



Osinbajo, Tinubu, other S'West APC leaders meet in Lagos over 2023

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MAY 7-8, 2022
VOL. 1 NO. 041

N250 **Weekend**

Presidential aspirants intensify consultations as more enter race

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- Former Zamfara Gov Yerima joins presidential race ■ Atiku woos Lagos delegates, preaches PDP unity
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Vice President Yemi Osinbajo (middle), House of Representatives Speaker Femi Gbajabiamila (2nd left, sitting), APC National Leader Asiwaju Bola Tinubu and some other presidential aspirants and leaders of the party at a meeting in Lagos at the weekend.

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Presidential aspirants intensify consultations as more enter race

By **TUNDE JOSHUA,**
Abuja

Consultations by presidential aspirants of various parties are gathering momentum nationwide ahead of their primaries for the 2023 general elections.

They are meeting leaders and delegates of the parties in different states just as more aspirants join the race.

Transportation Minister, Rt Hon. Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi visited Cross River State where Governor Ben Ayade described him as a man with outstanding qualities fit to rule Nigeria.

Ayade spoke when Amaechi paid him a courtesy visit as part of his consultations with delegates of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Cross River State.

According to him, "I agree with my brother Amaechi, totally. He comes with a lot of experience. He is one man who has shown commitment to Cross River State and Nigeria.

"We started trying to build a Deep Seaport, from the day I spoke to him about the Deep Seaport till today, he has given eight ministerial approvals. There was no day that our files stayed on his table for twenty-four hours. So, he has shown commitment to the State and to Nigeria, and I say this with all sincerity. He has also shown very outstanding sense of brotherhood. From the time I moved into APC, he said, "you are our leader, we will work with you and at any point in time we would always work together," Ayade explained.

Governor Ayade who also recently declared his intention to run for the Presidency on the platform of the ruling party, further revealed that between him and Amaechi, there is no competition.

"I have had extensive discussions with Amaechi, and I can tell you that we are not competitors, we are co-petitors. I am comfortable with him. He is somebody that speaks his mind, he is not somebody that you cannot understand, he is somebody that you can read, and such people are far more innocent, because if they are hurt, you know that they are hurt, and few minutes after, it's gone. He is not a tricky politician, and I think that's a good attribute of leadership. Let me mention clearly here, that for us as a State, outside of Ayade, we are very comfortable if you secure the ticket.

"And so, I wish you well, I commend you to go before the delegates of my State, and I ask you (delegates) to judge him based on balanced fairness, because what God has destined for him, I cannot take it," he said.

Addressing the Governor earlier, Amaechi said, "I will repeat what I tell people, I am 56 years old, so I am among the young candidates of the

party. I'm not the oldest, but I am the most experienced. Of all the aspirants, both in APC and PDP, I am the most experienced. I have been Governor for eight years, Speaker for eight years, Minister for seven years now, I have not seen anybody that comes with that kind of experience for the office of the President that I come with. I was the Chairman of Governors' Forum and I was Chairman twice when it was very contentious to vote for the office of the Chairman of that forum. The reason why it was contentious was because we stood for the people, we spoke the minds of Nigerians at that contentious time. I come with performance in every office that I have held. I had a meeting with the President two days ago, in which we had very good conversation about the Lagos-Calabar rail, and we agreed that he would launch the Lagos-Calabar rail here in Calabar. The moment we are about to sign the loan, I will tell the President to come and launch the project and will commence from Calabar."

Amaechi, who earlier visited the Obong of Calabar, HRM Edidem Ekpo Otu V and his Council of Chiefs, assured of his commitment to provide good governance to the masses, pledging also, that he would run a transparent government if elected President.

The Presidential hopeful also met with party delegates in Calabar where he urged the people to vote for him based on his antecedents and track record and not just because he is from the South South, adding that he would deploy his wealth of experience to bear in his service to humanity.

According to him, "I am your son, but let us not vote just because I am your son. Vote for me because I have the capacity to deliver. You have heard Northern candidate, Southern candidate, Western candidate, I am not a candidate of any tribe, I am a candidate for all Nigerians. Those who are Governors and running, let them tell us what they have done in their States, how many days do they sleep in their States, let them tell us whether they are owing salaries or not. For me, judge me by my capacity. Go back to Rivers State and find out, when I was Governor, the primary schools, the secondary schools, power, water, new city, roads, and the fact that we provided security. I am the only aspirant that fought insecurity when I was Governor. So, vote for me because I have the capacity to turn the country around for good."

In his response, Chairman of the party, Alphonsus Eba said, "Your Excellency, there is nothing I will say about you today that will not be laced with praises, with encomiums and much for this party, to Cross Riverians, even during the era of



Presidential aspirant, Rt. Hon. Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi, addressing the Obong of Calabar, His Eminence, Obong Edidem Ekpo Otu V and his Council of Chiefs, during his consultation visit to delegates of the All Progressives Congress in Cross River State.

our former Governor, you were around, we saw the support you gave to Cross River State. When our Governor (Ayade) came on board, you have given every support. You granted eight ministerial approvals for the take-off of Bakassi Deep Seaport and a super-highway. The Governor spoke about that in the meeting we just attended.

"Today, I stand to say that in Cross River State, you are one man that we could boldly stand up and say, you are politically merchantable. You will not be a difficult product for us to sell. We have only one river to cross and that river is the fact that our leader is in this race, but he has just allayed my fears, when he said to you, that if it is not him, let it be you," Eba said.

PDP presidential aspirant and Bauchi State Governor Bala Mohammed has, on a visit to his Edo counterpart, Godwin Obaseki, said his wealth of experience and track record over the years will enable him to deliver good governance to Nigerians if elected president.

He said: "I have a track record of being a nationalist, a federalist, a civil servant, and a reporter like these young people. I know the country very well and the people of the country know me. I have been tested as a civil servant, a legislator in Abuja and in Bauchi, using small resources to do more as you are doing a similar thing here in Edo."

Bala Mohammed visited the governor to seek his support and that of the party delegates ahead of the party's primary election at Government House, Benin City.

Mohammed promised that his reign as the president would foster oneness among Nigerians and further deepen leadership.

Responding, Obaseki said: "I believe that you know what the issues are in Nigeria today and have practically touched all of them. You are sensitive; you come with a lot of sensitivities and you have that displayed always, even when we go through contentious issues in our meetings.

"I can confirm that you are a patriot and as a democrat, I like your spirit which is why democracy is about contestation. There is nothing wrong when you throw your

hat in the ring, and you've been quite clear and not ambiguous. There may be other aspirants who may possess such attributes.

"You feel that you have what it takes to run this country and deal with all the critical issues affecting us today. What I want to assure you is that for us in Edo, we're PDP and we want our party to produce the next president."

"Whatever that our party agrees to do, as long as it's fair and just, we, in Edo will support it. You've come to seek the support of our delegates. They also have the privilege to hear from you and know the decision to take when the time comes."

Meanwhile, Minister of Science, and Technology, Dr. Ogbonnaya Onu, has said that if he emerges as President of Nigeria in 2023, he will unlock the prosperity of the country leveraging on the power of science, technology and innovation.

He pledged his readiness to evolve a knowledge-driven economy at his official declaration to run in next year's presidential election on the platform of APC on Friday in Abuja.

The former governor of Abia State said no nation, whether in ancient or modern times, has ever become truly great without the efficient and effective deployment of science, technology and innovation to nation building.

"I am convinced that I have the knowledge, the experience, the credibility, the education having been trained in one of the best universities in the world, the vision, the integrity, maturity and a man who can be trusted," he said.

Professing a greater future for the country, Onu stressed: "I have a dream that Nigeria will make one day lead the world. Let no one tell us that it cannot be done because if we cannot achieve it, our children can.

"The purpose is for Nigeria to do for the black people of the world, what Japan did for the yellow people," adding that "we must bring discipline into our nation, promote Justice, fairness and equity and allow creativity to flourish.

"This way, Nigeria will

become a nation that all Nigerians will be proud of and other nations will respect.

"Let there be nothing that can make any Nigerian lose hope about the future of Nigeria. Working together, we will make use of a knowledge economy driven by STI, to make Nigeria truly great."

The presidential aspirant called for local content by advocating self-reliance through the production of goods and services consumed in the country rather than an import-driven economy.

"Nigeria must be a producer nation, instead of remaining a consumer nation. We must produce many of the things that we need and use as a people. It is by doing this that we can create wealth and enough jobs for our people, fight poverty, create wealth and prosperity for our nation."

"Nigeria must be self-reliant," and can "no longer depend on other nations to solve our problems," he declared.

"We are better equipped to solve these problems ourselves. This is the road that we have to take; this is the road that we must take. I most respectfully ask my political party, the All Progressives Congress (APC), to elect me as the Presidential Candidate, and the people of Nigeria to elect me as the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, for me to be the Chief Servant of the nation."

A former Governor of Zamfara State, Alhaji Sani Yerima, has declared to run for the 2023 presidential election on the platform of APC.

The former senator who represented Zamfara West, at the National Assembly, was at the Presidential Villa Abuja on Friday, to inform President Muhammadu Buhari about his intentions.

He said when elected President, he would focus on fighting insecurity, poverty alleviation and ignorance of the mind which many Nigerians are living with unknowingly.

The former governor, who is famous for introducing the Sharia legal system in his state, debunked claims that he was a religious extremist.

According to him, that

perception people hold about him is one of the reasons he would work on the ignorance of Nigerians and give every citizen a sense of belonging.

While disclosing his plans to State House Correspondents, he noted that he had secured the consent of the President to run for the exalted office.

He is due to pick his expression of interest and nomination forms.

Presidential hopeful of the PDP, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, was in Lagos on Friday to seek support of the party's delegates ahead of the May 28 and 29 presidential primary election.

At a meeting in the Ikoyi residence of a party chieftain, Chief Bide George, the former Vice President preached unity among PDP members. He stressed the importance of winning Lagos to the aspiration of the PDP to return to power in 2023.

According to Atiku, it is important for the PDP in Lagos State to come under one umbrella.

"As you all know, the major theme of my campaign is unity. But I think we should share the same gospel of unity with the PDP in Lagos State. This call will require shifting of position and common understanding. But this is the sacrifice that we all have to make to ensure that the PDP wins Lagos State.

"I have talked to leaders and elders of the party inside and I made a similar call on them. I am here with all of you too who are esteemed members of our party to please give the necessary support to our leaders and elders in making sure that the party is united," Atiku said.

George said that the message of Atiku about unity is well taken and it is an appeal that he is committed to.

According to Chief George, "it is not in doubt that Atiku knows Nigeria very well and Nigeria knows him too. The next election is the last battle of Berlin and it is necessary that we go into it with all the power and elements that we have.

"In Lagos PDP, we shall be united. It is what we must do to win the next election.

"In this upcoming election, Nigeria needs someone with the experience, capacity and deep knowledge of this country and you, Waziri (Atiku Abubakar), fits into that perfectly.

"We wish you well in your campaign. I like the way you ended your remark about winning Lagos for the people of Lagos. We must end the era of Lagos belonging to a stranger."

Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, Hon. Ndudi Elumelu, has urged presidential aspirants of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) not to abandon exploring the consensus option in finding a presentable candidate for the main opposition political grouping.

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Akeredolu demands resignation of Emeziele over alleged partisanship

By FRIDAY OMOSOLA, Akure

On Sunday, Governor Oluwarotimi Akeredolu has called for immediate resignation of Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Governor Godwin Emeziele for him to pursue his interest of being the next President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Akeredolu said Emeziele could not combine partisan politics with the very delicate assignment of his office, saying if he refuses to quit, the incumbent President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Muhammadu Buhari should remove him with immediate effect.

Recall that the Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Godwin Emeziele, had on Friday picked the expression of interest and nomination forms to contest the presidential ticket on the platform of the All Progressives Congress (APC).

Emezele's form was obtained for him at the



Akeredolu

office of party's organising secretary, at the International Conference Centre (ICC) in Abuja.

