The 33-year-old, however, lamented over the incident that resulted in Zverev crashing out of the tournament.

"We had a super tough match which lasted for over three hours and we even didn't finish the second set now," Nadal said after the match.

"So it's one of the biggest challenges on the tour today. When he's playing you got to be on this super high level to play against him.

"Yeah! Difficult to say a lot of things today in this situation. I mean, of course, for me, as everybody knows being in the final of Roland Garros one more time it's a

dream without a doubt but at the same time that didn't finish that way.

"I have been in there in the small room with Sasha before we came back on court and see him crying there is a very dull moment," Nadal said passionately.

Following the unceremonious development, a-15,000 crowd on Court Philippe Chatrier waited for the news which broke the moment injured Zverev returned on crutches to shake hands with umpire Renaud Lichtenstein.

The entire stadium gave Zverev a standing ovation which the player responded by raising up his clutches in the air.

Wasteful Super Eagles' secure defeat ■ Amaju reposes confidence in Peseiro

Super Eagles of Nigeria have suffered a 1-0 defeat by Ecuador in their second friendly clash with American sides after they lost 2-1 six days ago in an unfortuitous outcome to CONCACAF champions Mexico at the AT&T Stadium, Arlington, Texas.

The 25,000-capacity Red Bull Arena in Harrison, New Jersey, was overwhelmed by Ecuadorians spurring them to start the game in a rampant manner, advertising silky touches and manifesting so much energy and invention.

The boys of Gustavo Alfaro are going to their fourth FIFA World Cup finals and were in high spirit as they filed out against the Super Eagles.

The South Americans, who are drawn to play the opening match of this year's FIFA World Cup finals against hosts Qatar on 21 November, and would also play Senegal and the Netherlands in Group A, scored after only three minutes as Pervis Estupiñán forced Nigeria's rearguard to score from an in-swinging free-kick.

They were up and running and making life difficult for the Super Eagles on the natural turf, and in the 11th minute, Angel Delgado came close with a sliced shot that went narrowly over the sticks.

Nigeria thought they had a penalty two minutes later when Terem Moffi was fouled in the box as he tried to get on the end of a sweet exchange between Moses Simon and Alex Iwobi, but the referee thought otherwise.

In the 22nd minute, Uzoho did a good job to parry over an angled shot by Isaac Caicedo, and at the other end, Cyriel Dessers could not beat goalkeeper Alexander Dominguez when through on goal. Nigeria were rampant in a melee a minute later, with so many touches in the box from a corner, but the ball simply refused to go in.

Moses Simon sent the ball sky-high from a 22-yard free kick in the 37th minute, and two minutes before recess, Dessers wasted another brilliant pass by Alex Iwobi.

In the second period, just

as they did against Mexico in Dallas on Saturday, the Super Eagles dominated and created a hatful of chances, but this time failed to put any away. While keeping the dangerous quartet of Pervis, Caicedo, Sebastian Mendez and Enner Valencia quiet, the Eagles created chance after chance, silencing the wholly Ecuadorian crowd.

Joseph Ayodele-Arifo, Iwobi, substitute Emmanuel Dennis, Calvin Bassey and Moses Simon were bright and bold, but Dessers wasted a couple of opportunities that would have tied the game.

Meanwhile, President of the Nigeria Football Federation and FIFA Council Member, Mr Amaju Melvin Pinnick would have wanted a win for the Super Eagles against Ecuador in New Jersey on Thursday, in a game they created so many chances, but would nonetheless took positives from the three-time African champions' tour of the United States of America, during which they also played perennial CONCACAF champions Mexico.

"I am happy and I can tell you that we fulfilled our objectives of restoring the spirit of the Super Eagles following the failure to qualify for the FIFA World Cup," Amaju said, reposing his confidence in the team and Coach Peseiro.

"We lost both games against Mexico and Ecuador narrowly but we were up for it and never finished on the back foot. The boys gave a good account of themselves in both games.

"Given the number of first-team players that were not available, we have to praise the boys who showed up here and gave their all.

"They have given us confidence going into the Africa Cup of Nations qualifiers. The despondency is over and we can now march forward in a sure-footed manner," Amaju reiterated.

Next up for the Super Eagles is a 2023 Africa Cup of Nations qualifying match against Sierra Leone, at the MKO Abiola National Stadium, Abuja on Thursday, 9th June.



Mata bids Manchester United farewell

Juan Mata eight years spell at Manchester United has come to an end after the player appreciated the fans for all their support with Erik ten Hag unwilling to include him in his plans for next season.

