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N250 **Weekend**

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Buhari's 'indifference' unsettles APC, others, as permutations favour VP, Amaechi, Tinubu

By **EDWARD ADAMIDENYO** (Deputy Editor) and **TUNDE JOSHUA** (Politics Editor)

With the visit of the governor of Ekiti State, Dr. Kayode Fayemi, on Thursday to President Muhammadu Buhari to inform him of his intention to contest the presidential ticket of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), the race is gathering momentum.

Before Fayemi, Vice President Yemi Osinbajo, Transport minister, Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi; former Imo State governor, Owelle Rochas Okorocha and Kogi helmsman Yahaya Bello had publicly declared their bids. The ambitions of Ebonyi State Governor Dave Umahi, Senate Whip Orji Uzor Kalu and former Lagos State helmsman Bola Ahmed Tinubu, though mentioned, are yet to be formally declared.

Amid permutations favourable to the three major contenders, name dropping by people close to the aspirants indicating the purported closeness of their principals to the Presidency is rife. But the Presidency has remained silent since the body language of President Buhari does not portend his preference for anyone.

And although Buhari may not have given his blessings to any of the aspirants, feelers from the grapevine say that power brokers within the Aso Rock Villa have preferences among the contenders.

Many political observers and policy makers are not comfortable with the lack of clarity on where the interest of the President is tilting among the aspirants, especially those regarded as the major ones.

This has created room for speculations as to who is the anointed candidate whom Buhari wants to hand over the APC administration to in 2023.

A major factor that serves as a pointer to Buhari's interest is the power play within the Aso Rock Villa, otherwise known as 'The Cabal.'

But the Attorney General of the Federation and Justice Minister, Abubakar Malami to many people is the de facto leader of the cabal. He took charge after the demise of the former Chief of Staff to Buhari, the late Malam Abba Kyari, and he has been the pipeline through which most actions of the government are being dished out.

While it may be difficult to pinpoint on whose side Malami is, it is obvious that he will not only support Buhari's

choice but work it out.

The National Chairman of the APC, Senator Abdullahi Adamu, is a close associate of Buhari and his emergence for the role has enlisted him into the cabal.

His emergence as Buhari's preferred candidate against all odds speaks volumes and his assigned mission in the party cannot be doubted.

As aforementioned, there are various permutations in favour of the three leading aspirants amid speculations that a dark horse might emerge owing to Buhari's alleged indifference.

Among those considered as influencers is the First Lady, Mrs Aishat Buhari, who was close to Yahaya Bello but now one of the major backers of Amaechi.

Although she is currently in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, sources said that her associates are already enlisted on the Amaechi-for-president project. Her influence might look insignificant to some people who see Buhari as unperturbed by such lobby from a wife.

Amaechi has been a close ally of Buhari and his financial contributions to the president's emergence in the 2014 APC primary, subsequent campaign as well as in 2019 cannot be over-emphasised or underestimated.

The former governor of Rivers is a key minister involved in driving the policies and programmes of the Buhari government, particularly the rail networks, many of which are in the north. These make him a trusted one.

His conferment a few months ago with a traditional title in Buhari's hometown, Daura is significant and seen by many as an indication that the cabal preference scale is tilting towards him.

He is also seen as an ideal one to fulfil three roles: a southern Christian to run with a northern Muslim, an Igbo presidency and compensation for the South South not completing the unwritten eight-year tenure under Jonathan unlike Obasanjo and Buhari. Amaechi is also seen as capable of handling the Niger Delta and Biafran unrests as well as garnering South South and South East votes.

Bureaucrats within the Presidency are not left out in the power play as most of them are rooting for Osinbajo to emerge as APC candidate.

Political Adviser to the President, Babafemi Ojudu, is believed to be the arrowhead of the Osinbajo-for-President project.

He came to the Presidency as one of Tinubu's political benefactors but he fell out with



Buhari

his former boss and openly profess that the Vice President is the best choice to succeed Buhari.

Permutations favouring Prof. Osinbajo include his academic qualifications (especially legal erudition), ability to garner South West as a Yoruba votes if he gets the APC ticket, a Christian to run with a northern Muslim for balance as well as his incumbency as the vice president which should ordinarily give him the right of first refusal to succeed Buhari.

Tinubu equally has some permutations in his favour. As the party's 'National Leader,' he is regarded as the APC's most powerful politician after Buhari.

However, certain erstwhile powerful forces in Aso Rock backing some of the aspirants may have lost out in the powerplay within Buhari's kitchen cabinet.

Kaduna Governor Nasir El-Rufai who until lately lost favour with the Villa over APC national leadership tussle and outcome of its convention was a force to reckon with. He is now a staunch projector of Tinubu within the kitchen cabinet. With his influence waning, it is doubtful if he can successfully pull through the Tinubu presidency project.

However, Tinubu also has other strengths such as his political structure in the high population Lagos State, in fact, the Southwest as a Yoruba as well in the core north as a Muslim.

But the Islamic card is seen as a double-edged sword for Tinubu if he does not play it well. There are strong speculations that he believes in a Muslim-Muslim ticket helmed by him winning the presidency as Yoruba Christians will vote for him due to ethnic solidarity. He is said to have in the past sought to run with Atiku and Buhari who are Muslims. He allegedly cited the victorious Abiola-Kingibe Muslim-Muslim ticket in the annulled

1993 elections and the Buhari-Idiagbon (Muslim-Muslim) regime that was welcomed by Nigerians after the coup that brought it to power.

However, critics of the Muslim-Muslim ticket say that the times have changed and that the ethno-religious fault lines have deepened since the voided 1993 elections. Some have also accused Tinubu of religious arrogance and insensitivity although his wife is a Christian.

But some pro-Tinubu people believe that they can clinch the presidency with Southwest and core Muslim North votes, arguing that South South, South East and Middle Belt/North Central ballots won't significantly affect his religious and Yoruba advantage.

Tinubu's age and health as well as the opposition of the umbrella Yoruba socio-cultural group Afenifere to his bid are also counted against him.

The presidential ambition of Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Governor Godwin Emefiele, though still in the realm of speculation, is difficult to just dismiss with his position in the financial system.

Another name in the APC race to succeed Buhari is Science and Technology Minister Ogbonnaya. He was a stalwart of Buhari's defunct CPC as its national chairman.

However, persons close to and who understand Buhari said the President's disposition might not be towards any of the names or aspirants being touted and bandied about.

One said: "All those jostling may end up as huge jokes as President Buhari that we know might spring surprises. He may not have his preference among any of these ones as he may prop up a dark horse."

"You should be guided by what happened with the choice of the APC national chairman. Look at how the President's men just raised Senator Abdullahi Adamu and the leading contenders were compelled to step down from

the race.

"So, you should not overrule any possibility. The game is not over until it is over."

"While the game to outsmart one another continues among the power blocs within the Presidency, it is hoped that an acceptable candidate will emerge as APC presidential standard-bearer."

Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) to run for the presidency in 2023. He is the eldest son of the late Chief Moshood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola, who is presumed to have won the annulled June 12, 1993 presidential election.

Abiola was formally accepted into the party on Thursday at its national secretariat in Abuja by Falalu Bello, its National Chairman.

Receiving him, Bello said: "I formally welcome you into our fold. Your antecedents speak volumes."

Earlier, Abiola said: "Today makes my formal inroad after 27 years, back into politics. I particularly picked to come back into politics through the PRP for some good reasons."

"I have gone back to the history of Nigeria to look at the party that truly represents Nigeria. I have gone back and I have found out that the oldest living party is the PRP; it still holds those ideals of what Nigeria and democratic practice should be like."

"The PRP is a party that was started by the people and truly for the people. It is a party that has shown first, as its priority, internal democracy."

"I have come back to PRP to show Nigerians that not too long ago, we did things in the right way and the new entities that have come together nowadays forget that there was a Nigeria that did things right."

"I am one that believes in an equal opportunity be it employment, be it business, equally in politics and I believe this party represents all of these."

"Everybody should have equal opportunity, irrespective of age, religion and ethnicity and that is represented here."

Expressing concern over the low participation of youths in politics, he said: "We have a youth population that has been caught out of the system, the political process."

"The first thing I want to do is to disrupt the political process, to disabuse the minds of the youth about godfatherism."

"The way to do this is to give the true owners of Nigeria, that is, the 18 to 36 years age group that makes up over 75 per cent of the population, an opportunity for their voices to be heard and their numbers to

count."

He said PRP is the only party that could give youths such an opportunity to make their numbers count.

His father was an influential politician who took the political landscape by storm in 1993 when he ran for the presidency on the platform of the Social Democratic Party, SDP.

In what many thought was a political blitz, Alhaji Abiola won on the first ballot securing popular votes in the North and South of Nigeria after promising to banish poverty by driving down the cost of food, goods and services.

He was however arrested and imprisoned after the military junta at the time headed by General Ibrahim Babangida annulled the elections. Abiola later died while in custody in controversial circumstances.

The entrance of Kola into the presidential race could rekindle old memories among Nigerians who still believe the family was unjustly denied the opportunity to rule Africa's most populous country.

On its part, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has earned N680 million from sale of Expression of Interest and Nomination Forms to 17 presidential aspirants.

Those who had previously collected forms included former Vice President Atiku Abubakar; erstwhile Senate President Bukola Saraki, and former Anambra State Governor Peter Obi. Another former Senate President and erstwhile Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Chief Anyim Pius Anyim; industrialist Mazi Sam Oluambua, medical doctor Nwachukwu Anankwene, media icon Dele Momodu, Cosmos Chukwudi Ndukwe and the only woman in the race, Olivier Diana Tariela, have also done the needful.

Governors Aminu Tambuwal (Sokoto State), Bala Mohammed (Bauchi), Nyesom Wike (Rivers), and Udom Emmanuel (Akwa Ibom) as well as a former Ekiti helmsman Ayodele Fayose and businessman Hayatu-Deen Mohammed are also in the PDP presidential ticket race.

Each of them paid the total sum of N40 million to obtain the forms which will enable them to participate in the PDP presidential primary election which holds between May 28 and 29.

Meanwhile, in the last 48 hours, some of the aspirants continue consultations with different organs and stakeholders within the party.

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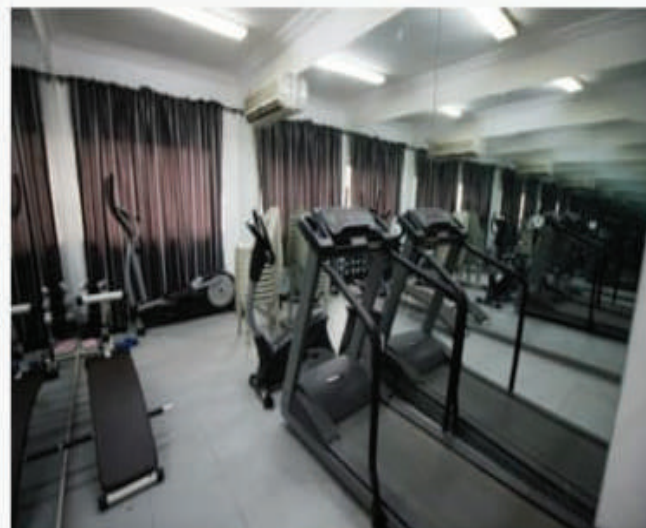


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Amid insecurity, 11,536 schools shut in Nigeria, says UNICEF

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH**

United Nations International Children's Education Fund (UNICEF) has stated that security challenges in Nigeria have affected 1.3 million children in the 2020/21 academic year.

According to UNICEF, since December 2020, a total of 11,536 schools have been closed due to abductions and security issues.

This was disclosed by UNICEF in a statement issued on Thursday to mark the eighth anniversary of the abduction of 276 students at Government Girls' Secondary School Chibok, Borno State.

UNICEF representative in Nigeria, Peter Hawkins, said attacks on schools have rendered the learning environment insecure and discouraged parents from sending their children to schools. The abductions and attacks have discouraged children, especially girls, from learning.

According to UNICEF statement: "Today marks eight years since the first known attack on a learning institution in Nigeria on 14 April 2014, in which 276 students at the

Government Girls Secondary School Chibok in North-East Nigeria were abducted by a Non-State Armed Group.

"Since then, a spate of attacks on schools and abductions of students – sometimes resulting in their deaths – has become recurrent in the last two years, especially in the North-West and North-Central regions of Nigeria. Since December 2020, 1,436 school children and 17 teachers have been abducted from schools, and 16 school children lost their lives.

"Unsafe schools, occasioned by attacks on schools and abduction of students, are reprehensible, a brutal violation of the rights of the victims to education, and totally unacceptable. Their occurrences cut short the futures and dreams of the affected students.

"Attacks on learning institutions render the learning environment insecure and discourage parents and caregivers from sending their wards to schools, while the learners themselves become fearful of the legitimate pursuit of learning.

"The invisible harm school attacks inflict on the victims' mental health is incalculable and irredeemable.

"Girls have particularly been targeted, exacerbating the figures of out-of-school children in Nigeria, 60 percent of whom are girls. It is a trajectory which must be halted, and every hand in Nigeria must be on deck to ensure that learning in Nigeria is not a dangerous enterprise for any child, particularly for girls.

"In Nigeria, a total of 11,536 schools were closed since December 2020 due to abductions and security issues.

"These school closures have impacted the education of approximately 1.3 million children in the 2020/21 academic year. This interruption of their learning contributes to gaps in children's knowledge and skills and may lead to the loss of approximately 3.4 billion USD in these children's lifetime earnings. This risks to further perpetuate cycles of poverty and inequality.

"To tackle the scourge in Katsina, 300 School Based Management Committees (SBMC) members have been trained, multi-sectoral task teams on school safety have also been established across all the 34 local government areas of the state.

"In Katsina State, 300 SBMC members have been trained, and schools supported through the



Buhari

Girls' Education Project funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of the United Kingdom, have developed Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans to mitigate the impact of potential and actual threats.

"Multi-sectoral task teams on school safety have also been established across all the 34 LGAs of Katsina State to provide timely and efficient networking among actors on school security, with particular focus on the safety of girls. Additionally, 60 Junior Secondary Schools have developed emergency

plans and tested the plans in evacuation drills.

"In Katsina State, government and communities have fenced some schools, and this is encouraging girls to attend school, underscoring the reality that collaboration is required in addressing insecurity in schools and making schools safe, especially for girls."

Hawkins added that collaboration is key to addressing insecurity and urged the government to increase their efforts to encourage girls' education by keeping schools safe.

Security: JNC gifts Ondo Amotekun 30 motorcycles

By **FRIDAY OMOSOLA**

The Ondo State Western Nigeria Security Network (WNSN) codenamed Operation Amotekun yesterday received 30 new motorcycles to boost crime operations by the Ondo state workers under the Joint Negotiating Council (JNC).

The Chairman JNC, Comrade Oluwaniyi Fabunmi, during the presentation of the motorcycles to Amotekun Corps Commander, Adetunji Adeleye at the Governor's Office, Akure, said the initiative was to support the state government's effort at making the state crime free and further assist the corps in their operations and performance.

State chairman, Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Comrade Sunday Adeleye, commended Governor Oluwarotimi Akeredolu for the creation of the security outfit, saying since the establishment of the corps, the spate of insecurity in the state has reduced.

"Since the creation of Amotekun, we have watched with keen interest that the government is not using it for any political colouration, and we have not seen, with due respect, any opposition party who has condemned Amotekun.

"Amotekun was not created for any particular set of people, but all citizens of Ondo State. Since we have seen this, we now felt that what can we do to assist, by way of corporate service responsibility, and this is what we have been able to contribute among ourselves to assist.

"This is a pointer to all the multinationals, the NGOs, the big people in the state to come and join this lofty idea", the NLC chairman added.

While commissioning the motorcycles, Governor Akeredolu, represented by the Special Adviser on Union Matters and Special Duties, Dare Aragbajye, lauded the state workers for the rare gesture and called on notable contributions organizations and individuals to do the same.

He, however, called on the people of the state to imbibe the habit of supplying timely information to the Corps to make the state a more secure environment.

Furthermore, He re-emphasized his administration's commitment to ensuring the safety of lives and properties of the people of the state at all times.

"It is unprecedented. It is not only appreciated by the governor and the state government, I'm sure it will be appreciated by all well-meaning people of Ondo state", the Governor said.

While appreciating the workers through their leaders for the uncommon gesture, the state commander of Amotekun Corps, Adetunji Adeleye, said the donation would allow Amotekun to do more in protecting the lives and properties of the people of the Sunshine state.

Obiano's wife not in our custody, EFCC says

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has denied arresting the wife of the immediate past Governor of Anambra State, Willie Obiano.

Recall that social media reports few days ago indicated that the anti-graft agency had arrested and detained the former First Lady of Anambra State, Eberechukwu Obiano for alleged fraud.

The news of her arrest came shortly after signifying her interest to run for the Anambra North Senatorial District, under the platform of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA).

Spokesperson of the Commission, Wilson Uwajaren, while reacting to the report of her alleged arrest, told newsmen that the claim was false.

He said, "Eberechukwu is not in EFCC's custody."

The Trumpet recalled that Obiano was arrested shortly after he handed over to his successor, Prof Charles Soludo.

The immediate past Governor was arrested at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos, around 8:30 pm on March 6th, 2022 while on his way to Texas, United States of America.



L-R: Jigawa State Governor, Muhammad Badaru Abubakar; Kaduna State Governor, Nasir El-Rufai; Ekiti State Governor/Chairman, Nigeria Governors' Forum, Dr Kayode Fayemi; and Kaduna State Deputy Governor, Hadiza Sabuwa Balarabe; during a courtesy visit to the Kaduna State Governor...on Friday.

Buhari's 'indifference' unsettles APC, others, as permutations favour VP, Amaechi, Tinubu

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Saraki, Anyim, Obi, Bala Mohammed, Tambuwal, Udom Emmanuel and others have been consulting caucuses of the party in both chambers of the National Assembly, members of the Board of Trustees (BoT), forum of former ministers as well as some incumbent governors.

Also, the PDP's National Working Committee (NWC) has been receiving aspirants who came to present their intention to seek the party's

presidential ticket.

On Tuesday, Bala Mohammed canvassed the support of his former minister-colleagues under PDP administrations, particularly that of former President Goodluck Jonathan.

He told the former ministers that he wants to deploy his wealth of experience as a journalist, lawmaker, minister and a state governor to in administering the country.

Mohammed said he will not be a sectional leader or

religious bigot, but unify all sections of the country. "I want to be a president of all Nigerians," he said.

He was at the PDP secretariat on Wednesday to inform the NWC of his intention and later met with members of the BoT.

Mohammed noted that he is not the best of the 17 presidential aspirants but has what it takes to lead. He, though, promised to work with anyone that emerges as the party's candidate.

Before him, Anyim was before the NWC where he

presented a blueprint of his mission to "rescue the country from the misrule" of the APC.

Saraki also engaged members of the BoT. Emmanuel while meeting with members of PDP House of Representatives Caucus said he has the capacity to create wealth and strengthen the nation's currency. Emmanuel said that tackling Nigeria problems is not rocket science but right leadership adopting right policies and decisions.

He stressed that with right

leadership, Nigeria has no reason to go through the challenges it was currently going through.

He remarked: "The problem we have in Nigeria today is that we don't have leaders who can create money. If you don't how to create money, you will not know how to run an economy."

He added that Nigeria needed a leader who can create wealth, which he said he had demonstrated in Akwa Ibom State by venturing into airlines and other businesses.

YOSN holds capacity-building tech programme for 500 youths

By **OVIRI KELVIN, UDEH VIVIAN**

President of Youth Organization for Self-Sustenance in Nigeria (YOSN), Amb. Stanley Power, said he is determined to empower the country's youths with the requisite skills through capacity-building and mentorship in 'technopreneurship' programmes.

This was made known in a Capacity Building Conference held in Abuja at the International Conference Centre with the theme: "Fast Tracking Nigeria's Digital Economy through the Expanded and Inclusive Empowerment of Aspiring and Emerging Youth Entrepreneurs", the trumpet gathered.

According to the President, the conference seeks to engender the creation of small and medium enterprises through tech startups which is a reliable portal to boost the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), unemployment reduction and enhance the welfare of the entire citizenry.

Stanley decried the high rate of unemployment amongst young graduates and the vicious cycle of lack, poverty, and hunger that has led to anger,

frustration, violence, radicalization, and extremism amongst Nigerian youths.

He stressed that the over-dependence on the government for employment after acquiring a formal education without attaining requisite capacity-building training is a major menace hindering the development of Nigerian youths.

He noted that the 2-day capacity building programme will help train and mentor 500 applicants who have enlisted to be trained in tech startups.

While he acknowledged the assistance and collaboration of the National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure, (NASENI) in making the conference a reality, Amb Stanley also applauded Engr. Frank Chukwumeka, Chairman, New Vital Network Nig. Ltd for his contributions in offering to train the 500 beneficiaries.

The events hosted various guest speakers from government agencies and parastatals, media, youth organizations, private investors, non-governmental agencies, and security agencies.

Guest speakers at the event and the Managing Director of Elomaz Com-

munication, publisher of The Trumpet Newspaper, Mr Edafeotu Endurance urged the trainees to key into the technology-driven Knowledge Economy.

