

Prisons, Falana trade words over alleged replacement of convicts with Innocent people

Activist lawyer Femi Falana (SAN) and Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS) are bickering over his allegation that some of its officials arrange for convicts to evade serving terms.

alleged last week during a media session titled, "Forget the past, forfeit the future: A nation seceding from humanity", that some officials of NCoS allow criminals to escape court verdicts by getting young men who will serve jail terms for the convicts.

allegation, its spokesman, Francis Enobore said the authorities of the Service "have observed, with great concern, the statement credited to a legal practitioner alleging that some officials of the Nigerian Correctional Service allow criminals to evade court verdicts by getting

The human rights lawyer ha

In a reaction at the weekend to the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



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EDITORIAL:
OAU Vice-Chancellor appointment
→ 12



Hackers demand N140b to release Bet9ja website
→ 5

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Russia invasion of Ukraine: Why war will be decided in Donbas region
→ 24

Atiku, Tinubu in dilemma

- Why APC chief fell out with Buhari ■ Sent 100 memos to President → 2
- His options for 2023 ■ Ex-VP's men lobby other aspirants to step down
- PDP chief under pressure to accept single term ■ Gives condition to drop ambition



L:R: Mrs Unoma Agrinya, Rev. Fr Joseph Kioko and Lady Marcelina Ewaliefo, during Palm Sunday's procession at St Christopher's Catholic Church, Games Village, Abuja

TIMETABLE & SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES FOR 2023 GENERAL ELECTION

By virtue of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended), tenure of the President, Vice President, Governors and Deputy Governors of States of the Federation (except Anambra, Bayelsa, Edo, Ekiti, Imo, Kogi, Ondo and Osun States) will expire on the 28th day of May 2023 while the National and State Assemblies will stand dissolved on the 8th day of June 2023.

Pursuant to Sections 76(2), 116(2), 132(2) and 178(2) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended), elections to the said offices shall hold not earlier than One Hundred and Fifty (150) days and not later than Thirty (30) days before the expiration of the term of office of the last holder of that office. In line with this provision and the Regulations of the Independent National Electoral Commission (hereinafter referred to as "the Commission"), the Presidential and National Assembly elections shall hold on Saturday 25th February 2023 while the Governorship and State Assembly elections shall hold on Saturday 11th March 2023.

The Commission is empowered by Section 28(1) of the Electoral Act 2022 to issue Notice for the elections not later than Three Hundred and Sixty (360) days before the date of the elections.

In exercise of the powers conferred by the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) and the Electoral Act 2022 and of all other powers enabling it in that behalf, the Commission hereby issues this Timetable and Schedule of Activities for the 2023 General Election.

Activity	Date	Remark
1. Notice of Election	28th February 2022	Section 28(1) of the Electoral Act 2022 provides not later than 360 days before the election.
2. Collection of Forms EC9 (Formerly CP02) and EC9A, 9B, 9C, 9D & 9E (Formerly CP02) for the election by Political Parties from INEC website.	1st March 2022	Collection by Political parties to be issued to their candidates.
3. Conduct of Party Primaries including resolution of disputes arising from the Primaries.	Commencement date 4th April 2022 End 3rd June 2022	To enable Political Parties democratically nominate candidates for the election as required by Section 84 of the Electoral Act 2022.

Atiku, Tinubu in dilemma

By EDWARD ADAMIDENYO (Deputy Editor) AND TUNDE JOSHUA (Politics Editor), Abuja

Former Vice President Atiku Abubakar and erstwhile Lagos State Governor Bola Ahmed Tinubu are facing some dilemmas in their 2023 presidential bids.

Both politicians are seeking the presidential tickets of their political groupings, the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) of Tinubu and the main opposition People's Democratic Party (PDP) of Atiku.

They face a common moral dilemma of throwing their hats in the ring at a time when many are urging political parties to zone their presidential tickets to the Igbo. However, they face other dilemmas.

Barely 11 months to the 2023 general elections, there are strong indications that Tinubu, who is the National Leader of the APC, and President Muhammadu Buhari may have parted ways over the presidential ambition of the former Lagos State governor.

Reliable sources who spoke to The Trumpet disclosed that the two powerful APC leaders are no longer as close as they were before the 2015 general elections when the party defeated the PDP that fielded the then incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan.

The source who spoke on strict condition of anonymity said many Nigerians are not aware of what is going on between the two men. "Our leader, the Jagaban is a sincere man. He was very open to Buhari and supported him with everything he has to win the presidential election in 2015 and 2019," the source said.

According to the source, Tinubu has been advising the President. He sent him over 100 memos to advise him on critical areas of government.

Asked why there appears to be government inertia with growing insecurity, worsen ing economy and unabating corruption, the source replied: "If you help somebody to get a job, will you also help him to do the work?"

In the weeks and months ahead before the election, the source affirmed that Nigerians will know the true extent of what has been happening and how

Tinubu did his best to avoid the current situation in the country.

In another response to a question if Tinubu enjoys the backing of Buhari in his presidential bid, the source maintained that the APC leader is a politician who has been in the field for a long time and has built bridges and empowered many people. "When the time comes, Nigerians will know that Tinubu is a man to reckon with in politics," the source said with an air of confidence.

Tinubu had visited the President in March to declare his interest to run for the presidency in 2023 but other sources believe there was no firm commitment of support by Buhari.

The situation became worse after the Kaduna-bound train attack when Tinubu asked the government to ensure that the killing of innocent Nigerians by terrorists was stopped immediately.

Tinubu said that attacks such as the one on the train between where the attackers opened fire on travelling citizens, were no longer acceptable.

The source further disclosed that advisers of the President interpreted these utterances as a direct affront and have urged Buhari to give his support to another aspirant.

Apparently miffed by the development, a support group of Tinubu for the 2023 presidency under the auspices of Disciples of Jagaban (DOJ) on April 6, 2023 raised the alarm over they alleged were moves by what it called 'cabals' in the corridors of power to work on the newly elected APC national chairman, Senator Abdullahi Adamu, to truncate the presidential ambition of their man.

The group said it suspects that Adamu was already doing the bidding of the cabals, stressing that: 'Senator Adamu must tread with caution concerning Tinubu's presidential ambition.'

A statement issued by the National Coordinator of DOJ, Abdulhakeem Adegoke Alawuje, read in part: 'It's pertinent for our new chairman of APC to realise the consequence of working against the popular candidate for the ruling party because only a politically naive will undermine the spirit and the force behind Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu's movement on the path to Aso Rock come 2023.'

'Adamu needs to be



Atiku

schooled that working to undermine Tinubu, as already been seen in some quarters amounts to political naivety and unreasonability, for it can only spell doom for the party.

'Senator Adamu should equally note that those working against Tinubu are true enemies of the nation and APC because they know Tinubu remains the only candidate the opposition will have a herculean task to defeat. In fact, they couldn't even get reasons to campaign against him. I, therefore, urge our Chairman not to be intimidated by the position being presently occupied by all former and current Disciples of Jagaban.

I urge the Chairman not to stir the hornet's nest. It is time we put our house in order and ensure all hands are on deck to achieve unity within the ranks and file of our great party, APC.

'Few disgruntled elements and enemies of progress within the party must not be allowed to discourage us at all. We must shine our eyes because the same people who were in the opposition, and worked against the ambition of Buhari but Tinubu came to the rescue are the same set of people working against the emergence of Tinubu, having defected from the opposition party. They regard no scruples, their goal is to perpetually flirt with the incumbent. It is their way, anywhere.'

Although, there have not been direct responses from Buhari's aides, the source said Tinubu has put in place several options to overcome the challenges to his ambition.

And with the uncertainty that pervades the zoning of the presidential ticket of the PDP, major contenders out of the 14 aspirants are not



Tinubu

leaving stones unturned to brighten their chances of emerging the party's candidate.

Various alliances are being formed while horse trading continues in an attempt to find common fronts particularly along regional lines, to reduce the number of aspirants that will go into the contest at the PDP presidential primary slated for May 28 and 29.

Some southern aspirants namely, Peter Obi, Anyim Pius Anyim, Sam Oluhambuja and Nwachujwu Anakwenze met in Abuja Friday night to affirm that power should go to the South and micro-zoned to southeast.

The consensus advocates are still meeting to tinker with the idea of producing one of the quartet of Dr. Bukola Saraki, Bala Mohammed, Aminu Tambuwal and Mohammed Hayatu-Deen. Their cardinal stand, however, is that PDP should throw its ticket open to all aspirants. They cautioned that competence should not be sacrificed on the altar of zoning.

The consensus team contacted former Vice President, Atiku Abubakar on their mission. But his body language indicated he wanted to run his own show personally, independent of the consensus experimentation.

Atiku's henchmen across the states have the marching order to deflate the zoning argument and sell their principal as the right man for the job.

Their task include but not limited to lobbying other aspirants to step down for Atiku. They have also been meeting with the statutory delegates ahead of the PDP primary next month.

They go about with juicy offers of settling all finances incurred in the build-up to obtaining nomination

form and the fees. Part of the deal for any aspirant willing to step down for Atiku is appropriation of positions in his expected administration.

While the southeast candidates are resolute in their stand for Igbo or southern presidential candidate, the Atiku lobby team are targeting aspirants from the south who do not have strong alliance.

The Atiku group believe that stepping down by a few will boost the rating of the Waziri Adamawa and probably win delegates from the placated aspirants over, ahead of the presidential primary.

However, The Trumpet gathered that negotiators for the approached aspirants expressed fear of betrayal of trust, hence they are demanding certain agreements to be made by

Atiku possibly in written form.

Notably among the request is that Atiku should agree to run a single term of four years if he wins the 2023 presidency on the platform of the party.

Also, there is a demand that Atiku must make verbal pronouncement which will be difficult to deny in future.

This request, it was further gathered, was borne out of the hope that the south will have its turn in 2027 after Atiku might have spent a four-year single term in office.

A source close to an already contacted group anonymously said "in politics no one can be totally trusted. If we as a party adhere strictly to our internal rotational arrangement, we wouldn't

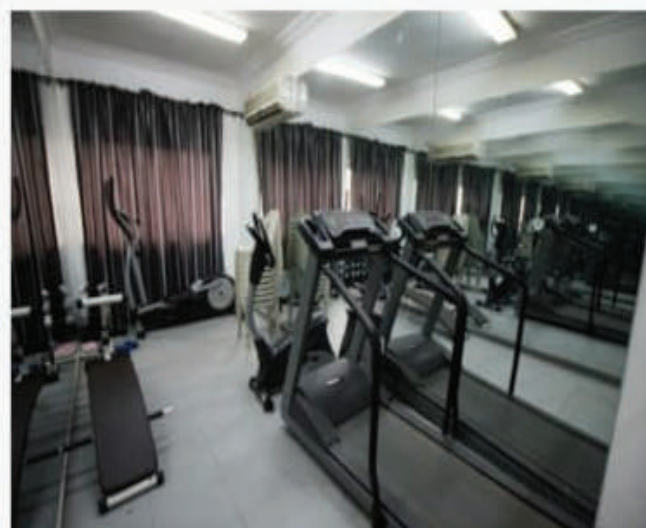
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4	Submission of Forms EC9 and ECDA, 9B, 9C, 9D & 9E online (Nomination Portal). 9.00am 1st July 2022 - 6.00pm 15th July 2022	Section 29(1) of the Electoral Act 2022 provides for not later than 150 days before the election. EC9 (Personal Particulars of Candidates), ECDA, 9B, 9C, 9D & 9E (Name/List of Nominated Candidates).
5	Publication of Personal Particulars of candidates (EC9) by the Commission. Governorship & State Houses of Assembly 24th June 2022	Section 29(3) of the Electoral Act 2022 provides for publication within 7 days of the receipt of Form EC9.
6	Last day for withdrawal by candidates(s)/replacement of withdrawn candidate(s) by Political Parties. 15th July 2022	Section 31 of the Electoral Act 2022 provides not later than 90 days to the election.
7	Last day for submission of Nomination forms (EC13A, 13B, 13C, 13D & 13E) by Political Parties. 8th August 2022	To enable Political Parties comply with Section 30(1) of the Electoral Act 2022.
8	Publication of final list of nominated candidates by the Commission. 20th September 2022	Section 32(1) of the Electoral Act 2022 provides at least 150 days before the day of election.
9	Commencement of campaigns by Political Parties in public. 28th September 2022	Section 94(1) of the Electoral Act 2022. Campaign in public by every political party shall commence 150 days before polling day and end 24 hours prior to that day.

10	Last day for submission of names of Polling Agents for the Election to the Electoral Officer of the Local Government Area by Political Parties through the Commission's dedicated portal. 30th December 2022	Section 43 of the Electoral Act 2022 provides for not later than 14 days before the election.
11	Publication of official Register of Voters for the election by the Commission. 12th January 2023	Section 10(4) of the Electoral Act 2022.
12	Publication of Notice of Poll by the Commission. 30th January 2023	Section 44 of the Electoral Act 2022 provides for not later than 14 days before the election.
13	Last day for campaigns by Political Parties. 23rd February 2023	Section 94(1) of the Electoral Act 2022. Campaign in public by every political party shall commence 150 days before polling day and end 24 hours prior to that day.
14	Date of Election 25th February 2023	Sections 76 (1) & (2), 76 (1) & (2), 116 (1) & (2), 121 (1) & (2), 116 (1) & (2) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended) empower the Commission to appoint dates for Presidential, Governorship, National Assembly and State Houses of Assembly elections not earlier than 150 days and not later than 30 days before the expiration of the term of office of the last holder/before the House stands dissolved.



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Minister of Transportation and All Progressives Congress presidential aspirant Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi (4th left) with traditional rulers in Kano at the weekend.

Man City, Liverpool play 2-2, Mbappe makes U-turn on Real Madrid move

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

Manchester City were held to a 2-2 draw at Etihad Stadium by Liverpool to keep the English Premier League title race open to both sides on Sunday.

Pertinent as the match was to both clubs, neither was able to take advantage to either leapfrog or extend the lead at the top of the EPL table.

A win by Liverpool could have seen the Reds topple Manchester City on the top of the EPL table with two points lead while on the reverse, Manchester City would have extended the point difference to four.

Liverpool had on two occasions cancelled out Manchester City's goals through Diogo Jota and Sadio Mane's goals after Kevin De Bruyne and Gabriel Jesus gave the host a lead in the match.

Jota, signifying Manchester City to be very good in their performances at home games, described the match as very intense.

Speaking with BBC Sport after the match, he said, "Very intense game. They are very good at playing at home. We tried to do our best but we felt,

in the end, we could have done a little better. They had their chances and we had ours too. We were fighting until the end.

"We tried to condition their game the way they wanted but they are obviously very good at what they do so it's not easy. You know sooner or later you can steal one or two balls and it's a football game so you need to take advantage of your chances," he added.

However, Manchester City which will play Liverpool on Saturday, April 16, 2022, in the FA Cup semi-finals, will travel to Spain for the second leg Champions League clash with Atletico Madrid on Wednesday, April 13, 2022.

Meanwhile, Real Madrid are set to step up their chase for Borussia Dortmund striker Erling Haaland after their prime target, Kylian Mbappe, made a U-turn to probably extend his contract with Paris Saint-Germain.

The Spanish football giant committed to rebuilding the team ahead of next season had penciled French international Mbappe as one of the targets to boost the team's attacking lineup.

However, with Mbappe not firmly willing to forge a move to Santiago Bernabeu, Madrid has decided to step up its pursuit to snap up the promising young Norwegian from the clutches of Manchester City.

City is one of the clubs seeking to offset the £67 million release clause of Haaland at the end of the season and has promised to make him one of the highest-paid players at Etihad alongside Belgian Kevin De Bruyne.

With Los Blancos most likely missing out on bringing Mbappe to the Santiago Bernabeu, Manchester City which hopes to fill the void left by the departure of Sergio Aguero will have to face a stiff contest with President Florentino Perez over the 21 years old Dortmund star.

Manchester City are keenly in need of a striker and had previously, last season, had its bid for Harry Kane of Tottenham rejected.

Haaland has scored a total of 23 goals this season comprising 16 goals in the Bundesliga and third in the chart of the highest goal scorers in the German league.