The attacking midfielder was signed for €43.75m by David Moyes from Chelsea in the 2014 winter transfer window and won the FA Cup and Europa league with Guus Hiddink and Jose Mourinho respectively.

The 34-year-old Spanish international who also won the League Cup under Mourinho, made a total of 285 appearances while he netted 51 for the Red Devils.

Mata, after switching to Manchester United in the second phase of the English top-flight division to bolster David Moyes's campaign for a Premier League triumph, featured 15 times while netting six goals in the 2013-14 season.

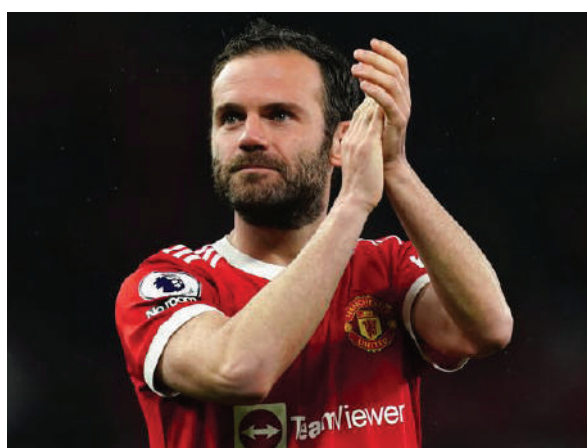
The versatile attacking midfielder, who can also play from the wings, became

a prominent figure in the Manchester United squad the following season and the one after, making 33 and 38 Premier League appearances respectively.

Several coaches, permanent or interim, that took turns to manage the squad after David Moyes' sack on April 22, 2014, made Mata part of their integral plans until German Ralf Rangnick replaced Ole Gunnar Solskjaer to manage the club in the interim.

With Rangnick as the boss, Mata's inclusion into the United starting lineup declined and this resulted in the player featuring in a pantry number of 7 times in the entire Premier League season without a goal.

However, with the signing of Ajax coach to revive the Manchester United squad back to glory, Erik ten Hag seems not to be interested in the Spanish player whose contract with Paul Pogba's come to an end this June and this has instigated the player to bid the club a farewell to



acknowledge special moments at Old Trafford.

In the player's farewell speech at Old Trafford, he said, "From here, from the middle of the pitch at Old Trafford at night, I'm alone."

"Actually, this feels like a dream. I wanted to say thank you very much to all of you for your support over the years and especially during the difficult times that we've lived together."

"I will never forget you, thank you very much and all

the best from the bottom of my heart. And goodbye," Mata added.

Meanwhile, Manchester United in a statement confirming the player's exit, said, "Thank you for dedicating eight years of your career to United, Juan. Everyone at the club wishes you all the best for the future."

Reportedly, Juan Mata, who is of interest to several Spanish top-flight clubs, could see the versatile midfielder returning to Spain.

Rudiger joins Madrid on four-year deal

Real Madrid have announced that former Chelsea defender Antonio Rudiger has joined the club on a four-year deal that will see him at the Bernabeu until 2026.

Rudiger, refusing to renew his contract with the West London club, snubbed advances from other clubs like PSG, Juventus, Manchester United and others to sign for the 14 times UEFA Champions League winners.

Consequently, the Spanish giants who missed out on their prime target for the summer, Kylian Mbappe, noted that Rudiger will officially be unveiled on June 20.

However, the excited Rudiger having bid Chelsea a farewell to bring an end to a five-year spell at Stamford Bridge, signed a contract worth £340,000-a-week.

"I'm proud to announce that I'll be joining Real Madrid. I'm super excited for all the challenges ahead and can't wait to play my first games for this huge club," Rudiger

tweeted.

Meanwhile, Chelsea in a statement have extended their appreciation to Rudiger who was an integral part of the squad during his five years spell.

The club added that in his 203 appearances for Thomas Tuchel's side, the passionate 29-year-old German scored 12 goals.

"Chelsea Football Club thanks Toni for his contribution to our success over the last five years and wishes him well in his future career," the statement read.

"He departs with 203 appearances and 12 goals to his name, in that time establishing himself as one of the most passionate characters to represent the club in recent memory," it added.

Reportedly, Antonio Rudiger's contract renewal talks with Chelsea were stalled by the sanctions meted on Roman Abramovich over Russia's military invasion of Ukraine.

'We'll make Nigeria proud with World Cup ticket'

Head Coach Bankole Olowookere has said that his Nigeria U17 girls, Flamingos, are inspired by the desire to make Nigerians happy by earning a ticket to the FIFA World Cup finals by confronting Ethiopia U17 girls in a final round, final leg match at the MKO Abiola National Stadium, Abuja, on Saturday.

