

# Pilots die as military plane crashes in Kaduna

By **EDWARD ADAMIDENYO** and **MICHAEL PAUL**, Abuja

**T**wo pilots have been reportedly killed following the crash of a Nigerian Air Force

aircraft in Kaduna State on Tuesday.

The Trumpet learnt that it was a military training plane with two officers on board.

Although details of the incident were hazy as at press

time, sources said the two officers on board died.

It makes it five air crashes involving Nigerian military planes in the last one year.

An Air Force Alpha jet had

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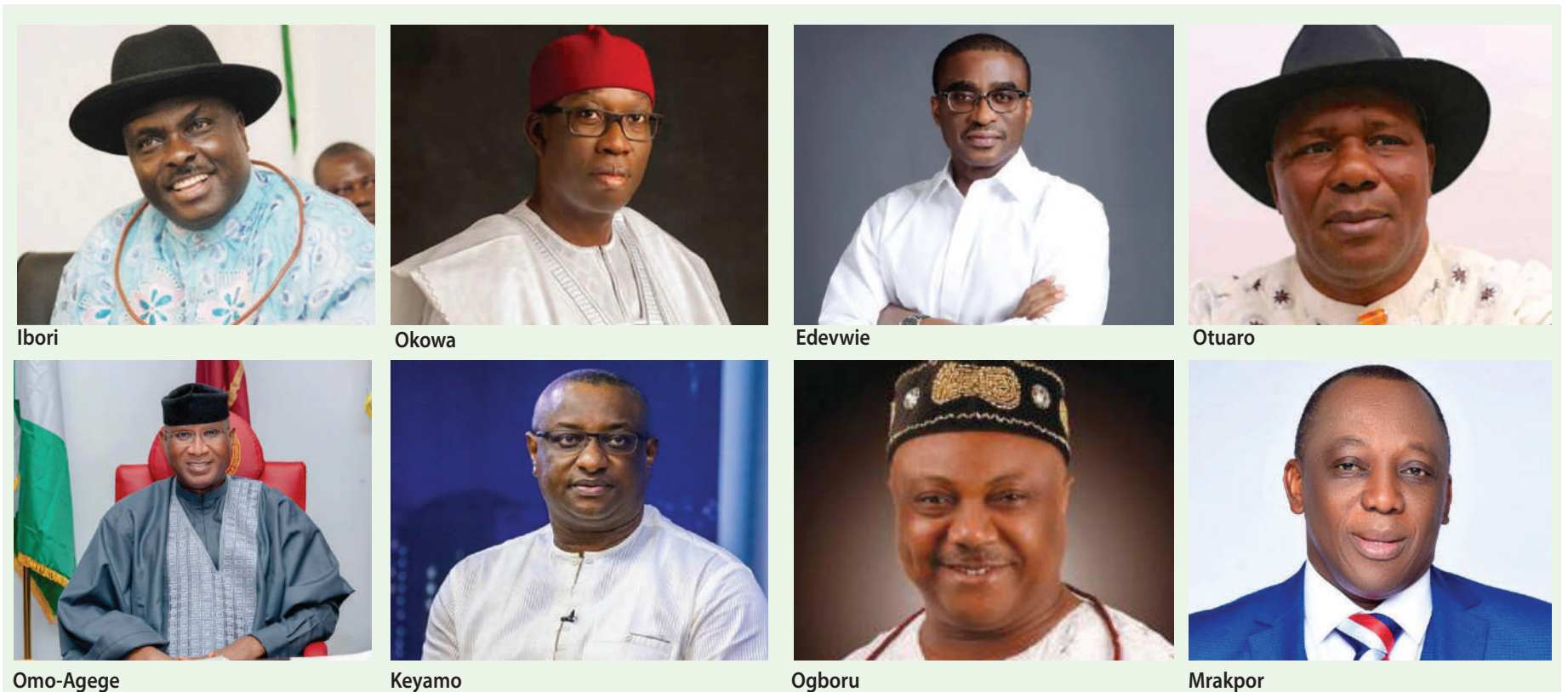
PATRIOTIC VOICE

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# Intrigues, tension hit Delta APC, PDP over guber poll, Okowa, Ibori, UPU, others step in

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## Intrigues, tension hit Delta APC, PDP over guber poll, Okowa, Ibori, UPU, others step in

By **OBAH SYLVA,**  
**TUNDE JOSHUA,**  
**MICHAEL PAUL** (Abuja)  
and **GABRIEL ELOZINO**  
**AWODEHA** (Asaba)

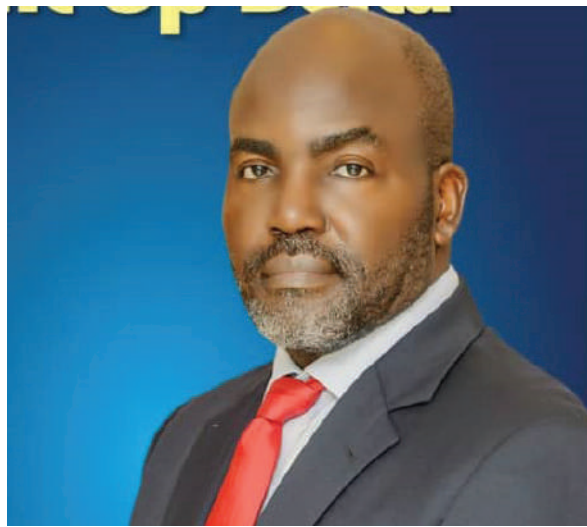
**D**elta is currently in the midst of political storms that have enveloped the All Progressives Congress (APC) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the state over next year's gubernatorial election.

The anxiety and tension mounting are not yet inter-party because the APC and PDP have not agreed on or picked their standard bearers for the election before facing each other. The ruling and opposition political groupings are dogged by internecine intra-party feuds that are keeping their chances at the governorship election hanging.

The PDP is dogged by a major disagreement between former governor, Chief James Ibori, and incumbent helmsman,

Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa, over who to succeed the latter. Ibori is said to be backing his former finance commissioner David Edevbie from the same Delta Central Senatorial District while Governor Okowa is said to be undecided on whom among his confidants from the area or the South where his deputy comes from. Central is made up of the Urhobo ethnic group while Delta South Senatorial District comprises the Ijaw, Isoko and Itsekiri ethnic nationalities.

Okowa is from Delta North Senatorial District which under an unwritten state PDP power rotation 'agreement' is precluded from fielding governorship aspirants or candidates for the 2023 poll. But Okowa's deputy, Barrister Kingsley Otuaro is an Ijaw most of whose political chiefs and people want to run in 2023, urging a new rotation system based on ethnic groups and contending that the extant agreement had always been



**Deacon Iyovwaye**

observed in the breach because Central aspirants always threw their hats in the ring whenever it was the supposed turn of the other districts.

Some accuse Okowa of backing the Ijaw to repay their support against Edevbie who ran against him in the 2015 PDP primary election. Some also accuse Okowa of opposing Ibori's choice and throwing up other Urhobo aspirants such as the current state House of Assembly speaker and a

former commissioner for justice, Peter Mrakpor. However, Okowa insists that he is neutral and wants a level playground for all.

The stalemate has led the Urhobo Progress Union (UPU) to throw its weight behind Edevbie who is of the ethnic stock. The move has triggered opposition from some prominent Urhobo (even dividing the UPU), the Central PDP and local governments chapters and some observers.



**Comrade Donald Awolowo Egbo**

**Omo-Agege has mountain to climb**

As aforementioned, the race to the Delta State government house for the two parties is dogged by crises with pressure mounting on the gladiators.

APC seems to have a chance that could have been leveraged upon if everything was in a proper perspective, a source told The Trumpet.

"You can see that the PDP is currently in a state of dilemma and confusion. The clash between Ibori and Okowa is taking a big toll on the party.

"Apart from these two blocs, there are other blocs that may form a coalition before the primaries to challenge the potency of the Ibori and Okowa political blocs. One thing you can expect from this rivalry is a fallout," the source said.

He, however, stressed that the APC was not ready and properly positioned to benefit from such fallout while noting that the party is on its own fragmented and disjointed.

He went on: "The Deputy Senate President Ovie Omo-Agege hijacked the party structure without

recourse to other leaders with grassroots supporters. Major opposition leaders in the state, such as Chief Great Ogoru who was

very instrumental to the emergence of Omo-Agege as senator, have obviously fallen out with APC and may be on the way out of the party. No one can dismiss the huge support base of Ogoru. He is loved.

"When you also look at the governorship declaration of Omo-Agege at Warri, you see a crowd of people without leadership. Hon Minister Keyamo from Uvwie, Hon Victor Ochei and Dr. Cairo Ojougboh from Delta North as well as Hon. Joel-Onowakpo Thomas from Isoko were not there and a host of others.

"These leaders have a measure of grip on their respective areas. How will Omo-Agege get enough votes and secure them in those places? Let's not forget that many of the crowds we see at political rallies can easily be rented or bought over because what they want is daily bread. They can trade anyone away. The only thing that counts when the chips are down are the ideological or interested leaders who can hold their respective followers to do the needful."

He noted there is a herculean task ahead for Omo-Agege and the APC, especially in the area of getting all the stakeholders onboard to be fully committed to the 2023 project, if the party wants a chance of winning the governorship.

"Otherwise, APC is faced with a big mountain of impossibility as long as the 2023 Delta governorship election is concerned," he added.

Other PDP aspirants in the race are Comrade Donald Awolowo Egbo (Isoko), Deacon Chris Iyovwaye, Chief Kenneth Gbagi, Ediri R. Idimi Ubiomor (the three are Urhobo) and Senator James Manager (Ijaw) among others.

## Pilots die as military plane crashes in Kaduna

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crashed in Zamfara State last year after an intense fire from terrorists. The pilot, however, survived crash by ejecting from the aircraft.

Also, a NAF203 plane crash that killed the then Chief of Army Staff and 10 others. Similarly, a Beechcraft King350 airplane - NAF201 had crashed in February 2021, killing all eight officers onboard.

In April 2021 a Nigerian Air Force fighter jet was declared missing and suspected to have crashed leading to the death of two pilots. While Boko Haram claimed to have shot it down, the military denied the claim.

Air Force spokesman, Edward Gabkwet, later said the crash occurred as the Alpha jet, a light attack aircraft, was returning to base from a mission on the Zamfara-Kaduna border.

Deadly plane crashes in military operations



had raised concerns over safety of the airspace in general.

Aviation stakeholders noted that though the development was blight on the nation's safety record in global aviation, the sequence of occurrences raises a 'red flag' to warrant new precautionary measures to avert more disasters, especially during the rainy season.

The aircraft type is said to be (Super Mushak).

Effort to get details of the unfortunate incident as at press time yielded no result as the Director of Public and

Information, Nigerian Air Force (NAF), Air Commodore Edward Gabkwet said that he was in a meeting.

As aforementioned, this is the fifth aircraft that crashed since the incumbent Chief of Air Staff (CAS), Air Marshal Oladayo Amao assumed office.

This tragic development comes 11 months after a NAF aircraft crashed in Kaduna killing the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lt Gen Ibrahim Attahiru, alongside ten other very senior military officers.

The incident, which

occurred in May 2021, involved a Beechcraft 350, and the aircraft crashed around the Kaduna international airport.

Late Gen. Attahiru was said to be on his way to Kaduna to attend a passing-out parade for army recruits.

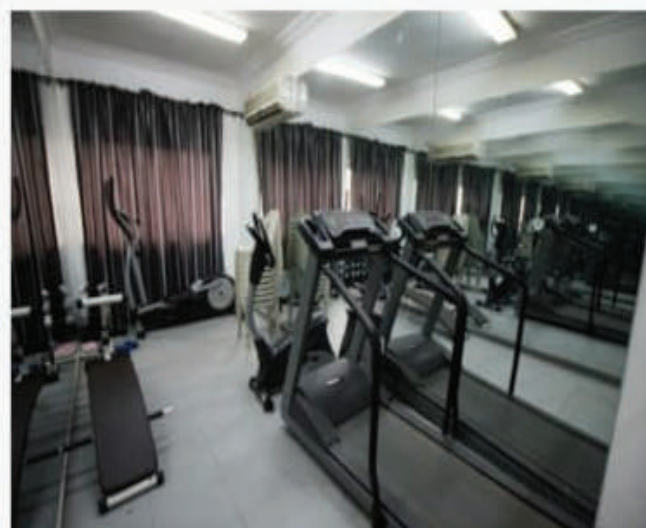
Also, the persistent denial that the terrorists group did not shot down the NAF missing fighter jet in Borno State with two officers on board was demystified by the overrunning of Sambisa forest which, led to the troops of Operation Hadin Kai discovering the site of the crashed aircraft with the wreckage scattered at the heart of the evil forest.

Following the incident, members of the minority caucus in the house of representatives had asked the federal government to ensure that a "system-wide investigation" is conducted into such incidents involving military aircraft in the country.





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# 'Why GAC endorsed Sanwo-Olu for second term'

## ■ NGO hails decision

By **BENJAMIN OMOIKE**

Secretary of the Governor's Advisory Council (GAC), the highest decision making organ of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) in Lagos, Alhaji Mutiu Are, has said that the commendable performance of the state's helmsman, Babajide Olushola Sanwo-Olu, was responsible for his endorsement for a second term in office.

"The people of the state are positively feeling the impact of his administration and his achievements are obvious and physically

visible for people to see," the GAC scribe explained.

"He has been able to endear himself to the political class while also building a solid and huge acceptance with the general public," he said.

Are praised Governor Sanwo-Olu for making the party proud through his performance in office, which has made the people revive their love for the APC.

"He has done well and he has proven to be a good disciple of our great leader, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu. We are proud of him and the party is also happy with him," he said.

On Monday, April 18, 2022, the GAC announced the endorsement of Sanwo-Olu for a second term in office during its meeting, which took place on the same day.

In related development, a non-governmental organisation (NGO), Women for Change Initiatives (WFCI), has described as commendable and praise-worthy, the decision of the GAC to endorse Sanwo-Olu for a second term.

Leader of the NGO, Barr. Eyiotope Success-Adekunle, said the step was a right one because it was in line with the thoughts of the overwhelming population of the people of the state.

According to the woman activist, it would have

been a great disservice to the generality of the good people of Lagos State and to the governor himself if the GAC's decision had been otherwise, hailing the body for its thoughtfulness and sound decision made at the appropriate time.

The lawyer was of the conviction that "the declaration of endorsement for the governor's second term in office will go a long way in putting the minds of a lot of residents at rest."

She noted that the people have been waiting anxiously for the good news and now that it has finally come, the governor would also be able to concentrate more, knowing full well that the first hurdle has been crossed.

The NGO boss, therefore, tasked all the groups and organisations yearning for more good governance post 2023, as represented by Sanwo-Olu, to prepare the ground well for the governor's formal declaration which they have been waiting for, reminding that, "it is not over until it is over properly."

Against this forgoing, the woman activist, therefore, urged the governor to keep on fixing his gaze on the ball as usual, assuring that, "we have never been doubtful of your capability to coast home well now and surpass your performance now, when you eventually come back for the second term."

## DELSU Professor dies after release by kidnappers

By **OMAMUZO EFIDHERE, Asaba**

Prof. Ovaborhene Idamoyibo, Head of Department, Music, Delta State University (DELSU) Abraka, has been confirmed dead a day after he was set free by his abductors.

It was gathered that, Idamoyibo was kidnapped by unknown armed gun men in Eku, Ethiope East Local Government Area, on his way from Sapele after a family meeting on Saturday, 9th April, 2022.

According to a source who pleaded anonymity, "Prof. Idamoyibo was with his abductors for eight days and was released unconscious in the late hours of Sunday by his abductors who demanded for and received ransom fee of three million Naira.

"When he was released, he could not walk or talk, so they rushed him to one of the hospitals in Abraka to stabilize him and by Monday morning he was taken to the Delta State University Teaching Hospital, Oghara, where he later died"

Police Public Relations Officer of the State Command, DSP. Bright Edefe, when contacted confirmed that the academician died in the hospital on Tuesday.



The Prof. Idamoyibo



Urhobo traditional rulers during a meeting with the Olu of Warri (middle) recently.

## British PM to apologise for violating Covid rules

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH** with agency report

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson will apologise to parliament for breaking COVID-19 lockdown rules after being fined by police.

He was fined by the police last week for attending a birthday party thrown in his honour in June 2020 when people from different households were not allowed to meet indoors.

Opposition parties push for an investigation into whether he misled lawmakers by repeatedly insisting that he did not

breach the COVID-19 regulations.

They have also called for Johnson to resign, accusing him of misleading parliament after he told lawmakers last year that all rules were followed in Downing Street, the prime minister's official residence and workplace during the pandemic.

Opposition lawmakers are in talks about how best to reprimand Johnson, either by pushing for a vote on whether he is in contempt of parliament, or to refer him to a parliamentary committee to investigate whether he deliberately misled

lawmakers.

The speaker will decide whether to grant a vote on whether to investigate if Johnson misled parliament, and if the house votes in favour then a parliamentary committee will investigate.

Johnson is set to address the parliament at around 1530 GMT, will attempt to deflect some of the criticism by talking about other issues he is dealing with, including the war in Ukraine, the energy crisis and immigration.

Britain's Northern Ireland minister Brandon Lewis played down claims that the prime

minister had misled parliament and suggested that the fine he paid was similar to ministers who have previously received parking fines.

Lewis has been criticised for comparing the Johnson lockdown fine to former ministers receiving speeding and parking fines.

Keir Starmer, opposition Labour leader accused the prime minister of using the conflict in Ukraine as a shield to keep his job and said that he finds such a tactic "pretty offensive".

"He's not just broken the rules, he's lied to the public and he's lied to parliament about it," he said.

Boris Johnson became the first serving UK prime minister to be sanctioned for breaking the law, along with his wife Carrie and Chancellor Rishi Sunak.

The Prime Minister is facing accusations of lying to parliaments because he initially told them Covid rules had been followed in No 10 after the first reports of parties emerged last year.

Under government rules, ministers are expected to resign for knowingly misleading parliament and correct the record as soon as possible if they inadvertently tell Parliament something false.



## UAT gets new DVC

By **AHERHOKE OKIOMA**, Yenagoa.

Authorities of the University of Africa, Toru-Orua in Sagbama Local Government Area of Bayelsa State have announced the appointment of Professor Barclays Foubiri Ayakoroma, as Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

Vice-Chancellor of the Institution, Prof. Kingston Nyamapfene, announced this after an Extra-Ordinary Senate Meeting of the institution. He said that the appointment, which is subject to ratification by the Governing Council of UAT, was vital as a lot of work needed to be done to improve the academic fortunes of the university. He was confident that the new DVC would bring his wealth of experience to bear in the performance of his duties.