Commending the effort of YOSN, Edafeotu described the gesture of the tech organization towards training and mentoring 500 Nigerians as laudable, adding that "it is a good step in the right direction".

He stressed that the 500 trainees through what is termed the multiplier effect, will in turn train and pass on the knowledge gained in this workshop to other persons.

The Director-General of the Nigerian Information Technology Development Agency, (NITDA), repre-

sented by Hajia Basira Hassan outlined the government's commitment to implementing the national digital economy policy for Nigeria.

According to the DG NITDA, the government's mandate through the agency has always helped in creating the frameworks for 'technopreneurship'.

The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Youths and Sports Development, Alhaji Ismaila Abubakar, also acknowledged the gains inherent in investing in Nigerian Youths.

Speaking on behalf of the minister, Mr Ugwoke outlined the government's efforts and programs aimed at training, empowering, and maximizing the

potential of the youths.

The Director-General of Small and Medium Enterprises Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN), Dr Dikko Umaru Radda, in his address pinpointed that entrepreneurship and skill acquisition programmes can be very effective if leveraged on technology.

Radda, who acknowledged the importance of Nigerian youths, describing them as the centre of development of any nation, enjoined them to think critically, start small, and start now.

Also, the Minister of State, Federal Capital Territory, Hajia Ramatu Aliu, represented by Hajia Asabe Umar, urged the youths to leverage technology to

grow their entrepreneurial skills and build the nation.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Anatomy Group Nig Plc urged the youths to identify and harness their talents & skills in technology to achieve great exploits. He avowed that greatness comes at a price and admonished trainees to be different, stand out and have a vision.

The National President of the National Youth Council of Nigeria (NYCN), Comrade Solomon Adodo, and Managing Director of EchoScan Nig Ltd, Dr Ayodele Benson, in their goodwill messages, encouraged the participants to take the training seriously as it is the springboard to an ocean of opportunities.

Keyamo tasks new NDE board, MINILS Council on good policies

By **PAUL MICHAEL and KELVIN OVIRI**

Labour Minister of State, Festus Keyamo SAN has charged newly inaugurated members of the Governing Board of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and Governing Council of Michael Imoudu National Institute for Labour Studies (MINILS) to formulate good policies that can enhance and advance the operations of the respective agencies.

Keyamo, who is the Supervising Minister of the two agencies, spoke at the inauguration ceremony of members of the Governing Board of NDE and Governing Council of MINILS, which was held at the Office of the Head of Service of the Federation, Abuja. He added that the Board and Council members must not interfere in the daily operations of the agencies.

While enjoining the new appointees to adhere strictly to all public service rules in terms of appointment, promotions and discipline, the Minister said the conditions of service of Chairmen and members of the Board and Council, particularly on travels and tours shall be subject to excellent public service procedures.

He said, "The Board and Council are therefore responsible for setting out the agencies economic, financial, operational, administrative policies, programs and targets, in line with the overall objectives as provided by the government.

"They also have the responsibility for meeting targets, introducing broad policy measures for seamless operation and supervisory management to ensure that targets are achieved.

"The challenge before the Board and Council is one of reengineering and developing new strategies and suitable modalities for translating the broad objectives of governments to tangible goals in the lives of our citizens, especially the most vulnerable.



Festus Keyamo

the Supervising Minister from the President before undertaking official trips overseas. Such approvals shall be conveyed by the Office of the Secretary of the Federation or the Office of the Chief of Staff to the President.

"I want to enjoin you all to ensure that all public service rules as it relates to appointments promotions, and discipline are strictly adhered to by the management of your agencies. You are also to ensure that all outstanding allowances due to workers are cleared promptly.

"Furthermore, the operations of the various agencies must comply strictly with financial regulations and the provisions of the Procurement Act. The audited accounts of the agencies must always be prepared and submitted to the relevant authorities as at when due."

Earlier while presenting his welcome address, the Director General of NDE, Mallam Abubakar Nuhu Fikpo said the reconstitution and inauguration of the Board and Council underscore the high premium that the government of President Buhari places on labour studies, employment, wealth creation and social inclusion matters, through the governing boards that will quickly fast track the agencies' policy directions.

"I'm sure that the Board will settle down to the rigorous tasks of policy formulation for the general good of the Nigerian citizenry," he said.

Members inaugurated into the Governing Board of NDE include Festus Keyamo, SAN - Chairman (as statutorily provided for Supervising Ministers of the Agency), Chris J. Maiyaki (member representing the Nigerian Universities Commission), Mallam Lawal Y. Hafiz (member representing the National Board for Technical Education), Prince Tony Omoaghe, Mrs Obiageli B. Orah, Collins Iriferi Umu-

koro, Andrew Obukohwo

Egunoma, Mrs Yamah Patience (member representing Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development) and Mohammed Ndadoko (member representing Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment Industry).

Others include Mrs Didi Walsom-Jackn (representing Federal Ministry of Water Resources), Dr Yerima P. Terfa (Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Labour and Employment), Mr Rasaq Bello-Osagie, Mrs Olubunmi Osuntuyi (representing the Nigerian Employers Consultative Association), Comrade Amechi Asugwu (representing the Nigerian Labour Congress), and Mallam Abubakar Nuhu Fikpo (Director-General of National Directorate of Employment).

Members of the Governing Council of MINILS are Prince Sam Okpako Onokohwomo (Chairman), Brigadier General Umar Gital Yusuf (member representing the Nigerian Army), Mrs Omoabie Udeme Akpan (member representing the Ministry of Labour and Employment), CP Falaye S. Olaleye (member representing the Nigeria Police Force), Amb Obinna Chukwuemeka Agbugba (member representing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Umaru Ahmadu (member representing Service Strategy and Policy Office) and Comrade Salamatu Aliyu (member representing the Nigerian Labour Congress)

Others include Comrade Babatunde Goke Olatunji (member representing the Nigerian Labour Congress), Femi Mokikan (member representing the Nigerian Employers Consultative Association), Adeniyi Ologun (member representing the Nigerian Employers Consultative Association), Comrade Nasir Fagge (member representing Nigerian Universities) and Comrade Issa Aremu (member representing the Director of National Institute for Labour Studies).

Abducted students regain freedom

•Kidnappers of DELSU lecturer demand N50m

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH**

Four abducted female students of the College of Health, Science and Technology, Tsafe in Zamfara State have regained freedom. They were released by their abductors on Thursday evening at a location close to the town.

The bandits invaded the residential area of the school on Wednesday, April 13, they broke into the rented apartment of the students and abducted five them but one escaped while the other four were whisked away to an unknown location.

Deputy Provost of the college, Jamilu Lawali, said "the school did not pay a dime for their release."

The four students are currently at an undisclosed hospital receiving medical treatment.

Schools have suffered bandits attack recently, especially in the northern part of the country with many students abducted. Some of them were later released after negotiations.

Meanwhile, kidnappers of a lecturer of Delta State University (DELSU), Abraka, Prof. Ovaborhene Idamoyibo, have demanded N50 million as ransom for his release.

Idamoyibo, who is the Head of Department, Music,

was reportedly kidnapped in Eku, Ethiope East Local Government Area, Delta State while on his way to Abraka from Sapele after a family meeting.

The abductors were said to have contacted the victim's wife, Mrs. Rosemary Idamoyibo, and gave her until Friday to pay the said ransom.

It was gathered that the kidnappers pursued the lecturer who tried to escape after one of the back tyres of his Highlander Jeep was shot.

The kidnappers also reportedly fired several gunshots in the air to scare away passersby, while they made their way to the premises of Aganbi Memorial Baptist Church, Eku where the Professor ran into after he abandoned his vehicle.

Two other victims were also reportedly dragged into the kidnappers' vehicle along with the lecturer before they sped off back to Sapele-Eku road.

Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), DSP Bright Edafe, confirmed the abduction but gave no details.

Students of the department have resorted to divine help, as they are now conducting prayers daily for Idamoyibo's release.

Easter: LAWMA assures of cleaner, healthier Lagos

By **BENJAMIN OMOIKE**, METRO EDITOR/LAGOS BUREAU CHIEF

Lagos Waste Management Authority (LAWMA), has expressed readiness to meet the waste management needs of residents, during and after the solemn Easter festivities, and to consolidate on its year round vision of establishing a cleaner and healthier Lagos.

The Managing Director/CEO, Mr Ibrahim Odumboni, who said this in a statement, noted

that the Authority will leave no stone unturned, towards ensuring that the season is celebrated in a clean environment, given the expected 100 percent increase in waste output during the period.

He revealed that the agency had intensified its advocacy campaigns, to sensitise residents on the importance of ensuring environmental sustainability around their neighbourhoods, adding that Private Sector Participation

(PSP) operators had been mandated to work optimally in their assigned areas, with the authority providing backup operations to cover service gaps.

Odumboni said, "All district heads across the state have been mandated to double their efforts and support the PSP operation to ensure no gap is felt. We have also taken definite steps to facilitate increased turnaround time by waste evacuation trucks, making

sure there are no delays at landfills."

The LAWMA boss implored residents to desist from all acts capable of degrading the environment while appealing to motorists to drive with caution, to safeguard lives of street sweepers and other service providers, discharging their duties during the period.

He further urged the populace to bag their waste, patronise assigned PSP operators and pay their waste

management bills promptly, assuring that the Authority had put in place adequate measures to ensure that the celebration was observed in an environment-friendly atmosphere.

While wishing all Lagosians a dirt-free Easter celebration, he enjoined residents to call LAWMA's toll-free numbers 07080601020 and 617, for inquiries on waste management issues in their areas, during and after the festive season.



Lagos Customs impounds 206,000 pieces of machetes, other contraband

●Nets N135bn revenue in first quarter

By **ALEX OLISE**

The newly-appointed Controller in charge of the Tin Can Island Command of the Nigeria Customs Service, Comptroller Steven Oloyede, has up-scaled activities at the Command.

This has led to the seizure of 206, 000 pieces of machetes, suspected to be for violent and criminal purposes, loaded in eight containers and wrongly declared as vehicle spare parts.

The Command has also collected whopping N135.4 billion revenues for the first quarter of 2022, which ended March 31,

as against the N112.7 billion collected in the comparative period of 2021, representing an increase of N22.7 billion or 20.18 percent growth rate.

Briefing newsmen for the first time, about six months after his appointment, the Comptroller disclosed that in addition to impounding the machetes, the Command, during the review period (January-March, 2022), also seized 145kg of Colorado, Indian Hemp concealed in two units of ridgeline trucks, two pieces of Toyota Corolla cars and 640 bales of used clothes.

Also seized were 236, 500 pieces of used shoes, 62, 500 pairs of brand new lady's shoes, 1, 814, 400 pieces of (500mg/5ml) Novalgen injec-

tion, 48, 850 rolls of cigarettes and 23, 800 tins of bromate and baking powder; all with a duty paid value of N1.04 billion.

The import of these products contravenes sections 46, 47 and 161 of the Customs and Excise Management Act CEMA 2004.

The Comptroller assured that the Command, under his watch, would continue to up-scale activities at the Command, using all the Information Communication Technology, ICT mechanisms at his disposal and a robust stakeholders' engagement.

"My arrival here signalled new dawn in the overall performance of the Command and this is simply in view of the fact that I was emphatic

and categorical on my vision for a renewed enthusiasm in the areas of discipline, trade facilitation and revenue drive devoid of extortionist tendencies.

"Tin Can Port Command's operation for the first quarter was significantly aligned with the statutory responsibilities of the service in the area of revenue generation, trade facilitation and enforcement/anti-smuggling activities. In addition to the above, my mandate also included putting modalities in place to boost export and increase revenue, through the use of risk management mechanisms in identifying areas of revenue leakage, with a view to blocking them.

"It is also instructive to

note that the Command's operations drew inspiration from the theme of the International World Customs Day: 'Scaling Up Customs Digital Transformation by Embracing a Data culture and Building a Data Ecosystem'.

"The Command continues to leverage on this theme, to harness such facilities that have been made available on the NICIS ii platforms, such as the Pre-Arrival Assessment Report (PAAR), Advance Manifest, Selectivity Engine and data analysis, which to a large extent enhanced our Risk Management Processes, culminating into trade facilitation, expedited Customs processes and ensuring collection of appropriate duty and taxes," Comptroller Oloyede said.



Sanwo-Olu presents N200m interest-free loans to 39 filmmakers

By **BENJAMIN OMOIKE**

Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, has presented cheques to 39 film-makers, who are beneficiaries of special interest-free loans being managed by the Lagos State Creative Initiative (LACI), under the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture.

Speaking at the ceremony, held at the Glover Memo-

rial Hall, Lagos Island, Governor Sanwo-Olu, who was represented by the Commissioner for Tourism, Arts and Culture, Pharm. (Mrs) Uzamat Akinbile-Yussuf, disclosed that a nine-man committee comprising veteran film-makers and some senior government officials, headed by the Commissioner for Tourism, Arts and Culture, was set up last year with the mandate to identify

struggling filmmakers that could be empowered with grants and seed fund for film production purposes.

According to the governor, the initiative aims to address financial challenges that inhibit quality film production in Lagos and Nigeria.

His words: "This initiative and presentation of cheques being done today, is a testament to our commitment to ensure the potentials of

the entertainment industry are realised."

"I congratulate the beneficiaries who are receiving their cheques today. I am convinced that your proposals and plans must have been really compelling and convincing to earn the approval of the Committee."

Sanwo-Olu admonished the beneficiaries to make judicious use of the loans and pay them back within the stipulated time to enable others to access the fund.

While giving her opening remarks, the Commissioner for Tourism, Arts and Culture, Pharm. (Mrs) Uzamat Akinbile-Yussuf, revealed that before the establishment of the revolving loan for filmmakers, the governor had made various interventions to ameliorate the devastating effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on business owners in the hospitality, entertainment and tourism sector.

The Commissioner said: "Mr Governor constituted a Palliative Review Com-

Lady calls off wedding over alleged domestic abuse

By **BENJAMIN OMOIKE**

A young lady, Ada Uburu, has called off her proposed marriage to one David Okike, over allegations of domestic violence.

In a post that she shared on social media, she said she was doing it for clarification purposes.

"Hello Guys! I never wanted to bring this here but I have to. I am the type of person who likes to keep my relationship away from social media but this is for clarification purposes.

"This was my secondary school classmate, who I thought I knew to an extent. On December 28, 2020, he did the 1st and 2nd stage in my family marriage list, which bride price happened to be on the 2nd stage, which he paid. After he paid my bride price, he started maltreating me.

"2021 was hell for me, that at some point, I left home. After everything, we settled around November 2021, which he promised he will never beat me again. But still nothing

changed.

"This is my reason, why I am calling off the Traditional Marriage (Igba Ngwu), and White Wedding ceremony between me and David Okike off. (Beating me was not part of the agreement in our Marriage).

"This Saturday should have been my traditional and white wedding ceremony day...I am supposed to be happy but I am not.

"For couple of months now I have been going through a lot."

"I have been in a toxic relationship for over a year now. I am aware that this may be a shock to many people, especially people from my Home Town. My supposed husband hit and abuse me at any slightest provocation, just a small misunderstanding without minding what condition I am into.

"Because I have chosen me and I will not live my entire life facing domestic violence. My supposed husband is full of rage, beating me with his belt, stick, and broom is his daily routine.



Easter: FRSC, fed min of works to ensure free traffic on Lagos-Ibadan expressway

By ALEX OLISE

In its bid to ensure free flow of movement on the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway during the Easter celebration, the Sector Commander FRSC Lagos, Corps Commander Olusegun Ogungbemde, with his Ogun State counterpart, Corps Commander Ahmed Umar, have held a meeting with officials of the Federal Ministry of Works.

In a statement released to

The Trumpet by the FRSC Lagos Spokesperson, Route Commander Olabisi Sonusi, stated that "To ensure free movement on Lagos-Ibadan during the Easter celebration, the Sector Commander FRSC Lagos, Corps Commander Olusegun Ogungbemde, with his Ogun State counterpart, Corps Commander Ahmed Umar, held a meeting with officials of the Federal Ministry of Works, led by Engr. Adebote on Tuesday

12th April 2022, at the FRSC Mowe command."

According to Sonusi, "After the meeting, the team inspected the level of work at the construction site on Lagos-Ibadan Expressway and it was unanimously agreed that all diversions at the construction spots should be opened from Thursday, 14th April, till Tuesday 19th April 2022, for easy and seamless movement by motorist plying the road,

since there will be high influx of vehicles travelling in and out of Lagos during the festive season."

Ogungbemde used the opportunity to inform the public that FRSC Lagos is ready to provide the necessary safety and traffic control needed by motorists during the Easter special patrol, as over 2,000 personnel (both Regular and Special Marshals), 57 patrol vehicles, eight bikes, three ambulances, two tow

trucks, seven breathalyzers, will be deployed on major highways in Lagos State, to monitor, control traffic and clear obstructions along critical routes within the state during the Easter Special Patrol exercise."

The special patrol, involving regular and special marshals, which has kicked off already, will focus on overloading, speed limit violation, tyre violation, and light sign violation, among

others.

The FRSC Lagos Sector Commander admonished road users to play their role, by obeying rules and also cooperating with the FRSC officials and sister agencies along the critical corridors, in ensuring free flow of traffic and a crash-free celebration."

He finally admonished the public to always call the FRSC toll free number, 122, in case of any emergency on the highway.

Alleged serial rapist tells police how OOU Undergrad was raped, killed in her room

By ALEX OLISE

A serial rapist and murderer, Ikenna James Joshua, has opened up to the police on how he and his gang member, Rasheed, currently at large, conspired to rape his 29-year-old neighbour, Adefisayo Tosin, at Ogijo Town, in Ogun State, after breaking into her apartment at midnight, before she was killed for fear of being exposed.

Ikenna also revealed how, not minding killing their victim, they started ransacking her apartment to cart away belongings before he fell into the hands of local vigilante men while his accomplice escaped.

The Police Spokesperson, Abimbola Oyeyemi, a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), who confirmed the arrest of the suspect, to The Trumpet, said that he was nabbed for raping and killing Tosin, a graduate of Obafemi Awolowo University, after invading her apartment to commit robbery.

The Police spokesperson said that the victim was fast asleep at midnight last Sunday, when Ikenna and his accomplice broke into her apartment through the ceiling, raped and then strangled her till she died.

He stated that other neighbours, including the mothers of the suspect and the deceased, discovered that Tosin's apartment had been broken into when knocks on her door by her mother got no reaction.

Unknown to them that the lady had been murdered, the

neighbours reportedly invited the local vigilante to the scene, and while trying to find out what had happened, Ikenna was seen coming down from the ceiling, where he had been hiding after committing the act.

He was quickly apprehended, while a distress call was made to the police at Ogijo Divisional Headquarters.

DSP Oyeyemi said that on receiving the report, the Divisional Police Officer in charge of Ogijo Division, CSP Onatufeh Umoh, quickly led his men to the scene and got the suspect arrested.

On interrogation, Ikenna confessed that he and his partner-in-crime decided to kill the victim after raping her because they discovered that she recognised them.

Ikenna's mother, who was said to have described her son's arrest as good riddance, said that she had given up hope on him, as he had always been a bad son.

In an interview, Ikenna revealed his criminal escapade: "I'm from Imo State but living at Ogijo in Ogun State. I came to the town in 2017. My father is late and I live with my mother in Ogijo.

"On Sunday, April 3, I stole the sewing machine of my uncle's wife, which he kept with my mother. I immediately sold it as scrap at N4,000.

"When my mother came back from church, she went to the room where the sewing machine was kept and noticed that it was not there. She must have realised that I was involved in the disappearance

of the equipment so she started calling me. I ran from home immediately because I knew what she wanted to ask me. I went to my friend, Rasheed, to whom I sold the machine. He is also living at Ogijo and sells scraps. He had initially told me he would not buy things as he had been doing, telling me to look for ways to 'work' by robbing people of their belongings.

"That same night, he told me about how to get more sewing machines. I knew a lady called Tosin that was living in the same compound with me and my mother. Her apartment is next to ours. I told Rasheed that Tosin had two sewing machines and he said that we should break into her apartment at midnight, tie her down and take all her valuables.

"At about 1 am, we broke the ceiling of Tosin's apartment to gain entry. When we got in, we met her sleeping and I started romancing her as she had only her underpants on because of the hot weather.

"As I touched her, she woke up and was shocked at seeing us. That was when Rasheed told me to hold her hand and throat, while he started having sex with her.

"After he was done, I took my turn. She started screaming when she saw our faces, which made us hold her throat tightly and cover her face with a cloth. She went limp as she could not breathe very well.

"Thereafter, we took one of her sewing machines, food items, such as rice, beans and spaghetti, copper wire



and phone, but we couldn't find any money.

"We kept searching everywhere in the apartment to get more things, and by the time we wanted to leave at about 6 am, she had already died. As we were about going, her mother came and knocked at her door. When she didn't get any response, she went to my mother and asked her if she had seen Tosin that morning and my mother said she had not.

"My mother also came to Tosin's apartment to check on her. That was when she noticed the hole through which we broke into the apartment. Coincidentally, the vigilante group members were close by so they quickly informed them. At that time, we were still inside Tosin's room and we knew that we had been caught.

"We went into the ceiling to link my mother's apartment and as we were about coming

out through the ceiling, with Rasheed coming out from the ceiling in my room and me using the sitting room, I just fell into the hands of the vigilante men who quickly grabbed me. However, Rasheed managed to escape.