Pakistan's PM Khan loses power

Prime Minister Imran Khan has lost power via a confidence vote in Pakistan's parliament.

Lower house speaker Ayaz Sadiq disclosed this following desertions from coalition partners who blame him for a deteriorating economy and failure to deliver on his campaign promises.

The announcement of the vote's result came just before 0100 (2000 GMT) on Sunday after multiple adjournments in the lower house caused by members of Khan's party,

who said there was a foreign conspiracy to oust the cricket star-turned-politician.

Opposition parties were able to secure 174 votes in the 342-member house in support of the no-confidence motion, presiding Speaker Sadiq said, making it a majority vote. There were just a few legislators of Khan's ruling party present for the vote.

The voting came after the country's powerful army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa met Khan, two sources said, as criticism mounted over the delay in

the parliamentary process.

Opposition leader Shehbaz Sharif is the front-runner to lead the nuclear-armed nation of 220 million, where the military has ruled for half its history.

Shehbaz, 70, the younger brother of three-time prime minister Nawaz Sharif, has a reputation as an effective administrator.

Khan, 69, surged to power in 2018 with the military's support, but recently lost his parliamentary majority when allies quit his coalition government. There were also signs he had lost the

support of the military, analysts said.

Opposition parties say he has failed to revive an economy battered by COVID-19 or fulfil promises to make Pakistan a corruption-free, prosperous nation respected on the world stage.

His ouster extends Pakistan's unwanted record for political instability: No prime minister has completed their full term since independence in 1947, although Khan is the first to be removed through a no-confidence vote. (Reuters)

Atiku, Tinubu in dilemma

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2
have found ourselves in this situation.

"Someone somewhere in 2015 reneged on the agreement and we are paying dearly for it now.

"So, what the concerned people are demanding from the Atiku lobbyists

is not out of place. Politics is a matter of interest and there are situations where you have to lose a position for you to get another position. The give and take understanding in politics creates room for a win-win situation".

It is expected that

before the end of April, the former Vice President or his anchormen may have to make some pronouncements to further consolidate his chances ahead of the primary

Meanwhile, Atiku has reportedly said

that he would only drop his ambition if the PDP micro-zones the presidential ticket to only the southeast. He said via Twitter that for him to forgo his bid, other aspirants from the South South and Southwest should not contest.

Atiku is believed to be referring to Rivers State Governor Nyesom Wike (S'South) and Chief Ayodele Fayose (Southwest) and other PDP chieftains from both southern regions who have entered the presidential race.

Prisons, Falana trade words over alleged replacement of convicts with Innocent people

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1
young men who will serve jail terms for criminals. This wild and unsubstantiated allegation is unpatriotic and most unfortunate, especially coming from a respected lawyer of international recognition."

He added that: "What is more worrisome is a growing consistency by the author to vilify the Nigerian Correctional Service without a just course. It would be recalled that in February 2021, the author alleged that a high profile inmate who was on remand in the Medium Security Custodial Centre, Kaduna contracted COVID-19 in custody.

"The alarm which insinuated that inmates were kept in squalor and exposed to debilitating health conditions, triggered condemnation from various quarters. Subsequently, an independent COVID-19 test by the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) in conjunction with the personal physician of the then inmate was conducted. The result came negative without a trace of the disease in her system.

"Now the alarm is being raised over hearsay arrangements to keep in custody, persons other than those legally convicted yet no name of persons or custodial centre is

mentioned. The Service is compelled to respond to the allegation in order to correct the wrong impression and prevent disaffection the information is capable of creating in the mind of Nigerians.

"For the avoidance of doubt, the process of admitting persons into custody begins with the court where the warrant is issued stating the particulars of the person concerned. At the designated custodial centre, the personal details are confirmed by the superintending officer before further biometrics, including photographs are taken.

"On routine visits by the Controller in charge of the state, the inmates and their corresponding documents are checked. Furthermore, the Zonal Coordinator conducts his mandatory custodial centre inspection during which these information and general supervision of the yard is carried out. The Controller-General, on his own, carries out unscheduled visits to any custodial centre and prisoners' records are checked.

"Moreover, Judges, lawyers, statutory custodial visitors, inmates' relations, religious groups, civil society organisations and host of other visitors

regularly interface with the inmates and it is expected that where such incident is observed, an alarm is raised for appropriate action to be taken.

"Particularly intriguing in this scenario is the fact that author is a public figure like many other distinguished Nigerians, that cannot be denied access to any custodial centre in the country upon request for a genuine course. One therefore wonders why he would resort to wild statement rather than identify a particular culprit with proof of his allegation as would be expected of a patriot.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

SERAP asks Buhari yo reverse decision on blocked phone lines of 72 million subscribers

By **ONYEBUCHI SAMPSON**

Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) has urged President Muhammadu Buhari to “direct the Minister of Communication and Digital Economy, Isa Pantami, and the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) to immediately reverse the apparently unlawful decision to block over 72 million active telecommunication subscribers from making calls on their SIMs.”

Last week, the Federal Government ‘ordered’ telecommunication companies to block outgoing calls on all unlinked lines as the deadline for the verification expired on March 31. Following the directive, over 72 million subscribers have now been barred from making calls.

In the open letter dated April 9, 2022 and signed by SERAP deputy director Kolawole Oluwadare, the organisation said, “Blocking people from making calls undermines their ability to communicate freely, and associate with others. It infringes their rights to freedom of expression and family life, as well as socio-economic rights.”

SERAP said, “The decision will have a chilling effect, dissuading the free expression of ideas and



SERAP boss, Adetokunbo Mumuni

information.”

According to SERAP, “The decision to block people from making calls is also inconsistent and incompatible with the country’s international legal obligations to respect, protect, promote and facilitate economic and social rights. The decision contradicts the tenets of the rule of law, and a democratic society.”

The group said, “Immediately reversing the decision would be in conformity with the Nigerian Constitution of 1999 [as amended], and Nigeria’s international human rights obligations. Reversing the decision would also improve the confidence of the international community in human rights and the rule of

law in Nigeria.”

The letter, read in part, “Access to telecommunications services is a condition sine qua non for the effective exercise of human rights. Therefore, the decision to block people from making calls is discriminatory, and a travesty.

“The decision will cause a wide variety of harms to economic activity, personal safety, and disproportionately affect those on the margins of society. This will directly hinder the ability of the government to achieve the 2030 Agenda’s Goal 8 on the promotion of sustained, inclusive, sustainable economic growth.

“Millions of Nigerians including persons with disabilities, elderly citizens, persons living in remote areas have been unable to capture their biometrics, and obtain their National Identity Numbers [NINs] due to logistical challenges, administrative and bureaucratic burdens, as well as the persistent collapse of the national grid.

“This has resulted in the discrimination of marginalized or vulnerable groups.

“We would be grateful if the decision to block people from making calls on their SIMs is reversed within 48 hours of the receipt and/or publication of this letter. If we have not heard from you by then, SERAP shall take all appropriate legal actions in the public interest to ensure full compliance with human rights standards.”

“The rights to freedom of expression, access to information, and freedom of association, whether offline or online promote the democratic ideal by allowing citizens to voice their concerns, challenge governmental institutions, and hold government accountable for its actions.

“The democratic ideal rationale also recognizes the necessity of having a well-informed citizenry to participate in the democratic process.

“We support any lawful means to address the growing insecurity across the country. However, while the authorities have a legal responsibility to protect, ensure and secure the rights to life and property, any such responsibility ought to be discharged in conformity with human rights standards.

“While we recognize the need for your government to take measures to ensure security and safety of the people in the country, we are seriously concerned that the decision to block people from making calls appears to go beyond the restrictions on the rights to freedom of expression, information, and association.

“The rights to freedom of opinion and expression and access to information are protected under section 39 of the Nigerian Constitution, article 19 of the

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (Ratification and Enforcement) Act.

“These rights must be protected online as they are protected offline. Any restriction on these rights must be provided by law, be necessary in a democratic society and serve a legitimate aim.

“The UN Human Rights Committee has stated that when a state party invokes a legitimate ground for restriction of human rights, it must demonstrate in specific and individualized fashion the precise nature of the threat, and the necessity and proportionality of the specific action taken, in particular by establishing a direct and immediate connection between the expression and the threat.

“The decision to block over 72 million subscribers from making calls on their SIMs also amounts to an arbitrary or unlawful interference with their right to family life, and socio-economic rights, as it unnecessarily or disproportionately interferes with these fundamental human rights.”

“According to our information, your government recently directed telecommunication companies in the country to block over 72 million active telecommunication subscribers from making calls on their SIMs. The ‘order’ to the telecommunications companies was apparently to enforce compliance with the Federal Government’s National Identification Number-Subscriber Identity Module policy. The policy effectively restricted outgoing calls on all unlinked lines, effective April 4, 2022.”

Hackers demand N140b release Bet9ja website

Hackers have demanded N140 billion to release the Bet9ja website.

It has been reported earlier that Nigerian Betting Company, Bet9ja had been hacked by the Russian Blackcat Group, a statement issued by the popular betting company said on Thursday, April 7, 2022.

Bet9ja is currently topping the Nigerian cyberspace with many sports bettors searching for Bet9ja news on the internet, following the news of a possible hack of the Bet9ja website.

It is understood that the Bet9ja website hack was confirmed by the company, who noted that the entire Bet9ja system has been under attack by the Russian Blackcat Group, which is famous for hacking big companies in the world.

The hackers, according to a statement issued by Bet9ja on Thursday, April 7, 2022, the hackers of bet9ja.com reportedly asked for a ransom but they never accepted their condition.

The company stated that their IT team was working tirelessly to restore normal services of the Bet9ja website and further assured customers that their funds are safe despite Bet9ja website hacked trending.

The statement reads thus; “It is important to keep you all updated on the actual position of things, as it has been very challenging in the last 24 hours. We have seen some posts in different groups that we are carrying out a maintenance, that is obviously not the case.

We will not choose an important UCL day to do such.

“The entire Bet9ja system has been under attack by the Russian Blackcat Group, who are famous for several attacks to huge companies in the world. It is a huge hacker attack by this Russian group but our people are working from yesterday without stopping for a minute to restore all the services, but it is not easy.”

The company told their esteemed customers to remain calm as everything will be under control.

“Please do not be discouraged, we will surely restore things as soon as possible and provide update on the progress.

“They are asking for ransom already but we will never accept their conditions. It is important to let you know this so that we are all on the same page. They have hit us hard but of course, they cannot kill us. We will stand our ground and come back even much more stronger,” the statement read.

Latest reports understand that the Russian group is demanding a fee of N140 billion (\$340,000,000), to release the Bet9ja website back to its owners, KC Gaming Networks Limited.

The Lagos State Lotteries and Gaming Authority also confirmed that they were aware of the situation and have urged customers of the company to be steadfast, assuring that measures were being put in place to retrieve the website.

How PDP can regain power, by Yero

A former Governor of Kaduna State, Mukhtar Yero, has enjoined stakeholders in the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to unite to enable the opposition political grouping to sweep polls in the 2023 general elections.

Yero made the call in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Sunday in Kaduna. He said it was imperative for the party members to unite to win upcoming elections in the country.

“It is important for PDP family to come together to rescue the country.

“We must eschew all bitterness and put personal interests aside and look at the collective interest of Nigerians as well as the party.

“So that when Nigeria becomes a better country, all of us will rejoice and will be happy with the situation.

“But if we continue to fight each other and only promote our personal interests, we will end up losing.

Yero also admonished the youths to use the 2023 elections to establish themselves as “true leaders of tomorrow.”

He advised the youth not to allow themselves be hoodwinked by self-seeking politicians and vote for credible leaders to ensure a better future for the country.

On security, Yero urged relevant authorities to use all the resources available to address the problem.

“There is need to create more jobs for people because part of the problem have been lack of jobs.

“That is why we have so many informants around, because they have no jobs, they easily give information for a small token,” he said.



Mukhtar Yero

Buhari signs bill extending retirement age for teachers by five years

By **OROWO AND VICTORIA OJIEH**

President Muhammadu Buhari has consented to the harmonised retirement age for teachers in Nigeria Act, 2022. This marks the hallmark of demands for extending the retirement age of teachers from the current 60 to 65 years and service years, from 35 to 40 years.

Senior Special Assistant to the President on Media and Publicity, Garba Shehu, disclosed this in a statement on Friday.

On January 20, 2021, the Federal Executive Council (FEC) approved a bill that aimed to increase the retirement age and the service years of teachers.

Minister of Education, Adamu Adamu said the essence of the bill was to give legal backing for the approval of the new retirement age of 65 from 60 years for teachers

and extend their period of service from 35 to 40 years.

The bill, according to him, also seeks to introduce bursary awards, special rural posting allowances, and other items that will encourage brilliant Nigerians to take up teaching jobs.

Following its transmission to the National Assembly after a few months, lawmakers in the House of Representatives passed the bill on November 9 last year.

Teachers across the country now have their retirement age and years of service extended by five years as President Buhari assents to the Harmonised Retirement Age for Teachers in Nigeria Act.

Apart from the Act, Shehu revealed that the President has assented to the Animal Diseases (Control) Act, 2022, Nigeria Police Academy (Establishment) Act, 2021.

The President also



Buhari

assented to the Nigeria Law Reform Commission Act, 2022, the National Biotechnology Development

Agency Act, 2022, and the Federal Medical Centre, Hong (Establishment) Act, 2022.

Buhari approves Police Academy as a degree-awarding institution

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH**

President Muhammadu Buhari on Friday signed the bill seeking to establish the Nigeria Police Academy, Wudil, Kano State, as a degree-awarding institution to provide academic and professional training.

The Senior Special Assistant on Media and Publicity to the President, Garba Shehu, who disclosed this in a statement, said the Police Academy Bill was one of two bills signed at the State House in Abuja.

The Nigeria Police Academy (Establishment) Act, 2021 establishes and provides a legal framework for the Nigeria Police Academy, Wudil, Kano State, as a degree awarding institution to provide academic and professional training.

The Academy will be led by a Commandant, not below the rank of Assistant Inspector-General of Police, and appointed by the Police Service Commission on the recommendation of the Inspector General of Police as stipulated in Section 8 of the Act.

Prisons, Falana trade words over alleged replacement of convicts with Innocent people

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

“As always, the Controller-General of Corrections, Haliru Nababa is irrevocably committed to the good course of inmates’ care and support for the betterment of the society and recent commendable performances of the inmates in both academic and vocational skills acquisition bear eloquent testimonials to this positive trajectory.

“While soliciting for constructive engagements and contributions from well-meaning Nigerians towards improving custodial management in the country, the Controller General assures of his unwavering determination to put the Service on a higher pedestal.”

Chief Falana also said the country was at war and the level of criminality was on the rise.

He noted that “solving the country’s security challenges goes beyond hiring mercenaries.”

Falana disclosed that criminals that had been convicted of a crime were allowed to walk freely on the streets after warders connived with convicts to pay youths willing to serve jail terms on behalf of criminals.

According to him, some of them who had been condemned to prison terms in Kirikiri hardly got there as the exchange was made at Mile 2, a few kilometres to the prison.

He also said that there were some convicts who did not seek a replacement or representation in prison but simply paid court officials after which “he goes from the court to his house.” He noted: “This will surprise you, when a

judge pronounces a jail term, sir, before getting to Kirikiri, at Mile 2, warders have an arrangement whereby some prepared young persons will replace the convict. That is the person that will enter the prison, he’s paid. The second one, in the court premises, there’s a syndicate by the defence counsel, prosecutors, warders and court clerks. Once the judge turns his back, the convict will arrange and pay them and the convict will walk back home.

“There’s a study in Lagos, I think 2005/2006, 199 people sentenced for drug trafficking, none of them made it to the prison. It’s a very serious crisis we are facing. If you want to discuss the security of our country, it goes beyond calling for mercenaries.”

Falana added that the country was at war but those in power, for reasons best known to them, had refused to acknowledge this.

He said President Muhammadu Buhari had disobeyed Section 305 of the constitution which required him to declare a state of emergency in war-torn areas.

He said Buhari had failed to take measures to restore law and order in troubled states.

Falana further noted that the Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami had refused to name the 400 financiers of terrorists that the AGF announced in May 2021.