In his acceptance speech, Ayakoroma assured that he would contribute his quota to add value to the management of the University, adding that the first task was improving the visibility to the University to ensure that there is significant increase in admission.

It was gathered that the pioneer Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Admin.) of the University, Professor Iwekumo Agbozu, has served out his two terms of two years each.

Ayakoroma, until his appointment, was the Head, Department of Theatre Arts, University of Africa, Toru-Orua (UAT).

He is a former Executive Director, Bayelsa State Council for Arts and Culture; and former Coordinator, Postgraduate Programme, Institute of Development Communication (ISDEVCOM) as well as the Department of Theatre & Cultural Studies, Nasarawa State University, Keffi (NSUK).

Ayakoroma was also the immediate past Executive Secretary/CEO, National Institute for Cultural Orientation (NICO), Abuja-FCT.

Meanwhile, Professor Innocent Ohiri, best known for the role of "Willy-Willy" in Hot Cash, a popular TV drama serial on Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Port Harcourt, in the 1980s and early 1990s, has felicitated with Ayakoroma.

Ohiri, who made this known during a call said Ayakoroma has been his close friend since their university days at Calabar and Ibadan, and that the new DVC convinced him to resign from NTA, Port Harcourt, where he was a senior producer/director, in the mid-90s.

The don said that with Ayakoroma as DVC, considering his antecedents at Bayelsa State Council for Arts and Culture and Executive Secretary/CEO, NICO, he was confident that there would be an upsurge in student admission, thus improving the visibility of the university.

Ohiri thanked Nyamapfene for finding Ayakoroma worthy of the appointment. He also congratulated the Registrar of UAT, Dr. Akpoebi Adesi, saying that having two Thespians as principal officers in the university is a blessing to the Department. According to him, it behoves members of staff and students to draw from their experiences.

"Willy-Willy" also urged theatre arts students to look at the entrepreneurial prospects of the theatre profession, disclosing that he did that in his younger days, by taking his Wizi Travelling Theatre for performances at Calabar, Benin City, Warri and many other cities. He added that his most challenging moment was when his fans in Warri insisted that he must vanish on stage, as they used to see on television.

## My child drugged, gang-raped, says 10-year-old pupil's mom

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH**

The mother of a 10-year-old pupil of Chrisland school who was allegedly raped by her fellow male classmates has called on Nigerians to come to her help.

She has narrated what she said truly transpired at the World Games in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Dubai which was organised by Chrisland School.

In a video posted on social media, the mother stated that her daughter was forcefully given a substance which made her lose the ability to think and behave sensibly.

She said: "When my daughter explained to me what happened, she said that they went out in the morning to have breakfast and one of the boys, Kachi, begged her to lend him her phone charger. She obliged.

"After they had dinner, Kachi called her room and said that she should come and take her charger. She went there for her charger.

"When she got into the room,

one of the students instructed her to take her charger from the toilet. It was when she entered the toilet that they hijacked and told her to take a substance, they were all under the influence."

The distraught mother continued that after the daughter took the substance she lost her senses of reasoning. "She did not know what she was doing again. They told her to be climbing them and someone stood there videoing them and posting it out."

She said that a parent drew her attention to the video of her daughter trending online and in the school: "The woman showed me the video and told me that all the parents were aware. Immediately I informed my husband."

Meanwhile, she begged for urgent intervention from Nigerians: "Please I am begging Nigerians to help me because Chrisland was trying to hide this issue. They were trying to push us out of the way and my daughter was affected psychologically. Please I need

help as a mother. I am begging fellow Nigerians to help me.

"They have been threatening my daughter that if she speaks out they are going to kill her. That it is a man's world and nothing would happen. My daughter was dying in silence."

According to Ubi Franklin, a Nigerian music executive and T.V show host: "This school took the girl from her parents that they wanted to conduct a Covid test and the school rather took the girl for a pregnancy test.

"As we speak the girl has been suspended from the school. Some things don't make sense at all."

Chrisland in an official statement claimed that the 10-year-old girl participated in improper behaviour with her classmates by participating in a game called 'Truth or Dare.'

A letter dated April 14, 2022, sent to the girl's parents by the authorities of Chrisland School in Victoria Garden City, states: "It was discovered that your daughter was involved in improper behaviour during

the recently concluded World School Games in Dubai with a few of her counterparts willfully participated in a game they called 'Truth or Dare', a game which led her and a few other co-learners to carry out an immoral act after the lights-out instruction was given.

"In line with our core values centred on discipline, Chrisland Schools have zero tolerance for any improper behaviour and misconduct. A full-scale investigation has been done and the parents of all the culpable learners have been duly notified of the necessary punishment meted out on the learners."

The school said other school-mates who took part in the game had been suspended, alleging that the girl and her parents did not cooperate during its investigation.

"Consequently, she is hereby placed on indefinite suspension until you as the parents ensure that she is punished, adequately counselled and rehabilitated," the school said in the letter signed by the Head Teacher, G. I. Azike.



## How student slumped, died acting Easter passion play

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH**

A 25-year-old Nigerian student has slumped and died while playing the role in the reenactment of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

Suel Ambrose, a student of philosophy at Clariantian University in Nigeria (CUN), Nekede, Owerri, startled the audience who thought his

slump was part of the Easter passion play.

The seminarian fell to the ground after the Biblical scene where he cuts the ear of one of the soldiers in an effort to prevent Jesus' arrest and was immediately rushed to the hospital but later gave up the ghost.

"Initially when it happened we thought it was a joke, and

that it was part of the drama," a witness at the university said

"It was when he could not get up that was when we knew it was a serious matter.

"Everybody came together and rushed the deceased to a school hospital and later, when the case became worse, he was taken to a nearby Federal Medical Center where he was pronounced dead."

The incident caused panic among the seminarians and put all Easter activities and celebrations in the school on hold.

The priest in charge of students affairs in the university, Fr Chukwuemeka IHEME, who confirmed the incident, said that he could only speak when authorised to do so.





## Presidential pardon: Constitutional amendment on prerogative of mercy

By ONYEBUCHI SAMPSON

Presidential pardon is universal and has become a ritual for heads of state worldwide. They make it a sort of fetish by granting pardons to convicts as part of activities marking their exit from power.

However, the recent case involving 159 prisoners, including Joshua Dariye and Jolly Nyame, former governors of Plateau and Taraba states, respectively, has attracted widespread condemnation.

Dariye and Nyame were jailed for stealing N1.16bn and N1.6bn, respectively. However, the National Council of State last week endorsed the pardon of Mr Dariye, Mr Nyame and 157 others serving jail terms following the recommendations of the Presidential Advisory Committee on the Prerogative of Mercy.

Although both have been in the penitentiary, as they should, their proposed pardon may be owed to the general belief that their imprisonment, to a large extent might have political, ethnic and religious undertones.

Already, some interests, among them, rights groups and lawyers have raised eyebrows on its application.

For instance, human rights lawyer and former President West African Bar Association, Femi Falana, has demanded similar treatment for 'petty thieves' to show his disapproval to the state pardon, granted Joshua Dariye and Jolly Nyame by President Muhammadu Buhari.

The senior lawyer also threatened to challenge discriminatory treatment in court if the president failed to do as he demanded.

Falana, who made the call at the 1st anniversary of Afenifere's spokesman, Yinka Odumakin's Lecture and Book Presentation in Ikeja, said granting pardon to convicts irrespective of the class would show fairness and equality of Nigerians before the law.

He said: "All petty thieves in our prisons should be released. Under Section 17 of the 1999 Constitution, there shall be equality and equal rights for all citizens.

"Section 42 of the Constitution says there shall be no discrimination on the basis of class and gender, so you cannot take out a few people on the basis that they belong to a category



President Buhari



Dariye



Nyame

or section of the society.

"I can assure you that if the government did not release others, I am going to call on lawyers whose clients are left in custody to come to court and challenge the discriminatory treatment on their clients.

"Just two weeks ago, a Nigerian was jailed for stealing N1,000 in Abuja; the accused pleaded with the judge that he had no food but the judge jailed him for six months.

"When we are talking of justice and fair play, if you want to pardon some set of people, then you must also extend presidential pardon to petty thieves in the prisons.

"This is because if the big thieves are being asked to go, then they must also extend the facility to other Nigerians."

Also, human rights and constitutional lawyer, Aham Njoku, said the thinking in the public space is that it was wrong for the President and the Council of State to have pardoned people who were convicted for corruption.

This, he said, is so due to the fact that most Nigerians believe that the current sorry state of the nation, ranging from infrastructural deficit to insecurity can be traced to poor political leadership occasioned by widespread corruption among political office holders.

Njoku, who is also the director, Constitutional Watch (CONSWATCH), noted that the pardon negates the cardinal campaign policy of President Muhammadu Buhari and APC that they have come to fight corruption.

According to him, apart from demoralising the

Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and other agencies fighting corruption, including judges, it sends a wrong message to the international community that Nigerian government tolerates corruption.

Rights group, the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), also raised issues concerning the exercise of the prerogative of mercy by the President.

The group is proposing constitutional amendment to the National Assembly to reform the provisions on the exercise of the prerogative of mercy to make the provisions more transparent, and consistent and compatible with Nigeria's international anti-corruption obligations."

In a letter dated April 16, signed by SERAP's deputy director, Kolawole Oluwadare, and addressed to President Muhammadu Buhari, the organisation, urged him to urgently withdraw the pardon granted to Dariye and Nyame.

SERAP urged the President to use his "good offices to urgently review and withdraw the pardon granted to former governors of Plateau State, Senator Joshua Dariye, and Taraba State, Rev Jolly Nyame who are serving jail terms for corruption."

The organisation noted that impunity for corruption will continue as long as influential politicians escape justice for their crimes.

According to the group, the constitutional power of prerogative of mercy ought not to be an instrument of impunity.

SERAP said: "The

pardon power ought to be exercised in a manner that is consistent with the Nigerian Constitution 1999 [as amended], particularly the provisions on oath of office by public officers, and section 15[5] which requires your government to abolish all corrupt practices and abuse of power.

"Indeed, the presidential pardon power must be exercised in good faith, and in line with the provisions of Chapter 4 of the Nigerian Constitution on fundamental rights."

According to SERAP, "We would like your government to clarify if the pardon granted to Mr Dariye and Mr Nyame would entitle them to the return of the stolen assets already forfeited to the government.

"The pardon also constitutes an interference in the exercise of judicial power. Because the pardon appears to be arbitrary, it undermines the authority and independence of the judiciary, and access to justice for victims of corruption."

The letter, copied to the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, read in part: "The pardon is clearly inconsistent and incompatible with the requirements of the Nigerian Constitution, and the country's international obligations including under the UN Convention against Corruption.

"Presidential pardon for corruption cases is inconsistent with the rule of law, and the public interest, as it undermines the principle of equality before the law. It will undermine

public confidence in your government's fight against corruption, and the justice system.

"SERAP is concerned that while the pardon power is routinely exercised to shield influential politicians and politically exposed persons from justice and accountability, ordinary people who have committed petty offences but with no money or influential politicians to speak for them, languish in prisons and are rarely considered for pardon.

"While there is no doubt that Section 175 of the Constitution vests wide discretionary power in the Nigerian president to grant pardon, it does not stipulate the conditions under which such power should be exercised.

"However, when section 15(5) of the Constitution is read together with the oath, it would seem to impose some ethical conditions on you to ensure that the exercise of the discretionary power of the prerogative of mercy is not such that it will encourage corruption or impunity of perpetrators.

"Mr Dariye and Mr Nyame should have been allowed to complete their jail terms. The exercise of the presidential pardon in their cases would seem to be unfair and undeserving.

"The investigation and prosecution of the corruption cases involving the pardoned former governors Dariye and Nyame reportedly cost over N300 millions of taxpayers' money. The cases went from the High Court to the Supreme Court of Nigeria.

"Section 15(5) of the Nigerian Constitution provides that 'The State shall abolish all corrupt practices and abuse of

power.' Similarly, article 26 of the UN Convention against Corruption requires your government to ensure 'effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions' in cases of grand corruption.

"Article 26 of the convention complements the more general requirement of article 30, paragraph 1, that sanctions must take into account the gravity of the corruption offences.

"SERAP notes that in your inaugural speech on May 29, 2015 you stated that 'We are going to tackle pervasive corruption head on. Nigerians will not regret that they have entrusted national responsibility to us.

"However, the latest Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index shows that Nigeria scored 24 out of 100 points, and ranked 154 out of 180 countries surveyed, falling back five places from the rank of 149 in 2020. This places Nigeria as the second most corrupt country in West Africa.

"The pardon power, if properly exercised, can help to protect citizens against possible miscarriage of justice.

"SERAP therefore urges you to urgently withdraw the presidential pardon granted to Mr Dariye and Mr Nyame, and to propose amendment to section 175 of the Nigerian Constitution that will make the exercise of the power to pardon more transparent and consistent and compatible with the country's international obligations.

"Any proposed amendment should also empower the citizens to challenge the legality of any arbitrary exercise of the power of prerogative of mercy," it noted.



## Ndubuisi Kanu: Lagos court orders service of processes on respondents

A Lagos High Court, Ikeja has ordered Mrs. Gladys Kanu, one of the three wives of the late former Military Administrator of Lagos and Imo, Rear Admiral Ndubuisi Kanu, to serve the respondents amended originating summons within seven days.

The respondents to the suit are the Nigerian Navy, the children and other wives of the deceased.

They are; Kelly Kanu, the Nigerian Navy, Simone Abiona (Nee Kanu) and Andrey Joe- Ezigbo (nee Kanu), Paula Ndidiamaka Kanu and Karen Johnson (Nee Kanu), Jeffery Kanu, Laura Kanu, Stephen Kanu, Josephine Ndubuisi-Kanu (wife) and Christine Kanu (wife).

Justice Christopher Balogun in a ruling ordered the claimant's counsel, Mr. Wale Adesokan (SAN) to serve the respondents, the amended originating summons within seven days, starting from April 11, 2022.

"The respondents are hereby given 14 days to file their responses to the amended originating summons through their counsel," he held.

The judge, who said that the case had not really started, noted that the only thing the court had been able to do was for the dead to be buried.

He said Adesokan had presented an amended application for the case to fully start. "The Justice of the case is to allow them to amend the originating suit so as to hear the case on its merit.

"It is not only the claimant that has something at stake. Your clients too also have something at stake. I will take the amended originating summons and if you also want to file an amended application, I will also take it because I am going to give everyone a fair hearing in this case."

Earlier, Adesokan told the court that he has a pending application dated March 22 and urged the court to add paragraphs 2b and c in the amended originating summons dated March 7 to the suit.

Counsel to the first, third to the ninth respondents, Mr. O.A. Sodimu, in a counter affidavit, dated April 5 opposed the amendment originating summons, adding that the claimant formulated a new case.

Gladys in the suit wants the court to declare her as the only legal wife and sole widow of the deceased.

She claimed to have been with the deceased until his death.

Further hearing on the matter has been adjourned till May 12, 2022.

## Falana gets fiat to prosecute OAU student's alleged murderers

Stories **ONYEBUCHI  
SAMPSON**

Osun State Government has granted a fiat to the firm of human rights lawyer and Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), Chief Femi Falana, to prosecute all the seven defendants charged with murder of a post-graduate student of Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Timothy Adegoke, at Hilton Hotel in Ile-Ife.

Dr. Ramon Adedoyin, who owns the hotel and six members of his staff, namely, Adedeji Adesola, Magdalene Chiefuna, Adeniyi Aderogba, Oluwale Lawrence, Oyetunde Kazem, and Adebayo Kunle, are facing an 11-count charge on the matter.

The charge borders on conspiracy, murder, altering of receipt and administration of extrajudicial oath among others.

The letter was contained in a statement signed by the Osun State Attorney-General & Commissioner of

Justice, Oluwafemi Akande, entitled: "Re: Justice for Timothy, Mr. Governor over to you: Osun State Government Position on State of Prosecution in HOS/5C/2022 The State vs. Dr. Rahmon Adedoyin & others".

The statement posted by the Chief Press Secretary to the governor, Ismail Omipidan, on his Facebook page, disclosed that Falana, upon request by him and the family of the deceased, had been given permission

to prosecute the matter.

The statement further stated that on April 1, 2022, Femi Falana, SAN, applied to the Office of Osun State Attorney General for fiat to take over the prosecution of the case. It added that, thereafter, the deceased's family wrote a separate letter to the Attorney General, requesting that Falana's Chambers be allowed to prosecute the matter.

The statement reads: "The alleged case of murder was

first investigated by Osun State Police Command, but was later taken over by the IGP Office in Abuja. "After the investigation, the Police filed a criminal charge against the suspects in Abuja.

The case was later moved to Osogbo by Nigerian Police. "While the Police Prosecutors were prosecuting the case, the deceased family's counsel, Falana, and Falana & Co watched brief for the victim and witnessed

the proceedings.

"On April 1, 2022, Femi Falana, applied to the Office of the Hon. Attorney General for fiat to take over the prosecution of the case. Thereafter, the deceased's family wrote a letter to the Attorney General requesting for the Chambers of Femi Falana to be allowed to prosecute the matter.

"The learned silk's letter and that of the family were immediately processed and the fiat requested for has since been granted. The Office of Chief Femi Falana had already collected the letter conveying the fiat of the Attorney General to the learned silk. "The position as of today, in law, is that the office of Femi Falana is in full charge of the prosecution of the case."

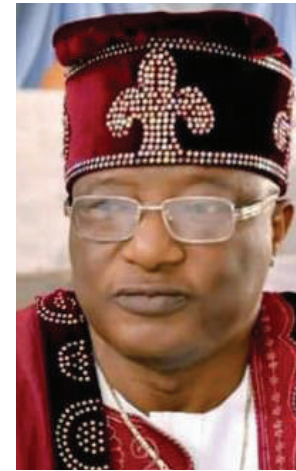
Trial judge, Adepele Ojo of Osun State High Court 1, Osogbo, who had earlier dismissed a no-case submission filed by the defence counsel on behalf of their clients, has adjourned till April 25 for the continuation of trial.



Falana



Adegoke



Ramon

## General allegedly shuns hearing on land grabbing

Commanding Officer, 174 Battalion Nigeria Army, Odogunyan Ikorodu, Lt.-Colonel Seyi Sholotan, has allegedly shunned an invitation extended to him by Lagos State Taskforce on Land Grabbing over ownership of a plot in Yaba, Lagos.