He said, "Our main objective is to do Nigeria proud, make Nigerians happy with the World Cup ticket. We will not under-rate the Ethiopians because they are a good team who also qualified to this stage."

"We defeated them 1-0 in their country but that does not mean we should assume the ticket is won. We must work hard and keep our



heads up until the referee's final whistle. No match ends until it is called to an end by the referee."

"We are focused on the task at hand. The Ethiopians have shown a flair for playing better on away ground and that is one thing we have taken on board. The best approach will be to keep the ball away from them while we do the playing."

"We have been working on

that since we returned from Addis Ababa and I believe we have the energy and the stamina for that approach," Olowookere added.

The Flamingos have scored a total of 15 goals in this qualifying campaign, conceding none. They scored a total of eight goals in a two-leg blizzard against the Democratic Republic of Congo and then shot six past Egypt in Abuja and Cairo. The rearguard and goalkeeper Faith Omilana have stolidly maintained a pristine record.

Aggregate victory over the Ethiopians, who turned back Uganda and South Africa in earlier rounds, would mean a direct flight to India for this year's FIFA U17 Women's World Cup finals – the seventh edition since the competition

was launched in New Zealand in 2008. The finals in India will hold from 11th – 30th October.

Olowookere will bank principally on the twin-attack force of Opeyemi Ajakaiye and Aminat Omowunmi Bello, who between them have scored nine of the team's goals in their five matches so far. Ajakaiye is ahead with six goals while Bello has three. The match kicks off at 4pm.

Meanwhile, officials for the big match have arrived in Nigeria on Thursday. The officials were led by Senegalese referee Mame Coumba Faye, who will take charge of proceedings. She will be assisted by compatriots Adia Iseu Cisse (assistant referee 1), Fatou Bintou Sene (assistant referee 2) and Fatou Thioune (fourth official).

Akpeyi part ways with Kaiser Chiefs

Super Eagles goalie, Daniel Akpeyi, has brought his four years' rein at Kaiser Chiefs to an end after featuring 12 times for Amakhosi in the South African top-flight league this season.

Akpeyi, who joined Kaiser Chiefs in 2019 after completing four years at Chippa United while making 92 league appearances, ended the season with Amakhosi, finishing in 5th position just above Orlando Pirates.

The 35-year-old shot-stopper with 18 caps for the national side played in the Nigeria Professional Football League in the 2014-2015 season for Warri Wolves before leaving the shores of the country to further his career in South Africa's Premier League.

Akpeyi, who in his entire action for Kaiser Chiefs was

never red-carded for a rough challenge, featured the most in the 2018-2019 season in the DStv Premier League when he made 20 appearances for the club.

However, on June 1, the Super Eagle tweeted to announce the end of an era with Kaiser Chiefs.

"An era has come and gone and a new one will begin, God has been faithful throughout this love for Kaiser Chiefs knows no bound, every part makes me strong for the journey ahead," Akpeyi tweeted.

The Trumpet reports that Akpeyi was not in the Nigeria squad that featured against CONCACAF giants Mexico in the May 30 friendly which was hosted at AT&T Stadium, Arlington, Texas. Nigeria lost 2-1 to Mexico.

Salah to swap awards for Champions League rematch

Egyptian Mohamed Salah has invariably enjoyed a wonderful 2021-22 campaign with Liverpool having won a cup double despite missing the highly contested Premier League trophy to Manchester City and European Champions League title to Madrid.

Salah, named the FWA Men's Player of the Year, scored the highest number of goals in the Premier League to win the Golden Boot prize alongside Son Heung-min of Tottenham who also tallied the number.

The talismanic player, who captained the Pharaohs of Egypt to the 2021 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) in Cameroon where they ended as runner-up after losing on penalties to Senegal, had his goal-bound attempts in the UEFA Champions League final

denied by wonderful goalkeeping by Madrid's Thibaut Courtois.

The result in the final at Stade de France is the second time in four years that Los Blancos have stopped Mohamed Salah and Liverpool from lifting the Champions League trophy.

Mesmerizing the defeat served by Vinicius Junior's goal in the second half, Salah who was listed among the Premier League Player of the Year award wishes he could exchange all his accolades for a rematch of the UEFA Champions League final with Real Madrid.

More so, the player inarguably has been superb this season, making clinical touches and contributing a whole number of assists to hand Jurgen Klopp's side to had been a strong contender for the season's Premier League trophy.