Akeredolu in a statement he personally signed in Akure, said the Governor Emeziele may be interested in immersing himself in the murky waters of politics like any other Nigerian with partisan interests, adding that he enjoys a constitutionally protected right to belong to any group or association and participate fully, just as any



Emezele

Nigerian.

He added that it was difficult for Emeziele who occupies the exalted and sensitive office of the Governor of the CBN to be brazen in actualizing his ambition.

His words: "The news of the purchase of Declaration of Intent and Nomination Forms to contest for the office of the President in the forthcoming general elections, on the platform of the All Progressives Congress, purportedly by the

supporters of the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, Mr Godwin Emeziele, has been received with palpable disbelief and shock by many Nigerians. This act, if unchecked, timeously, portends great danger to the fragile economy of the country.

"Rumours had been rife on the subterranean partisan activities linked to him through these shadowy characters in the recent weeks. Pictures of branded vehicles, ostensibly purchased for electioneering campaigns, were also posted on social media. The audacious moves by those who claimed to be supporting this interest have been unsettling.

"There is no gain asserting the obvious. The combined effect of the Public Service Rules, CBN Act and the 1999 Constitution, as amended, exposes not only the oddity inherent in this brash exercise of presumed right to associate. It also confirms the illegality of the act should he proceed to submit the forms while occupying the seat as Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria."

Presidential aspirants intensify consultations as more enter race

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Consensus arrangement, according to him, is a viable option which the PDP can explore because it will reduce contention and make the presidential primary election less acrimonious.

Elumelu gave this advice when one of the party's presidential aspirants, Dr. Mohammed Hayatu-Deen, met with the PDP House of Representatives caucus to seek their support for his ambition.

Recall that Hayatu-Deen and three others; Bukola Saraki, Bala Mohammed and Aminu Tambuwal went into a consensus arrangement which later broke down after the selection of Saraki and Bala by the Prof. Ango Abdullahi-led selection committee.

Hayatu-Deen and Tambuwal faulted the process which led to the selection of both Saraki and Bala as PDP northern consensus candidates.

However, Elumelu believed if carefully handled, the process of consensus can bring peaceful resolution of an acceptable recruitment process.

Elumelu said: "that brings me to the issue you were championing, which is consensus. That brings me to the issue of the unity that all of you went around, crisscrossing this nation, seeking understanding amongst yourself, that are aspiring to lead this nation.

"I want to plead that you will continue in that strive. Nigerians are waiting for us; they're calling on us to rescue and rebuild Nigeria.

"Well, we can only do that if we also put ourselves in a position that Nigerians hope to see us, to rescue them and bring them back to where our founding fathers had wished that we should be."

The minority leader lamented the near total collapse of the socio-economic, political, security and infrastructural sectors of the country under the APC government of President Muhammadu Buhari.

He said: "when APC was coming, they promised Nigerians that we'll be able to sleep in our various homes, with our properties and lives secured but today it is a mirage. Our brothers and sisters that were kidnapped between Kaduna to Abuja bound train are yet to be rescued. One of our sisters had given birth where they are being held captive. That is the height of it.

"It is in this country only that a train will be leaving from Lagos to Ibadan and in the middle of the way, they will tell us the fuel has finished. It has never happened in other country or history of the world."

On behalf of the lawmakers, he expressed confidence in the ability of Hayatu-Deen to govern Nigeria and return the country to the path of prosperity.

Earlier, Hayatu-Deen said he is a detribalized Nigeria who will strive to unite the country.

He said: "even though I was born in Maiduguri, I'd hardly ever lived there for more than eight weeks at a time. So I've been in Nigeria where I went to school where I lived and commingled with Nigerians from all walks of life, regardless of background, regardless of geography, regardless of tribe or religion. So I have Nigerian blood flowing through my veins. It is too late at this time for me to be anything else, but a quintessential Nigerian."

He promised to fix the nation's economy because he is a shrewd economist that had served three Nigerian Presidents as Economic Adviser and a founding member of the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG).

"I have been an adviser to three presidents on three presidential advisory councils. So don't blame me for the next thing that I'm going to say. I'm proud of what I did with every government. President-Elect Buhari had called me to join other Nigerians to put together a blueprint for his transition program. I was chairman of the committee on the economy and finance. I led the economic team. I want to let you know that we produced an outstanding document that can withstand the test of time, anytime, any day," he said.

As someone with a proven track record of transformation, he promised to unlock the potential and bring out the entrepreneurial energy that flows through the veins of Nigerians.

Presidential aspirant and Governor of Sokoto State, Aminu Tambuwal, has pledged not to abandon PDP if elected as President in 2023.

He said he has been a committed party man and will work closely with the party leadership as a sitting governor, not distancing himself from it.

He said: "when I get there, I will maintain interaction and consultation with the party and will respect the party's policy.

"I will be in constant touch with the NWC and the NEC, and will run my government with the party manifesto."

Tambuwal gave this assurance on Friday at an interactive meeting with members of the PDP National Working Committee (NWC) at the party secretariat, Abuja.

Speaking about his uniqueness as the best candidate that can win the 2023 election for the party, he said he has the right temperament for a leader and that he is a bridge across ethnic and age divides.

He said he is one of the youngest presidential aspirants in the PDP while claiming that he is neither too young nor too old to be president.

Obaseki, associates suffer setback ahead of primaries

By ISAAC OLAMIKAN

Edo State Governor Godwin Obaseki and his lieutenants in the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) have suffered a serious setback in their fight to garner delegates of their choice for the forthcoming party primaries.

A Abuja Federal High

Court has stopped the state government from using what is suspected to be its manipulated ad-hoc delegates from participating in any of the PDP primaries including national delegates, the House of Assembly, House of Representatives and Senate.

The only recognized list of delegates are the ones monitored by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and submitted to their headquarters.

There are rumours that with what is now considered as the final

nail on the head of the Obaseki plot to control the PDP in Edo State there are plans from his camp for defection into another political party.

Parties said to be under consideration in this wise are the Labour Party (LP) and the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP).

Airlines to shut down services from Monday over fuel hike

By ADAKU WALTER

Airline Operators of Nigeria (AON) has announced a shutdown of operations, with effect from Monday, May 9, 2022 over the hike in cost of aviation fuel, which has reached an all-time high of N700 per litre.

The operators group sympathised with the passengers, saying the current situation with Jet A1 has shot up the cost of operations to over 95 percent.

The operators stated this in a letter its President, Alhaji Abdulmunaf Yunusa Sarina, sent to the Minister of Aviation, Senator Hadi Sirika, which was endorsed by the chief executives of all the domestic airlines.

The letter read: "It is with a great sense of responsibility and patriotism that the Airline Operators of Nigeria (AON) have carried on deploying and subsidizing their services to our highly esteemed Nigerian flying public in the last four months despite the steady and astronomical hike in the price of JetA1 and other operating costs.

"Overtime, aviation fuel price (JetA1) has risen from N190 per litre to N700 currently. No airline in the world can absorb this kind of sudden shock from such an astronomical rise over a short period.

"While aviation fuel worldwide is said to cost about 40% of an airline's operating cost globally, the present hike has shut up

Nigeria's operating cost to about 95%.

"In the face of this, airlines have engaged the Federal Government, the National Assembly, NNPC and Oil Marketers with the view to bringing the cost of JetA1 down which has currently made the unit cost per seat for a one hour flight in Nigeria today to an average of N120,000.

"The latter cannot be fully passed to passengers who are already experiencing a lot of difficulties.

"While AON appreciates the efforts of the current government under the leadership of President Muhammadu Buhari to ensure air transport in Nigeria grows, unfortunately, the cost of aviation fuel has continued

to rise unabated thereby creating huge pressure on the sustainability of operations and financial viability of the airlines. This is unsustainable and the airlines can no longer absorb the pressure.

"To this end therefore, the Airline Operators of Nigeria (AON) hereby wishes to regrettably inform the general public that member airlines will discontinue operations nationwide with effect from Monday May 9, 2022 until further notice.

"AON uses this medium to humbly state that we regret any inconveniences this very difficult decision might cause and appeal to travelers to kindly reconsider their travel itinerary and make alternative arrangements."

Court to determine Kanu's fate, says Buhari

•UK declares IPOB terrorist organization

President Muhammadu Buhari has dashed the hope of a possible political solution to the plight of the detained leader of the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB), Nnamdi Kanu, when he told Southeast leaders that the court will determine his fate.

Buhari stated this during a meeting with Igbo leaders at the New Government House Abakaliki, capital of the State.

The President was reacting to a demand by leaders of the region who pleaded with him to release Kanu and Igbo other youths in detention across the country.

Southeast leaders had at the meeting demanded the

immediate release of Kanu from the President.

The leaders made the plea in an address during the meeting with the President at the Executive Council Chambers, New Government House Abakaliki, capital of Ebonyi state.

Chairman of Southeast Traditional Rulers Council, Eze Charles Mkpuma read the address.

He said: "We plead with you to temper Justice with mercy in the case of our son Nnamdi Kanu."

Eze Mkpuma said the leaders have started discussion with all aggrieved groups and persons with a view to getting all of them to come to a roundtable

discussion for an amicable resolution so that peace will return to the region.

The leaders commended the President for construction of second Niger Bridge, Akanu Bbiam Airport and many federal roads in the region.

He also asked for the President's support for the southeast to produce the next president.

With Buhari's emphatic position on the matter, hopes of political solution on the case have been effectively closed.

Expectations were high on the reprieve for the IPOB leader when elder statesman, and First Republic Minister for Aviation, Chief Mbazu-like Amechi, appealed to the armed groups in the south east to withdraw the sit-at-home directive they had issued over the president's two-day visit to Ebonyi State, assuring them that Nnamdi Kanu issue would be tabled at



President Muhammadu Buhari

the visit.

Amechi had begged the armed men to withdraw their threat and avoid actions that would embarrass Ndigbo before President Buhari.

Pa Amechi further explained that the sit-at-home threat could jeopardise the concerted efforts being made by Igbo elders to find solutions to the insecurity and

also secure the release of Nnamdi Kanu, leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra.

He said, "I read on social media that a militant group has stated the coming of the President to the Southeast. Please I want to appeal to whosoever, or group, behind the statement to please withdraw that threat."

"I will meet the President

along with some Igbo leaders and elders about the security of our region, which is interwoven in the continued detention of Nnamdi Kanu.

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Meanwhile, the international noose finally tightened on the neck of IPOB on Thursday as the United Kingdom finally designated the group a terror organisation and excluded its members from seeking asylum in their country.

Tinubu okays Sanwo-Olu's second term bid

•Gov says APC national leader paid for his nomination form

•Party's Lagos stakeholders endorse his re-election

By **BENJAMIN OMOIKE**

Will Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu be the standard bearer of All Progressives Congress (APC) in the 2023 gubernatorial election in Lagos State? This question has finally been answered by an open endorsement of the Governor and his Deputy, Dr. Obafemi Hamzat, for a second term in office by the APC National Leader, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu and the entire members of the Lagos State chapter of the party.

At the party's stakeholders' meeting held at Adeyemi Bero Auditorium in Alausa, Ikeja, on Friday, Tinubu physically raised the hands of Sanwo-Olu and Hamzat in approval of their bid to continue in office beyond 2023.

This development puts all rumours surrounding the recent endorsement of Sanwo-Olu for a second term by the Governance Advisory Council (GAC) to rest.

Tinubu's endorsement of Sanwo-Olu and Hamzat has also laid to rest the speculations in some quarters, especially some online news platforms few days ago that the APC National Leader dumped Sanwo-Olu for a former Permanent Secretary in the Lagos State Civil Service, Mustapha Olorunfemi.

Tinubu said the Governor and his deputy have built an unbreakable team to raise the bar of excellence in governance and service delivery in the State, with

visible achievements and progress to show for their efforts. This, the APC National Leader said, earned the duo the opportunity to return for second term, and not a blank endorsement which many politicians sought.

Tinubu, a leading presidential hopeful on APC platform, said Lagos under Sanwo-Olu's leadership had remained a State of pride for residents and other Nigerians who crave responsive governance and progress.