He also said the 800 suspected terrorists Malami mentioned two weeks after that must be put on trial.

He said: “Our country is at war, but whether the people in

government are aware of this, the enormity of the crisis is another. For instance, the president has refused, for some inexplicable reason, to declare a state of emergency in those states. That’s what the law says; Section 305, the President shall declare a state of emergency.

“He is supposed to go to the National Assembly for endorsement so that extraordinary measures can be taken to restore law and order. For reasons best known to the President, he has not done that, even to rebrand bandits as terrorists, was a problem.

“In May last year, the AGF, Malami announced that they have arrested 400 sponsors of Boko Haram but because the staff of judiciary are on strike, once the strike is over, they will be on trial. Two weeks later, he also announced the arrest of 800 Boko Haram suspects who were to be put on trial, that was about a year ago.

“None of them has been put on trial. So if the sponsors of Boko Haram are walking free, perhaps to continue to fund terrorism, we must know the 400 sponsors of terrorism, they must be put on trial. Money has been appropriated by the National Assembly to try arrested terror suspects, but the regime for reasons best known to the people in government is not doing this.

“It is about what has happened to the money budgeted for the defence of our country, what has happened to the arrested Boko Haram sponsors? Those are the kind of questions the likes of (Nasir) El-Rufai (Kaduna State

governor) should be asking, not diverting our attention.

“Lagos is the largest city in the world without CCTV cameras, if we had CCTV cameras all over the place, what happened to that lady inside the BRT bus wouldn’t have happened.

“Crime happens everywhere because we don’t have gadgets. At our airports, these guys (bandits) can launch attacks and no one knows who they are. If there is a killing anywhere, people are moving there to touch whatever they can lay hands on, whereas what is done is to remove everyone from there so that taking fingerprints will be enough for investigation.”

He also said the 800 suspected terrorists Malami mentioned two weeks after that must be put on trial.

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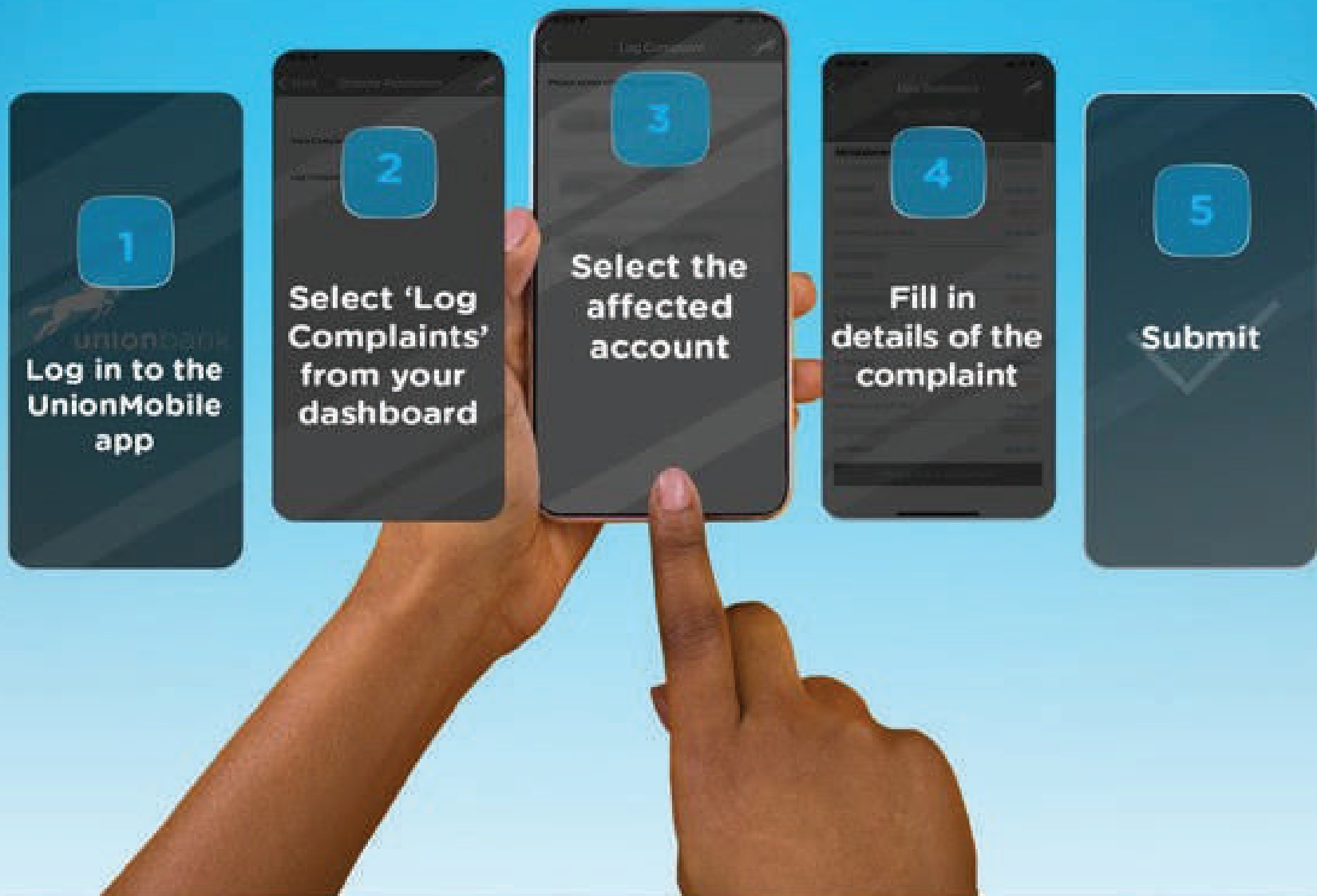
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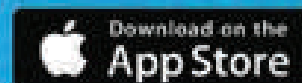


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Cocaine concealed in children duvets intercepted by NDLEA at Lagos airport

■ Skunk in detergent containers recovered at Enugu airport ■ Drugged Milo beverages seized, suspect arrested in Edo

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

Operatives of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, (MMIA) Ikeja, Lagos have intercepted no fewer than 101 parcels of cocaine concealed in eight children duvets.

This was disclosed by NDLEA Director of Media and Advocacy, Femi Babafemi, on Sunday in a statement obtained by The Trumpet.

According to him, "The illicit drug was brought into the country by a 52-year-old Brazilian returnee, Akudirinwa Hilary Uchenna, who hails from Oru East Local Government area of Imo state.

"He was arrested on Saturday 9th April at the D-Arrival Hall of the Lagos airport upon his return from Sao Paulo, Brazil via Doha aboard Qatar Airline flight, while the 101 parcels of the class A drug with a gross weight of 13.2 kilogram were recovered

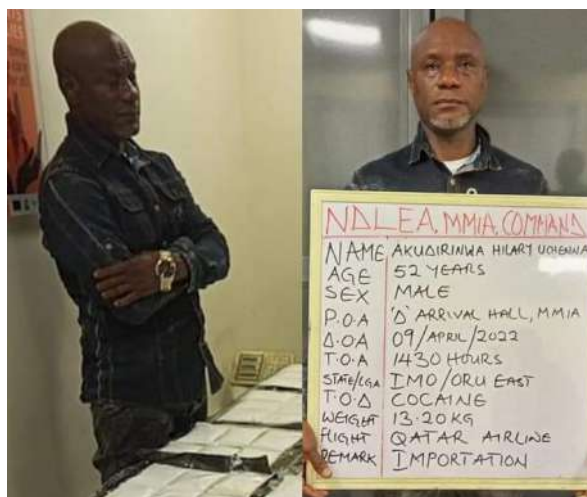
from his only check-in bag."

Babafemi further revealed that during preliminary interview, Uchenna, who claimed to be a carpenter, confessed that he was to be paid N5million for trafficking the drug after successfully delivering the consignment in Lagos.

This, according to Babafemi, followed a seizure of 746.25 kilograms of cannabis in an early morning raid in the notorious Akala, Mushin area of Lagos state on Saturday 9th April.

In a related development, big pellets of skunk concealed in detergent containers have been intercepted by NDLEA officials at the Akanu Ibiam International Airport, (AIIA), Enugu.

"A 37-year-old South African returnee, Ezekwesili Afamefune brought in the consignment weighing 730grams aboard Ethiopian Airline flight from Johannesburg, South Africa via Addis Ababa, Ethiopia," Babafemi said while adding that Ezekwesili is from Awka south local government area of



Anambra state.

Meanwhile, a 24-year-old drug dealer, Christian John, has been arrested by NDLEA operatives in Egbeta, Ovia North East LGA of Edo State.

According to NDLEA spokesperson, John was arrested "for selling assorted illicit drugs which include sachets of drugged Milo beverage, cannabis sativa, swinol and tramadol tablets."

The statement further stated that one Chibuzor Uba, a 30 old

man, was arrested on Friday 8th April with 1,955 ampules of pentazocine at Kaura Namoda area of Zamfara state by men of NDLEA.

"A cross-border drug trafficker, Stanley Chibuzor, 21, was on Friday 8th April arrested by officers of the Marine Unit of NDLEA stationed at Oron beach, Oron, Akwa Ibom state," the statement added.

The Trumpet gathered that the suspect, who hails from Ihiala, Anambra state was

nabbed with 11,190 tablets of Tramadol during the outward clearance of passengers traveling to Cameroon.

This followed the arrested of a drug dealer who produces and sells skuchies in Ondo State.

"Oluwaseun Agboola, 25, was arrested on Thursday 7th April, at his Igoba, Second Gate, Akure residence where 73 bottles of skuchies weighing 77kg stocked in his kitchen were recovered," Babafemi said.

Skuchies are said to be a mixture of Tramadol, Cannabis sativa, Codeine, Black Currant (popularly called Zobo) and water.

Chairman/Chief Executive of NDLEA, Brig Gen Mohamed Buba Marwa (Rtd) while commending officers and men of the NDLEA Commands for the arrests and seizures, charged them and their colleagues across the country to remain focus and abstain from acts capable of compromising or jeopardising the collective goal of ridding Nigeria off drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking.

Custom intercepts 1,300 jerry cans of petrol along Seme borders

The Seme Command of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) has intercepted about 1,300 jerry cans of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) also known as petrol along the Badagry and Seme border creeks.

Customs Area Controller, Comptroller Bello Jibo, made the disclosure in a statement issued on Saturday by Mr Hussein Abdulahi, spokesman for the Command, in Seme, Lagos.

While saying that each of the jerry cans contained 30 litres of petro and about 39,000 in total, Jibo further disclosed that the seized petroleum products has a Duty Paid Value (DPV) of N12.54 million only.

He noted that the continuous offensive patrol against the smuggling of petroleum product along the creeks within the Seme and Badagry axis by officers and men of the command had recorded yet another massive seizure of the product.

"The arrest was made on April 6, the petrol was packaged in sacks.

"The findings revealed that 1,300 jerry cans of petroleum products in 30 litres each, equivalent to 39,000 litres were discovered.

"This arrest is coming at a time when government is spending huge resources to subsidise the products to ameliorate the plight of its citizens.

"These unscrupulous and unpatriotic elements are bent on sabotaging the efforts of government.

"It is on this premise that the officers and men of the command, redoubled their efforts with renewed vigour in the fight against smuggling of the petroleum product," he said.

Jibo credited the successes recorded to consistency on the part of the management of the NCS in providing the needed logistics, adequate working tools, support and ensuring hard working officers were recognised and rewarded through promotions.

He said that the continuous monitoring and surveillance of the border axis had contributed in suppressing such illegal activities, sending right signal to people involved in such unfortunate act of smuggling to desist and face lawful business.

He expressed the committed of the Command in ensuring such illegal and unlawful business were suppressed and discouraged at the Seme borders.

Reasons for declining police service, by Solomon Asemota

By **GABRIEL OMONHINMIN**

Colonial masters double standard and refusal by Nigerians who took over from them to be innovative and implement standards, later resulted in the degradation of the ethos and values of the Nigerian Police Force after the exist of the colonialists.

Chief Solomon Asemota (SAN), an Inspector in the Colonial Police, before resigning his commission in 1961 to practice law, disclosed this in Lagos when he joined Professor Wole Soyinka and Femi Falana to dialogue with newsmen about the state of country.

Asemota explained that before the exit of the colonial masters, there were only five ranks between the Inspector-General of Police of Nigeria (IGPN) and the constable. But sadly, as we speak today, 32 ranks now separate the IGPN and the Nigerian police constable. This makes it almost impossible for any constable to aspire to the summit of the Nigerian Police Force (NPF).

Thus, some police personnel now have the mindset of "if I cannot aspire to head the Nigerian Police Force, no matter how hard I work or dedicated to service, I had better make all the money I can make whether

genuinely or through crooked methods."

Asemota agreed there were pockets of corrupt practices then in the Nigerian Police Force as at that time, but said it was however, never imagined it would get to this unimaginable level as it is today.

He added: "The Provincial Police officer for Ikeja was one Mr. Ford. One morning he called me into his office, and said 'Inspector Asemota, you are transferred to the Motor Traffic Division (MTD) in Ijora. Then Lagos was part of the then Western Region. He asked me to go and work under the famous Fycountry, who was heading the Nigerian Police Motor Traffic Division.

"I told Mr. Ford, I don't want to go to the Motor Traffic Division of the Nigerian Police, which Fycountry was heading then. He asked me, why? I told him, my Principal in school, I was the head boy, will see on the road, I think I was there to collecting bribe from motorist. Mr. Ford looked at me, you know? People were paying to be posted to MTD as at that time. This was why, I said earlier on, that there was already corruption in the Nigerian Police Force even before the white men left us. But it was however, on a very low scale.

"What happens today, is that Police men virtually robbed people with their guns on the roads whether in towns or on the high-ways, in the name of collecting bribe. Because a Police man who is carrying a gun on a road, who ends up forcing money out of a motorist willy nilly, has done nothing different from armed robbery. People are therefore been robbed every day on the road, by the Nigerian Police.

"In the Colonial Police, we had lesser ranks, as against what is obtainable now. Then we only had one IGP for the whole of Nigeria. As we speak, there are not less than 30 ladders between the present day IGP and the Constable on the street. I once went to the Scottish Police College, when I came back I did a report to the sitting IGP Kam Salem. Because when I got to the college, even though, I was already a graduate of the University of Lagos, I was asked in the college to seat with Sargent's and I said what? I was wearing two stars on my shoulders as at that time.

"I told the Scottish Police College Instructors, that I was not a Sargent. The Scottish Police College Commandant then brought out the file of Kam Salem who was then Inspector-General of the Nigerian Police Force, he showed it to me. The

File of one Ali Idowu and three others who have also attended the course I was attending in the Scottish Police College. He told me, these men attended this particular course, when they were all Superintendent of Police and I was only an Assistant Superintendent of Police.

"So when I returned from the course, I did a detailed report the IGP Kam Salem, telling him, that the act of making a Nigerian Police Superintendent to seat with Scottish Police Sergeants in a class is not fair and unacceptable. I also made it very clear, that I see myself as good as any Deputy Superintendent of Police DSP anywhere in the world.

"Kam Salem and the Nigerian Police Force immediately corrected what I complained about. You know? Because of the Colonial mentality they were still carrying, they later reverted to what I had complained about earlier on. This was when, they begun to destroy the ethos of the Nigerian Police Force, this is how we got to the disgraceful place the Nigerian Police is today in our society. So today, we have well over 32 ranks between the IGP and the Constable, when it ought to have been only five or six ranks difference. Forgetting we all go

to the same market, the IGP and the Constable.

"In those days, there used to be European Salary European post. And African Salary, African post. The African got post in the police Chief Inspector. In the army Sargent-Major. The salary paid to the Police at that time was not good. This was one of the reasons I left the Nigerian Police Force.

"One day, while still in the police force, I went to see a lawyer, who asked me how much my IGP was earning, I told him One thousands Eight-Hundred and Forty Pounds. He turned to me, and said, I will give you, your IGP Salary immediately, go and find out, how much your gratuity is and pension. This was how I left the Nigerian Police to seek greener pastures.

