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threatens to
shut down
polytechnics
nationwide

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Aisha Buhari's push for female VP may raise dust

By **OBAH SYLVA**
(Abuja) **AND GABRIEL**
OMONHINMIN (Lagos)

President Muhammadu Buhari's wife, Hajia Aisha, is apparently not on the same page with him over her insistence on a female Vice President emerging from the 2023 general elections.

The First Lady is urging political parties and aspirants to consider having women as running mates for candidates at all levels in the elections as part of her drive for the emancipation of women in politics.

However, President Buhari will most likely go along with his 2party's eventual plan for a running mate to its standard bearer for the presidential poll. No strong or even serious female presidential aspirant has indicated interest in the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) that could eventually be considered as a running mate to its presidential candidate.

Also, her demand for a female vice president might not sit well with northern Nigeria's conservatively orthodox Islamic establishment whose interpretation of the religion limits women's participation in politics and leadership.

Like her husband, Aisha Buhari has not openly backed any of the APC's presidential aspirants for any indication of which camp or campaign a running mate will emerge from.

But Aisha has maintained that it was "high time women were adopted as running mates at all levels considering their voting strength and active involvement in political processes."

She made this call while playing host to presidential aspirants from various political parties at a Ramadan (Iftar) breakfast at the State House, Abuja.

"As we approach the 2023 election with greater hope, I am confident that Nigeria will continue to grow from strength to strength on the pedestal of our democratic tenets," she said.

"As we approach the 2023 election with greater hope, I am confident that Nigeria will continue to grow from strength to strength on the pedestal of our democratic tenets," she added.

APC national leader, Bola Tinubu, Governor Dave Umahi of Ebonyi, Minister of Labour and Employment, Chris Ngige, and Governor Bala Muhammed were among the presidential aspirants who honoured the invitation of the First Lady.

Buhari also seemingly has a different view of women's participation in politics.

He had in Germany responded to a BBC interview where his wife also seemingly questioned his leadership ability and claims that her husband does not know 45 out of 50 persons appointed in his government.

The President

sarcastically responded: "I don't know which party my wife belongs to, but she belongs to my kitchen and my living room and the other room."

Buhari's comment went viral on the internet and made big headlines in almost all the major newspapers in the country.

The President's body language has constantly pointed in the direction of conservatism in terms of women's participation in politics. From the outset, he refused to recognise the office of the First Lady. He rather prefers to call it "Office of the wife of the President."

His stance on women holding vital public offices frustrated Aisha who wanted a functional office as First Lady. Probably her inability to cope forced her to relocate to Dubai, where she flew from to meet with the presidential aspirants.

Meanwhile, an Abuja-based Islamic scholar and cleric, Ustadh Abu Jabir Abdullah Musa Abdul (Penabdul), has said that the Holy Qu'ran especially the Hadith forbids women from aspiring to positions like the office of the Vice-president (VP) of a country, where they would hold 'General or Absolute' powers.

According to him, "positions like the office of the V.P. will place such women in a position where they can order the deployment of troops and other members of the country's Armed Forces. This type of power which is 'general



Aisha Buhari

or absolute power' Islam forbids and frowns at.

"The caveat, however, is that women in Islam, can aspire to the pinnacle of their various professions in life as professionals. The positions they could aspire to could be State Governors, Ministers, Director of industries, Directors of Ministries, Directors of Government Parastatals, agencies and banks. Women could also be chief executives of Industries, banks and other commercial ventures.

"There is no dispute among the scholars that one of the conditions of the Imam or leader is that he should be male. Ibn Hazam reported in his book Maratib al-Ijma' that there was scholarly consensus on this point. In the section he says: "Out of all groups of the people of the Qiblah [i.e., all Muslim sects], there is not one that allows the leadership of women."

The evidence for this

is the general meaning of the ayah: "Men are the protectors and maintainers of women because Allah has made one of them to excel more than the other." (al-Nisa 4:34).

"It is also clearly indicated by the hadith of Abu Bakrah who said that when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) heard that the Persians had appointed the daughter of Chosroes as their queen, he said, 'No people who appoint a woman as their leader will ever prosper.'" (Reported by al-Bukhari, 13/53).

Another Islamic cleric, Alhaji Tajudeen Adigun, disagrees with this position, saying the Holy Qu'ran is expressly clear about positions. Allah, he maintained, is the one that gives power to whosoever he pleases and as such if a woman gets any position, it was only possible because God allowed it.

First Ukrainian corn cargo leaves Romanian Black Sea port since Russia invasion

By **OROWO VICTORIA**
Ojeh with agency report

A cargo carrying over 71,000 tonnes of Ukrainian corn finished loading in the Romanian Black Sea port of Constanta on Thursday, the first since Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24, the manager of port operator Comvex said.

Ukraine's seaports have been blocked since the war started more than two months ago, the world's fourth-largest grain exporter has been forced to send shipments by train via its western border or through its small Danube river ports into Romania.

"This is the first Panamax vessel with Ukrainian corn to leave the port," Comvex President Viorel Panait said.

According to the agency's source, the ship taking the cargo is the Unity.

"Supporting Ukrainian grain exports means preventing a colossal wave of global hunger triggered by the blocking of Ukrainian ports," Panait added.

Comvex operates Europe's fastest-loading grain terminal, which can process up to 70,000 tonnes per day, as well as a mineral handling terminal, said Panait, who is also president of the Constanta Port Business Association.

Earlier in the week, the operator finished loading around 35,000 tonnes of Ukrainian iron ore, with a second ship expected to be loaded around May 15, he said.

"Compared with the initial moment, when everyone was searching for alternatives, transport corridors for these exports are slowly taking shape," Panait said.

Around 80,000 tonnes of Ukrainian grains have been sent to Constanta so far, with another 80,000 approved and en route, Constanta Port's manager said on Tuesday.

Romania, a member of the European Union, shares borders on the Black Sea, a major shipping artery for grain and oil, with Bulgaria, Turkey, Georgia, Ukraine and Russia.

But, more work is needed on the port's connecting infrastructure, Panait said.

"The infrastructure around the port is a problem for all economic activity in Romania. Slow access generates additional costs in these industries."

Panait welcomed plans by the Romanian government to rehabilitate several rail lines connecting ports to the Ukrainian borders.

On Thursday, Ukraine accused Russia of stealing grain in territory it has occupied, an act which it said increased the threat to global food security posed by disruptions to spring sowing and the blocking of Ukrainian ports during the war.

Russia calls its invasion of Ukraine a "special military operation".

ASUP threatens to shut down polytechnics nationwide

By **OROWO VICTORIA**
OJIEH

The Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP) has threatened to shut down polytechnics in the country if the Federal Government fails to respond to its demand.

The union said this as the one-month ultimatum it gave to the Federal Government would lapse next week Wednesday and

the expiration of the ultimatum makes the strike inevitable.

After the emergency congress of ASUP Zone C at the Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic, Ijebu Igbo, Ogun State on Thursday, the union insisted that the Federal Government must meet up with its demands before the expiration of the one-month ultimatum.

The National Executive Council of

ASUP had in March at the end of its 102 NEC meeting in Yola, Adamawa State, issued a one-month ultimatum to the Federal Government.

While addressing journalists, the Zonal Coordinator, Yekini Asafe, said ASUP had suspended its 61-day long industrial action on June 10, 2021, following the signing of a memorandum of understanding with the government.

Asafe said due to the failure of the government to meet the union's demands, the union may be forced to resume the suspended industrial action.

He added that the NEC meeting scheduled for Abuja on May 4 was to make the decision.

According to the Zonal coordinator, ASUP demands include the non-release of the revitalisation funds for the sector, non-

release of arrears of the new minimum wage, and non-release of the reviewed nomination instruments for institutions and managements as well as programmes accreditation among others.

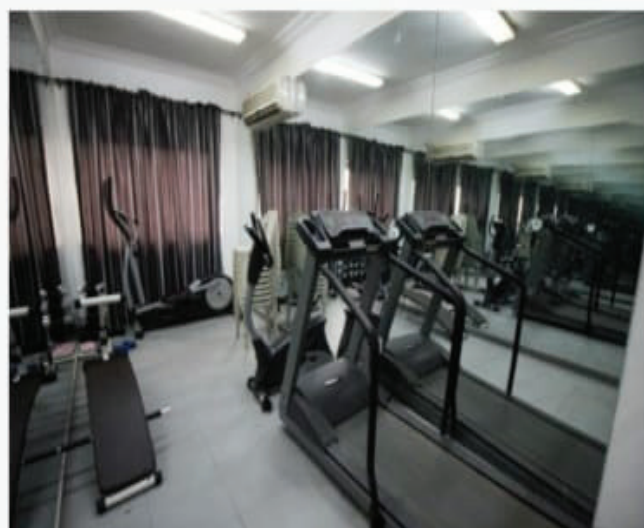
Asafe charged the government to address and attend to the union's demands so as to avoid shutting down polytechnics nationwide.



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Joel-Onowakpo Thomas, Publisher of The Trumpet Newspaper (2nd right), and other participants at the closing ceremony of Senior Executive Fellows, April 2022 Cohort in Harvard University, USA.

Joel-Onowakpo Thomas enters Delta South senatorial race

By **OBAH SYLVA**

Publisher of *The Trumpet* newspaper and immediate past Chairman of Delta State Board of Internal Revenue, Joel-Onowakpo Thomas, has declared his intention to represent the Ijaw, Isoko and Itsekiri ethnic nationalities in the Senate next year.

He made the declaration on his verified Facebook page on Friday night, saying: "Distinguished brothers and sisters, I know you must have been inundated with the rumour that I am contesting once again. Yes, it is true, I am running to represent the amazing

people of the Delta South Senatorial District at the National Assembly in Abuja.

The financial expert and chartered accountant was the All Progressives Congress (APC) House of Representatives candidate for Isoko Federal Constituency in the 2019 general election, which was fiercely contested.

He was a one-time South-South State Coordinator, Federal Inland Revenue Services. He has also served as caretaker committee chairman, Isoko South Local Government Area.

He holds the title of the Majidadin Kaigama Katsina.

2023: Ayu begs Nigerians to give PDP a second chance

By **GABRIEL ELOZINO**,
Asaba

The National Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Senator Iyorchia Ayu has appealed to Nigerians to give the party a second chance in 2023 to correct all the ills facing the nation in the last seven years under the All Progressives Congress APC.

Senator Ayu made the appeal Friday in Asaba, during the inauguration of Ralph Uwechue road and storm drainage projects executed by the Delta State Government.

The PDP Chairman who was accompanied by members of the National Working Committee and Board of Trustees, lauded Governor Ifeanyi Okowa for his commitment to the welfare of his people, describing him as a dedicated democrat.

He thanked Deltans for their massive support for the PDP since 1999 and urged them to remain steadfast in the forthcoming election to enable all candidates for all elective positions to emerge victorious.

He counselled against disagreements that could jeopardise the fortunes of the party in the 2023 elections, stressing that

intraparty squabbles must be handled as a family affair.

He said that apart from road construction, Governor Okowa had done well in the health and education sectors as well as infrastructural projects and human capital development.

Governor Ifeanyi Okowa at the occasion said the project was dear to his heart because it had provided a permanent solution to the perennial flooding of the state capital.

He said his administration had to undertake the project despite having huge financial challenges when

he came into office.

The governor explained that the state prides itself in the health sector as the first state to commence a contributory health insurance scheme for the citizens.

The governor added that his administration upgraded three tertiary institutions to universities to provide access to tertiary education for qualified Deltans who were denied admission because of lack of space.

Governor Okowa said his administration's empowerment programmes had touched the lives of youths and reduced crime rate.



Joel-Onowakpo Thomas

Father arrested for impregnates daughter, attempts abortion in Ondo

By **FRIDAY OMOSOLA**, Akure

Sunday Udoh, 38-year-old, has been arrested by policemen attached to the Ile-Oluji Division in Odigbo local government after attempted to abort the pregnancy resulted from his sexual relationship with his 15-year-old daughter.

The Trumpet learnt that the suspect took his teenage daughter (name withheld) to a health care centre in the area for abortion.

Udoh was arrested by security agents following an alert by the health workers at the facility after discovering he was responsible for the daughter's pregnancy.

The State Police Public Relations Officer, SP Funmilayo Odunlami, who confirmed the incident, said, the Policemen attached to Ile-Oluji Division received a complaint on 26th of April, 2022 of an attempt to procure an abortion by one Sunday Udoh 'm', Aged 38, at a health care

centre in Ile-Oluji.

SP Odunlami said: "During the investigation, it was revealed that the suspect was attempting to procure abortion for her daughter (Name withheld) of about 15 years old whom he has been having sexual intercourse with."

She further disclosed that the case has been transferred to the Gender Office of the State Criminal Investigation Department, SCID, at the Police headquarters in the state and the suspect will be charged to court after an investigation.



Asuen promises to give quality representation to Edo South

Hon. Valentine Asuen, a youthful and front runner for the position of the Edo South Senatorial District has promised to give quality representation to the people of the district. He made this promise while picking his senatorial form at the Abuja conference centre, the venue the ruling All Progressive Congress (APC) is using as a collection centre.

According to Asuen, "I have consulted widely with overwhelming acceptability from party faithful. I took advantage of the just concluded APC National Convention in Abuja", he said.

Asuen also visited the immediate past National Chairman of the party,



Adams Oshomole, to receive his blessings immediately after picking his form in Abuja.

While receiving Asuen, Oshomole Prayed " for the Senatorial district to

have a senator that will represent their interests, from APC. He spoke highly of his time as governor of Edo state particularly the Edo South Senatorial district

where he won all the 77 wards in his second term. He promised to give the needed support to realise a purposeful representation of the district.

'Why others should support Isoko for Delta South Senatorial seat in 2023'

•Barnabas Akporehe unfolds agenda

By MICHAEL J. EKOKORUWE, Oleh

Prince Barnabas Akporehe, a philanthropist and estate developer, has entered the race for the Delta South Senatorial District seat, saying he is from the young vibrant generation that God has chosen to make the difference in the area.

Speaking to newsmen at Oleh, headquarters of Isoko South local government area of Delta State, Akporehe said he is a grassroots politician accepted by and accessible to the people. According to him, his mission for the Delta South Senatorial District has been ordained by God towards the development of the area.

He pledged to build on the long existing peace and unity of the Isoko, Itsekiri,

Ijaw and part of Urhobo people in the senatorial district. Also, his 'Head Start' programme will be given priority among Akporehe's developmental objectives and vision for the district.

Akporehe who is from Oyede in Isoko North local government area, noted that he is the last to join the race and likened his position to Jonah that God called but initially ran away. He maintained that he could not rest as he had sleepless nights to answer the call.

"I picked up the expression of interest form on the 8th February 2022 without knowing how to go about it, but today, God gave me direction and vision in the political contests, and I have submitted my form with acknowledgement", he said.

Akporehe disclosed that he has consulted with ward

chairmen and unit leaders of the area to make his intention known as a young aspirant full of expectation for the senatorial district.

He assured of equitable development of the eight

local government areas of the Isoko, Ijaw and Itsekiri ethnic nationalities. He promised that the difficult terrain of the riverine areas will be redressed just as he will create development channels towards sustainable development of the

district.

Akporehe who owns Blue Baney Homes Limited, Pamela Erere Foundation (PEF) for the less privileged and other philanthropic bodies and activities also pledged to discuss directly with

the people of the three senatorial district to know their challenges towards equitable development of the area.

He added that he would "form alliance" with other Delta senators to develop the state if he wins.



APC presidential aspirant, Rt Hon. Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi, with the Asagba of Asaba, Obi Chike Edozien, at the monarch's palace in Asaba, Delta State, on Friday.

The Trumpet partners NGO for leaders, media interactive forum May 19

A Leaders- Media Forum for National Development will hold in Abuja on May 19th, 2022 at National Merit House.

It is gathering of political leaders and media professionals.

The forum is being put together by a non-governmental body, Good Circle International Organisation, in collaboration with The Trumpet newspaper.

The theme of the forum is PROMOTING CITIZENS UNITY AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

The Editor-in-Chief of *The Trumpet*, Mr. Omokioja Eto, said that "there is no better time to hold this event as there is the need for leaders and the media as well as the general public to interact and bring lasting solutions to the challenges facing our society."

In the same vein, the International President of GCIO, Engr. Esanerovo Agbodo, in a press statement in Abuja stated that "the forum is meant to beam searchlight on issues bordering on the unity and empowerment of Nigerians toward building a virile nation."

Agbodo added: "the Forum is deliberately formulated to bring lead-

ers from different political parties under one roof as a way of promoting unity among Nigerians irrespective of political parties affiliations. All Nigerian citizens are one in their search for good governance and economic empowerment.

"So, what we need in Nigeria is good governance and Nigerians under any political party that have what it takes to govern the country effectively should present themselves and state clearly their visions so that Nigerians can make informed decisions in the 2023 elections."

Leaders expected at the Forum as Speakers are former Vice President of Nigeria, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar and Senator Rochas Okorocha as well as Kogi State Governor Yayaya Bello and his Rivers counterpart, Nyesom Wike.

The 2019 presidential candidate of All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA), Major-General John Gbor (Rtd), will be the chairman of the forum.

The Forum will also examine the use of philanthropy as a way of complementing government efforts in the development of citizens in order to reduce poverty and crime rate in Nigeria.

Amaechi consults with Delta APC leaders, delegates, meets Asagba

Rt. Hon. Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi has taken his consultations for the 2023 presidential primary to Delta State where the All Progressives Congress (APC) welcomed his candidacy.

Amaechi who met with the leadership of the APC and delegates in Asaba, Friday, urged delegates to vote for him for his competence and not just because he is from the South South. He also paid a visit to the Asagba of Asaba, Obi Chike Edozien.

Speaking to the delegates, Amaechi said: "There are two essential elements that takes people to power, governance and infrastructure. If you combine this two, you create an economy. I am ready for you to run a referendum on my past activities. Governor for eight years, speaker for eight years, and Minister for seven years. Let anybody who says Amaechi should not be President ask 'what is his capacity?' as Minister for Transport, I was on this track, Warri-Itakpe rail line. When we came, there were bushes and trees on the track. And knowing that South South is part of Nigeria, I got the President to approve money, it wasn't a loan, it was funded from the budget. Today, you can travel from Itakpe to Warri,

Warri to Itakpe and then to Abuja.

"The point I'm making is, it was there 32 years before we came, if we did not do it, it would have continued to be like the forest that we met. I'm working extremely hard to make sure Lagos-Calabar rail line starts. We've awarded the contract, we are looking for the loan. What affects you is that from Benin, there's a spur to Onitsha, and there's a new bridge into Onitsha. If I don't become the President of Nigeria, nobody will do that project, because it is \$11 billion and that is for now one of the biggest projects in the world. So this is not the time to play with your votes. It is our future. The day we do Lagos-Calabar which goes up to Onitsha, that is the day you'll see some developments coming back here. Just give us another six months, you'll see the impact of the second Niger bridge.

"As Minister, I don't think the Nigerian people will say I'm an absent Minister. I'm a Minister that is present almost all the time, because I know what it is to deliver to the people. I have that capacity to deliver. Vote for me because I have the capacity to turn Nigeria around, and when I get

there, please hold me accountable."

Amaechi recalled how, when he was governor of Rivers, he would hold town hall meetings in different local government areas to give account of the monies received by the state government and projects they were being spent on, including payment to contractors to ensure they were equally held accountable. He assured that with him as President, things will change for good.

"I don't have the solution to every problem in Nigeria, but things will certainly come to change. If you read my declaration, you will see 'hope is in the corner,' all you need do is to push it a bit and you'll see the difference. The electability of a candidate is necessary for APC to win. Please give me your votes at the primaries," he said.

Responding to accolades that he helped resolve the differences in the APC in Delta State, Amaechi said: "It was necessary if APC will win the South, for the party to be united. For Delta, all it took was call my friends and say, look, three persons cannot be governor, so let us allow one person go and everybody will have peace. I think that was the deal breaker."