He said: "We have a brilliant Governor at the helm of affairs, who is supported by his deputy to build an unbreakable team that has raised the bar of excellence in governance in Lagos. I specially thank Dr. Hamzat, who has been a very good assistant and a pillar of support to the Governor."

"Sanwo-Olu with Hamzat has raised an impenetrable team. I commend both of you and all members of the cabinet. You have all done wonderfully well and I must say that I am very proud of you."

The raising of Sanwo-Olu's hand by Tinubu was preceded by a motion moved by the Vice Chairman of APC (Lagos East), Hon. Saidat Oladunjoye, for open endorsement of the Governor by the party's leadership. The motion was seconded by a member representing Alimosho Constituency in the House of Assembly, Hon. Kehinde Joseph. This attracted a resounding approval from all stakeholders in attendance.

Abuja Okada Menace: legislation our major challenge - DRTS Boss

By **OBAH SYLVA** Abuja.

The newly appointed Director of the Directorate of Road Traffic Services, Abdulateef Bello has said legislation is the major challenge toward the eradication of motorcycles popularly known as Okada in Abuja.

Speaking exclusively to *The Trumpet* over the week, the Public Relations Office Mr Kalu Emetu who spoke on behalf of the Director, noted that it will be difficult to eradicate okada without proper legislation. He, however, was optimistic that the directorate is doing its best to ensure that the Abuja transportation master plan is strictly adhered to.

Bello said, "Unlike other states where on the instance of the governor, the state House of Assembly will come up with a law that bans Okada, it is the National Assembly made up of people from different parts of the country that make laws for Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Most times they look at things in the way it affects their home state and try to bring the same here."

"We are struggling to make sure that the provisions of the Abuja transportation master plan is maintained. Though we are getting it right 100%, proper legislation has been

a major challenge.

"You cannot just make a pronouncement that Okada has been banned. It has to be backed by law. And the administration is working hard to make sure that the law-making process is done in the way it's supposed to be done." Bello added.

He noted that the good synergy with other law enforcement agencies is yielding the much needed reward in curtailing traffic offences in the FCT.

"I'm glad that we have good synergy with other law enforcement agencies. We are making efforts to curtail the excesses on the airport road and other major roads in the FCT."

"The airport road is a presidential route and a gateway to the nation, that is where most visitors and investors to FCT pass through. It is an eyesore for Okada to be on Airport Road and other major roads. Some may even be driving against traffic. What kind of impression are we giving to our visitors? That is why the new leadership of the Directorate is making the needed reforms and to enlighten the masses."

Bello reiterated that it is a huge security risk for Okada to be on a major road like the Airport road. He noted that the directorate will continue to educate

Okada riders on the risk involved.

He however disagrees that it is due to lack of enlightenment on the part of commuters that has led to the huge numbers of traffic offences and prosecution. He noted that though the directorate is working with a small budget which might not give the needed impact, he said that all forms of enlightenment have been deployed by the directorate to get the needed result.

While stressing that the huge number of prosecutions was part of the administration's effort in ensuring that the right things are done, the DRTS boss noted that in a recent meeting with the Okada union, which was an opportunity to enlighten Okada riders, the directorate gave the union the option of abiding with set rules and risk outright ban.

On the issue of traffic gridlock in some major areas of FCT, Bello said it is due to the operation of illegal parks and the directorate has been working hard to ensure that the needed enlightenment is given to operators of the parks.

"A few days ago we were at Area 1, Area 8 and Apo Bridge as part of our enlightenment and enforcement campaign. We

made them understand that if the park is filled up, they should move to another park. You don't have to drop or pick up people on the roads.

"From now on offenders are going to pay for training. We will take them to our training centers and educate them, the education is part of the enlightenment we are talking about. During that period their vehicle will be confiscated. All these are put together to serve as a deterrence to others."

DRTS boss sounds a word of warning that henceforth the directorate will no longer take lightly any attack on its personnel. He stressed that attackers will be prosecuted by the laws of the land.



Bello Abdul-Lateef

Court slams Ekiti prince with death sentence for killing monarch, as judge throws out defence counsel's plea of insanity

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

An Ekiti State High Court, Ado Ekiti Division, has sentenced a 42 year-old prince, Ademola Omoniyi, to death by hanging for killing the traditional ruler of his community.

Omoniyi was arraigned on one-count of murder contrary to Section 316 and punishable under Section 319 of the Criminal Code, Cap. C16, Laws of Ekiti State of Nigeria, 2012.

The charge read, "Ade-

mola Stephen Omoniyi on August 20, 2018, at Odo Oro Ekiti in the Ikole Ekiti Judicial Division, murdered His Royal Majesty, Oba Gbadebo Ibitoye Olowoselu II, the Onise of Odo Oro Ekiti in the Ikole Local Government Area of Ekiti State."

A chief who testified before the court said, "We were at the palace on that day for the Onise-in-Council meeting around 7am. Before the commencement of the meeting, Ademola Omoniyi entered the palace and sat

on kabiyesi's seat, but the chiefs frowned on his action and drove him away.

"After the meeting, the late Onise, in the company of his male clerk, was trekking back to the main palace when Ademola came out of his hiding and attacked kabiyesi with a knife on the road and stabbed him to death. Before that day, he had been parading himself as the king of the town."

To prove his case, the state counsel, Adegboyega Morakinyo, called five

witnesses and tendered a medical report, statements of the convict, a knife and a rope, among others, as exhibits, while the convict spoke through his counsel, Tope Salami, and called no witness.

In his judgment, Justice Olukayode Ogundana dispelled the claim that the defendant was insane.

"Consequently, the defendant, Omoniyi Ademola Stephen, is hereby sentenced to death and shall be hanged until he breathes his last," the judge added.



One dead, another injured, as trailer hits motorcycle

Federal Road Safety Corps, Gombe State Command, has confirmed a fatal accident involving a motorcycle operator and a trailer, where one person was confirmed dead, following a strong wind that blew.

Confirming the accident on Friday, the Public Relations Officer of the Command, Janet Kassa, described the accident as a sad occurrence.

Kassa revealed that the motorcycle, popularly

known as Achaba, was conveying a passenger before it collided with a trailer around Rainbow roundabout at the state metropolis.

Our correspondent reports that the Thursday evening wind caused dust, and set

pandemonium in motion as motorists scampered for safety, with the thought that it would rain.

However, the situation which lasted for about 30 minutes, set people in panic as some relied on their headlights to see clearly to

avert more tragedies.

The FRSC spokesperson revealed that the deceased had been deposited at the Specialist Hospital morgue for proper identification before interment.

According to her, "I have confirmed the accident, three

persons did not pass on, and one person died on the spot. It involved a trailer and a motorcycle rider and his passenger at the rainbow roundabout, the two survivors are receiving treatment as they sustained various degrees of injuries."

Police arrest alleged gang leader for homicide

By **PAUL MICHAEL**, DEFENCE EDITOR, ABUJA

Zamfara Police Command has arrested a notorious gang leader of an outlawed group, Yansakai for a case of culpable homicide and causing public panic in the name of celebrating Sallah.

A statement by the Police Public Relations Officer, SP Mohammed Shehu, on Friday, said the arrest of the gang leader followed a distress call from Tungar Dutsi community that members of the group invaded the village armed with guns and other deadly weapons.

It further stated that the display of weapons and sporadic shooting of guns led to the death of one Surajo Alhaji Ali, a 40 yrs old man.

On arriving at the scene, the leader of the gang, Bala Minister, was arrested while others fled.

The statement reads, "On 3rd May 2022, DPO Bukkuyum Division responded to a distress call from Tungar Dutsi Community in Gana district of Bukkuyum LGA. That some members of the

outlawed group popularly known as "Yansakai" from Tungar Bido Village led by its notorious leader Bala Minister, invaded Tungar Dutsi village armed with locally made guns/ other dangerous weapons in the name of Sallah Celebration and started shooting sporadically, causing panic and fear within the community.

"When some members of the community cautioned them against the sporadic shooting, the outlawed group members escalated their nefarious action to attacking people with cutlass, knives and other dangerous weapons. As a result of which one Surajo Alhaji Ali, a 40 yrs old man was gruesomely killed by the outlawed group.

"The leader of the group was arrested by the Police, while others fled and escaped to an unknown destination. In the course of interrogation, the suspect confessed to the offence and further mentioned the names of his collaborators now at large.

"Discreet investigation is in progress to further arrest his accomplices and charge them to court for prosecution."



Man allegedly kills friend over \$150, reports self to police

By **BENJAMIN OMOIKE**

A 30 year-old man, Oluwagbemiga Shogbola, has reportedly stabbed his friend, Victor Olabiyo, to death over \$150 (N61,950), proceeds of a business deal between them in the Ikenne Local Government Area of Ogun State.

It was gathered that Shogbola, aka Oja or Federal, accused the victim of cheating him and taking all the money to himself.

Our correspondent learnt that as the disagreement degenerated into a fight between the men, some of their associates attempted to mediate, but to no avail.

However, around 8pm on Tuesday, Shogbola was said to have posted a picture of Olabiyo on his WhatsApp status with a tag, 'RIP'.

The suspect, who is now in detention at the State Police Command Headquarters, Elewera, Abeokuta, reportedly stabbed the victim to death around 11pm.

One of the deceased's friends, Onyemaechi Onwuzuribe, said Shogbola was given a hot chase as he attempted to board a motorcycle to flee the scene.

On seeing his bloodstained shirt, motorcyclists were said to have turned down his request for a ride.

The suspect reportedly raced to the Ilishan-Remo Police Station, where he handed himself over to the police.

Onwuzuribe said, "Federal was bloodied and I saw him running away though I did not know that he had stabbed Victor (Olabiyo). I knew that they fought earlier that morning over \$150 and as soon as I saw him running, I sensed that he must have done something.

"I grabbed him and just as I did, I saw people running after him and crying that he had stabbed Victor to death. That was when I and others tried to hold him,

but he escaped and went to the police. If the boys had caught him, they would have lynched him."

The victim's brother, Adebowale Opasanya, told our correspondent that the deceased was a professional fashion designer.

He said the incident was shocking as the two friends were close and visited each other often.

"Victor's death was shocking to us. I am dazed that his friend, Federal, was the one who killed him just because of \$150. I had warned him about some of his friends, but I never thought Federal would do this.

Alleged thugs of Ojodu local gov chairman assault editor for challenging chairman driving on one way

Chairman of Ojodu Local Government area of Lagos State, Hon Odubakun, reportedly on Wednesday, May 4, 2022, assaulted editor of The SUPREME newspaper, Mr Aruga Joe Omokaro.

At about 11.35am, the editor was at Ogba bus stop, when the chairman in a black truck with tinted glasses and two other cars following, drove one way from Ogba bus stop entering Mokuolu Street.

Three traffic police officers in uniform (two are ASPs) from Area G Police Command, stopped the truck carrying the chairman and directed the driver to go back and take the proper turning, but the driver refused.

Apparently the chairman

would have ordered him not to mind the police. The police officers insisted not to allow the vehicle and the two others to take the one way route.

At that point, a scene was created and people gathered to know who was taking laws into his hands and would not obey the police.

One of the police officers went to the door to find out who the 'important person' was. Unfortunately, the arrogant chairman refused to wind down and introduce himself. Suddenly a police Inspector came down, saluted the superior officers and introduced the occupant in the truck as Ojodu LG Chairman.

The officers allowed him to pass. Surprisingly

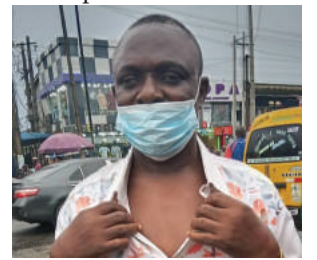
he drove forward a bit, stopped and came back with his thugs to justify his action, and told the police that he was on an emergency. The officers then told him that he ought to have initially introduce himself to avoid attracting a crowd.

At that point, the editor and some passersby supported the police and told him that he was supposed to show good example by his status.