The ownership of the land located on 2-3 Bashorun Street, off Haastrup Street, Alagomeji area of Yaba, Lagos was in dispute between him and an engineer, Adewole Adeleye.

Adeleye had petitioned the Task force following an alleged invasion of the land by Sholotan with soldiers on more than three occasions.

The Task force, in a letter by its coordinator, Owolabi Arole, had first invited Sholotan to a hearing at

the meeting room of the Lagos State Ministry of Justice, Annex on March 23, 2022, but the military officer was not present.

The hearing was adjourned till April 13 to enable the military officer attend, but on April 13, Sholotan was also absent.

Adeleye urged the Army hierarchy, especially the Chief of Defence Staff, General Lucky Irabor, to intervene in resolving the matter.

Arole said another chance would be given to Sholotan to appear and adjourned until May 11, 2022.

Sholotan said he bought the land from one Ahmed Olorunimbe, but none of them attended the mediation or provided documents for

the land.

Adeleye, who said he was the valid owner of the land with a registered title, had in March 2021 also reported Olorunimbe to the Force CID Alagbon for alleged encroachment.

Olorunimbe was invited for questioning by the police and was later released on bail.

Insisting that he owned the land, Sholotan said he bought it from Olorunimbe in 2017, before he was deployed to the Northeast on a military operation.

He said when he returned to Lagos, he visited the land, and Olorunimbe told him someone else (Adeleye) was claiming it.

He said the case had been investigated by the military

police and that he was found to have validly bought the land.

Sholotan admitted that he went to the land to remove the gate himself and to fix his own.

He said he did not assault anybody with any soldier in the process.

"The land is mine. I paid for it. I have the right to own property," the military officer said.

On why he shunned the invitation for a second time, he said he was in Port Harcourt and couldn't have attended from there, adding that he was not even called to notify him of the hearing, adding that he is not under obligation to attend.

"I'm not even obliged to attend that meeting. This

matter has been in 2017. I bought the land from Olorunimbe. I have asked him if he was invited and he said no and they are inviting only me. I cannot go there.

"This same person has reported me to my headquarters at 81 Division, Kofo Abayomi, Victoria Island. The case was investigated. He went there with so many false documents and he was advised to approach the court.

"So, he should go to court. I will appear in court to defend myself. The Task force on land grabbing cannot solve this issue. He should sue me, if he is sure that the land belongs to him," he added.

## Industrial court upholds sanctity of human labour

National Industrial Court of Nigeria (NICN), Port Harcourt Division has upheld the sanctity of human labour, saying it is not a 'simple contract'.

Delivering judgment in suit NICN/YEN/444/2016, between Fedison ManPower Supply Ltd v. Niger Blossom Drilling Nig. Ltd, Justice Nelson Ogbuanya, held that labour supply contract is not a simple contract.

The defendant's counsel, C. Uriem, had raised issue of jurisdictional objection in his final written address, to the effect that the NIC lacks jurisdiction to adjudicate on the dispute over payment of the contract sum in a labour supply contract between the claimant and the defendant, which he said is a 'simple contract' and not covered by the provisions of Section 254C (1) of the 1999 Constitution and thus, outside the jurisdiction of the NIC.

The objection was, however, over-ruled by Justice Ogbuanya, while delivering judgment and held that the court has jurisdiction, as supply of human labour is not a simple contract, contrary to the submissions of the defendant's counsel.

From facts, the claimant's case is that it is a labour supply contractor engaged by the defendant company to supply and operate with its retained manpower, the defendant's Rig (Niger Blossom) in its drilling area for Pan Ocean Oil Company.

The claimant argued that in fulfilling its obligation as specified in the Labour Supply Agreement they signed, it mobilised the human labour and operated the rig until the contract was terminated by Pan Ocean, adding that at the conclusion of the rig operation, there was left an outstanding debt of N72,

512,015, which was the sum agreed to by the parties after reconciliation of invoices sent in by the claimant.

It also stated that the defendant refused to pay, even after sending a demand letter through its solicitors, hence the suit.

The defendant said it has paid because it has issued instructions to its Bankers, First Bank, and also issued some cheques in favour of the claimant, and therefore not owing the claimant as alleged.

The claimant denied receiving any such payment and put the defendant to the strictest proof.

In his final written address after the trial, the claimant's counsel, Prince H.O Egielemai, pointed out that the defendant only tendered the copies of the cheques and transfer instructions, but did not lead

evidence on how the payment instructions were carried out and that the claimant received payment for the sum owed.

The defendant's counsel submitted that the defendant does not owe the claimant, having paid all outstanding and also raised an objection that industrial court lacks jurisdiction to adjudicate on dispute over such contract, which he said is a simple contract, and falls outside the jurisdictional scope of the NIC.

Ruling on the jurisdiction of the court, Justice Ogbuanya said: "What the learned defendant's counsel however, forgot in his tenacious posturing of jurisdictional challenge in this matter, is that this court has been imbued with jurisdiction over any matter arising from, related to or connected with employment, courtesy of the provisions of S.254 C(1) of

1999 Constitution (3rd Alteration), effective March 4, 2011.

"I dare say that this provision has over time become a one stop-shop for gauging the amplification of the new jurisdictional mandate of this court in its one-subject matter adjudicatory-stock, which is- employment, workplace, labour-related, connected and/or arising matters! It is actually from the backdrop of the phrasal concept of 'arising from, related to, connected with labour/employment/workplace' used variously in the provisions of S.254C (1)-(5) of the extant Constitution that this court derives its amplified jurisdiction to entertain other core civil claims bordering on contract and tort, such as tenancy, libel, negligence, policy issues, fundamental human rights, and even criminal jurisdiction. I so hold"

According to the judge, it was clear and the contract dealt with supply of human labour.



## Senate to Ningi: Impeachment not basis for parliamentary scorecard

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

The Senate has said that performance of any legislature is not measured by frequency of rift with the executive or number of impeachment moves against a sitting President.

It explained that the best parameter for scoring a legislative house is the symbiotic role it can play to complement efforts of the executive in delivering good governance.

Senate spokesman and Chairman, Committee on Public Affairs, Dr Ajibola Basiru made the clarification in apparent reaction to a statement credited to a former Deputy Senate Leader, Senator Abdul Ningi.

Ningi had said that the 9th Assembly has been too soft on both National Issues and President Muhammadu Buhari on some alleged "wrong doings" that he said are "detrimental to good governance".

The Senate spokesman knocked



Ningi

Ningi for lacking understanding in parliamentary procedures in spite of being a ranking Senator and former principal officer of the Red Chamber.

Doubting Ningi's understanding of parliamentary procedures, Basiru in a statement Tuesday said "it is baffling that Senator Ningi never understood that neither the National Assembly nor the Senate is constituted as an opposition to antagonise other arms of government but as an assemblage of lawmakers elected for good governance and pursuits of national interest.

"The barometer to gauge a working Legislature is not how many times it initiated a futile and failed impeachment procedure against a sitting President but the amount of work it could do within the framework of cooperative bi-partisan legislation".

Defending the Ahmad Lawan - led 9th Senate, the spokesperson said that the Senate had at many times turned down requests from the President but "they were done with maturity and understanding without generating so much rancour and public uproar". The 9th Assembly represents the

ever increasing maturity of Nigeria's democracy, he added.

According to him, the 9th Assembly has been the most successful since the return to civil rule in 1999 adding that "our focus has been on impactful legislations which both on the economy, security and livelihood of Nigerians."

Basiru said the 9th Assembly "has successfully passed the Petroleum Industry Bill which had suffered several abortive attempts since its introduction before the 6th National Assembly.

"Besides, the Finance Act (2020), The CAMA Act (2020), the Deep Off Shore and Inland Basin Production Sharing Contract (Amendment) Act 2019, Public procurement Act, 2020, Electoral Act, Return to January -December budget cycle are few of the many landmark bills passed by the National Assembly.

"We worked on legislation that have realistic chance of being assented to and which have potential impact on the lives of Nigerians".

## 'President without party discipline will gravitate towards dictatorship'

● Ayu cautions Wike, 16 others to avoid attacking one another

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

Senator Iyorchia Ayu has emphasized the importance of party supremacy and discipline in internal processes.

The National Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) said its policies and guidelines are meant to be totally obeyed by elected and non-elected members.

The national chairman noted that an elected president on a political grouping's platform who in turn fails to imbibe party discipline will gravitate towards dictatorship.

Ayu gave this charge while he led other members of the National Working Committee (NWC) to a meeting with Governor Nyesom Wike of Rivers State.



Ayu

Wike was at the Wadata Plaza national headquarters of the party to inform its leadership of his intention to contest the PDP presidential ticket for the 2023 election.

The national chairman urged Wike and 16 other aspirants to be guided by the democratic principles of the party by placing party interest above self interest in their quest to win PDP ticket.

Ayu though said all the 16 men and one woman in the race are eminently qualified for the ticket, one of them will surely emerge in a transparent primary to be conducted by party leadership.

He warned that after the emergence of PDP flag bearer on May 29, the rest of the aspirants should give total support as loyal party men to the winner to ensure that PDP win in 2023.

He as well assured if total commitment of the leadership of aggressive campaign and mobilization for vote for PDP's victory.

The chairman said "but I want to also assure you, that once you emerge, as the candidate of the party, whoever emerges from that point on, we will be aggressively partisan, because you want the party to win the election.

"We will do everything in our power by way of canvassing for votes from Nigerian

people to ensure that the PDP wins the next election because a victory by PDP candidate is a victory for everybody.

"We have a strong and credible NWC which is working very relentlessly to make sure that we'll have a strong political party that will win and Nigerians will be proud of our performance.

"If and when you win the ticket and win the presidency. I want to assure you that the party will stand firmly behind in all policy discussions and all policy implementation because you are right.

"If you don't have a strong political party, it is very easy for the President to gravitate to dictatorship and this party was built on the foundation of democracy.

"And it in that light that I particularly like your submission when you you made it clear, that win or lose, you will never leave the party. You will work for the party. You've done it before and we are very sure that you will do it again.

Ayu also warned against in-fighting among aspirants, saying "we've never attacked an individual and that is what we want from all our presidential aspirants that they should stick to issues. They should not attack themselves.

"By attacking each other you undermine the party, because if you give to opposition

the nursery ammunition to attack us when the candidate emerged secondly, when you attack yourselves, you're undermining your candidate also, because if you emerge as the candidate of the party, you needs every aspirant and every member of the party to canvass for you in many parts of the country, you alone cannot win elections. You need every member of the party to work for the party.

"I want every member of the party who is running for election from the lowest level to the highest level, particularly presidential aspirants to stick to the issues, to decampaign the opposition, to promote the party, make sure that we stick together because only a united PDP will go into this election and win the election. I have no doubt in my mind whatsoever that we are going to win the next presidential election..

"We can only do so, by uniting our party chapters in the ward, in the local government and in the states.

"Any action we take should never we should never lose sight of the fact that our ultimate goal is not the ticket of the PDP. Our ultimate goal is to win the presidential election. Self resilience is very, very important even where we are provoked or agitated.

He appreciated Wike for his support for the party.

## Adamawa ex-SSG eyes senatorial seat

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

A former Secretary to the State Government, Engr Umar Buba Bindir, has declared his intention to vie for the Adamawa Central Senatorial seat in the 2023 general elections.

Bindir who is pursuing his ambition on the platform of the All Progressives Congress has his campaign posters flooding both electronically and conventional spaces in the state's public capital, Yola.

Umar, an Agriculturist per excellence with penchant for his Engineering skills and bagged professional certificates in many field many described him a leader who creates an inspiring vision of the future..

One of his campaign arrow head ,Aliyu

Adamu said Bindir is capable of giving the people of Adamawa Central purposeful and qualitative representation at the upper chamber of the National Assembly.

Adamu said though the former state scribe is seeking election on the platform of APC, his candidature cuts across party lines as a preferred personality for the senatorial seat.

He said "Dr. Umar Buba Bindir is a leader who creates an inspiring vision of the future, motivates and inspires people to engage with that vision. As a good and visionary leader, he always manages delivery of the vision.

"He coaches and builds a team, so that it is more effective at achieving the vision. This can be proved beyond any reasonable doubt if we reflect or cast our look at how he is revolutionizing the youth's.

"Fellow compatriots and good people of Central Zone, it becomes imperative for us to better our tomorrow and make our zone great. This could be done if we sincerely and patriotically endeavor to make a clarion call for the zone service of our fathers'land to Dr Umar Buba Bindir to come forward and contest for Senator in the Central Zone come 2023.

"Bindir is the answer, Bindir is the person whom the cap fit, Bindir is a good material for the job, Bindir will surely deliver the goods, Bindir is tested and trusted. Bindir is an achiever, Bindir is a peace maker, Bindir is a reformer, Bindir is indeed visionary And last but not the least, Bindir will definitely salvage Central Zone from all socio-economic and political traumas when given the mandate."



Bindir



# 'My strategy to develop Plateau, check insecurity, others'

**Brigadier-General John Sunday Sura (retd)** from Mangu / Boko Federal Constituency of Plateau State is a governorship aspirant on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). In this interview, he blames communal strifes, killings and general insecurity in Plateau on its helmsman Solomon Lalong whom he called an 'absentee governor' who is far from realities on ground in the state. As a retired military officer, he gives his blueprint on security to secure the state while promising to redefine governance in Plateau. He also justifies the state pardon granted former governor Joshua Dariye and others. Politics Editor, TUNDE JOSHUA brings excerpts.

*Why are you in the race for the 2023 Plateau State governorship election? .*

Very simple, I am contesting because I have a passion to serve the people. I also have seen the needs to have leaders who have character, people who have capacity, those that also have the ability to stand for the people at all times. I've also seen what is happening today. Therefore, I think I have all it requires to be able to lead people of Plateau State. And the end of it is that we are looking at the economic side of it. And secondly, the empowerment of our people and particularly infrastructural decay in Plateau State. Of course as a retired General, it is expected of me to talk about the insecurity in the land. That is one of the things that every concerned Nigerian and every aspirant wants to talk about. I have the remedy, I also have the architectural thinking of what I'm going to put in place to secure the people of Plateau State. And therefore, looking forward to making sure that all Plateaunians will sleep with their eyes closed. They will go to their farm lands and still return back to their ancestral homes to do their traditional farming and other things.

*What do you think Jonah Jang failed to do? What will you do differently?*

As at the last time, when he was living in 2015, May 29, 2015, Jang did all he could and we had a very peaceful state. By the providence of the Federal Government then, because of the insecurity as at that time, Plateau State was granted the opportunity to have a private security outfit, which is codenamed 'Operation Rainbow'. He maintained and also equipped that outfit and they also contributed their own defence in conjunction with the security forces in the land. Thereafter, when he left, today, that outfit is no longer operational. The equipment are no longer there, the personnel are no longer being taken care of. It is one of the things that today, other states are copying. And that's the only state that the Federal Government granted when we had an insecurity on the Plateau. We have that and so coming back home as a person who is also having that legislative authority from the Federal Government we will reenact it and also look at the inadequacies and also see how we can structurally deploy them to assist the security forces of the Federal Government.

*What exactly is the present governor doing or failed to do that escalated insecurity?*

You see at all times, human being need to be talked to, most often than not when there are crises like this. We always have an absentee governor who is always in Abuja, rather than being in the state. Therefore, as a leader, you must always be around with your



Brigadier-General John Sunday Sura (retd)

people whether in thick and thin, in times of sorrows and in happiness, not only when they are happy, that is when you can speak to them. I will be there with my people to speak to them when they are sorrowing, and I will sorrow, mourn with them. And when it is time to rejoice, we will also rejoice. And in terms of what he has not done, apart from not talking to the people, that outfit that was given to us by the Federal Government, I think the present government has abandoned them.

The equipment were given out to the security agencies and these sets of people were just abandoned and left in a skeletal form. I'm looking at the deployment of those people and how to retrain them or redeploy them into the hinterlands and also early warning signals of information gathering will also be used alongside. I will also look at it and we will also deploy a lot of additional security equipment to be able to also complement what they will be doing at the manual side of it.

*Is the presidential pardon given to past Plateau State Governor Joshua Dariye a blow to the Nigerian justice system?*

Actually, the law is meant to punish, and at the same time to reprimand. When you have already punished somebody, you do not need to take a sledgehammer to kill the person. For posterity sake, I think the punishment has gone that far. And again, it has served as a deterrent to those who are in government who also intend

*When you become governor, will you be probing previous administrations?*

I once said to somebody that while in the service I've handed over offices and also I've taken other offices. And there is no office that you entered that there wouldn't be any problem. But at least within this circumstance, probably that person may have taken some risk or feel that is the best decision at that time. And when I come in being an accountant, a chartered accountant, a fellow of the Certified National Accountant and a Fellow of Certified Institute of Taxation and so many other fellowships. I will not, well when we get to the bridge, we will cross it. I will not be talking about probing or anything. But we will only demand explanation and if it is good we'll also follow it. And where it is not, we'll also not jettison it.

*What is your take on the provision in the Electoral Act that INEC should use electronic means to transmit election results?*

We've seen the BIVAS deployed in Edo states. We've also seen it deployed in some states like Anambra and also recently in Plateau State we had two constituencies that we have the elections in that area. And quite differently from what we've seen it is possible to do a lot of things, we strive to make the elections very transparent. I want to encourage the INEC to do more and what they have done is okay. There may be some commas here and there. I believe the chairman will be looking out for where they need to cross the t's and dot the i's to perfect the system. In that manner I want to really appreciate it. It is something that is so cheering that we know that definitely if it is done perfectly, we will have a better election come 2023.

*What are the chances of PDP winning Plateau?*

I want to assure you that the chance is as high as 95 per cent. Why did I decide to say so? Firstly, to Nigerians from the national level. We've all been demarcated. We've all been impoverished, we also have suffered so many untold hardship in the country. So the replication of it is what is happening on the Plateau. So if we have gotten a governor that is under-developing the state, certainly you should be rest assured that Plateaunians will not be ready to have infrastructural decay again. So today on the Plateau, the PDP is the bride of every son and daughters of Plateau State. APC, yes in government but absolutely nothing to write home about. Well, I wouldn't want to say more than that. When we get to the debates and also to the run the scorecards of the present administration, it will be true to Nigerians and Plateaunians that we've not had what we desire from the present government.



## Terrorists continue attacks in Kaduna, threaten to kill 900, demand N30million

### ■ Murder four, kidnap bride before wedding

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

The alarming rate of insecurity continues to increase across the country as terrorists launch more attacks, issue threats and demand ransom.