"They had not known that Tosin was dead. When they started beating me, I opened up that her body was inside her room, as we had killed her."

Foray into lifestyle of hard drugs and hooliganism

Ikenna also spoke about his mode of living from a tender age. According to him, "my father died when I was about two years. My mother was not around then, and members of our extended family rejected and later pushed me and my elder sister out because they said that they could no longer cater for us and were after their own survival. My sister was taken to an unknown person in Abuja to live with.

"I was on the streets early and started smoking cannabis at the age of six. I learnt it where I grew up at Idi Oro in Mushin. I finished secondary school in 2016 without sitting for WASCE because of lack of money and no one to support me. I used to fight around.

"Apart from cannabis, I'm also involved in the use of other hard drugs such as cocaine, Colorado, amphetamine (popularly known as Ice), Loud and Skuchies (a mixture of cannabis, Tramadol, codeine, zobo drink and water)."

The state Commissioner of Police, Lanre Bankole, had directed the immediate transfer of the suspect to the Homicide Section of the State Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Department for further investigation.

He also ordered a manhunt for Rasheed, the accomplice, for him to be brought to answer for the crime he allegedly committed.

Man connives with others to kidnap girlfriend, collects N2m ransom

By BENJAMIN OMOIKE

The police in Lagos are on the trail of one Ahmed for allegedly conniving with one Uchenna Daniels to kidnap his (Ahmed's) girlfriend, Hannatu Kabri.

Daniels reportedly abducted Kabri in Abuja on March 31 and took her to Lagos.

It was learnt that the victim was released after her parents

paid N2 million ransom.

The case was reported to the police and a manhunt was launched for the suspects, leading to Daniels' arrest.

Addressing journalists on Thursday at the Lagos State Police Command Headquarters in Ikeja, Lagos, the Spokesperson for the Command, SP Benjamin Hundeyin, said the police were making efforts to arrest Ahmed and one Biliya,

who allegedly participated in the crime.

He said, "On 31st of March, 2022, at about 1400hrs (2 pm), intelligence gathered revealed that one Uchenna Daniels, 30, kidnapped one Miss. Hannatu Kabri, 22, in Abuja and fled to Lagos.

"Operatives of the Command tracked and arrested the suspect, Uchenna Daniels, at Allen Avenue, Ikeja. The suspect

revealed that the victim's boyfriends, one Ahmed and one Biliya, planned the kidnap with him and collected a ransom of N2 million in Kaduna, through a Bureau de Change from the parents of the victim before she was released.

"He added that they used a toy gun to commit the crime. Investigation is ongoing to arrest other fleeing suspects."

The PPRO said the arrest

was one of the numerous breakthroughs recorded by the Command in the last one month in the fight against crime and criminality within Lagos.

He stated, "Before you today, we have a total of 32 suspects, who have engaged in various crimes including armed robbery, kidnapping, defilement, murder, cultism, etc.

"From all of these cases which we successfully cracked,

we recovered a total of 11 arms, 19 live ammunition, two cars, 16 inverter batteries, six modules, cables, three ATM cards, four SIM cards and four phones."

Hundeyin said the State Commissioner of Police, CP Abiodun Alabi, has assured Lagosians that the security of life and property will continue to be prioritised by the Command.



Yoruba groups to support pro-restructuring presidential candidate in 2023

By Gabriel Omonhinmin

A Pan-Yoruba group known as the Alliance of Yoruba Democratic Movement (AYDM) made up of farmers, hunters, traders, market women, mechanics and civil society networks has vowed that they will ensure that the 2023 presidential election in Nigeria produces a candidate that will restructure the country and resolve its lingering national question.

The group said the 2023 elections must produce a Yoruba presidential candidate or risk a popular uprising. The groups stressed that political parties in Nigeria should know that the coming elections will be different, as it is not going to be about the All Progressives Congress (APC) or the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) but the ordinary men on the streets.

AYDM Chairman Mr Adewale Adeoye, in a three page address entitled "2023 Democracy And The Future Of The South-West" which was issued on Wednesday, April 13 2022, in Lagos, in a two days conference, the group organized to mobilize and sensitized its members in all the old South-West region of the country, which included Edo and Delta states, He said his groups will take over the present political process and campaign to ensure the will of the people in the South West is accomplished in all Yoruba territories.

The AYDM Chairman warned, "Multiplicity of presidential candidates in Yoruba land will be counterproductive."

Adeoye stressed, his coalition is aware of the presidential ambition of the likes of Dr Kayode Fayemi the present Governor of Ekiti state, the Vice-president of Nigeria Professor Yemi Osinbajo, SAN, GCON, and Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu the National Leader of the APC, adding that, the Yoruba people will now choose who would represent their interest as Yoruba people at the national level. Saying it is no longer for the candidates to impose themselves as representative of the Yoruba people. He added "We shall ensure this does not happen. The Yoruba people must decide their presidential candidate and work genuinely for him."

Adeoye said some of the reasons why these groups are pushed to take this position is because as of today, the people of the South-West are at a crossroads. As the people of the region are faced with one of the most difficult moments since 1960 when Nigeria became independent from Britain, some three years after the Western Region had regained her independence from Britain too.

AYDM Chairman explained further that the South-West region, as we speak, has various degrees of threats.

"We face internal, external and international threats to our livelihood. I summarise these concerns in a few words. Internally, we are afflicted by poverty, lack of jobs, deprivations, exclusion and worst still, degradation of our environment, our stream, our mountains, our valleys, our forests and our livelihood externally, we are at the mercy of marauders, terrorists, kidnappers, villainous spirits and gangsters that have surrounded some of our towns and villages, in the West, East, in the North, South of Yoruba land including our seashores.

"These forces are not only for domination but are bent on exterminating us and taking over our ancestral homes. The impacts of these threats on food security cannot be imagined not to talk of the impact on our forest resources that are vanquished and destroyed with impunity.

"For the first time, murders, killings and assassination of our people is no longer a terror masterminded by the state, but by alien non-state actors, that are heavily armed and who kill without

discrimination putting the whole Yoruba territory in jeopardy.

He continued "The acts of terrorism on our highways, our street corners, our towns and villages have polluted our scared forest and groves, almost eliminated the high economy, restrict our freedom, deprive our farmers their trade, our fishermen their commerce and our communities their livelihood. The threat is no longer a shred of imagination. It is real. We live under fear, trembling and anxiety.

"The actors are not just people of Nigerian extraction; they are equally aliens, terrorists that have acquired deadly weapons and training in Algeria, Somalia and the Maghreb region. They have cells all over our indigenous territories from Lagos to Jebba, to Warri and Ondo State.

"Our international threats came from the parochial instinct of many international institutions. While in Nigeria, hundreds of people are killed by terrorists and arms men, the world chooses to look the other way.

"The number of Nigerians that have been killed in non-combat attacks by terrorists in the past six months is 10 times the number of people that have been killed in Ukraine since the beginning of the February 2022 War. While the European Union, (EU) are outraged by the killings in Ukraine, followed by imposition of sanctions, we have not seen the same concern demonstrated by the same EU on the situation in Nigeria which confirms that the future of the people of the South-West is in their own hands. The EU and those bodies may not be able to help us even as we are being strangled by the conditions imposed on us"

Adeoye said the reason for the conference is due to the various solutions being offered by the situation that confronts the people of the South-West region of today. Some people are demanding regional autonomy, some others are asking for restructuring of the country, and some want a sovereign Yoruba nation.

Each logic has its merit. What is most important is a constructive engagement of the people. It is the masses, the pillars of democracy that matter. The future of the Yoruba people to a large extent depends solely on what the people want. It is their future. They must have a say. They must give direction. They must show us the way to follow. While in some communities, it is the leaders that dictate to the followers, in Yorubaland it is the people that dictate to their leaders who are expected to aggregate their collective feelings, aspirations, fears and provide a melting pot for their collective spirit.

The AYDM chairman said "We are aware that there is still a sizable number of our people who will participate in the coming 2022 and 2023 elections. We are aware some of them are registered and will go out to vote in the coming elections in line with democratic norms. The electoral process began this week.

"What then should be our attitude? Since 1999, the voting pattern and public enthusiasm towards elections in the Western Region have continued to wane. Many of our people appear to be losing interest in the democratic process. Many people think their votes do not count. Millions of our people think their votes have not been able to bring the good government they all desire.

"This has put our people at a disadvantage position. Increasingly, the people are marginalized based on their weak political strength expressed through their voting capacity. The votes coming out from the South West fail to reflect our population. This in future may affect our people in the context of local, regional, national and global politics where population is



Mr Adewale Adeoye

power.

"We want our people to show their determination to use their votes to determine their future. We want our people to use their votes to raise political consciousness. We want the Western Region to overwhelm the rest of the country through massive participation in any electoral process, so that we can assert ourselves as one indivisible people, bound together by common history, shared dreams common future for the prosperity of our people."

The Guest of Honour/Guest Speaker at the event Pa. Ayo Opadokun, in his presentation, first asked the delegates that gathered, "What is the relevance of any election at this time of our national life, without a resolution of the existential National Question?"

He asked again, "Can the current political operators, in good conscience, point to significant milestones they have accomplished meaningfully to improve the qualitative and quantitative standard of living of our people? I don't need to waste your time enumerating what has happened to the value of the naira; price of foodstuffs, provisions of social services like education, health, shelter, transportation (even if some efforts are being made through loans from China and Sukuk); not to talk about our infrastructure.

"Nigeria has admittedly spent over \$20 billion on power and yet electricity supply remains painfully unreliable despite our natural resources like water, sun, gas wind, etc. Lack of power continues to rob Nigeria of highly valued investments by blue-chip companies.

Opadokun, said for clearer understanding and critical appreciation of the parlous nature of the state of the nation, the following comparative global statistics on Human Development Index for Africa, and the state of corruption in Nigeria speak for themselves as to the country's direction.

He continued, "The summary of the corruption perception index disclosed that Nigeria performed woefully and dropped down to become No. 154 of 180 countries where the survey was conducted. This is despite the much-taunted efforts of Nigeria's anti-corruption agencies.

Opadokun added, that, there is the need to remind Nigerians that in the last 35-40 years, Nigeria has been under-developing rather than developing. The latest statistics on African Development Index are avail-

able on the internet. It should worry Nigerians that despite the country's human and natural endowments, Nigeria is part of the low human development countries, comparable only to war-ravaged areas of the world like Sudan, Chad and Somalia. He said, making our situation of much more concern is the intolerable level of insecurity and its consequential effect on human lives that are degraded, the poor national economy and the deprivations that many Nigerians farmers are suffering as the fear of bandits, herders, terrorists have made many of them jobless. Saying that this is an unprecedented abnormality in domestic, municipal and international laws, and protocols.

Opadokun stressed that the second and perhaps a much more fundamental matter for the younger generation to consider, request and insist upon is that aspirants who will soon be coming to them for votes in the forthcoming elections, should be made to respond to where they stand on the Yoruba Agenda. Since 1994, the Yoruba Agenda has been harmonized under the Chairmanship of the late Professor Adebayo Adedeji. While the Political/Elite's position was harmonized with that of the Traditional Rulers at conveyed meetings at the Ogbagba Court of the Awujale of Ijebu land when the Yoruba people, thought that the late General Sani Abacha was going to organise a truly representative assembly of Nigerians to discuss and resolve the National Question.

He said "The most germane item in the Yoruba Nation's categorical demand for a return to Federal Constitutional Governance. As Yorubas have always stated with clarity that Nigeria secured its Independence on a Federal Constitution Governance that was negotiated by the different ethnic nationalities and their political leaders. He stressed that there was no time when Nigerians consented to, nor agreed with, the Unitary and Central Government that was imposed on Nigeria, by the military governments by decrees since January 15, 1966. Since this particular date, Nigeria has been governed unitarily and centrally till date, in spite of popular, credible and sustained categorical demands for a return to the negotiated Federal Constitution that recognizes the fact and reality that the geographic and political space created by imperialist Great Britain, composed of heterogeneous people with over 350 ethnic nationalities with their different languages, religions, cultures, customs, traditions, artefacts, folklore, mores and morals.

Opadokun, told the Yoruba youths, that those who will come to see them for their votes in the coming elections, must be made to give them written and actionable guarantees of positive and categorical determinations on the 10 points AYDM agenda. And the Yoruba youths must make sure that those politicians did not again renege on their promises, as many recent past political operators have done.

He concluded, by calling on the Nigerian Youths saying their jobs in the present political dispersion have been done for them. The most potent voting population today in Nigeria is the youth. The latest demographic population statistics indicate that ages below 19 years constitute over 40 percent of Nigeria's citizens. If they move up to 25 years, the youth group constitutes over 60 percent of Nigeria's population. Urging Nigerian youths to exhibit guts, tenacity and stamina to inform, educate, conscientize and mobilize their generation and the youths in the country of voting age to determine the fortune of aspirants in Nigeria.

APC holds Post-Convention NEC meeting April 20

The All Progressives Congress (APC) National Working Committee (NWC) has called the maiden post-National Convention meeting of the National Executive Committee (NEC) to be held on Wednesday, 20th April 2022.

The emergency NEC meeting will take place at the Congress Hall of Transcorp Hilton Hotel in Abuja.

A statement by Barr. Felix Morka, National Publicity Secretary of the party said "pursuant to Article 25.2.ii of the Constitution of the All Progressives Congress (APC), the National Working Committee (NWC) hereby invites members of the National Executive Committee (NEC) of our great Party to a meeting to consider the Party's Timetable/Schedule of Activities for Primaries for the nomination of candidates for the 2023 General Elections and other relevant business of the Party.

"All members of the NEC are by this invitation to take notice of the meeting in accordance with Article 12.3 of the APC Constitution, please," the official notice/invitation for the NEC meeting stated."

Stop castigating Buhari's government over insecurity, BMO cautions NEF

•Says insecurity not a trifling matter

By **TUNDE JOSHUA**, Abuja

Opposition elements and other critics of President Muhammadu Buhari have been charged to join the government in the fight against insecurity rather than politicizing the issue.

Making the call in a press statement in Abuja, the Buhari Media Organisation (BMO) said the security situation in the country is not a trifling matter but that which calls for all hands to be on deck.

In an obvious response to recent calls for the President's resignation, BMO, in the statement signed by its Chairman Niyi Akinsiju and Secretary Cassidy Madueke, challenged the Northern Elders Forum (NEF) to tell Nigerians what it has done to complement the government's efforts to address insecurity in northern Nigeria.

"It would be great to know the contribution of the forum to the search for peace in that part of the country.

"It is becoming the norm to see Dr Hakeem Baba-Ahmed, regularly in the media, pontificating on behalf of the Northern Elders Forum on the security situation in some parts of northern Nigeria

"But what we find worri-



President Buhari

some is the claim that there has not been an appropriate response from the President Muhammadu Buhari administration to the problem.

"While we see it as a mischievous claim, we believe it would be good to hear the initiatives that NEF members had embarked on since 2009 to complement efforts of various governments to reduce

insecurity in the part of the country.

"This is what is expected of elders and community leaders who are genuinely interested in ensuring peace in their domain.

"So, we believe that Nigerians would be curious to know what Hakeem Baba-Ahmed and his group have been doing across the 19 States

of the North to ensure that the various peoples from as many as 200 ethnic groups live in peace", the statement added.

BMO also brushed aside suggestions by NEF that the Buhari administration had not been doing much to stem the tide of insecurity in the North.

"We make bold to say that the government is not unmindful of the security concerns in some parts of the country

"We have seen credible successes at the frontlines as well as massive arrests of the criminals, some of whom have been handed lengthy prison terms after a mass trial of terror suspects.

"Only recently, about 7,000 terrorists and members of their families surrendered to the military after another round of sustained air and land raids to bring the number of those who have surrendered since September 2021 to 47,975.

"Nigeria's military might on the watch of President Buhari is at an all-time high with a global ranking of 35th in the world, yet the government is also engaged in non-kinetic efforts to tackle the root causes of conflicts.

A/ IBOM: I'm not aware of any anointed governorship candidate - Udofia



Akanimo Udofia

A governorship aspirant on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party PDP in Akwa Ibom State, Akanimo Udofia has denied knowledge of any anointed governorship candidate by the state governor, Emmanuel Udom.

He said no one could be said to be closer to the governor than himself while describing Emmanuel as a fair leader of all in the Akwa Ibom PDP family.

Udofia however said he only knew that Gov. Emmanuel preferred Pastor Umor.

The aspirant spoke at the PDP national secretariat, Abuja immediately after returning his completed expression of interest and nomination forms on Thursday.

He said even if he had

not participated in elective politics in his 11 years in PDP and does not have a political godfather, he has God almighty as his leader.

According to Udofia, the PDP administration of Emmanuel had recorded many successes in governance and there should be someone who equally has the love of Akwa Ibom people at heart to continue the good works of the government.

He said he believes he has the right resume and ability to continue from Gov. Emmanuel after 2023.

Udofia said "I am not aware that the governor has anointed anyone but he preferred someone. That is not a threat to me because I have no godfather but God the father."

He said he is the people's choice because he has been

blessing his people from the proceeds of his 32 years of practice in the oil and gas industry.

"I am the only one that God has chosen and I will be the next governor of Akwa Ibom State.

"I want to bring infrastructural and social security and human capital development revolution to the state. I am prepared for the task of governance.

"I will guarantee the future for peoples because the trust of government would be poverty alleviation, human capital development and link them to the outside world".

Expressing confidence in the PDP as a credible platform, he said, "the PDP is a bastion of democracy because it represents the conscience of the people".

Christ's resurrection and conspiracy theory of idle tale

While they were going, behold, some of the guards went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place. And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sum of money to the soldiers and said, "Tell people, 'His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep'" (Matthew 28:11-13). At the heart of the Christian belief, doctrines and theology is the resurrection of Jesus Christ three days after He was crucified. Paul hit at the core of this statement when he wrote to the believers at Corinth that "If Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty ... and if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sin" (1 Corinthians 15:14).

In Luke 24, verse 5, the women came to beautify the body and grave of Jesus Christ with spice which they had prepared. They were asked by the angels, "why do you seek the living among the dead?" The three women and others who were asked this question included Mary Magdalene, Joana, and Mary the mother of James. Here the 'dead' are those in their tombs; the 'living' they have come to tend was Jesus Christ who unknown to them had been raised from death! Only the living preaches, speaks and witnesses. The stones used to cover graves and build sanctuaries do not. It is in this sense we are called the living stone.

The question the angels asked the women is still very relevant today. They were sceptical that Jesus Christ had risen. They had come to meet a corpse. But were taken aback and grieved that the corpse was 'missing.' But the angel told

them they were in the place of the dead. The one they sought was already among the living. They should go and seek Him there. The eleven grieving disciples also felt that Jesus' resurrection was nonsensical and an 'idle tale.' The angels said, "He is not here, but is RISEN!" the women were thus the first to preach the story of the risen Christ. And since this time, the Church has always proclaimed: He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!! This manifests and signifies the one - Christ Jesus - on whom the Christian faith is anchored.

This incidence, Paul argued, is at the heart of Christianity (1 Corinthians 15:13-14). He goes on to explicate its necessity and importance in 1 Corinthians 15:45-50. The first Adam had a natural body that was corruptible. The second Adam, Christ Jesus, had a body that is incorruptible. Christ came to undo that which occurred at the fall of man. As a consequence of this, Peter writes, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (1 Peter 1:3).

So in the resurrection, God has offered us a 'lively hope and because of this lively hope, we are Christians with conviction. What is the Lord Jesus Christ to us? Who is Christ to us? Where should we seek Him? What meaning does His gospel give? A good number of us, by lifestyle and conviction, are still seeking Christ among the dead; but God forbid! We carry on as if Christ is neither alive nor living with us. This attitude, and misplaced belief in Christ's being make the difference in our Christian life. "I am ready to preach the gospel to you ... for I not ashamed of the



Dr. Karo Ogbinaka

gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes" (Romans 1:15-16). "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:13).

Now, this is how Luke writes about the resurrection story in the face of those who were its early witnesses. "And the words seem to them as idle tale and they believe them not" (Luke 24:11). Christians are followers of Christ simply because they hold on to the actual existential reality of Christ as raised from the dead. But the challenge is one of obedience on the part of believers. "But we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Corinthians 1:23). Perhaps, the significance

of the resurrection will help us answer this question. Do we obey Him as one who is alive and living with us here and now? The women met a stone that was rolled off. But stones do not witness. It was the women and the disciples that witnessed. We are witnesses! How can we be Christ's witnesses in a world being torn apart by wars, poverty, deprivation and corruption, more so in communities that are Christian dominated?

Archbishop Justin Wilby, in his 2015 sermon explicated that: "Cathedrals and churches make great statements, but without words. Witnesses are those people who know Christ; lay or ordained, old or young, or whatever irrelevant - all are equally witnesses. The resurrection happened, and it changes our view of the universe. Once we have seen the reality of the risen Jesus nothing else should be seen in the same way as before." In his 2000 Easter sermon, Bishop Peter Adebisi stated that "this [Easter] is the time that Nigerians need our [Christian] love most, just as Jesus offered to us. A great number of people have no homes; a lot have been displaced due to religious wars, tribal and ethnic problems. As Christians, let us look beyond our own needs. Let us look at other Nigerians and offer them the hope of the gospel. Let us offer them the love of Christ, let us extend to them our knowledge of the power of the resurrection. Let us bring Christ to them in a practical way."