Just then, he asked the editor furiously, "who are you to challenge me?" The editor replied: "I am a journalist." And he retorted: "you are a stupid journalist." And two men thought to be his political thugs came and seized the editor's shirt

against his neck, another came and slapped him on his neck, while shouting "stupid journalist, useless journalist, who cares if you are a journalist is local government chairman your mate?"

Without asking for his identification card, a third person came and attempted to seize his phone, which he wanted to use in recording the scene. He threatened to order their thugs to beat him up.



Power rotation vehicle of unity in Nigeria - Clark

●Says S/West, S/ South presidential aspirants are not serious

Chief Edwin Clark, leader of the Pan Niger Delta Development Forum (PANDEF), has been at the forefront of agitation for a southern President in 2023. In this interview at his Abuja residence, he maintains the position that power must rotate to the south while urging southern aspirants not to accept Vice Presidential position from any northern aspirant. The elder statesman however declined comment on the rumoured interest of former President Goodluck Jonathan in the race among other sundry national issues. Politics Editor, **TUNDE JOSHUA**, brings excerpts.

What is going on within the political space, especially the South-West, to succeed President Muhammadu Buhari? As of now over 20 people have picked form from the South in the PDP and the APC. What is your take on this?

It is madness. If I'm to be realistic they are not serious; particularly the southerners from the South-West and the South-South. There are some people that have gone to be bottle bags to play double game. So when it comes to where we say no, some people would come out to say yes we are contesting. So they know why some of them are there. For instance, there are reasons to be told that my very good friend Adams Oshiomhole, the former national chairman of the APC was with Tinubu, I was surprised yesterday when I saw him entering the race. I'm also surprised that Amosun, after seeing the VP from his place in the race, also entered the race.

So you come back to the South-South, Jonathan was a Rivers State man before Bayelsa State was created in 1996. Today Nyesom Wike wants to be president of Nigeria, Rotimi Ameachi wants to be president of Nigeria both of them are in small Ikwere. You can imagine what is going on. I understand Timipre Sylva would soon declare. Meanwhile, people are asking me questions about Goodluck Jonathan and they are in the same senatorial zone in Bayelsa State. So they know what they are doing. And for the Igbo, some of them I encourage them to come out. If it is zone to the South-East the whole of Nigeria will vote for them.

I know that you belong to one particular platform, the eminent leaders of the Southern part of the country, what exactly are you going to say to these presidential aspirants in the Southern part of the country across the party divides?

A: I think the time will come, we must tackle them because of what is going on today. In the South-West from 1975 to 1979, a Yoruba man was the Head of State of this country after the death of Murtala Muhammad, Obasanjo was there for 3 years. when Abiola contested and won, they faulted him and then took over but they didn't last. But in 1999, Obasanjo came in with full force to rule Nigeria. At that time, Obasanjo had taken over the party; it was very easy for him to bring a northern candidate of his choice. So there was no contest of the primary major. But we don't have a doubt that Yar'Adua will win. So Jonathan became his running mate when Yar'Adua asked me to recommend the running mate to him.

Are you not surprised that both major parties PDP and APC were running away from being specific about zoning? Even when it was in the constitution of PDP but APC is also singing another tune about zoning. What is your position on this sir?

Thank you very much, that is a very good question. I used the word madness, now you have everybody in Nigeria where there is hunger, where there is lack of employment,



Clark

where there is kidnapping going on every day, where children cannot go to school, where the economy is going down, these people were able to mobilize N100 million to pick forms. So if these governors and ministers use their salaries, I don't think they have it because they must eat in their houses. But they then went back with pretence telling Nigerians we are fools; that their friends contributed money for them. El-Rufai sometime ago said that 19 governors met with Mr president, vice president and agreed that all the positions held by the northerners should be moved to the South and vice versa. So with that, the zoning has been done. So the South will produce the next president. Now that no southerner contested any position in the party which was zone in the north and because the chairmanship was zone to North Central, Abdullahi Adamu took over.

We strongly warn our politicians, former governors, ministers, senators and so forth not to accept running mate positions from any northern candidate because they cannot do without us and we cannot do without them. That will show how serious we are and anybody who offers himself as a running mate will be regarded as the most unpatriotic and a man who has sold his own side of the country and is not worthy of being respected and honoured.

What If the two dominant parties end up with northern presidential candidates te?

We are going nowhere. No southerner will like to see himself being treated as a slave or as a second class citizen. When he has the right of franchise than someone who believes in population alone. This matter was discussed at the national conference of 2014. Rotation is the only vehicle of unity in Nigeria and it was decided at that conference that there should be a power shift, there should be rotation

among the various ethnic groups or the various parts of this country if we are to have unity in this country. We were reaching there. And during the debate, I remember in particular I mentioned that in a situation whereby for instance in Kaduna State, southern Kaduna is bigger than the other part of Kaduna, the Zaria part yet they used religion and political authority from the center in suppression of southern Kaduna. So when, unfortunately, Architect Namadi Sambo was taken as vice president by Jonathan, the northerners instead of being happy, accused me in particular that we did it to make the deputy governor become governor of Kaduna State. Patrick Yakowa, mysteriously died in a plane crash and we were back to square one.

Go to Benue State, where the Tivs have been governing all the time at the expense of the Idomas. You go to Borno State the same thing. So, we took a decision, 18 more states should be created and they said the 36 states cannot maintain themselves because they are lazy. They have oil money and so nobody wants to work, their governors now stay in Abuja. So, created 18 states, four for the Igbos. It is on this matter those of us who were delegates again in 2005, Political Reforms Conference, set up by former president Olusegun Obasanjo and the issues of the eastern region. The South East received five states instead of six. It was unacceptable. We recommended new states should be created immediately for the southeast zones. Then in 2014 National Conference, set up by former President Goodluck Jonathan, we recommended for the East to make it nine, northwest to make it nine, and three, each to the remaining four geopolitical zones to make them nine states each. That was our recommendation.

I would like to ask two questions about Jonathan. Do you think it is illegal for him

to contest as a president? And secondly, do you think he should run for president under the APC?

No comment from me I'm 95 years old.

Is it because former President Goodluck Jonathan is from Niger Delta? Your son?

I don't want to respond

Did he discuss with you that he wants to join APC?

He has not.

So how will you advise President Muhammadu Buhari, INEC, and Nigerians about upcoming primaries and general elections, because there seems to be tension everywhere?

In the first place, I say categorically that we have no leader. Look at this country, do we have a president? For 34 days a train moving with unspecified number of passengers, luggages from Abuja to Kaduna, was bombed. A young lady a Doctor lost her life, about 30 people were admitted to the hospital, two of them died later in the hospital and about 70 of them were taken away. As El-rufai has always said, which forest in Nigeria is so difficult for the president to move into? And for 34 days the President of this country made no statement. We have people dying everywhere. About 70 people were killed in Benue, when the governor cried to Mr President, he said go and live with them. The question I am now asking is whether the president is aware of all the problems in this country? The number of killings every day, where a lady had to deliver a child in captivity.

We asked Mr. President the other day who is your candidate and his response was the man who won, but whether Nigerians are going to fight, whether things are going wrong he is not bothered. This is the man that said he will fight corruption yet presided over the levy of N100 million on forms for aspirants in the country that we say we are poor, where N30,000 minimum wage cannot be paid by some states, where pension cannot be paid, where some state can't pay gratuity. A professor receives 450,000 naira in a month and the vice-chancellor receives double. Then when the vice-chancellor goes back to the university as a professor, he will go back to earn a salary of N450,000. What ASUU is fighting for is not only for themselves alone. Develop our universities, provide facilities for universities, and modernize our universities.

I was Pro-Chancellor of University of Benin for 5 years. 3 years ago they named the Faculty of Management Sciences after me. Also a Pro-Chancellor, Federal University of Technology, Minna, they named the part of Engineering Faculty after me. Today the University of Benin is one of the largest. I have written a book on it. I have seen what the people are asking for. They are not asking for allowances for themselves alone, they are asking for things that will make learning better.

Osinbajo, Tinubu, other S'West APC leaders meet in Lagos over 2023

BY GABRIEL OMONHINMIN, SOUTHWEST BUREAU CHIEF

A meeting of South-West presidential aspirants of the All Progressives Congress (APC) conveyed by former Governors of Ogun and Osun states, Chiefs Olusegun Osoba and Bisi Akande, held Friday evening in Lagos.

The meeting which was called to streamline and resolve possible political grey areas among the aspirants was attended by Vice-president Yemi Osinbajo, Chief Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Speaker House of Representatives Femi Gbajabamila, as well as Ministers Babatunde Raji Fashola (Works and Housing) and Rauf Aregbesola (Interior).

Governors of Ekiti, Ogun, Lagos, and Osun States including APC National Secretary Otunba Iyiola Omisore were also in attendance as were some APC stalwarts from the region.

The meeting was also to ensure electioneering campaigns devoid of hostility.

The South West APC Elders meeting with presidential, gubernatorial and National Assembly aspirants from the zone ended on a convivial note, as sources confirm that the leaders resolved that every aspirant has a right to contest.

Besides, the meeting, though behind closed doors also resolved that name callings and other personal attacks should no longer be encouraged by aspirants and their supporters.

According to an inside source, "the issue of betrayal was put to rest as the elders affirmed that everyone who desires to run for any political office whatsoever is not encumbered in any way at all."

They commended the Vice President, being the highest ranking public officer from South West extraction for a job well done.

While stating that consultations with them would be a continuous exercise, the meeting admonished the aspirants to queue behind whoever amongst them eventually emerges as the party's candidate, stating that the cohesion of the South West must be sacrosanct.



Nigeria's economy in comatose, says APC spokesman

● Berates Osinbajo, says Tinubu has structure to win

By OBAH SYLVA AND OVIRI KELVIN, ABUJA

The Presidency has reacted to the statement credited to the spokesperson of the Lagos APC, Seye Oladejo, over his claim that the nation's economy is in a bad state after about seven years of President Muhammadu Buhari in power.

Oladejo was obviously getting as the Vice President Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, following his declaration to contest for president in the 2023 general elections. He lashed at the presidency for failing to meet the expectations of Nigerians. He added that despite having a professor as the head of the economic team the economy of the nation is comatose.

But in a quick reaction, the Presidency took a swipe at Oladejo, stating that it was

a mistake for a party spokesman to abuse the legacies of the president because he wants to advance the aspiration of his preferred aspirant.

Senior Special Assistant on Public Affairs to President Muhammadu Buhari, Ajuri Ngelale in a statement made available to The Trumpet said that it is unwise for anyone under the guise of intra-party politics to criticize the achievements of Mr President.

He stressed that the act of condemning the legacy of this administration by the spokesperson of the Lagos APC due to his affiliation with one of the presidential aspirants was a misnomer.

Ngelale said, "I actively avoid politics, but it is necessary to state that as intra-party competition intensifies, the President's legacy should be protected at all times. For a party spokesman to abuse the legacy of the President to advance one aspirant is a mistake."

Oladejo lampooned the Osinbajo for daring to declare his interest to contest the seat of the president to truncate his godfather Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu's presidential ambition.

He described Osinbajo as a serial betrayal who failed to stabilize and grow the party using his office but prefers to empower his fellow pastors which is against the context and dictates of the constitution of the party and the 1999 constitution of Nigeria as amended.

"The news did not come to us as a surprise, except that it took forever for diverse reasons but he eventually summoned the courage to throw his hat into the ring and as he said, he was busy consulting and engaging in self-denial overtime about his interest to run for the office.

"It didn't catch us as a surprise and doesn't

change anything as regards who is calling the shots, as regards who is the leading aspirant, a presidential aspirant in our party APC.

"There is no doubt that only one man has paid his dues in terms of fighting to enthrone democracy, in terms of making the reference point for good governance in Nigeria since the advent of democracy, in terms of being a fisher of men including the vice president himself. We believe that with the mammoth support he is enjoying in all the nooks and crannies of the country, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu will definitely emerge victorious.