Sunday night, four residents of Angwar Bulus in Kajuru Local Government Area of Kaduna State were reportedly killed by terrorists who invaded the community while residents were sleeping.

Mr. Yohanna Magaji, a resident of the community told news men in Kaduna on Monday that the terrorists numbering over 100 stormed the community at midnight on Sunday, and started shooting sporadically. He narrated that the sound of gunshots woke residents, who started running to different directions for safety.

"The bandits came around 11.00 pm on Sunday night, and started shooting sporadically. The villagers who were fast asleep, suddenly woke up, after hearing the sound of gunshots. They started running, as they were all confused. Four persons were gunned down by stray bullets," he said.

He further added that the dead persons were taken to the hospital morgue.

Magaji called on the security operatives to help safeguard the community, as bandits have visited the community for the fourth time since March.

This is even as unknown gunmen suspended to be bandits reportedly abduct a bride identified as Tina Moses on Friday in Kaduna State, only 24 hours to her wedding.

Tina and her fiancé, Elisha Koje, were set to wed on Saturday, April 16 in the Sanga Local Government Area of the state.

A statement on Facebook by her sister-in-law, Esther Attah Asheri, announced the kidnap of Tina, saying she was abducted while

on her way to the salon to make her hair in Kaduna town.

She said, "My sister-in-law has been kidnapped in Kaduna town. Today (Saturday) was supposed to be our happy day as she would be walking down the aisle today but some people have chosen to make it a sad day for us all. Please join us pray for her safe return."

Asheri further revealed that the kidnappers have contacted the family but are yet to demand ransom.

In recent months, Kaduna has been on the spotlight regarding unabated terror attacks which have led to killings and abduction of residents.

On March 28, a Kaduna-bound train was attacked by gunmen, which led to the death of eight people with several persons still missing. Some of the abducted persons are currently in the custody of the terrorists, who have threatened that the victims would be killed if government failed to do their bidding.

While the nation was yet to recover from that attack, 11 soldiers were killed in an attack by terrorists on a military base in Birnin Gwari LGA of Kaduna State few days later.

Prior to these attacks, Kaduna international Airport was attacked in broad day light leaving one staff dead as others run for safety.

Recall that the Kaduna State government led by Governor Nasir El-Rufai earlier raised security alarm over planned terrorists attacks in the State.

According to a statement by Samuel Aruwan, the state commissioner for Internal Security and Home Affairs, terrorists have planted Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) in some public places such as schools, hospitals, hotels, bars, entertainment centres, restaurants, parks, major roads and places of worship.

Aruwan said, "The Kaduna State government wishes to issue a crucial advisory to citizens across the state for alertness to the

threat of explosive devices planted in public places by terrorists.

"Such public facilities include schools, hospitals, hotels, bars, entertainment centres, restaurants, parks, major roads and places of worship."

Despite the alarm, which came ending of February, security agencies have been unable to contain the violent attacks on citizens of the State.

Meanwhile, a notorious terror gang leader simply identified as Nasanda, has demanded N30 million ransom from the Zamfara State government over the killing of his bride, her uncle and aunt by Yansakai men, thereby warning that failure of the government to comply within 14 days would lead to the killing of 900 persons.

In a recorded audio message currently in circulation on social media, Nasanda described the murder of his bride, her uncle and aunt as a deliberate attack on him, adding that the Yansakai men knew that they were related to him.

In the audio, the Nasanda said that he was realistic and not greedy in asking for the N30 million compensation, adding that if he was greedy, he would have demanded for N50 million for each of the people killed.

"If the State government fails to pay the compensation, I vow that it would lead to the killing of 300 community people.

"I cannot give months for the government to settle me, the 14 days would be enough to settle my demands. And we will not attack until when people are on their farms. If our Fulani people are not allowed to live in peace, we will also not allow others to live in peace.

"If the government can't pay the N30 million demanded, the government should be ready to see me in action. I will kill 300 people to avenge the death of my bride and two of her relations. Yes, the lives of 900 will be in danger," he warned.

## NDLEA takes drug campaign to mosques

The campaign against drugs and substance abuse was on Monday taken to mosques in Katsina State by the National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) as Muslims were attending Islamic lectures and preparing to break the Ramadan fast for the day.

Commander of the anti-narcotic agency in the state, Mohammed Bashir and his entourage were at the Abubakar Sadiq Juma'at mosque, Filin Samji and Rafukka Juma'at mosque, Kofar Sauri, both in the State capital.

Speaking during the campaign at Rafukka Juma'at mosque, Bashir said the campaign aimed at sensitising parents and youths against the illegal use of drugs and hard substances.

He noted that the move would help in informing parents on measures to be taken on their children to prevent them from using hard drugs.

Bashir added that youths would also be guided on the dangers of drug abuse and its accompanying implications.

"The purpose of taking the campaign to places of Ramadan lectures is because parents and youths attend the function.

"Religious, traditional and community leaders and parents have a great role to play to assist the Federal Government in fighting the menace.

"If those leaders mentioned above can put all hands on the deck, nobody can engage in selling or illegally use drugs in their communities," he stressed.

He appealed to the parents to do everything humanly possible to ensure that their children did not engage in drug abuse.

Mr Bashir also called on Islamic scholars to keep using their sermons to sensitise the public about the glaring dangers of drug abuse.

While responding, the Imam of Rafukka Juma'at mosque, Sheikh Husamat Katsina, said such initiative was a welcome development, "because the menace affects everyone".

He said the solution to the problem was for all the stakeholders to unite to address the problem.



NDLEA CE, Buba Marwa

## Police, soldiers nab suspected robbers, others, kill one in states

Delta State Police Command has said it has arrested four suspected armed robbers/cultists as well as a serial car snatcher in a separate operations.

Force Public Relations Officer of the State, DSP Bright Edefe, who disclosed this in a press statement, said: "On 17/4/2022, information got to the Command that a group of suspected cultists/armed robbers were hibernating at Elope Hotel located in Issele Azagba and the location being their meeting point before carrying out their operations.

"Intelligence further revealed that the syndicate monitor to know if the police are closing up on them and that whenever they suspect anything, they throw their guns from the window of the hotel and run away.

"Operatives of the State Anti-Cult unit in a carefully planned operation, raided the said hideout and arrested four suspects namely;

Ogbuokwu Trust 'm' Age 23yrs, Augustine Solomon 'm' Age 20yrs, Edebatu Gideon 'm' and Kingsley Okolie 'm' Age 20 yrs. Two locally made cut to size guns and four live cartridges were recovered from them."

Edefe further stated that the suspected car snatcher, Mkohol Iligh, a 57 year old man, was caught along Kwale/Ogwashi-Uku expressway by Olloh-Ogwashi Community on Monday after he tried to escape when he sighted mentioned of the Police Force on stop and search duty.

"In another development, on 17/4/2022, the Command received a distress call from a caller (Name withheld) that his Toyota Camry car with registration no. EFR 939 TK was snatched at about 2000hours of same date in Out-Jeremi community of Ughelli South LGA.

"Information was quickly disseminated through the Command's control room to all

DPOs and Patrol teams to be on the lookout with a view to recovering the said vehicle and arresting the suspects.

"Consequently, on 18/4/2022 at about 0635hrs Anti-Crime Patrol of Ogwashi-Uku Police Station while on routine stop and search duty along Kwale/Ogwashi-Uku expressway by Olloh-Ogwashi Community, intercepted the said Toyota Camry.

"The Occupant who happens to be the driver of vehicle upon sighting the Police, abandoned the Car and took to his heels. The team went after the suspect and after a hot chase caught up with him and the suspect Mkohol Iligh 'm' age 57yrs was arrested.

"The suspect stated that one C.Y 'm' who stays in Warri gave him the car to be delivered to another person in Asaba. Investigation is ongoing with a view to arresting all suspects involved."

## IGP procures more assets, sets up ICT platforms, orders aggressive patrol

To curtail the rising insecurity across the country, the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Usman Alkali Baba has procured more assets to tackle terrorists and other criminal elements.

The items include 55 additional Lorries, 5 water tankers, 2 coaster buses and 15 Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs), The Trumpet gathered.

Force Public Relations Officer, CSP Olumuyiwa Adejobi, in a statement, said that the assets would aid the strategic deployment of tactical squads across the country.

Adejobi said: "The IGP, who has reiterated his commitment to continually provide necessary welfare and safer environment for police operatives at the forefront in crisis areas, immediately directed that the logistics and assets be made available for the ongoing serial operations being executed by the police at strategic locations in the county.

"In the same vein, IGP Usman Alkali Baba, has released adequate funds to upgrade the police ICT platforms to the required status, capable of combating the present security

issues and realities in Nigeria as such will go a long way in alleviating the operational challenges of police troops on various tactical operations in Nigeria.

"He equally directed the Police Airwing to step up its platforms and logistics to provide air support to the ground troops whenever they are on operation in the six geo-political zones in Nigeria.

"The Police boss however appealed to the general public not to panic in view of the heavily armed Police tactical squads who have

been deployed for various operations, as they have been warned to be professional, civil and to operate within the ambit of the law. He also sought for maximum cooperation with the police operatives in many areas especially information sharing, in order to make the operations successful.

"The IGP emphatically restated his zeal to fight criminal elements who are bent on neutralising and truncating the security system, peace and harmony we deserve in this country."



## Stakeholders tackle Buhari over state pardon for ex-govs, others

● *Say it's arbitrary, undermines judicial independence*

● *Shows prison's for poor Nigerians, anti-graft war finished*

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Critical stakeholders have berated the corruption war of the President Muhammadu Buhari administration, following the state pardon granted to former Governor of Plateau State, Joshua Dariye and his Taraba counterpart, Jolly Nyame.

They said Buhari is merely wasting national treasury in the name of fighting corruption, stressing that it is finished for the anti-graft war.

They contended that the state pardon extended to the former governors among other prominent Nigerians has shown that the Nigerian prison is only meant for the poor.

Speaking on the pardon, the prosecution counsel of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Rotimi Jacobs (SAN), said the Buhari anti-corruption has been made a joke.

He stated he was disappointed in the decision of the government which amounted to setting a wrong precedence for the younger generation.

Jacobs said the message being conveyed was that prison was only for the poor, noting that the pardon meant that both Dariye and Nyame could later run for elective offices.

He said, "This pardon means that they can hold offices and run for elections. It has turned the anti-corruption war into a joke. It is a setback against the fight against corruption. They are setting a bad example for the younger generation. This case went from the High Court to the Supreme Court

and now the convicts are being pardoned.

"It will demoralise the judges, the investigators and the prosecutors. It sends a bad message to the youth and Nigerians as a whole."

Meanwhile, Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) has described the state pardon as arbitrary, saying it undermines the independence of the judicial arm of government.

The group in a letter signed by its Deputy Director, Kolawole Oluwadare, called on the president to urgently withhold the pardon and allow the supposed beneficiaries to complete their jail terms.

"The pardon power ought to be exercised in a manner that is consistent with the 1999 Constitution (as amended), particularly the provisions on oath of office by public officers, and Section 15 (5), which requires your government to abolish all corrupt practices and abuse of power.

"Indeed, the presidential pardon power must be exercised in good faith, and in line with the provisions of Chapter 4 of the Nigerian Constitution on fundamental rights.

"The pardon constitutes an interference in the exercise of judicial power because the exercise appears to be arbitrary and undermines the authority and independence of the judiciary and access to justice for victims of corruption," the letter reads in part.

On his part, Nobel Laureate, Prof Wole Soyinka, said he was at a loss for words following the carelessness of the Buhari administration in granting pardon to convicted criminals, who are serving their jail terms for

corrupt practices and abuse of public trust.

In a disappointing manner, Prof Soyinka said, "All I can say is that it is finished. It is finish."

This is coming even as renowned Human rights lawyer, Femi Falana (SAN) stated that the war against corruption had officially come to an end and jokingly asked the Federal Government to release all guilty persons from prisons.

He said it is quite sad that a man who said one of his major cardinal focus is the fight against corruption would turn his back and grant pardon to convicted corrupt politicians and public officers for stealing billings from the Nigerian people.

Falana said, "They are pardoning themselves now. The same man, who said he came to fight corruption, has been granting pardon to people who were convicted for stealing billions of naira.

"My reaction is that all criminals and petty thieves should be released since Section 17 of the Constitution says there shall be equal right for all citizens and Section 42 says there shall be no discrimination on the basis of class, gender or whatever."

While speaking earlier on Friday at the first memorial lecture and book presentation in honour of the late activist, Mr Yinka Odumakin, at Lagos, Falana said, "The rulers are interested in continuity – continuity of injustice and corruption. A Nigerian was jailed for stealing noodles in Abuja, he was not granted state pardon. If you want to pardon your friends, you must extend that pardon to other people

in the spirit of equity and fairness."

Also a Pro-transparency group, Transparency International (TI), which has consistently ranked Nigeria low despite the anti-corruption war of the Buhari administration, said it had become obvious that the President's anti-graft war was a scam.

Auwal Rafsanjani, the Executive Director of the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre, which is Nigeria's chapter of the TI, said the Buhari has lost the moral right to continue the anti-corruption war. Adding that it was obvious that the pardon of the two ex-governors was connected to the 2023 elections.

"The Buhari government has shown that the fight against corruption is simply deceptive, a mere show, a means to settle political scores and pardon those in its camp. It has rubbished the work of the EFCC and the Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission.

"You need to know how much was spent on the trial of these gentlemen. Why did the government waste taxpayers' money if they knew this was what they wanted to do?"

"We are not surprised that as 2023 is coming, these two ex-governors, who are popular in their states, are being pardoned so that the ruling party can use them to win elections in their states.

"There are thousands of Nigerians languishing in various correctional centres. Why are they not being forgiven? Why is it that people who looted and impoverished the people are being pardoned?"



Buhari



Bawa



Soyinka



Falana

## Court to rule April 25 on bail bid of 'Army General' in fraud case

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Justice O.A.Taiwo of the Special Offences Court sitting in Ikeja, Lagos, has set aside April 25, 2022 for ruling on the bail application of one Bolarinwa Abiodun, a self-acclaimed Army General.

Abiodun is being prosecuted by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) on a 13-count charge bordering on obtaining money by false pretence, forgery of documents and possession of documents containing false pretence to the tune of N266,500,000.

The defendant was arraigned on April 11, 2022 by operatives of EFCC.

He was also accused of falsely representing himself to the complainant, Kodef Clearing Resources, as a General in the Nigerian Army, who had been shortlisted by President Muhammadu Buhari to be appointed as the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and that he needed a short grant to "press and process the appointment".

He is also accused of being in possession of a forged document titled: Letter of Authorisation, purportedly signed by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo permitting one Bamidele Olusegun Safiriyu, of De-Rock Maritime Resource L.T.D. to enter Apapa Port freely and load their truck.

Abiodun was also alleged to have, in May 2020, forged a Nigeria Army Identity Card with serial number 387140, claiming the same to have been issued to him from the Nigerian Army, and another forged Letter of Recommendation purportedly signed by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, recommending one Adebayo Rasaanq Adebola, with recruitment No 77RRI/OG/556/0032555 and Adeogun Emmanuel Adesola, with recruitment No 77RRI/OG/352/0123751, for employment into the Nigeria Army.

Abiodun was arrested at his house in the Alagbado area of Lagos State on Wednesday, January 12, 2022.

The charge reads: "Bolarinwa Oluwasegun Abiodun between 17th August 2017, and 12th

December 2018, in Lagos, within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court with intent to defraud and whilst holding yourself out as a General in the Nigerian Army, obtained the sum of N23,300,000 from Kodef Clearing Resources Limited, under the pretence that the sum represented part of the amount expended to "press and process" your incoming appointment by the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, as the Chief of Army Staff of the Nigerian Army, which pretence you knew to be false.

"Bolarinwa Oluwasegun Abiodun sometime in April 2018, in Lagos within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court, had in your possession a document containing false pretence titled: letter of Recommendation purportedly signed by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo recommending one Adebayo Rasaanq Adebola with recruitment No 77RRI/OG/556/0032555 and Adeogun Emmanuel Adesola with recruitment No: 77RRI/OG/352/0123751 for employment into the Nigeria Army, which documents you

knew to be false."

The defendant pleaded not guilty to the charges.

Following his plea, the prosecuting counsel, A.O. Muhammed, prayed the Court for a trial date and for the remand of the defendant at the facility of the Nigerian Correctional Service.

The defence counsel, Kayode Lawal, informed the Court of a summons for bail filed on behalf of the defendant.

The prosecution acknowledged receipt on April 8, 2022, noting that "we are still within time to respond and we intend to respond."

Acknowledging the position of the prosecution, Lawal prayed the court for "the shortest date to move our bail application."

Thereafter, Justice Taiwo adjourned till Thursday, April 14, 2022 and ordered that the defendant be remanded at Ikoyi Correctional facility, Lagos.

Having held the bail application, the court has fixed April 25 for its ruling on the application.



## UNIMAID Solar hybrid power plant: Lessons for Universities

The Trumpet of April 9, 2022, reported that the Federal Government will soon complete a hybrid solar plant at the University of Maiduguri, UNIMAID. Persons conversant with the city of Maiduguri and environs are familiar with sunlight and its attendant heat in that part of Nigeria. Not surprisingly therefore a good number of research projects in that area are focused on sun energy. Meeting electricity power demand is a major challenge which most public institutions face. Most internally generated funds are expended on diesel and other power generation related overheads by the universities.

Lack of electric power supply is the malaria-equivalent of most of our universities. It has become a veritable source of corruption and sleaze in the system. There is diesel racketeering; inflated cost of generators purchases and repairs. Given its essentiality, managements of most our institutions usually insinuate that officials of power distribution companies are "settled" under the table for a guarantee of more regular power supplies. It was therefore cheery news when Vice President Yemi Osinbajo, SAN, announced that through the economic Sustainability Plan approved by the president, NNPC, REA and Yola DISCO are partnering with FG and Borno State government to deploy 30MW of Solar Power to critical areas of Maiduguri.

Borno state is a natural home to solar energy. Apart from gas and hydro related sources of energy, sub-Saharan Africa is highly endowed with solar and wind as sources of energy. It was recently reported that a superfast solar-powered charging station that could charge vehicles in 35 minutes is in operation at Baga Road, Maiduguri. This city also prides itself as hosting Africa's largest fully automated solar plant factory at Jimtilo Village, Maiduguri that could produce 40 Megawatts worth of panels per year with each panel imbued with a capacity of 300 watts. Students at the University of Maiduguri recently developed a fish drying machine that is also solar driven.