"With the present recklessness in the entire Police force, nobody really know what the Nigerian Police stand for. All manner of under hand tactics are deployed people are promoted. People who genuinely work to improve the Nigerian Police are never promoted. People who were supposed to have been weed out, are sadly the ones, who get the pinnacle of the present day Police Force. Any surprise things are the way they are with the Nigerian Police? No!"



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2 x 2	24,941.96	26,812.61	2 x 2	22,588.91	24,283.09	2 x 2	18,349.89	19,716.64	2 x 2	15,147.94	16,284.03	
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10 x 5	448,957.08	482,628.86	10 x 3	169,651.36	182,375.21	10 x 3	156,602.81	168,348.02	8 x 5	172,116.65	185,025.40	
11 x 5	493,852.78	530,891.74	10 x 4	226,258.00	243,176.28	10 x 4	208,808.58	224,469.23	9 x 6	278,649.91	299,548.66	
9 x 6	484,873.39	521,239.16	10 x 5	354,037.54	380,590.16	10 x 5	325,815.11	349,966.25	11 x 5	295,636.20	317,808.91	
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Earpiece Back Page 3x2	628,187.50	675,301.56	6x6 Front Page	6,982,500.00	7,506,187.50
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OAU Vice-Chancellor appointment

The academic community in Nigeria was recently shocked by an ugly development at the Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) Ile-Ife, Osun State when people dressed in fetish garb stormed the university campus to protest the appointment of a non-Ife indigene as Vice Chancellor. At a time when it seems Nigeria is enervated by various demons from the netherworld, one had thought that the ivory tower would retain the last vestiges of decency in our beleaguered social space.

Sadly, ethnic bigotry which hitherto dominated the core fabrics of our nationhood broke free from its subdued enclave and bared its fangs before the whole world. Although ethnic considerations in appointments had always existed in Nigerian universities, it had never been so shamelessly displayed in the market place. The OAU debacle is a disgrace to the university and academic community still stifled by industrial strikes.

The issue was the appointment of a Vice-Chancellor following the expiration of the term of Prof. Eyitope Ogunbodede, the 11th substantive VC of the university. Visual images on mainstream and social media showed a group of persons believed to be traditionalists, carrying fetish items in their bizarre outfit, walking around the university premises protesting the failure of an Ile-Ife indigene to emerge as the new VC of the university. The incident adds to Nigeria's absurd aviary constantly upheld by misbegotten fellows whose parochial inclinations to national cohesion is founded and established in ethnic convictions.

According to confirmed reports, the Governing Council of the Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife, in compliance with extant laws of the university on the appointment of the Vice-Chancellors, commenced the process of appointing a new one on the 7th day of December 2021. Vacancy for the position was duly advertised in national dailies which circulated across the country. On the 14th day of February 2022, during a special meeting of Council, twenty applicants

were considered and their curriculum vitae thoroughly scrutinized. At the end of the exercise, sixteen candidates were shortlisted for meeting the stated criteria for the position. Following the short listing of the candidates, they were invited for an interview which was conducted from 14th to 16th March 2022. At the end of the exercise Prof. Adebayo Bamire emerged victorious ahead of other applicants including Prof. Rufus Adedoyin a professor of physiotherapy, an indigene of Ile-Ife. In fact, Professor Adedoyin came a distant 9th out of the sixteen candidates interviewed for the position.

It is unfortunate that the office of the Vice-Chancellor has become a political one. The academic community views it as a juicy position because the VC has enormous powers

and controls a large financial budget. In many cases, he determines who gets employed, who gets what contract and formulates policies that affect people's career. But the university is an international arena where research and the highest level of intellect are on display. Therefore, such base thinking as ethnicity should have no place in a proper university environment. This situation is prevalent in public universities. In private universities, it is possible for anybody from any ethnicity to emerge as the VC based on merit and qualification.

Besides the position of the Vice-Chancellor, ethnic mentality has eroded almost all public universities in Nigeria. There are universities where a lecturer, no matter how qualified, can never head a department because they are not from the host community of the university. This is disgraceful and condemnable. There are universities in Nigeria where the indigenes headship has surreptitiously adopted a policy never to employ non-indigenes in the department or the faculty. This type of practice is retrogressive, antithetical to research and innovations. While other countries of the world are matriculating to new heights, ours is choking in the vicious grip of ethnic parochialism. If we are to continue to exist as one country, ethnic sentiments should have no place in any area of our national lives. To insist that an indigene of the university host community should become the Vice-Chancellor is irresponsible and frivolous. To also employ only indigenes within the university community is against the rules of intellectual and academic excellence.

In the US, a Nigerian lady Dr. Toyin Tofade will on the 1st day of July 2022 assume office as the first black woman to head the Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (ACPHS) as president. There are many other instances around the world where non-nationals occupy leadership positions in universities. We must collectively resist this trend of clannishness before it destroys our already ailing universities.



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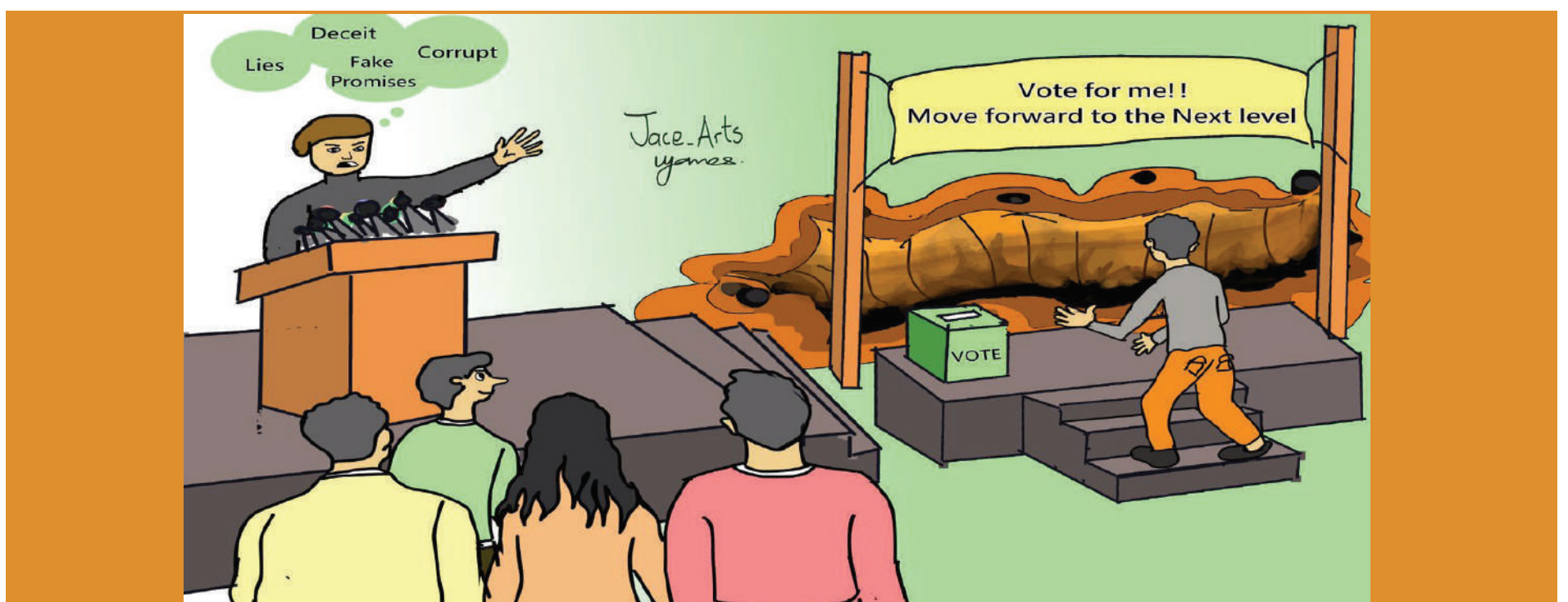
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O! Compatriots and kinsmen, when storms destroy the farmlands relentlessly for seven weeks, termites eat the crops for seven weeks, our children die in the hands of kidnappers while serving the nation, earthquakes shake the land at night and in the day, terrorists walk the land at night and in the day, bandits rule the nights, kidnappers rule the day, herdsmen carry AK-47s to harass the innocent of the land, herdsmen seize farmlands that do not belong to them, when government says we should cede our lands to foreign herdsmen so that we may live, young men slaughter ladies, harvest their body parts, rape their mothers for ritual money, when so-called pastors bury live human beings in their altar in your name, when non-state actors rule some states, when injustice sits in the court of justice, death becomes second skin, it is time to run to the divine for restitution, for divine intervention.

To whom do we cry, who do we call, when bandits become an alternative government, stronger than the army of the land, stronger than the government that claims we elected them? Do we still have the moral right, are we qualified to still call on you when there is so much pollution in the land, when blood touches blood? Do you have a controversy

with us? O God of Jeremiah Awolowo, God of Benjamin Azikiwe, God of Balewa, what have we done to deserve this plague that calls itself a government, a government which stays supine in the cold luxury of Abuja while scoundrels snuff out lives with reckless ease? Is this a curse on us your poor children for rejecting good governors for ethnic jingoists? Is this a visit of the serpents which you unleashed on the stubborn Jews at Mount Hur during the exodus? When shall we have a Serpent of Brass? When shall the messiah come? Who will save us from the apostates in power? Who Lord, who? Who do we cry to when an Imam is suspended from the altar because he cries aloud about the failure of the State to stop killings?

Our nation bleeds. Our hearts fail us for fear. Too many strange things are happening in the land. There is food. There is meat. Yet, some of us kill human beings and eat flesh? Fierce looking young men and women seize informal power in some parts of the land and impose their own rule, spilling blood of the innocent? Even during the civil war, we did not live in such hopelessness. Is this the apocalypse so long in prophecy? My pastor assures me it is not yet the Great Tribulation. If this is not the Great Tribulation yet we are gnashing our teeth, the sea is boiling, the

A prayer for divine Intervention

mountain is melting already, what would the Day be when you shall throw us out of the land? It is not a story to tell. It is not a good story to pass on. What must we do O Almighty father! A goat does not suffer the pains of parturition when elders are around! Who do we cry to when the locusts eat our food and decimate our farms? Who, Father, who?

Dear Father, Devil is on the loose, Fire is on the loose, this could be our noose, unless we cut the noose! Someone loves the noose, he rigidly fiddles for the noose, because he has nothing to lose, if we all face the noose, for the noose is the news he has for the mews of mewling children. Our necks are tightened by the black noose, black patriots cry about the noose, even white strangers cry about the black noose, yet fat messengers of the noose indolently remain on the loose to praise the hands of the noose till the raging fire of the noose consume us with herdsmen's noose. Who shall tell the news of the noose?

They said they would change the land. They said they would provide power supply. The gods of Abuja said they would bring down the cost of gas. They even promised to end the reign of terror. They promised to end Boko Haram. But they have become Boko Haram to the hungry citizens of the land. They refused to call black, black; they gave it another name. They refused to brand the terrorists of the northeast as terrorists. They branded the boys in the east as terrorists and outlawed their organisation. Killers roam the land, protected by some unwritten codes of dishonour! Who shall save the land? O Lord God, arise and save your children.

So it was Chinelo, the nation's young daughter, trained as a medical doctor, ready to leave the land to pursue her dream was bombed to death by bloodthirsty hounds. She was shot. Posted her picture. Called for help. Attack dogs of the gods in Abuja called her names. And she bled to death. Will her blood not haunt the land if her killers walk the land with impunity? What makes the gods of Abuja believe that their reign should continue in post-2023 elections? Why should they show their faces in the ballot? To deceive the people? Do they think we are morons? Is that they believe our votes will not count? That the result of the elections is written already? O Lord! Have mercy on us and send down the rain!

Everything has got its time and season. Let this be the time for restoration. Let the locusts go away. The suffering in the land has a distended stomach. It can eat up everybody except your mercy comes from above. Save us that we may be saved. Help us that we may be healed. If a pregnancy could be hidden, we would hide this one. Who gave them the power to ruin lives in such an impudent manner? Who gave them this nonchalance over what matters to your children who cry to you daily? Is that an affliction from you?

Arise o Lord, arise as in Mount Perazim. Arise and bring succour to the land. Overturn, O Lord, overturn, and overturn and let your Mercy sit on the throne in the land. We have no one but thee!

•Professor Hope Eghagha is a member of the Editorial Board of The Trumpet Newspapers.

Karo OGBINAKA

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The 2022 NUGA games recently came to a close at the University of Lagos. It was a well-organized. The host university and its leadership should be commended. The University of Lagos will surely have a lasting, good and memorable impression on the athletes and other universities' participants. The university used the opportunity to showcase its facilities, serene and well-kept learning environment. The University of Lagos is simply one community where municipal services, especially uninterrupted electric power and water supplies are guaranteed. Throughout the tournament, traders had a field day. It provided great opportunity for sales of various goods. During the sports festival there was also a showcase of arts, cultural and musical festival. The entire university community was colourful as it was painted by a diverse array of visitors and sport personalities

Sports activities are big businesses today. Sports positively enhance the corporate image of organizations that identify with it. Nigerian universities were reputed for their contributions to Nigerian Sports, especially the quality athletes they offered. This has waned over the years. But in the University of Port Harcourt, there seems to be hope. The final result of the week-long games easily established that it was a one-horse race for which University of Port Harcourt had no mates as fellow competitors. Why would other universities not go to the University

of Port Harcourt to adopt their successful sports' model? Why do we as a people fail to adopt good models? It amounts to a waste of limited university funds if thousands of our youth are gathered in one arena for sporting competition that is devoid of true competition. Only competition brings out the best in athletes, and would consequently lift them up into becoming internationally rated athletes. The argument may be put forward that the universities are not established to promote sports. This argument is only tenable to a one-dimensional thinker. Universities ought to be centres where the best of our youth's abilities are discovered and developed to their full potentials. The development of the full potentials of our undergraduates in other life skills they may possess is missing in our school system - in music, entertainment and in all other aspects of human creativity.

There are two ways the youth of any nation may be perceived. Negatively, they may be adjudged as a liability. Where this is the case, institutions see them as enemies that should be kept at bay. Many public institutions from primary to tertiary levels usually treat the youth under their stead as liabilities that should be dispensed as quickly as possible. The other way of treating the Nigerian youth is seeing them as agents of development, change and national pride. We subscribe to this attitude.

Here, we proposal a reversal of the negative trend as well as argue that a platform for

Drawing the curtains on 2022 nuga games

sporting programme that is built upon a business model, should be adopted and developed by all Nigerian universities. The gain of this is that Nigerian undergraduates would constitute the base of Nigerian Sports. Consequently, we suggest that all our tertiary institutions should set up Sports Academies. The academies should be domiciled at the Sports Centres and headed by a competent staff that must not be lower than a Senior Lecturer in status. It should also be affiliated with the relevant sports bodies in Nigeria. All athletes affiliated to the academies should be recruited and put under contract. There is also the need to use the foundation and pre-degree programmes of our universities to attract secondary school pupils within the catchment areas of the universities into the academies. Such athletes should be registered as would-be programmed athletes; and subsequently admitted into relevant departments depending on their performance after the requisite qualifying examinations such as UTME, JUPEB and IJMB. In doing this, the institutions should be guided by the age of the athletes, and their ability to cope with the stress of university education. One is convinced that with relevant counseling, an average student should be able to succeed in sports and learning even to the highest level.

In order to hold a successful sports event, new facilities were built and old ones were rehabilitated or upgraded. What would be the post-NUGA state of these facilities? It is doubtful if there is any university in Nigeria that is capable of maintaining such huge infrastructural outlay. Not even the Federal and State governments have been able to maintain the various stadia spread across the country. Events are hardly held in these stadia to keep their facilities occupied and busy. The best way to save these capital

intensive structures from decay and waste is to either convert them to sports training institutions or academies for our youth; for whom they were set up in the first place. Not many primary and secondary schools in cities like Lagos and Port Harcourt can boast of play grounds and facilities for sports. It is thus suggested that those who run our universities should liaise with the relevant ministries in the various states so that schools can register and be attached to their sports academies. This will also keep the various universities coaches engaged throughout the year. Most universities' coaches idle away in our campuses except during the "season of NUGA." This makes them obsolete in the art of their chosen profession.