"I have read in so many media stocks about the issue of betrayal and all of that and people have really put this as they have started with Asiwaju but well it goes beyond that; betrayal should be put in perspectives. It should be put in context. It is multi-faceted; it is multi-dimensional. Betrayal of Mr President himself to the extent that the VP has not really been a stabilizing force as regards his activities very much in the media promoting his sector the Christian religion, the Pentecostal sect.

"The fact that all his appointees coincidentally have been pastors or members of the church. The fact that he has also betrayed the constitution of Nigeria, which in context and dictate promote secularism or the fact that he has not been able to contribute anything meaningful to the growth and development of APC as a party so the betrayal is multi-faceted and I guess it is not really a big surprise that this coincided with the holy way, the windfall fashion where historically, the first betrayal took place," he added.

Following, the party spokesman in Lagos state said that the vice president cannot wrestle

the ticket with Tinubu in the southwest because, in the sojourn of his political career, the APC national leader was his pathfinder.

He said, "Actually put in succinctly, you don't challenge your father to a battle in the marketplace, politics or no politics I think there should be some sense of decorum, some morality, even in a political battle, by the way, Mr Vice President is definitely too old to be called Asiwaju's son.

"By trying to fight the battle, he has declared himself a minor to want to take on the might of the national leader of our party, who more than any other person contributed to bringing Mr vice president himself to limelight by appointing him as commissioner for justice and attorney general in Lagos and nominating him to be the vice president to President Muhammadu Buhari. The vice president has a whole lot of issues to clear. There is a big albatross on his neck so we'll see how it plays out," he added.

The Lagos APC spokesman in his outbursts noted that Osinbajo should be asked some salient questions about the economy of the nation because last he checked, it was within the vice president's purview to oversee the economic recovery plan of the nation.

Oladejo continued, "The last time I checked he has been in charge of the economy. The question Nigerians should ask is what is our net worth? Have our personal fortunes improved in the past seven years? And I dare say that this is a personal thing and is a personal failure of the man who holds the office and not necessarily the party.

"So these are fundamental questions that we're going to ask as party members and we also want to know politically what is he bringing to the table? Is he in a position to mobilize members of the party who have been likely deprived, who have been likely sacrificed as regards their interest and patronage of democracy for members of his church, which is clearly not in tandem with the spirit of the party constitution and constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 as amended? These are questions we are going to ask.

"There are issues bordering on the economy, unemployment, inflation, and a whole lot, so what is he going to give differently? All he said during his declaring speech was that he was going to continue what he has been doing before and I think Nigeria and Nigerians need someone with a clean slate in terms of personality and governance, not a reluctant president who can't take us to the Nigeria of our dreams," he added.



Oladejo,

Nine PDP members in Kano Assembly defect to NNPP

Nine members of the Kano State House of Assembly elected on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) have defected to the New Nigeria People Party (NNPP).

The spokesperson of the Assembly, Uba Abdullahi, announced this in a statement he issued on Friday. He said the members have sent a letter to the Speaker of the House notifying the House of their defection.

He said some of the members cited a leadership tussle in the PDP at state and national levels for their action.

The affected members include Isyaku Ali Danja (Gezawa Constituency), Umar Musa

Gama (Nassarawa Constituency), Aminu Sa'adu Ungogo (Ungogo Constituency), Lawan Hussain Chediyar 'Yan Gurasa (Dala Constituency) and Tukur Muhammad (Fagge Constituency).

The others are Mu'azzam El-Yakub (Dawakin Kudu Constituency), Garba Shehu Fammam (Kibiya Constituency), Abubakar Uba Galadima (Bebeji Constituency) and Mudassir Ibrahim Zawaciki (Kumbotso Constituency).

Earlier on April 29, the House announced the defection of a member representing Kano Municipal, Salisu Gwangwazo, from the PDP to the ruling All Progressive Congress

(APC), also citing an internal crisis in the main opposition party.

However, the latest defections are widely seen to be connected to the movement of a former governor of the state, Rabiu Kwankwaso, from the PDP to the NNPP.

Mr Kwankwaso moved to the NNPP earlier this year and is expected to run for president on the ticket of the party.

His defection has triggered the mass defection of his followers from the PDP to the NNPP where some of them have taken party positions ahead of the party's primaries.

30 Years on Throne: How Mai Gwari is viewed by his subjects

By GABRIEL OMONHINMIN

His Royal Highness Mallam Zubair Jibrilu Abubakar is the Mai-Gwari Traditional Ruler of Birnin-Gwari in Kaduna State, North-West Nigeria.

The 74 years old Mai-Gwari, who is very reserved, urban and highly educated, usually watches developments in his kingdom and the country with philosophical calmness.

On Saturday, 30th April 2022 the Mai-Gwari marked his 30 years on the throne. He was 44 years when he ascended the throne.

Although he holds very strong views on the socio-economic and political developments in the country, the Emir of Birnin-Gwari seldomly speaks on any issue because of his past ugly experiences, for speaking the truth to government. But whenever he chooses to speak about national issues, he is blunt and makes no pretence about it.

In April 2021 during the North-West Conference entitled "The State of the Nation and Contemporary Challenges in Nigeria," organized by the Arewa Research and Development Project, (ARDP) at Savannah Center in Kaduna, the Monarch lashed out at Nigerian politicians describing them as greedy and opportunist.

The Emir said, "Some politicians have capitalized on the high level of illiteracy and poverty among the people, to attain power."

He stated that "I have said this on so many occasions and so it's easy for me now to repeat what I have said in the past here. He then asked, "Why do we have failed politicians running local, state and federal governments? This problem could be traced to the people we consider to be politicians in our various localities.

"In every area of the country, majority of the people, who pretend to be politicians, stakeholders, party chairmen and delegates in most elections, can't, in all honesty, be regarded as politicians in the true meaning of the word. As they are simply greedy and opportunistic in everything they do.

"This is part of the reasons, the country is not making any meaningful progress politically and economically as expected. Nigerian politicians do not care about the people in their immediate environment. All they want is to make money

no matter how distastefully and degrading the process could be. They do this because they want the generality of the people to continually troop to their homes for pittance and hand out. This is not supposed to be."

Mai-Gwari stressed that "Nigerian politicians use three things to subjugate the generality of the people in the country. They deliberately capitalized on the high level of illiteracy prevalent among the people. Knowing that it is very easy for the masses to be deceived and exploited once they are in that state in any society. Secondly, politicians again take undue advantage of the high level of poverty among the people and thirdly, very many of these politicians exhibit an unrestrained level of greed, which is shameful and un-Godly. These three qualities are so prevalent among our politics, thus making it very difficult for the country to have a workable political system that takes care of welfare and well-being of the people."

An indigene of Birnin-Gwari, who simply wants to be identified as Al'Amin said, the Mai-Gwari forthrightness had made him an enemy to most people in the corridor of power. That is why the Emir of recent is maintaining a very low profile, so as not to continuously run into trouble with the power that be.

He continued, "Our Emir has a very rich background, he is one of the very few educated traditional leaders in modern day Northern Nigeria. If we had a good government in place, he needed to be consulted occasionally on several issues, before major decisions in our state, sadly this is never the case as we speak.

"His Royal Highness holds a first degree in English Language from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. He was among the first set of Nigerians that did the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in 1973. He served in the defunct Mid-Western Nigeria that is now Edo and Delta State. Thereafter he lectured at the College of Arts, Science and Technology, in Zaria. From there, he was transferred to Kufena College to teach English and Literature. He rose to become a Senior lecturer before going to Government Secondary School, Fadan Kaje, in Southern Kaduna. He was appointed the Vice Principal in 1975. In the year 1977, he was



His Royal Highness Mallam Zubair Jibrilu Abubakar

posted to Rimi College in that same capacity as Vice-Principal. He was asked to open the first day secondary school in the North as its Principal. It was that same school that was later converted to be Tafawa Balewa way, Kaduna, which now metamorphosed into the Kaduna State University today.

"Our Emir as a young dashing teacher then was later transferred to the Kaduna State Scholarship Board as its Secretary in 1979. From there, he was again moved to the State Ministry of Education, while still in the State Ministry of Education, he was among the team that was mandated to establish Secondary Schools across the length and breadth of Kaduna state. An assignment he carried out with his team, with lots of diligence and efficiency."

Al'Amin added that "In 1981, the Emir whose name had become a household name in Kaduna state, was again pressurized to go into politics, unlike now, just because the people wanted a quality representation. It was then he became an active member of the People's Redemption Party (PRP) the then political party for the Talakawa, the downtrodden. After the un-ceremonial impeachment of

Balarabe Musa as the Governor of Kaduna State for not yielding to the underhand tactics of the majority members of the NPN led Kaduna House of Assembly, Abba Musa Rimi took over as the Governor of the State. It was then that Mai-Gwari was first appointed as the State Commissioner for Economic Planning. He was thereafter appointed again as the State Commissioner for Education. It was in that same year he contested for the Kaduna Central Senatorial seat, and he lost to the candidate of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN). Although there was obvious manipulation of that election, he did not contest the election in court, he went on to do other things. Just because he wanted to serve the people and not take undue advantage of them, as is the case today.

"The Mai-Gwari almost immediately got a job with the Peugeot Automobile Nigeria Limited (PAN) as Assistant General Manager (AGM) Commercial.

"When the Military Government led by General Muhammadu Buhari struck, Mai-Gwari was among the persons arrested in 1984 and thrown into Kaduna prison, just because he served

in the civilian government overthrown by the Military Government then. Mai-Gwari spent a year in Kaduna prison and was released in 1985. Some years after his release from the Kaduna prison, that was when he ascended the throne of his ancestors and became the Mai-Gwari of Birnin-Gwari. Since his ascension to the throne, Mai-Gwari had provided leadership in all ramifications of life. This we are most grateful about." He concluded.

Speaking in the same vein, Mallam Zubair Abdura'uf Idris, who is the Danmasani of Birnin-Gwari, says "the Emir's thirty years on the throne, had shown beyond any reasonable doubts, that he is a true leader not just a ruler of his people."

He stated, "Twice, the Mai-Gwari was queried for saying the truth and reflecting the feelings of the people in his Emirates over the insecurity situation in Kaduna. The insecurity the Mai-Gwari complained about then, had eventually grown today to become a national embarrassment. The Danmasani Birnin-Gwari said, it is gratifying to note, that after so many years, the powers that be kept on denying the exact security situation in Kaduna State, the Emir" has been vindicated.

Zubair regretted that "After fifteen years of the persistent assaults on our people and economy, resurfacing of criminality in the Birnin-Gwari axis of Kaduna State, which went on, for a very long time unchallenged, the entire state, has now become the epicentre of kidnapping, armed banditry and all manners of crimes, which are now threatening the peace of the country."

The Danmasani Birnin-Gwari said the Emir is highly regarded by his brother Emirs across Northern Nigeria, because of his forthrightness. Saying the Mai-Gwari has consistently followed the virtues of the revered Sheikh Usman Danfodio. The Emirs in question admire the Mai-Gwari's deep knowledge of Islamic tenets, as he adjudicated on matters among his subjects which he regularly leads in congregational prayers.