The above are both locally relevant and related problem centred initiatives. It attests to the fact that every part of the country is blessed with

resources that can be deployed for the benefit of humanity. The President – as the Visitor to all its universities – must task its research and teaching institutions to tackle our local problems and challenges to turn our societal weaknesses into strength, and our threats into opportunities. The time has come for Nigeria to elevate itself from a raw material producer into finished products producer. Many universities in Nigeria are acclaimed announcers of grants received from various local and international agencies. This is commendable. But they should be challenged to announce the research outcomes of the received grants as quickly as they do when they win the grants.

The parasitic nature of our teaching and research institutions should also be checked as quickly as possible. The moment funds

are not received from Abuja and TETFund, the universities begin to creak. Most of the books in universities' bookshops and libraries are foreign. Universities have not been able to attract industries such as printing, publishing, bookshop, hotels, and hostels that are traditionally part of the large scale of industry associated with an ideal university town. The reason is not far-fetched. We have a university system that disdains local publications and conferences for its senior research and teaching members. In turn, they neglect publication of, or in, local journals. They seldom patronize local publishers; attend or organize local conferences. Consequently, the system is littered with "unknown Professors". Our university landscape has lost publishers such as Longman, Heinemann, African Writers' Series and even the University Presses and Bookshops. The system which the universities have foisted on themselves is strangulating, suicidal and self-destructive.

The time has come for university administrators to reverse this trend. The loss of foreign exchange is huge. Emphasis should be on the local. Nigeria boasts of a high number of tertiary institutions spread across the country. Consequently, the research output of our academic institutions should be massive. Industries associated with our universities should be thriving and vibrant. With mounting myriad of problems which we are facing as a people, universities should be tasked and challenged to identify with well-spelt out problems. They should be given the requisite funds for research and development. This was exactly what Europe did when the reality of COVID-19 faced humanity.

Nigerian universities should be challenged to do the same in areas of our social engineering, security, book production, food production and preservation, repairs and maintenance of our refineries and other production plants as well as in designing and fabricating relevant technologies from the spheres of household to military, factory, social and other interventions of human needs. The federal government's intervention through collaboration with Borno State government on the energy needs of UNIMAID should be replicated in other institutions.



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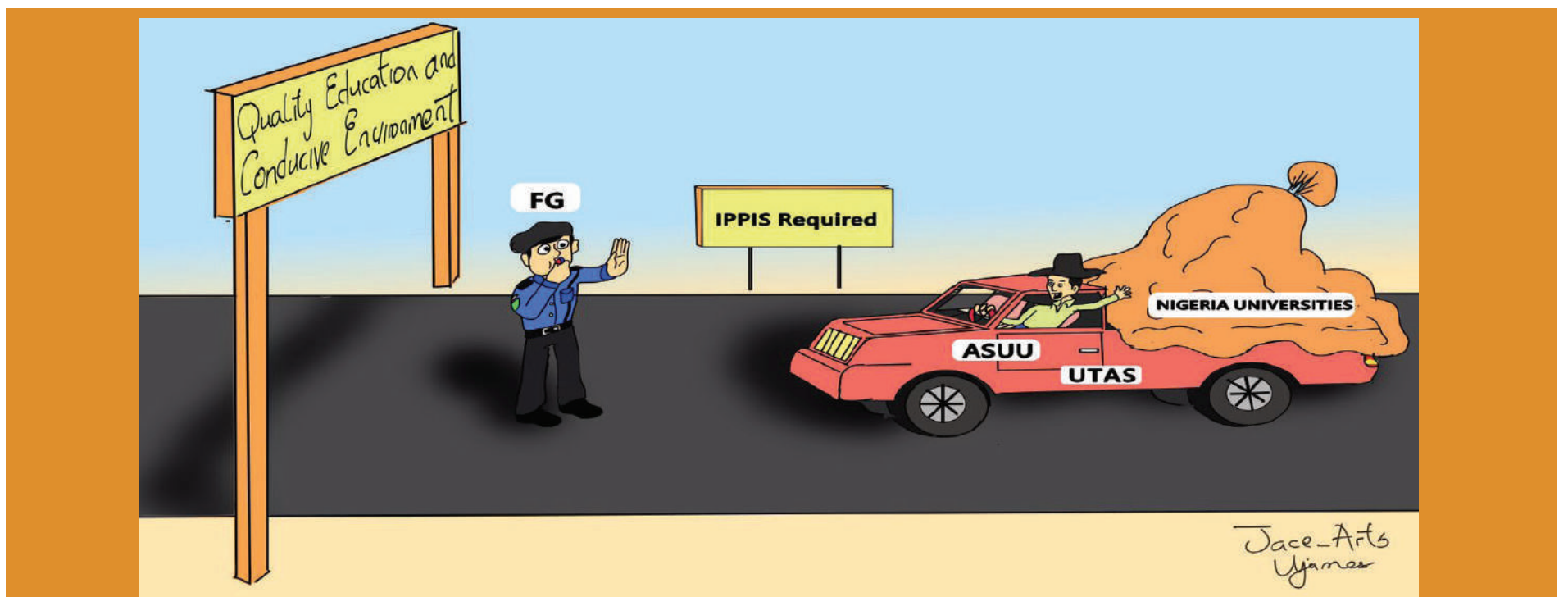
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Last week the National Council of State, presided over by President Muhammadu Buhari, shocked the nation by granting an undeserved state pardon to former Governors Joshua Dariye and Jolly Nyame of Plateau and Taraba states respectively, who were jailed for mindlessly looting billions of their states' funds, while in power. It was more disgusting that the President, who was voted to power because of the general belief that he had solid anti-corruption credentials to tame the monster, which has been the albatross of our national development, was the very one who superintended over the obnoxious decision. Definitely, it will worsen the spate of embezzlement of public funds in the country. How can Nigerians come to terms with the contradiction that President Buhari, who gained popularity as an anti-corruption czar, along with his Deputy, Late Brigadier General Tunde Idiagbon, during his reign as a military head of state, is the same one romanticizing corruption and treating it with levity?

As a military head of state, he jailed some politically exposed persons up to 200 years for stealing public funds. The question now is: why is he soft on corruption this time around? Is it true that the brain behind the relatively successful war against corruption at that time was his no-nonsense Deputy, Brigadier-General Tunde Idiagbon?

The President has unwittingly given credence to this impression by the

unprecedented level of corruption ravaging the country since he came to power in 2015. The situation is so bad that some Nigerians are now clamouring for the return of his predecessor, President Goodluck Jonathan, who was voted out on account of what was then considered as an abysmally high level of official graft. It is a paradox that Jonathan's administration, contrary to all expectations, is being adjudged as less corrupt than Buhari's.

Anyone who is seriously committed to fighting corruption in Nigeria must focus his searchlight on the executive governors. For one, they wield enormous powers comparable with that of ancient Roman emperors. Secondly, they enjoy immunity, which they see as a license to misbehave. Thirdly, they use state security budget as slush funds which they don't account for.

The combination of all these factors create an enabling environment for them and their cronies to steal public funds with impunity. The situation is even made further worse by the pliant and mercantile judiciary which enables them to escape justice or, at best, given a mere slap on the wrist.

This probably explains why out of the over 30 ex-governors investigated by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, and charged to court for corruption, between 1999 and 2019, only about six have been convicted and one acquitted. This is why Nigerians are generally very disappointed that two of the convicts have been granted pardon by the

## Pardon for Dariye, Nyame: Big boost for corruption

Buhari's administration.

Reacting to the pardon, Mr Femi Falana, a reputable human rights lawyer and Senior Advocate of Nigeria, was so furious that he asked Mr President to go further and release all those jailed for corruption in this country. He spoke the minds of most Nigerians who saw the unwarranted pardon as an action tantamount to an official stamp on unbridled reign of official looting of public funds.

We should not also forget in a hurry that under the watch of the same government, a former governor of Abia State, Mr Orji Uzor Kalu, who was jailed for pocketing N7.56 billion of his state's funds, was released from prison on some so-called technical grounds. Since then, not much has been heard about his case.

With the pardon granted Dariye and Nyame, no former governor is currently in jail, though the governors, and their cohorts, obviously constitute the worst thieves of humongous public funds in the country. With this scenario, can the Buhari administration really thumb its chest that it has effectively delivered on its electoral promise to drastically reduce corruption?

What is playing out in Nigeria is that thieving governors will now have the confidence to even steal more, knowing fully well that at the end of their immunity, no serious punishment will be meted out to them.

The charging of ex-governors to court for corruption is now being regarded as a mere formality to fulfill all righteousness. After all, by far the majority of them have been under going trials for over a decade, and in most instances, the cases are as good as abandoned. What a way to fight looting of public funds in a country once described as "fantastically corrupt" by the immediate past Prime Minister of Britain, Mr David Cameron.

After leaving office, with the stupendous ill-gotten wealth at their disposal, the ex-governors usually retire to the Senate where they continue with the plundering of our common patrimony. Many of them merely warm their seats because they neither propose tangible new bills nor contribute meaningfully to debates. They are just there to while away time and, without conscience, receive full senators' remunerations, in addition to the huge pensions that most of them enjoy as former governors.

At the 8th Assembly, for instance, there were 15 former governors and two ex-Deputy Governors in the Senate. They were Bukola Saraki, Kwara; Theodore Orji, Abia; Godswill Akpabio, Akwa Ibom; George Akume, Benue; Sam Egwu, Ebonyi; Danjuma Goje, Gombe; Joshua Dariye, Plateau; Jonah Jang, Plateau and Bukar Abba Ibrahim, Yobe.

Others were Ahmed Sani Yarima, Zamfara; Rabiu Kwankwanso, Kano; Adamu Aliero, Kebbi; Abdullahi Adamu, Nasarawa and Aliyu Wammako of Sokoto state.

Also rubbing shoulders with them were two former Deputy Governors: Eyinnaya Abaribe, Abia and Biodun Oluyemi of Ekiti State.

With this abhorrent political norm deeply entrenched in our country, it will be really difficult to reverse the anomic behavior of our governors who are in power, not to deliver the dividends of democracy to their constituents, but mainly to serve their selfish interests.

President Buhari should be mindful of how posterity will judge him. He should, therefore, use the remaining 13 months left in his administration to re-strategise to rejuvenate his dwindling reputation as an anti-corruption czar.

*•Chief Araka is Chairman of the Editorial Board of The Trumpet..*

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Tom and Jerry is a television cartoon series created in 1940 by William Hanna and Joseph Barbera. It is arguably the most famous cartoon series on television across the world and commands a viewing audience of over one billion, with ninety-per cent of the audience children and youths. As a comic series, it holds viewers spellbound, glued to the screen with fantastic theatricals and exaggerated stunts orchestrated by a cat and a mouse involved in a game of absurd chance, melancholic deceit, and grotesque rascality. In the end, it is all a cartoon comedy, without any intent or purpose beyond the ludicrous.

In our country these days, there are more reasons to cry than to laugh, therefore, the populace should welcome comedy of any hue with open arms. Whether it is stand-up comedy, comedy in core literature or comedy in a cartoon, we must welcome them to indulge our faculties no matter how momentary or fleeting. Whoever created the cartoon series Tom and Jerry must be a genius. How on earth was it possible to create two very unserious, trivial, frivolous characters with an unmatched, incredible capacity to amuse? In Nigerian politics today, many Tom and Jerry characters have taken comedy to a new height by indicating interest to become Nigeria's president in 2023. Apart from entertainment and all the trappings of amusement such presidential avowal highlight, they indicate, gravely, the pitiable and hopeless depths to which we have

fallen in this country.

It has gotten to a level where ordinary cartoon characters now aspire to lead over two hundred million people in Nigeria? This calls for a national emergency, a cry for spiritual supplication. Let the Christians pray, let the Muslims pray, let those who subscribe to various traditional beliefs offer sacrifices and beckon on the ancestors to save us. Tom and Jerry, celebrated cartoon characters are interested in occupying the highest office in Nigeria. Wahala dey o! I am not unmindful of such sanctimonious opiate as "it is their constitutional rights" which many people bandy about when a cartoon character or a jester indicates interest in elective public office. But must we dance naked before the whole world in utter disregard for the codes of decency all in the name of politics? Has the leadership of Nigeria become so pedestrian that Tom and Jerry consider themselves qualified to steer the ship of state? The immediate tragedy is that no matter who indicates interest to occupy the office of the president, there will be foot-soldiers and turncoats to lend their support. I have always maintained that if the devil comes out today and declares that he is the devil responsible for all the tragedy in the world, followers will emerge.

Certainly, one can argue that given what is going on in Nigeria now where many people insist that there is no leadership of any kind, Tom and Jerry can fill in the gap. This is the tragedy of our time. I am aware that Nigerians are all

## Nigeria 2023: Tom and Jerry for president

crying and wishing that 2023 should arrive so that there will be a change of baton from the current emasculating order, but we have not also looked inwards to the kind of change we want. It lacerates my heart that we are likely to repeat the mistakes of 2015 in our hurry to embrace change. Are we ready to accommodate all manner of cartoon characters towards 2023? Are there genuine persons, those who are versed and in tune with the various maladies confronting the country, speaking or aspiring to the office of the president in 2023? From my close observation and analysis, Nigerians are gravitating towards the kind of mistake they made in 2015. We are inclined to such primordial sentiments like ethnicity, loyalty, and many uncategorized inclinations. Therefore we have become part of the political amusement circus, providing much-needed entertainment. Nigeria should not sink lower than the present situation by supporting a misfit, a cartoon character to become our next president.

Perhaps, hopes can come alive again if qualified, knowledgeable people can step forward and indicate their interest to serve Nigerians. If educated people, well disposed and knowledgeable stay aloof, abandoning Nigeria to cartoon characters, then, we must be ready to tell our children stories of our complicities in their inevitable future anguish. When someone stated that he would love to see a Boko Haram repentant member become the president of Nigeria someday, many of us did not take him seriously. If care is not taken, 2023 will produce the most absurd, comic, inconsequential character as president which will decorate the present dispensation in glory.

There must indeed be a way out. Beyond the cataclysmic conditions in Nigeria, quite beyond the eviscerating circumstances all over the country

now, the bigger challenge is staring everyone in the face and that is 2023. I foresee danger at the national and state levels with the calibre of cartoon characters that are indicating interest in public offices. Because of their inordinate ambitions, because of their selfish pursuits, these cartoon characters have looked away while the ordinary people stew in the juice of extermination in the hands of cruel leadership. Truth chokes these cartoon characters, reality too is not part of their menu. Their commitment is to conceal evil as long as it will guarantee them a free passage to the position of leadership in Nigeria. They refuse to speak when the devil bellows. Wahala dey o!

Is it possible that come 2023, Nigeria will be left in the hands of criminals, bandits, crooks and double-dealers, those who have no iota of idea about what Nigeria needs to become a better country? Cartoon characters have no vision beyond fulfilling a deep-seated ambition to hold political offices. This maniac insistence to become president, we all thought it was for a good cause in the past but today, we know better. We cannot deliberately open the door to another horror experience in 2023. These questionable characters with all the putrid baggage hoping to lead Nigeria in 2023 should please stop the insults. I am sure Nigerians have learnt from the mistakes of 2015 and will never repeat them. If the cartoon characters insist, believing that Nigerians will remain fools forever, they will be treated to the greatest collapse of their existence to the envy of tsunami. Our love for comedy must have limits, even our love for Tom and Jerry.

*•Dr. Adiele who teaches at Mountain Top University is a member of The Trumpet Editorial Board and can be reached via promee01@yahoo.com*



## Chrisland School shut over sextape scandal

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH**

Lagos State Government has shut down all Chrisland Schools in Lagos State indefinitely over alleged an 'immoral act' engaged in by pupils during a trip to Dubai.

Pupils from the school were in Dubai in March to participate in the World School Games between March 10-13, 2022.

They were said to have been involved in an immoral act during a truth-or-dare game which led to an alleged sex tape scandal circulated on social media involving students of the school and which also centered around a 10-year-old girl.

The shutdown notice was contained in a press statement on Monday. The statement was jointly signed by the State Ministry of Education, Ministry of Youth and Social Development, Office of Education Quality Assurance, Ministry of Justice and the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency.

The statement read, "The attention of the Lagos State Government has been drawn to the alleged sexual violence case involving students of Chrisland Schools which occurred in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

"It is pertinent to note that all allegations are being investigated by the relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies, including the Ministry of Education, Office of Education Quality Assurance, Ministry of Youth and Social Development, Ministry of Justice and the Lagos State

Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency, whilst the criminal allegations have been escalated to the Commissioner of Police.

"In view of the allegations, we are committed to ensuring that adequate medical and psycho-social support is provided.

"This is to reassure members of the public of the State Government's commitment to safety and child protection, especially in ensuring that all child-centred institutions within the state, formulate and implement policies and systems that are compliant with the Executive Order (NO. EO/AA08 of 2016), Lagos State Safeguarding and Child Protection Program.

"We also use this medium to remind the general public that any person who engages in any visual depiction of sexually explicit conduct involving a child, commits an offence and is liable to a custodial sentence of 14 years. This includes "producing, distributing, receiving, or possessing an image of child pornography".

"In the meantime, all Chrisland Schools within Lagos State are hereby closed, pending further investigations."

## VC laments absence of budgets for environmental research institutions

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH**

Vice Chancellor, University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN), Prof. Charles Igwe, has lamented the absence of budgets in research institutions for efficient environmental research in the country.

He said this at the Environmental stakeholders' review on Resources and Environmental Policy Research Centre, Environment for Development (REPRC-EfD), for five years strategic plan on environmental issues in Abuja.

According to him, the absence of allocation funds for research in the annual budget for universities is a challenge to the efficiency of research institutions in Nigeria.

Igwe added that serious work such as setting up more programmes needed to be done to help Nigeria solve its numerous environmental problems.

"I commended the Centre for its achievements on the



Prof. Charles Igwe

strategic plan which will help the centre to carry out a focused intervention in the core areas of its mandate.

"I am also commending TETFund for its intervention in research funding.

"Meanwhile, the absence of allocation of funds for research in the annual budget of universities is a challenge to the efficiency of research institutions in Nigeria," he said.

Director of REPRC-EfD Nigeria, Dr Nnaemeka Chukwuone, said that the centre has produced over 28 high impact research publications since it was established in 2019.

He said that the centre has developed pilot natural capital accounts for Nigeria, for review of the country's fishery Act, capacity building training for government technical staff among others.

"The strategic plan will last for five years from 2022 to 2026 and will help the centre to achieve specific objectives through research, policy engage-

ments and capacity building for researchers.