Have a blessed and happy Easter

• *Rev'd Dr Karo Ogbinaka, an Anglican priest of the Diocese of Lagos West. He lectures at the Department of Philosophy, University of Lagos and a member of the Editorial Board of The Trumpet*

What kind of salvation did Jesus Christ actually bring to earth?

A man that is being wasted through acute poverty will say he got his salvation the day something happens and took away poverty from his life. A barren woman will say she has gotten her salvation from barrenness the day she conceives and finally gives birth to a baby. For the person that is sick, the day of salvation is the day he or she got healed.

So, since every form of salvation has its specific target and result, what kind of salvation did Jesus Christ actually bring to humanity?

To answer the question and for us to understand the kind of salvation that was brought by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we need to examine some of His statements while on planet earth as documented in the Bible.

John the Baptist started his ministry with the words REPENT FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS AT HAND - Matthew 3:2. Our Lord Jesus Christ also said REPENT FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS AT HAND - Matthew 4:17.

So, the salvation Jesus Christ brought can only be received through repentance from what is not good according to God Almighty to what is good.

Another question to answer is where is the Kingdom of God that both John the Baptist and Jesus Christ talked about? Does it then mean that the earth is not the Kingdom of God they were talking about because both of them were referring to the coming Kingdom of God and not an existing one?

It, therefore, means that the Kingdom of God they were talking about was not in existence on earth as of the time of their statements but was on its way.

So, Jesus Christ's salvation message to humanity is for all humans to be saved from sin and the deceits of the devil so that they can enter the Kingdom of God. In essence, the miracles and healings Jesus Christ performed in His ministry on earth was not the main salvation message but a road to it. The miracles and healings were just to tell humans that He was the expected Messiah/



Dr. Agbodo

Saviour who came to save humanity into the Kingdom of God, but the main Salvation message is for all humans to repent from their sins (bad and immoral deeds) and live a holy and obedient life to God, and finally make Heaven (the Kingdom of God).

Yes, a poor man can become rich by applying wealth creation principles in the scriptures, but the real Salvation message Jesus Christ brought to humanity is primarily to save humans from sin so that they can receive the Holy Spirit who will now help them to overcome sin, poverty, sicknesses, barrenness and the rest.

The result of the Salvation message of Jesus Christ to humanity, therefore, is to receive the Holy Spirit and work with the Holy Spirit to the end of their existence on earth.

Then, how does one benefit from the salvation Jesus Christ brought to earth? Answer: The process of salvation is very simple. All you need to do is review your life, regret your sins, confess them before God and make up your mind not to go back to them again. Then, accept Jesus Christ as your King/Lord

who came to offer the eternal sacrifice of salvation for humanity with His blood to reconcile humans with God.

The truth is that anyone living in sin has the devil as his or her king/lord and the person is estranged from God if such a person dies in that state of sin, the person will go and spend the rest of eternity with the devil in Hell-Fire while those that accepted Jesus Christ as King and Lord over their lives while on earth, and continued in holiness will live with Jesus Christ in a perfect condition which the scriptures refer to as Heaven.

How do you then know what is sin? Answer: Get a copy of the Bible and read to know what God calls sin. You can even search "What is sin in the Bible" through google or any search engine on the internet and the search result will itemise what is called sin by God.

This is important because many people do not really understand what is called sin and some even feign ignorance of what is actually called a sin.

Your business then after understanding what is sin is to jettison the sins you have been committing and start living a holy life by the power of your strong will coupled with the support of the Holy Spirit our Helper. Your strong will is necessary to turn a new leaf because God wants human beings to initiate the process of repentance first before coming to help them.

Remember that the Bible is complete and if you want to really fulfil your destiny spiritually and physically, study the Bible and know your rights and privileges.

All the principles and commandments of God are complete in the Bible hence any literature that does not complement but contradicts the Bible is not from God because God is not the author of confusion.

Jesus Christ is the Saviour and Redeemer of all mankind from the consequences of the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and other sins.

The picture therefore of human existence is

that there are now two creations for humans; firstly, the creation of Adam that failed midway and secondly, the creation of Jesus Christ that succeeded from the beginning to the end.

And inheritance from the failure of Adam is automatic/compulsory by birth for every human being but to be in the perfect successful lineage of Jesus Christ, it is by choice.

I want to stress here that the salvation Jesus Christ brought to humans can only be received by choice, so, you can consciously accept it by obeying the commandments of God or reject it by continuing in sin.

More so, to benefit from the Salvation Jesus Christ brought to humans, you have to acknowledge the sacrifice and death of Jesus Christ on the Cross of Calvary and believe that He is the Messiah and the only begotten Son of God who was sent by God to save humanity from sin, death and all works of the devil. In fact, the process of salvation through Jesus Christ is so simple, and God does not want to impose the salvation of the soul on anyone but has allowed us to express our free will to either accept or reject it. However, anyone who is not saved through the salvation plan brought by Jesus Christ will be destroyed in Hell-Fire with the devil and other fallen angels according to the Word of God.

Also note that, once you acknowledge Jesus Christ as your Lord, Saviour and King, and regret and repent from your sins, the Holy Spirit will then be released to you to lead and help you to overcome all temptations and battles of life, in order to fulfil your destiny.

The only way therefore to benefit from the kind of salvation Jesus Christ brought to earth and fulfil your destiny is to submit wholly to God through Jesus Christ and receive the Holy Spirit that helps your spirit man to overcome all temptations and sins. God bless us in Jesus Name.

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2023 Election: Don't use religion to divide Nigerians

Prof. Wole Soyinka and Chief Solomon Asemota Plead

By GABRIEL OMONHINMIN, Culture and Religion Editor

Nigeria, being a secular state has never been in doubt. Some Nigerians are however fanatical about their faith, that they could be safely regarded as religious zealots.

According to Chief Solomon Asemota (SAN) "God has given Nigeria all it needs to grow, I am very hopeful, that this is the period for us to get out of the quagmire we have been for this long, if our religious extremists did not take undue advantage of our people's religious beliefs to perpetrate evil."

Nigeria has one of the largest populations of Christians in Africa and it is not surprising that there are many church denominations with thousands of congregations spread all over the country.

Nigeria also has a large number of Muslim faithful in Africa too.

According to a recent survey, the population of Christians in the country is slightly lesser than that of Muslims. In fact, Christianity which is one of the three major religions in Nigeria has about 48 per cent of the country's total population.

While the argument as to which church in Nigeria has the highest population often goes unanswered, people tend to choose the church where they worship which of course makes their claim biased. Take, for example, Redeemed Christian Church of God, Living Faith Church Worldwide and Dunamis Gospel International, Abuja, these three Churches have one of the biggest church auditoriums in the country, this does not necessarily make them the biggest churches in Nigeria.

According to an estimate of the religious population in Nigeria in 2018, Nigeria's major religion is Islam with a total population of 53.5 percent. Over half of the country's population is estimated to be Muslims. Christian religion makes up around 45 percent of the total, with Roman Catholicism being the main branch with an estimated population of 10.6 percent. Other Christian bodies are estimated to be 35.3 percent. While other religious bodies, alongside traditional idol worshippers, are put at 0.6 percent.

With the above statistics, it is obvious why Nigerians must embrace religious tolerance and peaceful co-existence for it to continue to survive as one indivisible united country.

In a recent remark in Lagos, Professor Wole Soyinka said, "With the way things are currently going in our country and around us, Nigeria is gradually seceding from humanity. As a humanist, I do not want to belong to a country that is seceding from humanity."

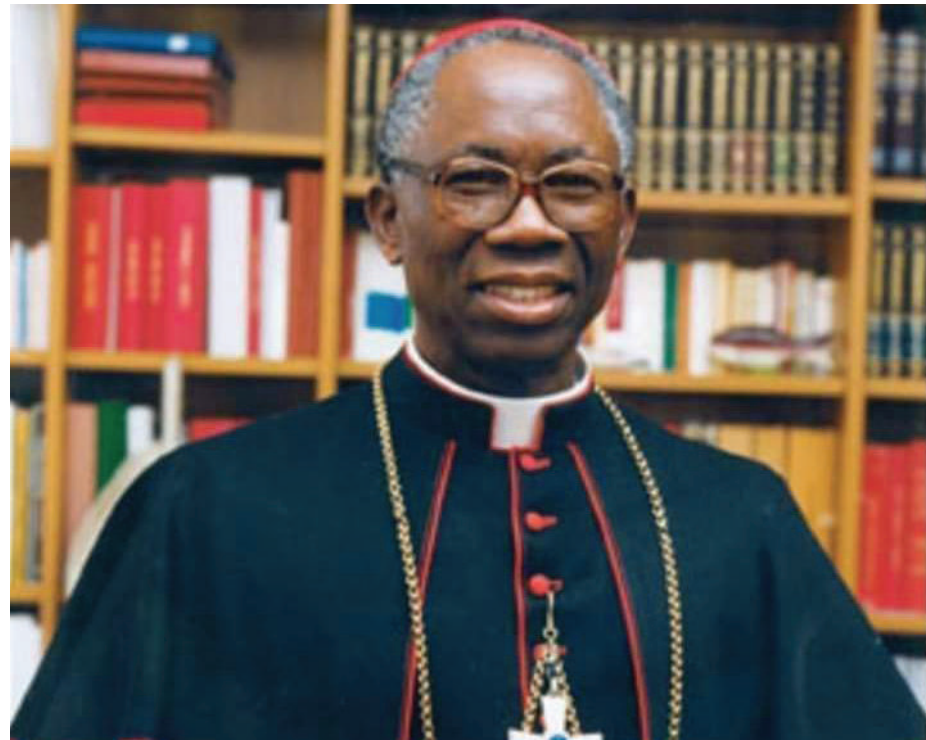
On Thursday, April 7, 2022, Professor Wole Soyinka in a well-attended Media dialogue in Lagos, entitled "Forget The Past, Forget The Future; A Nation Seceding From Humanity." Cautioned Nigerians never to allow themselves again to be divided by religious extremists, who see religion as an easy weapon to put Nigeria asunder for them to achieve their aims. He said this appeal is necessary because we are once again approaching another election year.

He, therefore, appealed to all Nigerians, Muslims, Christians, Atheist and Babalawo - Native Doctors, Traditional idol worshippers, to endeavour for once in the general interest of our country, Nigeria, never again to be allowed to be divided by regions extremists, who usually see religion as an easy weapon to put Nigeria asunder during electioneering periods like the one we are currently facing.

Professor Soyinka explained that the problem of Nigeria as we have all seen from the APC government, is not religion or ethnicity, but visionless leadership, who does not know what to do with the power they crave when they are eventually entrusted with power after several attempts.

Mr. Femi Falana (SAN) and Chief Solomon Asemota (SAN) were on hand that day, to join Professor Soyinka in the media chat.

Chief Asemota (SAN) in one of his interventions on that day, painted a graphic picture, as the Chief Prosecutor and Defendant for the Nigerian Government during the infamous religious riots led by one Muhammadu Marwa aka 'Maitatsine' in the 1980 religious civil disobedience in Kano, which he said could guide Nigerians never again to fall into such ugly pit-fall. He, therefore, appealed to all Nigerians never again should they allow religious extremists under any guise to use them



Chief Solomon Asemota

to set the country on fire.

Chief Asemota shared some of his experiences as follows, "I used to do battle with the late Chief GaniFawehimi and Falana. I was the Chief Prosecutor and Defendant of the Nigerian Government in the time past. Because of my experiences on the job at that time, I was able to see things differently from the likes of Falana. It was because of the theme of this dialogue "Forget The Past, Forget The Future, A Nation Seceding from Humanity, that " I pleaded that I should be allowed to make some comments here, I am happy that Prof Wole Soyinka granted me the permission.

"I will tell stories, but just briefly. In 1982, I was the leading Counsel in Justice Aniagolu's Inquiry in Kano. After the inquiry, the report was prepared, but before ex-President Shehu Shagari could implement the report, he was overthrown by the Military Junta led by then General Muhammadu Buhari. And what happened then, was that after assuming power as Nigerian Head of State, General Buhari succeeded in uniting all the Islamic groups that were fighting then, which resulted in the ugly Maitatsine religious uprising.

"It was after this particular incident, I believed, I may be wrong, that was when Buhari got his 15 million fanatical religious supporters across the Northern region, which he still has till this day.

But the question we ask is simple, who is going to succeed Buhari as Nigeria's President? Is the person going to be a Northerner? If he succeeds him, will the new President be able to change some of the things we have been complaining about him? Or if he is a Southerner, who is a Muslim, will he offend? The reason why all these things are important is that, when we were still with the Colonial Masters as subjects, we all knew, we only had one system, and the system was as provided by the Colonial Masters. There was a very interesting aspect when customary law was tested against equity and natural justice. In areas where the customary law was found not fit into equity and natural justice, the customary law is not accepted.

"The present popularity is such that, I do not think, and I want to be quoted, that if a Northerner succeeds President Buhari, he will be able to solve all the problems we are presently having. Also, if a Southern Muslim succeeds him, it will be very difficult because the dichotomy in the way Nigeria is being governed has been well established. So people presently saying, the North has so many years of this or the South has so many years of that, needs to think very carefully.

Well, I am a Benin man and I was born in Benin City. But my first language was Ibo. My mother took me and got married to an Okwale man. As they were speaking Kwale, I picked it up. This was in Jos, Plateau state, and I attended St Paul's school. I then went to St Luke's School, which was dominated by Yorubas or foreigners then in Jos. It was there, that I learnt my Yoruba

even in Jos, I also learnt how to speak the Hausa dialect fluently in Jos.

"I am completely against anybody who suggests that this country should be broken up. Please do not take it at face value when people begin to tell you, we have spent these numbers of years, they have spent these numbers of years in power. The question to be asked then, is how well did they spend it? Other questions that need answers as we approach another election year, is, must we now go and vote for someone, who killed so many of us Nigerians, when he was in power, or the one who made life very difficult for Nigerians while occupying the presidency. We should further encourage those people, by voting someone or people from their areas as our next president.

"The present situation Nigerians are facing is like the story of a Major in the Nigerian Army, who was alleged to have known, about a planned coup de'tat, as expected of an office of his rank, he quickly rushed to inform his superior officer, his Commandant about what was in the offing. Not knowing that the Commandant, he went to report the matter to was part of the coup planners. He was immediately arrested and put into detention until after the coup. He was later released to continue in the army. At another time, he again got to know about a coup to be staged, this time around, based on his past experience, he refused to make any report. He was again arrested, tried and executed, for having knowledge of the coup but refused to make a formal report. If one may ask, what type of justice is that?"

"The above scenario reflects our country and it also reflects what is happening today in Nigeria. In the case of the late Sheikh Gumi, the father of the present Sheikh Gumi, I know him, because he was part of Justice Aniagolu's Panel of Inquiry. We all can see the type of preferential treatment he was being given, for virtually doing the same thing, as his late father did at that time in a different way.

"From all indications, the Nigerian government is presently running two systems, and any country with two systems, cannot succeed. The late Sardauna of Sokoto made sure he sent people round the world, and it took everything concerning Islam into consideration before the Penal Code of Northern Nigeria was passed into law. The Penal Code is identical and he considered everything about Islam because we were under the British Colonial Masters at that time, they ensured that we still had one Nigeria and one system of governance. But today, they have changed all this.

"The boundary between North and South for God's Sake, can any Nigerian physically show it to me where these boundaries are located? But sadly, it is so entrenched today, that even the boundary between Russia and Korea is not as firm as the one, we have, between the present North and South, even though we cannot see it. Why? Because people take advantage of bad situations and use them for their selfish gains.

Nigeria is not based on a tripod plus the Yorubas and Hausa-Fulanis. I will plead, that we minority tribes should be left out of these dangerous games they are presently playing! Leave us the minority tribes out of this dangerous scheming, which makes no sense!

For example, during the First Republic, the minority of Edo extraction also had Cocoa, Palm Oil, and Rubber plantations and made contributions to the South West. But we never had a fringe of what is today known as the Cocoa House in Western Nigeria, what did we do wrong then? Absolutely Nothing! The point is that these things all must be rectified. One, when I was a former student in those good old days, the Local Government Area Council in Benin used to grant scholarships. And I had so many of my friends, who got scholarships from the then Local Government Council. Today, Local Government Councils are no longer functioning. These have no doubt affected our morals and whatever we do.

"If the Local Government Area Councils were functional, at my age today, instead of looking forward to becoming a Nigerian President, or Governor in my state, I will rather prefer to go and be the Chairman of my Local Government Area Council, so that I can help my community grow, so that, they can help to bury me properly whenever the time comes."

In the Catholic church which has one of the largest Christian followers in Nigeria, two of its Cardinals, Francis Arinze and John Onaiyekan, have done a lot of work on religious tolerance, and peaceful co-existence between the Christians and Muslim communities in Nigeria.

Cardinal Arinze's literary works such as "Sacrifice in Ibo Religion, Ibadan University Press (Ibadan Nigeria) 1970. Christian and Politics, Tabansi (Onitsha), 1982. Answering God's Call, Chapman (London) 1983. Living Our Faith, Tabansi (Onitsha) 1983. Alone with God, Tabansi (Onitsha) 1986. Church in Dialogue Walking with Other Believers, Ignatius (San Francisco, CA), 1990 and Gospel to Society Optimal Computer Solutions (Nsukka Nigeria), 1990.

Most of these books by Cardinal Arinze are centered on how to have harmonious, frictionless free relationships between Christians, Muslims and other religions in the same space as Nigeria.

Today, Cardinal Arinze is the oldest surviving Catholic Cardinal in Nigeria. Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church is a senior member of the clergy of the Catholic Church, they are immediately behind the Pope in the order of precedence. Collectively, they constitute the College of Cardinal and are appointed for life.

Their most solemn responsibility is to elect a new pope in a conclave, almost always from among themselves (with a few historical exceptions), when the Holy See is vacant. During the period between a pope's death or resignation and the election of his successor, the day-to-day governance of the Holy See is in the hands of the College of Cardinals. The right to participate in a conclave is limited to cardinals, who have not reached the age of 80 years by the day the vacancy occurs. In addition, cardinals collectively participate in papal consistories (which generally take place annually), in which matters of importance to the Church are considered and new Cardinals may be created. Cardinals of working age are also appointed to roles overseeing monasteries of the Roman Curia, the central administration of the Catholic Church.

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

Anthony Olubunmi Okogie, who will be 86 years on June 16, 2022, is also retired and was the Archbishop of Lagos Archdiocese for 39 years.

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

Archbishop Onaiyekan is the youngest of the Nigerian Catholic Cardinals. He is known for his peace and reconciliation work across the bitter Christian/Muslim divide. These are men other religious leaders must emulate, for our country, Nigeria to survive, and prosper in peace and harmony.

Nigeria overtakes Iraq on number of ISWAP attacks

Islamic State – West Africa Province or ISWAP is a Salafist jihadist militant group, administrative division and affiliate of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). The objective of ISIL is to establish a caliphate control and govern the Caliphate, expand Islam and Sharia Law worldwide and recreate the power and glory of Islam. With the loss of ground in Iraq and Levant, ISIL cashed in on the pervading corruption, poor governance, poverty, local grievances, youth population bulge, resentment of heavy-handed and extrajudicial police and military actions against extremism that exists in many African countries to expand to the continent.

This expansion into Africa was done covertly. ISIL identifies a country with weakened national institutions, a fledgling insurgent group and a history of social injustice, then makes overtures to the militant groups in the target clime with the allure of financial and materiel support and a request for an oath of allegiance. The plan of action serves two purposes: to fast track insertion into the target jurisdiction without going through the hassles of local recruitment and to acquire its operating base. This was the case of ISIL intrusion into Nigeria, Mali, Somalia, Burkina Faso, etc.

ISIL was introduced into Nigeria in March 2015, when Abubakar Shekau's group, Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad (Boko Haram), pledged allegiance to ISIL and changed the group's name to Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP). ISIL accepted the pledge the same month. However, an internal dispute on account of differences in objectives and leadership style later fractured the group. ISIL recognized another leader in 2016, and Shekau's faction reassumed its original name, continuing to be commonly known as Boko Haram. ISWAP killed Shekau and almost wiped out or co-opted most of the Boko Haram adherents in Sambisa forest and took over the forest as its base.

This marked the coming of the ISWAP brand of terrorism in Nigeria. ISWAP distanced itself from the indiscriminate violence that came to characterize Boko Haram, renouncing the killing

of Muslim civilians and vowing to focus attacks on Christians and state targets. It reportedly started providing some state-like services (e.g., basic law enforcement) in its areas of operation to win the hearts and minds of the local population. By 2020, it was assessed that ISWAP had outstripped Boko Haram in size and capacity and was operating with a degree of success including conducting raids on security forces, which have yielded significant war spoils in the form of materiel and other supplies. All these indicate, from the very beginning, that ISWAP may prove to be a more resilient threat than Boko Haram. ISWAP's efforts to build legitimacy in areas it governs and its reputedly strong resource base, which are in tandem with IS global objectives, were the initial pointers. By January 2022, ISWAP Nigeria is estimated

to have 4,000-5,000 fighters and it tops the attack chart of all IS formations with 162 attacks. The group has attacked military facilities, killed soldiers, looted materiel and funds itself through raiding, kidnapping for ransom, and taxing local populations and commerce. Since 2020 more than 11,000 schools have been shut down in Northern Nigeria with over 2,968 persons killed and 1,484 abducted in the same period. Furthermore, amid rising insecurity in parts of northern Nigeria by the presence of bandits and pervading farmers/herdsmen acrimony there is a mounting concern of convergence of the ISWAP threat and the others. Additionally, United Nations (UN) investigators report that ISWAP Nigeria has links to another IS faction, known as IS-Greater Sahara, which is active in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, although each group appears primarily focused on local aims, the platform can be used for transfer of tactics and knowledge.