He concluded, that the Mai-Gwari's humility, and consistency in whatever he does, stand him out among his peers wherever he goes. Thus bringing honour and glory to the entire Birnin-Gwari people and Emirates



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2 x 2	24,941.96	26,812.61	2 x 2	22,588.91	24,283.09	2 x 2	18,349.89	19,716.64	2 x 2	15,147.94	16,284.03	
3 x 2	37,413.09	40,219.07	3 x 2	33,987.48	36,622.04	3 x 2	27,524.84	29,589.20	3 x 2	22,721.91	24,426.05	
4 x 2	49,884.02	53,625.42	4 x 2	45,177.83	48,566.17	4 x 2	36,700.09	39,452.60	4 x 2	30,295.53	32,657.70	
5 x 2	62,355.15	67,031.71	5 x 2	56,472.29	60,707.71	5 x 2	45,866.19	49,315.34	5 x 2	37,863.00	40,710.09	
6 x 2	76,142.50	81,853.18	6 x 2	67,975.12	73,073.25	6 x 2	55,049.68	59,178.41	6 x 2	45,443.82	48,852.10	
7 x 2	87,297.21	93,844.50	6 x 3	101,962.78	109,609.99	6 x 3	54,074.55	61,200.90	7 x 2	53,017.79	56,993.61	
7 x 3	166,172.00	179,229.37	6.5 x 3	110,459.64	118,744.11	6.5 x 3	89,455.78	96,164.94	8 x 2	60,591.76	65,136.14	
7 x 4	197,125.00	211,909.37	7 x 2	79,304.29	85,252.11	7 x 2	64,224.63	69,041.48	9 x 2	80,454.83	86,488.95	
8 x 2	99,768.24	107,250.85	7 x 3	128,456.43	138,090.67	7 x 3	96,336.94	103,562.21	10 x 2	86,147.92	92,609.02	
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14.5 x 4	520,790.19	559,849.45	9 x 2	101,962.78	109,609.99	9 x 2	93,773.60	100,872.44	8 x 4	137,692.17	148,019.082	
7 x 5	218,243.02	234,629.74	9 x 3	152,944.01	164,414.81	9 x 3	141,108.54	151,691.68	10 x 4	172,301.37	185,224.22	
8 x 5	299,304.72	321,752.57	9 x 4	203,925.29	219,219.69	9 x 4	187,921.52	202,015.71	14.5 x 3	187,057.43	201,086.73	
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10 x 5	448,957.08	482,628.86	10 x 3	169,651.36	182,375.21	10 x 3	156,602.81	168,348.02	8 x 5	172,116.65	185,025.40	
11 x 5	493,852.78	530,891.74	10 x 4	226,258.00	243,176.28	10 x 4	208,808.58	224,469.23	9 x 6	278,649.91	299,548.66	
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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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Reintegration of ex-terrorists: UN backs Buhari, commends troops

■ As orphans, widows of fallen heroes get relief materials

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

Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN), Antonio Guterres, has expressed his support for the reintegration of former terrorists of the Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) by the Nigerian government.

Guterres, who was in Nigeria on an official visit, said the step is right to achieve peace in the country. Adding that the UN will support creation of new facilities for effective reintegration of ex-terrorists and ex-combatant.

"The governor has told me that you need to create new facilities to be able to have effective reintegration of these ex-terrorists, ex-combatants, and I promised that we would be fully supportive of that project.

"The best thing we can do for peace is to reintegrate those who in the moment of despair became terrorists but

now want to become citizens and to contribute to the well-being of their brothers and sisters," Guterres said.

The UN Secretary General who was in Borno State to assess the North East region which has been plagued with the activities of terror groups for over a decade, also commend troops of the Operation Hadin Kai for their tireless efforts in fighting terrorists and defending Nigeria and the neighbouring countries.

During the tour, the UN Chief was led to some Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps in the state and also one of the holding facilities for the repentant insurgents and thereafter paid a courtesy visit to Borno State Government House in Maiduguri.

In his remarks at the government house, Guterres said the mass surrendering of terrorists signifies that the troops are winning the war against terror. He also lauded the effort of the Armed Forces of Nigeria for rescuing some



President Buhari UN Secretary General, Guterres

kidnapped victims from the terror group's enclaves.

The Theatre Commander JTF NE Operation Hadin Kai, Major General CG Musa, who was present during the historic visit, joined His Excellency, Professor Babagana Umara Zulum to bid farewell to the UN Secretary General at the airport.

Meanwhile, orphans and widows of fallen heroes of the Armed Forces who

paid the supreme price in the fight against terrorism in Maimalari Cantonment, Maiduguri in Borno State have been given some relief materials by Operation Hadin Kai as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility.

The Theatre Commander Joint Taskforce (JTF) North East (NE), Major General Christopher Musa, who led the team, said while handling the relief materials to the beneficiaries, "the Nigerian

Army will not forget in a hurry the selfless service and sacrifices of your loved ones and will continue to support you all where ever necessary."

Mrs Blessing Edet, who spoke on behalf of the beneficiaries appreciated and extol the Theatre Commander for always supporting them. She used the opportunity to pray for the Theatre Commander and his troops to be victorious in the fight against the insurgents.

Two arrested for vandalism of PHCN transformer, electrical installations

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

The Zamfara State Command of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) has said two suspected vandals have been arrested in connection with the vandalism of transformers and other electrical installations belonging to the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN).

The suspects, Mubarak Aliyu and Sani Ahmed, who are from Wanzamai village

in Tsafe LGA of the State, were said to have stolen large quantity of Aluminum conductor wire worth N800,000.00.

Their arrest according to a statement by the state Public Relations Officer, SP Mohammed Shehu, followed a distress call by the Area Manager of PHCN.

The statement further stated that the suspects have confessed to the have committed the crime. Noting, however, that other fleeing suspects would be

arrested by the Command as discreet investigation has commenced.

The statement reads, "The Zamfara State Police Command has arrested two (2) Suspects, Namely: Mubarak Aliyu and Sani Ahmed both 'M', 25YRS of age from Wanzamai Village in Tsafe LGA.

"The arrest followed a distress call received from the Area Manager, Power Holding Company of Nigeria, popularly known as NEPA, Tsafe branch, regarding the

vandalisation of Transformer and other electrical installations in Wanzamai Village, where large quantity of Aluminium conductor wire valued at about Eight Hundred Thousand Naira (N800,000) were removed.

"DPO Tsafe acted on intelligence information and arrested the above-named suspects in possession of large quantity of melted Aluminium conductor wire. On interrogation, the suspects confessed to the offence and further mentioned their

partners in crime now at large.

"The Command under the leadership of CP Ayuba N. Elkanah psc(+) is applying various strategies to arrest the fleeing suspects and charge them to court for Prosecution.

"While the Command assures adequate Protection of Public and Private installations across the State, it advises members of the public to be vigilant and report any attempt to vandalise such equipment for prompt action."

Oleh protests, demands white paper on land dispute with Ozoro in Isoko

By **MICHAEL EKOKORUWE**

Residents of Oleh have staged a peaceful protest and asked for the white paper on their land dispute with Ozoro, another Isoko community in Delta State.

Economic and social activities were paralysed as hundreds of women, men and youths blocked major roads within metropolis and Oleh roundabout/A saba expressway over the loss of 12 indigenes of the

community that were gruesomely murdered on October 16th, 2020.

The people displayed placards with various inscriptions such as "Governor Okowa release the white paper between Oleh and Ozoro to enable the families of the dead bury their sons and daughters", "Oleh community is tired of crisis with Ozoro", "We do not need more bloodshed between Oleh and Ozoro", Okowa hear Oleh community cry now", "the report of the judicial panel of inquiry

has been submitted since May 2021", and "We want to bury our 12 that are still in the mortuary."

Speaking to newsmen, the president-general of Oleh community, Chief Believe Alakri, said, the report of the land dispute, killing of the 12 Oleh indigenes submitted to Okowa since May 2021 in a white paper has not been released. They stressed that both communities are still engaged in land encroachment.

He maintained that same protest was

carried out by Ozoro people to avoid further crisis between the two communities. Alakri noted that the bodies in the mortuary must be buried, while demanding for justice over the 12 Oleh indigenes that were murdered.

The president general reiterated that the release of the white paper by Okowa will specify where to bury the 12. According to him, the parents and children of the dead are crying as their bodies are yet to be buried.

"We voted for Governor Okowa and he will not allow us to die in crisis. We need peace in Oleh as people cannot go to their farm because of fear," Alakri said.

Oleh women leader, Mrs. Itewor Juliana, commended Okowa for setting up the panel of inquiry and appealed to him to release the white paper for peace and justice. She added that Oleh is tired of war and wants to bury the 12 indigenes of the community whose bodies are in the motuary.

Police arrest Lebanese for crushing lady in Lagos

By **AUL MICHAEL**,
DEFENCE EDITOR, ABUJA

Lagos State Police Command has arrested a Lebanese for hitting a lady, Omotomi Akinsanya, as a result of driving recklessly against traffic along Sanusi Fafunwa road, Victoria Island in Lagos.

According to the account of an eyewitness, Gbadamosi Damilola, the Lebanese, John Greg was on high speed and driving against traffic, thereby forcing pedestrians to take to their heels. Damilola said it was at the process that the suspect ran into Akinsanya.

"The man was driving on a one-way, against traffic and on was on high speed around Sanusi Fafunwa Street, Victoria Island. People had to run helter-skelter for their lives. The driver then drove into Omotola and pushed her against the wall.

"The impact was so much that the plate number fell off. The driver did a hit and run, he absconded instead of waiting to care for the victim. A passer by took a bike and chased after him. He was caught, brought back and handed over to the police," Damilola stated.

The victim was said to be severely injured and in critical condition. She is currently taking treatment at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital.

Confirming the incident, the Lagos Police Public Relations Officer, SP Benjamin Hundeyin, said the suspect is currently in custody and further investigation is ongoing.

Hundeyin further confirmed that the suspect sped off after hitting the victim, who has serious injuries on her leg but was chased and arrested. He added that the Lebanese Embassy has been duly informed of the incident.

He said, "On May 4, 2022, at about 0745hrs, a middle-aged Lebanese by name John Greg 'm' drove a Toyota 4Runner recklessly and against traffic on Sanusi Fafunwa Road thereby hitting one Omotomi Akinsanya 'f' which resulted in serious injuries to her leg.

"He speed off but was chased and arrested. Suspect is in our custody. Vehicle impounded and in our station. Victim undergoing treatment at LASUTH. Victim's family duly informed. Embassy of Lebanon duly informed. Investigation ongoing."

That viral video on bestiality

Last week, social media was set aflame by a video of a young Nigerian lady boasting that she had sex with a dog for a fee of one million five hundred naira only. The furore which it generated must have alarmed the lady. A few days later, she claimed in a remorseful manner that the dog-sex claim was a stunt to gain followers. The debate which followed suggests that bestiality is a widespread practice these days. The viral video therefore is a slice of our now degenerated lives that is mirrored by the social media. It is a comment on the degeneration on our core values. It reflects failed socializations at family, school, and religious levels.

The question is what triggers bestiality? The answer could be found in mankind's penchant for the abnormal, especially by a small minority. It also happens when humans refuse to give their souls to the Great Spiritual force of the Universe – God Almighty. They sell their souls to dark forces and sink into moral depravity. The result is all forms of bestialities like that viral video of a lady having sex with a dog!

Bestiality is as old as mankind. For this reason, the two major religions – Christianity and Islam - and our traditional society made laws to taboo the practice. Those core-values are what make man different from animals. Porn sites which are easily available with the advent of social media promote depraved behaviour. But bestiality exists in different forms in our world.

Ritual murder and pounding a day-old baby to be eaten for political power is a form of bestial behaviour. We also have terrorists, kidnappers, herders' killings, stealing and destructions in a bestial way. The level of man's inhumanity to man in our country is bestial in a sense.

Bestiality does not start in a day. It has its origin in many factors. When Government removed religion and prayer from our schools, distorted curricular of Christian and Muslim Religious Studies, removed Civic Education, introduced new normal Human Rights Philosophy, strange political correctness, they were sowing the seeds of bestialities in our societies!

When parents do not train their children the way they should go, so that when they are old, they will not depart from such ways, as well as nurturing happy homes, they end up laying the basis for bestial behaviours in their children. Dysfunctional homes, broken family values, lack of family primary socialization

set the stage for bestial behaviours!

Primitive materialism and desperation for Machiavellian end-justifies-the-means criminal tendencies on the part of our girls is a challenge of our time. Such girls are ever ready to do anything for money, including prostitution, and appearing half naked at parties under the influence of drugs and other stimulants lead to bestial behaviour.

Politicians and Parties that create the enabling environment for the degeneration of our moral character, core values and integrity must be exposed, condemned for us to come out of present bestial attitudes and inclinations. Our judicial system's degeneration even in our core values must be corrected.