"Our target is to use research to influence policies that will make our environment better."

Chukwuone also stated that the objectives of the REPRC-EfD are to conduct policy-impact researches that will help Nigeria solve its environmental challenges.

Prof. Emmanuel Oladipo, the Chairman of REPRC Policy Advisory Panel, called on the government to set up a National Research Council that would determine the country's problems and provide solutions.

Oladipo added that the council would help to carry out solution-based research on environmental problems.

Furthermore, the Chairman of REPRC strategic planning committee, Prof. Anthonia Achike, stated that the event was organised to solicit recommendations of environmental experts and stakeholders in order to calibrate the strategic plan.

## Lagos to establish 50 comprehensive schools

Lagos Government has disclosed plans to increase the number of Comprehensive Schools in the state from the initial pilot of 12 to 50 by September. It is part of efforts to equip secondary school pupils with technical skills.

Commissioner for Education, Mrs. Folasade Adefisayo, disclosed this at the sensitization of stakeholders on Lagos State Comprehensive School Programme held at Government Secretariat, Alausa, Ikeja.

She said that the Comprehensive School Programme is organized towards reducing the rate of dropouts in schools, as some students are disconnected with the usual academic curriculum but prefer to learn technical skills.

The commissioner also emphasised the importance of integrating the new programme into the curriculum, noting that the Comprehensive Schools are designed to give technically-inclined students the

opportunity to explore their interests and get trained to mastery level.

In her words, "We discovered and observed that out of every 10 students admitted to JS1 only three make it to SS3, while only one student will eventually excel at the transition exam. This has resulted in an increase in student dropouts in Lagos State".

"The students, under the programme, will be given a mobile tablet preloaded with their curriculum and starter kits to explore their interests and desired skills. Also, the best

three students will be sponsored to Finland for more training and exposure," she added.

The Commissioner stated that the present administration has established partnerships with private and international institutions for training, internship opportunities and employment prospects for the students.

Aside from the infrastructures, the government indicated that plans have been made to send teachers to Finland for training in order to improve their ability to better impact knowledge on the students.

Revealing that an MOU was

recently signed by the Lagos State Government and the City of Tampere in Finland, Mrs. Adefisayo said some of the teachers would get an opportunity to visit Finland to understudy a similar system.

She also applauded school principals for the highly impressive results in the last West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE). She added that the performance of students with a minimum of five credits including Mathematics and English has improved from 38.79% in 2020 to 79.64% in 2021.

## Singer begs ASUU to call off strike

•Says since he got admission he hasn't start schooling

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH**

Nigerian singer, Divine Ikubor, popularly known as Rema lamented over the lingering Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike.

He took to social media with a post stressing the predicament of every Nigerian student in a government-owned university.

ASUU embarked on a one-month warning strike on February 14th and extended it by another two months, over the alleged failure of the government to fulfil its agreements.

The union has been on strike for over two months and students have been at home since then waiting for the strike to be called off.

In January, Rema disclosed that he had been admitted for a degree programme at the

university of Lagos (UNILAG)

On Monday, the singer lamented over the fact that he had not started schooling since he got the admission and urged the academic staff union to call off the strike.

The singer said this via this Twitter handle.

His tweet read, "ASUU, since dem give me admission I never start school o, e don do nau!"

The Academic Staff Union of Universities has said it has yet to call off its ongoing strike because it is waiting for the government. Its members are ready to resume academic activities if the government is ready to play its part.

However, the Minister of Labour and Employment, Chris Ngige, at his last meeting with ASUU told the union to look for better ways to pressurize the ministry of Education rather



Chris Ngige

than embarking on strike.

The minister stated that he has no control over the current situation between the Federal Government and the ASUU, adding that things are beyond his control because he's not the Minister of Education.



Mrs. Folasade Adefisayo





## IGP, CP order maximum security in schools, others

By PAUL MICHAEL ABUJA AND ALEX OLISE LAGOS

Inspector General of Police, IGP Usman Alkali Baba, has ordered the protection of schools and colleges, particularly boarding and tertiary institutions in areas prone to insecurity across the country.

In a statement by the Force Public Relations Officer, CSP Olumuyiwa Adejobi, the IGP also deployed operational assets to compliment existing ones.

The statement said that the IGP gave the directive while reviewing the general security in the country, including that of schools and colleges

in a meeting of the Force Management Team, held on Sunday at the Force Headquarters in Abuja.

The statement said, "The Inspector-General of Police, IGP Usman Alkali Baba, psc(+), NPM, fdc, has ordered the review of police personnel and operational assets deployments to schools and colleges around the country, to ensure the protection of schools and colleges, particularly boarding schools, tertiary institutions, and its campuses in areas prone to security breaches around the country.

"This directive was issued at the management meeting of the Force Management Team at the IGP

Conference Hall, Force Headquarters, Abuja, on 19th April, 2022, while reviewing the general security in the country including the security of schools and colleges as a result of some isolated incidences reported in some schools.

"The IGP equally directed all State Commissioners of Police, Tactical Commanders, as well as their supervising Assistant Inspectors-General of Police (AIGs), to explore all available options and think outside the box to boost security in and around schools, colleges, and student-based communities.

"The IGP has equally directed detectives/

operatives of the Force Criminal Investigations Department (FCID) and the Force Intelligence Bureau (FIB) to ensure sustained surveillance and intelligence gathering activities within various school environments while the Police Airwing has been directed to extend its aerial patrols to the six geo-political zones of the country.

"The Inspector-General of Police therefore assured that all hands will be on deck to ensure a safe environment for all pupils and students in the various schools and colleges of learning within the country. He further reiterated the commitment of his administration to

diversifying resources towards sustainable security and safety of all and sundry in Nigeria.

Also, Lagos Commissioner of Police (CP) Sylvester Abiodun Alabi has ordered full security alert in the state.

In a signal, he urged all the Area Commanders and Division Police Officers of all fields to maintain adequate security in their various jurisdictions. The position of the CP, is in line with the order of the IGP Akali Usman Baba.

The CP's order came after the bursting of criminal hideouts in Lagos, that led to the arrest of many criminals and recovery of arms and ammunition.



## Commercial cycle rider jailed for raping passenger

By BENJAMIN OMOIKE

A 33-year-old motorcyclist, Michael Ahmed, has been sent to life imprisonment for raping a 21-year-old passenger.

The convict was handed down the judgement by the trial judge, Justice Hakeem Oshodi, at the Lagos State High Court in Ikeja.

Justice Oshodi, in his judgement, said that the prosecution had succeeded in proving the case against the defendant beyond reasonable doubts.

The prosecution held that the survivor was 21 years old, while the convict was 24 years old at the time he committed the offence in 2013.

The judge said, "The evidence of the victim is concise and clear, while the defendant's evidence is distorted before the court. He tried to distort the facts in the timing of the incident, how he got to the police station and the name he was called on the day of the incident.

"There is a clear evidence before the court that the defendant forced himself on the victim.

"There is also proof before the court that the defendant bit the survivor

on the shoulder. "The defendant is hereby convicted of the two-count charge of rape and serious assault against him.

According to Justice Oshodi, "The court has clearly considered the allocutus presented by the defence counsel. However, the offence of rape is mandatory and the court has no power to pronounce a lesser offence.

"The defendant is hereby sentenced to life imprisonment, which is the statutory sentence for rape and three years jail term for serious assault.

This should take effect from July 25, 2013, that he had been in detention."

The defence counsel, Mr. Ramon Bashir, in his allocutus, pleaded with the court to temper justice with mercy, noting that the defendant had no prior criminal record.

"My Lord the convict is a young man, who I believe has turned a new leaf. It is evident before

the court that he never committed any offence before today.

"My Lord, the convict is pleading before the court to temper justice with mercy," Bashir said.

Throughout the trial, four witnesses – the survivor, the survivor's father, an investigative police officer and a medical doctor from the Ikorodu

General Hospital, testified for the prosecution; while the convict, his sister and a vigilante, who knew the defendant, testified for the defence.

According to the State's prosecutor, Mr. M. T. Adewuyi and his team, the defendant committed the offences on July 9, 2013, about 11:30 p.m. in New Covenant Estate, Gage in

Ikorodu, Lagos.

Trouble started for the defendant when he raped the survivor while she was on her way from church.

On the day of the incident, the survivor and her two sisters were at a Berger Bus Stop when they called the defendant to carry them to the house.

But the defendant could not carry the three of them

at once. As a result of that, the survivor told the defendant to drop her two sisters first at home and come back to pick her.

The prosecution said that the defendant told the survivor he was trying to avoid the police at the estate and diverted into another route.

He then pretended that the motorcycle was faulty and the survivor got down from the bike to check what was wrong.

The prosecution further said the defendant pounced on the survivor, strangled her, hit her head in the mud and raped her, while the survivor fought back but he bit her on the shoulder and threatened to kill her if she did not allow him have his way.

Following the act, the defendant was arrested in his house and taken to the police station by the estate's security after the survivor narrated her ordeal to them.

The offence contravenes Section 172 and 258 of the Criminal Laws of Lagos State, 2011.



## Patient allegedly falls, drowns in Edo hospital's septic tank

A male pensioner seeking free medical care has reportedly fallen and died inside the soakaway of Oredo Primary Health Center premises in Edo State.

The incident reportedly occurred during a screening/registration exercise for patients.

The unnamed deceased

patient was said to be among dozens of others who had gathered at the health center for registration ahead of the free medicare.

An invitation sent out to residents showed that the free medicare was organised by the Edo State Government, in collaboration with Association of

Nigerian Physicians in America.

A witness, who simply identified himself as Obaze, said, "The man (deceased) was on the queue and later stepped aside to pee.

"It was while he was finding a place to pee that he stepped on the dilapidated soakaway.

"The concrete slab of

the dilapidated soakaway caved-in and the man fell into the facility.

"The man remained inside the soakaway for about two hours without rescue. And when help finally came, he was brought out dead with the aid of an excavator," the witness added.

A visit to the health center showed that registration

for the free medical care, which was temporarily suspended after the tragedy, had resumed.

The State Commissioner for Health, Prof. Akoria Obehi, could not be reached for comment. Also, the State Commissioner for information, Mr. Adaze Emwanta, did not respond to calls to his mobile line.

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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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9 x 4	224,478.54	241,314.43	8 x 5	226,238.74	254,477.52	8 x 5	208,805.79	224,469.23	6 x 4	100,634.10	110,944.41	
10 x 4	299,302.72	321,752.57	8 x 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	
8 x 6	359,165.65	386,103.08	9 x 5	305,373.04	328,276.02	9 x 5	281,288.07	303,022.10	14.5 x 4	249,838.03	268,575.88	
9 x 5	404,061.37	434,365.97	9 x 6	367,065.92	394,595.86	9 x 6	337,805.68	363,141.11	7 x 5	141,001.98	161,793.93	
10 x 5	448,957.08	482,628.86	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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Page 4 (Full Page)	1,187,500.00	1,276,562.50	3x6 Front Page	1,140,000.00	1,225,500.00
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Senate President Ahmad Lawan



Nnimmo Bassey

# Groups laud Senate for backing regulation of GMOs

## •Insist such crops unsustainable, unsafe

By **EDU ABADE**, Business Editor

A coalition of environmental activists, public health and food safety advocates has commended the Senate for backing strict regulation of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) crops in the country.

The groups comprise the Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF), Corporate Accountability and Public Participation Africa (CAPPA), Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth Nigeria (ERA/FoEN) and GMO-Free Nigeria, among others. They applauded the Senate for considering a bill to review the National Biosafety Management Agency (NBMA) Act in the overall interest of protecting food safety and public interests in Nigeria.

They were reacting to a report titled: Senate Insists On GMOs Thorough Regulations, insisting that they reject

and will continue to reject GMO crops and being fed with contaminated foods.

Speaking, Director of HOMEF, Nnimmo Bassey, said: "This is a huge milestone towards defending the rights of Nigerian citizens to safe food and environment. It is a step in the right direction for consumers and especially for small holder farmers who are directly impacted by GMOs and associated chemicals, and yet have little or no knowledge or choice about the entry of these unnatural varieties into our food system or of their potential risks.

"We reject being fed with foods of dubious quality! We have always called on the Federal Government to interrogate the questionable authorisation of crops that would have irreversible impacts on our biodiversity, health, environment and food safety. We applaud Senate's intervention in seeking to enforce law and order with proper regulation of Biosafety

in Nigeria."

Bassey added that promoting food safety and security/sovereignty is a mandate that rests not just on the Biosafety Management Agency, but also on the entire public and as such public opinion must be considered in decision making processes concerning GMOs.

The report indicated that Presenter of the bill and Senate Leader, Dr. Yahaya Abdullahi, stressed why the Bill for the Amendment of the National Biosafety Management Act (NBMA) must be supported for more diligent legislation that would make our country zero tolerant to any hazardous product as related to GMOs saying our soils and the good health of Nigerians must be well protected with eco-friendly environment.

He said: "There have not been any conclusive findings regarding overall safety of GMOs on human lives and the environment. So Mr. President, my colleagues, caution must

be our watchwords in the handling of the GMOs, because as we speak, about 60 countries around the world have partially or totally rejected and banned the use of GMOs."

In his response, Director of CAPPA, Akinbode Oluwafemi, who commended the Senate for what he described as 'a bold step' said: "We strongly believe that scientific integrity and social responsibility and accountability are not negotiable and no technology should be exempted from these values."

He added that those saddled with the responsibility of protecting the nation's food must not ignore the industrial yield-output paradigm and adopt a more integrated systems approach to food and agriculture that would take into consideration many factors, including local food security and sovereignty.

Executive Director of ERA/FoEN, Chima

Williams, said this was a welcome development and that the Senate position resonated with what activists have been telling Nigerians and the Federal Government for over a decade.

"GMOs are regulated because their safety is not guaranteed. There are good reasons why robust regulatory mechanisms are in place for GM food and GM crops in Europe. GMOS are not the same as natural varieties and they are also not substantially equivalent.

"If they were indeed one and the same thing, as the GMOs proponents claim, why are they modifying them and why have patents on them? The claim of substantial equivalence as touted by the promoters of the technology is an industry get-out tactic to avoid the rigour of proper assessment and regulation."

On her part, Coordinator for Food Sovereignty Program for Friends of the Earth Nigeria and Africa and the Chair

of the Agroecology and Land Working Group of the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA), Mariann Bassey-Orovwuje, said: "There are enough reasons to hold back on commercialising GM Crops in Nigeria."

She urged the Senate to subject all GMO crops and food approved in our environment to an independent, transparent, environmental, social and health impact evaluations, adding that as a matter of urgency, they should be subjected to stringent regulatory scrutiny to determine if the groups' concerns about them were justified.

The groups vehemently reject the non-circumspect method of the National Biotechnology Development Agency, National Biosafety Management Agency and partners to foist GMO crops and foods on Nigerians through their introduction and marketing in the country's agricultural system and food supply chain.



# Isoko group tells Heritage, Agip Oil, others to shut down operations over neglect

By **KELVIN OHOROR, OLEH**

An aggrieved Isoko group has given a 14-day ultimatum to Heritage Energy Oil Services Limited, Nigeria Agip Oil Company (NAOC) and other oil companies operating in the area to shut down their operations and begin to address their demands with immediate effect.

The group, under the aegis of the United Coalition Front Emancipation Movement (UCFEM), gave the warning in a statement signed by its Spokesman, Mr. Ogbu Ogbu, and made available to newsmen in Warri, Delta State, insisting that the ultimatum to shut down their facilities took effect from Monday, April 11, 2022.

The group, which expressed concern that the multinational oil companies had neglected the entire Isoko land, said if the companies fail to accede to their requests its members

would launch attacks on their installations in the area.

It would be recalled that the youths of the area had in March 2022 threatened to launch coordinated attacks on oil and gas flow stations, pipelines, trunk lines and other equipment, if the companies refused to meet their demands.

Among other things, the youths are calling for the engagement of Isoko youths in the onshore and offshore platforms of the oil companies, promotion of the few Isoko sons and daughters working with them into management positions, as well as organise intensive training of the people on various skills acquisition programmes.

"We want the operators of OML 61, 30, 26, and 28 to peacefully shut down operations in Isoko land while our grievances are attended to at a round table discussion.

"The Nigerian Petroleum Development Company (NNPC), NAOC, Heritage Energy Oil Services Limited, Shell



Sylva

Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) and First Hydro should shut down their operations peacefully in Isoko land and address our concerns," it said.

They warned that oil and gas multinationals operating in Isoko land should heed their advice for a peaceful shut down

of operations until further notice and called for the establishment of an Isoko Ethnic Nationality Regional Development Commission for urgent and efficient human capacity development of Isoko youths and the area.

They also decried the non-inclusion of Isoko



Okowa

people in the Federal Government's Presidential Amnesty Programme which, according to them, had denied the youth of empowerment, engagement, training, and other benefits accruing from the programme.

Meanwhile, the Community Relations Officer of Heritage Energy

Service Limited, Williams Ebieroma, told *The Trumpet* that certain cadre of employees were not allowed to speak on the issue, saying: "We are not allowed to discuss issues like this with the press. We have our media consultant based in Lagos, who handles such issues."

## Long queues return to banks after Easter break

By **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

Long queues returned to Nigerian banks, yesterday, as customers spent hours before

being attended to after the Easter celebrations. The situation may have been caused by systems failure and power outage that lingered

throughout the Easter break.

Investigation by *The Trumpet* in some branches of United Bank for Africa (UBA),

Access Bank, First Bank, Guarantee Trust Bank (GTCO) and Zenith Bank, among others in Ikorodu, Ikotun, Ikeja and other parts of Lagos State showed that customers spent at least two hours before they were allowed into the banking halls and another two hours in the long queue before they were able to do any transactions.

Findings showed that in some of the banks visited that have about specs for 10 cashiers only four or five were on their seat attending to the huge customers.

The worst hit were customers who went to the customer service personnel to sort out issues of debit without cash dispense on Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) and Point of Sales (PoS) terminals due to network failure.

A customer, who

identified himself as Austin Jombo, said he used his UBA Bank ATM card on an Ecobank ATM, was debited immediately to the tune of N10,000, but the machine failed to dispense the cash, adding that he did the failed transaction since Friday, but up till yesterday, it had not reverted, which was why he went to his bank to register the failed transaction, which took him several hours.

It was also observed that some branches that usually have four or five customer service personnel now have either one or two, which led to serious delays in attending to customers.

A man who identified himself as Benson Okoro told *The Trumpet* that a customer of Access Bank collapsed last week at their Ojota branch after about three

hours of standing just to withdraw some cash.