Earlier, the Chairman, Delta APC, Engr Omeni

Sobotie, thanked Amaechi for being instrumental to the resolution of all issues within the party in the state and bringing them back together as one. He affirmed that the party is going into the primaries as a united front.

"I want to announce to everybody that APC Delta, in the last 48 hours something happened. For the first time since 2015, we are going to go into the battle of 2023 as a united front. We no longer have any differences in APC. I want to acknowledge the man with whom God has done this for us, Rt Hon. Rotimi Amaechi. God has used him as an instrument to effect total reconciliation in the party. I also want to tell you that the Deputy President of the Senate (Omo-Agege) is so excited that you've been able to achieve this.

"In our midst is a man who has the courage of a lion. When you have courage, you are in the majority. But for your courage sir, the South South would have been put to shame. We stand with you, we stand behind you. We have 88 statutory delegates here, by the time we add the adhoc delegates it will be 161. We want to assure you that all the votes will be cast in your favour," the chairman added.

Lagos birthday shooting: Widow of late Obieshi disagrees with police, says husband was assassinated

By ALEX OLISE

Distraught widow to slain birthday guest, Mrs Vivian Ifeyinwa Obieshi, has picked holes with the accidental discharge position of the Lagos State Police Command, saying her husband, Mr Chikere Obieshi, popularly known as Jesus Brother JB, was assassinated at the venue of the birthday.

She said her husband was killed because of his good nature, adding that he didn't want to attend the said birthday party.

Mrs Obieshi, who spoke to The Trumpet at her Egbeda home in Alimosho Local Government Area, described her husband as a loving and caring man, who would not hurt a fly.

According to her, when the celebrant of the party, one man popularly known as Asiwaju, invited her husband, he was initially

sceptical about attending but changed his mind to only grace the occasion and not to waste time adding, "he said he would only go and give the celebrant his own token and return back home."

The 28-year-old woman, who is just recuperating from a successful surgery, said amidst tears, "I am heartbroken and bitter, and what I want is justice for my husband, justice for JB, justice for JB Communications because the only wrong thing he did was to be a brother's keeper."

"Anywhere he enters, he makes friends and tries to put smiles on the faces of everybody. This is why I am saying that this is not a case of an accidental discharge, this was a planned deal. I want justice for him and want all those involved to be brought to light and all those involved to be brought to justice.

Speaking further, Mrs

Vivian said, "My husband was invited to a birthday party by someone nicknamed Asiwaju before he was killed. I have never heard him tell me that Asiwaju invited him for a birthday, he was invited to the party just close to the bus stop, close to our house and he called me. That place he was invited to, he doesn't like going to such places but because he was somebody that likes honouring invitations, before he entered there he called me, he was like, let me just show my face, honour the invitation and come out, I'm coming in the next few minutes you will see me, I was like it's okay."

"But a few minutes later, I started hearing there was a gunshot at the bus stop, at Da-Silver Club and the so-called Asiwaju that invited him for the birthday jumped over the fence, ran out and he is nowhere to be found, no



communication, he could not even reach us the family or to tell us what happened or anything.

"So I feel this was a perfectly signed deal. Before the incident on Sunday, the celebrant had called my husband telling him of a birthday, later that night he called him that it had been cancelled, that they should move it till Sunday. If it was far, he wouldn't go because he knows the condition of

his family, he knows my condition. I believe vividly that this was a set-up."

Describing a video, which she claimed she saw, "From the video that I saw, the Asiwaju was very anxious, he felt something was going to happen. My husband was spraying him with money, he was just standing uprightly, not moving, not dancing. Immediately the gunshot was aimed, he flew over the fence, took his car and

left, so I believe this was a clear assassin's case.

"I want the Inspector General of Police and everybody to critically look into this case, I want justice for me and for my children, I want justice for JB Communications. I know my husband's soul is not going to rest until justice is served."

The widow's suspicion stemmed from the fact that when the incident took place, the police did not contact her; rather she called the police on the morning she was informed of JB's death. She said all effort to reach her husband on the phone was unsuccessful, stressing that an officer later picked up her call and she told the officer to give the phone to her husband out of disbelief.

"Just give the phone to my husband, I want to hear my husband's voice, he was like you should come to the station. This was when I knew that something had happened."

Earlier, the Lagos State Police Command had given a statement describing the incident as accidental and that the suspected killer policeman was not on duty as of the time of the incident.

"A shooting incident occurred at La Silver Bar, Egbeda which resulted in the death of two persons and injuries to others. Upon receipt of the information, the Lagos State Commissioner of Police, CP Abiodun Alabi, ordered an immediate full-scale investigation into the circumstances surrounding the unfortunate incident.

"While the investigation is ongoing, findings so far reveal that the shooting was accidental and involved an off-duty police officer, Inspector Mohammed Husini, serving at the State Headquarters, Ikeja. Findings equally reveal that the off-duty officer is a friend of the celebrant, Ifeanyi, aka Obama, and was not at the party in any official capacity.

"Efforts are currently being intensified to apprehend the fleeing birthday celebrant, while the officer involved is expected to turn himself in anytime soon. CP Alabi has given firm assurances that everyone found culpable in the sad and avoidable incident will be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the law," the police statement read.

Lagos govt pulls down distressed buildings

By BENJAMIN OMOIKE

As a measure to prevent loss of lives and property in Lagos, the state's building control agency (LASBCA), has pulled down no fewer than three buildings, which

were identified to have become distressed and potentially could cave in anytime soon in Ibeju-Lekki Local Government.

One of the buildings

demolished by the agency was a partially collapsed two-storey building sited in Oribanwa Town, Ibeju-Lekki Local Government, and the two others removed were bungalows in Mesia Town in Abijo and Ogombo Town.

The General Manager, LASBCA, Gbolahan Oki, who led the enforcement exercise after the state governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, lifted the suspension over the Ikoyi highrise building collapse, stated that the demolition of the building was necessary to avert a total collapse of the building, which may have cost lives and property of citizens.

The LASBCA boss further stated that the construction

of the buildings was ongoing before they were pulled down, to prevent them from collapsing willingly.

On the two-storey building in Oribanwa, he noted that the agency's personnel discovered the distressed building earlier and sealed it up after serving all statutory notices, including a stop-work order.

Stating that all the processes yielded no positive response from the recalcitrant developer, the General Manager maintained that some building owners/developers were bent on contravening the state's building laws, threatening that the agency would continue to compel compliance, to avert further building

collapse across the state.

On the two other buildings, Oki disclosed that they were removed for being built on access roads in violation of the Lagos State Building Control Law.

He observed that no responsible government will watch its citizens die an avoidable death without taking the precautionary measures to avert it.

The General Manager, therefore, called on building owners/developers to seek appropriate authorisation from the agency before the commencement of any construction, subject their existing buildings to the Structural Integrity Tests, and obtain all necessary building permits.



Delta police arrest suspected drug dealers, recover illicit drugs

By ALEX OLISE

Operatives of the Delta Police Command, led by CP Ari Muhammed Ali, have continued to make great strides in the fight against criminality, armed robbery and drug smuggling, following the seizure of illicit drugs and cocaine in the state metropolis.

The Command's Crack Squad, while acting on information, raided a suspected criminal hideout at Azugwu Street, Umuonicha quarters in Ogwuashi-Uku,

and arrested three suspects, namely; Izuagbe Theophilus 'm' age 20yrs; Okofu Henry 'm' age 22yrs and Confidence Ugochukwu 'f' age 19yrs.

Exhibits recovered from them include 147 wraps of dry weeds suspected to be loud, 47 wraps of substances suspected to be cocaine, seven wraps of colorado, and 44 wraps of weeds suspected to be Indian hemp.

Suspects are in custody and the investigation is ongoing.

This was disclosed to The Trumpet by the Command Spokesperson, Bright Edafe.

In another development, operatives attached to Safer Highway Patrol, deployed along Benin-Sapele Road in Sapele, while conducting stop and search, intercepted a Toyota Camry car with reg no. APP 134 UP, driven by one Osasere Megegbe 'm' age 45, in company of one Edosa Monday 'm' aged 35, both of no 12 Emah Community Road, Ekiadolor, Benin City."

"During the search, one cut-to-size double barrel gun was found concealed inside the engine compartment. The suspects were promptly arrested, the gun and vehicle recovered at the station. Upon further investigation and interrogation, two additional long single barrel guns shrouded under the back sit of the vehicle were also recovered. Suspects are in custody and will be charged to court upon completion of investigation."



If not a state, FCT deserves two ministers - *Tambuwal*

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

Sokoto State governor and presidential aspirant of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Aminu Tambuwal has advocated that the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) deserves two ministerial slots in the federal executive cabinet.

Tambuwal's insistence was at the meeting held with PDP delegates from the FCT Thursday night in Abuja.

The aspirant said though getting a state status for the FCT might be a bit difficult because it is a matter of constitutional amendment which was defeated in the recent constitution amendment process, the FCT deserves to produce two ministers.

He said "I am not insisting that FCT should be a state but you appoint ministers, sometimes two from a state, what stood you from appointing a zonal Minister from the FCT because FCT is part of the North Central zone. So if you are appointing an FCT person as Minister to represent the zone, what is wrong with that?"

"Because of the special nature of FCT, there should be a Mayor in the FCT. In major cities in the world London, California, they have majors.

"So I understand that the issues are, so what is important is for you to work with us on this campaign train. This is a project



Tambuwal

to beat in the PDP

Speaking on behalf of the FCT delegates, Hon. Sunday Dogo Zakka, Chairman of FCT PDP, pledged that the FCT will support the Sokoto governor. He said "you have been there for the party we will continue to appreciate you because you have been there for us. You have been there for the party.

"The party must also be there for you. So we thank you and thank you for your interest. I pray that you will return safely."

People of FCT are solidly behind you. We will not disappoint you."

Hon. Dr Hassan Usman Sokoto, House of Representatives member, Abuja South cautioned on developments in the PDP.

The lawmaker said " your Excellency sir the issues happening at our party today, not at the bottom level, not at the middle level but the top echelon need much to be desired because majority of us, don't take decisions on our own, we look at our leaders and by the time this leader is speaking, going to the east, another leader is speaking going to the south and another leader is speaking going west, those who are followers become confused. We become worried and disturbed, where do we go?

"Nigerians will never forgive PDP if we allow this 2023 slip from our hands. And if Nigerians are crying that we betrayed them, that we let them down, those of us that will be talking on behalf of our people will continue to say that the leadership of our party, let us down.

Please, Your Excellency, the leaders must call themselves to order so that if consensus cannot be achieved, once we get to primary, once a level playing ground is given, who-soever emerges but it is our earnest prayer that you emerge but because I don't know tomorrow but every day we are praying that you emerge but whosoever emerge, we hope that others will be able to join him and build this country."

2023: Jonathan not interested to run - *Ononuju*

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

A stalwart of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Dr Katch Ononuju has debunked the rumoured interest of former president, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan in contesting the 2023 presidency.

The former president has been heavily linked with the move by the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) to drag him into the race with an unconfirmed claim that he might be President Muhammadu Buhari's preferred successor.

Buhari defeated Jonathan in the 2019 presidential polls and the former leader congratulated Buhari even when the final results of the election had not been announced.

Lately, there have been several meetings between the two leaders at the Aso Rock Villa suggesting there might be a secret pact between the duo.

But Dr Ononuju, a Bayelsa born politician and a close associate of Jonathan said the former president is not interested in contesting either APC or any other platform.

In a statement made available to The Trumpet Friday in Abuja, Ononuju said

"President Goodluck Jonathan is not interested in being used to cheat the south into a useless single term for the south and has never campaigned for such an arrangement.

"Please disregard the foolishness being displayed by ignorant people on this issue. President Goodluck Jonathan is not interested in the stories Mallami and his urchins are bandying about as he is just playing along for the peace and safety of his family and interests.

"He has given his conditions to those who came to discuss the idea with him and when those conditions are met, we will all hear from president Buhari through a public endorsement plus a legal manoeuvres to reverse an executive bill signed into law by President Buhari barring a Nigerian from being sworn into office thrice as president.

"President Goodluck Jonathan has not told anyone that he is running for election."



Ononuju

Politics useless if not beneficial to my people - Senate Deputy Chief Whip

● as Constituents procure N20m nomination form for his third term bid

By TUNDE JOSHUA, ABUJA

The Senate Deputy Chief Whip, Senator Aliyu Sabi Abdullahi has said that he is in politics because of the good people of Niger North senatorial district because politics is useless without being beneficial to people.

This is as loyalists and supporters across the eight local government councils in Niger North senatorial district endorsed his aspiration for a third term in office by procuring N20



Abdullahi

million senatorial nomination form of the All Progressives Congress (APC) for him.

The form was handed over to him at the Senate wing of the National Assembly in Abuja by the leader of the constituents who doubles as Director General of Senator Aliyu Sabi Abdullahi Campaign Organization, Mallam Muhammad Danladi.

He said the gesture was to reciprocate the positive development which Senator Abdullahi has brought to the senatorial district in his two terms as a senator, adding that the entire district has positively changed within the last seven years of his representation while the welfare of the people has tremendously improved.

Presenting the forms, Danladi said "all the leaders of the 87 wards and eight local government councils in the Senatorial District are here to tell you to continue your responsive and quality representation of them in the Senate.

"You did excellently well during the 8th Senate and also repeated the same feat in the 9th Senate, the reason why the largest percentage of constituents from the Zone wants you to continue your good work in the 10th National Assembly.

" As a practical demonstration of our

support for you to run again for the Niger North Senatorial District, the N20 million nomination form has been procured for you from the National Headquarters of our great party, the All Progressives Congress (APC).

" Niger North people are behind you and you must run, failure of which may result in litigation against you ", he said.

In successive order, leaders from all the eight local government councils of the district urged the senator to regard the gesture as a call to greater service to the people.

Responding, Senator Abdullahi appreciated the unprecedented support from his constituents and promised that this will spur him to do more in law-making, fair representation and oversight functions.

He said apart from the Federal University of Education, Kontagora which he facilitated through sponsorship of a bill to that effect, all the eight local government Councils within the Senatorial District, have been touched in one way or the other, in terms of required infrastructure.

"To me, if politics is not beneficial to the people, it is useless. My representation of Niger North Senatorial District in the Senate will surely continue to be beneficial to the entire people of the zone ", he said.

Arewa Youth Forum declares support for Odupitan's presidential bid

By TUNDE OPALANA, ABUJA

As more aspirants across parties made known their intention to contest the 2023 presidential election, the Arewa Youth Development Forum (AYDF) has declared their support for Chief Samson Abiodun Odupitan.

This is as the group support the demand across stakeholders in the southern part of the country that in2023, power must shift to the south.

Addressing a press conference in Abuja on Friday, Comrade Adnan Rali, National Coordinator, Arewa Youth Development

Forum categorically stated that the group is supporting a southern candidate for the 2023 Presidential Election in the spirit of fairness and justice for all.

The Forum said it is interested in mobilizing voters to elect the right and focused leader with proven track records of performance in the area of resources management, and someone who could resolve the complex problems confronting the country.

"After careful study of our problems as a nation the Forum of concerned Northern Nigerians Youth, we discovered that there is an urgent need for professionals who are

successful in their careers such as Chief Samson Abiodun Odupitan, the Chief Executive Officer of Radiation Investment Limited to contest the highly exalted seat of President to fix the country from years of retrogressive development by Professional politicians.

"This is part of many reasons we are calling on Nigerians across the 36 states of the federation to join the Northern Youth Development Forum to call on and mobilize the electorate during the forthcoming general election to vote Chief Samson Odupitan as the next President come February 2023.

"We have always advocated for a President

with a great understanding of the economy of development with no political history of maladministration, corruption and who is equally a detribalized Nigerian, who has demonstrated ability to unite Nigeria as well as hit the ground immediately elected.

" By actions and deeds in the past Chief Samson Odupitan possesses all these cherished human values and qualities."

The Forum called on all Nigerian Youth not to allow any politician to use them for thuggery and as agents of political violence. "Let's unite to vote all these failed professional politicians out with our PVC.", he said.

2023: Amaechi, Abe return to the trenches for the soul of Rivers APC

By CHRIS EZEONOH, PORT HARCOURT

Political analysts in Rivers State are miffed at the endless and rancorous circus show being displayed by the former governor of the state who is the current Minister of Transportation, Rt. Hon. Rotimi Chibuike Amaechi and his once trusted friend and confidant, Senator Magnus Ngei Abe.

Anyone who has been following the political trajectory of these two great sons of Rivers State cannot but pause and wonder about the Lucifer who has put a seemingly irretrievable wedge between the duo with inevitable collateral damage.

The relationship between the two political gladiators began at the Rivers State House of Assembly after the 1999 elections when both won elections from their various constituencies. Amaechi represented Ikwerre while Abe represented Gokana, on the platforms of PDP and APP respectively.

It was Abe's exceptional brilliance at debates on the floor of the House even as the Minority Leader, that endeared him to Amaechi who was the Speaker. Amaechi often consulted Abe who is an accomplished lawyer on anything that needed any legal interpretation before the House would conclude debate on such issues.

Soon, the two young politicians bonded more which resulted in Abe defecting to the PDP to seal the bond of friendship with Amaechi.

The friendship also brought Abe very close to the then Governor Peter Odili, who was Amaechi's benefactor, and this earned Abe's appointment as Commissioner for Information in the second term of Odili as governor.

Abe stood with Amaechi through thick and thin even while Amaechi was in political exile in Ghana after falling out of favour in the Odili political family.

That was why upon Amaechi's swearing-in as governor following the Supreme Court declaration, he promptly announced Abe as his Secretary to the State Government, SSG.

Abe later ascended to the National Assembly, the Senate, to be precise and spent two terms.

From the National Assembly, Abe started thinking homewards for the next logical rung to climb in the ladder of his political career and it became the governorship position.

But here he encountered what was to him like a numbing anathema, akin to the Caesar-Brutus scenario as Amaechi emerged from a blind angle and impudently asked him to perish the ambition.

Amaechi had become the leader of APC in the state when he defected to the party from PDP, pulling most of his loyalists including Abe along



Amaechi

with him.

A governor of the Ogoni extraction had been a long-standing demand within the political space in Rivers and Abe had felt that his relationship with Amaechi would make the realization of that desire even much easier. There have been rumours and gossip over issues bordering on power tussle between both camps, which made Amaechi to pitch his tent against Abe. According to an insider Amaechi even swore that Abe would be governor over his dead body!

Amidst the rancour and acrimony occasioned by Amaechi's rejection of Abe's governorship bid, he, (Amaechi) had gone ahead and anointed the immediate past Director-General of Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency, (NIMASA), Dr Dakuku Adol Peterside to fly the governorship flag of APC in 2015.

This necessarily marked a turning point in the once blossoming relationship between Amaechi and Abe as they went their separate ways politically, though still in the same party, APC which became factionalized into Amaechi and Abe camps.

The crisis triggered in the APC by the avoidable face-off between the two gladiators culminated in the deleting of APC on the INEC ballot papers for all categories of elections conducted in the state in the 2019 general election as Abe's faction succeeded in convincing the court that they were unjustly shut out of the congresses conducted by the APC in the state.

Ahead of the 2023 elections, the storm seems to be gathering very



Abe.

ominously again against the Rivers APC chapter as the two factions remained fixated on their extreme positions not to reason with each other to find peace.

Observers had expected that after the fate it suffered in the 2019 elections where it fielded no candidate the election over internal crisis; the APC would look inwards ahead of the 2023 election and sort out its challenges.

But it appears history is about to repeat itself again as the faction led by the Minister of Transportation, Rotimi Amaechi has announced Arch. Tonye Cole, the INEC rejected candidate in 2019 as the consensus governorship candidate of the party for the 2023 election, a development the faction loyal to Abe, has sworn would not stand.

In a three-paragraph statement addressed to party members, one of the elders of APC in the state, Senator Andrew Uchendu had broken the news of the emergence of Tonye Cole as the consensus governorship candidate.

He said, "Last night, our Leader, CRA, (Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi) set up a Committee of Elders of about 19 members to meet immediately and decide on the Governorship candidate of our party.