The Police and Law Enforcement Agencies must root out men and women that lure people to all forms of bestialities, in line with the rule of law to face appropriate punishment and sanctions as a deterrent to others. Our laws stipulate that those who are guilty of any form of bestiality are liable to imprisonment for 14 years. But this provision of our laws has not been enforced. This is the time to act.

There must be massive media sensitization, reorientation and mobilization for parents and their children to know that those who are guilty of bestial behaviours must be held accountable for their actions. They must also know the health hazards that are associated with bestiality. Parents should also live up to their responsibilities by paying close attention to their wards' growth in their formative years.

We at The Trumpet call for a thorough investigation into the bestial video origins. All persons involved in the act should be brought before the law and prosecuted in line with extant provisions. If there are powerful persons luring poor vulnerable ladies into depravity, such barons should be fished out and tried for the criminal behaviour.



THE TRUMPET

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Christ Jesus' Being is Life Eternal and not Death

It is quite weighty to brothers and sisters of other faiths to assert that Jesus Christ has power over life and death. The Incarnated Lord Jesus described Himself in various ways. This was to make His followers to truly know Him fully. In the Gospel according to St John, there are seven of such. (1). Bread of Life (John 6:35-51); (2) Light of the world (John 8:12; 9:5); (3) Door of the Sheep (John 10:7-9); (4) the Good Shepherd (John 10:7-9); (5) Resurrection and Life (11:25); (6) Way, Truth and Life (John 14:6); and (7) True Vine (John 15:1-6). Today's meditation shall be mainly on the subject of life, as emphasised in John 11:25-26.

Jesus said to Martha, "I am the Resurrection and the Life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whosoever lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?" The believer's answer to Jesus' question is a key to their faith and salvation. It is our prayer that we believe this! And that many who do not believe shall be brought to this faith in Christ's mercy.

Death is one of the most dreaded human phenomenon. It is a major theme in existential theology and philosophy. The meaningfulness or meaninglessness of life is paradoxically tied to how we conceive death. The reality and certitude of death have never been an issue of doubt, though the use and significance of death remain a mystery to us mortals. Jean Paul-Sartre thinks death signifies the meaninglessness of human life and existence; it tells of the nothingness of life. "What must be noted first is the absurd character of death," Sartre asserts.

But another philosopher, Martin Heidegger, position on death, as a human

reality, is totally antithetical to Sartre's pessimistic view about it. As a Christian philosopher, Heidegger viewed death positively. He felt that "the moment a man is born, he lives towards death, and each person has their death to die alone. Nobody can die your death for you. Human life is 'deathwards.' Heidegger pointed out that death makes man aware of his singularity, his individuality and his uniqueness. Death, in Heideggerian existentialism, imposes upon us our finitude and possibilities. Death tells us that life is brief. Consequently, we should put haste into our human calls and challenges. Heidegger puts his view powerfully by saying, "death becomes the meaning of life as the resolved chord is the meaning of the melody."

The message Christ is passing to believers, in John 11:25-26 as in elsewhere, is that it is in His Being that human life can ultimately have meaning. Outside the Being of Christ Jesus human life is meaningless. Believers are therefore called to live in, through and for Him. To die in Christ is to live. In order to achieve this, believers are called to fulfil Christian conditions that are necessary for the attainment of eternal life such as to: follow Christ (John 6:37, 44, 45, 65); eat Christ's flesh and drink his blood (John 6:50-51, 53, 58); have knowledge and fear of God (John 17:2-3); forsake the world (Matthew 19:27-29); live right with God by forsaking sin (Romans 5:21; Revelation 2:7); believe and obey the gospel (John 3:15-19); obey God's commandments (Matthew 19:17) and many more.

When preachers talk about heaven and paradise they are actually referring to the Life that has consumed death.



Dr. Karo Ogbinaka

"And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; and he who has not the Son of God has not life" (1 John 5:11-12). And this is how St John puts it in the Gospel he wrote, "he who believes in the Son has eternal life; he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God rest upon him" (John 3:36). And to believe in Jesus is simply to have faith in Him and obey Him. A life of faith and obedience secure life eternal for believers.

Thus far, our exposition shows that Jesus Christ did not come, or rightly, Jesus was not given to the world by God (John 3:16) in order to bring death. He rather brought life. Death is an option the unbeliever has chosen. It is a consequence of the 'wrath of God.' Perhaps a better way of putting this is to say that ultimately, in Christian eschatology, there shall be those who will live for ever and those who will be put into a permanent

'second death.' Without going into the contentious hermeneutics of the millennial – premillennialism, postmillennialism and amillennialism – we read how the Bible records the question of choosing between Life (Jesus Christ) and death, "Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom judgment was committed. And also I saw souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony to Jesus and for the word of God, and who had not worshipped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life, and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priest of God and of Christ, and they shall reign with him a thousand years."

In Christ Jesus, believers are called and elevated unto a higher platform. "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light. Once you were no people but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy" (1 Peter 2:9-10).

Be blessed and Shalom.

•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

Runaway from sin and save your life

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ said in Luke 13:1-5 that unless we repent from our sins, humans will continue to perish through different weapons of death. Coronavirus is a weapon of death, and so are accidents, sicknesses and the rest. What the Word of God has said is that all these problems emanated from sin even though scientists and others may ascribe them to just human inconsistencies and other factors.

We pray that the blood of Jesus Christ will cover you and your family from every weapon of death in this era of mass destruction forever in Jesus' Name.

It is foolish to keep on sinning because it is a way of accumulating problems for ourselves in the future.

The truth is that all problems, sicknesses, wars and other crises on earth in the past and even today emanated from sin but many people are ignorant of this fact because they don't see the immediate consequences of their sins, hence assume that there are no consequences. Some consequences of sins can come after days, some years, while others for generations to come. Some consequences come most times when the person must have even forgotten what he or she has done.

The Word of God cannot be broken and since the Word of God has said the wages of sin is death, nobody can escape it. Even when you repent from sin, it still demotes you because it brings delay to your breakthroughs and miracles.

Yes, it is not the Will of God that people



Dr. Agbodo

should perish but people are perishing every day because of personal and societal sins.

Many people say nobody born of a woman can live without sin and because of this assumption, they continue to sin and hope that they will still make Heaven. This is a wrong assumption because the Bible clearly states that without holiness, nobody will see God or enter Heaven now and on the last day.

Adam and Eve committed a single sin and were driven from the Garden of Eden and in the same vein today, sin drives us from your personal Garden of Eden that God created for us to enjoy all His blessings.

Also, note that every sin committed must be paid for whether God forgives you or not. When sin is committed and the sinner repents, the sinner will still have to start from wherever he or she has been demoted to through the sin and start climbing again to perfection and this is also a form of punishment.

This is the reason many people are stagnant and are not progressing the way they should even as Christians.

We should therefore be wise and see sin as suicide in instalment and as an agent of destruction. Therefore, stay away from it because God will not excuse anybody.

If God did not compromise the consequences of sin for his only begotten Son Jesus Christ when He carried the sins of the whole world to be crucified, He will not compromise it for anyone.

The sins of the children of Israel kept them wandering in the wilderness for 40 years instead of getting to the promised land at the appointed time, according to the initial plan of God for them. Sin downgrades and demotes a destiny and we must always remember that all the problems of humanity today have their roots in sin and until we stop sinning, crises will continue.

The wages of sin is death hence poverty, sicknesses, wars and the rest are weapons of death that came into the world through personal and societal sins.

Therefore, the wise thing to do is to repent of any sin you are committing now, ask for forgiveness from God and

remain faithful and hold on to living a holy life in line with the Word of God. The mercy of God is covering people from being destroyed by the devil because of their sins but if they don't repent, the mercy of God can expire and the devil and demons will pounce on them. This is the reason many are dying in abnormal circumstances these days.

The wages of sin is death and even if a true Christian that is not a habitual sinner refuses to abide by the righteousness of God, he or she can still perish. God is no respecter of any man and the only way to fulfil our destinies is to stay away from sin and unrighteousness and abide by the righteousness and the holiness of God because one may not be a sinner but can be unrighteous in some areas of life and unrighteousness also brings death. The difference between sin and unrighteousness will be explained in this column in subsequent messages so that we can keep ourselves in holiness and righteousness and enjoy all that God has created for us to live a joyous and meaningful life.

Repent, accept Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Saviour and be saved from death and all the weapons of the powers of darkness this season and in the future.

God bless us in Jesus Name.

•Pastor Esanerovo Trinity Agbodo is a columnist with The Trumpet Newspaper and can be reached at eagbodo@gmail.com

How to possess Christian faith that extinguishes fire - Rev. Ezeonye

By GABRIEL OMONHINMIN, Culture and Religion Editor

The book of Isaiah 43:2, says, "When thou passeth through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walketh through the fire, thou shalt not be burned: neither shall the flame kindled upon thee."

John wrote that he heard the thunderous voice of the Lord and in the process of seeking the voice, he encountered seven golden candlesticks. The candlesticks are later revealed as the Church. We, therefore, need men and women who hear the voice of God before they do the work of God. What good will it do us to polish the candelabra and light the candles if there is no voice of God to cause men to turn aside and see?

From the foregoing and with the present-day proliferation of churches in Nigeria and all over the world, Trumpet Religious desk asked Rev. Dr Prince Obed Ezeonye, Senior Pastor, Excellent Glory Christian Centre, Lagos, whether so many Pastors, who are today shepherding churches still hear from God?

Rev. Obed: Yes! Some Pastors, not all the people who claimed to be Pastors today hear from God. We must not deny the fact that some people are into the Ministry, just to make quick money. Despite this deplorable situation, Pastors sent by God are still able to do exploits.

It is therefore easy to differentiate these Pastors from the other characters. For example, when the voice of God led to the presence of Christ, John collapsed in the presence of the Lord. A deluge flooded the cave as Christ opened His mouth; His voice sounded like the noise of many waters. John said that many waters were in His voice, but the fire was on His feet, Effective communication is always transmitted from the base of burnt feet. John said Jesus' feet looked as if they had been in the fire. What a comfort to the indicted character of this Pentecost preacher to find that the feet of his Consoler had been through the fire. Dearly beloved, hear me today: Your Deliverer has feet that have been burnt. He knows what it feels like to be in the fire.

Trumpet: What will you say is the reason, why people are becoming very sceptical about Christianity and Islam?

Rev. Obed: Well, let me remain in my lane, I can only speak about the possible reasons why people are becoming sceptical of Christianity, not Islam. The truth is that, when we talk about religion, we should understand that religion is spiritual. We should also not fail to understand that there is an enemy called Satan, who is coming from different angles to fight the church. It is this Satan that is out to fight religion to give different colourations to what religion is supposed to be. This is where the problem lies. Many people who do not understand this spiritual aspect of religion, easily get misunderstood and carried away.

It is just like you have an enemy, and this enemy is after you, all you need to do is guide yourself against the attack of the enemy in question. You, therefore, need to fortify your stronghold. Because any little advantage the enemy will penetrate and use against you, this is exactly the problem the churches are facing today.

The point we should therefore not ignore is that, for every counterfeit, there must be an original elsewhere. So no matter the kind of misconception about the Christian religion, and the misunderstanding the enemy is bringing about religion that does not mean that religion is not there. Now, coming to the people, who are trying to merchandise the people already in the faith, these same people who are trying to merchandise religion for personal gain, this is a reality we must not rule out or discountenance because it is here with us in reality.

A deeper look inwards has shown that the popularity of modern-day Christianity is what is responsible for its being counterfeited. Yes!



Rev. Ezeonye

There are people doing all within their powers to adulterate the Christian religion and faith. I must say that this doesn't preclude the fact that there are still lots of good Christian leaders, who are genuinely called by God. These men of God are there for the real reasons of their callings. It is therefore wrong for us to assume or generalize that true Christian religion or practice is no longer there.

Trumpet: What did religion really stand for, from your point of view?