Okoro said while customers of the bank on queue were running around to resuscitate the man, employees of the bank showed no concern over the plight of the customer, as they went about their normal business.

Findings also indicated that most of the banks have sacked most of their workers, which also contributed to the pressure on the remaining staff members.

It was further learnt that most of the experienced hands have been disengaged and as such, the new remaining ones with little or no experience continue to do their best for the teeming customers due to the banks' quest to improve their bottom line in an increasingly harsh economic and operating environment.



Zainab Ahmad



## Gulf of Guinea still at risk of piracy attacks, IMB warns

■ *Canvasses enhancement of maritime security*

Stories by **ADAKU WALTER**

International Maritime Bureau (IMB) has warned that the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) remains susceptible to piracy attacks and kidnapping of crew members despite the purported decline in crime rate.

It stated this in its latest global piracy report, maintaining that seafarers in West African waters were at risk following armed robbery incidents within the anchorage waters of Angola and Ghana, as well as the hijacking of product tankers off the coast of Cote d'Ivoire, in which no fewer than 17 crew were held hostage in the first quarter of 2022.

According to the International piracy reporting centre, although, Gulf of Guinea saw a welcomed decline in the number of reported incidents, the seven incidents that happened this first quarter of the year raises fear for imminent attacks.

The centre also noted that the first three months of 2022 witnessed 37 incidents of piracy and armed robbery attacks at sea worldwide, compared to the 38 incidents in the same period of last year.

It stated that of the number of incidents recorded during the first quarter of 2022, 41 per cent occurred in Southeast Asian waters, particularly in the Singaporean Straits, adding that the development was becoming most dangerous for commercial shipping.

The IMB also noted that no fewer than four incidents were reported off



the coasts of Indonesia and Malaysia, compared to two in the same period of 2021.

According to the IMB, Peruvian waters are an area of concern, noting that the South American nation's ports accounted for 27 per cent of global incidents, with 10 reported events and six in the Callao anchorage, compared to five incidents during the same period last year and only one in 2019.

The centre stated that three incidents were also reported in the Macapa anchorage, off the coast of Brazil, in which seafarers were either threatened with knives or abducted, tied up and blindfolded with burlap, while their hostage lasted.

It added that although no incidents were reported in the Gulf of Aden,

the threat of piracy still existed in the Yemeni and Somali coasts, as well as the waters off the Southern Red Sea.

Director of IMB, Michael Howlett, acknowledged the efforts being made by maritime authorities in the Gulf of Guinea region, as well as the regional and international navies towards the reducing the attacks.

"In most of the incidents, the perpetrators are armed, putting crew at risk even in the low-level opportunistic incidents. As such, coastal states and independent international navies are urged to increase efforts aimed at identifying and apprehending the criminals to enhance maritime security and facilitate safer trade across the important and strategic waterways," Howlett said.

## NIMASA tasks NMU on global recognition of certificates

Director-General of the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) Dr. Bashir Jamoh, has charged management of the Nigerian Maritime University (NMU), Okerenkoko, Delta State, to seek national and international accreditations to ensure that certificates from the school are accorded global recognition.

He urged management of the university to seek collaboration with the World Maritime University (WМУ) and other specialised higher institutions of learning to bridge the gap in human capacity deficiency in the Nigerian maritime sector.

Jamoh stated this when a delegation from the university visited NIMASA in Lagos, saying: "Nigeria Maritime University can conveniently bridge the gap in terms of human capacity deficiency in the Nigerian Maritime sector.

"All it needs to do is to seek collaboration with similar specialised institutions and ensure that NMU certificates enjoy global recognition. Our goal is to seek top level manpower development from the NMU instead of the current situation where institutions abroad are preferred to their Nigerian counterparts."

Jamoh, who restated the agency's commitment towards the development of the NMU, said despite handing over the university to the National Universities Commission (NUC), NIMASA still makes budgetary provisions for it to ensure the completion of projects it initiated in the university.

"Our belief is that a well-funded NMU will greatly enhance youth employment and engagement particularly in the Niger Delta Region of the country. Our financial commitment to NMU is based on principle of capacity development," he said.

Commenting on the Modular Floating Dock, he noted that experts from the manufacturers of the dockyard have been in Nigeria over a month working on the nitty-gritty of deploying the dockyard.

He also informed the NMU management that the facility would be available for students of the university and other institutions for practical experience, when it becomes operational.

Jamoh also disclosed that a proposal to convert the under-utilised NIMASA Science and Technical College (NSTC), Okoloba to a campus of NMU was being considered.

On his part, the Chairman of the NMU governing board, Dr. Elias Courson, who commended NIMASA for its continued support for the university, said the school was in the process of signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ghana Maritime University (GMU).

Courson, who was represented by a member of the board, Bello Salihu, also commended NIMASA for clarification on the history and technicalities of the modular floating dockyard, which they had thought belonged to the school.



DG NIMASA, Bashir Jamoh

## 'Destruction of transport infrastructure threatens cargo movement to hinterlands'

National President of the Association of Nigeria Licensed Customs Agents (ANLCA), Iju Tony Nwabunike, has declared that the attack on the Kaduna-Abuja train and continued destruction of transport infrastructure by terrorists is a threat to successful movement of cargoes from the nation's seaports to the hinterlands.

He lamented that the occurrence would also constitute a major setback to the anticipated seamlessness of cargo movement from Lagos and Port Harcourt to Kano, Kaduna and other states of the country.

Nwabunike, who stated this in his Easter message to licensed customs brokers, freight forwarders and colleagues in the country's logistics chain, said the situation had driven the cost of doing business higher and depleted returns on investments.

"Our ports are not properly utilised if import and export cargoes suffer clogs in the logistics chain. From the farmer of export produce, whose field is occupied by terrorists to the dockworkers waiting to assist in the loading and unloading of cargoes, we are all involved.

"Our collective interest is in the cargo, because government generates huge revenues from our activities. It is also from our activities that employees are paid, service charges collected and profit from warehousing and sales are obtained," he said.

He, therefore, urged the Federal Government and politicians and policy makers not to be subsumed by the hysteria of campaigns and forget citizens who are in kidnappers' den and sought prayers for the Nigerian military.

He stressed that the potential of a peaceful Nigeria were limitless, adding: "When peace is lost, the results include instability and lack of cohesive direction."

## Air Peace begins international flights from new MMIA terminal II

Air Peace has commenced flight operations from the newly commissioned Terminal II of the Murtala Muhammed International Airport (MMIA) in Lagos.

The airline operated its 7:00 hours Lagos to Accra flight from the new MMIA terminal on Tuesday, April 19, 2022, thereby becoming the first airline to begin regional flights on that route.

In a statement issued by its spokesman, Stanley Olisa and made available to The Trumpet, Air Peace notified the flying public that from April 19, 2022, its international and regional flight departures would now be at the Terminal II of the

"We are delighted to be the first airline to operate a flight at the newly commissioned MMIA Terminal II and going forward, all our regional and international departures will be from the new terminal. We commend the Federal Government for the feat and Air Peace will continue to blaze the trail," the statement reads.

He stated that passengers flying to Accra, Banjul, Freetown, Douala, Dakar, Johannesburg and Dubai were henceforth expected to proceed to the new terminal for ticketing, check-in and boarding.

"Our personnel are on ground and ready to assist the passengers to ensure that they seamlessly adjust to the new development," the statement added.



# Local airline operators seek ban, sanctions for violent passengers

By ADAKU WALTER

Local airline operators under the aegis of Airline Operators of Nigeria (AON), have pushed for stiffer sanctions against unruly passengers, which may include ban and fines in extreme cases.

The operators said they would no longer condone cases of assaults on staff and crew members, public intoxication and verbal abuses by irate passengers.

Changes in air travel patterns and flight delays have caused frustrated air travelers to push back violently at airlines.

Nigerian airports have had a fair share of irate passengers attacking officials and destroying facilitation equipment in protest against flight delays and cancellations.

Recently, some passengers attacked Max Air at Abuja airport and destroyed computers and other equipment at the check-in counter.

Following the development, President of the AON, Abdulmunaf Yunusa, urged the Federal Government, the Ministry of Aviation and the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) to beef up security at the nation's airports and ensure that the life of airline staff members and their property were protected.

"May we also state that should a similar occurrence like the unfortunate case with Max Air happen to any of our members going forward, AON may be forced to have a rethink on how to respond in such circumstances," Yunusa said.

Another member of the association said the zero-tolerance policy for unruly conduct should go a step further with a lengthy ban and fines to deter would be perpetrators.

"It is obvious that a lot of Nigerians have found the operators as easy targets for the expression of their frustrations. The system has been condoning them and I fear a major safety breach will occur someday.

"Ideally, anyone caught henceforth should be given stiffer sanctions that should include ban from air travel, fined,

named and shamed publicly, if we are serious about curtailing extreme violent behavior at our airports," he said.

The operators recognised that the extant rules prohibit unruly conduct. For instance, Part 17.92.1 of Nigeria CARs 2012, Vol. II states: "Any passenger who becomes unruly at the airport terminal or onboard an aircraft commits an offence."

Part 17.92.2(c)(d)(e)(f) defines the word "unruly" as fighting or other disorderly conduct on board an aircraft or at the terminal building; any conduct/act constituting a nuisance to other passengers; disobedience of lawful instructions issued by the aircraft commander, flight crew, cabin attendants, check-in staff and/or security screening staff; and any conduct that endangers or is likely to endanger the safety of flight operations, among others.

Yunusa, who is Chairman of Azman Air, noted the airport vicinity remained a sensitive and sacrosanct environment where people are not allowed to behave

callously and uncontrollably.

"A situation where passengers are allowed to have access to sensitive, restricted areas of the airport and attack airline workers or prevent a plane from departing to other destinations because if a particular flight is delayed or cancelled, it puts the country in a bad light in the international community.

"Issues of delay or cancellation can be addressed in a civil manner without resorting to violence. The unruly passengers that went after Max Air and destroyed the computer reservation systems exacerbated the problem for other passengers going to other destinations. Such acts are completely unacceptable.

"AON understands the frustration whenever a flight is delayed or cancelled and we apologise to passengers on behalf of airlines for such delays or cancellations. It is however, instructive to note that delays happen worldwide and some conditions cause them," he stated.



AON president, Abdulmunaf Yunusa

## LASG, NPA streamline checkpoints along Apapa, Tin Can axis

As part of efforts to eliminate traffic and check extortions along the Apapa and Tin Can axis, the Lagos State Government has reached a consensus with the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) to streamline checkpoints along the corridor and feeder

routes.

Speaking at a stakeholders meeting with transport unions, Special Adviser to the Lagos State Governor on Transportation, Oluwatoyin Fayinka, declared that the government would enforce zero tolerance on all extortions and activities of miscreants along the corridor through Special Mobile Courts created to address the challenges.

Fayinka also explained that in streamlining the corridor, illegal extortion points would be disbanded and the agencies charged with managing traffic flow along the axis have been defined and assigned to prevent illegal activities capable of hindering smooth port operations.

He further stated that trucks would no longer be stopped for ETO at Ijora Badia (LPC axis), Mile 2 and UBA (TCIPC corridor), adding that movement of trucks would not be interfered with at NAGAFF, Area B, RRS Marine Bridge, 7up, Fidelity Roundabout, Etisalat Roundabout (LPC axis) and RRS (TCIPC corridor).

Fayinka, who also revealed that the

checkpoints have been assigned to specific agencies, added that some checkpoints would be manned by only the NPA, while some other checkpoints would be assigned to NPA and the Lagos State Government.

In the same vein, the Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA), Rapid Response Squad and the Nigerian Police Force would manage some checkpoints independently without interference from other agencies, while Military checkpoints would no longer exist along the ports corridor.

He, however, cautioned unions and hoodlums against extorting motorists on the Tin Can axis, saying their activities would no longer be allowed on the corridors, as they were also inimical to seamless flow of traffic.

Fayinka, therefore, urged all stakeholders to cooperate with the new strategy and comport themselves accordingly, as this would improve movement along the port access roads, which would ultimately boost economic activities.

## CBN encouraging false declaration at ports, frustrating businesses, say Customs brokers

Customs brokers have accused the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) of frustrating government's ease of doing business initiative at the ports, insisting that the apex bank's activities was the major cause of false declaration of imports at the nation's ports.

Vice President of the Association of Nigerian Licensed Customs Agents (ANLCA), Dr. Kayode Farinto, alleged that 75 per cent of imports coming into the country were non-compliant, because of foreign exchange (Forex) restrictions the CBN placed on over 80 of imported items.

He expressed concerns that the CBN had taken so much powers to itself, which he said, was constituting an impediment to trade facilitation and ease of doing business.

He added that the agency now carried out overlapping functions to the extent that it now takes over the functions of the Ministry of Finance and the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS).

"We no longer have ease of doing business in the ports. We all know the difficulties our members go through to clear cargoes from the ports. There are two policies, the monetary policy and the fiscal policy, the responsibility of CBN is to regulate monetary policy, a situation where an item is not under import prohibition and yet you cannot open Form M for them because it is under CBN's forex restriction calls for concern.

"To open Form M on importation of tyres for instance, you need clearance from the CBN and only the CBN Governor, Godwin Emefiele approves. We have more than 80 items on forex restrictions.

"CBN has succeeded in dabbling into fiscal policies. The Customs ought to have gone to the Ministry of Finance to correct the anomaly. This is because the CBN is carrying out an overlapping function, but the apex bank deliberately left it that way and allow people to be doing what they want, this is what encourages false declaration," he stated.

He lamented that the CBN had abrogated to many powers to itself, which said was affecting importation and that since the items were not under restriction, Nigerians would want to import the items in by all means, adding: "If the CBN does the right things, it will reduce false declarations by over 75 per cent."



Gov Sanwo-Olu



CBN Goc, Godwin Emefiele



## 'I'm providing gallery where visitors can see best of Nigerian art pieces' – Nike Okundaye

*She has traversed the world. She is also a woman of immense accomplishment. In some quarters, she is known as Chief Mrs. Nike Okundaye. To some she is just Nike, a remarkable artist. The affable Chief Executive Officer of the nationally spread network of culture, named Nike Art Centre in Lekki, Lagos spoke with OMONIYI ALLI. Excerpts:*



**Looking back, are there things you would have done differently if you were not into arts. Some people just look at you and they are surprised with what you have achieved?**

Answer: I don't think there is anything I could have done differently because at the end of the day everything has worked out well for me. For this I thank the Almighty God for His mercies and kindness over my life.

**You always look so cheerful with the stream of visitors coming to this place. What is the secret?**

Hard work, humility and of course, following what I believe is my passion right from childhood.

**Who is who visits your gallery, including Serena and Venus Williams when they came to Nigeria. One would like to know what is the secret of this, high profile collectors and individuals coming to your gallery, and what makes Nike Okundaye happy?**

Every human being does get pissed off. It all depends on situation at a time. However, as an artist, I have more things that make me happy

daily than those that put me off. I keep

working and one of my philosophies is to provide a gallery where visitors can see the best Nigerian art pieces. So that is why they come. In other words, they appreciate what I am doing even they have not seen me. However, I can't say it my work alone, I think it is the favour of God.

**There are too many versions of your background. Can you now throw real light on your background?**

I started my sojourn into arts when I was just six. Because I lost my mother in life early in life one of my mother's sisters had to bring me to Osogbo. You know, Osogbo has a history of being a home to arts and culture in Yorubaland. It was while in Osogbo as young girl that I heard about the late Susanne Wenger and her husband Ulli Beier. Up till today, I consider them the major catalyst of art movement. The extra moral classes they conducted in those days was what empowered many artists. Today, as you know many of them have become international artists. For me, I will say I derived some of my inspirations from Susanne not only loved our culture but because she remained committed to our culture till she passed away. I wish

we can have another artist like Wenger. You remember that she with Beier in the 1950s. It was then that I said let me go and grow up with her because the way she embraced everybody and Yoruba religion and culture. Honestly, she truly inspired me during my stay with her. So, in brief that was how I started with arts and background. But let me equally say that from the very beginning my family is into craft art especially where I come from in Ogidi Ijumu, Kogi State. My first effort were in weaving, then from weaving I moved into Adire (indigenous textile designing) But later, I discovered the Batik, which I called the loss wax method. But some people prefer to call it Campalla. Although it as by accident, but before you know it, that was how people started calling me Mama Adire up till today. The Adire has carried me to so many countries of the world. Apart from that, today I also do oil and acrylic paintings. We have held so many exhibitions in this gallery since we opened. Some featured my works and other Nigerian and foreign artists.

**People talk about your galleries in Abuja, and Osogbo. Why did you build this imposing one in Lagos?**

I built it so I can provide a platform for artists to engage the public with their works. It is part of my contribution for young artists or those interested in creativity. It is true as you said, that I have such edifice in other places but our gallery in Lagos different thing. For instance, we know that a lot of art event in Nigeria takes place in Lagos. Because of that I feel we should a kind of gallery that will reflect that. So the gallery is dedicated to arts, especially to promote it. That is why we welcome everyone to be part of our activities. It is for everyone to come and express their creativity. It is the journey that I set to do in my life. It is a vision that started over three decades ago and I am happy that I have achieved it. One of the memorable places that fired my zeal to build the gallery was the Convent Garden in London. I cannot forget my experience the first time I was there. If you visit Convent Garden, you will see all kinds of works and beautiful paintings from the ground to the top floor. You will see paintings hanging all over the place. So when I visited the gallery, I kept dreaming of that place. I



kept dreaming that one day, I will build that kind of gallery in Nigerian that actually looks like that. Apart from that, I think Nigeria has a lot to learn from some countries like Kenya. If you go to Kenya and Senegal, you will discover that the government is investing heavily in arts and tourism.

**What do you think are challenges that artists face in Nigeria?**

Without even talking about it, many people know that finance is the greatest problem that young artist face. I think it will be very good if government and banks can develop products that will help not only artists but all creative people in his country. That will go a long way to solve the problem young artists.

**Some people hold the view that Nigerians have problem of appreciating works of arts. What is your view?**

I will not blame people who hold such view. Because if you look at the works of Hubert Ogunde and how it has been left since he died, you would agree to that. If you leave property for your children, it is their right to protect it. So I am appealing to our leaders to do something in helping artists. In many cases the rights are violated but no one speaks for them. We should also stand up just like what other countries are doing to promote our culture.