"We all met for about two hours and unanimously chose Tonye Cole. The committee immediately communicated this choice to our leader.

"I was a member of that committee and therefore invited all of you to accept this decision and communicate the same to all our members. It is

in our overall interest to do so. Let us get down to work for all our candidates", he pleaded.

But upon hearing what had transpired, Senator Abe roared that nobody could enslave Rivers people, no matter the quantum of the person's wealth or social status in the society.

In a statement issued by his spokesman, Parry Sarah Benson, Abe noted that Rivers people could not be enslaved by anyone through crooked manoeuvring, and advised his supporters to brace up for the fight ahead which he said would not be easy.

"I have said it before and want to say it again, that Rivers people have never been slaves to anybody and nobody no matter the amount of money he has, nobody can enslave us here in Rivers State. We can chart our own destiny.

"Let me assure you all that the road ahead will not be easy but you have the power, the capacity and audacity and I know that we can do it. We will do it and we'll win.

"I will present myself to the Rivers people and if they decide to choose a better person over me through a transparent process, I will support that person.

"We must have a clear and transparent process. But if they bring somebody through a Kangaroo process, we will not accept. We will challenge it", Abe maintained.

He stated that the party needed everybody to be able to succeed, saying that to achieve this, the party leaders must make room to accommodate everybody.

He said: "As far as possible, we must be able to work together to bring our party together. Let us not deceive ourselves; this party needs everybody to be able to succeed. We must be able to make room for one another.

"We must be able to accommodate one another. In politics disagreements are normal and it is expected. What is not normal in politics is hatred such as people have been preaching amongst us here, the Rivers people.

"Whether you are APC or PDP; whether you are with Magnus or with Amaechi, you are a Rivers man. You are the proud son of your father and your mother.

"You deserve the best and the reason why we are doing politics is so that we can offer you the best. And that is why I am here. We have a track record of saying something and standing by what we said", he pushed.

Observers say the crude intransigence on the part of Amaechi and Abe over who gets what in the party could again scuttle the chances of the party to get a foot holding in 2023 election and ultimately consign the party to perdition in Rivers.

Ritual rites for Traditional Rulers in Yoruba, matter of choice – Oba Adedokun



Oba Adedokun Omoniyi Abolarin

By **GABRIEL OMONHINMIN**

Oba Adedokun Omoniyi Abolarin is from the Aniyunlogba ruling house in Ile-Obasolo, Oke-Ila Orangun. He was born and raised at Gbenla in Ibadan. His mother is from Ipoti-Ekiti in Ekiti State. His late father was a Primary School Headmaster while his mother was a teacher before she finally decided to go into full-time trading as a housewife.

It was therefore no surprise, that Oba Abolarin, after graduating with a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from the then the University of Ife in the

year 1980, decided to go into teaching, after a brief working experience as an Administrative Officer in the Ministry of Aviation, immediately after completing his one-year mandatory National Service.

From 1981 to 1989, Oba Abolarin lectured at the then Oyo State College of Arts and Science (OSCAS) in Ile-Ife. That was when he took the opportunity to go back to the University again to take a first and second degree in Law.

As was the case with most children of his age and time, Oba Abolarin youthful experiences while growing up was tough

and eventful. All these experiences have today helped to shape his lifestyle and made him one of the most charitable, compassionate and caring traditional rulers in modern Nigeria. Today, he has hundreds of indigent students in the Abolarin College he founded to cater for the education and well-being of students across the country, from diverse backgrounds and tribes, who now enjoy free and qualitative education from his college.

Oba Abolarin, who has a strong passion for legal practice and a solid foundational base in political science, was for two years the Special Adviser, Legal Matters to Senator Anyim Pius Anyim, who was then the Nigerian Senate President.

Palace Watch, recently met with Kabiyesi and the following discussion ensued.

Kabiyesi, I observed that you recently conferred a chieftaincy title of Aare Agbaakin and Yeye Aare Agbaakin of Oke-Ila Orangun, on your former school mate at the University of Ife, Chief Oyewole Olaoye and his wife, Chief (Mrs.) Anne Ndidiamaka Olaoye. What were the other qualities other than being your former schoolmate, you and your council of Chiefs considered before finding Chief Olaoye and his wife worthy of these titles?

Kabiyesi: There were so many qualities which I found in Chief Olaoye and his lovely wife, which qualified them for these exalted titles in my kingdom. Yes, Chief Olaoye was a University schoolmate of mine, whom I am very proud of. While we were at the University of Ife, Wole was a Student Union President of Great Ife in 1979. He was also a distinguished Alumni President of Great Ife Worldwide and a member of the Obafemi Awolowo University Governing Council. He is



a lover of tradition and culture of our people. If you must know, Wole is indeed the power behind the throne, since my enthronement as Orangun in the year 2006.

The conferment of his chieftaincy title and that of his lovely wife was, therefore, a combination of the traditional class led by the Owajero of Ijero Ekiti, the intelligentsia, with the presence of the outgoing Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ife, Prof. Eyiotope Ogunbodede, the past VC of Ife, Prof. Michael Faborode and the future of Nigeria, represented by the school children of the great Abolarin College, Oke-Ila Orangun.

Chief Olaoye's chieftaincy conferment was to support a worthy cause according to all the Chiefs in this kingdom, no exception no dissension, as they were all desirous of using that happy occasion to further the identity of the kingdom which I have strived all these years, to put on the map as one of the world's destination as far as college education is concerned.

Palace Watch: Kabiyesi, over the years, you have been selfless, in making sure that the children of the poor, I mean the very poor in your immediate environment in Oke-Ila Orangun get the basic education they require in life. Very many of these children are today in various Universities across the globe. How do you manage this large number of indigent students? How do you go about their feeding, clothing and so many other things, while they are still with you here in your college?

Kabiyesi: This is my calling in life, I, therefore, enjoy what I am doing, I give it my all and manage no matter the difficulties to keep pushing on. Let me lead you into one secret, how we function here. My daughters from the 1st and 2nd sets of Abolarin College, Oke-Ila Orangun, in these pictures handed over to you, are today in various Universities, such as Aanu-Adeleke University, Nimotallahi-Ife, Temidayou-FUOYE, Ronke-Ife, Barakat-Ilorin, Aminat-Ilorin, Sulyat-Ife, Stella Adeleke University and Sulyat-FUOYE. Those of them in Adeleke University, are ten presently, and to the glory of God, they are there as students courtesy of the Springtime Development Foundation, Ede. Happily, my little girls of the other day, are now big beautiful, cerebral hardworking, girls with big, big ideas and dreams.

You just imagine if these girls, because of the unfortunate nature of their births, were on the streets engaging in different vices, what benefit would they have added to the society? Nothing! Absolutely Nothing! When I see them, it gives me a lot of joy to continue to do what I am doing, not minding the pains and hardship.

Now back to your question, one of the things we do here to survive, is that we work very hard to feed ourselves. We as a college are into full-scale farming. My daughters and sons work so hard. They are beautiful, brilliant and have faith, and hope in themselves and also in the future of their country, Nigeria. They are ready to conquer the world and reduce poverty in their environment. This is one of the unique ways we survive here. As the saying goes, "once hunger is out of poverty, the problem of poverty is half solved."

Palace Watch: Before and after the burial of the Alaafin of Oyo, there were so many traditional rites that were performed and are still being performed now. Recently, these rites have brought about the hot exchange of words

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AfDB President visits Ooni of Ife, Speaks on Effects of Russia-Ukraine's War



By **GABRIEL OMONHINMIN**

The President of African Development Bank, Dr Akinwumi Adesina, on Monday, 25th April 2022 paid Ooni Adeyeye Enitan Babatunde Ogunwusi Ojaja II, a courtesy visit in his palace in Ile-Ife.

Adesina, who immediately went into a closed-door meeting with the Monarch in his palace, was said to have discussed with the Ooni on the need for him to mobilize his kingdom and the entire Yoruba race, to be prepared for

the inevitability of a global food crisis.

The AfDB boss was said to have spoken extensively on the need for African countries to get their priorities right, especially now, that the continent has the most vulnerable countries and is hardest hit, by the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic, which the AfDB President stressed has impeded the economic and development progress in the Africa continent.

Adesina pointed out that Africa, with the lowest GDP growth rates, had lost

as many as 30 million jobs on account of the recent pandemic.

He told the Ooni that the tripling costs of fertilizer, rising energy prices, and rising costs of food baskets, could worsen in Africa in the coming months. He explained further, that 90 percent of Russia's 4 billion dollars exports to Africa in 2020 is made up of wheat; while 48 percent of the wheat valued at \$3 billion U.S. dollars was also exported to the continent by Ukraine. These are the two countries that are presently at war, thus making it impossible for this food chain to continue. Ukraine, as AfDB President also pointed out, is the exporter of 31 percent of maize to African countries.

AfDB President, therefore cautioned that to fend off a food crisis in Africa, Africa must rapidly expand its food production. He stressed, "The African Development Bank (AfDB) is already active in mitigating the effects of a food crisis through the African Food Crisis Response and Emergency Facility - a dedicated facility being considered by the Bank to provide African countries with the resources needed to raise local food production and procure fertilizer.

"My basic principle is that Africa should not be begging. We must solve our own challenges ourselves without depending on others".

The Ooni of Ife, in a brief remark, said "It is a priceless honour for me to welcome Dr Akinwumi Adesina, the President of the African Development Bank to my palace in Ile-Ife. Dr Adesina is a true son of Oduduwa, an inestimable asset, a shining light of truth, patriotism, and a selfless hero of the Yoruba race.

"the amazing, candid, and high-quality conversations Adesina had with is really valuable, even though I spent an hour discussing with the AfDB boss, it was just like a 5 minutes talk since we had a lot of areas to cover.

"As a son of Oduduwa saddled with the mission of safeguarding our ancestors' legacy, Adesina spoke to me passionately and beautifully. As he saw the lingering food crisis from wheat production, soybeans and maize, which is part of the ripple effects of the Russia/Ukraine crisis. I must, therefore, commend your proactive initiatives for generating billions of dollars to assist agriculture as a massive social and economic footprint for Africans, particularly in Nigeria." Ooni said.

"I admire your unwavering commitment to preserving African cultural values and economic dependence. Your significant and outstanding achievements have earned Africa a lot of respect as the world's next economic frontier." Ooni concludes.



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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	
9 x 2	112,183.69	120,597.47	7 x 4	158,608.73	170,504.38	7 x 4	145,965.10	156,912.48	14.5 x 2	124,915.92	134,284.61	
9 x 3	168,358.90	180,985.39	7 x 5	198,260.25	213,129.77	7 x 5	182,500.19	196,187.71	5 x 3	56,804.77	61,065.13	
10 x 3	187,065.45	201,095.35	8 x 2	90,633.42	97,430.92	8 x 2	73,399.58	78,904.54	6 x 3	68,170.86	73,283.67	
14.5 x 2	260,395.00	279,924.62	8 x 3	135,950.22	146,146.48	8 x 3	125,871.78	134,674.05	7 x 3	79,526.68	85,491.18	
8 x 4	199,536.48	214,501.71	8 x 4	181,266.93	194,841.95	8 x 4	167,043.40	179,022.80	8 x 3	103,375.58	111,130.80	
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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Perm Sec makes case for military, civilian driven Defence Ministry

■ *Calls for societal synergy in combating insecurity*

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

The new Permanent Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Defence, Dr Ibrahim Kana has stated that one of his aspirations for the Ministry is to see to the deployment of more military personnel alongside their civilian counterparts to take up key positions in the Ministry.

He stated this on Wednesday when he paid his maiden visit to the Defence Headquarters, where he met separately with the Nigerian Army, Nigerian Air Force and the Nigerian Navy. Adding that the right mix of civilians and military personnel working side-by-side at the Ministry of Defence will reduce the bottlenecks usually experienced in handling and treating official matters affecting the Services while also enhancing cooperation and collaboration.

Dr Kana further stated that under his watch, special attention will be given towards improving the standards of education and healthcare in schools and medical facilities run by the military, due to the critical roles these infrastructures play in enhancing

morale among troops.

He also emphasized the need for improved synergy especially now that the various Services continue to expand in sizes and roles as well as delve into each other's responsibilities and expertise.

"As the Services expand and delve into each other's expertise, the need for synergy and cooperation is expedient," he noted.

Dr Kana also averred that surmounting the security challenges confronting the country requires whole-of-society and multi-disciplinary approach. He enjoined all stakeholders to mobilise in support of the military and security agencies who are at the forefront of ensuring Nigeria's national security.

While assuring the military of the support of the Ministry of Defence in the fight against terrorism and other contemporary security challenges, he said the Armed Forces remain a vital arm of the ministry and also a leading institution in the national security architecture of the nation.

The seasoned technocrat pledged to sustain ongoing reforms in the military and foster seamless collaboration to fast track the restoration of peace and tranquillity in troubled areas of the country.

Dr Kana commended the effort and resilience of troops and pilots in the ongoing fight against terrorism and other security challenges in the country while disclosing the ministry's desire to ensure provision of quality education for children and wards of military personnel by repositioning Command Primary and Secondary Schools across formations and Units. This, he said, will further boost the morale and fighting will of the troops.

In his remarks, the Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant General Faruk Yahaya congratulated Dr Kana on his appointment as the Perm Sec, Ministry of Defence. Noting that both the Army and the ministry enjoy a functional working relationship and sued for its sustenance. Gen Yahaya expressed appreciation for the Perm Sec's willingness to support the NA in the execution of its constitutional mandate.

On his part, the Chief of Air Staff (CAS), Air Marshal Oladayo Amao, while welcoming the new Perm Sec, congratulated him on his appointment and assured him of NAF's readiness to support him towards a successful tour of duty.

He noted that going by the impeccable milestone achieved by the Perm Sec as noted in his citation,

the needed synergy between the Services and the ministry would be much better.

The CAS further stated that the culture of jointness in all operations has come to stay amongst the Armed Forces. He, however, added that because the solution to the current security challenges requires a whole-of-society approach, the Armed Forces would require the support of the Perm Sec and the Ministry of Defence.



Dr Ibrahim Kana

Troops nab ISWAP logistics suppliers, 119 terrorists

■ *Neutralize 85 terrorists, rescue 798 civilians in Borno, Taraba, others*

■ *1,158 terrorists and their families surrendered*

■ *Recover 7,732,000 litres of crude oil, 10,821,605 of AGO*

■ *Gen Irabor engages stakeholders in Southern Kaduna*

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

Troops of Operation Hadin Kai and Hadarin Daji of the Armed Forces have in the last three weeks recorded tremendous success in combating terrorists and criminal elements across the country as two logistics suppliers of the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) and 119 terrorists were arrested in Borno, Taraba, Katsina, Kaduna and Zamfara States.

It was also gathered about 85 terrorists were killed by the troops while a total of 798 civilians held captive by the terrorists were rescued.

This was disclosed on Thursday by the Director of Defence Media Operations, Major General Benard Onyeuko in a bi-weekly briefing on the operational activities of the Forces. Gen Onyeuko gave the names of the logistics suppliers/informants as Mallam Abba Sidi Lawan and Abdurrazaq Hudu while adding that a prominent ISWAP Commander, Abubakar Dan-Buduma and scores of the terrorists were killed.

According to him, the operation "led to the destruction of terrorist enclaves and their central workshop where vehicles are fabricated for vehicle-borne Improvised Explosive Device (IED)."

He added that ISWAP "fighters on 5GTs attempted to attack Nigerian Petroleum Product Company Depot in Diffa near Nigeria/Niger border

the attack was repelled and an unspecified number of terrorists were killed.

"Consequently, own troops recovered 49 AK 47 rifles, 728 rounds of 7.62mm, 4 MG's, 1 G3 rifle, 3 60mm mortar, 1 AA gun, 1 SMG, 6 Magazines, 1 hand grenade, 1 UXO anti-tank RPG bomb, 11 dane guns, 1 gun tripod, 1 binocular, 5 bandoliers, and 8 crowbars.

"Other items recovered include; 7 motorcycles, 31 bicycles, 4 heavy-duty generators, 3 Canoes, 3 tri-cycles, 4 motorcycles, 22 sewing machines, 1 video camera, 4 grinding machines, 8 mobile phones, 4 cars, 4 trucks, 1 Toyota buffalo vehicle, 8 drums of grains, medical syringes and 43,000:00 Naira cash."

Gen Onyeuko further disclosed that a total number of 1,158 terrorists and their families comprising 164 men, 367 women and 627 children surrendered to troops within the period under review.

He added that troops of the Operation Hadarin Daji recovered 592 rustled cattle, 45 different assorted weapons, 80 rounds of different caliber ammunition, and 50 motorcycles.

Meanwhile, troops of Operation Delta Safe operating in the creeks of Niger Delta were said to have recovered 7,732,000 litres of crude oil and 10,821,605 of AGO.

"Within the period under review, own troops discovered several illegal refining sites with 133 ovens, 194 metal tanks storages, 127 dugout pits, 5 wooden boats, 12 receivers, two ovens, two engines, two pumping machines, one oxygen cylinder, one motorcycle, one Jetta vehicle, 4,000 polythene bags of illegal refined black oil and five trucks. Cumulatively, Seven Million Seven Hundred and Thirty-Two Thousand (7,732,000) litres of crude oil and Ten Million and Eight Hundred and Twenty-One Thousand Six Hundred and five (10,821,605) litres of AGO was recovered," he said.

He further added that troops of Dakatar Da Barawo discovered and destroyed several illegal refining sites, 145 ovens, 201 storage metal tanks, 9 pumping machines, one Yamaha 40HP outboard engine, 55 dugout pits, 58 drums of AGO, two wooden boats, 100 polythene bags illegally refined AGO and one tanker loaded with illegally refined AGO in Delta, Anambra, Cross River and Bayelsa States.

"Cumulatively, within the week under review a total of One Million Seven Hundred and Eighteen Thousand (1,718,000) litres of AGO, Three Million Eight Hundred (3,800,000) litres of crude oil, Three Hundred and Fifty Thousand (350,000) litres of sludge, Twenty Thousand (20,000) litres of PMS and One Hundred Thousand (100,000) litres of DPK," he stated.

In another development, the Chief of Defence Staff, General LEO Irabor, was said to have embarked on an operational visit to Kaduna State during which he met with critical stakeholders drawn from 5 local government areas of the troubled parts of Southern Kaduna.

"He also interacted with retired military senior officers of Southern Kaduna extraction to chart ways towards bringing an end to the incessant attacks in the area. The visit has impacted positively the peace efforts in the area," Gen Onyeuko said.

This is coming as troops of the Operation Safe Haven during patrol received a distress call on the activities of criminal elements in Heipang in Barkin Ladi Local Government Area of Plateau State.

"Troop quickly moved into swift action and on sighting own troops the criminal fled in disarray. The exploit led to the recovery of 178 rustled cows," he said.

He added, "In another development, on 21 April 2022, the Commander of OPERATION SAFE HAVEN at its Headquarters in Jos handed over a total of 517 small arms and light weapons recovered from bandits and other criminal elements to the Coordinator North Central Zone of the National Centre for the control of Small Arms and Light Weapons.

"The Commander commended troops for their resilience and successes recorded at stamping out criminal activities and the recovery of numerous illicit weapons. He also commended the spirited citizens who gave actionable information to the troops that led to the huge success recorded.

"The breakdown of the weapons are 26 AK 47 rifles, one FN, two Barreta rifles, 3G3 rifles, six Barreta pistols, one Harris Bing pistol and one SMG. Others include 183 locally fabricated rifles, 163 dane guns, 102 locally fabricated pistols, 19 locally fabricated SMGs, six single barrel guns and pump-action guns."

Oyo NSCDC deploys 2,300 personnel ahead Eid-El-Fitri celebration

■ *As Lagos command tasks citizens on civility, safety, others*

By **ALEX OLISE**

The Oyo State Command of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) said it has deployed 2,300 personnel for this year's Eid-El-Fitri celebrations.