The modus operandi of ISWAP Nigeria, just like the mother ship, ISIL, remains to take advantage of fragile states with the aim to supplant them. It brings to the fray resources, experience, knowledge from foreign terrorist fighters and the disposal of the organisation. In Nigeria, the writing is on the wall, ISWAP is now in the process of forging an alliance with the bandits in the north. This will lead, predictably, to increase in attacks, raids and kidnap for ransom in the first instance because financial strength is very important to ISWAP and quest for territorial control in the medium term and finally the destruction or co-option into ISWAP of the bandits in the long term for the organisation to carve a niche for itself in furtherance of ISIL objectives.

To avert this impending disaster, national institutions must be strengthened, morale in the security sector must be raised. Furthermore, social services and social justice must be entrenched. One of the favourite tactics of ISIL and by extension ISWAP Nigeria is to win the hearts and minds of the local population in areas they operate to ensure secrecy and loyalty. Therefore, it is imperative that the FGN engages in similar tactics for the same purposes urgently.



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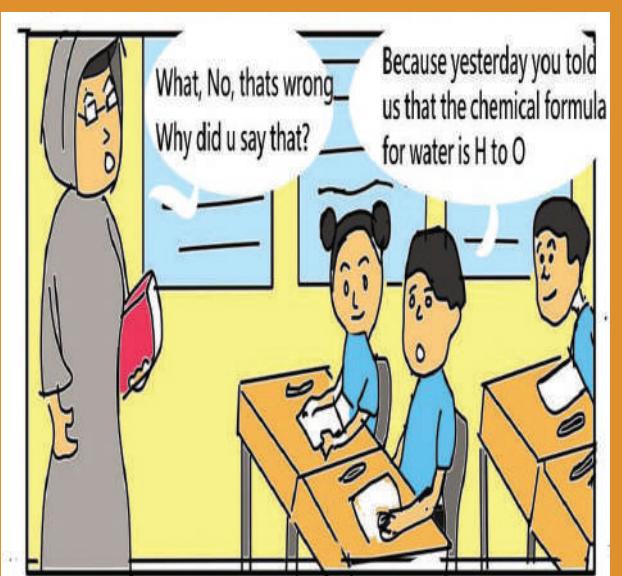
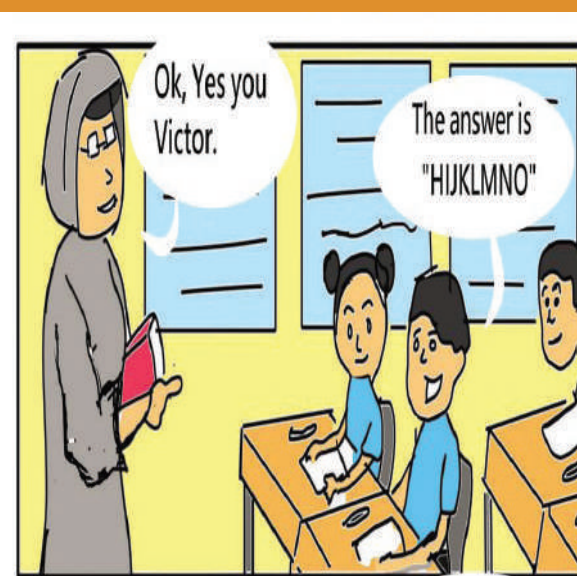
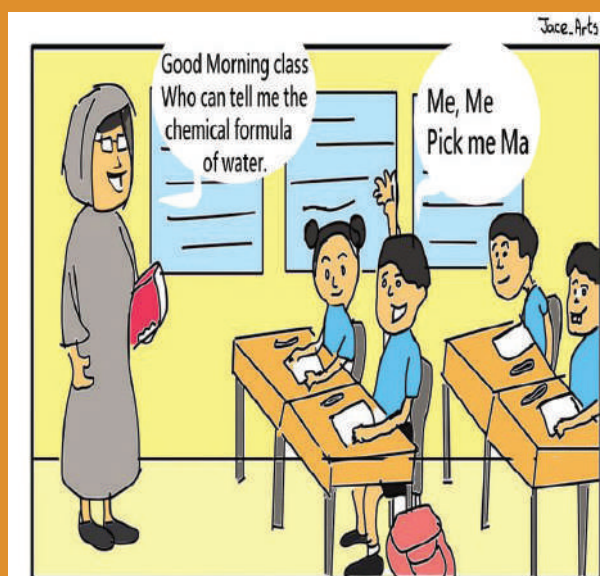
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Anxiety mounts in southeast as gunmen attack police station, registration center

■ Police kills deadly gunman, recovers rifle, others in Anambra

■ INEC suspends voters' registration as Gunmen kill official in Imo

By **PAUL MICHAEL**, and **BLESSING OZIWO** Defence Editor, Abuja

There is tension and anxiety in the southeastern part of the country as gunmen suspected to be members of the proscribed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and the Eastern Security Network (ESN) are currently on rampage attacking public facilities and officials.

Operatives of the Anambra State Police Command in the wee hours of Thursday foiled an attack on the Nteje Divisional Headquarters, Oyi Local Government Area by hoodlums and killed one of the deadly gunmen as others fled the scene.

During the operation, one type 06 rifle, one magazine and fifty-three live ammunitions of 5.56mm as well as charms were recovered by the operatives, The Trumpet gathered.

The State Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Ikenga Tochukwu, confirmed the attack on Thursday in a statement obtained by **The Trumpet**.

He said the state Commissioner of Police, CP Echeng Echeng, led the crack squad while responding to a distress call on the attack of the station by the deadly gang.

He said, "Anambra Police Operatives led by CP Echeng Echeng on 14/4/2022 at about 3 am foiled an attack by gunmen at Nteje Divisional headquarters Oyi LGA. The Operatives recover one type O6 rifle, one magazine and fifty-three live ammunition of 5.56mm and charms.

"The Commissioner of Police CP Echeng, led the crack squad when responding to the distress call as the station came under attack by the deadly gang. The Police Operatives decisively dealt with the assailants.

"During the gun duel, one of the gunmen

was neutralised and due to the superior fire of the Police Operatives made the assailants fled the scene. The station was secured and all police operatives and arms are intact.

"The CP while reiterating that the Command will not relent in delivering on its mandate on protection of life and properties, commended the Officers and Men of the Command for their perseverance and painstaking efforts to weed out all criminal elements in the State."

Meanwhile, gunmen on Thursday attacked a voters registration center of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Imo State and killed one of the officials.

Two other staff involved in the attack during the registration exercise at the polling unit are also said to be missing. INEC said it was making efforts to locate their whereabouts.

Following the attack, which lasted for several minutes, INEC suspended the Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercise in Isinweke, the headquarters of the Ihite/Uboma Local Government Area of the state, where the ugly incidence happened.

It was learnt that INEC Adhoc Staff were registering members of the community for the 2023 general elections when the gunmen stormed the venue and launched the attack.

INEC National Commissioner, Festus Okoye, who announced the voter's registration suspension in the council, said the decision was taken following the attack on INEC and its officials, which left one dead.

According to Okoye, the staff, Mr Nwokorie Anthony, was shot dead at Nkwo Ihite (PU 004) in Amakohia Ward (RA 02) of Ihite Uboma Local Government Area.

"Prior to this incident, the Commission had suspended the CVR in Orsu and Njaba Local Government areas of the State on account of insecurity while the exercise is taking place

only at the INEC LGA office in Oru East, Oru West, Orlu and Ohaji - Egbema Local Government Areas of the State," Mr Okoye said.

He added that "The Commission extends its condolences to the family of Nwokorie Anthony and prays that God will grant them the fortitude to bear the loss. The incident has been reported to security agencies to unravel the circumstances that led to this unfortunate incident and bring the culprits to justice.

"We enjoin the President General of the various Town Unions in Imo State as well as all the critical stakeholders to protect staff of the Commission engaged in national assignment. The safety and security of staff is of paramount importance to the Commission, particularly with the devolution of the voter registration exercise beyond our State and Local Government Area offices nation in our determination to serve Nigerians better."



Gunman neutralised by Police in Anambra

Army nabs 12 suspected impostors in Lagos, Ogun

Officers of the 81 Division Nigerian Army Military Police during 'Operation Checkmate' within Lagos and Ogun states, arrested about 12 suspected impostors fully kited in military camouflage uniforms

Acting Deputy Director of 81 Division Army Public Relations, Major Olaniyi Joseph Osoba, made the disclosure on Wednesday in a statement, adding that about 150 impostors have been arrested by the Army from January last year to date.

He further explained that preliminary investigation revealed that some of the suspects specialized in mounting roadblocks along Ajah Road to extort money from motorists as well as indulge in other illegal duties while dressed in Nigerian Army

Camouflage uniforms.

Major Osoba said, "The General Officer Commanding (GOC) 81 Division Nigerian Army (NA) Major General Umar Thama Musa in a press briefing dispelled the unfounded narrative that all illicit acts committed by persons dressed in military uniforms are always military personnel. He noted that persons displaying military banners and accoutrement such as belts and stickers on vehicles and driving commercial vehicles in military uniform as well as driving civil vehicles painted in Army colour are most often not personnel of the Nigerian Army.

"He said in an effort to curtail this ugly trend, the Division has heightened the activities of OPERATION CHECKMATE to ensure regular

arrest of impostors and offenders within the Division's area of responsibility. The GOC disclosed that over 150 impostors have been arrested from January last year to date.

"Major General Musa during the parade of the suspected impostors explained that preliminary investigation revealed that some of the suspects specialized in mounting roadblocks along Ajah Road to extort money from motorists as well as indulge in other illegal duties while dressed in Nigerian Army Camouflage uniform. Similarly, the GOC said there are some arrested fully dressed in military uniform who were caught along the Ilaro Border area of Ogun State where they carry out smuggling of rice and other contrabands.

NDLEA secures conviction of 677 drug traffickers in Q1

■ Rehabilitated 2,223 drug users across the country ■ Arrested 3,359 drug traffickers ■ Seized 65,915.891 kilograms of hard drugs

The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) said it secured the conviction and sentence of 677 drug traffickers between January and March 2022.

The NDLEA Director of Media and Advocacy, Femi Babafemi, made this known while presenting the Commission's first quarter report on Wednesday. Adding that about 2,223 drug users were also counselled through brief interventions and were rehabilitated in NDLEA facilities across the

country within the same period.

Babafemi also revealed that a total of 3,359 drug traffickers and dealers were also arrested in the first quarter while saying that 65,915.891 kilograms of assorted drugs were seized within the same period.

The report said Lagos has the highest number of drugs seized with 22,192.62 kilograms of drugs recovered within the state, followed by the Murtala Muhammed International Airport (MMIA) Command,

Ikeja, also in Lagos, with 8,979.869kg.

He said, "As the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, NDLEA, intensifies the war against illicit drug trafficking and abuse across Nigeria, no less than Six Hundred and Seventy Seven (677) traffickers have been convicted and sentenced to various jail terms between January and March 2022, with a total of Three Thousand Three Hundred and Fifty Nine (3,359) arrests and 65,915.891

Easter: Security agencies move to protect Christians, worship centers

■ IGP orders round-the-clock security of public spaces

■ NSCDC beef up security in worship centers, others

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

As Christians across the federation begin the celebration of Easter, major security agencies in the country such as the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), have vowed to protect Christians, worship centers and other critical public facilities against attacks by terrorists and criminals.

The Inspector General of Police, IGP Usman Alkali Baba, on Thursday ordered intensive security patrols in all public places and critical national assets.

Acting Force Public Relations Officer, CSP Olumuyiwa Adejobi, in a statement forwarded to The Trumpet on Thursday night said the move is to ensure "crime-free Easter celebrations." Adding that the IGP specifically ordered all State Commissioners of Police (CPs) and their supervising Assistant Inspectors-General of Police (AIGs) to "ensure adequate deployment of police personnel, and operational assets to areas of security interest within their respective areas of responsibility (AoRs)."

According to CSP Adejobi, "The IGP equally ordered that supervising officers should ensure confidence-boosting, proactive, and high visibility patrols are carried out along the highways, motor parks, train stations, airports, worship centres, recreation centres, banks, and other financial institutions while taking adequate measures to provide a peaceful, crime-free, and enabling environment for religious, cultural and other socio-economic activities to thrive.

"In addition, the Commissioners of Police and their supervising AIGs have been directed to ensure proper supervision of the men assigned for these assignments. They must be professional and courteous to law-abiding citizens but firm and ruthless to criminal elements who might want to take the advantage of the festive period to perpetrate their unholy acts.

"To this effect, the IGP Monitoring Unit and X-Squad have been given marching orders to monitor and police activities of police officers policing the highways to ensure respect for the rights of citizens and operational conformity with the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and Rules of Engagement (RoE) of the Force; the Complaint Response Unit, vis-à-vis Public Complaint Bureau, have equally been charged to respond swiftly to complaints received from the general public."

kilograms of assorted drugs seized within the same period.

"No fewer than Two Thousand Two Hundred and Twenty Three (2,223) drug users were also counselled through brief interventions and rehabilitated in NDLEA facilities across the country in the first quarter of the year; figures that represent a fair balance between the Agency's drug supply reduction and drug demand reduction activities.

N3.6bn Fraud: Appellate court upholds EFCC's appeal against ex-NDDC boss

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

A three-man panel of the Court of Appeal, Lagos Division, led by Justice Peter O. Affem, has upheld the appeal of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and dismissed the ruling of a Federal High Court in Lagos in the case involving a former Executive Director, Projects, Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) Tuoyo Omatsuli, over an alleged case of money laundering to the tune of N3,645,000,000.

Justice Festus Obande Ogbuinya in his judgement held that the ruling of the lower court dated November 11, 2020, discharging the respondent, Omatsuli, of the money laundering charges "is hereby set aside and he shall enter into his defence accordingly on the same counts."

The Appellate Court, however, discharged Omatsuli on counts 27, 28 and 29 of the charge.

Omatsuli is facing trial alongside Francis

Momoh, Don Parker Properties Limited and Building Associates Limited on an amended 45-count charge bordering on conspiracy and money laundering to the tune of N3,645,000,000.

One of the counts reads: "That you, Engr. Tuoyo Omatsuli, Don Parker Properties Limited, Francis Momoh and Building Associates Limited, between August 2014 and September 2015 at Lagos, within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court, conspired to disguise the illegal origin of N3,645,000,000 (Three Billion Six-Hundred and Forty-Five Million Naira), being proceed of unlawful activity to wit: corruption and gratification; and thereby committed an offence contrary to Section 18 of the Money Laundering Act 2011 as amended by Act No 1 of 2012 and punishable under Section 15 (3) of the same Act."

Another count reads: "That you, Engr Tuoyo Omatsuli, between August 2014 and September 2015 at Lagos, within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court, did procure Francis Momoh and Building Associates Limited to use the total sum of N3,645,000,000 (Three Billion

Six-Hundred and Forty-Five Million Naira) paid by Starline Consultancy Services into the Diamond Bank Plc Account No. 0023785116 operated by Building Associate Ltd when you reasonably ought to have known that the said sum formed part of the proceeds of your unlawful activity to wit: Corruption and Gratification; and you thereby committed an offence contrary to Section 18 of the Money Laundering Act 2011 as amended by Act No 1 of 2012 and punishable under Section 15 (3) of the same Act."

The defendants pleaded "not guilty" to the charges.

In the course of the trial, the prosecuting counsel, Ekene Iheanacho, had called 16 prosecution witnesses, the last being Segun Temitope, a staff of the Special Control Unit against Money Laundering (SCUML) who gave his testimony on July 7, 2020.

Rather than open their defence, however, the defendants filed a no-case submission, which was heard on October 12, 2020, while the ruling was reserved till November 11, 2020.

Justice Saliu Saidu in his ruling on November 11, 2020, discharged the first defendant, Omatsuli, saying, "I have gone through the charge preferred against the defendants as well as the evidence of all the 16 prosecution witnesses and I found no reason for the first defendant to enter the defence.

"Accordingly, the first defendant is hereby discharged."

The Judge, however, held that the other defendants had cases to answer.

Dissatisfied by the judgement, the EFCC appealed the ruling of the lower court.

While dismissing the judgement, the Appellate court, also dismissed the applications of Momoh and Building Associates Limited seeking to set aside the ruling of the lower court on their no-case submission.

However, the appellate court, in its ruling affirmed the ruling of the lower court on the no-case submission filed by both Momoh and Building Associates on the grounds their appeal "is bereft of merit" and ordered them to enter their defence accordingly.

Alleged N1.7bn Fraud: Court grants application of First Nation MD

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Justice Mojisola Dada of the Special Offences Court sitting in Ikeja, Lagos, has granted an application filed on behalf of the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of First

Nation Airways Limited, Kayode Odukoya, seeking the release of his passport to enable him to get it renewed by the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) to attend the graduation ceremony of his son at the University of Kent, United Kingdom.

Odukoya is standing trial alongside First Nation Airways Limited and Bellview Airlines Limited on a seven-count charge bordering on forgery, use of false document, perjury, stealing and obtaining credit by fraud contrary to sections 85(1), 86(1), 278(1) & (b), 285(1),

313(1)(a) & (b), 361(1)(a) & (b), 363 (1) and 364(1) of the Criminal Law of Lagos State of Nigeria 2011.

According to EFCC spokesperson, Wilson Uwujaren, one of the counts against Odukoya reads: "Kayode Odukoya and First Nation Airways, on or about the 29th day of August, 2013 in Lagos, within the Ikeja Judicial Division, using fraud, obtained the credit of N307,268,406.43 for yourselves from Skye Bank Plc (Now Polaris Bank Ltd) and made the bank to incur liability by presenting a Memorandum of Loss at Lagos State Certificate of Occupancy registered as No.33 at page 33 in Volume 1011 at the Lagos State Registry, Alausa, Ikeja in respect of property being and situate at No. 29 Oduduwa Street, Ikeja GRA, Lagos State."

Another count reads: "Kayode Odukoya, First Nation Airways Limited and Bellview Airlines Limited, on or about the 7th day of October, 2016 in Lagos within, the Lagos Judicial Division, dishonestly converted to your use the sum of N1, 742,994,962.04 (One Billion, Seven Hundred and Forty-one Million, Nine Hundred and Ninety-four Thousand, Nine Hundred and Sixty-two Naira, Four Kobo) property of Skye Bank Plc."

At the sitting which was held on April 13, the defence counsel, E.D. Onyeke, moved the application dated April 1, 2022, on behalf of his client, seeking an order of the Court for the release of his passport deposited with the EFCC.

"It is to enable him to renew same in order to travel to the United Kingdom for his son's graduation at the University of Kent on May 17," he said.

He further informed the Court that the said application had also been served on the prosecution.

Confirming the said position, the prosecuting counsel, Nnaemeka Omewa, raised no objections but left the decision to the discretion of the Court.

"Out of caution, the prosecution will want the defence counsel to take special undertaking that the defendant will be available at the next adjourned date," Omewa said.

Ruling on the application, Justice Dada, granted the prayers of the defence and ordered that his passport be released to him.

"The defendant must return the international passport to the Commission on or before the 23rd of May, 2022," the trial judge ruled.



Chairman of ICPC, Professor Bolaji Owasanoye SAN (3rd right) and members of the newly inaugurated Board

ICPC: New Board members resume office, as Owasanoye harps on Integrity

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Five new Board members of the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) have resumed duties at the Commission after their swearing-in by President Muhammadu Buhari.

The new board members are Senator Anthony Agbo from Ebonyi State who is representing the South-East zone of the country, Anne Otelafo Odey, from Cross River State, (South-South) and Alhaji Goni Ali Gujba, from Yobe state, (North-East).

Others are Dr Louis Solomon Mandama, from Adamawa State, (North-East) and retired Assistant Inspector General of Police, Olugbenga Adeyanju, from Ekiti State, (South-West).

The Trumpet recalled that the appointment of the new Board members was confirmed by the Senate on Wednesday 9th March, 2022.

During a reception meeting at the Commission's headquarters in Abuja, the Chairman of ICPC, Professor Bolaji Owasanoye SAN, commended President Buhari for identifying people with rich backgrounds in the public

sector to be appointed into the Board.

While informing the new Board members that their appointments have changed their status, Owasanoye enjoined them to put forward their proven integrity and experience towards achieving the mandate of the Commission.

"ICPC is an integrity organization and the standard here is higher than the normal. What others do and get away with, if we do it, will be big news.

"Your status has changed with your appointment and I am happy that all of you have a rich stint in public service.