**What types of works will one find in Nike Art Gallery?**

We have different types of paintings, sculptures, installation and all other types of arts works that you can imagine. We equally hope that we will continue to improve with time and demand. With time, there will be more works. Our gallery is also offering opportunities for young artists to showcase their works as well as see what others are doing with their talents. So we are open to every art and culture lover.





## 'The Real Housewives of Lagos' breaks Showmax streaming record

The Real Housewives of Lagos (RHOLagos) premiered exclusively on Showmax on the 8th of April. But it has broken the record for the most first-day views on Showmax Nigeria.

The Showmax Original reality series trended on Twitter at No.1 in Nigeria and South Africa, and also featured on the trend list in the UK.

The cast also trended individually in Nigeria, supported by an official Twitter Event page that sat on top of the trends list for the entire 24 hours. A Twitter Space hosted to recap the launch was retweeted to an even larger international audience of RHOLagos superfans by the official Twitter TV account.

Candice Fanguero, Head of Content at Showmax Africa says: "The reception of the first

episode of RHOLagos across Africa and the UK was beyond amazing; we knew we had a trend-setter on our hands and we're not surprised that RHOLagos is breaking records. Just wait until you see the rest of the season; fans are going to love it."

A lover of reality TV, SwedishLovee tweeted "#RHOL is giving EVERYTHING it's supposed to give. The luxury, the everything mahn! Episode one and I'm already hooked".

RHOLagos follows the lives of six wealthy women in Lagos; Carolyn Hutchings, Laura Ikeji-Kanu, Chioma Ikokwu, Toyin Lawani-Adebayo, Iyabo Ojo, and Mariam Timmer. The show gives an insight into their lives and how they navigate businesses, family and friendships.

## AMAA-StarTimes short film festival records over 500 entries across Africa

The AMAA-StarTimes Short Film Festival (The Shorts) has had an amazing number of African submissions for its maiden edition. Over five hundred shorts have been submitted from across the continent and the African Diaspora.

The Shorts is currently at the screening stage as the selection committee led by the Chairman of the Africa Movie Academy Awards Screening Committee, Shaibu Hussein, is getting them ready.

Two hundred short films will be selected and shown from April 25 to May 25 on the ST Nollywood Plus channel and StarTimes-ON mobile app.

"Africa day is May 25. So we will take this period to celebrate the amazing film talents on the continent," AMAA's founder, Peace Anyiam-Osigwe said.

"Apart from enjoying these short films, Nollywood fans can also vote for their best films so that they can win the prizes. This is to make sure fans are part of the process of encouraging the emerging and diverse talent in African Cinema.

"The voting will take place on the StarTimes-ON app which can be downloaded from Google Play Store and Apple Store.

"The Shorts will also be coming to a city near you with the 'The

Shorts Road Tour'. Nollywood enthusiasts will get to network, learn and appreciate the values of filmmaking, and opportunities that StarTimes

offers to content owners. The Shorts will be at the Wole Soyinka Theatre, the University of Ibadan on April 21; Genesis Deluxe Cinema, Port Harcourt on April 23; Silverbird Cinema, UYO on April 27 and Viva Cinema Lagos on April 30. Follow us on all social media handles of Africa Film Academy and StarTimes for updates," she concluded.

Africa film Academy has built a reputation of being a platform for bright new stars to emerge and this time there is no difference. The final selections of 'The Shorts' will be live and available for the viewing pleasure of StarTimes subscribers on ST Nollywood Plus channel and StarTimes-ON app from 25th April 2022. During the festivals, exceptional films that make the cut will compete for prizes.

The first prize winner will get \$3000 and a laptop; the 2nd Prize winner will receive \$2000 and a phone; the 3rd Prize gets \$1000 and a phone, and a special prize of \$1000 for the best documentary.

On his part, StarTimes CEO, Alex Jian, said the collaboration with AMAA is very crucial and strategic with the growing demand for quality local content by Nigerian and African film practitioners. Jian further noted that StarTimes is glad to strengthen its partnership with AMAA to bring significant impact to the Nigerian and African film industry by ensuring the growth of filmmakers as well as getting value for their productions.



## Labule to release new track, 'Wait'

Fast-rising 'Highfro' singer, Segun Adewale, popularly known as Labule, is not resting on his oars. He is about to follow up on his last successful release of hit track, Zero, which enjoyed massive radio airplay, with another hit titled, 'Wait'.

Zero, released in January, enjoyed massive airplay on radio stations, earning the University of Lagos graduate rave reviews. And following the massive success that

greeted its release, the 'highfro' singing sensation is hitting his fans with 'Wait,' a song he describes as reflective, deep, and educative which is aimed at addressing the get-rich syndrome among the youths and, at the same time reinforce in them the value of hard work, contentment and waiting on God.

"Wait is telling us not to be in a rush to be wealthy. "Being wealthy is a process; procedure that I believe is the universal truth. It is a divine process that youth must accept.

"It is quite unfortunate that we are being plagued by quick-money, get-rich manes and, the major culprits caught up in this web of vices are the youths.

"Most youths believe in the fast life, ignoring the process. Imagine a 16-year-old boy eager to drive a Bentley, ignoring the process of getting wealthy. Where is the virtue? Hard work, contentment, and waiting on God should be the anchor," he stated.

The much-anticipated track will be coming out on the 29th of this month.

## VTEK to receive Grammy Award certificate

VTEK, Nigerian songwriter, Mix & Master engineer, is now a Grammy Winning Producer following the success and win of Angélique Kidjo's "Mother Nature" as the "Best Global Music Album" at the 64th Grammy Awards.

Born Victor Kpoudosu, VTEK produced, co-wrote, mixed and mastered the song "Dignity" on Angélique Kidjo's Grammy Winning Global Album of the Year, "Mother Nature".

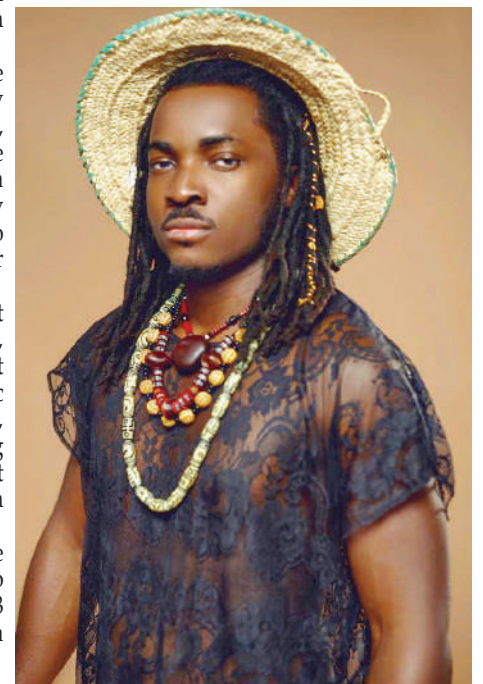
The song "Dignity" was the forerunner, the first song released off the album featured the amiable singer-songwriter, Yemi Alade.

According to the Recording Academy rules & guidelines for Producers & Engineers, "All producers (and others) eligible credited on a GRAMMY-winning recording will be acknowledged with GRAMMY certificates."

Putting the above rule by the Recording Academy into consideration, VTEK is expected to be acknowledged with a certificate from Grammy for contributing to Angélique Kidjo's "Mother Nature".

This is VTEK's first Grammy win. However, he had his major breakout in the Nigerian music industry in the year 2013, credited for producing "Personally", a smash hit for the African duo & twin brothers, P-Square.

In recent times, he worked with Netflix to produce movie scores for 3 number 1 movies on Naija Netflix.







## AFCON 2023: Nigeria drawn in Group A

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

Nigeria has been drawn in Group A of the 2023 African Cup of Nations to be hosted by Cote D'Ivoire next year.

The three-time African champions in the draws that took place on Tuesday in South Africa, also have Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, and Sao Tome and Principe or Mauritius in the same group.

Nigerians could recall that in the recently held continental

tournament in Cameroon, the Super Eagles had performed excellently in the group stage, raking in maximum points but lost to Tunisia by a lone goal in the round of 16 to crash out of the 33rd AFCON event.

However, the team, expected to bounce back from its poor AFCON and World Cup outings, will be managed by a new technical adviser whose name will be announced soon by the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF).

Following the nation's failure to also qualify for the Qatar 2022 FIFA World Cup, Augustine



Eguavoen stepped down with the NFF relieving the entire Super Eagles coaching crew of their jobs. The last time Nigeria failed

to qualify for the AFCON tournament was in 2017 having also failed to qualify for the 2015 edition.

## Bayelsa wins maiden edition of Para Games with 93 medals

Bayelsa State Team has emerged as the winners of the maiden edition of the National Para Sports Games in Abuja with 93 medals.

The games which officially ended over the weekend, saw Bayelsa State Team scooping 31 golds, 30 silvers, and 32 bronzes to win the first edition of the National Para Sports Games with a record total of 93 medals, The Trumpet gathered.

In a statement by the Minister of Youth and Sports Development, Sunday Dare, who was represented by the ministry's permanent secretary, Ismail Abubakar, he commended the event and thanked all participants for their partnership.

Abubakar, as reported by the News Agency of Nigeria, said, "I want to thank the Almighty God for the huge success recorded in the games and also wish to express my profound gratitude to all the state governments that participated in the first edition.

"I want to thank all the team officials and athletes, sponsors for their participation," he added.

Meanwhile, the Chairman of Local Organising Committee (LOC), Peter Nelson, praised the athletes for their sterling performance in the international stage.

Nelson, satisfied with the turn out of the event, promised that the second edition will take place next year and there after, it will be held biannually.

The LOC chairman also clarified that the National Para Games were organised by the federal government to lessen loads of burden on the states who fund athletes to the National Sports Festivals and Para Games the same year.

He said, "Para-athletes had been making the nation proud in international tournaments for the Federal Government to show them what they intended for them in the maiden show."

## 'Mexico, Ecuador friendlies will help S'Eagles'

William Troost-Ekong, has welcomed the idea of playing two international friendlies with Mexico and Ecuador on May 28 and June 2 respectively.

Troost-Ekong, who regretted the nation's inability to pick the qualifying ticket ahead of arch-rivals Ghana, agreed that the friendlies of his magnitude will help in preparing the team for the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON).

However, the Watford defender advised the team on the need to

focus on the continent tournament while putting world cup woes behind.

He said, "It's good to have these two fantastic friendlies. Obviously, we are still recovering from missing out on the World Cup.

"It's good to play against two top football countries because they are the kind of oppositions we would've liked to play in preparation for Qatar.

"Anyway, we still have a chance to gain that experience. We are

looking forward to it and we are happy to play these quality friendly games and looking forward to starting a new campaign to truly put the World Cup behind us as the Nations Cup is our only focus for now," he added.

Nigeria, which held the Black Stars of Ghana at Kumasi to a barren draw in the first-leg world cup qualifying encounter, lost on away-goal rule after playing a one-all draw in the MKO Abiola National Stadium in the return clash.



Super Eagles assistant captain,

## Ikpeba advises Osimhen to emulate Salah, Mané

Victor Ikpeba has advised Napoli striker Victor Osimhen to emulate the likes of Mohamed Salah and Sadio Mané if he is to excel in football.

Osimhen and Ikpeba have recently been engaged in a warfare of words after Nigeria was unable to secure the World Cup ticket to Qatar 2022.

Nigeria, in the second leg match against the Black Stars of Ghana that ended 1-1 at the MKO Abiola National Stadium, Abuja, could not proceed following the away goal rule.

Ikpeba, who was the African footballer of the year in 1997, pointed out that Osimhen could have taken a different approach towards finishing a golden opportunity to hand Nigeria the much-needed win.

In reaction, the former Lille forward on Asisat Oshoala post on Instagram said the pundit would

not tell him what to do.

However, Ikpeba recalled that he has seen Osimhen before who as a young man, is calm and unassuming.

On Channels Tv, Ikpeba said "I have seen the timeline of what happened, I can be the father to the young Victor, I have seen Victor before, very modest good young lad.

"A lot of things came to play, sometimes players can take decisions because of emotions and respond, so I've really moved on," he added.

The SuperSport football analyst noted that the Napoli striker still has a lot to achieve in his career and for the national team.

He continued, "Victor is one of those players that have a lot of character. He still needs to grow up, he's not yet the finished article, he's going to be one of our top players in the future, but he needs to humble himself and try to learn.

"It's a learning process, he knows how many years it took him to be in Napoli so my only advice to him is to look at the way the likes of Salah, Mane carry themselves and concentrate on his footballing career," Ikpeba added.



## Joshua, Usyk's rematch takes place in July

British sports promoter, Eddie Hearn has revealed that Anthony Joshua and Oleksandr Usyk heavyweight rematch will take in July.

Hearn assured that all underlying issues relating to the rematch between the boxing champions have been settled.

Joshua had lost the heavyweight titles in September last year and days later triggered the contractual terms that involved a rematch.

Resultantly, the discussions for a rematch started in January but were hindered with Usyk billed to take on Tyson Fury and Joshua taking on Dillian Whyte in a bout.

Following agreements were reached with both parties, Dillian Whyte and Tyson Fury to set up Joshua and Usyk rematch.

With the development, Whyte and Fury decided to take on each

other in a fight that takes place this weekend, Saturday.

According to Hearn the fight between Joshua and Usyk is sealed.

The sports promoter stressing that the fight between the duo is 100 percent concluded, divulged that the expected date for the bout will be finalised in a fortnight.

According to talkSport, Hearn said, "The fight's all done, it's all agreed.

"It's 100 per cent Anthony Joshua vs Oleksandr Usyk rematch.

"We're finalising the location at the moment, his team is in London this week so we're gonna sit down with them.

"I think in two weeks' time we'll finalise the date. It will be July," he added.

Joshua lost the heavyweight titles to Usyk in a unanimous decision.

## 'M'City to make Erling Haaland highest-paid in Premier League'

Manchester City have agreed to pay Borussia Dortmund striker, Erling Haaland, £500,000 a week to lure the player to Etihad Stadium ahead of next season's campaign.

If this deal materialises, Haaland will become the highest-paid player in the Premier League.

City have been on the trail of the Norwegian to fill up the void left in its central-striking position since the departure of Sergio Aguero.

The Blues of Manchester, last season, tried to bring in Tottenham's prolific striker and England captain, Harry Kane, but were unsuccessful.

Having failed to bring in Spurs striker to Manchester, Pep Guardiola has almost finished the entire 2021/2022 season without a central striker for the club.

According to reports, Manchester City have been experiencing stiff competition from Real Madrid and Barcelona who hope to bring the promising striker to Spain.

However, in a recent development according to Sportsmail, the pursuit of Erling Haaland has taken a different twist with Manchester City agreeing personal terms with the player's representatives.

Manchester City have also agreed to trigger the player's £63million release clause from Borussia Dortmund.





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

— Oprah Winfrey.

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Minister of transportation, Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi paid a courtesy visit to the Ooni Of Ife, Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi during Inspection and Verification Tour of Federal Government projects in South West.

## Police invite Chrisland School, parents, others over alleged child rape, sextape

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH**

Lagos State Police Command has invited parties involved in the alleged abuse of a 10-year-old pupil of Chrisland Schools in Victoria Garden City, Lagos State.

Benjamin Hundeyin, Public Relations Officer of the command, disclosed this on Tuesday. All parties involved had been contacted and directed to report to the State Criminal Investigation Department, Pantli.

They include the school's head teacher and officials as well

as the parents of the female pupil who alleged that their daughter was sexually abused.

The mother in a viral trending video, claimed that her daughter was drugged and raped by some male pupils while they were on a trip to Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE).

She claimed that Chrisland sought to cover up the matter and suspended her daughter once the school found out she was aware of the alleged abuse.

Although the school management said the child was among 76 pupils that represented

the school at the Dubai event, but the rape allegation was false. Two pupils of the school engaged "sexual misconduct" in a game called 'Truth or Dare,' the school affirmed.

In a statement signed by a member of the school advisory board, Akin Fadeyi, he insisted that no rape occurred and faulted the allegation of conducting a pregnancy test.

"We are proud to reassure our stakeholders that no rape of anyone or the administration of a pregnancy test on any child took place on our watch.

"For emphasis, only

a COVID post-travel test was conducted on the returning delegation of our students, in compliance with COVID-19 travel protocols, at the Life Centre Medical Services on March 21, 2022, at School Hall, Opebi," the statement said.

Amid the controversy surrounding the alleged abuse of the pupil, the state government had shut down all Chrisland Schools within Lagos.

The government also warned that anyone caught producing, distributing, receiving or possessing an image of child pornography risks a custodial sentence of 14 years.

## Top ISIS leader killed in Borno

By **EDWARD ADAMIDENYO**, Deputy Editor

Troops of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) have eliminated a top leader of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Ammar Bin-Umar, in Lake Chad during massive airstrikes.

It was learnt that the coordinated airstrikes were carried out by the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) Super Tucano in coordination with the MNJTF, Niger Air Task Force's Mi35 and Mi171 helicopter Gunship on April 14, 2022 in Arinna, Marte Local Government (LGA) of Borno state.

Bin-Umar was killed in an attempt to flee the Lake Chad, following

ceaseless onslaught by security forces.

The terrorist was reportedly among the top ISIS Mujahedeens dialogue committee deployed to the Boko Haram/Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) caliphates in February 2022, to intervene following prolonged supremacy squabble among the Jama'at Ahl as-Sunnah lid-Da'wah wa'l-Jihad/ISWAP.

This newspaper learned that there is growing apprehension and panic among Boko Haram/ISWAP elements over clearance Operations of the MNJTF task force in some of its strong holds in Abadam and Marte local government areas.

## Hunters seek community support

By **UMAR AKILU MAJERI**, Dutse

Nigerian Hunters and Forest Security Services, Jigawa State chapter, has requested the support of wealthy individuals to assist its personnel with working tools to enhance their duties.

The appeal was made by the State Commandant, Alhaji Sale Umar shortly after celebration by members following Federal Government approval to include the Hunters and Forest Security Services as part of the country's security architecture.

Sale explained that the forests are parts of their homes and it is their responsibility to guard all of them in the state to tackle insecurity at all levels.

Sale disclosed that personnel of the Hunters and Forest Services have in the last

three months arrested many suspected kidnapers terrorising people along the boarder communities and handed them over to the Police.

"Our people recovered two buses and nine motorcycles around Sule, Maigatari in Gumel Emirate. In Gwaram area, three persons were arrested in connection with duping," he disclosed.

Sale promised to work for the progress of the state and the country to protect life and property of the people.

He urged Jigawa communities to come to their aid by providing them with torch lights, rain coats and boots, adding that politicians and wealthy individuals should assist their office with vehicles to enable them discharge their duty