This is contained in a statement signed by the Command's Public Relations Officer, DSC Okuneye Oyindamola, adding that the Corps Commandant (CC), Adaralewa Michael, while deploying the personnel, praised the spirit of sacrifice and resilience displayed by the Muslim faithful in the state during the period of Ramadan.

The statement further noted that the Commandant congratulated the Muslims on the successful completion of Ramadan and prayed that Allah will bless the immense sacrifice that was made. He urged the citizens to keep hope alive and to celebrate Eid-El-Fitri moderately while felicitating with each other.

The NSCDC boss stressed further on the modality that officers and men of the Corps are deployed, saying that tactical units, such as disaster management, counter-terrorism unit, Female Special Squad, Agro-Rangers, Armed Squad, CNAI, Intelligence Department, C B R N E Unit and others within the corps will be positioned at various Eid praying grounds, relaxation centers, malls, pipeline areas, telecommunication mast, and all Federal, State and Local Government properties and infrastructures across Oyo State.

He also ordered that the Command ambulance be stationed on the highways in case of any disaster occurrence.

Commandant Adaralewa also called on all Divisional Officers to monitor the activities of officers deployed to all the flash spots within their jurisdictions.

He assured the citizens that the Command's readiness to work with other sister agencies in order to secure and protect the lives and properties of the good people of Oyo State before, during and after the Eid el-Fitr Celebration.

Meanwhile, the Lagos State Command of the NSCDC has called on citizens in the State to be civil, safety-minded, practice intellectualism and give room for attitudinal change.



Gen Leo Irabor

250 female aspirants obtain PDP forms

A total of 250 women have obtained Expression of Interest forms to run for seats ranging from presidential to State Houses of Assembly on the platform of the People's Democratic Party (PDP). It is also reported that a high number of women have indicated interest in APC as well. If it is true, both political parties must be commended for giving women this kind of opportunity to participate in governance. It is a sign that more women are taking the struggle for elective office seriously and the parties have become more flexible in their attitude towards the women folk. We here at The Trumpet call on these female aspirants to serve as good ambassadors for women and prove to the nation that including more women in governance brings about positive change and development.

Since the nation's return to democracy, no State has elected a female Governor. There had been some tokenism in this direction as Lagos, Ekiti, Ogun, and Anambra States had produced Deputy Governors in the past. The nation has not produced a female Vice President. In terms of appointive positions, women have not fared as well as their male counterparts. There is something retrogressively cultural about excluding women from the political space. If therefore 250 women have picked up forms, it is a landmark. It deserves commendation.

Currently, Nigerians have genuine anxieties over the 2023 elections and the candidates running for various offices. Nigerians do not know whom to trust. This is therefore an opportunity for the women aspirants to show that they are the embodiment of the change Nigeria so desperately needs. Indeed, one good thing about bringing in more women is that we will escape the endless recycling of the same old faces

during every election. This is women's chance to prove that the 35% Affirmative Action agitated for will be a welcome development in Nigeria.

When elected, these women should do their utmost to serve the people conscientiously and avoid the pitfalls of some of their predecessors who became distracted by the pursuit of material wealth and ended up looting the nation and spoiling the name of women in the process. We call on these aspirants to be hardworking and upright, to shun dirty politics and avoid the unfortunate practice common among politicians of encouraging and employing thugs which destroys the lives and futures

of many Nigerian youths. We call on these women to avoid the practice of buying votes or bribing voters with gifts. Nigerian voters are now wise to such tricks and any politician who engages in such acts only earns the outward and insincere praise of Nigerians but on the inside Nigerians do not respect such a person.

Let clean politics be the watchword of these women aspirants and let them be honest to the people during campaigns and avoid making grandiose promises that they know will be impossible to fulfill. Let them also remember that they got the nomination forms virtually free. This places a huge responsibility on their shoulders because whereas a woman professor, for example, could run for the office of president, a male professor would still have to find millions of naira to purchase the same nomination form. These women should therefore not turn around and bite the hand that fed them but should instead prove that the trust placed in them to run for office is justified.

There is some concern that some of the aspirants do not actually intend to run for office but intend to strike a bargain with other more powerful aspirants for lucrative positions in government. If this is the case, such aspirants have no business indicating their interests in the first place since their motives are obviously selfish. Those who wish to serve our country must be willing to be more than just aspirants. They must be willing to run the race, convince the people that they are qualified for the job, and strive to win at the elections. Nigerians have suffered enough in the hands of unscrupulous politicians. We call on Nigerians to vote massively for women on election day. A change in our political fortunes could arise from a high presence of women in political offices across the country.



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Christian shepherding, ideal leadership

Shepherd' and 'flock' are common Christian terms. Shepherding presupposes having a flock. Jesus Christ proclaimed, 'I am the Good Shepherd, The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep' (John 10:14). He is called the "Great Shepherd of the Sheep" (Hebrew 13:20). As imitators and followers of Christ, we are also called into the ministry of shepherding. Apostle Peter wrote this: "I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed; 'Shepherd the flock, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly" (1 Peter 5:1-2). Shepherding the flock was dear to the heart of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

"And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things" (Mark 6:34). "And when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs! He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes Lord; You know I love You. He said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon son of Jonah, do you love Me?" "Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep."

Feed My Lamb! Tend My Sheep!! Feed My Sheep!!! This was what Jesus requested of Peter if he loves Him. Today, Jesus is asking us thrice if we really love Him? The canon with which He measures our love for Him is how we treat His lamb or sheep. Christ is the Great Shepherd of the Church, and He has ceded the task of shepherding to us. In Psalm 23 David proclaimed: "The Lord is my Shepherd! We must not love our desires and material things more than the flock of Christ.

What does it mean to shepherd the flock?

1 Peter 5:2-3 gives us the answers thus: (i) Feed, do not fleece the flock of God, (ii) Take oversight of the flock of God (iii) Serve God and His flock willingly (iv) Serve readily, not for personal gain (v) Do not be lords over God's heritage (vi) Be a good example to the flock. These are requisite conditions for good secular and ecclesiastical leadership. These conditions are mere epistemic and theoretical; they call for the praxis. Can or do we practice the act of good shepherding? Do we have good Christian shepherds in today's church and society?

Prophet Ezekiel outlines the traits of irresponsible shepherds. God, through Prophet Ezekiel, cursed irresponsible shepherds. "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, "Thus says the Lord God to the shepherds: "Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?" (Ezekiel 34:2). The bad shepherd is selfish, heartless and wicked to the flock. He would use them as his food and skin them for his clothing. He is unconcerned when the flock is sick. He will not seek lost sheep. He does not protect and shield the endangered flock from predators. He allows the sheep to scatter and fend for themselves even in unpalatable terrains (Ezekiel 34:3-8). He offers no protection for the sheep. But God says, "Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require My flock at their hand; I will cause them to cease feeding the sheep, and the shepherds shall feed themselves no more; for I will deliver My flock from their mouths, that they may no longer be food for them" (Ezekiel 34:9-10).

On the other hand, we have the good shepherd. As John Maxwell footnoted on Ezekiel 34:11-24, "The Lord of ancient Israel was the Great Shepherd to His flock, Israel. He calls all spiritual leaders to view their role in the same way. The word picture of the shepherd enables us to see what kind of relational skills and attitudes we are to build into our leadership. Ezekiel 34 provides a 10-fold quality of how a shepherd ought to care for his flock. "The shepherd: (i) searches



Dr. Karo Ogbinaka

out the lost sheep (vv. 11-16); (ii) delivers the captive sheep (v. 12); (iii) gathers the dispersed sheep; (iv) feeds the hungry sheep (v. 13); (v) rests the weary sheep (v. 15); binds the hurt sheep (v.16); strengthens the weak sheep (v. 16); protects the vulnerable sheep (vv. 17-22); equips the needy sheep (v. 23); and directs all the sheep (v.24)." The foregoing qualities are established in Psalm 23!

As secular and ecclesiastical leaders, the security, health, education, feeding, the general well-being and happiness of the people we rule over should be prioritised. We should be responsibly carry out our leadership assignments; compassionately, altruistically without being corrupt. This is because our reward comes from Jesus Christ alone. "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep" (John 10:7); "The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep" (John 10:11); "I am the good shepherd; I know My sheep, and am known by My own (John 10:14). Christ is the Chief Shepherd, and Apostle Peter says, He will give us "the crown of glory that does not fade away" (1 Peter 5:4). Consequently, the good shepherd looks up to Jesus Christ, not the sheep, for his reward.

Shepherding means more than the provision of food and grass for the flock. In Mark 6:34ff, Jesus was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd, so He began to teach them many things." It is not recorded that He began to give them plenty food to eat. The Psalmist says: "My soul faints for Your salvation, but I hope in Your word." "My eyes fail from searching Your word, saying when will you comfort me?" (Psalm 119:81-82). The comfort of the flock flows from the word, statutes, commandments and ordinances of the living God. Without the word there is no world for the sheep. The Apostles fed the early church with the word. They resisted all distractions that were mitigating the word in the life of the Church. "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables" (Acts 6:2).

We must care for the sheep in humility, (Matthew 18:1ff); seek the lost sheep, even if it is one (Matthew 18:12); the good shepherd protects (Psalm 118: 6); gives confidence and is trusted (Psalm 118:8); must put away evil and the enemy (Psalm 118:11); and must make the sheep fruitful. (Matthew 28:19) "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations... baptising them ... and teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you." He that shepherds must imitate the Great and the Good Shepherd, Christ Jesus, our Lord and Saviour.

Are you a shepherd in your Church or community? Are your sheep lost or scattered? Are there no lost sheep in your neighbourhood? Are you not moved with compassion, seeing the lost, the hungry, the sick, the desolate, and the bereaved? Do you comfort and care for your sheep? Do you love Christ Jesus? Christ is today asking us: 'Do you love Me?' If we affirm as Peter did, Jesus is asking us to feed, tend and again feed His lamb and sheep!

•The Rev'd Dr Karo Ogbinaka, an Anglican priest of the Diocese of Lagos West, lectures at the Department of Philosophy, University of Lagos. He is a member of the editorial board of The Trumpet

Know your rights and privileges in the word of God. Don't allow Satan and demons to cheat you through ignorance

Everything happening on earth is a consequence of the judgement of the Word of God. Death, the most feared condition in the existence of man came through the pronouncement of the Word of God and all the blessings of life also come through the Word of God.

The Word of God is the greatest blessing to humanity and the Word came to humanity after a lot of sacrifices in our modern era. Adam did not sacrifice anything before the Word of God for his existence came to him but after he sinned, the Word of God came into the earth through humans who sacrificed their sinful desires to obey God in their generations.

First of all, let us thank God for His mercies that kept the spirit of man from dying completely before Jesus Christ came to pay the price to save humanity because if the spirit of man had died or become irredeemable, there wouldn't have been any form of salvation for man.

The truth is that God has given humans total authority to dominate on earth and humans reap as much as they sowed, no more no less, hence if another man Jesus Christ did not come to earth to cancel the curse of death that the first man Adam through Eve brought on humans, all humans would have died spiritually one day and perhaps be thrown into Hell Fire on the last day just like Satan and other demons have been condemned to spiritual death in Hell Fire forever.

So, humans should always be grateful for God's mercies that intervened to stop the total death of man as a spirit even though their bodies died because of sin. So, the mercies of God sustained the human race because when Satan and other demons sinned through rebellion against God, they died without remedy and that is why they have been condemned already and are waiting for when they will be thrown into Hell Fire on the last day for destruction and eternal lamentations.

In essence God in His infinite mercies allowed man to continue to live as a spirit through the guidance of His Word after the first sin of Adam and Eve which perhaps



Dr. Agbodo

would have led to the complete death of man both physically and spiritually. The wages of sin according to the scriptures is death and death can slay a spirit as well as a body.

So only the physical man of humans continued to die after the sin of Adam and Eve while the spiritual man continued to exist, even though the spirit was also dying gradually until Jesus Christ came to the rescue to pay the full price to redeem the spirit, soul and body of man from death (destruction).

So, since the wages of sin is death and the scriptures cannot be broken, the sin of Adam and Eve would have killed the spirit of man to roast forever in Hell Fire like Satan and demons, but God gave man a second chance through the death and victory of Jesus Christ from the grave.

So, humans should continue to be grateful to God for His Word of guidance in every generation since the era of Adam and Eve which kept human spirits alive while humans waited for the total restoration of their spirits, souls and bodies through the sacrifice of Christ

on earth.

So, note that the Word of God which a lot of people are not taking very seriously today in running their lives came into the earth in our era after the era of Adam's existence in the Garden of Eden through a lot of sacrifices, so don't joke or overlook the Word of God. In the Word of God is life and death depending on how it is applied.

In truth, the solution to every problem on earth is stated in the Word of God as revealed in the Bible, so study the Bible from cover to cover as a right sacrifice, in order to be conversant with the principles of God and apply them in your day to day living and it will surely be well with you. Even if you have not been able to read and digest the Bible from cover to cover, always make efforts to research the Bible on any issue of life as they come and obey the recommendations of the Word of God to solve such an issue, and God will surely help you. So, stop running from pillar to post or from one prayer house to the other but focus on obeying the Word of God and it will always be well with you. Yes, a Pastor can guide you in prayers and an understanding of the Word of God but what is important is your dedication and positive application of the Word of God in your thoughts and your deeds.

So, we humans should deeply appreciate that the Word of God came into this earth with a lot of sacrifices and was not just picked along the road. Moses fasted without food and water for eighty days although in two installments before the Word of God in the Torah (Old Testament) was released to the children of Israel in the wilderness and indeed all humans. Jesus Christ also went to the wilderness and fasted without food and water for 40 days and came back with the Word of God for the complete salvation of man as recorded in the New Testament in the Bible.

Don't joke with the Word of God because it was purchased into this earth through the sacrifices of first, the Mercies of God that insisted

on saving man from complete death in the spirit and secondly, through the determinations of men like Moses and other Prophets of God and our through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ for our generation.

Study the Word of God to know your rights and privileges. Try and know the Word of God inside out because that is what you need fundamentally to fulfil your destiny. You need spiritual power to excel in all aspects of your life whether in marriage, business, leadership, motherhood, fatherhood and the rest and that spiritual power is in the positive application of the Word of God.

Jesus used the Word of God to defeat the devil and lived a successful life on earth, so study the Word of God and quote it to the devil to overcome any temptation as well as to open the doors of your destiny as you progress in life. General education, academic degrees, intellectual development, prayers and the rest are secondary to the Word of God although they are also necessary to completely comprehend and fulfil your mandate on earth, so the first thing every human should try and assimilate is the Word of God. It is the strong value that God attached to His Word that made God command in the Bible that the first training we should give to our children is to bring them up in line with the Word /ways of God so that they will not depart from it when they grow up. And once the children grow up and keep to the Word of God all through their lives, it will be well with them and they will live long on earth and enjoy the blessings of the earth. So, read and study the Word of God every day to know your rights and privileges because Satan is a specialist in twisting the Word of God to deceive human beings into self-destruction. Also, make sure your children are taught the word of God early in life.

•Pastor Esanerovo Trinity Agbodo is a Contributing Editor with The Trumpet Newspaper and can be reached on 07036893533 or 08075504012 (WhatsApp)

Executive Order forestalls the release of Catholic Priest from Abakaliki Prisons

By GABRIEL OMONHINMIN, Culture and Religion Editor

Ebonyi State Governor Dave Umahi Executive Order, which the state governor issued to forestall communal crisis, checkmate banditry and kidnapping in the state, has been alleged to prevent the release of a Catholic priest, Reverend Father Timothy Ngwuta, who has been in Abakaliki prison for over one month.

The Catholic Diocese of Abakaliki in a press statement issued on Sunday 24th April 2022, painted a graphic and pathetic picture of the incident that led to the Catholic priest's incarceration.

The statement entitled "From the Catholic Diocese of Abakaliki, regarding the arrest and arraignment of Reverend Father Timothy Ngwuta" reads as follows: "On Saturday, 11th of December 2021, Reverend Father Timothy Ngwuta, was arrested by the Nigerian Police at Mbeke Ishieke in Ebonyi Local Government Area, where he went to help his friend, Jude Ariom, retrieve a vehicle (Toyota Sienna) that was parked there.

"Before Reverend Father Timothy Ngwuta arrived at Mbeke, he proceeded to the Police station to obtain clearance to move the vehicle whose tyres were deflated. The police at Mbeke permitted him to take the vehicle away after he had settled their bill for guarding the car for two weeks. In the course of inflating the tyres, the local vigilante swooped on him and his companions, demanding further settlements. Fr. Timothy informed them that he had already settled with the Nigerian Police. And that the Nigerian Police was meant to take care of the Local Vigilante as well. After a short while, a different set of local vigilante groups arrived on the scene again, this brought about some altercation between the two groups.

"Fr. Timothy and those who came to assist him, to move the vehicle, were arrested by the local vigilante and handed over to the same police, who earlier had given him clearance to move the vehicle. Fr. Timothy and his companions were subsequently brought to the Nigerian Police Headquarters in Abakaliki the following day and was detained for 12 days. He was tortured. He was later released on bail when his health began to fail him on account of the torture he received while in the Nigerian Police detention. That was on 23rd December 2021. He was required to be reporting to the Police Station weekly. This he did religiously.

"Just when we thought the matter was over, he was re-arrested on Tuesday, March 8, 2022, and, on the 11th of March, 2022 arraigned in court for, kidnapping and murder of the five NELAN Engineers, attack and murder of Police officers, aiding escape, and arson, promoting inter-communal war etcetera. We are worried about how the issue of going to recover a car parked outside a war zone (a different Local Government Area) has metamorphosed into



Rev. Fr. Timothy Ngwuta

such an accusation as contained in the charges against him. The identity of the owner of the car was disclosed to the police by Fr. Timothy together with the contact address and phone number. It is rather surprising to hear that Fr. Timothy is shielding him.

"Facts available to the Diocese are as follows: 1-Fr. Timothy Ngwuta comes from Ezaa Effium; whose home town has been decimated by the inter-communal war between the Effium/Ezza-Effium. 2-Fr. Timothy Ngwuta vehemently denies all these charges and sees himself as a victim of circumstances. 3-Fr. Timothy Ngwuta states unequivocally that he innocently went to help a friend retrieve his vehicle and was not aware that the vehicle was used in the commission of the crimes alleged.

"The Catholic Church condemns acts of violence, incitement of violence, wars, kidnapping, arson, or any crime and will not shield anyone involved in such dastardly acts. We urged the security forces to do a thorough investigation and ensure that the priest of God, who has, in conscience, stated before his Bishop, that the accusations are entirely FALSE. Is not to be punished for offences he knows nothing about. Efforts to secure his release on bail

have been hampered by the Executive Order preventing any court in the state from entertaining any matter relating to Effium crisis. Recently the motion for bail was refused on the 12th of April, 2022.

"The church in the name of God, appeals to all the people of Effium and Ezza-Effium involved in the inter-communal war, to lay down their arms and embrace the path of peace. Nothing justifies the senseless killings and maiming of innocent lives. Peace can never be achieved under the barrel of guns.

"Since the matter is before the courts, we will not be making any more statements on the case. We urged all to withhold judgment and let the case run its course.

"We implore all people of goodwill to join us, in praying to God to touch those responsible for the incarceration of Fr. Timothy to listen to the voice of the right conscience. We commend the whole process into the hands of the blessed virgin Mary, the mother of Priests and the star of evangelization. Pray for peace in the state and the country."

Trumpet Religious Desk immodestly sought the opinion of a Lagos based Legal Practitioner, Olu Oyatomi, on the proper meaning or status of Executive

Order in law. The order was allegedly issued by the Ebonyi State Government under Dave Umahi. Mr Oyatomi said, "If indeed the Ebonyi State Government issued such an order, it cannot in any way prevent the court of competent jurisdiction from running its course in any matter. He stressed that if it was the Executive Order they cited to prevent the court from looking into the matter as it concerns Fr. Timothy Ngwuta in Ebonyi state, then the act must be reckless and unconstitutional. And as such, it needs not to be obeyed. Mr Oyatomi added, "the court is the final arbiter in matters like this."