"We have a rich blend that will help us achieve the mandate of the Commission. We should not get administration wrong when we have a rich blend of professional administrators to guide our mandate," the ICPC boss said.

The new Board members who took turns to speak expressed their readiness to help combat corruption and project the good image of the Commission and the Country.

Hon. Odey, a retired Permanent Secretary in the Cross River State government, who

spoke first assured that she will work as a family with the Board, management and staff members of the Commission to project the aims of ICPC.

Also speaking, Dr Mandama, a retired Permanent Secretary and one time Head of Service in Adamawa State gave the assurance that he will bring his wealth of experience as an administrator to the Commission to aid the fight against corruption.

On his part, retired AIG Adeyanju, who left the police service in February 2021, noted that as a proven investigator and having headed the biggest investigation department in the Nigeria Police, he was ready to listen to people and project the good image of Nigeria through ICPC.

Another board member and former Permanent Secretary, Alh. Gujba said the new members will add more value to the Commission, coming from different parts of the country with diverse experiences. He pleaded for cooperation and patience from the chairman and the old board members to enable them to work as a family towards achieving the goals of the Commission.



Ogun first lady flays counterfeiters, commends Ecobank for promoting local products

Stories by JOHNMARK UKOKO

Wife of Ogun State Governor, Mrs Bamidele Abiodun, has condemned the activities of the counterfeiters and their foreign collaborators in the country, saying they are sabotaging the nation's economy.

Abiodun said *Adire* fabric, which is produced mostly in Ogun State, was being massively counterfeited by some unpatriotic Nigerians with their foreign collaborators and that if not checked, it was capable of killing local producers and charged the Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON) and other government agencies to tackle the menace.

Abiodun also pleaded with the agencies to address the issue of intellectual theft bedeviling the country, as she commended Ecobank Nigeria Limited for supporting the just concluded *Adire* market week, in Abeokuta, the state capital.

In her welcome address at the event, which was organised by her office in conjunction with the Ajoye Foundation, noted that the unfair practice of counterfeiting was impacting negatively on the sector, adding that the situation had led to many people

abandoning the trade.

"Foreign manufacturers, aided by Nigerian middlemen take away original, handmade *Adire* designed from Nigeria, mass produce them and sell them cheaply to Nigerian markets around the country. The effect of this is that makers of authentic *Adire* are unable to compete with the cheap print alternatives.

"An industry that employs thousands of Nigerians across the value chains is in dilemma, while many have cut back on production. Others have considered abandoning the trade altogether, even though it has been in their families for generations," she said.

Abiodun explained that the *Adire* Market week was meant to build on the gains of the successful launch of the *adireogun.com* to promote financial inclusion for women-owned businesses, enhance the tourism potential in the state and to further help Ogun State continue to set the pace as the *Adire* capital of the world.

Speaking on the initiative, Managing Director of Ecobank Nigeria, Bolaji Lawal, who was represented by Head of Agency Banking, Nike Kolawole, said the bank identifies *Adire* as a key driver of tourism, culture



Mrs Bamidele Abiodun

and the creative industry and that supporting the industry will further empower the youths, women, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and other businesses in Ogun State.

She stated that Ecobank would continue to support the women of Ogun State and Nigeria, particularly the indigenous local

women who produce *Adire* fabric so that they would continue to flourish.

"Ecobank will stand by you and will always be there to give you the right support you need to succeed," she said at the exhibition attended by over 100 exhibitors, traders, fashion designers, models and other players in the *Adire* industry.

AFAN to donate 500,000 tricycles for transportation of farm produce

President of the All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN), Alhaji Sheu Mudi, has disclosed plans of the association and its partners to provide 500,000 units of tricycles for farmers to aid the transportation of farm produce in the country.

He made this known when some representatives of Nigerian companies and their South Korean counterparts visited the Minister of State for Agriculture and Rural Development, Mustapha Shehuri, in Abuja stressing that the development would create direct and indirect jobs for over two million members of the association.

"This will empower youths and farmers to reduce stress and cost of transportation of produce and in turn reduce the cost of food items," he said, adding that one of the association's partners would establish tricycle assembly plants in the six geopolitical zones of the country to create employment opportunities for the country's teeming youths.

Shehuri said the use of tricycles would ease the difficulties faced by smallholder farmers in the transportation of their produce, maintaining that the use of tricycles would ensure easy movement of food and agro-allied products and generate wealth for Nigerian farmers.

He said the Nigerian agricultural sector has huge potential to drive the country's economy, adding that the Nigerian market was massive across value chains and that the use of tricycles would help Nigeria in food distribution, food sufficiency and export of agricultural produce.

He appealed to the leadership of AFAN and other stakeholders in the agricultural sector to ensure that the tricycles on offer match the requirements of the small holder farmers.

"There is no point bringing in tricycles without inputs by the end-users: please, the small holder farmers must have inputs for the initiative to achieve its objectives and goals," Shehuri stressed.

The minister urged the association to ensure that there is synergy between the federal, state and local governments in carrying out its programmes, adding: "There should be a robust collaboration between the three tiers of government and AFAN because all the relevant stakeholders must streamline policies and programmes to achieve food and nutrition security and boost the economy."



Alhaji Sheu Mudi

High energy cost forces companies to run skeletal services

•As First Bank reduces operating hours

As the Russia and Ukraine war rages, Nigerian firms continue to take 'the bullets' as most local companies are gasping for survival. Findings during the week showed that nearly all firms from the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and bigger firms have reduced their operating hours from 24 hours to about eight or 12 hours.

While banks, insurance, agencies and other service support firms have cut their working hours from eight to about five hours daily, most MSMEs and manufacturing firms now run one shift of 12 hours instead of 24 hours and two shifts.

Some firms that use heavy diesel-powered generators have now bought smaller generators that use petrol.

Checks by The Trumpet showed that instead of some organisations using one heavy-duty generator that uses diesel now resulted in buying smaller generators that use petrol to cut costs.

Findings by The Trumpet also showed that some of the smaller generators are unable to power most of the equipment and heavy air-conditioners, while some categories of employees have been asked to work from home as others have been asked to report for work for three days per week.

Investigations also revealed that many workers were being asked to go home until the situation improves.

It would be recalled that crude oil that was sold for about \$70 in early February 2022 rose sharply to about \$140 per barrel at the commencement of the Russia and Ukraine war in late February and although a barrel of crude oil now sells for about \$120, diesel is currently sold for between N600 to N700 per litre.

The high cost of diesel also occurs during the period the country is experiencing constant collapse of the national grid, just as checks showed that the national grid collapsed four times between March and April this year, which threw the entire country into total darkness for several days.

While the high cost of diesel and epileptic power supply threaten businesses in the country, Director General of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), Olusegun Ajayi-Akadir, told The Trumpet in a telephone interview that the epileptic power supply and high cost of diesel have wiped away the little gain the manufacturing sector recorded last year after the COVID-19 pandemic.

He disclosed that many of his members were daily closing their shops due to the harsh operating

environment. He, therefore, appealed to the Federal Government to assist the manufacturing sector and businesses in the country by ensuring that the challenge of the national grid is settled once and for all.

Nigeria, Africa's highest producer of crude oil and one of the top 15 global major crude oil producers, has been unable to refine its abundant crude oil and provide stable public supply despite spending huge amounts of money on its energy sector over the years.

Meanwhile, First Bank Nigeria Limited has reduced the time of business transactions with its customers in most of its branches across the country to cut its energy costs.

A few days ago, the bank sent an SMS to some of its customers about its plans to review its business hours in most of its branches, with effect from Monday, April 11, 2022.

In a statement issued by the bank, it stated the time review was staggered and subjected to the volume of operations across different branches and outlets of the financial institution.

"We have revised our banking hours across all our locations. The revised opening and closing hours will be effective from Monday, April 11, 2022. Our alternative and digital channels are available and accessible 24 hours per seven days anywhere and anytime to meet your banking needs," the

bank said in its communication.

Findings showed that some branches were to open between 8:00a.m to 1:00 p.m daily, others were to open between 8:00 a.m and 2:00 p.m.

Findings by The Trumpet during the week showed that, while some banks in Ikorodu and its environs opted to close at 2:00 p.m, some of the branches in Ikeja and its environs closed at 3:00 p.m.

Reports have it that some branches across the country were operating between 8:00a.m and 1:00 p.m.

Some customers of the bank who did not receive the SMS on the bank's directive were livid when they visited their branches only to be told that the bank had closed for the day instead of the normal 4:00p.m closing hour.

A source in the bank, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, explained that the management of the bank decided to reduce the operating hours due to the high cost of diesel, which is the alternative source of power.

"With the current price of diesel, it only makes sense to review our operations and the number of hours we do business daily. As you know, most of our branches run on alternative power supply, otherwise, we will be failing in our services to our customers and the banking public, hence the decision.

Access Bank acquires First Guarantee Pension Funds Administrator

By JOHNMARK UKOKO

One of the country's leading financial institutions, Access Bank Plc, has acquired 75 per cent stakes in First Guarantee Pension Funds Administrator (PFA) in a deal concluded last week in Abuja and subject to all regulatory approvals.

The Trumpet learnt that the Access Bank's acquisition of 75 per cent shares followed a rigorous process and discussions at the board of the two organizations, just as most shareholders of the First Guarantee PFA were warming up to go into politics as the 2023 elections draw nearer.

An insider to one of the parties to the acquisition revealed that the Access Bank acquired the PFA to boost its dominance in the country's financial sector, adding that the bank identified the PFA firm as a viable concern to enable it to dominate in the PFAs sector.

Checks, however, showed that most employees of the First Guarantee PFA were apprehensive of what their fate would be when Access Bank fully takes over the running of the firm.

SON laments restricted access to bonded terminals, markets, rising importation of arms

•As port users seek reversal decision on SON's exit from ports

By ADAKU WALTER

Director General of the Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON), Farouk Salim, has lamented the inability of agencies to track the importation of substandard goods into the country.

He stated this at a maritime stakeholders' sensitisation forum with the theme: Standards Save Lives, Grow Economy and attributed the escalating insecurity in the country to the importation of substandard goods through the nation's ports.

Salim lamented that restriction of access to the ports, bonded terminals and major markets was an avenue for importing arms and ammunition used in escalating insecurity in the country.

His words: "We don't have access to bonded terminals and people use bonded terminals to import arms and ammunition, which bandits and terrorists use to fuel insecurity in the country. We also don't have access to major markets. When our officials go to seek

information, they are attacked and injured in the process. This is limiting our ability to track illicit importations."

Salim noted that the essence of the sensitisation with stakeholders was to communicate and share views on how to make businesses more efficient.

Meanwhile, clearing agents operating at the Lagos ports have canvassed reversal of the executive decision banning SON from the ports to check the importation of substandard goods into the country.

Vice President of the Association of Nigeria Licensed Customs Agents (ANLCA), Dr Kayode Farinto, noted that if the country must win the war against importation of substandard goods in the country, there was a need to return SON to the seaports.

Farinto, who spoke on Juxtaposing Substandard Imports: SON's Absence At The Seaports, insisted that since the agency vacated the seaports with the Federal Government's intention to allow its regulation outside the ports, there has been increase in the importation



Farouk Salim

of substandard goods. He said the effort of some nonconformists also showed that there was the need to reverse the executive decision, if Nigeria must win the war against the importation of substandard goods in the country, noting that if the trend was

not checked urgently, it might affect the economy and the nation's revenue generation. Farinto said if stakeholders must achieve ease of doing business, freight forwarders and customs brokers should do away with dishonest declarations, such as concealment, and inaccurate descriptions of imports and exports, to circumvent the procedures, which he described as an impediment to achieving ease of doing business.

On his part, the President of the National Association of Government Approved Freight Forwarders (NAGAFF), Tochukwu Ezisi, who was represented by his Chief of Staff Emma Agunbaze, urged SON to engage stakeholders more, which he said, was crucial to improving accountability in the organisation and its external audiences.

He said stakeholder engagement would further ensure proper consideration of interests and commended the SON for embracing the ease of doing business in the country.

Largest vessel laden with agricultural commodities berths at Onne port

The Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) has said the successful berthing of MV Lady Jane, the largest container vessel with 50 per cent agricultural commodities at the West Africa Container Terminal (WACT) in Onne Port, Rivers State, has proved its readiness to consolidate on the gains of container vessel traffic in the eastern ports.

MV Lady Jane, with overall

length of 295 metres and draft of 12 metres, berthed for the first time in Nigeria on Wednesday, April 13, 2022, at 3:00 p.m.

According to NPA, the historic landmark is that the vessel, which sailed from Majuro in the Marshall Islands, is discharging 840 TEUS and loading 1,060 TEUS, 50 per cent of which are agricultural commodities including cashew nuts, sesame seed and cassia

tora seeds, among others.

This is coming on the heels of the reception at Onne Port of the first ever export-laden barge containing 120 TEUs of Cocoa to Belgium via Cotonou earlier this year.

While the berthing of the MV Maersk Stadelhorn, a 300 metres LOA container vessel on August 15, 2020, tested the navigability of the channel, MV Lady Jane has proven

the capability of the channel for sustained container vessel traffic, NPA stated.

According to the authority, this is a testament to its unwavering resolve to promote exports and support the efforts of the Federal Government of Nigeria at positioning the non-oil sector as a revenue earner.

The authority said although the Onne Port Complex has traditionally been known as

a logistics hub for oil and gas services, the implementation of fresh initiatives deployed by the Managing Director, Bello Koko's administration resulted in a 30 per cent increase in container traffic at the end 2021.

Speaking to stakeholders, who came to welcome the vessel, Koko, who was represented by the Port Manager, Stanley Yitnoe, said the milestone signposted the fact that NPA's initiatives geared towards repositioning the eastern ports for productivity were yielding positive results, adding that the Onne Port Complex was fast becoming an attraction for container vessels traffic.

"We cannot afford to rest on our oars, we must continually strive to surpass stakeholders' expectations," he said, and commended the pilots for the professionalism demonstrated through the effortless and safe berthing of the vessel.

He assured that in addition to the palliative works that have already begun on the arterial roads at the Onne Port, full-scale rehabilitation of infrastructure, improvement of port security through illumination and deployment of access control to check unauthorised entry, were top on management's priority.



MV Lady Jane



Nigeria's infrastructural development affected by relegation of surveying profession, says Kasim

Mr Olukolade Kasim, the 15th chairman of Lagos State Branch of Nigerian Institution of Surveyors (NIS), spoke in this interview with **ONYEBUCHI SAMPSON**, on the importance of drones in surveying, lack of patronage, building collapse, quackery and others issues.

Congratulations on your election as the 15th chairman of the Lagos branch of Nigerian Institution of Surveyors. What areas are going to focus?

Thanks for your compliments. One of the areas, I will like to focus on in my tenure is the area of unity of all surveyors in the state. We have surveyors in private practice, those working with the government and in the academia. We also have a few working in our regulatory bodies. So, I will try to ensure that all work under the umbrella of NIS. Currently, there are several groupings, but when we have a united house, we can achieve a bit more than through different divisions.

Before now, the surveying profession is said to be the root of any development in any country. Is it still the case now? Are surveyors doing enough to drive development in the country?

Yes, even if we should be able to do more. I will give surveyors a pass mark. Surveyors had been at the bedrock of infrastructure, which is the programme of this present administration. I know that surveyors have been involved in the railway projects right from their inception. Surveyors have made huge input in the area of road construction. So, I will give the Nigeria surveyors a pass mark, but I think with more engagement from the government, we can do more. We can stand shoulder tall with our colleagues all over the world. So, if the government gives us more opportunities, we can have a mutually beneficial relationship.

Do you think that the absence of surveyors in politics is affecting the recognition of the profession in Nigeria?

On a lighter note, I don't want to agree completely with you, because we are claiming the governor of Lagos State, Babajide Sanwo-Olu as one of us. The Senate President is also a member of an allied profession. Over the years, we have had surveyors, who have played a big role in politics. Moreover, I agree with you, maybe we could do more. Most surveyors are now going into politics, I think we can bring professionalism into politics. As surveyors, we

are trained in precision and diligence, there is a lot we can bring into the political space, but we are also a bit conservative. I can tell you that in due course things will change and it is changing already.

What is your profession's relationship with Lagos State Government? Are there areas you want improvement?

As you are aware with the spate of recent happenings, particularly, with regards to incessant building collapse, we are trying to push for a bill to ensure that buildings over three floors are monitored. This will ensure that at least, we don't pray for such an unfortunate incident, but there will be some elements of check so to speak. We are also pushing for separate surveying inputs in infrastructural projects. So, instead of lumping them up as a turnkey project, we have surveying aspects, which should be strictly handled by surveyors. I am not saying that they are not being done by surveyors, but when surveyors come directly into the project, it is very reliable and they will be more careful than if it was just lumped under other professional bodies in the built environment.

For any meaningful development, there is a need for us to consult surveyors. If you see any smart city in any developed country, it must have had the input of surveyors. So we are available and should be patronised. If we are patronised, you can be sure of quality jobs. So, for any development which you want to put your money into, you must ensure that you engage professionals, so that they can be held responsible for any issues that may come up.

Professional fees were a major issue at a time in Lagos NIS. Are you planning for a review?

Between you and I, even now, a review is still necessary, but we all know the state of our economy now, so it will be a bit unfair if we are to review our fees again.

The honest truth is that the Exchange rate affects everything and I can tell you that it affects our instruments more than anything. We use position instruments and all of them are imported. So, Fired



Olukolade Kasim

affects our equipment. We cannot afford to manage our equipment, because they are very fragile and need servicing as well as replacements over years.

The surveying space is one, whereby the rate at which instrumentation changes is amazing. Nigeria surveyors do not want to be left behind. We want to be able to compete internationally. We don't want when jobs are coming in, and expatriates would say they want to bring their own colleagues from other countries. We want them to meet us here fully equipped as they will find in their own countries. So, all this affects how we charge, but I think to our credit, we have tried as much as possible to maintain the fees as they are.

What is your thought about government's investment in the surveying profession?

Over the years, surveyors used to have a place of pride in Nigeria. In fact, during the colonial era, the surveyor-general used to be the number two man. When you look through history, we made claims of Herbert Macaulay being a surveyor. I know Oba Adeniji Adele II had a surveying background down to some of our past presidents, like Surveyor Adekunle Kukoyi. So, surveyors used to have a place of pride, but over the years, it has been

dwindling. With the advent of modern technology, you can see what we've lost by relegating surveying. Back then, pictorial views of Lagos would show you green spaces and stuff like that, but now when you look at it. It's all buildings, no more green area. These are the things that the latest technology in Geographic Information system (GIS), the technology will highlight these things.

So I think, we've been neglected, but I think that they are seeing what they have missed. There is nothing wrong when we realise our mistakes, the thing is how to retrace our steps as soon as possible. We will continue to engage governments until they retrace their steps and give us our rightful place in the scheme of things.

Do you think that adequate attention has been given to surveying?

What we ask for is Fed-

eral government patronage so they can improve our practices and build a very solid practice. We assured them that anything can be handled here. There is no need to bring someone from somewhere to handle our projects. I hope the government continues to patronise us which will enable practitioners to build solid practice. One of the problems that we have now, is the issue of bringing drones into the country. A few of our members have their drones seized because they need a permit right from the office of the National Security Adviser. This takes a very long time. So, we are appealing to government to help us.

I understand for security reasons they may limit the sizes of the drones because drones aid in our photogrammetric works. They can exclude drones, which carry heavier tonnage and may be subjected to these security checks. If government can help us in that regard, we will be grateful.

We also intend to sponsor a bill for monitoring high rise buildings. We will continue to push for that at the state level, but drones and stuff like that are what we will continue to push at the national level.

Do you think that government is doing enough to address building collapse in Lagos?

In recent times, I would say they are stepping up. The panel of inquiry set up to investigate the Ikoyi building collapse has just submitted its report. We heard that 26 out of 28 of their recommendations were approved in the white paper released afterwards. If these recommendations

are followed through and implemented, we would consider that they have done a very good job. If prosecutions also follow for all indicted persons then we can restore some confidence back into the real estate sector. The Government should also follow up with a lot of in-house deep reflection on the process of building plan approvals. That in essence means they are doing well but they can and must do more for us to get out of these unfortunate collapses.

How is your association handling the issue of quackery in the profession?

We are creating stronger and stricter monitoring units and we are revamping the ethics committee. We are also introducing what we called the monitoring committee Task Force. I don't want to let the cat out of the bag, but basically, we are going to empower the committee to actually look at that issue critically.

What do you think were the reasons for big cities like Lagos sliding into slums?

I have to sympathise with Lagos because of its population explosion and the latest development that caught everybody by surprise. I have to give Lagos State government credit because there is regeneration going on in parts of the Island. Even places like Lekki needs regeneration. As I said, the government needs to engage us more, because, for any development, surveying is the bedrock. The governor is a surveyor and he realises the importance of surveyors and I am sure they will engage us.

Also, as surveyors, we don't give approvals, what we do is surveying, whether hydrographic or land. So, you can't blame us if you have issues with development and stuff like that, we will only do our task.

Many people are confused with surveying and mapping. How do they work together?

They are intertwined, mapping is an aspect of surveying. So, if you say you are mapping, you are carrying out a survey on another level. It is just large scale surveying so surveyors are mappers and geographers.

Government needs to accord surveying its rightful place because it is the bedrock of all development.