The gains of the NUGA games may be appraised by what we do after the games. That is by learning our lessons and turning our losses into good success. The performance of most of the privately owned universities was quite appalling. The just concluded NUGA games was clearly a completion between team University of Port Harcourt and others. If the medals won by all other universities are added and put in a common pool, they would still not beat the University of Port Harcourt. Therefore, NUGA, as the games organizing body, must go to the University of Port Harcourt to understudy her winning template in order to recommend same for the other universities in Nigeria. Just as FIFA does, the games' tournament is as good as how athletes are prepared for it. NUGA must have an assessment and accreditation team that moves around universities to monitor their sports facilities and training programmes.

•Dr Karo Ogbinaka is of the Department of Philosophy, University of Lagos and a member of The Trumpet Editorial Board.



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How graft fuels insecurity, by Soyinka

By GABRIEL OMONHINMIN

Nobel Laureate, Professor Wole Soyinka, has observed that corrupt practices in high places and Nigerian political actors' tendencies to be involved in primitive aggrandizement and mindless accumulation of wealth have combined to fuel the country's present-day unsettling insecurity crisis.

Along with rights activist, Mr. Femi Falana (SAN) and Chief Solomon Asemota (SAN), in a media dialogue in Lagos, entitled, "Forget the Past, Forfeit the Future: A Nation Seceding from Humanity," Soyinka painted a frightening and graphic picture of how the activities of some politicians were creating apprehension and anxiety in the county.

He remarked: "Between corruption and the attacks in our airports and the train stations, do we believe or think, these things are not connected? One question most Nigerians must now begin to ask themselves is, people who are presently standing trial for various cases of corruption are the same people who now want to be Nigeria's president come 2023. Are these people, not the same people whose cases are still in courts? Some of these politicians cases, have been heard. I think the prosecutors have already finished submissions in some of these cases. And now, it is their turn, the defense to respond, but they have succeeded overtime in postponing the judgment day through technicalities.

"Now, if these politicians know, that they have really stolen, it is up to them to decide what units of this money to be surrendered, ten units of this money or what? Especially when they know the people are after them. They might now decide, how much of these units or per centage of the money stolen they are prepared to sacrifice, to make sure at lest they never losses the major part of the money. They might say, is it one, two, three, four or five per cent

of this money? I think some of them may be prepared to go 50-50.

"And what would they do with the 50 per cent they are giving away? Or what would they use it for? One, to keep a standing army. Of that 50 per cent out of a 100 or 5 out of 10 units, what will it cost them, to buy a few of the lose Gaddafi weapons and now recruit a few mercenaries, intermingle with some lunatics religious fundamentalists, get together or form a coalition. The next thing that will happen is attack. And they will keep everybody busy. So that they will never come to trial.

"So when we are looking at bandits, bandits and bandits, we are looking at

fundamentalist, religion delusion, those who have been deluded by paradise eventually. I advise you also to look at corruption. Again, again and again, we have been told, we are going to name those who are behind these corrupt practices, I will travel and return to the country, thinking that by the time I return to the country, they would have been named. I think there is going to be this name ceremony. Sadly, this has not happened, simply because of the powerfully corrupt, and the corruptly powerful members of the society. They are not unconnected with the issues of insecurity. So let Nigerians worry a lot about this."

Soyinka, during a chat with newsmen, was accused of helping to foster Muhammadu Buhari on Nigeria as President as he endorsed his candidature and possibly voted for him, during the 2015 elections that brought him to power.

He responded: "I am very glad that you raised this issue. I didn't want to worry about it, but since you raised it, if I am convinced that I should vote for Buhari at that time, it is within my right to do so. And if that, that person fails along the way, it is my responsibility to say it. Were you expecting me to say, just like one political party chieftain in Nigeria, who was told, that his son has failed as Governor of a state, he said, his son should be allowed to reseat as Governor of that state.

"The fact you must know, if I was convinced at that time, that Buhari was the right Presidential material for Nigeria, I would have led the voting. Not when I refused to leave my house on that day of the voting. But as at that time, I repeat, ex-president Goodluck Jonathan, had lost the trust of most Nigerians, that was why I said, do not vote for Jonathan. Ex-President Jonathan, I respect till tomorrow, because of the way he took his defeat. I will want to remember in that glorious moment when he said no more! Please those who are friends of Jonathan, should tell him, that I would want to remember when he said in those glorious moment NO MORE! Please tell him not to be tempted to come out again, because I shall come out again, to say do not vote for him."

Mr. Femi Falana, in his contribution, said that most of the politicians who have pending cases of corruption against them in courts are desperately jostling to occupy the country's presidential position, to secure immunity when elected, so that they will no longer face trial for the offences they have already committed, while occupying the seat of the presidency.



Soyinka

EFCC challenges court order to release Obiano's passport

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has challenged an interim ex parte order by Awka Division of the Federal High Court presided over by Justice Hyeladzira A. Nganjiwa.



The order granted a former Governor of Anambra State, Chief Willie Obiano, leave to travel abroad to the United States of America to attend to his medical appointment, on the grounds of denial of fair hearing.

EFCC is investigating Obiano for alleged corruption and money laundering during his tenure as Anambra State governor from 2014 to 2022.

The Commission arrested him on March 17, 2022, at the Murtala Muhammed Airport in Lagos as he attempted to leave the country, hours after handing over to his successor, Professor Chukwuma Soludo.

The Trumpet reported that the former Governor has been on the watch-list of the Commission before his official handover.

A statement released weekend by the Commission's spokesman, Wilson Uwujaren said Obiano attempted to arm-twist the EFCC with the said ex parte order. It, however, added that the order of the Court is being challenged

by the anti-graft agency.

He said, "Surprisingly, the former governor had attempted to arm-twist the Commission with an ex parte order, obtained from Justice Nganjiwa of the Federal High Court, Awka, Anambra State.

"Available court documents indicate that Obiano had on March 11, 2022, ahead of his handover on March 17, 2022, filed a motion ex parte dated March 10, 2022 before Justice Nganjiwa praying among others, for an interim injunction stopping the EFCC from arresting or preventing him from travelling out of the country for his medical treatment.

"While the court in one breadth ordered the applicant to put the Commission on notice why interim preservatory order should not be granted, it went ahead to make an order that the Commission should not obstruct, impede or prevent the applicant from travelling abroad to keep his medical appointment and adjourned till March 23.

"On March 31, the Commission was

served an originating motion on notice for the enforcement of the applicant's fundamental rights. Curiously, the motion was filed on March 11, 2022, the same date as the motion for ex parte order.

"This was followed by another motion on notice on April 4, putting the Commission on notice to release Obiano's passport to enable him travel abroad for his medicals with hearing fixed for April 6, and instructions that proceedings shall be conducted virtually via Zoom.

"Ahead of the hearing, the Commission petitioned the Chief Judge of the Federal High Court asking that Justice Nganjiwa recuse himself from the fundamental rights action on the grounds that he is a party in the Commission's appeal at the Supreme Court in the corruption case, H. A. Nganjiwa VS. FRN.

"But when the case was called, Justice Nnamdi Dimgba held the brief of his brother judge, who is bereaved. The case was subsequently adjourned, with instruction that counsel will be notified of the adjourned date."

Jonathan's tenure was five, not six years, says monarch

Former President Goodluck Jonathan spent five years in office as against the assumed six, a traditional ruler, King Ariwareni Paul, has clarified.

The monarch who is the paramount ruler of Jonathan's Otuoke community, described as disinformation, any claim that the former president spent six years in office.

The royal father said this is just an orchestrated campaign against their son, Dr. Jonathan.

King Paul specifically referred to a series of documentaries on the zoning of the office of President by Dr Don Pedro Obaseki.

In a statement issued in Yenagoa King Paul noted that "some political hirelings and propagandists have wrongly and treacherously claimed to have lasted six years, ostensibly to agree with their predetermined selfish narrative."

Putting the record straight, the royal father further said "We have read in the news and watched on TV the deliberate misinformation of the public on the political timeline of former Presidents, especially concerning the number of years spent by President Jonathan in office. The narrative that Jonathan spent six instead of five years as President is a distortion of historical fact and it is expedient that we correct this misinformation for the sake of posterity."

Criticising what he called a misleading



Jonathan

short documentary on Nigeria's leadership tenures by Don Pedro Obaseki titled 'PDP 2023: The Arithmetic of Zoning', the traditional ruler wondered why such a man "who is supposed to have a reasonable knowledge of historical events in Nigeria would willingly opt to distort and misrepresent recent significant occurrence in the political evolution of

our dear nation.

He said "this was not an error on the side of Obaseki but a deliberate mangling of Nigeria's political history in pursuit of the political desires of his paymasters."

"It is on record that Jonathan took his oath of office and was sworn in as President on May 6, 2010, following the death of his boss, President Yar'Adua.

"He later contested in 2011 polls and was subsequently sworn into office on May 29, 2011, and he handed over to his successor on May 29, 2015. So how does May 2010 to May 2015 amounts to 6 years?

"Assuming but not conceding that one wants to add the three months Jonathan served as acting President, from when the doctrine of necessity was passed by the National Assembly specifically on February 9, 2010, it will amount to five years and four months and definitely not six years.

"Individuals and groups are free to promote any candidate of their choice but Nigerians should not be misinformed for their personal reasons.

"We have observed that an otherwise credible television station has been promoting this falsehood in the form of advertisements and documentaries and we are advising them to retract this error. We also admonish sponsors of the advert to get their facts right and stop misinforming Nigerians."

PDP names caretaker committee for Osun chapter

By BEN OREVA

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) National Working Committee (NWC) has approved the composition of a caretaker committee to run the affairs of its Osun chapter with Dr Adekunle Akindele as the chairman and Otumba Femi Carena as Secretary respectively.

Other members of the committee are; Mr Niyi Owolade, Mrs Ayo Awolowo, Dr B.T. Salami, Mr Adetoye Ogunboyega and Alhaji Razaq Oyelani.

PDP National Publicity Secretary, Mr Debo Ologunagba, who stated this in Abuja on Saturday said the decision followed the expiration of the tenure of the State Executive Committee.

He added that the committee would manage the affairs of the party from Friday, April 8, for a period not exceeding 90 days or till the time that a new State Executive Committee would be elected.



Chase PDP to Atlantic, Lawan charges Kwara APC members

By TUNDE OPALANA, POLITICS EDITOR, ABUJA

Senate President Ahmad Lawan has advised the people of Kwara not to allow the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) bounce back to power in the state in 2023.

He warned that the opposite party should not be allowed to near the seat of power but rather you be chased to the Atlantic.

The PDP in 2019 lost power to the current APC administration in the state under Governor Abdulrahman Abdulfatah and also lost all federal and state legislative seats to the APC.

Lawan spoke at a town hall meeting organised by Senator Oloriegbe to account for his stewardship and also declare his intention to run again and represent his people of Kwara Central in 2023 polls.

He was in Ilorin, the state capital to commission some of the constituency projects sponsored by Senator Ibrahim Yahaya Oloriegbe who is representing Kwara Central senatorial district.

The Senate President told the people of Kwara State in general to continue to keep faith with APC.

"I will like to remind you here, those people that you chased out will never get tired of trying to come back. You have only one more of "Otoge" and they will never come back.

"In 2023, just chase them far away from Kwara, and they will never find their way to Kwara. Don't take it for granted. They are smart people. You know that. Chase them far away, if you can, up to the Atlantic Ocean if you chose to chase them to the South. If you wish, chase them up to Niger Republic. Chase them far away from here.

"The people of Kwara, you have gotten what you deserve from 2019. You have a

state Governor that is for you. You have your National Assembly members that are for you. You have your state Assembly members that are for you and council chairmen and councillors.

"Don't ever take that for granted. Less than three years, what our state Governor in Kwara has done, what our members of National Assembly, our Distinguished Senators, all the three of them, Senator Yahaya Oloriegbe from Kwara Central, Senator Sadiq Suleiman Umar of Kwara North, Senator Lola Ashiru of Kwara South, have given every time that they need to give for us in the Senate to achieve what we have been able to achieve in the Senate.

"You don't need to think twice. Vote for them more than you did in 2019. Make



Lawan

the gap more than convincing. Vote massively. Don't assume, well we have win in 2019, this people, send them far away from Kwara so that we can maintain the trajectory of what you have been able to get today because, Nigerians, having gone through 16 years of deprivation, of mis-governance between 1999 and 2015, deserve the Progressives to continue to provide leadership in Nigeria," Lawan said.

Commending Senator Oloriegbe for giving the people of Kwara Central a fair and qualitative representation, he said the people could not have had it better considering the achievements of the Senator within less than three years of his being in the Senate.

"What we watched, the 30 minutes documentary on the activities of Distinguished Senator Ibrahim Yahaya Oloriegbe, showed something more than three-year activities of a Senator.

"For you to achieve what you did in less than three years, it beats my imagination, how a new Senator, in three years, can attract so many projects, sponsored so many bills and engaged himself in so many activities within a short time.

"Imagine if you had him as your Senator in the Eighth Assembly, so if you are talking of seven years down the line, probably we will be here until next day going through his achievements," Lawan said.

Earlier before the Town Hall Meeting, the Senate President performed the Foundation Laying ceremony of the Drug and Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Centre for Federal Neuro-Psychiatry Hospital, Budo-Egba, Asa Local Government Area.

Lawan also commissioned a Comprehensive Health Center, Dr Ibrahim Yahaya Oloriegbe Foundation Building at Idi-Isin, Ilorin South Local Government Area and

commissioned as well the Ilorin Emirate Mobile Health Clinic.

The Senate President commended Senator Oloriegbe for facilitating the idea of a rehabilitation center.

He said the idea of the center was "to show that the Federal government of Nigeria cares about our youths. That our President, Muhammadu Buhari cares about our youths and their tomorrow. That the Distinguished Senator you voted for, the man representing you today in the Senate, Senator Ibrahim Yahaya Oloriegbe cares.

"That we all care for the Youths of this country and for the development of this country because the Youths in any nation are the leaders of tomorrow.

"Today, its a fact, that across the country, we are challenged as a people, as a nation by substance and drug abuse. Some of our youths that fall victims need to be rehabilitated.

"But I want to take the opportunity here to appeal to all of us in the leadership positions at all levels of government, Federal, State and Local Government to ensure that we are proactive, that we make it difficult for drugs and substance to be available for them to be abused.

"That we protect our youths because by protecting them, we are protecting our tomorrow, we are protecting the development of our nation and therefore this particular project is one sure way of ensuring that those that are falling victims will have a centre to go to for rehabilitation.

"But that is not what we want. That actually is not what we need. My prayer will be that after we construct this centre, there should be nobody inside it because nobody should be a victim. But we need to prepare for the worse at all times."

Why I am contesting for House of Reps, by Banky W

Bankole Wellington (a.k.a Banky W) is a media entrepreneur, musician, filmmaker and advertising practitioner. He was at the PDP secretariat to submit his nomination form. He is contesting for the Etiosa Federal Constituency of Lagos state seat in the House of Representatives. In this interview, he says he is into politics to serve, believing that the PDP is a better platform to realize his ambition having failed in 2019. **TUNDE JOSHUA** brings excerpts.

You have a fledgling career as a musician. What informed your decision to delve into the murky waters of partisan politics?

Well, I'm getting into politics because I have a genuine desire to serve. I think that for me, politics shouldn't be about servant leadership, it should be about people that recognize that there's a reason they call government public service, because you're supposed to be the servant of the community. And in the capacities that God has opened the doors for me, in the arenas that God has opened for me, I've tried to serve my community. I've served young people. I've been a stepping stone to many young people in various industries and I believe that the greatest impact that we can have is when we engage with our political system, and try to participate in a political system and try to use the powers of that office for the benefit of the community. So I'm in politics to serve. I'm in politics to build, I consider myself a builder. God has used me to build people in various sectors and I believe that by the grace of God, if given the opportunity and the mandate of my constituency, then he will use me as a stepping stone for a choice and for all the young people in it to stand around Nigeria.

All Progressives Congress (APC) is the party in control in Lagos. Why did you join PDP.?