The Ebonyi State Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, Chief Cletus Ofoke in his reaction, dismissed the Catholic Church claim, saying "the Ebonyi State Executive Order never prevented the court in Ebonyi state from entertaining the case involving Fr. Timothy Ngwuta.

Trumpet Religious Desk immediately reached out to Most Reverend Peter Chukwu, the Catholic Bishop of Abakaliki for his comments. We asked him whether the priests under his supervision had no jobs to do, for one of them to be involved in helping his friend to retrieve his car abandoned in a war-ravaged area of Ebonyi State.

The Bishop said, "It is not true, to insinuate that the priests under my supervision have no jobs doing, that is the reason(s) one of them had the chance to be involved in the matter at hand. I have spoken with the priest involved in this matter, and I believed what he told me, that he innocently went to help a friend to retrieve his vehicle and he was unfortunately caught up in the present web of intrigues surrounding this whole unfortunate incident.

"We as a church do not tolerate violence of any form, and we will never condone the involvement of our priest in such un-Godly acts. That is why we are following this matter carefully. Much as we are eager to get our priest out from the Abakaliki prison where he is presently incarcerated, we will allow the law to take its course. All we are urging is for the Nigerian Police to do a proper and thorough investigation so that the truth be made known to the public.

When Trumpet Religion enquired if the priest will be de disciplined when granted bail? The Bishop said, "The church business, for now, is first to make sure the priest in question is granted bail and his health properly taken care of. At least he needs to be alive, to be able to face any disciplinary action if the need ever arises. And if the church is even to discipline him, as you are suggesting, it will never be done in the way and manner you think. We will seat him down as members of the same family, tell him where and where he went wrong and try to correct him. So that he does not make similar mistakes now or in the future.

"Our main concern now is to strive to clear the name of the priest and church in this whole mess. This is what is important to the church now, as we speak." The Bishop concluded.



AfDB cautions African countries against looming food crisis

Stories by **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

President of the Africa Development Bank (AfDB), Dr Akinwunmi Adesina, has warned African countries to prepare for an inevitable global food crisis in the next few years.

Adesina was speaking on Africa's priorities, as a guest at the Atlantic Council's Africa Centre recently in the United States of America (USA).

Fielding questions from the council's Africa Centre Chair, Ambassador Rama Yade, Senior Fellow, Aubrey Hruby and Jeune Afrique, he advocated an increased sense of urgency amid what he described as a "once in a century convergence of global challenges for Africa."

He maintained that the continent's most vulnerable countries had been hit hardest by conflicts, climate change challenges and the COVID-19 pandemic, which had disrupted economic and development progress in Africa.

He said Africa with the

lowest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rates had lost as much as 30 million jobs on account of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On the impact of the Russia and Ukraine war on Africa, Adesina lamented the killing and displacement of Ukrainians, describing their suffering as 'unimaginable,' adding that the war's ramifications would spread far beyond Ukraine to other parts of the world, including Africa.

The AfDB boss explained that Russia and Ukraine supply 30 percent of global wheat exports, the price of which has surged by almost 50 percent globally and reached identical levels as during the 2008 global food crisis, adding that fertiliser prices and energy prices had tripled fuelling inflation.

Adesina warned that the tripling costs of fertilizer, rising energy prices and rising costs of food baskets could worsen in Africa in the coming months. He noted that 90 percent of Russia's

\$4 billion exports to Africa in 2020 comprised wheat and 48 percent of Ukraine's near \$3 billion exports to the continent were made of wheat and 31 percent of maize.

Adesina cautioned that to fend off a good crisis, Africa must rapidly expand its food production, saying: "The AfDB is already active in mitigating the effects of a food crisis through the African Food Crisis Response and Emergency facility, being considered by the bank to provide African countries with the resources needed to raise local food production and procure fertiliser."

"My basic principle is that Africa should not be begging. We must solve our own challenges

ourselves without depending on others.

He highlighted the importance of the technology sector as a driver for growth in Africa, and prospects for young people on the continent.

He described African youth as one of its greatest assets and commended the contributions of young entrepreneurs in the Fintech, digital, creative arts and entertainment industries.

Adesina added that the need for young entrepreneurs for innovative financing was responsible for the bank's decision to engage with stakeholders and established specialised youth entrepreneurship investment banks to unlock potential and engender economic growth.



Dr Akinwunmi Adesina

Good nutrition beneficial, achievable, UNICEF insists

The United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) says good nutrition is beneficial to and achievable for all Nigerians.

Nutrition Officer of (UNICEF), Nkeriuka Enwelum, made the assertion, yesterday, in Enugu at a two-day dialogue on *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as Child Rights*, while presenting a paper on child malnutrition situation in Nigeria: An overview.

Enwelum said some benefits of good nutrition include an increase in school participation by one year and adult wages by between five to 50 percent, among others.

She said that the consequences of malnutrition include impaired brain development and lower Intelligence Quotient (IQ), low birth weight, weakened immune system leading to an increase in infectious diseases and premature death.

She added that about 45 percent of child deaths were linked to poor nutrition which mostly occurs in low and middle-income countries adding that malnutrition in children leads to wasting, stunting, underweight, while overweight was visible

among adults.

Enwelum stressed that malnutrition should be avoided at all costs through provision and eating of all classes of foods, maintaining that failure to prevent and treat malnutrition could result in long-term cognitive and growth impacts and loss of income for households and up to 15 per cent loss in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for Nigeria.

Dr Chidi Ezinwa of the Department of Mass Communication, Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), said Nigeria ranked 160th on the 2020 world SDGs index from 159th in 2019.

He said SDGs could not be realised without fulfilling the rights of children in SDG index from 159th in 2019 to 160th in 2020 adding: "The SDGs index above shows that many rights of children are yet to be fulfilled in Nigeria, hence Nigeria is far from realising the SDGs."

He stressed that the SDGs included several rights of children to be fulfilled without which progress would not be made in achieving them.

SEC urges NESG to support capital market economic development roles

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has restated the vital role the capital market plays in the development of any country through the provision of long term funds for infrastructure development among others.

Director-General of SEC, Lamido Yuguda, stated this when a team from the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG) visited the commission in Abuja recently, to collaborate with the SEC on the development of the economy.

The SEC boss said that the capital market can actually do more in the areas of provision of necessary infrastructure for the country in a bid to support the

government in its developmental efforts.

"Our collective economic power is bigger than the government and in many countries, the capital market actually funds the government. When you save, the finance is used to create economic value that actually enhances living and this translates to a win-win." While stressing the need for collaboration with the NESG, he said both organisations could do more for the economic development of the country, he said: "You get financial returns and also utility from the investment and this is actually achievable."

"On the capital market, it is a welcome development that we are talking with the NESG for there is something that really needs to happen in this country. When you look at our policy environment, in many areas it is not conducive for the return of capital to investors and we are working hard to tackle this."

He noted that the telecommunications companies are successful because no one is getting the service for free as everyone pays to add: "We all pay for the services, no one gets the services for free, but when we move on our roads, we say we don't want to pay for it. In other countries, people pay for their roads and they are happy doing so because

the roads are good.

"We need to collaborate with a group like NESG. Once we are able to put things right, investors will be willing to put in money and there will be returns."

Speaking, Chief Executive Officer of NESG, Laoye Jaiyeola, who expressed concern that the banking sector was being overstressed, urged the Federal Government and corporate organisations to look towards the capital market for their funding needs.

Jaiyeola stated that transactions could be restructured to raise bonds, bills and all the things that would fund whatever is needed to be funded without going through the banks.

He said: "The securities market needs to take the bull by the horn otherwise, we are going to be in perpetual debts as a nation and that will not help us. That is one of the reasons we are advocating an Investments and Securities Act that will ensure that the needed funding for development in Nigeria is given priority and then we can fund Nigeria for a long term."

"The short term funding cannot help us and so, we need to begin to move to the long-term. We are passionate about it and we need to raise funds for the needed development funding in Nigeria."



Lamido Yuguda

ASCSN greets members on 2022 Workers Day

The leadership of Organised Labour in civil service under the aegis of the Association of Senior Civil Servants of Nigeria (ASCSN) has charged Nigeria workers, especially under the payroll of the Federal and state governments, to remain steadfast in their work.

In his 2022 May Day message, its President, Comrade Tommy Etim Okon, commended the workers for always striving to uplift the union through their unity.

Also in a statement issued by Okon and Secretary-General, Alade Bashir Lawal, they said: "Today, as we join millions of workers throughout the world to

celebrate the 2022 May Day, we wish to use this opportunity to commend the esteemed members of our union for remaining steadfast and united, which had enabled the association to always overcome organisational challenges whenever they arise.

"We wish to assure you all that the current national leadership of the association is committed to the pursuit of welfare issues including the restoration of gratuity to public service employees. In the same vein, the labour leaders said, on behalf of the central working committee and the National Executive Council, "we you all have a very pleasant May day celebration."

MTN notifies NGXE, investors on N127b series 1&2 commercial paper

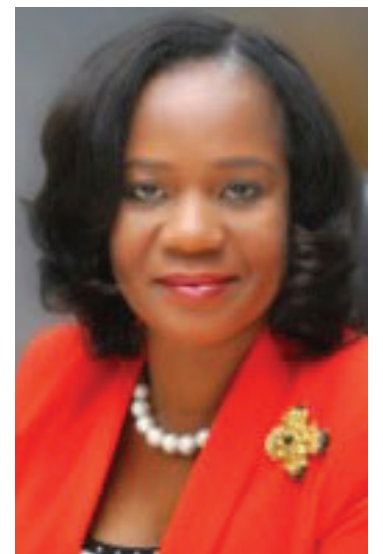
MTN Nigeria Communications Plc has notified the Nigerian Exchange Limited and the investing public of its N127 billion series 1 and 2 commercial paper insurance under its N150 billion registered commercial paper programme.

In a statement released by NGX Exchange information portal, the Company Secretary, Uto Ukpanah, stated that the issuance comprises two tenors of 184-day series issuance period at a 7.50 per cent yield and a 345-day series 2 issuances priced at 8.50 percent yield.

According to the report,

Stanbic IBTC Capital Limited acted as the lead arranger and Dealer, while Chapel Hill Denham Advisory Limited, Coronation Merchant Bank Limited, FBN QUEST Merchant Bank Limited, FSDH Capital Limited, Standard Chartered Capital, Advisory Nigeria Limited and UCML Capital Limited acted as joint dealers.

Ukpanah stated that the issuance was in line with the company's strategy to diversify its funding options with the proceeds being deployed towards working capital and general operations purposes," the statement said.



Uto Ukpanah

CIIN stresses family values at Ramadan Tafsir

The Chartered Insurance Institute of Nigeria (CIIN) has once again demonstrated its commitment to raising professionals, who should display professionalism at home and in the workplace

To ensure insurance professionals display professionalism across board, the institute in its 2022 Ramadan Tafsir focuses on Nurturing Families: Panacea to Societal Ills and Youths Restiveness, which helped to clarify the role of parents in building good families as viable units of society.

President of CIIN, Dr Muftan Oyegunle, explained that Tafsir was derived from the Arab word 'FASARA,' which means to lift the curtain, to make clear, to show the objective, stressing that by analogy, it aims to clarify the true meaning of Quran and its injunctions.

"We are in a season where we should reflect on the wisdom and guidance that comes with the Islamic faith, the responsibility that human beings should have for one another, and to God. It is also a time of intense devotion to Allah.

"With these reasons, I urge us to continue the holy month of Ramadan to stay close to Allah by seeking forgiveness of our sins, praying for our country, families and entire humanity," he stressed.

CIIN stresses family values at Ramadan Tafsir

Stories by JOHNMARK UKOKO

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CAPPA cautions FG against accepting Philip Morris' COVID-19 vaccine

The Corporate Accountability and Public Participation Africa (CAPPA) has alerted the Federal

Government to the possibility of the Canadian government approaching it to accept the Medicgo COVID-19 vaccine (Covifenz), which has not been approved by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The WHO refused to approve the Medicgo vaccine because Philip Morris is a major shareholder in the pharmaceutical company. Public health groups across the globe including in Canada support the WHO decision and have called on the Canadian government to find a suitable investor to replace Philip Morris in the company's shareholding.

Medicgo has also signalled that it is seeking alternative investors and wants the Canadian and Quebec governments to help facilitate such a transition. Unfortunately, the transition has not happened.

In a statement issued in Lagos, CAPPA said that as a signatory to the WHO's first public health treaty - the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO-FCTC) Nigeria should remain committed to its obligations including Article 5.3 which advised Parties to insulate their public health policy from the vested and commercial interests of the tobacco industry.

Guidelines for implementing this obligation make clear that "the tobacco industry should not be a partner in any initiative linked to setting or implementing public health policies, given that its interests are in direct conflict with the goals of public health.

"Parties are directed that they "should not endorse, support, form partnerships with or participate in activities of the tobacco industry

described as socially responsible."

Executive Director of CAPPA, Akinbode Oluwafemi said: "In as much as we appreciate the Canadian government for supplying COVID-19 Vaccines to Nigeria, we urge our government to be circumspect and ensure the product is not the Philip Morris funded Covifenz. An industry that kills its customers and the rest of us who are exposed to tobacco via second-hand smoke cannot lead the way in solving either the tobacco menace or the coronavirus pandemic."

Oluwafemi explained that Philip Morris is primarily a manufacturer of lethal products



Akinbode Oluwafemi

and continues to actively oppose smoking reduction measures across the globe including in Nigeria where its executives through well-publicized articles promote heated tobacco products as a less harmful alternative to cigarettes despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

Through an initiative called the Conrad Nigeria Challenge, Philip Morris-funded Foundation for Smoke-Free World (FSFW) supports young people in the education sector, who are subtly brainwashed into believing that the tobacco company is socially responsible and a stakeholder in public good.

"With at least nine other WHO-approved vaccines that are not tainted by tobacco companies' funding in COVAX kitty, Nigeria is not obliged to accept vaccines tainted with industry funding. In fact, Nigeria can contact COVAX directly to obtain the approved products".

Echoing the position of public health groups in Canada, Oluwafemi said rather than pose as a front for Philip Morris that the Canadian government should stand for public health by replacing Philip Morris's shareholding in Medicgo and stop partnerships that violate its FCTC obligations.

"The control of one pandemic should not compromise another. COVID-19 vaccines or any other health product from companies with ties to the tobacco industry are not welcome in Nigeria. The acceptance of the Philip Morris vaccine and its use violates the FCTC Article 5.3," he insisted.

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Now that Tobacco Control Fund has been operationalised

By PHILIP JAKPOR

Sustainable funding is crucial to winning the tobacco control war and no one understands this better than the tobacco industry. Realising that low-and middle-income countries like Nigeria devote meagre or zero allocation to implementing tobacco control policies, the tobacco industry has cleverly etched its footprint in sectors where government agencies are financially crippled.

The industry is particularly active in the agricultural sector and so-called youth empowerment and skills acquisition training that are well choreographed to garner endorsements from public officials who see them as openings for partnerships with a supposed "stakeholder" to achieve "societal good".

But such endorsements and the partnerships that follow are exactly what the World Health Organisation (WHO) discourages and cautions Parties to the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) to be wary about. Article 5.3 of the FCTC specifically urges parties to protect their public health policies from the commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry.

The WHO also encourages governments to ban all tobacco industry Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities, establish and/or enforce a

code of conduct to limit interactions between government officials and the tobacco industry, and when such interactions are strictly necessary, they must be transparent. It also suggests that where a code of conduct exists, regular training and awareness on tobacco industry inferences in line with Article 5.3 must be conducted for public officials, among others.

But the tobacco industry is also smart albeit in the negative. To circumvent the recommendations of the Convention, tobacco corporations yearly deploy huge financial war chests into compromising and creating conflicts of interest with public officials, especially in sectors where government intervention is non-existent or inadequate. In this way, the tobacco industry effectively clips the hands of governments in regulating the tobacco business. They also pump huge resources into tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorships that seem harmless on the surface but are in fact, subtle ways of recruiting the next generation of smokers.

The Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that in 2019, the largest cigarette and smokeless tobacco companies spent \$8.2 billion on advertising and promotional expenses in the United States alone.

For a country like Nigeria which

is by far the most populous nation in Africa, its huge population which is made up of predominantly youth, is a market opportunity for the tobacco industry. British American Tobacco Nigeria (BATN) which controls over 80% of the Nigerian market continues to break new grounds through its BATN Foundation (BATNF). The Foundation is currently in partnership with virtually all the states of the federation in agricultural production. It has signed MOUs with virtually all of them in implementing their FADAMA projects.

Such projects literally litter Abia, Benue, Kwara, Kogi, Lagos, Niger, Ogun and Osun states, among others. In Lagos, it partners with the state government in organising the yearly Lagos Farm Fair and has been training fish farmers and various cooperatives on so-called capacity building engagements.

The Conrad Foundation funded by the Foundation for Smoke-Free World (FSFW) allied to Philip Morris International is equally active in the education space, exploiting scholarships for pupils in prestigious secondary schools in Nigeria as an entry point to forge partnerships. Through the Conrad Challenge eligible Nigerian pupils have been funded to travel to the United States and other countries to pursue projects that they came up with. Most of

such kids are blindsided and not made to hear about tobacco harm in the public communication of the promoters of these initiatives.

The dangers of the industry partnerships and the endorsements they get from such entanglements are the motivation behind the recent operationalisation of the National Tobacco Control Fund by the Nigerian government. Section 8 (2) of the National Tobacco Control (NTC) Act 2015 and Sections 23 and 26 of the National Tobacco Control Regulations 2019 provide for annual budgetary allocations, gifts, donations, testamentary dispositions, subventions, license fees, and proceeds of the sale of forfeited items shall go into the Fund. Though Nigerians are yet to see the relevant government agencies charged with enforcing the Act adequately funded to get on with their work, it is reassuring that Nigeria has taken this bold step.

Most developed nations understand this fact and continually explore available options to keep the funding tap open. Such funding options by developed countries implementing tobacco control policies include Taxes on tobacco or health-damaging goods such as alcohol; Treasury appropriation; Value added tax (VAT); Health/sickness or universal health cover insurance levy; Philanthropic donations; and

Funds collected through penalties for violations of legislation, among others.

Unfortunately, these options remain largely unnoticed and untapped by the Nigerian government and create loopholes that the tobacco industry explores to continue business as usual.

To wean government agencies off the allure of tobacco industry funds, the agencies must independently have access to the needed resources to be able to carry out timely and proactive interventions required for the successful implementation of tobacco control policies in the country.

No doubt, a Tobacco Control Fund regime will make funds readily available for them to carry out all public health sensitization activities, cessation programs, alternative cropping, and other critical activities. It will also eliminate the reliance of the government on donor and foreign funding and aid the setting up of structures across the country to help people who want to quit and monitor compliance.

Nigerians expect that the operationalisation of the fund will not just be a mere formality. The more delays there are, the more the tobacco industry will addict our youth and unleash a cycle of death already before us.



Shelter Afrique's N46 billion housing bond oversubscribed by 60.7 per cent

• Investors put assets for sale, convert others into residential

By **ONYEBUCHI SAMPSON**

Shelter Afrique, the pan-African development finance institution exclusively dedicated to housing finance in Africa, has announced the successful completion of its debut N46 billion (US\$110.7 million) Series 1 Fixed Rate Senior Unsecured Bond Issuance in Nigeria's capital market under its N200 billion (US\$481.3 million) bond issuance programme.

The dual tranche bond issuance was 60.7 per cent oversubscribed with the order book peaking at N64.3 billion (US\$154.6 million), enabling Shelter Afrique to exercise the 'green shoe' option and raise an additional N6 billion (US\$14.4 million) more than the original N40 billion plan (US\$96.3 million).

On the back of an AA rating from GCR Ratings and an A+ rating from Augusto & Co, the bond issuance attracted participation from a diverse range of institutional investors, including pension funds, banks, and insurance companies. The oversubscription rate demonstrates investors' confidence in Shelter Afrique's mandate to enable housing development in Africa, coupled with

the institution's strong management team, business strategy and credit profile.