Sequel to the above, his form spurred the club to launch a campaign to end the season with a quadruple but relentless City and an aggressive 14th UEFA Champions League title-contending Madrid ensured they ended at a double.

In a tweet after Salah was listed in the Premier League Player of the Year award, he said, "I cannot express in words how much we wanted to bring that trophy back

to Liverpool but in the end, we couldn't. I cannot thank the fans enough for your support. It has been a very long season but a part of me wishes the next one starts again tomorrow."

"Being recognised by the fans and by the sports journalists in the same season is something special that I will never forget. I would however give all those personal awards up for a chance at replaying that final, but that is not how football works," he added.

The Trumpet reports that alongside Liverpool who parade three of their players, Mohamed Salah, Sadio Mane, and Virgil van Dijk as nominees for the 'Men's PFA Players' Player of The Year award,' Harry Kane of Tottenham, Cristiano Ronaldo of Manchester United and Kevin De Bruyne of Manchester City also surfaced.

Mauritius out: Nigeria to play Sao Tome and Principe

The Super Eagles of Nigeria, in the US on a friendly tour where they are to face Ecuador after playing CONCACAF giants Mexico, will now play Sao Tome and Principe in the 2023 AFCON group stage qualifiers after Mauritius were shown the way out of the continental event.

Sao Tome and Principe had approached CAF Appeals Board after they were disqualified by the CAF Disciplinary Board for fielding an ineligible player against Mauritius.

The African continental football governing body in a statement released on June 1, 2022, noted that the CAF Appeal Board has admitted Sao Tome and Principe's plea to upturn the decision of the CAF Disciplinary Board.

CAF statement reads: "Sao Tome and Principe Football Association took the decision of the CAF Disciplinary Board (08 May 2022) to overturn the results of their match against Mauritius in the TotalEnergies Africa Cup of Nations preliminary qualifiers played on 24

March 2022 on review with the CAF Appeals Board.

"After hearing both parties' presentations, the CAF Appeals Board ruled that:

"The Appeal of São Tomé and Príncipe Football Association is considered admissible in form."

"The Appeal of the São Tomé and Príncipe Football Association is upheld and the decision of the CAF Disciplinary Board is set aside in its entirety."

"The result of the match between Mauritius and São Tomé and Príncipe is ratified and validated."

"The São Tomé and Príncipe Football Association shall be reimbursed the Appeal fees," CAF started.

With the ruling by CAF, Nigeria, a three-time African Champion, who start their AFCON qualifying Group A campaign against Sierra Leone on Thursday, June 9, will now travel to Sao Tome and Principe to process their second Group A match on June 13, 2022.



Spain, Nigeria sign MoU, strengthen sports development, others

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

Nigeria and Spain have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen the bilateral relations between both countries in sports development and other key areas.

This development is one of the benefits of the visit by President Muhammadu Buhari to his Spanish counterpart, President Pedro Sanchez.

According to the report by the Nigeria Sports Ministry, the Minister of Youth and Sports Development, Sunday Dare on behalf of the Federal Government, signed the MoU alongside his Spanish counterpart Miquel Octavi Iceta I Llorens on Wednesday in Madrid.

The Ministry noted that "the agreement aims to initiate and build collaboration in the area of Sports



as well as strengthen the bilateral exchange between both countries based on reciprocity according to their competencies and mutual benefits in the field of sports."

"Some of the specific areas of cooperation include the following

among others;

Building, development and management of sports relations and institutions, exchange of knowledge in the areas of sports science, technology, medicine and the fight against doping. "Sports sponsorship, patronage

and organizing of sports events, initiating programmes to support and promote sports for special athletes, protection of young athletes and sportswomen.

"Provision of sports facilities and training centres, organization of friendly and major International competitions among the national teams and clubs of both countries in different sports and the arrangement of joint training sessions were also listed among the areas of cooperation.

"The application and execution of the terms of the agreement are expected to begin immediately and will be automatically renewed on an annual basis," the Ministry stated.

The Trumpet reports that other areas of the agreement that help to strengthen the bilateral relations between the African and European countries are economy and trade, health, tourism, science and technology.

How Rivers United extended NPFL dominance

Rivers United have extended dominance in the Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL) after they defeated their closest rivals and title contender, Plateau United, 2-0 at the Adokiye Amiesimaka Stadium, Port Harcourt, yesterday.

The game, more of an NPFL22 title-deciding cracker, following the rivalry between both teams for the trophy, saw the Pride of Rivers extend a seven-point lead to ten to further reassure Plateau United that they are up to the task ahead.