I believe that with the PDP there's a genuine intention to give young people a seat at the table? I believe that we have a chance to build a bridge between those who have been in the political terrain for many years and those of us who've been protesting from the sidelines. And at the end of the day, if all we do is shout from the sidelines, then we'll never actually change anything, we will never have any impact. But if impact is truly the goal, if making a difference in Nigeria, is truly the goal, then we must engage with Nigeria. And that's been my message to young people to say, listen, we can sit and complain and shout from now till thy Kingdom come or we can join a mainstream platform that gives us a chance to play a part in the rebuilding and the rescue of our nation. And I believe that the PDP is welcoming us with open arms and open doors. And it's an opportunity for us to join hands together and rebuild Nigeria and rescue Nigeria. And so I'm very grateful to the party for the warm reception. I'm very grateful for the opportunity to come, have a seat at the table and I believe that working together you know, God will help us to do what he has destined us to do.

What's the relationship between music and politics?

I think part of the problem is that we've left politics to politicians. There are some people in politics who've never had to build a business, they've never had to provide jobs, they've never had to struggle to build a career. They've just been kind of in the place of entitled politics because that's just what they do.

Whereas I've had to build businesses, I know what young people go through to build a career, to provide jobs for other young people, to go against the grain in the



Banky W

very difficult terrain that is Nigeria and try to make something of yourself and trying to make something of the people around you and the people that God brings to you. And so I think there needs to be a change or there needs to be a difference in the selection of people that we choose to enter office. It should be people who have built something and I've been fortunate enough to have been used by God to build things in music and film and food and advertising. In my spiritual walk in my community and community service, these are all areas that I'm extremely active in. And that should be the requirement. It should be somebody who has experience across multiple sectors, who knows the pain of young people in Nigeria, who has experienced some of that pain himself and who has also learned how to channel that pain into purpose, and channel that journey into fulfillment, not just for himself, but for the other people around him. I think that should be what we expect of people who are entering politics. So it's not so much about the fact that I'm a musician, but it's about the fact that I've had to put my hands to the plow and make something of myself and others in this kind of country. And I think if we have more people with like minds like this, then it will spell a better day for government as a whole, for our National Assembly and for our young people. You know, I think that the way that we make it out of the situation, the mess that we are in as a country, is through innovation and reform and innovation doesn't happen in government offices, Innovation happens in the private sector. That's where Burna Boy and Wizkid are earning Grammys. That's where Flutter Wave and Paystack are unicorns you know, the successful companies they're in the tech space and FinTech innovation is happening in media and music and entertainment where you need reform as well. And the only way you get reform is to put people with like

minds at the table of policymaking in the country so that while innovation is going on reform is there to support it. And if you have innovation and reform that's how you fix an economy.

In 2019 you had an unsuccessful election to the House of Reps. What actually went wrong with that election and what do you need to do differently to come out successful?

You said something interesting, you said that 2019 was unsuccessful, and I completely disagree. The reason I say that was that for us, if you recall in 2019, I didn't declare for office until I think three months before election day, which is completely unheard of. It's insane. So for us in 2019, it wasn't about winning a seat, It was about planting a seed. And I think we successfully did that because what we did was we came third, and we won in some areas as an independent candidate, we won in some areas in our constituency where it was completely unheard of. We won in wards and polling units that were previous strongholds for either of the big two parties. But at that time, it was about showing young people that this is something we have to get involved in even though we're late to the race. We just planted a seed, let's just stick our toe in the waters. You know, there are some things that you cannot learn unless you are in the trenches yourself. So the entire goal of the 2019 campaign was to plant that seed, was to get involved, was to learn what it was and also to become a rallying point for the younger generation to see, to say, Hey, this is something that we have to do and we've planted that seed. Now. It's about winning the seat and I believe that we'll be successful this time. If you take what we did in 2019, and you take what the PDP did in 2019 in my constituency, we would have won decisively if we were working together at that time and we're working together now. I think that it spells good things for the Lagos PDP and for the

PDP as a whole, where young people are now seeing because of what we are doing that okay, you know what, maybe this is something that we can do, maybe this is someone we can go with, maybe we can join forces, maybe we can be a part of the system and and help to fix it and help to reform it from within. So that's what we're trying to do and I believe that will be successful. Honestly, it's so much bigger than the race that I'm running for. I think this is about the future of Nigeria, the destiny of Nigeria. This is about where we are going from here, you know, and I'm just grateful to be playing my part in that story. I think that if we all did that, if we all just played our part, then we would have a better nation. So I'm content to play my part and hopefully that inspires other young people to do the same.

What are your chances of winning the election?

I think for me, first of all, you know in a David and Goliath situation, I'm more comfortable being David. You know, the stakes are high, the big machine is against us, but I do believe that what we may lack in money we have in meaning, we have a mission, we have a message. And I think that insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, and expecting a different result. I think that if Lagosians are truly happy with the way everything is happening, then maybe you know, we don't stand a chance but somehow I suspect that that's not the case and that people are ready for something fresh, something different, something unique, something that speaks to the heart of someone who wants to serve and who wants to see the nation better. So I'm content to stand on my own two feet with the support of the PDP and the support of our young people and the support of our community in saying that, because I know that we represent something different. I think that that's what my people have been waiting for. They're waiting for a representative who truly cares about the community and who has a track record to show. They're waiting for a representative who truly cares about Nigeria's young people and who has a track record of being a stepping stone for those young people. They're waiting for a representative who is not there for selfish interests or selfish ambition, but is truly there to serve and to help build. They're waiting for a representative who will be transparent and accountable for them so that they will know what their representative is doing for them in Abuja, but also seeing what he's doing in the constituency. And I think these are the things that we represent. And I believe that by the grace of God and with the support of the people, we will get the mandate. Yes, it will be history in the making, it will be the first time that PDP has ever won a seat, won this seat in Etiosa. It always seems impossible until it's done. I believe now, like Nelson Mandela said, the only people that change the world are the ones crazy enough to think that they can. I'm crazy enough to think that we can pull off an upset and and have a lot of people that are crazy with me so we'll see what happens.

Continue online at www.thetrumpet.ng

WHO records over 100 Russian attacks on Ukraine's health centers

World Health Organization (WHO) says it has recorded more than 100 attacks on health care facilities in Ukraine since the start of the Russian invasion on February 24.

The "grim milestone" was crossed on Thursday, the organisation said, adding that 73 people had been killed and 51 others injured.

According to the WHO, out of 103 attacks, 89 have impacted health facilities, and 13 have impacted transport, including ambulances.

"We are outraged that attacks on health care are continuing. Attacks on health care are a violation of international humanitarian law," said WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

WHO representative in Ukraine, Jarno Habicht, said 1,000 health facilities were close to conflict areas or changed areas of control.

"Health workers throughout the country are risking their lives to serve those in need of medical services, and they, and their patients, must never be targeted," Mr Habicht said.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi tests positive for COVID-19

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

United States House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has tested positive for COVID-19, a day after appearing unmasked at a White House event with President Joe Biden.

Spokesperson Drew Hammill who announced the news said Ms Pelosi had tested negative earlier in the week.

"The speaker is fully vaccinated and boosted and is thankful for the robust protection the vaccine has provided," Mr Hammill said in a tweet.

He added that Ms Pelosi

would "quarantine consistent with CDC guidance, and encourage everyone to get vaccinated, boosted and tested regularly."

Ms Pelosi's positive COVID-19 result came a day after she was present for the signing of the Postal Service Reform Act of 2022 with Mr Biden.

The White House clarified that Mr Biden and Ms Pelosi had only "brief interactions over the course of the last two days" and that the U.S. president was not considered a close contact of the speaker by CDC guidance.

"Last night, as a part of his regular testing cadence, the

President tested negative," the White House said in a statement. "He will continue to be tested regularly. The president wishes Speaker Pelosi a speedy recovery."

Other members of Mr Biden's administration who tested positive for COVID-19 include Attorney General Merrick Garland, Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo, Congress members Adam Schiff, Katherine Clark, Joaquin Castro, Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Derek Kilmer and Scott Peters.

Several of the officials who tested positive had attended events in Washington, DC, together.



Nancy Pelosi

Nigeria sets standards for GMOs regulation in Africa



Rufus Ebegeba

National Biosafety Management Agency's (NBMA's) director-general, Rufus Ebegeba, says Nigeria sets standards for Africa in regulating genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

Mr. Ebegeba, speaking in Abuja while welcoming a team of regulators from Ghana's Biosafety Management Authority who came to understudy NBMA's success story in biosafety management, remarked:

"The agency was not established to stop GMOs but rather to see that whatever results from the technology does not pose a threat to human health, environment, animals and plants."

According to Ebegeba, GMOs

in Nigeria are safe, stressing that the agency ensures that they are kept in a safe environment.

"The global economy today is driven by science and technology, and it is timely that Nigeria is keying into it by ensuring that safety measures are put in place for the deployment of the technology," he stated. "The government is so proactive to the establishment of NBMA, and by implication, the agency stands to prevent Nigeria from becoming a dumping ground for unregulated genetically modified organisms."

He also stressed that the collaboration among government agencies, departments, and

ministries had been effective, especially in information and teamwork.

Mr Ebegeba expressed the need for Ghana to extend the scope of the regulatory framework to capture the new emerging technologies such as gene editing, gene drive, and synthetic biology.

Responding, Emmanuel Marfo, the chairman of Ghana's Parliamentary Committee on Environment, Science and Technology, commended the activities of NBMA in Nigeria.

"We have toured the facility and seen the activities and are happy with what we have seen," said Mr Marfo.

Ogun gov't denounces group soliciting diesel donations for state hospital

Ogun Government has warned residents of the state to ignore any appeals by individuals or organizations soliciting support to fund its facilities or projects.

Commissioner for Health, Dr Tomi Coker, issued the warning at a news briefing in Abeokuta in the wake of an online message by a group soliciting donations from the public for the reconnection of the state hospital, Ota to the national grid and daily purchase of diesel to power its generating set.

The commissioner said the hospital was not indebted to the Ibadan Electricity Distribution Company (IBEDC) or disconnected from the national grid.

She said that the hospital had always been on 11KVA transformer

with a monthly payment of N500,000 to IBEDC.

She also said that efforts were being made to connect the facility to a 33KVA transformer to achieve more hours of power supply and reduce the amount spent on fuelling the generating set.

According to him, the state government would not stoop so low to asking a group to help it raise funds into a personal account.

"No hospital under the purview of the Hospitals Management Board (HMB) owes IBEDC and none of our facilities has been disconnected from the national grid.

"We are only making efforts to move the state hospital to the 33KVA transformer from the 11KVA transformer that would help achieve about 12 hours power supply daily.

"The public should ignore the calls for donations from any private organisations that want to enrich themselves in the name of helping the government," Ms Coker said.

Also, the Medical Director of the hospital, Dr Toafeek Somade, said that a group approached the facility with the intent to help it in any area of challenge.

Mr Somade said that the group was advised to channel its request to the HMB and also specify the area it wanted to support.

He said that arrangement had been concluded with IBEDC to connect the hospital to the 33KVA transformer within the next few weeks.



Tomi Coker

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"Health workers throughout the country are risking their lives to serve those in need of medical services, and they, and their patients, must never be targeted," Mr Habicht said.

Customers stranded as Russian hackers take over Bet9ja website

Popular sports betting website, Bet9ja, has been hacked, shutting out users and leaving customers apprehensive about their investments.

Many customers complained of their inability to access their accounts on the gaming website.

The company in a statement acknowledged the challenge while allaying customers' fears and assuring the safety of their funds.

"Just like so many market-leading global organizations, Bet9ja recently became a victim of a sophisticated criminal cyber-attack, which is restricting your access to our platform," the company said in the statement.

"We take this matter extremely seriously. Our priority is protecting our customers and you have



Kunle Soname

our assurances that your accounts and all your funds are safe."

Chairman of KC Gaming Networks Limited, owners of

Bet9ja, Kunle Soname, confirmed to Peoples Gazette that the company's website was under a cyber-attack by a Russian hacking group.

Mr Soname confirmed that the hackers have demanded a staggering amount of money to be paid in bitcoin as ransom. The betting supremo, however, assured that the website would be back online on Friday, March 8.

He also debunked claims that the company absconded to avoid paying large winnings to customers who won recently, stating that all winnings will be paid once services are fully restored.

KC Gaming Networks Limited has escalated the ongoing cyber-attack on the Bet9ja website to all the relevant federal authorities.

Musk proposes Twitter Blue subscription shake-up days after disclosing 9.2% stake

Elon Musk, Twitter Inc's (TWTR.N) biggest shareholder, has suggested a raft of changes to the social media giant's Twitter Blue premium subscription service, including slashing its price, banning

advertising and giving an option to pay in the cryptocurrency dogecoin.

Musk, who disclosed a 9.2% stake in Twitter just days ago, was offered a seat on its board of directors, a move which made some Twitter employees panic over the future of its ability to moderate content.

Twitter Blue, launched in June 2021, is Twitter's first subscription service and offers "exclusive access to premium features" on a monthly subscription basis, Twitter says. It is available in the United States,

Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

In a Twitter post, the head of electric vehicle maker Tesla Inc (TSLA.O) suggested that users who sign up for Twitter Blue should pay significantly less than the current \$2.99 a month, and should get an authentication checkmark as well as an option to pay in local currency.

"Price should probably be ~\$2/month, but paid 12 months up front & account doesn't get checkmark for 60 days (watch for credit card chargebacks) & suspended with no refund if used for scam/spam," Musk said in a tweet.

"And no ads," Musk suggested. "The power of corporations to dictate policy is greatly enhanced if Twitter depends on advertising money to survive."

Musk also proposed an option to pay with dogecoin and asked Twitter users for their views.

Twitter declined to comment on Musk's suggestions.

The company already lets people tip their favorite content creators using bitcoin. Twitter had said last year that it planned to support authentication for NFTs, or non-fungible tokens, which are digital

assets such as images or videos that exist on a blockchain.

Musk also started a poll on his Twitter account - which has more than 81 million followers - asking whether the firm's San Francisco headquarters should be converted to a homeless shelter as "no-one shows up (to work there)". The poll got more 300,000 votes in an hour, with 90% answering yes.



Elon Musk

Ukraine conflict hurts Russian science, as West pulls funding

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

Dozens of international scientists have arrived each year since 2000 at Russia's remote Northeast Science Station on the Kolyma River in Siberia to study climate change in the Arctic environment.

Not this year, though.

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Germany's Max Planck Institute for Biogeochemistry froze the funding used to pay personnel at the research station and to maintain instruments that measure how quickly climate change is thawing Arctic permafrost and how much methane - a potent planet-warming gas - is being released.

The funding freeze will probably lead to an interruption of the continuous measurements at the station dating back to 2013, compromising scientists' understanding of the warming trend, said Peter Hergersberg, a spokesperson for the Max Planck Society, which is funded by the German state.

"(Russian) colleagues at the Northeast Science Station try to keep the station running," Hergersberg said. He declined to say how much funding was withheld.

Reuters spoke with more than two dozen scientists about the impact of the Ukraine conflict on Russian science. Many expressed concern about its future after tens of millions of dollars in Western funding for

Russian science has been suspended in the wake of European sanctions on Moscow.

Hundreds of partnerships between Russian and Western institutions have been paused if not canceled altogether, the scientists said, as the invasion has unraveled years spent building international cooperation following the Soviet Union's 1991 collapse.

Many communication channels are closed and research trips have been postponed indefinitely.

The projects affected by the suspension of Western assistance include the construction of high-tech research facilities in Russia, such as an ion collider and a neutron reactor for which Europe had pledged 25 million euros (\$27.4 million).

Such technology would unlock a generation of research that

could contribute to everything from fundamental physics to the development of new materials, fuels and pharmaceuticals, scientists said.

Another 15 million-euro (\$16.7 million) contribution toward designing low-carbon materials and battery technologies needed in the energy transition to combat climate change has also been frozen, after the

European Union halted all cooperation with Russian entities last month.

"Emotionally, I can understand this suspension," said Dmitry Shchepashchenko, a Russian environmental scientist who studies global forest cover and has been affiliated with the International Institute

for Applied Systems Analysis in Austria since 2007.

But for science overall, he said: "This is a lose-lose solution. Global issues like climate change and biodiversity ... can hardly be solved without Russian territory [and] the expertise of Russian scientists."