The 5-year Tranche A bonds priced at 13.00 per cent and the 7-year Tranche B bonds priced at 13.25 per cent. The tenors of the bonds are aligned with the institution's housing finance strategy and long-term plans in Nigeria. Shelter Afrique will use the bond proceeds to fund mass housing development by tier One real estate developers and to provide lines of credit.

FSDH Capital Limited acted as the Lead Issuing House while ARM Securities Limited, FCMB Capital Markets Limited and United Capital PLC acted as joint issuing houses to the bond issuance.

Other professional parties include Aluko & Oyeboode and Banwo & Ighodalo who acted as Solicitors to the Issue/ Issuer and Solicitors to the Trustee respectively. While United Capital Trustees Limited and Cardinal Stone Registrars Limited acted as the Trustee and Registrar respectively. The Receiving Banks include FSDH Merchant Bank Limited, Stanbic IBTC PLC and United Bank for Africa PLC.

Announcing the result, Shelter Afrique's Acting

Managing Director, Kingsley Muwowo said: "This is the first time Shelter Afrique is tapping the Nigerian debt capital market and the positive market reception is a clear indication of investor confidence in our long-term value proposition for the Nigerian housing market. We would like to assure our investors that we shall put the proceeds of the bond issue into good use that will ensure that more value is created for them."

Mr Muwowo said the issuance of the Naira-denominated bonds reflects

the organisation's desire to focus on tailor-made, long-term funding solutions for the provision of affordable and adequate housing in Nigeria and across Africa.

He also noted that the volatile foreign exchange rate regimes in most member countries are one of the major challenges in financing affordable and decent housing in Africa.

He said: "Constant currency fluctuations make it difficult for those who borrow in foreign currencies to honour their loans because of the

foreign exchange exposure risks. Through this bond issuance, developers and primary mortgage lenders in Nigeria will be able to access funding in Naira, thereby reducing such risks."

Speaking at the signing ceremony held in Lagos, Nigeria, the Managing Director of FSDH Capital Limited, Mr Tolu Osinibi, said: "FSDH Capital is pleased to have advised Shelter Afrique on its successful debut bond issuance in Nigeria's capital market. Shelter Afrique continues to play

a pivotal role in housing development across Africa and the success of the bond issuance will encourage other supranational financial institutions to tap Nigeria's debt capital market for their Naira funding needs. We thank the investor community for their support on the bond issuance.

"We also thank the Board and management of Shelter Afrique for trusting us with this milestone transaction, and their commitment and dedication throughout the process."



Acting Managing Director, FCMB Capital Markets Limited, Abimbola Kasim; Managing Director, FSDH Capital Limited, Tolu Osinibi; Acting Managing Director, Shelter Afrique, Kingsley Muwowo and Managing Director, Investment Banking, United Capital Plc, Gbadebo Adenrele during a press conference on Shelter Afrique Financing Affordable Housing for Africa in Lagos.

Town planners seek collaboration with Edo Govt

By **ISAAC OLAMIKAN**

Chairman, Edo State Chapter of the Nigerian Institute of Town Planners (NITP), Inanigie Abudu, said the body would commence collaboration with the state government in its chains of sustainable programmes in the communities.

He disclosed this at the handing over ceremony of the outgoing executives to the newly elected team in Benin City.

Inanigie in his acceptance speech, said: "There is going to be advocacy and public enlightenment. We are going to partner with the government to ensure that the advocacy is taken seriously."

The new NITP chairman extolled his predecessor, Hope Iyawe, for ensuring that the association had a

sound footing by initiating several laudable projects in the state.

A member of the association, Joshua Akin Olorunfemi, commended Iyawe for his achievements and charged the new officers to ensure that all members were carried along in the activities of the association.

The former chairman, Iyawe, had earlier, enumerated his team's achievements in office and thanked members for their support.

Members of the new executives led by Inanigie, include Dr Adegboyega Maiseyi Collins (Vice Chairman); Lucky Unuirode Okao (General Secretary); Kelly Ugiagbe (Treasurer); Kingsley Esan Akhigbe (Financial Secretary); Bernard Oshiemokhai (Public Relations Officer) and George Osagiede (Auditor).

Nigeria, WHO track progress on clean water project

By **ONYEBUCHI SAMPSON**

The Federal Government through the Ministry of Water Resources in partnership with the World Health Organisation (WHO), has moved to track progress toward improving access to water and sanitation services in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

Director, Water Quality Control and Sanitation in the Ministry, Mr Emmanuel Awe disclosed this at a 'Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS) Report Validation meeting'.

According to him, the event has provided an opportunity for stakeholders'

consultation and representation for effective governance in scaling up water and sanitation services.

He urged stakeholders to sustain the progress, adding that with activities from the 'Clean Nigeria, Use the Toilet campaign', more local councils are now recording open defecation-free status. Awe noted that the GLAAS is a UN-Water initiative implemented by the WHO, that responds to information needed to address gaps in the use of sanitation and drinking water services.

He said: "GLAAS is in the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector on governance, monitor-

ing, finance, and human resources, it will help us to know where we are as a country."

The director, who was represented by a deputy director in the ministry, Mrs Elizabeth Ugoh, noted that plans had already begun to see how to close these gaps toward meeting the needed parameters for meeting the water and sanitation SDGs.

He said data gathered had seen gaps in urban sanitation services, saying having the right policy in place would go a long way in reversing these trends.

In his remarks, the Country Representative of WHO in Nigeria, Dr Walter Mulombo, represented by

National Consultant, Public Health & Environment, Dr Edwin Isotu-Edeh, described the UN-GLASS report as an important strategic document, which provides an overall assessment of WASH systems in Nigeria.

He said understanding bottlenecks and enablers of WASH system in COVID-19 era as revealed by the assessment, is key to accelerating the actualisation of both SDG 6 and addressing determinants of health in Nigeria.

The latest GLAAS report, published in 2019, builds on the GLAAS 2017 report, where finance continues to be a major theme of the report.

Lagos alleges misrepresentation of legal status on collection of tolls

•Says appeal still pending

Stoies by **ONYEBUCHI SAMPSON**

Lagos State Government has described as misrepresentation of fact in the statements circulating in the media that it does not have the legal right to collect tolls on the controversial Lekki-Ikoyi Link Bridge and that tolling on the Link Bridge is unlawful.

The state Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Moyosore Onigbanjo, in a statement noted that the misleading statements were based on the false premise that the Lagos State Government has no pending appeal against the judgment of the Federal High Court in Suit No FHC/L/CS/1405/02 between Ebu-Olu Adegboruwa Esq. Vs. Attorney General of the Federation & Ors.

According to him, in the light of this misrepresentation, it has become necessary to state as follows; "On the 27th day of March 2014, the Federal High Court delivered judgment in Suit No FHC/L/CS/1405/02.

"Thereafter on 28th of March, 2014 the Lagos State Government (sued as 3rd and 4th Respondents) filed a Notice of Appeal against the judgment of the Federal High Court and an application for stay of execution and injunction pending appeal.

"That on 11th of No-

vember, 2014 the Lagos State Government applied for an extension of time within which to compile and transmit the Records of Appeal, at the Court of Appeal

"However, on the 9th of October, 2017 owing to lack of representation on the part of Lagos State Government, the application for extension of time to transmit the Records of Appeal, filed on the 11th of November, 2014 was struck out and the Court stated: "Since Applicant is aware of today's date and is not in court, we take it that applicant is not diligent in prosecuting its application. It is hereby struck out. Number Deleted.

"From the foregoing quote what was struck out was the application (that came up before the Court of Appeal on 09/10/17) and not the appeal. There is a distinction between striking out an application and striking out an appeal.

"As at date, there is no order striking out Lagos State Government's appeal against the judgment of the Federal High Court delivered on 27th of March, 2014 in Suit No FHC/L/CS/1405/02.

"It is also notable that before the Federal High Court, the claimant sought ten (10) Declaratory reliefs and one (1) order of injunction [1], to restrain the Lagos State Government from collecting tolls on the Lekki-Ikoyi Link Bridge.

"However, in its judgment dated March 17, 2014, the Federal High Court did not specifically or expressly grant either the Declarations or the injunction sought. It rather only held that:

"I agree and uphold that the construction of this bridge was authorized and the 3rd Respondent has the power to generate revenue thereon from the subject matter but the existing law did not cover this bridge and the 3rd Respondent can only make the law to that effect before it can collect toll on the bridge.

"Dissatisfied with the lack of clarity and precision in the judgment amongst other grievances the Lagos State

Government filed a Notice of Appeal against the judgment on 28th March 2014.

"The position of the law is that once a Notice of Appeal is filed along with an application for stay of execution/injunction pending appeal, the judgment being appealed against cannot be enforced until the application for stay of execution/injunction pending appeal has been determined. This position was upheld in VASWANI TRADING COMPANY V. SAVALAKI & CO (1972) N.S.C.C @ 697 - 698, where the Supreme Court of Nigeria held that: "...whilst by virtue of the provision of the section, an appeal or the filing thereof

could not eo ipso operate as a stay of execution, clearly, in practice, the position should be different where apart from filing an appeal, the prospective appellant also files an application in this Court, by which a stay of execution of the same judgment is sought. In such circumstances, a general appraisal of the whole situation is absolutely necessary and it is most desirable that the court should ensure that, at that stage of the proceedings, it is not possible for any party to present it with a fait accompli...

"Notwithstanding the above position of the law. The Lagos State Government affirms that

it will continue to engage with all stakeholders and concerned members of the public in the Lekki axis and will abide by commitments and concessions made at the various stakeholders' meetings."

Onigbanjo stressed that based on the foregoing, the statements that the collection of tolls on the Lekki-Ikoyi Link Bridge is unlawful and without legal basis or right are clearly incorrect, saying that "the Lagos State Government's appeal against the judgment of the Federal High Court subsists and the judgment of the Federal High Court cannot be enforced at this stage."



Julius Berger's Corporate Quality Manager, Emeka Ejike (left); Abumet's Commercial Manager, Abubakar Auwal and Abumet's General Manager, Alexander Hausner; Qs Nigeria's Country Director, Ogudu Lawrence; Abumet's Operations Manager, Erhardt Markus; and Julius Berger's Head Of Corporate Communications, James Agama, during the presentation to Abumet of its Iso 9001 certification in Abuja Nigeria

Obaseki seeks support for biodiversity sustenance, forest protection

Edo State Governor, Godwin Obaseki, has said his government is strengthening partnerships with stakeholders, including multi-national organisations, on the implementation of programmes, policies and initiatives to regenerate forests and conserve biodiversity.

He said the effort to preserve flora and fauna in the state through effective regulation is codified in the bill on Edo State Forestry Commission before the state's Assembly.

The governor said this in commemoration of International Mother Earth Day, marked across the world by the United Nations (UN) and its various organs.

According to him, the state government is working with reputable organisations and professionals for the concession of forests for regeneration.

He stressed that the state will work with qualified groups and organisations with clear plans for sustainable regeneration action plans.

Obaseki said the state was working with security agencies to prevent illegal exploitation of forest reserves.

He said: "Stakeholders, including private investors and local communities, must support the implementation of policies and guidelines to protect our forest belt.

"We are working with owners of oil palm plantations, saw millers, timber licensees and contractors, and corporate organisations in the state to keep to the international conventions on protecting the environment from degradation."

"Mother Earth is clearly urging a call to action. Nature is suffering. Oceans filling with plastic and turning more acidic, extreme heat, wildfires and floods, have affected millions of people.

"Even these days, we are still facing COVID-19, a worldwide health pandemic linked to the health of our ecosystem.

"Climate change, man-made changes to nature as well as crimes that disrupt biodiversities, such as deforestation, land-use change, intensified agriculture and livestock production or the growing illegal wildlife trade, can accelerate the speed of destruction of the planet," the UN stated.

Abumet gets quality certification for improved performance

Leading aluminium and glass service provider and a member of the Julius Berger Plc Group, Abumet, has been presented with the ISO 9001:2015 Certification.

The certificate, presented to the company on Wednesday, is the international gold standard for business practices and quality management and is only obtainable through thorough technical audits.

The audit was carried out by DQS Management Systems Solutions, a globally renowned and leading quality management systems (QMS) certification body reputed for premium international standard benchmarking, technical impartiality, competence, responsibility, openness, and impeccable ethical business practices.

As an initiative of the International Organisation for Standardization (ISO), one of the key philosophies of ISO Certifications is to provide an international model that will broadly improve every aspect of businesses and organisations worldwide, enhance customer satisfaction and guarantee a proper return on investment for business stakeholders.

The ISO 9001:2015 is especially focused on businesses and organisations' ability to withstand a wide range of business risks through effective quality management systems.

Speaking on certification, Country Director, DQS Nigeria, Mr Lawrence Ogudu expressed DQS' satisfaction with the quality systems, Abumet has in place to meet customers' requirements.

He explained that, the ISO 9001: 2015 is at the height of management systems because it puts in place superstructure for every management system, and this certification is for Abumet a clear statement that it has implemented a management system to ensure that it can deliver quality to its customers consistently."

He said: "Abumet has put in place an effective and efficient process which enables it to determine customers' requirements.

"Abumet possesses the knowhow, the infrastructure, and the competent personnel required to consistently fulfil these requirements at all times. Of course, business is about meeting customers' requirements, and when customers are satisfied,

there is trust, which is what quality is all about."

On his part, Abumet's General Manager, Mr Alexander Hausner, described the feat as, "a big milestone in terms of improvement to the entire company, in every single department, coordinating interfaces and the improvement of quality."

Abumet's General Manager ascribed its success to dedicated staff and a committed management team, whose collaborative efforts brought about the milestone achievement.

"The responsibility for the success belongs to the entire company, we all worked hard to get the certification, and every personnel of the company followed the rules of the ISO 9001 accordingly.

"It is a big success for the entire company and not only the management. For every single member of Abumet, this is a big success and we are all very proud of the achievement."

Commenting on the ISO certification of Abumet, Engr. Emeka Ejike, who is the Corporate Quality Manager for the Julius Berger Group, explained that the excitement about the certification is not limited to the certificate

itself, but to the customers' satisfaction that comes along with it.

"Abumet in its 31 years of operation has had outstandingly dynamic management processes in place to guarantee its commitment to the satisfaction of its clients. "The ISO certification further consolidates this commitment, as well as reinforces the company's assurance of consistency in superior performance," he added.

Ejike said with the certification, Abumet, as a dynamic offspring of the iconic Julius Berger brand, shall continue to maintain the Julius Berger group's corporate tradition of excellence and progressively build on what it has achieved".

Abumet Nigeria Ltd is an experienced, full-service aluminium and glass provider with the resources to deliver a range of building construction solutions. It holds a corporate culture of quality, integrity, innovation, and productive collaborations even as it remains ever customer-focused.

The company has the vision to be the innovative market leader for aluminium and glass solutions for the West African market.

Islam forbids corruption, ICPC charges Muslims in Osun

● Takes anti-corruption campaign to Kogi State Central Mosque

As part of efforts geared towards engaging religious leaders and their adherents in the fight against corruption in the country, the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) has taken its sensitisation lecture to some of the mosques across Osogbo, the Osun State capital, reminding Muslims that Islam forbids corruption.

Speaking during the enlightenment lectures held at Mallam Tope Central Mosque and Aduramigba Central Mosque, the Resident Anti-Corruption Commissioner (RACC), Baba Alaro Shuaib, reminded participants that they are expected to keep the month of Ramadan holy by shunning all forms of corruption.

Shuaib, who was represented by Laaro Sulyman of the Public Enlightenment and Education Department, encouraged them to shun all forms of evil associated with corrupt practices and make integrity their lifestyle and watchword.

He further sensitised Imams and their congregations on the types and effects of corruption, the core values of the National Ethics and Integrity Policy (NEIP) as well as the role of Muslims in the fight against corruption as contained in the booklet produced by the Ummah Support Initiative (USI), the National Mosque Abuja, with support from ICPC.

Shuaib equally used the occasion to educate

them about ICPC initiatives and its youth programmes.

Leaders of both mosques, Imams Alhaji Abdulhakeem and Yunus Raji commended the Commission for the sensitisation and promised to intensify efforts on anti-corruption sermons as contained in the Holy Quran.

In a similar development, ICPC recently took its anti-corruption campaign to Muslims at the Kogi State Central Mosque, Lokoja.

The sensitization exercise, which is in line with Section 6 (e & f) of the Corrupt Practices and

Other Related Offences Act 2000, was aimed at getting participants to join the anti-corruption fight.

Speaking at the event, the Resident Anti-Corruption Commissioner (RACC) in Kogi State, Okoro Ulu James, informed the Islamic scholars and members of the mosque that there was an urgent need for them to collaborate with anti-corruption agencies through their sermons and lifestyles.

He gave them a run-down of the duties of the Commission and some of the offences

contained in the Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act 2000.

The Commissioner advised the participants to report any corrupt practices they witness to ICPC either at the office or through ICPC's reporting channels such as toll-free numbers, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other social media handles.

In his remarks, the Chief Imam of the mosque, Alhaji Aminu Sha'aban urged the people to pray fervently, and also put more effort towards eradicating corruption.

ICPC, NGOs to curb sexual harassment in workplaces

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) has expressed its readiness to partner with relevant Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to curb the menace of sexual harassment in workplaces.

This was contained in a statement made by Akibu Garba, who represented the Commission in a one-day workshop on "Career Barriers and Workplace Sexual Harassment against Young Women in Nigeria". The workshop was organized by the HEIR Women Development,

at Hotel Reno, Abuja.

While speaking, Garba said that ICPC recognizes sexual harassment as a corrupt practice, noting that contrary to the report that Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) do not have Sexual Harassment Policies, ICPC under the chairmanship of Professor Bolaji Owasanoye (SAN), has a Sexual Harassment Policy in place, to guide staff of the Commission in their interaction with different stakeholders and the opposite sex in the workplace.

He further commended HEIR Women

Development for having the workshop at the right time, and the Ford Foundation for supporting the NGO.

Garba called on the victims of sexual harassment at workplaces to have the courage of reporting the matter to the appropriate authority to put a stop to the menace.

Earlier in her speech, founder and Executive Director, HEIR Women Development, Anuli Ola-Olaniyi, decried the prevalence of sexual harassment of girls and young women at work, saying that it makes them unproductive and unable to contribute their quota to national development.

Court jails two bankers for stealing dead customer's N2.9m

● As court jails man for misappropriating N1.9m in Makurdi

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Justice Elias Abua of the Cross River State High Court sitting in Calabar, Cross River State, has convicted and sentenced two former bankers, Titus Chima Nwankwo and Utibe-Abasi Ifiok George for stealing N2.9m from the account of a deceased customer of a commercial bank.

A statement by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) said the convicts were jailed on Tuesday after pleading guilty to one-count separate charges bordering on forgery, conspiracy, breach of trust and stealing.

The statement said, "Nwankwo and George were jailed on Tuesday, April 26, 2022, after pleading guilty to one-count separate charges bordering on forgery, conspiracy, breach of trust and stealing, upon their arraignment by the Uyo Zonal Command of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC.

"In view of their pleas, prosecution counsel, Joshua Abolarin prayed the court to convict and sentence the defendants accordingly.

"Justice Abua convicted and sentenced George to three months imprisonment with an option of fine of N100,000.00 (One Hundred Thousand Naira only) while Nwankwo bagged three months imprisonment with an option of fine of N50,000.00 (Fifty Thousand Naira only).

"The convicts' journey to the Correctional Centre started on June 16, 2021 when a petitioner alleged that they conspired and

forged the signature of one Godfried Francis Osso, a deceased customer of a bank and fraudulently diverted the said sum for their personal uses. They were investigated, arrested, prosecuted and convicted."