Bayelsa monarch mentors youths on environmental consciousness

By **AHERHOKE OKIOMA**, Yenagoa

King Bubaraye Dakolo of Ekpetiama Kingdom in Yenagoa Local Council of Bayelsa State has begun a mentorship programme to encourage youths on hard work and environmental consciousness.

The mentorship programme is in collaboration with an environmental rights-focused Non-Governmental organisation (NGO), Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF).

Participants drawn from oil bearing communities across Bayelsa, spent time, interacting with Dakolo in his palace.

The aim, the organisers said, is to get youths to draw inspiration from the monarch's accomplishments, seek wisdom and prepare for leadership positions in the future.

Speaking with the youths, Dakolo, the Agada the IV, of Ekpetiama Kingdom, expressed satisfaction with the younger ones for seeking knowledge and wisdom from the wise.

He stressed that the kingdom is an as old one, which existed before slave trade, palm oil trade, and groundnut trading among others.

The monarch explained that Mongo Park, and Lord Frederick Lugard, all passed and visited the kingdom, a development that exposed his subjects early to foreign languages.

He appealed to young people to embrace education, and also devote their time to learning something new every day of their lives.

While urging young people to always maximise their time, in all they do as well as be orderly in their youthful age, Dakolo, asked them to always take serious issues concerning oil and gas as well as the environment.

According to him, oil deposits are supposed to be a blessing but unmitigated pollution has left a bitter experience. He challenged them to study and provide a solution to the challenges posed by oil and gas exploration and production.

He said that young people must always endeavour to ask questions to be better than those old men, who never bother to ask questions about their environment.

The monarch who is also Chairman, Bayelsa Tradi-



King Bubaraye Dakolo

tional Rulers Council, urged the youths to always have a purpose on what they want to study in school, and discuss with their parents before obtaining their JAMB forms.

In his remarks, a renowned Environmentalist and the Director of HOMEF, Dr Nnimmo Bassey said the visit was to tap wisdom from the wise as well as enlighten the young scholars.

"We came with young people because education is a very strong tool for the growth of young people.

"We are here to learn from the wise on things that are of natural value to human nature, things like climate change, amongst others.

"Also to get the right knowledge, not the wrong one, but the one that will take young people far in life," he said.

Bassey noted that things are changing rapidly in the world today, so many people are seeking knowledge and information from the media.

He also commended the King, for his emergence as the Chairman, Bayelsa State Traditional Rulers Council.

Bassey observed that Dakolo was endowed with all the leadership qualities to transform and uplift the traditional institution in Bayelsa.

Delta approves 30 km of road projects

Delta State Government has approved the construction and rehabilitation of more than 30 kilometres of roads, across its three senatorial districts.

Commissioner for Information, Mr Charles Aniagwu, who addressed newsmen after the state's Executive Council, presided over by Governor Ifeanyi Okowa, said the approval was part of measures aimed at urbanising communities

Expert laments incessant building collapse

Stoies by **ONYEBUCHI SAMPSON**

Managing Director, Jecmeralds Engineering Ltd, Engr. Chidiebele Uzoagba has urged the government, individuals, and Engineers to imbibe the culture of good maintenance, to curb the menace of building collapse.

He stated this while speaking on the topic: "Poor Maintenance Culture in Nigeria, Role of Facility Management" at a meeting of the Nigerian Society of Engineers (NSE), Victoria Island Branch, Lagos.

Uzoagba lamented that many infrastructural amenities in Nigeria, such as schools, hospitals, offices, and monuments, are in bad shape due to negligence.

He identified lack of funds, indiscipline and ignorance, bad economy,

corruption, absence of the owner, and remoteness of the building as the reasons for poor maintenance culture.

Uzoagba also highlighted causes of maintenance problems as faulty design and construction, bad workmanship, and use of sub-standard materials.

"It's inexplicably true that in Nigeria today, peoples' commitment to maintenance is poor," he said and emphasised the role of facility maintenance as a driver to encourage a good maintenance culture in the country.

"We have seen this in the private sector, and even in private residences, where it's deployed, and how it has helped the life circle of those buildings.

"By the way, facility management is a multi-disciplinary profession

that involves every sector of engineering and integrating people's process and technology to deliver a good environment where we live and play," he said.

Across the country, according to him, there are building facilities that are poorly maintained due to poor culture, or bad attitudes.

"It would interest you to know that on February 19, 2019, the Federal Executive Council approved Building Maintenance Policy plan work, which has not been communicated to us till now.

"Not many Nigerians are aware of the policy and it is as if something has not been developed because if a policy is not communicated, or implemented of what use is that policy?"

"So, if we have a policy, it must be communicated

to the people. I believe this would transform the psyche of the people towards maintenance because policy should be able to transform, direct, or structure issues around that thing.

"Whether we are looking at maintenance culture on building, airway, road, oil & gas or in any sector of the economy, we must communicate it in a manner that helps to transform the psyche of the people and that could be through education, either formal or informal," he added.

He stressed that the formal education approach should be such that facility maintenance will be made part of the nation's curriculum in the universities. He noted that currently, no university in Nigeria offers facility management as a first degree except at the master's degree level.

FG commences installation of solar power systems in Abia

The Federal Government has commenced the installation of solar systems in 5,000 households in Abia State. The project is being handled by the World Bank through the Niger Delta Power Holding Company (NDPHC) in collaboration with the Federal Government.

An NDPHC representative, Engineer Chinonso Ugwueke, who led the installation team to Abia, said the project targets five million households in the country. The households, he said, will benefit from 24-hour uninterrupted solar power outside the national grid.

He stressed that the lawmaker representing Aba South Constituency in the Abia State House of Assembly, Hon. Obinna Ichita paid for the 3,000 systems to be installed in his constituency as well as sponsored the installation team.

Speaking, Hon Ichita said that renewable energy had



Ms Sharon

the potential to meet the energy needs of rural communities, especially at a time when the national grid had almost collapsed. He stressed that the solar systems would provide opportunities for "unserved and underserved" communities in his constituency to overcome their power

challenges.

Ichita urged the state government to key into the project, saying renewable energy could provide constant power supply to households and businesses, which would, in turn, boost socio-economic development in rural areas.

"When I discovered this

opportunity, I decided to bring it down to my constituency, considering how important Aba is in our march to industrialisation.

"Besides constant power supply, 1000 youths will be taken off the street and get employed along the solar technology value chain," he added.

The Regional Manager of A-Solar Systems Company, the company that handled the installations, Mr Ibrahim Usman, told Aba South traditional rulers that the initiative (Project) was in furtherance of the Sustainable Development Goal seven (SDG 7), whose target was to provide affordable and accessible electricity off the national grid for rural and semi-urban communities.

Chairman of Aba South Council of Traditional Rulers, Eze Ibe Enyeazu, commended Hon Ichita for the gesture, saying it would end the power challenges in the rural areas.

and the construction of a new office accommodation for the State Civil Service Commission.

He stated that the state has approved the appointment of a Financial Adviser on a proposal, which, according to him, is requesting the state to be part of the establishment of a manufacturing facility that would be responsible for the coalition and production of nails.

"We have approved the construction of Ute-Okpu/Ute-Enugu Road in Ika North East Local Council. It is about 10.85kms.

"This was a road awarded sometime in 2010 during the time of the late Hon. Sam Obi, but was abandoned over time and was later repudiated."

According to him, EXCO also approved the construction of a landing jetty at Kolofiaebene in Bomadi

Aviara - Bethel road in Isoko South Local Council; 1.2km Abi-Ezionum road and 12km internal roads in Uwheru, Ughelli North which, he said, cuts across eight agrarian communities.

He said: "We are still continuing with approval of projects, not just to enable us to finish strong, but also, to reach several rural communities and urbanise them.

in the state.

He listed some of the projects to include 2.05km Kokodiagbene road in Warri South West Local Council; 10.85km Ute-Okpu/Ute-Enugu road in Ika North East Local Council and 1.5km Ovie Palace road in Mosogar in Ethiopie West Local Council.

Others include Etua -Oliogo and Etua Etit roads in Ndokwa West Local Council; 4.9km

National Monument: Work begins at Ogaimen Ancient palace



His Imperial Majesty, Rich Arisco Osemwenge J.P.
The Ogiamen of Utantan Benin City

By **GABRIEL OMONHINMIN**

The ancient Royal Palace of Ogiamen of Utantan, in Sakponba Road, Benin City, Edo State Nigeria, was built in 1160AD. It is one of the oldest palaces in West Africa still standing.

After several visits to the palace in Benin City by the then British Colonial Masters, the ancient palace was in May 29th 1959, declared one of the country's national monuments.

62 years after this declaration, members of the Ogiamen Royal Family, especially their elders, are still having problems clearing the surroundings of the palace of illegal structures and debris to pave way for the National Museum and Monuments.

The Ogiamen Royal Family's strenuous efforts to eject all the illegal occupants of the surroundings of the ancient palace in Benin City have yielded very little results. Unfortunately, the illegal occupants of the ancient palace neighbourhood have done all within their powers to frustrate this move, just because they want to continue to remain in the vicinity.

Plywood sellers in Benin City, who have made the palace surroundings their trading spot for years, constitute the majority of the occupants in the area. They are also accused of generating the huge dirt that litters everywhere around the palace ground, thus making it difficult to access the

palace and the entire area. The issue is further complicated by some relatives of the Ogiamen larger family who have also built their houses in the area in question without getting the approval of the elders of the Ogiamen Royal Family.

This has obviously resulted in a tug of war between the elders of the Ogiamen royal family and all the illegal occupants of the surroundings of the ancient palace for about 62 years.

The National Museum and Monuments management on its part, has continued to maintain, that it can only take over the ancient palace, only when all the surroundings are cleared of the filthy and illegal structures. They stressed that there must be, at least 50 meters radius between the ancient palace and all the structures in the vicinity.

In a deliberate effort to meet these conditions, the elders of the Ogiamen royal family of Utantan sometimes last year, met in Benin City and resolved to do all within their powers, to clear the palace surroundings of all illegal structures and debris so that the National Museum and Monuments can move into the place.

The head of the Ogiamen Royal Family, His Imperial Majesty, Rich Arisco Osemwenge, JP, the Ogiamen of Utantan Bini who spoke with Palace Watch, said, "We are surprised that this matter has continued to linger unnecessarily. Some persons, who bought the unauthorised

areas in conjunction with some of our relatives, who have built their personal these areas without seeking approval, are making things to be very difficult. At some point, they went to court, to restrain the Ogiamen Royal Family from ejecting them from the palace surroundings. But we on our part have now resolved to clear the place so that the National Museum and Monuments can take over the palace. It was in line with this resolve, that the larger Ogiamen family recently met again in Benin City, and decided to task itself and contribute money to rebuild part of the ancient palace that has fallen. From these contributions, the family has also embarked on the renovation of the inner chambers of the ancient palace.

"As we speak, 15 deities inside the inner chambers of the ancient palace excluding Olokun and Orunmila, have all been appeased and revived. The Ogiamen Royal family, however, rejected the Olokun and Orunmila idols we located in the place because these idols are not aboriginal to the Bini people. As the name suggests, these idols are of Yoruba extraction. We are Bini people, not Yoruba.

Osemwengie continued; "I was physically present in that palace on a one-day working visit, to supervise the work going on, in the inner chamber and surroundings of the ancient palace. The point that must interest you to note, is that among the deities just revived in the inner chambers of the palace, has one of the most potent deities in Bini land. It is known and called the fire eating and fire-spitting 'Osu Nazengban'. This deity immediately it was revived swung into action to exterminate all the people, who have been working over the years against the peace and progress of the Ogiamen Royal Family of Utantan Benin City.

Another idol known as "Evan Nu Regbe" was also recently re-awakened, and is now set to strike, His Majesty stressed, "The time for the National Museum and Monuments to take over the ancient palace as a national monument is now because this project can no longer be delayed."

Your Majesty, what specific measures have you now put in place that will last and ensure that normalcy returns to the place and eventually results in the clearing of the palace surroundings of all the intruders?

Osemwengie: "As civilized people, our measures or more appropriately efforts, to clear all these surroundings of filthy and illegal structures, were initially that of stick and carrot. Then we were pleading and begging them to vacate the area peacefully. It was when these entreaties fell on deaf ears, we decided to adopt other measures to clear the place of all the mess.

Your Majesty after my tour of the ancient palace surroundings in Benin City, I discovered, there is still a lot of work to be done, to meet the requirements of the National Museum and Monuments:

First, at the front of the ancient palace at plot 97 Sakponba Road, only 20 meters as against the 50 meters of the National Museum policy, have been met. As areas cleared of structures from the major road to the palace, is just about 20 meters.

Second, the two sides of the palace have not been cleared of filth and illegal structures.

Third, the back of the palace has been cleared of dirt and structures up to about 50 meters or more. But there is still a lot of work to be done in the entire area, if the mess on both sides of the ancient palace must be removed?

The truth is that we are fighting very hard to remove this mess. No matter the present odds, we will succeed. My family will not relent in efforts to make the ancient palace ground a tourist attraction. For those illegal occupants and owners of those structures, who are recalcitrant and are still living within the palace grounds or areas, they either learn to leave the place voluntarily or would invariably be forced out of the place. It doesn't matter how long it will take us.

I must confess, presently, it has not been easy at all for us to clear some of the surroundings of the ancient palace, which we have so far succeeded in clearing. It is sad, that a place as important as these ancient palace surroundings has been for decades now the hub of plywood sellers and other illegal activities, which we strongly objected to as a family.

I must say, this illegality festered, just because we as a family were not too decisive in our initial actions then. So these people saw our passiveness as a sign of weakness, which is not. But now, this is no longer the case. In the process of being peaceful and civil in our approach, all manners of illegal structures continued to spring up around the palace. While the debris generated by plywood sellers daily and other activities in the areas continued to mount. Thus, making the whole area eyesore. This can no longer be tolerated or remained unchallenged.

I must at this point emphasize that no responsible member of the Ogiamen Royal Family sold any of these areas to anyone. As civilized members of the society, we initially tried to be civil in all our approaches. We appealed to the senses and conscience of all the people involved in these illegal activities, especially the plywood traders, alongside some of our relatives who decided to illegally build structures in the

palace surroundings to vacate the areas.

At some point, we have to issue them, with quiet notice since they refused to vacate the areas peacefully. At another point, we have to write to invite the Edo State Ministry of Environment to come and do their job and ensure that the whole area becomes habitable. At another point, the law enforcement agencies were invited to come and help in the clearing of the place of these people who have continued to constitute themselves as a nuisance in the entire area.

After all these efforts, the people who still have their buildings in the area, and who have refused to leave the place on their own volition, will have to be forced out of the place, when we finally appeal to the Federal Government to help us prevail on the Edo State Government, to do all within its powers to clear the areas of all illegal occupants and structures so that the national monument can now take off.

How will this National Monument benefit the Ogiamen Royal Family directly when it finally becomes functional?

Ogiamen Arisco: The preservation of the ancient palace and its relics is of great importance not only to the Ogiamen Royal Family of Utantan-Bini alone but to all the aborigine Bini people at home and abroad. Firstly, this particular palace was built before the palace now known as the Oba of Benin Palace. The present Oba of Benin palace was never inhabited by any of the Ogisos, who are the original owners of Benin City. The palace situated around the Ring Road area of Benin City, if the truth must be told, was once the burial ground of the people of Igodomigodo land.

Ogiso Evian and Ogiamien Erebo also lived in this particular ancient Bini palace before the invasion of Benin City by Oranmiyan and his forces. It was during the reign of Ogiamien Erebo that the sanctity of the ancient Igodomigodo now known as the Bini Kingdom was violated by the Yoruba invaders.

It was the crisis that arose, after several failed attempts to invade Igodomigodo land that was mostly responsible for the exit of our relatives, who later went on to establish other ethnic groups or kingdoms in other areas of Edo state of today. These kings and their people migrated from this place to where we now know as Edo North, Edo West and Edo South.

In the case of the Niger Delta areas of today, the majority of our kinsmen formed the bulk of some of these areas in Delta, Bayelsa and Rivers States. People from these areas were our kit and

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Stage performance is a discipline craft – Actress Kehinde Bankole

When it comes to bringing life to a character then talented actress, Kehinde Bankole best suit this accolades as her acting prowess stands her out. Having featured in countless movies and won some awards; Kenny as she is fondly called by her fans is not resting on her oars to get better. Kehinde who has tested both the craft of stage performance and film production in this chat with OMONIYI ALLI spoke about her acting prowess, the thin line between stagecraft and movies, keeping off scandal and what she considers good script amongst others.



You are a fantastic actress, what do you look out for in a script before you consider the script worthy?

The direction the story is going, there are some stories you will see and you will understand what they are saying but you don't understand the direction it's going, that is what I look out for, I want a good story, apart from

the story being good I should be able to understand the direction, there is a theme, a message the story is trying to pass, whatever happens to me the first time I open a script will be happening to the people watching at home, we serve as the bridge between the people at home watching the movie and the person writing the story.

You do a lot of stage performances; which will you consider more challenging, being a stage performer or an actress?

Both of them are challenging, stage is very disciplined, very challenging because you don't have a second take, there is no rewind and let me take it again and so, what you give at that time is what the people are going to get, it is important you make your decision for stage like in fraction of a second, you have to decide how you want to deliver that role within a fraction of a second, and once it's done you can't take it back, it helps you to focus, people think acting a movie is simple but it is not, it is also equally challenging, the opportunity you have to act a stage play once is not like that of a film, you might have to re-do like 30 times, think about rewinding a particular emotion, the stress of having to put yourself on the same level of that emotion for about 30 times, especially if there is a crowd in a scene and you have to re-do a scene plenty times and have to sustain the same level of energy, if you have to remember something bad that made you be in the mood, you have to remember that over and over if you are ask to act the scene over again, so it is equally challenging if not even more, it's a lot of hard work.

These days we see more female actresses delve into production and directing, are you also going into that direction anytime soon?

No, am an actor, well if I have the opportunity to produce something, it doesn't have to be a film, it could be telling a serious story through documentary, some people do this, somehow I could be involved in the process of the production, I don't have anything against it but I am an actor.

Some of your colleagues reject scripts based on who the other casts members are, do you also find yourself in such situations?

it is not a yes or a no if it is important to the life of that film, I have a team, we sit down and we make a decision, if we think the smallest person is not good for that film or the biggest person is not good, it is business decisions that people make will make them turn it down or accept it, I necessarily do not have to say because an actress is in it or not in it, I look at the story, sometimes if a story is very good and they cast you and you know within yourself that you don't find yourself in the story, you can't deliver it, that is one of the reasons why you turn it down, you don't think essentially because one actor is not there, it must be because of a business decision.

What is your take on the state of the

industry before the joined and now?

Yes there are a lot of changes, those who are ahead of us have done a lot of work, there are now so many opportunities, there are young producers, actors, it is spreading everywhere, the media is coming to us and we are also going to the media, it is not everybody in entertainment that are acting, everybody is doing serious work here, there are editors, cinematographers, it is way better than how it was before.

How have you been able to keep fit?

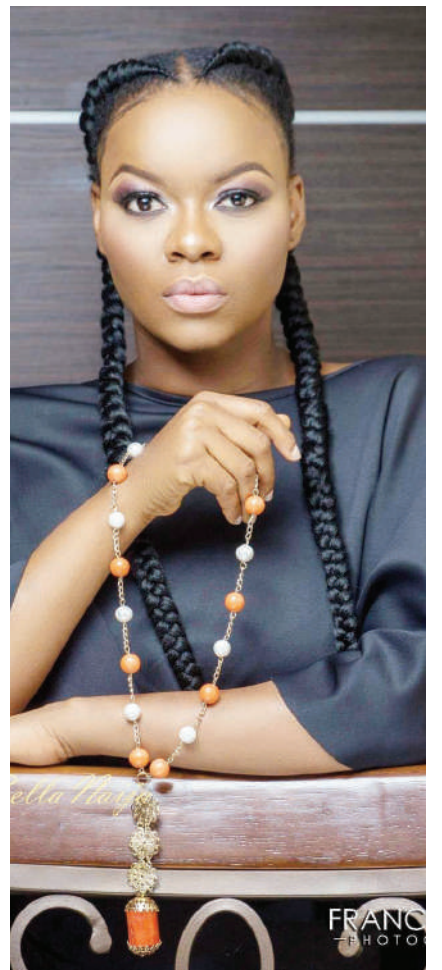
Although the nature of my job is a bit stressful but more importantly; I watch what I eat, rest well, do exercise if need be and just put my mind at rest.

How have you been able to keep off scandals?

I keep things simple; simplicity is what makes you stay away from trouble, when you keep everything simple it makes whatever comes back at you simple

Take acting from Kehinde who is Kehinde Bankole in real life?

I joke a lot, I like to laugh, when am in the mood we crack jokes and laugh and also have a good time, I love to cook, I love spending time with family, loved ones and friends, I like to make people happy, and I can be very strict.



Kate Henshaw, Ini Edo others attend Rita Dominic's bridal shower

■ As Rita is expected to exchange marital vows



Cross-section of top celebrities at the bridal shower

Nollywood actress Rita Dominic has some of her close friends organize a beautiful bridal shower over the weekend. The movie star and her partner Fidelis

Anosike got engaged earlier in the week.