FROZEN FINANCES

When the Soviet Union broke apart, Russian spending on science plummeted, and thousands of scientists moved abroad or abandoned their fields altogether.

"We felt as scientists that our work was not appreciated," said permafrost scientist Vladimir Romanovksy, who moved his work to Fairbanks, Alaska, in the 1990s. "There was practically no funding, especially for field work."

Russian funding has since improved, but remains far below that of the West. In 2019, Russia spent 1% of its GDP on research and development - or about \$39 billion, adjusted for currency and price variation -

according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Most of that money has been spent in physical science fields, such as space technology and nuclear energy.

By comparison, Germany, Japan and the United States each spend around 3% of their respective GDPs. For the United States, that amounted to \$612 billion in 2019.

Russian science got a boost, though, from partnerships on projects with scientists abroad. Russia and the United States, for example, led the international consortium that launched the



Dmitry Shchepashchenko

International Space Station in 1998.

The head of Russia's space agency, Roscosmos, said this month it would suspend its participation in the space station until sanctions tied to the Ukraine invasion are lifted.

Russian scientists also helped build the Large Hadron Collider, the world's most powerful particle accelerator, at the European Organization for Nuclear Research in Switzerland, known as CERN. In 2012, the collider made the breakthrough discovery of the elusive Higgs boson, which until then had only been theorized.

Scientific camaraderie with Europe continued uninterrupted after Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine in 2014. But CERN's governing council announced last month it was suspending any new collaboration with Russia.

Germany alone has given some 110 million euros (\$122 million) toward more than 300 German-Russian projects over the last three years. A further 12.6 million euros (\$14 million) in EU funding was awarded to

Russian organisations for another 18 projects focusing on everything from Arctic climate monitoring to infectious animal diseases.

Chemist Pavel Troshin recently won Russian state funding for his part in a Russian-German effort to develop next-generation solar cells to power communication satellites. But, with the German side now suspended, the project is up in the air.

Joint projects "are supposed to be done for the benefit of all the world, and cutting out Russian scientists ... is really counter-productive," said Troshin, who works at Russia's Institute for Problems of Chemical Physics.

"I would never expect something like this. It's shocking to me. I'm upset very much."

ARCTIC BLACKOUT

Among the more urgent research efforts on hold are projects to study climate change in the Russian Arctic.

"Two-thirds of the permafrost region is in Russia, so data from there is critical," said Northern Arizona University ecologist Ted Schuur of the Permafrost Carbon Network.

"If you cut off your view of changing permafrost in Russia, you're really cutting off our understanding of global changes to permafrost."

That's alarming for scientists as global warming thaws the long-frozen ground that holds an estimated 1.5 trillion metric tons of organic carbon - twice the amount already in the atmosphere today.

As permafrost thaws, organic material locked within the ice decays and releases more planet-warming gases like methane and carbon dioxide.

Scientists fear that such emissions could cause climate change to spiral out of control.

Scientists can use satellites to monitor landscape changes due to thaw, but can't pick up what's happening below ground, which requires on-site research, Schuur said.

Russian scientists have collected and shared permafrost field data for years, but Western researchers aren't sure if those communication channels will remain open. Those datasets were also patchy, due to limited funding to cover the vast region.

Arctic ecologist Sue Natali, at U.S. Woodwell Climate Research Center, said her project's plans for boosting Russian monitoring capability is on hold.

"Instrumentation that was supposed to go out this year has been halted," she said, as her colleagues' travel plans have been canceled.

The U.S. government has issued no clear directive on interacting with Russian institutions, contrary to the European stance.

WhatsApp warns users could be banned for breaking these five rules

While things like scamming are an obvious way to get yourself thrown off the platform, there are some rules you may not realise you're breaking.

Here are five that could land you in hot water.

Being reported too much No one likes a nuisance, especially on WhatsApp.

Did you know that if too many people report you, it could lead moderators to remove you completely.

One way you can become a bit of a pain and tempt others

to report you is over using the broadcast feature.

Contacting people you don't know is another way you can get yourself blocked.

So it's best to be respectful of others and don't bombard them, because it'll attract attention.

Impersonating someone No, you're not allowed to impersonate someone - even if you're trying to find out the truth about an unfaithful ex.

If you're caught creating a fake account using someone else's photos, you will get your

number blocked.

Third party apps WhatsApp only wants you to use the official app.

If you're using a third party rip off, like WhatsApp Plus or GBWhatsApp, your account risks being banned.

Automated or bulk messages Automated and bulk messages are usually a bit of a red flag suggesting

someone is trying to scam.

So even if you're doing this innocently, it's probably best not to.

That's because WhatsApp uses AI tech as well as reports from other users to detect and ban accounts sending unwanted automatic messages.

Not using WhatsApp enough Though not strictly a ban, your WhatsApp account may be disabled or

deleted if you're not using it.

The official rules simply say: "We may also disable or delete your account if it does not become active after account registration or if it remains inactive for an extended period of time."



FCMB Group's revenue hits N212b as profit rises to N22.7b

First City Monument Bank (FCMB) Plc has announced its financial year ended December 31, 2021 disclosing that it sustained impressive performance across several key areas despite the country's challenging business environment.

As a result, it declared a higher dividend of 20 Kobo per share to shareholders compared to 15 Kobo per share in the previous year.

The result across market fundamentals showed increase in gross revenue to N212 billion, representing a 12 per cent growth compared to N198.4 billion in 2020. Also, profit before tax (PBT) rose to N22.7 billion from N21.9 billion in 2020, while profit after tax (PAT) also rose by seven per cent to N20.9 billion.

The financial results also showed enhanced customers confidence in FCMB, as deposit increased by 24 per cent to N1.6 trillion from N1.3 trillion in the previous year.

Loans and advances grew by 29 per cent to N1.1 trillion at the end of December 2021.

FCMB Group's Assets Under Management (AUM) also sustained its growth by rising to N525.8 billion in 2021, up by six per cent from N495.2 billion in 2020.

Net interest income grew marginally by 0.2 per cent year-on-year from N495.2 billion in 2020, due to an increase in electronic fee and commission from digital channels.

Trading income also surged by 32 per cent year-on-year resulting from higher increase of fixed income trade instruments.

While capital adequacy ratio remained stable at 16.2 per cent for the retail and commercial banking subsidiary of the group, FCMB also accrued additional 2.1 million customers in 2021 thereby increasing its total customers to 9.4 million from 8.3 million it recorded in 2020.

AfDB appoints Karen Rot-Mustermann as Evaluator-General

The Africa Development Bank (AfDB) has appointed Mrs. Karen Rot-Mustermann, as its Evaluator-General with effect from April 16, 2022.

Rot-Munstermann, a Dutch, is currently the Acting Evaluator-General and Division Manager, Knowledge Management Outreach and Capacity Development at the Independent Development Evaluation Department (BDEV).

Before joining the bank in 2009, she was a Senior Policy Advisor at the Dutch Ministry of Finance (Treasury Foreign Financial Relations Department).

As a Desk Officer for the African Development Bank, she contributed to various initiatives that led to a 13 per cent increase in the Dutch shareholding in the bank in 2005, as well as 54 per cent increase in the Dutch contribution to the replenishment of the African Development Funds.

At the ministry of finance, she worked on a wide range of issues, she worked on a wide range of issues, including international development, multilateral development bank governance and financing debt and debt

sustainability and contributed to the definition and presentation of Dutch government policy in those areas.

Rot-Munstermann joined the bank in February 2009 in the Resource Mobilisation Department, which is responsible for the three-yearly redeployments at the African Fund (ADF) and allocation of ADF resources to African countries in June 2014, she was appointed as division manager of the knowledge management, outreach and capacity development division where she established a new identity for the independent evaluation function, which changed its name from Operations Evaluation Department to Independent Development Evaluation.

She then served as Acting Evaluation General from September 2018 to August 2019 and from November 2020 to date.

As Acting Evaluator-General, she has presented over 35 evaluations to the bank's board, including the very complex and time sensitive evaluation of the implementation of the bank's development business and business delivery model, among other interventions.

How Nigeria is winning war against piracy, by EU

• NIMASA restates commitment to sustainability • Japan, Korea lift Deep Blue Project

By **EDU ABADE**, Business Editor

European Union (EU) has commended the Federal Government for providing leadership in the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) in the war against crime and criminality in the maritime sector, which has yielded desired results.

Senior EU Coordinator for the Gulf of Guinea, Ambassador Nicolas Martinez, made the commendation at the end of a working visit to the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) by the EU delegation, which inspected assets under the Integrated National Security and Waterways Protection Infrastructure (INSWPI), otherwise known as the Deep Blue Project.

Martinez noted that the EU remained a committed partner to the Gulf of Guinea region and would continue to provide extensive and targeted assistance to strengthen the critical features of the Yaoundé security architecture, while cementing the long-standing relationship between member states of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) like Nigeria and the EU.

"We support Nigeria's leadership in the regional quest to end piracy and other maritime crimes. You



Bashir Jamoh

can count on the EU, as we are fully supportive of the Yaounde Infrastructure. We urge Nigeria to share experience with other countries within the region. It is obvious from the results so far that Nigeria, is winning the war against piracy by providing leadership for other countries," he said.

Speaking, Director General of NIMASA, Dr. Bashir Jamoh, noted that the recent removal of Nigeria from the piracy list by the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) was as a result of collective efforts of various stakeholders within and outside the country.

"It is not yet time to celebrate. Now the focus

for us at NIMASA is sustainability. The improved intelligence gathering and sharing among all stakeholders played a major role in the results we are witnessing now.

"Our Deep Blue Project, the SPOMO Act enacted by the National Assembly, the Convictions of criminals under the SPOMO Act, the commitment of the Nigerian Navy and other military arms of the Nigerian Armed Forces, as well as support from the international community, all led to the reduction of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea," he said.

Speaking further, Jamoh said NIMASA was already looking ahead in its quest

to attain sustainability and that the agency was working on an International Maritime Sustainability Conference, which will be hosted in Abuja later in the year, adding that a comprehensive National Maritime Policy for Nigeria was in the pipeline.

Commenting on the Deep Blue Project, Jamoh disclosed that the Japanese Government pledged \$2.4 million to support the Deep Blue Project just as the Korean Government has donated a warship to NIMASA to add to the fleet of the Deep Blue Project.

The delegation, comprising Martinez and members of selected EU member states, in the company of the NIMASA DG and senior management staff of the agency, conducted an inspection tour of Deep Blue Project assets at the Nigerian Navy Diving School. They also witnessed an organised drill by the Nigerian Navy in which it showcased some of the assets in action.

The Deep Blue Project, otherwise known as the Integrated National Security and Waterways Protection Infrastructure, was initiated by the Federal Ministry of Transportation and Ministry of Defence, while being implemented by NIMASA, with the core mandate of securing Nigerian waters up to the Gulf of Guinea.

CBN, AFC, NSIA, others sign infraCorp term sheet with independent asset managers

Stories By **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Africa Finance Corporation (AFC), Nigerian Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA), Debt Management Office (DMO) and other organisations have signed InfraCorp term sheet with Independent Asset Managers.

Speaking at the event, CBN Governor, Godwin Emefiele said the initiative is the brainchild of President Muhammadu Buhari.

His words: "A few months after the administration was returned in 2019, after the signing of the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), Buhari challenged to the banking and finance sector to help in providing infrastructure for the country.

"The President challenged the private sector to partner with him in his infrastructure transformation agenda to deliver the foundation of national

assets for sustainable economic growth, but the directive was delayed due the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

Emefiele said the government alone could not provide all the infrastructure needs in Nigeria, adding that the private sector collaboration was the way out of the country's infrastructure challenges.

"This type of collaboration I believe is a practical template to solve many of the country's complex socio-economic problems that our nation is facing. From public health, climate change and energy transition to infrastructure and others, the public sector alone cannot resolve the issues.

"The private sector incentivised can develop the critical resources and capacity to deliver infrastructure goals successfully," he added.

He disclosed that CBN, AFC and the NSIA had worked with KPMG and others to deliver InfraCorp as a catalyst to deliver infrastructure, stressing

that InfraCorp's goal was to shape projects for the private sector and that for projects initiated by the private sector, InfraCorp would help to shape government policy to support and sustain private sector investments.

The CBN governor said: "Today marks a major milestone as InfraCorp and the Infrastructure Asset Managers: AAA Consortium Chapel Hill

Denham, Africa Infrastructure Investment Managers in Nigeria and Sanlam Infracorp have concluded initial discussions on how they will operate together to deliver infrastructure in Nigeria."

He stressed that for Nigerian companies to focus successfully on their competencies, they needed to be assured of the infrastructure that they will rely upon.



Godwin Emefiele

Manufacturer flays FG over constant collapse of national grid

By JOHNMARK UKOKO

Managing Director of Liberty Industries Limited, Abuh Kamal, has berated the Federal Government for its failure to fix the challenge of the national grid, lamenting that it is one major reason the country's manufacturing sector and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are not doing well.

Kamal, who spoke with The Trumpet in a telephone interview at the weekend, said the constant collapse of the national grid has become a national embar-

rassment.

Reacting to the national grid that collapsed over the weekend, he said erratic power supply is the major reason local MSMEs were finding it difficult to grow, adding that erratic power supply and high cost of diesel had forced several MSMEs and firms to shut down.

"When I heard that the country's national grid collapsed again on Friday, I marveled. I kept asking what is happening? In the last two months or so, the Minister of Power told Nigerians that the national grid collapsed

for four times.

"I don't know how that can happen, despite the billions of dollars the government has pumped into the power sector in the past 23 years. I am just confused," he said.

He added that the cost diesel that the local MSMEs and businesses in Nigeria rely heavily on had increased beyond the reach of most MSMEs operators.

Kamal added that he usually run his factory with the diesel when it was sold for between N190 and N230 per litre, but due to the Russia and Ukraine war, the price of diesel has

soared to between N700 and N800 a litre, which has impacted negatively on his firms.

"In the past, the public power was supply for between 10 to 18 hours in the area my factory is located," he said, adding that whenever there is power outage, he uses his generating set to power the factory.

Liberty Industries that produce PVC, plastic Chairs, household plastic products and related items postulated that the current year has been very challenging for the local MSMEs firms.

"This year 2022 has been very challenging for the business sector. Most of my colleagues have either shut down their plants or have been operating skeletal services.

The constant collapse of the national grid has impacted negatively on public power supply," he added.

He appealed to the Federal Government to tackle the issues that have led to the constant break down of national grid, adding that erratic power supply and high cost diesel have almost crashed MSMEs in the country.

Apapa Customs presents Q1 scorecard, generates N265b

Apapa Area 1 Command of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), at the weekend, presented its first quarter (Q1) report of its activities, saying that it generated N264.5 billion between January and March this year.

The Area Controller, Controller Yusuf Malanta Ibrahim, who spoke at a media briefing in Apapa, said the N264.5 billion revenue showed an increase of N104 billion as against N159 billion collected within the corresponding period of last year, representing a 65.7 per cent increase.

He stated that the feat was made possible by the creativity of the officers, who leveraged information technology (IT) with corporation from other stakeholders.

The Command also witnessed an increase in its anti-smuggling operations, with 46 seizures of various items with a Duty Paid Value (DPV) of N1.142 billion as against 28 seizures made in corresponding months of 2021.

Ibrahim further revealed that unregistered drugs such as Tramadol, Codine syrup, unprocessed wood, used clothes, foot wears, foreign parboiled rice and sundry items under the prohibition list in clear contravention of sections 46 and 47 of Customs and Excise Management Act (CEMA) CAP C45 LFN 2004.

The Command restated its readiness to continue its drive towards trade facilitation but warned that it will not relent on clamping down on those whose businesses thrive on contravention known trade laws.

The Controller further explained that the Command did not also relent in the area of encouraging diversification of the Nigerian economy through non-oil export, saying various items, such as agricultural produce, mineral resources, steel and others were exported through the port.

Statistics, however, revealed that goods worth N34.072 billion with free on Board (FOB) value of \$88 million were exported, which showed an improvement compared to the N30.2 billion, which is equivalent to FOB value of \$82.1 million between January and March 2021.

He also pointed out that in spite of revenue collection and trade facilitation, the Command will not relent in fighting those bent on circumventing laws to defraud the Federal Government of revenue.