Meanwhile, the Makurdi Command of the EFCC, on Friday April 29, 2022, secured the conviction of one Damian Oragbai Terhemba before Justice M. A. Ikpambese of the Benue State High Court sitting in Makurdi, on one count charge of misappropriation to the tune of N1,906,000

The charge against reads, "That you, Damian Oragbai Terhemba between 2017 and 2018 in Makurdi within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court, being entrusted with the sum of N1,906,000 (One Million, Nine Hundred and Six Thousand Naira only) by one Iortule Aondowase for the purchase of a Toyota Corolla Car 2005 Model, dishonestly misappropriate the said sum and thereby committed an offence, contrary to Section 312 of the Penal Code (CAP) 124 Law of Benue State, and punishable under Section 313 of the same Law".

He, however, pleaded not guilty to the charge setting the stage for trial to commence.

In the course of the trial, the prosecuting counsel, George Chai-Yakua, called two witnesses and tendered several documents. Upon closing his case, the convict filed a no case submission but the same was dismissed.

Justice Ikpambese in his judgment on

EFCC freezes N365m, N30m from ASCSN scribe, accountant's accounts over alleged fraud

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has allegedly frozen about three hundred and sixty-five million naira (N365m) personal investment of Association of Senior Civil Servants of Nigeria (ASCSN) Secretary, Alade Bashir Lawal in Meristem securities limited.

It was gathered that the EFCC has also frozen about thirty million naira (N30m) investment of the Chief Accountant of ASCSN, Akorede Fatai, in the same company.

Sources within the union disclosed that the anti-graft agency has also gone after Lawal's property agent.

It was gathered that the property agent has been given a marching order to appear before EFCC, to explain Lawal's local and international property scattered all over Lagos, Abuja and the United Arab Emirates, worth billions of naira, which the agent helped to acquire for Lawal.

It was learnt that ASCSN, which is an affiliate of the Trade Union Congress of Nigeria (TUC), is a senior staff union of senior civil servants from grades levels seven to levels seventeen in both the federal and state civil service of Nigeria.

It could be recalled that the union has in the last few months been enmeshed in a series of crises.

The EFCC and Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) had commenced a probe of some officials



Lawal

of the union.

The anti-graft agency has now frozen about three hundred and sixty-five million naira (N365m) personal investment of Lawal in the said company due to the ongoing investigations over alleged financial fraud.

The sources within the union said Lawal is also being investigated over money laundering through the ASCSN cooperative account which he has used to divert union funds to his personal account.

There are speculations that the cooperative is unregistered and Lawal has been the only Secretary for over twenty years.

Former member of ASCSN National Executive Council, Andrew Emelieze, confirmed the development to newsmen on Thursday.

Emelieze called on the Head of Service and the ministry of labour to investigate the allegations levelled against the officials.

"We as members of the union are disturbed over the ugly corruption crisis rocking our Union. We are worried that a workers' Union that is supposed to protect workers' interests has become the house of corruption and so we are calling for a forensic audit of the Association of Senior Civil Servants of Nigeria (ASCSN).

"We, therefore, call on the Head of Service of the Federation, Dr Folashade Esan, the Ministers of Labour, Dr Chris Ngige and Mr Festus Keyamo (SAN) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) to seek to investigate the corruption crisis rocking the union".

N450m Diezani Cash: Court reserves ruling on trial within trial in Bulama's case

Justice Fadima Murtala Aminu of the Federal High Court sitting in Damaturu, on Thursday, April 28, 2022 adjourned till May 30, 2022 for ruling on the admissibility or otherwise of the trial within trial, in a case involving Dr. Abdu Bulama, former Minister of Science and Technology, standing trial for allegedly receiving the sum of N450m from Diezani Alison-Madueke, former Minister of Petroleum Resources, to influence the outcome of the 2015 Presidential Election.

Bulama was the coordinator of former President Goodluck Jonathan's 2015 Re-election

Campaign Committee in Yobe State.

He was re-arraigned on November 8, 2021 alongside a former Commissioner for Integrated Rural Development in Yobe State, Mohammed Kadai, Abba Gana Tata, Muhammad Mamu and Hassan Ibn Jaks on seven-count charges of criminal conspiracy and money laundering following the judgment of an Appeal Court in Gombe State, which upheld the argument of the EFCC, that the lower court erred by discharging and acquitting the defendants following their 'no case submission' upon the closure of the prosecution's case.



Diezani

Consistency brought me this far" – Esther Ijewere

Esther Ijewere is an enterprising social activist, women's advocate, Columnist, Author and the founder of Rubies Ink Initiative for Women and Children - A Non-profit outfit devoted to advocacy, development and social enterprise solutions amongst others. An Olabisi Onabanjo University-trained Sociologist; Esther is the youngest recipient of The Idea Builders Women Mentoring Women Award, winning Mentee of the year 2010 and "Women Enterprise Award" from Vital Voices International & Exxon Mobil. In this chat with OMONIYI ALLI, Esther spoke about her passion for women, and single motherhood amongst others.

Kindly tell us the story of Women of Rubies, your career path and how it all started?

Women of Rubies were born out of my passion for humanity. I started as a social activist, lending my voice to victims of rape, and other forms of gender-based violence. This evolved into the media, which is the Women of Rubies platform where I use my column and blog as a vehicle of social change to put the spotlight on other women in different sectors who are contributing their quota to nation-building and adding value to the society through their work. I believe Women of Rubies was divinely orchestrated by God to give me a life path, touch lives and show young women that their dreams are valid.

Bloggging, through the Women of Rubies platform, has been very interesting. It avails me the opportunity to be more inspired and challenges me to even do more.

Looking back, would you say Women of Rubies and your other initiatives have achieved what they set out to accomplish?

Absolutely! We have accomplished even more than we envisaged ten years ago. Despite the losses we suffered, we have stayed solid and consistent through the years.

Every project we have embarked on has impacted lives and added value. We have served those at the grassroots and the high earned professionals. The ripple effect of the work we do is unquantifiable, and that's the reason why even after 10 years, with all the bumps and losses we've encountered, we are still very relevant in the sectors we represent, because God is fully involved in everything we do.

Rubies Ink Initiative championed the first of its kind Walk against Rape campaign in Nigeria, The walk did not only encourage victims of rape to speak up, It also became an annual event most concerned Nigerians and celebrities look forward to. We used different toolkits (workshops, media, information handbooks, town hall meetings in different communities) to educate and sensitize members of the society.

We also got justice for several victims through our alliance with the Lagos State Ministry of Women Affairs and the domestic and sexual violence response team (DSVRT). The walk is endorsed by the Federal and State governments respectively. We have over fifty celebrities and influencers who are our ambassadors.

They use their platforms to educate the society on the scourge of rape and aim for victims to get justice. The walk will be moving to other parts of Nigeria this year by God's grace.

With Women of Rubies, we have given visibility and brought stories of different amazing women to the front burner, featured and celebrated over 1000 (one thousand women) through our Guardian Newspaper column, blog and social media pages.

We have raised over N5M funds for

several women in distress, paid hospital bills, supported widows, paid rent for homeless victims of domestic violence and also integrate them back into the society. During the thick of COVID-19 pandemic, we were one of the organizations at the forefront raising funds for families who were affected, and we continue to support many.

Let's talk about "Get Talking with Esther". Can you shed more light on this project?

I am very expressive, I love to write and read from people, I love to celebrate people and give them hope, and I love when I can feel people's thoughts through words. "Get talking with Esther" is just about that. It's a #Tweetchat session that gives you the ambience of a show on Twitter.

Basically, using my platform, years of experience, and skill set for social good to give everyone a voice. We fix broken tables; bring "Under the table" conversations to the front burner for positivity. We bring people who share life experiences, healing, and learning. My mission is to use the show to spread positivity on social media, especially on Twitter. It will be 2 years by August 13th, 2022.

Intimate us about your proudest moments in the last ten years?

There are many proud moments, and it will be hard to pick just one. But I'd say each time I touch someone's life, give hope to a helpless person, use my platform to celebrate a person who needs visibility and light up someone's dark path, it becomes a proud moment. The joy of giving back and paying it forward is innate. It's my happy place. Above all, being a mother, and experiencing childbirth is my proudest moment. The joy of holding your baby in your hands. It's unexplainable. I pray every woman seeking the fruit of the womb will experience this.

Kindly mention some of the lessons life has taught you?

Patience; life has taught me to be patient with myself and others. Setting boundaries is also one of the lessons I have learnt over the years. For a long time, I didn't have boundaries, and I ended up burning out and feeling used. The moment I started setting my boundaries, things changed. I learned how to say no respectfully without feeling guilty. Setting boundaries has helped me greatly in navigating where and to whom I give my energy.

Life also

when my marriage crashed. My saving grace was remembering that my purpose is bigger than me, and my light is brighter than being a wife. Each time I have those wrapping up moments, I reflect on why I started and the beautiful moments. I will keep pushing against all odds. It's an assignment and I have to do it well. Giving up is not an option.

Who really is Esther Ijewere?

Esther is smart, strong, opinionated, and kind-hearted. She is determined, dogged and much focused. She is passionate about issues that affect women and children. She is the Introvert, who loves



taught me the beauty of releasing power and letting go easily. While I am still a work in progress, these lessons have helped me stay grounded and focused.

You have a passion for women and single mothers. How was this ignited?

My passion for women is innate, I mean being a woman, I should love and support other women naturally. However, single motherhood is very personal. I am a single mum, I know the pain and struggles of single mothers. It's twice the sacrifice, and it takes a lot to raise kids alone. Spreading light to other lone parents is from a place of experience, love and understanding. I wish society would judge us less, and support us more.

Was there any time you had felt like giving in, wrapping your platforms and moving on?

Yes, several times. It's hard to run an organization in Nigeria, especially when you don't have core funding and lack committed human power. I almost gave up everything

her own space, the multi-tasking single mum who works hard so her kids can learn all she was not taught. A deep soul, and very spiritual woman who prays a lot. The writer who writes with passion and with deep understanding for humanity. A very private woman who prefers to share her work than her personal life. The playful, happy-go-lucky girl who is living intentionally. Esther, like every human, is not perfect. She is a work in progress

How did you build such a strong following on social media?

That's the power of consistency. I have also managed to keep a drama-free life on social media, separated my personal life from my work, and consciously use my platforms to support folks and spread love and light. I have also focused on being relevant and not just popular. I worked hard over the years to make my name a solution to a problem I solve. People gravitate towards value

GUS 12: Odudu Otu Visits Widow's Foundation



Odudu Otu flanked by women of The Widow of Zarephath Foundation

As part of the grand homecoming tour sponsored by the Nigerian Breweries for GUS season 12 winners, Odudu Ime Otu, the 22-year-old native of Akwa Ibom has paid a visit to The Widow of Zarephath Foundation to render support.

Raised by a single mother, Otu experienced firsthand some of the struggles of single or widowed women who lack the support of their spouses in raising their children. This has inspired him to use available resources to alleviate some of their economic struggles.

Some of the items donated to the foundation included food items, toiletries and cash gifts.

Speaking at the event, Otu says he hopes the donations would make a difference in such a period of economic instability faced in the country. He also noted that the support provided will serve as a means to kindle the dreams of their offspring.

On his part, Senior Brand Manager, Non-Lager and Craft; Olufunmilayo Ogunbodede said, Nigerian Breweries is passionate about projects like these. Nigerian Breweries Plc believes in empowering the voiceless with the necessary resources to spark growth and development in various communities in Nigeria. The partnership between us and The Widow of Zarephath Foundation will not be a one-off affair. We shall continue to support these women to gain economic stability.

Consistency brought me this far...

Continued from page 20

naturally. However, I do not take glory for any of it. I am just a vessel doing God's bidding on earth. It is my hope that my light continues to attract and touch souls all over the world, even beyond social media.

If you were to start all over again what would you do differently?

I will align with people who have more experience than me, and be more open about my struggles and challenges. Being in a society where you are constantly judged for your failure and mistakes could kill your morale, and make it hard for you to open up.

I am learning how to ask for help and lean on people who can add value to me, and my brand. Life is a lesson; I embrace everything with love, and I'm open to change and best practices.

What is your message to women battling one challenge or the other?

Don't give up! There is light at the end of the dark tunnel. Don't keep your problems to yourself, share with people who can proffer solutions and help. You are not your mistake and challenges, don't let them consume you. There is always someone out there you can talk to, and ask for support.



Laylah

The many sides of Laylah Ali Othman

Virtue, courageous and free-spirited; all these accolades best describe award-winning Interior Designer, Farmer, Writer, Reality TV Presenter, Educationist and Chef; Laylah Ali-Othman.

A lover of education; Laylah bagged a B.A in English Language from the University of Maiduguri, a Diploma in Interior Designing from Lotus Educational Institute, Dubai and a Diploma in Space Management from Maren School of Interior Décor and Design. In addition to her educational qualifications, she added a Doctorate Degree (Doctor of Management Science Honoris Causa in Entrepreneurship / Corporate Communication) at ESAE University, Benin Republic.

With a passion for entrepreneurship; Laylah started running businesses of her own at the age of 19 and at the moment she doubles as the MD/CEO of Superb L&N (Laylah & Nahaar) Interiors. It is however important to note that in addition to her many caps; Laylah is a philanthropist with a functional

NGO, a TV presenter and host, and an editor to mention but a few.

Exterior Décor Nig. Ltd, L&N Kitchen and Almat Farms. The standard of these business ventures speaks for themselves.

As an expert in interior designing; Laylah has proven her worth in the building industry in the last 10 years as she has successfully completed over 6000 projects.



Naija Hood

Naija Hood Reps 'Switch up' Nigerian cultures during presentations

The Ongoing Nigeria reality competition television series called 'Naija Hood Rep' has tasked the housemates to present their cultures in a dramatic form during Day 19.

Following the daily airing of the show on Nevada bridge TV App or Nevada bridge TV YouTube, The Landlord, having put the hood reps in groups, directed them to include the name of the hood, location of the hood, culture of the hood, dialect, celebrities and predominant celebrities of the hood. The Landlord added that they would be judged based on originality, creativity, teamwork and coordination.

Group A dramatized the people of Yenogoa, Asaba, Akure and Isale-Eko, where the yeno goa man is the canoe paddler and the rest are the passengers on the boat discussing their food, dress and language of their respective cultures.

In Group B, the Maiduguri character described the people as humble, explaining that both the rich and the poor sit on the floor and that they have fresh fish over there.

The Enugu Rep said that they love eating Abacha, peppery ponmo and catfish and that they grow a lot of fresh fruits.

Group C was composed of the people of Warri, Mokola (Ibadan) and Ilasamaja (Iagos). Warri Hood rep said they are the original owners of pidgin language and that Urhobo, Itsekiri and Ijaw are the three major ethnic groups in Delta state.

Having said that the people of Mokola in Ibadan love Amala, gbegiri and ewedu, The Hood Rep pointed out that the men prostrate while the women kneel

to greet the elderly ones.

The Ilasamaja Hood Rep described the people as hustlers, who like to eat Akara and bread but hobby football.

The representatives of Group D were Edo, Calabar and Ajegunle. Edo Rep said the people are known for beads and rafia works, mentioning predominant celebrities like Majek Fashek, Rema and Edopikin.

The Calabar Rep said the Efiks are usually whites due to the colonization, identifying Kate Henshaw, MC Galaxy, Ubi Franklin and so many others as their predominant celebrities. While describing Ajegunle as a mixed tribe, the Rep said the local dialect is pidgin and Yoruba and at the same time mentioned celebrities like E-money, Oritsefemi, basket mouth and others as their celebrities.

Otukpo (Benue state) and Chanchangan (Niger State) characterized Group E. While Otukpo Hood Rep identified idoma as the local dialect, the chanchangan said his people have Nupe and Hausa as their major languages.

Speaking with Chief Executive Officer, Nevada Bridge TV, Neville Sajere noted that the show is targeted at the roots creation of nostalgia for those whose regions are deeply rooted in the hoods while serving as a tool of leaving and unifying the different cultures at the same time.

"The show is targeted to the roots creation of nostalgia for those whose regions are deeply rooted in these hoods while simultaneously serving as a tool of leaving and unifying the different cultures." He said.

Singer Seyi Shay shares pregnancy journey

Vocal Powerhouse and multi-award-winning multi-talented singer and Songwriter Seyi Shay is on full disclosure mode as she shares details on her pregnancy, her baby daddy and their relationship status, her latest album "Big Girl", music career, industry feuds and more. Giving exceptional insights into her life's journey; from navigating the ups and downs of her career, to

advancing towards self-acceptance and personal joy, Seyi Shay in this latest feature tells a very human story of a woman who has come into her own, embodying the burden of responsibility and growth.

I'm grateful for how far I've come, and I know I'm still on a journey, so, if this is just the middle, I'm grateful for the journey and looking forward to the future. I'm

happy that I'm still progressing," said Seyi Shay. Knowing and being yourself are essential components of growth and as Shay succinctly puts it "I am a grown and sexy woman with lots of experiences. I have embraced my vulnerabilities and I'm owning them." As of press time, Seyi Shay put to bed a beautiful baby girl. Huge congratulations to our super cover star.



Retirement: Tyson Fury brushed off any possibility of a comeback

The undefeated WBC heavyweight champion, Tyson Fury, has reiterated that he is done with boxing.

Fury, who defeated Dillian Whyte in the sixth round of the bout last weekend to retain the WBC heavyweight title, revealed after the match that he has retired from the game.

With fans and boxing lovers expecting the 33 years old to rescind its decision, Fury as a guest on a TV show emphasized that he has called time off the deadly sport to spend more time with his family.

The heavyweight champion, who said he is happy over his state of health having partaken actively in a life-threatening sport, revealed that he is contented with what he has made for himself.

According to Sky Sport, with Fury retiring undefeated in boxing, he becomes the second man in history that has retired from the game undefeated after America Rocky Marciano.

Fury said, "This is the truth, the gospel truth, nothing but the truth. I'm done.

"Every good dog has its day and like the great Roman leader said, there will always be somebody else to fight.

"When is enough, enough? I'm happy, I'm healthy, I've still got my brains and I can still talk. I've got a beautiful wife, six kids, I've got umpteen belts, plenty of money, success, fame, glory - what more am I doing it for?

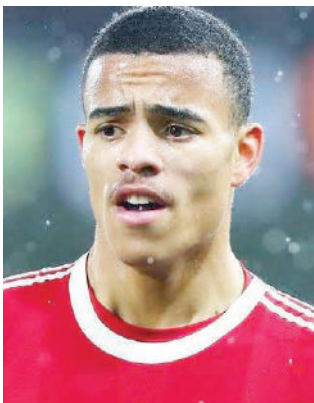
"Boxing is a very dangerous sport. You can be taken out with one punch as we've seen on Saturday and it's one unlucky blow and you may not get up off that canvas.

"I'm quitting while I'm ahead, I'm undefeated and only the second man in history to retire as undefeated heavyweight champion. I'm very, very happy, very content in my heart with what I've done and what I've achieved," he added.

Though the Gypsy King insists that he has retired from boxing, promoters still believe that the WBC heavyweight champion who fought in a 94000 capacity Wembley stadium, would give a rethink to fight UFC heavyweight champion Francis Ngannou.



Sexual assault: Mason Greenwood's bail extended to June



Greater Manchester Police has extended the bail deadline of Manchester United player Mason Greenwood to mid-June.

Greenwood was arrested on Sunday, January 30, 2022, for assaulting a lady with a probable intent to rape.

Greater Manchester Police got wind of the incident after a lady posted the video on social media which led to the arrest of the United player.

Since he was arrested, Greenwood has not featured in

any game for United with Nike calling off his sponsorship over the incident.

According to the Greater Manchester Police, the player's bail condition due to end on April 30, would be extended pending when the case will be heard in June.

Also reacting to the player's misdeeds, Electronic Arts confirmed his removal from active squads on its Fifa 22 game.

"We are continuing to investigate a report made to us on

Sunday 30 January of online social media images and videos posted by a woman reporting incidents of physical violence," the force spokesman said.

"A 20-year-old man arrested that day on suspicion of the rape and assault of a woman, and threats to kill remains on bail.

"An application has been made to the courts to have his bail extended beyond Saturday 30 April, but the hearing isn't expected to be until mid-June.

"The suspect will remain on conditional bail until the date of the court hearing," he added.