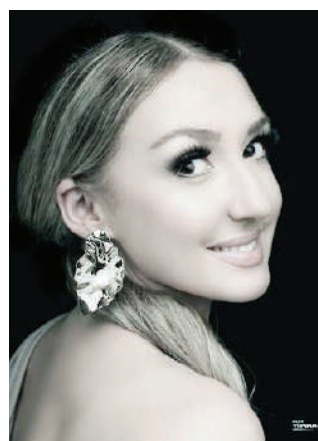
The private event saw some of Hollywood's screen goddesses in attendance. From Ego Boyo, Ini Edo, Kate

Henshaw, Dakore Egbuson-Akande to Mo Abudu, Joke Silva, Chioma Chukwuka, Michelle Dede, it was indeed a beautiful evening filled with fun and laughter.

Dominic and Anosike will reportedly be getting married in Imo state on April 18th and 19th this year.

It would be recalled that on Boxing Day, 2020, Dominic sent social media into frenzy when she shared some cosy photos with her partner, Anosike.

Dominic's partner, Anosike, is the founder of Folio Media Group, a multi-media company that owns Daily Times Nigeria (founded 1926), the country's oldest newspaper.



Oyin

Hannah Oyin Fakoya, popularly known as Oyin, is no doubt one of the most promising new faces in the entertainment industry in Africa. Only a few months after appearing on the scene, she is already moving with the Who is Who of the Nigerian entertainment industry.

Counting the indigenous Yoruba singer Qdot Alagbe or the rap legend Vector Tha Viper to her close circle of friends, Oyin has been quickly accepted and connected with notable

Why Oyin has everything that it takes to become the Jennifer Lopez of Africa

music industry personalities and influencers. Apart from her musical talent, her ability to blend in the Lagos scene has been one of her remarkable moves. Oyin's open, charming and professional personality is being equally appreciated and praised by fellow musicians, producers and industry experts.

Apart from the music industry, Oyin already had her on-screen debut in one episode of Bovi Ugboma's Back to School. The Nigerian actor and comedian, who also shares a deep friendship with Oyin, acknowledged her acting talent and encouraged her to look into an acting career. One of the door openers for an acting career in Africa could no doubt be the legendary actor Richard Mofe-Damijo, another one of Oyin's allies in the industry.

Being confronted with the question if it wouldn't be better

to choose one field within the entertainment industry, Oyin says, "You see, one of my biggest role models in the global entertainment scene is Jennifer Lopez. People have been questioning her ambition to be both singer and actress so many times but she proved that you actually can do as many things as you want and be good at it. Life is too short to limit yourself and not explore all your given talents." Considering her talent, personality, looks and connections, there is no doubt that Oyin, the blonde bombshell from Germany, has everything that it takes to become one of the brightest shining stars in the African entertainment industry and beyond. Oyin just finished shooting a leading role for a pilot in a Nollywood production alongside King Tonto Dikeh and Ime Bishop Umoh aka Okon Lagos in Abuja.

Creative industries entrepreneur, Obi Asika, to speak at NECLive9

Obi Asika, creative industries entrepreneur, will speak at Nigerian Entertainment Conference (NECLive) ninth edition on April 29th, 2022.

The founder and CEO of Storm 360, an indigenous music label, and founding partner of Dragon Africa, a strategic communications firm is renowned for his significant influence in Nigeria's music industry and is prominent for laying the infrastructure for the growth and development of the media and entertainment industry. Obi Asika music label spawned talented entertainers like Naeto C, Ikechukwu, Sasha P, Tosin Martins, and Yung 6ix.

At NECLive9, Obi Asika will engage other creative geniuses in the

industry on how to sustain Africa's momentum in the entertainment space. Some of the likeminded-gurus Asika will be discussing with include Anyiko Owoko from Kenya, actor and comedian, Mr. Macaroni, founder of ChessInSlums, Tunde Onakoya, Dr. Busola Tejumola, the Executive Head of Content and West Africa Channels at MultiChoice, Aline Gahongayire, Rwandan gospel music star, Broadcaster Osi Suave, Sam Onyemelukwe, media executive, Broadcaster Mozez Praiz and more.

The conversations will explore how African creatives and entertainers can use digital media and technology tools to build sustainable economic power for themselves, the industry,

and their nations, opportunities via communities of Africans in the diaspora and social impact and development through entertainment.

The special hybrid event, NECLive9, will be held at Landmark Event Centre in Lagos and simultaneously broadcast live on Hip TV (DStv and GOtv) and online platforms.



Obi Asika



Seedorf, Okocha and Davido Feature in the Heineken Novelty Face-Off

4-time Champions League winner and iconic Dutch footballer, Clarence Seedorf, Afrobeats superstar Davido and former Super Eagles captain Jay-Jay Okocha all featured in the Heineken Face-off, a novelty match that was held at Landmark Beach as part of the UEFA Champions League Tour presented by Heineken®.

The game which lasted about an hour saw Team Heineken take on Team Nigeria in an encounter that showcased some classy football skills from both sides. Team Heineken was captained by UCL Ambassador Clarence Seedorf and featured NB Plc Supply Chain Director, Martin Kochl and

Finance Director, Rob Kleinjan. Afrobeats Superstar Davido led the line for Team Nigeria which had ex-Nigerian internationals, Jay Jay Okocha, Daniel Amokachi and Pastor Taribo West, NB Plc Marketing Director, Emmanuel Oriakhi, Rapper MI and Afro R&B singer Darey.

The game which was filled with fun moments saw the over 500 watching fans treated to an entertaining display with Okocha finding the net with almost every shot he took and Clarence Seedorf showing why he is called the Professor after hitting the woodwork twice and finding the back of the twice.

Jesse King returns with 'The Rebirth Medley'

Foremost Nigerian musician Jesse King popularly known as Buga has made a return to the music scene with 'The Rebirth Medley'.

'The Rebirth Medley' is the recreation of all Buga's songs to reflect who he is in this space and time.

Speaking about this project, the veteran who has been on a hiatus says "I am constantly in motion, reinventing myself and this you will hear through my music."

'The Rebirth Medley' is a bridge between the old and the new; a potpourri of different sounds well blended like butter and bread.

It's Jazz, it's Soul, it's Hiplife, it's Highlife, it's Apala, it's Street. It speaks of culture and traditions.

The Rebirth Medley shows the versatility of Buga so I truly hope you enjoy it."

Popularly now known and referred to as 'Buga', he is easily recognized for his traditional style of dressing infused with modern day styling to promote and encourage the younger generation to embrace African dressing and fabrics. His signature hat with long-tail used by the Yoruba hunters (looks like a Santa Claus hat) makes this all interesting. The hat has commonly taken up the

new name "Buga" after Jesse King Buga.

One of his popular tracks, 'Mummy Ooo' remains the preferred choice of song to celebrate women on mothers days, birthdays and at traditional weddings of the Yoruba speaking tribe both home and abroad



Jesse



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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	
3 x 2	37,413.09	40,219.07	3 x 2	33,987.48	36,622.04	3 x 2	27,524.84	29,589.20	3 x 2	22,721.91	24,426.05	
4 x 2	49,884.02	53,625.42	4 x 2	45,177.83	48,566.17	4 x 2	36,700.09	39,452.60	4 x 2	30,295.53	32,657.70	
5 x 2	62,355.15	67,031.71	5 x 2	56,472.29	60,707.71	5 x 2	45,866.19	49,315.34	5 x 2	37,863.00	40,710.09	
6 x 2	76,142.50	81,853.18	6 x 2	67,975.12	73,073.25	6 x 2	55,049.68	59,178.41	6 x 2	45,443.82	48,852.10	
7 x 2	87,297.21	93,844.50	6 x 3	101,962.78	109,609.99	6 x 3	54,074.55	61,200.90	7 x 2	53,017.79	56,993.61	
7 x 3	166,172.00	179,229.37	6.5 x 3	110,459.64	118,744.11	6.5 x 3	89,455.78	96,164.94	8 x 2	60,591.76	65,136.14	
7 x 4	197,125.00	211,909.37	7 x 2	79,304.29	85,252.11	7 x 2	64,224.63	69,041.48	9 x 2	80,454.83	86,488.95	
8 x 2	99,768.24	107,250.85	7 x 3	128,456.43	138,090.67	7 x 3	96,336.94	103,562.21	10 x 2	86,147.92	92,609.02	
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10 x 4	299,302.72	321,752.57	8 x 6	271,900.48	292,008.02	8 x 6	250,284.32	269,911.09	7 x 4	120,404.56	129,434.90	
14.5 x 4	520,790.19	559,849.45	9 x 2	101,962.78	109,609.99	9 x 2	93,773.60	100,872.44	8 x 4	137,692.17	148,019.082	
7 x 5	218,243.02	234,629.74	9 x 3	152,944.01	164,414.81	9 x 3	141,108.54	151,691.68	10 x 4	172,301.37	185,224.22	
8 x 5	299,304.72	321,752.57	9 x 4	203,925.29	219,219.69	9 x 4	187,921.52	202,015.71	14.5 x 3	187,057.43	201,086.73	
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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	
10 x 6	538,748.49	579,154.53	10 x 6	424,845.04	456,708.42	10 x 6	390,978.13	420,320.48	11 x 6	340,573.10	340,466.08	
11 x 6	592,622.16	637,068.82	11 x 5	389,441.887	418,650.01	11 x 5	358,396.62	385,276.37	HP7.25 X 6	218,226.87	234,593.89	
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NBBF commits to grassroots development – President

Proposes 2023 for para-basketball competition

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

The President of the Nigeria Basketball Federation (NBBF), Igoche Mark has said that the board is committed to grassroots development.

Mark, who made this known after watching the National Para Games organised by the Ministry

of Youths and Sports in Abuja, also promised to organise a para-basketball league next year.

In his statement according to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), the NBBF President noted that the proposed event will be all-encompassing.

He said, "This is a promise, with an all-inclusive package that will include all players,

irrespective of their physical challenge or situation.

"We have promised basketball stakeholders, including players, officials, and administrators, that the main goal of our board is grassroots development.

"It is a development that will be all-inclusive, irrespective of the physical challenge anyone might be going through," he

said.

The NBBF president said the federation would in due course make further pronouncements on the para-basketball league.

He then praised the Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development for organising and hosting the National Para Games, saying it is a good omen for the overall development of sports.



Accra 2023: NCF provides cricket consultants to Ghana

The Nigeria Cricket Federation (NCF) in recent times has been engaged in activities geared toward achieving five key strategic imperatives for the development of cricket sport in the country

This has drawn

commendations from cricket governing bodies in the continent and internationally.

NCF has always provided the needed support and platforms to cricketers in Africa and the world.

However, ahead of the Africa

Games "Accra 2023", facility upgrades and construction have become the front burner for the Ghana Cricket Association (GCA).

Following the above, NCF as part of its merited support system has recommended Mr. Yemi Amusa and Mr. Francis Atekega as turf wickets consultant, and chief groundsman respectively to Ghana Cricket Association.

The duo will provide expert advice and services in the construction of a turf wicket at the famous Achimota Cricket Oval in Accra.

Meanwhile, preliminary discussions took place during the recently concluded Women's T20I tournament in Lagos where the President of the Federation, Mr. Uyi Akpata, and Presidents of other countries, engaged

in a closed-door meeting to discuss collaborations on how to grow the game in the continent.

Prince Kelechi will lead Flying Eagles to victory, says Obuh



As Roma Academy promising winger, Prince Kelechi, has been singled out for greatness in the profession by John Obuh, the vastly experienced Nigerian coach.

According to the football gaffer, the youngster possesses the talents that can lead the

Flying Eagles to victory.

Moreover, the WAFU U-20 tournament from May 7 - May 20, 2022, which is held bi-annually, is also the means to qualify for the U-20 Africa Cup of Nations and Obuh believes Kelechi will lead the nation to victory in both events.

Complete Sports reports that the Ex-Nigerian Under-17 World Cup coach, Obuh who worked closely with Prince Kelechi with the former having been the technical director of Roma Academy, Abuja believes the young forward can help Ladan Bosso's under-20 team achieve greatness.

Obuh said, "Prince Kelechi has exceptional qualities that stand out," explained Obuh. "He has an understanding of the game as well as good balance and coordination which means that he has exceptional technique with the ball at his feet.

"It's incredibly difficult to take the ball off him. He is good one-on-one and has a good shot and precision. He can shoot with both feet even if he is right-footed, he can finish with the left as well.

"That makes him very difficult to read for the defenders. Will he go right or left? It makes him difficult to handle. And impressively too, he's a huge threat at free kicks," concluded Obuh who had only good things about the 19-year-old attacker," he added.

Meanwhile, Prince Kelechi who has also featured for Prince Kazeem Eletu FC is wanted by the Spanish La Liga SmartBank side, CD Leganes, French Ligue 1 club, Amiens SC, and another top team from Qatar with the three sides desperately jostling for the signature of the latest Nigerian attacking sensation.

India 2022: Flamingos battle Egypt in qualifiers

Bankole picks 20 for Egypt

The Nigeria U17 girls will on Sunday battle Egypt's U17 girls in the first leg of double-clash qualifiers for FIFA U17 Women's World Cup third round at the MKO Abiola National Stadium, Abuja.

Flamingos had in the course of the world cup qualifying campaign, defeated the Democratic Republic of Congo 8-0 on aggregate to reach the final round of the qualifiers if they fly past their Egyptian counterparts.

However, the winner on aggregate will tango with the winner of the fixture between Ethiopia and South Africa for a place at this year's FIFA U17

Women's World Cup, which will be staged in India, 11th - 30th October.

In course of the April 17 cracker with the Egyptians, Head Coach Olowookere Bankole has picked 20 players from the group in camp for the task of eliminating Egypt's U17 girls and reaching the final round of African qualifiers for this year's FIFA U17 Women's World Cup.

According to reports by the Director of Media and Communication of Nigeria Football Federation (NFF), Ademola Olajire, Bankole in his team selection, picked two goalkeepers, seven defenders,

four midfielders, and seven forwards.

Faith Omilana, Linda Jiwuaku will serve as the goalkeepers while Blessing Sunday, Comfort Folorunsho, Tumininu Adeshina, Olamide Oyinlola, Omamuzo Edefe, Miracle Usani, and Confidence Nwoha were picked as defenders.

NBBF calls on Sports Minister to resolve federation crisis

The President of Nigeria Basketball Federation (NBBF), Igoche Mark, has called on the Minister of Youths and Sports Development, Sunday Dare to fashion out solutions to the crisis rocking the federation.

Mark made the call to draw the attention of the ministry to salvage the sport that has experienced a great decline at the grassroots level.

According to him, the ministry is aware of the crisis rocking NBBF and has promised to wade in to help resolve the imbroglio.

While he vowed that the ministry knows the right thing to do, he urged them to be expedient and decisive in their actions.

NBBF presently parades two

presidents. Igoche Mark came in through the federation's election held in Abuja on January 31, 2002, and Ahmadu Musa Kida emerged in another federation's election held the same date in Benin, The Trumpet gathered.

Mark said, "I believe the minister and the ministry have the best interest of the basketball game at heart. They know the right thing to do and I believe they will do it.

"But it is time they all come out and specifically say something and do what is right about what we have on ground now," he added.

The NBBF president decried the level of inconsistency in the development of basketball which

is one of the resultant effects of the crisis, noting that the ministry is aware of the existence of both factions.





Kano Pillars to play in Sani Abacha Stadium after two years away

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

Kano Pillars play Katsina United this Saturday at the Sani Abacha stadium after over two years away from home.

This is coming on the heels of the League Management Company (LMC) granting provisional approval to use the Sani Abacha Stadium after it acknowledged the receipt of club's letter on April 1, 2022, The Trumpet gathered.

In the LMC response dated 12 April, 2022, the letter tagged: "RE: CERTIFICATION OF STADIA: SANI ABACHA STADIUM KANO" reads: "We acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 1 April 2022, informing us that the Kano State Government has made funds available for the urgent replacement of the playing turf, and also requesting for a provisional leave to return to the Sani Abacha Stadium, pending the mobilization and commencement of turf replacement project.

"Be informed that after due consideration of your request, the League Management Company is



Kano Pillars players on training session

granting Kano Pillars FC provisional clearance to temporarily return to the Sani Abacha Stadium for your home matches, pending the commencement of replacement works on the playing turf.

"You are however required to immediately propose an alternate ground where you will revert your

remaining home matches when the turf replacement project commences at the Sani Abacha Stadium. Note further, that you are required to make instant improvements to the current condition to the playing turf, to make fit for purpose pending the commencement of the project.

"The above is for your information

and consequent action," the letter stated.

Meanwhile, the club management had in the 2019/2020 season suspended all local matches from the stadium following the poor state of the stadium facilities.

According to the club in 2019, it appealed to the Kano state

government to renovate the stadium to meet the standard approved by the Confederation of African Football (CAF) for the 2019/2020 African Champions League.

The statement read in part: "The association, in this wise, wants to appeal to the Kano State Government to put more efforts into renovating the stadium to meet the CAF standard before the competition begins."

Following the appeal by the club, the Kano State House of Assembly in October 2021 adopted a motion moved by the House Committee Chairman on Sports, Nurudeen Alhassan, calling on the state government to put the stadium into shape.

Supporting the club's appeal in 2021, the honourable member representing Kuru state constituency, Alhaji Kabiru Dashi described the predicaments of Kano Pillars as pathetic noting the players have been subjected to play all their 2020/2021 games in Kaduna due to the coronavirus facilities Sani Abacha stadium has.

However, Kano Pillars' last game at the Sani Abacha Stadium was on March 15, 2020, which ended in a 2-0 win over Jigawa Golden Stars.

NFF board composition, PFAN advocate for stakeholders' inclusiveness

The President of the Professional Footballers Association of Nigeria (PFAN), Tijani Babangida, said that the composition of the executive board of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) is 'deficient on all fronts'.

Babangida stated that the football governing board chose to favour chairmen of states' football governing bodies leaving out other key stakeholders which negate the democratic principles of the sport.

According to him, the faulty composition of the board has always hurt the distribution of votes.

Babangida on Tuesday in

Lagos opined that restructuring is the only avenue to make the membership of the NFF board more inclusive.

In a statement tagged, "NFF for Sustainable Growth and Development of Nigeria", and made available to newsmen, Babangida advised that if the body is to make progress, the provisions of article 10:1 of NFF Statutes must be reviewed.

He said, "The current structure of the NFF board is deficient on many fronts. The current structure dominated by the chairmen of the state football associations to the detriment of other important stakeholders does not portray the game of football as the most

democratic game in the world.

"The board dominated by the state football association chairmen has its roots in the faulty nature of the composition and distribution of votes.

"This votes amongst the five distinct members of the NFF, according to the provisions of article 10:1 of NFF Statutes must be addressed if we must move forward and make progress", Babangida added.

Furthermore, Babangida faulted the structure of the congress that ushers in new executives, adding that it is an avenue where electoral fraud and malpractices are promoted.

He continued, "There is no doubt that the current structure of the congress and the board has continuously promoted and encouraged election malpractices such as votes buying.

"This has negative effects on the quality of members of the board which robs on quality decisions making and good governance," he added.

Babangida proposed that the governing body should adopt a system that is devoid of the exclusion of key stakeholders across boards which will aid in curbing electoral malpractice and excesses of vote-buying.

He said, "What I mean is that we should adopt a system, and

structure where the board is composed of representatives of only duly, and democratically elected.

"They can be persons of the various stakeholders such as the football associations, the leagues, the player's union, coaches' association, Nigeria Referees Association, (NRA), Sports Writers Association, etcetera.

"They will now be responsible to elect the president of NFF and other key officials amongst themselves.

"By this, the election will be less expensive and devoid of manipulation and guarantee quality and professionalism," he added.

NCF invites 36 cricketers for Lagos trials

Nigeria Cricket Federation (NCF) has invited thirty-six (36) Nigerian cricketers for trials into the national senior men's team.

The 5-day event which takes place from 19th to 24th April 2022, will be hosted at the NCF Cricket Oval, Tafawa Balewa Square, Lagos.

According to the report released

by the federation and signed by the General Manager, Emeka Igwilo, the successful cricketers that will emerge in the trials will form the senior men's cricket team mandated to represent the country in the future tournaments.

However, the trials also targeted scouting new talents, which will

help in the rebuilding of the national cricket team.

The 36-man list comprises Ademola Onikoyi, Sulaiman Runsewe, Ashmit Shrestha, Babatunde Ayinde, Pradeep Chaudhary, Sesan Adedeji, Akhere Isesele, Ikaigbe Miracle, David Abiebhode.

Kodjo Timinade, Solomon Miracle, Chimezie Onwuzulike, Peter Aho, Prosper Useni, Isaac Okpe, Mustapha Yussuf, Nzube Nwokike and Taiwo Mohammed were also listed.

NCF also added Chiemelie Udekwe, Vincent Adewoye, Elijah Monday, Sylvester Okpe, Ridwan

Abdulkaree, Boniface Oche, Joshua Asia, Tamesh Singh, Manish Mundhra.

Malik Olaitan Jamal, Jeremiah Theophilus, Odion Isesele, Elochukwu Ndububem, Samuel Mba, Happy Bagshaw, Eghosa Aghedo Destiny, Ifeanyi Uboh, and Bekky Mubarak also made the cut.