African airlines' capacity increased by 34.7% in February, says IATA

By ADAKU WALTER

International Air Transport Association (IATA) has disclosed that air travel in Nigeria and other African countries recorded significant growth in February 2022, despite the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

IATA, which represents over 230 international and global airlines based in Geneva, revealed this in a report titled: Passenger Recovery Accelerates In February, stating that African airlines' capacity rose by 34.7 per cent, while load factor climbed 12.9 percentage points to 63.0 per cent.

It added that air travel posted a strong rebound in February 2022 when compared with January 2022, as Omicron-related impacts moderated outside Asia, noting that the Russia and Ukraine war, which began on February 24, did not have a major impact

on traffic levels.

The report said total traffic in February 2022 rose by 115.9 per cent compared with the same month last year; adding that domestic traffic also rose by 60.7 per cent compared to a year ago and building on a 42.6 per cent increase in January 2022 compared to January last year.

It further explained that African airlines recorded a 69.5 per cent rise in February revenue passenger kilometres (RPKs) versus a year ago, representing a huge improvement compared to the 20.5 per cent year-over-year increase recorded in January 2022 and when compared to the same month in 2021.

But globally, RPKs rose by 256.8 per cent as against February 2021, it added, noting that all regions improved in their performance compared when to the previous month.

Director-General of

IATA, Willie Walsh, attributed the recovery in air travel to the lifting of restrictions by governments.

He said countries that persisted in their efforts to impose lock downs due to the COVID-19 pandemic, rather than manage it, risked missing out on the economic benefits that restoration of international connectivity would bring.

"As the long-awaited recovery in air travel accelerates, it is important that our infrastructure providers get prepared for a huge increase in passenger numbers in the coming months. We are already seeing reports of unacceptably long lines at some airports owing to the rising number of travelers.

"And that is even before the surge of the Easter holiday travel in most markets next week. The peak Northern summer travel season will also be



Willie Walsh

critical for jobs throughout the travel and tourism value chain.

"Now is the time to prepare. Governments can help by ensuring that

border positions are adequately manned and that background security checks for new staff members are managed, as efficiently as possible," he stated.

Concerns mount as Customs slams 15% NAC levy on importation of vehicles

Barely one week after the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) reduced import duties on vehicles from 35 per cent to 20 per cent, it has slammed a fresh levy of 15 per cent National Automotive Council (NAC) on vehicles imported into the country.

The policy, which was effected on April 9, 2022, has, however, generated negative reactions from freight forwarders and importers, who have vowed not to pay the levy.

The freight forwarders described the NAC levy as an attempt to arm twist importers for customs to meet its yearly revenue target of N3 trillion for 2022.

According to them, the implication of the new imposition is that Nigerians

would have to pay more for vehicles, as clearing costs would have to be increased at the nation's ports.

Meanwhile, The Trumpet learnt that the NAC levy was supposed to be collected on new vehicle imports at 35 per cent to encourage local vehicle manufacturers and industries in the country.

The policy was later reviewed by Comptroller General of the Nigeria Customs Service, Col. Haameed Ali (rtd) last year. The vehicles affected are HS Code 87032120, 87032220, 87032400 for Diesel and Gasoline/Fuel Vehicles.

However, the Association of Nigerian Licensed Customs Agents (ANLCA) has urged its members not to pay the NAC 15 per cent levy, just as its National Vice President,

Dr. Kayode Farinto, at the weekend, urged members to jettison the policy, which he described a 'oppressive.'

"The National Automotive Council levy was imposed by virtue of the National Automotive Design and Development Council Act 6 of 2014", which was enacted to encourage locally manufactured vehicles to encourage Nigerians to buy vehicles assembled in the country and to protect locally made ones.

"Section 10 of the Act states: 'The Council shall establish a fund, which shall consist of two per cent Cost, Insurance and Freight (CIF), value of all imported automotive Fully Built Units (FBU) and automotive components, Spares and Semi-Knocked Down (SKD) units.

"This simply applied to those importing new vehicles and new spare parts. Professional colleagues, please do not pay any NAC levy on imported used vehicles, as there is no law that compels you to do so.

"Let us collectively resist this, should you see any NAC levy whenever you want to make your declaration, do not asses the declaration. It is another attempt to swindle Nigerians and force them to pay by some fifth columnists. Please Resist from Monday," he said.

Also reacting to the development, Secretary of the Tin Can chapter of ANLCA, Michael Ovien, said with the earlier reduction of duty from 35 per cent to 20 per cent last week, the Customs was implementing the newly

approved Common External Tariff (CET) on Vehicle 8703 that was generally agreed by ECOWAS, Customs and Licenced Agents in 2021 at a meeting on General Agreement on Trade and Tariff (GATT).

He said the changes were meant to be interjected into the Extant Law of CET from January 1, 2022, which took effect in Nigeria from April 1, 2022.

"But the NCS did not find this comfortable, because its management thought this would reduce the target imposed on the organisation by the Federal Government to collect a total revenue of N3 trillion that was shared to all Customs Commands under the supervision of the Customs Headquarters," he stated.



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- 3Bedroom Penthouse + BQ
- 2Bedroom Penthouse
- 4Bedroom Maisonette +BQ
- 3Bedroom Maisonette
- 2Bedroom Maisonette
- 1Bedroom Maisonette
- 1Bedroom Studio Apartment

- 4Bedroom fully Detached Duplex
- 4Bedroom Penthouse + BQ
- 4Bedroom Terrace + BQ
- 3Bedroom Penthouse
- 3Bedroom Terrace
- 3Bedroom Apartment
- 2Bedroom Penthouse
- 2Bedroom Terrace
- 2Bedroom Apartment
- 1Bedroom Maisonette

- 4Bedroom Penthouse + BQ
- 4Bedroom Terrace + BQ
- 3Bedroom Penthouse
- 3Bedroom Terrace
- 3Bedroom Apartment
- 2Bedroom Penthouse
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Super Falcons get boost for Canada rematch

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

Ahead of the rematch with the Canadian senior female team, the Super Falcons, after their 2-0 defeat in the first leg tie last Friday, are prepared to lead a resurgence against the North Americans with the arrival of Francisca Ordega on Sunday.

The African champions, as a plan by the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) to get them prepared for the Women's Africa Cup of Nations finals taking place in Morocco from July 2nd - 23rd, sought to play two games with the Olympic champions in Victoria City.

In the first leg clash of the two-legged cracker, despite holding the world's sixth-ranked female national team to a goalless first half, conceded two goals due to a series of injuries that made the likes of goalkeeper Chiamaka Nnadozie, defender and skipper Onome Ebi and forward Uchenna Kanu stretched off occasionally.

However, with the return of the players who did not have much time to blend in their pattern of play from injury and the arrival of the forceful forward Ordega to the squad, the reinvigorated Super Falcons have been handed a boost to take the Canadian team to the cleaners.



According to the NFF, Coach Randy Waldrum prosecuted that game with only 14 outfield players, most of whom arrived on the eve of the match due to late issuance of visas from their respective bases. Monday's encounter will take place at the Starlight Stadium, and will commence at 7.30pm Canada time (3.30am Tuesday in Nigeria).

Man U losing to Everton is degrading, says De Gea

Manchester United goalkeeper David De Gea has said the club's loss to Everton in the Premier League match on Saturday was a disgrace.

United, courtesy of Anthony Gordon's first-half goal, were defeated 1-0 by the relegation-threatened side at Goodison Park.

Frustrated by the outcome of the match, De Gea said that Manchester United do not create chances upfront to score goals.

However, De Gea decried the inability of the club to qualify for the Champions League spot noting that the loss to Everton has made it an uphill task.

In a chat with BT Sport, he said, "It's a disgrace from us, to be honest, we should win that game."

"We don't create, that's the problem. We don't even create proper chances to score. I don't know what to say, to be honest."

"We're not good enough, that's for sure. It's going to be very difficult now to be in the top four," he added.

Everton, with the win over Manchester United on Saturday, has gained a glimpse of hope after enduring a disappointing defeat on Wednesday against Burnley to continue its fight for survival in the Premier League.

Furthermore, De Gea outrightly stated that there was no reason whatsoever United should have lost the game against a side that is struggling and nervous.

He continued: "We knew before they were struggling, but how difficult it is to play here even when they are not in a good mood, but they play with more desire."

"They played on Wednesday, they were tired, they were a bit nervous, you could feel it, and even with that, we lost the game."

"Of course, it's not the perfect atmosphere. But you could see they were tired, they were nervous, and come on, they keep going and keep fighting to win. They had more desire than us. That is not acceptable, and it's very sad to lose today," he added.



Nigerian Lukas Nmecha leads Wolfsburg's 4-0 rout of Arminia



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

Lukas Nmecha was in the spotlight on Saturday

as VFL Wolfsburg thrashed Arminia 4-0 in the Bundesliga clash on matchday 29. The German

international with Nigeria roots opened the scoring in 11 minutes and completed his brace in the 38th minute to pave way for M. Arnold and M Kruse to wrap up the demolition of Arminia in the 48th and 53rd minutes respectively.

Nmecha first joined the German club on a season-long loan from Manchester City and later signed a permanent deal on July 16, 2021.

Having lost to Augsburg in the last Bundesliga game, a close rival on the league table,

Nmecha led a resurgence against Arminia to leapfrog Augsburg which lost 1-0 to Bayern Munchen.

The promising versatile centre-forward, who can also play from the right and left-wing positions, has made 20 Bundesliga appearances with 8 goals added to his name this season.

However, despite the player having been capped for Germany U19s, he is still eligible to play for the Nigeria senior men's football team, the Super Eagles.

Lack of time resulted in Eagles' W/Cup failure, says Eguavoen

Former Super Eagles Head Coach Augustine Eguavoen has attributed the failure of the team to qualify for the Qatar 2022 World Cup to insufficient time for preparation.

Eguavoen noted that due to the constraint in time, he was unable to blend the players ahead of the game by infusing his DNA into them.

The coach who is still the Technical Director of Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) stated this at the event where the 1994 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) winning Super Eagles' squad were presented with Certificates of Occupancy to their honorary houses.

Furthermore, the football manager advised the NFF to appoint a new Super Eagle head coach/technical adviser on a long-term basis as that will help guarantee the success of the Nigerian senior men's football team.

In a statement to the media and retrieved by The Trumpet, the 56 years old apologised to Nigeria for failing to secure

the qualifying ticket to Qatar where nations' football cultures are displayed on the international stage.

The former Super Eagles' right-back defender opined that the prospective manager of the national football team will have to stick with 90% of the Super Eagles' squad because of the difficulty involved in rebuilding a team from scratch.

He said: "I will just say anybody coming in should be given a long-term contract, just like a long-time project."

"You can't just raise a new team. It's always going to be difficult. Any coach that is coming in now will still work with 90 percent of these players we have now."

"First of all, I will like to apologise for our inability to qualify for the World Cup. It's very painful that we didn't qualify and I know how much we love football in this country."

"But we didn't lose the game. We only lost the ticket, and the fact that it's a World



Cup ticket makes it more painful.

"I think we didn't have enough time. If we had enough time to bring in new players, and see them in friendly games, and the coach can establish his DNA, I think it would have been better. But we need to move on," he added.

The NFF is presently shopping for a replacement for Augustine Eguavoen with much ado being given to a foreign coach. As earlier reported, the Minister of Youths and Sports Development, Mr. Sunday Dare is tilted towards the option of hiring a local coach.

Results

Man City 2: Liverpool 2

Leicester 2: Crystal Palace 1

Elche 1: Real Sociedad 2

NOC to hold seminar for women in sports

By **ADAKU WALTER**

A two-day seminar for Women in Sports holds April 12-13, 2022 in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja.

The Women Commission is organizing it under the auspices of the Olympic Solidarity and Nigeria Olympic Committee (NOC).

The seminar is in two phases and designed to enhance the productivity of women in the administration and management of sports. The aim is to foster collaborations in communication and interpersonal relationships with mentors and sponsors while paving way for continued growth and success.

A statement by the Public Relations Officer, NOC, Phemmy Adetula, said the theme of the seminar is, "Effective Career Enhancement for Today's Women in Sports" with the objective of understanding and exploring more deeply the current professional and career challenges and discovering new effective solutions to the most pressing issues.

Engr Habu Ahmed Gumel,

President NOC, says the seminar is solely for women at management and administrative levels that are aspiring to grow in their career as sports managers and administrators.

"It is a seminar for women at a high level of their career aspiring for the leadership cadre into Executive Board of International Federations, National Federations etc. It is in line with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) clamour for more women's participation in sports politics. So, I implore our women to come out in large number and participate in the workshop. I will be there personally to declare the seminar open", Gumel concluded.

The course directors are; Professor Florence Adeyanju, from the Department of Health Education and Human Kinetics, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaira who is also President, National Association of Women in Sports and Dr. (Mrs) Toyin Aluko. Invited speakers are Hon Agboola Dabiri of Revenue Generation & PPP, Federal Capital Territory Administration, Abuja and Chief Abiodun Odusanwo, President, Institute for Tourism Professionals of Nigeria

'The greatest discovery of all time is that a person can change his future by merely changing his attitude'

— Oprah Winfrey.

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Minister of State Petroleum Resources Chief Timipre Sylva (left) during a condolence visit to former president, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, in Abuja.

Russia invasion of Ukraine: Why war will be decided in Donbas region

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH**

The Donbas region borders Russia in the east of Ukraine, and has been an important coal mining area since the late 19th century.

The region is important to Russia's current vision for Ukraine, as it contains areas controlled by Russian-backed separatist groups, including the Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic, officially recognised by Putin ahead of his invasion.

Because of its proximity to Russia, Donbas is perhaps the area of Ukraine in which pro-Russian or anti-Ukrainian sentiment is strongest.

Pro-Russian and anti-government chaos first took hold of the region in 2014, following the Revolution of Dignity, which eventually

led to the annexation of Crimea by Russia.

The self-proclaimed republics held referendums on the status of Donetsk and Luhansk in May 2014, the referendums were viewed as illegal by Ukraine and undemocratic by the international community.

The referendums also showed that a large percentage of the population were in favour of independence from Ukraine.

Before Russia's full-scale invasion, Donbas was split between Ukrainian-held territory, constituting about two-thirds of the region, and Russian-held territory, constituting about one-third.

A month into the invasion, Russia declared its main goal was the "liberation of Donbas" referring to Ukraine's eastern regions of Luhansk and Donetsk.

Upon launching his invasion, Putin said it was

partly intended to "protect" the people of the Donbas from the "abuse" and "genocide" of the Ukrainian government, though there is no evidence to support these claims.

Russian President Vladimir Putin officially recognized the independence of the regions of Donetsk and Luhansk, known together as the Donbas, in eastern Ukraine. Putin signed documents purportedly declaring the regions were no longer part of Ukraine after Russian-speaking separatist leaders of the regions had appealed for the declaration.

More than a third of this area was already seized by Russian-backed separatists in a war that began in 2014, now Russia wants to conquer all of it.

Russians made up the majority of the industrial workforce and the

population of cities while Ukrainians dominated rural areas.

For almost eight years the breakaway enclaves have been the site of a low-intensity war between Russian-backed separatists and Ukrainian forces which has left more than 14,000 people dead.

Other cities located within the Donbas region include Mariupol, Luhansk, Makiivka, Horlivka, Kramatorsk, Sloviansk, Alchevsk, Sievierodonetsk, and Lysychansk.

The city of Kramatorsk is the interim administrative centre of the Donetsk Oblast, whereas the interim centre of Luhansk Oblast is Sievierodonetsk.

The Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) and the Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) have not been recognized by any nation until Russia did so. It has

been giving them financial and military support since their formation, and has granted Russian passports to hundreds of thousands of people there.

Kremlin spokesman, Dmitry Peskov said Moscow was demanding that Ukraine cease military action, change its constitution to preserve neutrality, acknowledge Crimea as Russian territory, and recognise the separatist republics of Donetsk and Lugansk as independent states.

He said all the demands have been formulated and handed over during the first two rounds of talks between Russian and Ukrainian delegations.

Moscow had been forced into taking decisive actions to force the demilitarisation of Ukraine, he said, rather than just recognising the independence of the breakaway regions.