UEFA slam Manchester United, others with fines

UEFA have fined Manchester United, Rangers, and Liverpool over certain behavioural breaches committed during Champions League and Europa events.

The European football governing body had directed its Control, Ethics, and Disciplinary organ to launch a full-scale investigation into the incident.

After concluding the investigation, the disciplinary committee submitted its reports to the executive body for action.

The European football governing body fined Manchester United £8,420 for its fans' wrongful behaviour towards the Atletico Madrid manager Diego Simeone.

United in Old Trafford were losing 1-0 to Atletico Madrid in a Champions League match which made the fans react by throwing objects at Diego Simeone who proceeded to the tunnel leading to the dressing room.

Atletico Madrid dumped Manchester United out of the Champions League with a 2-1 scoreline on aggregate.

UEFA also fined fellow English topside, Liverpool for a late kick-off in a match against Portuguese side Benfica.

Despite winning 3-1 on April 5, UEFA cautioned Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp over a reoccurrence.

Meanwhile, Scottish club Rangers were fined €46,250 for late kick-off in a Europa game against Braga where they lost 1-0 at the Ibrox Stadium. The fans also aggravated the punishment for lighting up fireworks in the stadium which UEFA frowned at.

Mohamed Salah, Sam Kerr win FWA footballer of the year awards

Liverpool and Egypt striker Mohamed Salah has won this year's Football Writers' Association Men's Footballer of the Year award for the second time.

Salah, who leads this Premier League season's goal-scoring chart with 22 goals and 13 assists, won the award in the 2017-2018 season.

The award, which started in the 1947-1948 season with England's Stanley Matthews winning the maiden edition, records former Arsenal striker and France International Thierry Henry with the highest wins.

Though Salah looks promising to equal the record and probably leapfrog Henry who has

the highest record of three wins, his contract imbroglio with Liverpool, if not rectified, may force the Egyptian to leave England.

Alongside Salah, Australian Sam Kerr, who also won the Football Writers' Association Women's Footballers of the Year award for the 2021-2022 season, is the leading scorer in the Women's Super League.

Kerr, 28, leads Chelsea's attack and has been very instrumental to the club's success this season.

The accolades to be presented formally to the recipients on May 5, is the 75th edition since its inception in the 1947-1948 season to decorate specific talents in the English league.



Ademola Lookman rescues Leicester against Roma

Nigeria Ademola Lookman's jab rescued Leicester to a draw against Roma in the Europa Conference League on Thursday at the King Power Stadium in East Midlands.

Roma had taken the lead through its captain, Lorenzo Pellegrini, in first-half but Super Eagle forward Ademola Lookman's 67th-minute goal which was later awarded to

Gianluca Mancini as an own goal ensured The Foxes shared the spoil.

Leicester, going into the second leg of the Europa Conference League on May 5 in Italy, has been handed a lifeline by Lookman to square it out with Giallorossi in Stadio Olimpico.

Meanwhile, Roma boss

Jose Mourinho has praised the improvement of his team in recent times after the result in King Power Stadium.

Mourinho, comparing the team's performances under his stead to five months ago, stressed that they would have lost against Leicester.

Consequently, Roma's boss declared that they still have one hurdle to cross which demands the players' mental discipline and commitment to the game.

Furthermore, Mourinho added that Giallorossi must keep their heads-up high and must not create room for being emotional.

In a post-match interaction with Sky Sports, Mourinho said, "Does tonight show our growth? I'm not very humble or at least I don't have a reputation of being, but I have to agree with you.

"For me, we definitely would've lost this game 5-6 months ago. We had the courage to come out and play the way we did initially: we pressed high and got guys forward.

"We could've taken home a win, we shouldn't have conceded that goal. But it's still an acceptable result. There's still a final to be played: I'm not referring to the one in Tirana, but rather the one next week in Rome.

"Next week we'll have to keep our heads and have a strong mentality, we can't play emotionally. The emotion will be needed from the supporters," he added.

Mourinho has told the team to treat the return leg like a final at the Stadio Olimpico with over 70,000 Roma supporters backing the team to victory.



'My performance puts Nigeria on a positive map'



Super Falcons Uchenna Kanu says her performance in the Mexican Liga MX is modelling Nigeria in a positive light on the world map.

Kanu, who plays for UNAL Tigres in the Mexican Liga MX as the first Nigerian and African to feature in the South American league, appeals to fellow Africans to make a switch to the promising league.

The Super Falcon has been in top form for Tigres scoring double-digit goals with a capitulated hat-trick in a 4-1 win over Santos Laguna over the weekend.

Kanu, 2019 African Women Footballer of the year nominee, consented that the Mexican Liga MX is not in the same prime as Sweden and Spanish women's leagues, but the inflow of international players will help to develop the league.

Following the above, the 24 years old striker who is playing in her debut season after the league rules were changed to enable international players to participate in the Mexican Liga MX,

called on Africans to explore the opportunity to grow the women's league.

According to the Abia State-born striker who played domestic football in Delta Queens before going abroad, the fans, and the people of the city have been great, not just her teammates.

However, she attributed her development on the pitch to the competitive league of Sweden where 'she made a huge breakthrough, scoring 22 goals in 42 games for Linkopings before making a big-money switch to Mexico', CAFonline reported.

"I'm honoured, coming to Mexico has been great and the people here are nice, not just the teammates, not the club but the whole city, the fans," she expressed.

"I've not seen fans like that of Tigres, I am thankful for the opportunity to represent Nigeria, my family, and myself here in Mexico.

"As the first Nigerian and African to play in Mexico is huge, a stepping stone and opening the door for other Nigerians and Africans to join. Just putting the name of Nigeria on the map positively, it's been great and I am grateful for the opportunity.

"Playing there [Sweden] prepared and inspired me really well physically, and mentally. I learned so much in Sweden. I think it's stereotypical how people view Mexico, no one could really say what it is like there.

"Right here it's totally different, the league is competitive, and the players are professional. I like it here. Being the first African and Nigerian to play here, I hope my former teammates and fellow Africans from back home can join the league and just help build and grow it more.

Delta Babes, three others promoted to NWFL championship



The Nigeria Women Football League (NWFL) has approved the promotion of Delta Babes and three other NWFL Nationwide teams to the NWFL Championship against the earlier two publicised by the league board.

The increase was announced today by the General Co-ordinator of the NWFL Nationwide, Sir Joe Amene while addressing the four teams that qualified for the final round of the Nationwide League.

In a statement to the teams which was made available to newsmen by NWFL media, Amene after the last two matches played at the School of Health Technology, Benin City, noted that the approval for the promotion of the four teams was given by the Chairperson of the Nigeria Women Football League, Aisha Falode, with the support of other board members of the NWFL, after watching all the group matches within the A1, A2, B1, and B2.

Amene stressed that the Chairperson and the members were marvelled by the standard of play of all the teams and particularly the last four teams - Imo Strikers, Lakeside Queens of Lagos, Prince Kazeem Eletu Queens of Lagos, and Delta Babes.

He said, "The high standard of play was the main reason the four teams were promoted. None of the teams, coaches, or league officials had the premonition that four teams would qualify for the NWFL Championship. But they were only lifted by their excellent standard of play and maturity displayed by all the 16 teams that participated in the league.

"Last season, a total of eight teams were promoted to the NWFL Championship from Nationwide. Four each from the Ijebu Ode and Abuja centres. The standard at

both Ijebu Ode and Abuja wasn't as high as what we experienced at the Western Boys Stadium, Ikpoba Hill, and the School of Health Technology, Okha, Benin City this year.

"With the high standard of play displayed by the players of various teams, I am so proud of the players as scouts of top women's football clubs in Nigeria have picked great talented players to sign them on for their clubs.

"Three out of the four that got promoted won all matches played, while the second-placed teams missed out narrowly after very highly competitive games. We had a player from Imo Strikers, Harmony Achiefulu, who scored 11 goals out of a total of 15 goals scored by her team in the League. These goals included three hat tricks by Harmony.

"Lakeside Queens of Lagos scored 12 goals and didn't concede any goal. Imo Strikers scored 15 goals and conceded only one against Ubakala Queens of Abia, while Prince Kazeem Eletu scored six goals and conceded just one goal," Amene added.

Amene continued: "We had other brilliant players in other clubs: like Daniella Fagbenro, the gangling player from FC Niger Amazons, Blessing Amadi from Delta Babes, Franca Asooto from Lakeside Queens, and Cynthia Mega. These players can easily play in the NWFL Premiership League.

The decision to promote four NWFL Nationwide teams to the Championship was a collective one to also beef up the number of teams for the professional cadre, which is the NWFL Championship," Amene concluded.

'Mino Raiola not dead, critically sick'

Mino Raiola, a top agent to known football figures in Europe has been reported critically ill.

The Italian who was alleged to be dead is in the hospital battling for his life.

As agent to Gianluigi Donnarumma, Marco Verratti and Matthijs de Ligt, Mino Raiola was behind the huge deal of Paul Pogba's return to Manchester United worth 93million pounds.

However, with reports from Italy alleging that the popular football agent is dead, Alberto Zangrillo, head of the Intensive Care Unit at San Raffaele Hospital, has debunked the news lamenting that he has been inundated with calls since the rumour surfaced.

Zangrillo, a professor of anesthesiology, condemned the act of journalists premeditating the death of a man who is battling for survival.



"I am outraged by phone calls from so-called journalists speculating on the life of a man who is fighting," he told Italian news agency ANSA.

Aside from Paul Pogba, Gianluigi Donnarumma, Marco Verratti and Matthijs de Ligt Football, Mino Raiola also looks after players Erling Haaland and Zlatan Ibrahimovic.

However, it is still unknown the kind of ailment the football agent is battling against.

Udogie stars in Udinese's romp over Fiorentina

Destiny Udogie in Udinese sublimed 4-0 victory over Fiorentina in Serie A clash on Wednesday, scored in stoppage-time to finalise the romp.

The Italian-born Nigerian, on loan from Hellas Verona, was a key figure in the defence for Udinese who maintained a clean sheet in the visitors' reverberated victory.

During the game, the 19 years old defender made a series of moves in the game which were unfruitful but persistently kept on the push.

The game was highly dominated by Fiorentina with overwhelming ball possession statistics against the visitors but that did not stop Udogie from making attempts at goal.

Sustaining the pressure mounted on Udinese by Fiorentina, a counter-attack was initiated with Udogie in the play. This led to the second goal in the 36th minute after the defender's attempt was parried by Pietro Terracciano and Deulofeu jabbed it into the net.

Bianconeri broke the goal-vault in



12 minutes through Pablo Mari and doubled the scoreline from Isaac Success' strike partner, Gerard Deulofeu, before halftime.

Though Isaac Success contributed greatly to Udinese's surge at the Artemio Franchi Stadium, 21 minutes into the second half, Gabrielle Cioffi opted for Ignacio Pussetto in lieu of the striker.

Fiorentina exerted more pressure on Bianconeri who fought relentlessly to defend the lead.

However, Udogie who had made attempts without the desired return finally got a last-minute grasp after Wallace's 91st-minute goal.

Gov Diri Rewards Para Games Athletes

Presents Jerseys To Prosperity Cup Team's

By **AHERHOKE OKIOMA**, Yenagosa

Bayelsa State Governor, Senator Douye Diri, has given cash rewards to the victorious state team in the recent para games.

Bayelsa State emerged champions of the first National Para Games held at the Moshood Abiola National Stadium, Abuja, with a total of 93 medals.

A breakdown shows that the team won 31 gold, 30 silver, and 32 bronze medals at the championship.

Speaking after the state's weekly jogging exercise at the Samson Siasia Stadium on Thursday morning, the governor thanked members of the team for making the state proud.

A statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Mr Daniel Alabrah, disclosed that gold medalists were rewarded with N300,000, silver medalists N200,000 while bronze winners got N150,000.

Coaches in the different categories also got similar amounts while participants that did

not win medals were given N50,000 each.

Governor Diri urged the team to continue practising to maintain its winning tempo.

He thanked Bayelsans for keying into the weekly jogging exercise tagged "Prosperity Walk" and called on more people to participate to improve their health and physical fitness.

His words: "On behalf of your government and the good people of Bayelsa State, we congratulate you. We say thank you and urge you to keep winning for your state.

"This is the first edition of the para games in Nigeria and Bayelsa emerged first. Thank you for making your state proud.

"For all those who won gold, you will get N300,000, silver N200,000, and bronze winners N150,000.

"Also, all who participated, whether you won a medal or not, will go home with N50,000. The same goes for all the coaches in the different categories. If you are a coach of any gold winner, you equally get N300,000. The same applies to silver and bronze medalists," Diri added.



Austrian FA name Rangnick as Franco Foda's successor

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

After the resignation of Franco Foda as the manager of Austria's senior men's football team, Ralf Rangnick has been appointed to replace him.

Foda has tendered his resignation following his inability to qualify Austria for the Qatar 2022 World Cup having suffered a 2-0 defeat from Wales.

His successor, Rangnick, took over Manchester United in November 2021 in the interim after United sacked Ole Gunnar Solskjaer after a poor run of results.

Despite the German not meeting up to the expectation, having produced inconsistent results this season, with Ajax's manager already announced to replace him by the end of the season, Rangnick has been offered a consultancy role until 2024.

According to the terms discussed with United, the consultancy role will see Rangnick undertake advisory tasks at the club for six days a month.

With this leverage in time, the interim manager of Manchester United will combine the Austria national team's job with his consultancy role at Old Trafford.

Earlier, the Austrian daily Kurier broke the news of a meeting between Austria sporting director

Peter Schottel and Ralf Rangnick in Manchester United; a report that was denied by the Austrian Football Association (ÖFA).

However, with the recent development and the imminent announcement of the Rangnick underway, after the ÖFA would have finalised the terms, it corroborated the earlier report by Austrian daily Kurier.

Rangnick, after the 1-1 draw against Chelsea at Stamford Bridge, told Sky Sports that "What I can tell you and confirm is I will definitely continue with my consultancy role at the end of the season and for the next two years.

"I'm very much looking forward to it. We haven't spoken, Erik and myself, we've spoken with the board about the contract and the profile of the job, the content of the consultancy role.

"That's why I can confirm I will continue at the end of the season," he added.

Reacting to the development, soccer pundit and former Manchester United defender Gary Neville disapproved of Ralf Rangnick's duality of tasks as a sporting director in Old Trafford and Austria national team manager.

He conveyed that the Austrian national team need a lot of commitment from Rangnick who will have to keep tabs on the Austrian players consistently.

Neville wondered how the German coach would be able to pilot the



consultancy role effectively without giving priority to the other.

According to Sky Sports, Neville said, "As Manchester United's sporting director, or consultant, can he really be going to look at Austrian players week in, week out and then selecting them for a national team?"

"The Austrian national team have got pride, it's a great country

with great players, so he'll have to watch them play every week. Then he's going to go and coach them for two weeks in September, October, November, and March.

"So then you're thinking 'what's happening to the Man United consultancy and advice? Where's the priority?' because there's a conflict there.

"I don't see how that can work

because if you're a national team manager - and I've worked under a national team manager - I know that they have got to be present watching their players play week in, week out. And he can't be at Old Trafford every single week - not watching an Austrian player play.

"I don't know how that's going to work if it is something that's true.

"It's messy. Man United can't afford to have distractions at this moment in time, they can't afford to have a poor communications plan around the idea that Rangnick's the football consultant, but he's seen watching German football three times a month and then going off to coach the Austrian team.

"There needs to be laser focus, clean lines, people staying in their lanes, understanding what their jobs are, and communicating to the fan base that this is a real change and different than it has been for the last 10 years," he added.

The Austrian FA (ÖFB) will hold an executive committee meeting on Friday morning when Rangnick's potential appointment is expected to be given formal approval by board members, and an announcement could follow shortly after that, Sky Sports revealed.

'Heartland will survive NPFL relegation'

Erasmus Onuh has stressed that Heartland FC has improved tactically in its fight for survival in the Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL).

Onuh, head coach of Heartland, revealed that the recent changes made to the team which has earned them a win against Plateau United followed by a draw against Wikki Tourist in Kaduna were not targeted at any player.

Heartland, 17th in the NPFL table with 25 points from 25 games, hosts Abia Warriors this weekend, Saturday, to sustain the recent thrust in the team's performances to avoid relegation.

The Owerri-based side is a point above the red zone that engulfs Kano Pillars, which were slammed with sanctions over their misconduct against Katsina United at the Sani Abacha Stadium, Katsina United, and MFM.

Onuh averred that the team must change their mindset if they must beat the relegation zone and advised the players to act like soldiers on the pitch.

"My team has improved

tremendously, there is a big improvement from the way we used to play, that is why I didn't make many changes. The few changes I made were not because someone was not doing well, but for tactical reasons, He told NPFL media.

"We will escape relegation. We are on course. It is a work in progress and we will see what we can do as the season progresses. It is a difficult job to do, but we will do it. The people who gave me the job trusted me and I want to do my best not to betray that trust.

"There is a new mindset in our team, the game plan from me is that the team should possess the ball and get ready to die, we should play like soldiers, defend the team with our body, mind, everything. We want to leave that place (relegation zone) and we would do that by going for victory in our next match against Abia Warriors," Onuh added.

Heartland rocking the 17th spot on the league table is however short-lived as it has played more games than the 18-spot Katsina United with a point difference and 19-spot Kano Pillars with two points difference.

Retirement: Tyson Fury brushed off any possibility of a comeback

The undefeated WBC heavyweight champion, Tyson Fury, has reiterated that he is done with boxing.

Fury, who defeated Dillian Whyte in the sixth round of the bout last weekend to retain the WBC heavyweight title, revealed after the match that he has retired from the game.

With fans and boxing lovers expecting the 33 years old to rescind its decision, Fury as a guest on a TV show emphasized that he has called time off the deadly sport to spend more time with his family.

The heavyweight champion, who said he is happy over his state of health having partaken actively in a life-threatening sport, revealed that he is contented with what he has made for himself.

According to Sky Sport, with Fury retiring undefeated in boxing, he becomes the second man in history that has retired from the game undefeated after America Rocky Marciano.

Fury said, "This is the truth, the gospel truth, nothing but the truth. I'm done.

"Every good dog has its day and like the great Roman leader said, there will always be somebody else

to fight.

"When is enough, enough? I'm happy, I'm healthy, I've still got my brains and I can still talk. I've got a beautiful wife, six kids, I've got umpteen belts, plenty of money, success, fame, glory - what more am I doing it for?"

"Boxing is a very dangerous sport. You can be taken out with one punch as we've seen on Saturday and it's one unlucky blow and you may not get up off that canvas.

"I'm quitting while I'm ahead, I'm undefeated and only the second man in history to retire as undefeated heavyweight champion. I'm very, very happy, very content in my heart with what I've done and what I've achieved," he added.

Though the Gypsy King insists that he has retired from boxing, promoters still believe that the WBC heavyweight champion who fought in a 94000 capacity Wembley stadium, would give a rethink to fight UFC heavyweight champion Francis Ngannou.

Furthermore, the promoters also forecast that Fury may decide to come out of his retirement to fight who wins between Anthony Joshua and Oleksandr Usyk in a world heavyweight rematch.

However, Fury has doused the tension without giving any possibility for an occurrence.

He continued: "It's not worth it. I've got four young kids to raise and two older ones, I've been away for the last 10 years all over the world travelling for boxing."

Fury, expressing that he needs time to be with his family and play his fatherly role to his kids, stressed that boxing has taken most of his time which spanned 20 years.

He said, "When do I get time to be a father, a husband, a brother, a son? I need this personal time. The fans will always want more, they're always baying for more blood, but at the end of the day, I don't have any more to give. I've given everything I've got, I've been a professional for 14 years and been boxing for over 20 years.

"Every good dog has its day in the sun and my time is to go out on a high. I always said I wanted to walk away on top of the sport and do it on my terms and didn't want to be the person who said I should have been retired two years ago or whatever.

"They will not forget 'The Gypsy King' in a hurry - and no amount of material assets or money will make me come back out of retirement because I'm very happy," he added.