The Pride of Rivers after the matchday31 win, need a maximum of four wins from seven games to coast home the NPFL22 league trophy.

Last NPFL's season, Rivers United on matchday30 defeated Plateau United 3-1 and this season's was merely a reminder to the visitors that Adokiye Amiesimaka is a fortress that can only fall to an unfavourable circumstance.

Prior to the game, coach Stanley Eguma made two changes in the team that played against Dakkada FC with Sochima Victor and Fabian Nworie replacing Darlington Ovunda and Temple Emekayi respectively.

The Pride of Rivers got the first goal 12 minutes to the additional time of first half by Chijioke Akuneto who recorded his 13th goal of the season and rounded the win with a brace 8 minutes to the 90' to send shivers in the spines of the visitors.

Consequently, River United after the victory, stressed that the win is a huge psychological boost to the team as the visitors will have to go the extra mile if they wish to cut down the lead.

Meanwhile, Plateau United, after a stunning 4-0 win against Enugu Rangers in matchday30 fixture at the Godswill Akpabio International Stadium, Uyo, said the odds against Rivers United were unfavourable but are prepared for the task.

"After mesmerizing and flabbergasting Enugu Rangers 4-nil yesterday, we are already lacing our boots and getting ready for the next task against @RiversUnitedFC.

We know the odds are stacked against us but we remain resolute. See you in Port Harcourt against Wike Boys on Wednesday," Plateau United tweeted.

The Trumpet reports that coach Eguma has continued to play down the assumption that

Rivers United have won the trophy insisting that they will process the remaining matches like a final.

Argentina was better, admits Mancini

Roberto Mancini concedes that Argentina were better after the Italian national team fell to a 3-0 defeat in Finalissima at the Wembley Stadium, England, yesterday.

Mancini pointed out that Azzurri was flawed in the first half for failing to capitalise on some key opportunities that could have given them leverage to contend with a formidable side that has remained undefeated in 32 matches.

Italy failed to qualify for this year's FIFA World Cup in Qatar after they were defeated by North Macedonia in the semi-final of the qualifier playoff.

According to Mancini, the Italian national team that also failed to feature in the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia after they were sent out by Sweden in the second round playoffs, lamented that his team made little impact in the second half.

"The first half we made two mistakes on the two goals, but the game was balanced. At that point, they did better to keep the ball and move it around well. They were better," Mancini told RAI Sport in a post-match interview.

"We should've tried to score a

goal and open up the game again, but in the second half, we did far too little to turn this around. We had chances in the first half and should've taken more of them then," he added.

First-half goals from Lautaro Martinez and Angel Di Maria and a rout from Paulo Dybala were enough to hand the Argentina team a superb win.

Italy's shot-stopper Gianluigi Donnarumma was acknowledged for making some brilliant saves to deny fellow PSG teammate and 'Man of the Match' award winner, Lionel Messi, a goal.



Christian Ekong relieved, he's back to action

Enyimba's striker, Christian Ekong, is happy to be back in action for the Aba-based club after spending over a year on the sidelines due to injury.

The blazing forward whose ferocious volley against Nasarawa United hit the crossbar before creating a late penalty that resulted in Enyimba coasting home a 3-2 victory, added that he was born to be a great footballer.

Ekong joined Enyimba in April 2021 from Akwa Ibom-based club, Dakkada FC, to assuage the club's goalscoring difficulties but has since been nursing

one injury or the other, keeping him out of action for thirteen months.

After the injury woes, the striker made his debut on Sunday, May 22, 2022, for Enyimba in an away match against Katsina United where he played an eleven-minute cameo according to NPFL report.

However, in his first home debut and second match for coach George Finidi's side, he came in the 70th minute to substitute Samuel Stone, the first goalscorer of the Peoples' Elephant 3-2 win and made a huge impact to aid

the club's victory.

In a post-match interview, he said, "Football is a mind game, forget the injuries, once you believe in yourself, there's nothing you cannot do if you add God to it.

"I know I passed through many things but I believed that one day I will come back to play because I know that is my calling.

"I thank God for the opportunity that the coach gave to me and for the few minutes I played, at least I proved myself that there is someone in the

team," he added.

Ekong continued: "The coach was telling me to watch the two forwards. Samuel Stone was drifting out of the box but I have the speed and stamina to bulldoze through so if I entered I should just put myself inside the box and that helped us.

"I would have preferred if I scored. Had it been I scored that goal (that came off the crossbar), I would have just gone straight to the altar and thanked God for everything because it's not easy.