Rev. Obed: Let me attempt to draw a thin line between religion and what Christianity is all about, from a general point of view. Religion is an act of man desperately trying to know God. It is an act of one seeking God. The thin line between what we call religion and Christianity is therefore as follows. While religion is the act of man seeking God, Christianity is the act of God seeking man. The bible says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believes in him, shall not perish. But have everlasting life." From the foregoing, you can see clearly that it is God that is seeking man at this particular point. That is Christianity for you.

But the general idea about religious practices is an act of man seeking God, in the process, mankind degenerated into several acts of worship, both the good acts and the bad ones.

Trumpet: What would you say is responsible for the present-day commercialization of Churches and Christian religious practices by some Pastors?

Rev. Obed: The scepticism about Christianity and its faith, is borne out of what I earlier said, the reason why we have counterfeit in anything we do, is because we do have an original elsewhere. It is not everybody that has commercialized the act of faith or religion. It is not everyone that has gone into Christian religious practice to enrich himself. No! Be far from this belief. Let me tell you, when one is honestly serving God in spirit and truth, God will bless the person. Those who are trying to go the extra mile to do it on their own, are bound to incur the wrath of God in the process. But when we

go the way of God, follow God's principles just like what I am presently trying to do in 'Double Diamond' trying to change the mindset of people for good, change their thinking, and let them know that it is still possible to become prosperous without corruption. Make believers know that it is possible to make money, without crime or killing anyone.

It is a known fact today, that many people to get rich, have gone into all manner of rituals, and some others have gone into drugs, especially some of them who are putting on cassocks. Some of these people claimed to be in the faith. These types of people are also found in other religions. They use their faith as a cover to commit all manners of crimes. These acts are against God's will.

As you must know, most of these people are already reaping what they sow aside from all this nonsense, some people are genuinely serving God. They are daily preaching faith, and in the process of doing the things that please God, and you see God blessing them.

For example, there are frontline churches around the world and in Nigeria, that are preaching holiness without even concentrating on preaching prosperity and money and what have you, some of these churches are still being blessed. The fact that must not be lost is that when God calls a man, he gives such a man messages because for every messenger, there is a message.

Now if God has called me to the area of healing, and asked me to preach healing, I have to stay in that stream, to make progress. I have to remain in that stream and continue to do what God has asked me to do, so long as I am doing what God has directed me to do, the same God will bless me. And if God has called his messenger and asked him to preach prosperity, if such a person is doing what he or she is asked to do genuinely there is no way he or she will not be blessed.

Now, what happened with this prosperity thing, which most people are fraudulently abusing today in the name of Christianity, when you look at the history of Christianity some years ago, you will discover that there

is this phrase that was used then, 'as poor as the Church rat.' In other words, in those days, it was difficult to see somebody rich in the church. It was difficult to see someone riding a good car in the church. Even Pastors in those days, go about their duties with bicycles. At that time, Satan was very happy. It was about the 19th century, just before we stepped into the 20th century, that God began to give a balanced message, that people can be serving God and become rich. In the churches of old, people were running away from serving God, because they did not want to wear the toga of poverty. But today, glory to God, that is no longer the case, hence, the proliferation of churches. Despite what people have to say, we still need a lot of churches, because it takes different types of churches to reach different types of people.

Haven't said all these, it doesn't mean that one should take the opportunity God has given him or her to exploit other people and enrich themselves. As a person, I am of the strong belief that if I am doing the will of God, God will one day bless me. God will enrich me. Because taking from the covenant fathers, none of them was poor. Abraham was not poor. Isaac was rich and successful. Isaac was a farmer, in Genesis 26:11, he said, Isaac sowed and reap in the same year, a hundredfold. Jacob was an institution himself. When we, therefore, follow the antecedent and understanding, and historical parts of where we are coming from, we will see that when we are serving God in truth and spirit, God will bless us. And when we talk about prosperity, it encompasses peace, wealth and what happens to you as a person.

Trumpet: Now that most Pastors are getting off the way of preaching the biblical doctrines, the way it is, what should be done to correct them?

Re. Obed: In the Christian faith, there are already established bodies like the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN). We also have a body like the PFM, these bodies should serve as strong regulatory bodies. Once a Pastor or group of Pastors and the church members are going out of the established tenets, or the doctrines of the church, they can quickly correct these people and bring them to order. I am of the strong belief that these bodies are already doing this.

Apart from this, I will also want to say that all these types of religions, if you like to call it ministerial rascality, if you look at the people involved in these acts, they have no people they are submitting their ministries or themselves to. I am talking about mentoring. They have no mentor. If you have a mentor, to whom you submit yourself, you'll be careful, because whatever you do, you know, someone, somewhere, is watching over whatever you do or say. And if you are getting out of line, and your mentor calls you to order, and you refuse to listen to him, you will be disowned or excommunicated in the process. The truth is that most of the pastors causing all these problems, do not have people they submit to. They do not have mentors. They do not have Ministries they are looking up to. It is advisable that anyone that is called into the Christian Ministry should look for a mentor that has the same pattern of Ministry, to submit. Once this is done, it will help the Pastor, and his ministry to mentor the person, in the way and manner he does his things.

As a Pastor, I am very careful about whatever I do, because whatever I do, negative or positive, will be regarded as the practice of where I am coming from.

From the above, I might be regarded as not representing my roots very well. Even without me saying who is my mentor, once I am preaching, people with discerning minds will immediately know where I am coming from. If I try to go contrary to the doctrines known with where I am coming from as a Pastor, the leadership of my root will pick on me, and say, you are not representing us well.



May Day Celebration: Dilemma of Nigerian workers

On May 1, 2022, Nigerian workers joined their counterparts all over the world to celebrate the International Workers Day as it is called in some climes. While workers in most climes look forward to expectations of the good plans the government has for them, that is hardly the case with Nigerian workers. May 1 every year has become a day for Nigerian labour leaders to celebrate their pains, sufferings and deprivations of the government, JOHNMARK UKOKO writes.

International Workers Day came into effect in 1889 to celebrate workers' struggle, following the fallout of Hay Markers Affairs in Chicago, United States of America, where workers led a protest to insist on working for eight hours instead of 12 hours daily, besides other welfare issues.

From the days of pioneer labour leaders in Nigeria like the late Michael Imoudu, who fought the colonial masters to a standstill with the strike he organised in the 1950s to late Pa Sumonu and Adams Oshiomhole the country's labour movement has consistently engaged and fought successive military regimes on several issues, such as fuel scarcity, minimum wage, increases in fuel prices and other socio-economic issues.

Labour leaders like former Secretary-General of National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas (NUPENG), Chief Frank Kokori, held the General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida regime in the jugular, as the strike led by Kokori totally paralysed the country in a bid to force the IBB regime to reverse the annulled June 12, 1993, presidential election, believed to have been won by the late Moshood Kashimawo Abiola.

The NUPENG strike was the mother of all strikes the country's labour union ever organised as the entire country was paralysed for over three months. Kokori who was later arrested and detained for years with several other labour and their civil society activists showed that organised labour could be truly powerful and should not be ignored by any reasonable government.

In the heydays of the current democratic dispensation, Oshiomhole also gave former presidents Olusegun Obasanjo and Goodluck Jonathan a lot of headaches, as he consistently organised strikes and protests by calling out Nigerian workers to protest against the constant increases in the prices of petroleum products and induced scarcity.

On several occasions, Oshiomhole was arrested and brutalized in the course of leading workers to protest one government policy or another to the extent that it took the efforts and interventions of the late Gani Fawehinmi to deliver the labour leaders from the country's security forces and the law courts.

However, in the last decade, it appeared that the Nigerian workers have lost their voice and have been unable to champion the cause of the workers, especially as the President Muhammadu Buhari has increased the prices of petroleum products by about 300 per cent without any protest or action from the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) and the Trade Union Congress (TUC).

The famous NUPENG strike led by Frank Kokori in the 1990s had been seemingly forgotten despite the challenges and hardship Nigerian workers and citizens have had to grapple with. The same is true of the Petroleum and Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGAS-SAN), which was also considered very resilient, but seemed to have lost its teeth.

Also, the once-powerful Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) that was dreaded by the government during the days of the late Prof. Festus Iyayi, Prof. Itsye Sagay, and Prof. Atahiru Jega and several other brilliant academicians appear to have lost their verve.

On May 1, Nigerian workers joined their counterparts in the world to celebrate International Workers Day, a day set aside every year to advocate for better working conditions and environment.

Speaking at the occasion on the backdrop of hardship foisted on them by the current administration, President of NLC, Comrade Ayuba Wabba, urged the workers to register for their Permanent Voters Card (PVC) and ensure that they vote for credible politicians, who will improve their lot in 2023 and beyond.

He charged them to make their voices and votes count ahead of the 2023 general elections, insisting that the country's workers were grappling with shortage of food-stuff, and hyper-inflation, while most youths of the country remain jobless.

He pointed out that the workers were celebrating the international worker's day at a period their morale was down and pleaded with the Federal Government and other tiers of government to heed the worker's cry. As expected, because the country was heading towards the general elections, the Vice President, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, who represented President Buhari during the worker's parade at the Eagle Square, Abuja, commended the workers for their resilience, steadfastness and dedication to duty.

Buhari, who said his administration was doing everything within its powers to address the myriad of challenges Nigerians were contending with, pledged that the presidency was addressing the insecurity and economic challenges frontally, adding that the government appreciate the sacrifices workers and Nigerians were making to ensure that the country overcame its many challenges.

Also speaking at the event, President of the Senate, Ahmed Lawan, assured workers that the National Assembly will continue to partner with organised labour to address issues relating to them.

Lawan charged ASUU to ensure a



President of NLC, Comrade Ayuba Wabba

speedy and amicable resolution of its three months old strike, saying: "Nigerian workers deserve our appreciation and respect for their contributions to the development of our country. I also salute them for their cooperation with the government and other institutions in our collective efforts to address societal challenges."

On his part, National Leader of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Bola Ahmed Tinubu, said workers remain the unsung heroes of society, adding: "Labour's work helps to define our nation and the goods and the services its members provide are the basis of our collective wellbeing. Today is worker's day. It is a day for us to fully celebrate the Nigerian workers."

Governors were not left out in the praise of organized labour, as they also trooped to their various state capitals, where workers were observing the yearly rituals to

celebrate with them.

In Edo State, Governor Godwin Obaseki, who assured workers that his administration would continue to prioritise their welfare, announced a N40, 000 new minimum wage for civil servants of the state.

Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, urged the workers in the state to remain productive and committed to their duties and assured them that his administration would continue to accord them all their entitlements at all times.

Governor Dapo Abiodun of Ogun State, who joined workers to celebrate the day at the Moshood Abiola Stadium in Abeokuta, commended the workers for their loyalty, professionalism and perseverance in the face of the global economic challenges.

He assured the workers of better years ahead as he pledged to settle all outstanding gratuities, deductions and other welfare packages.

But in Kaduna State, NLC Chairman, Comrade Ayuba Suleiman, lamented that the state workers' productivity and their safety have been largely affected by banditry, terrorism, killings and kidnappings generally ravaging the state and other parts of the country.

He, therefore, urged the Federal Government to rise to its responsibility of protecting the life and property of the country's citizens.

Even as several speeches were rendered and goodwill messages sent across the country by politicians, respondents expressed reservations that talk will always remain cheap, but it is left to be seen how the various promises by the political leaders are implemented.

They maintained that this had been the worst time in the country's history with kidnappers, terrorists and bandits freely roaming the streets and cities and unleashing mayhem on citizens of the country.

Bandits and unknown gunmen have sent many Nigerian workers to their early graves, while many have been forced to pay huge amounts of money to regain their freedom.

The ongoing Russia -Ukraine war has further compounded the worker's plight, as they now grapple with high inflation, which has soared to over 17 per cent at a time most Nigerians were losing their jobs.

The celebration of this year's International Workers Day has come and gone, but beyond the parades and celebration, what is the hope that the Nigerian worker will experience a better tomorrow?

Beyond the long speeches by labour and political leaders, what benefits will now accrue to workers from the yearly rituals? With the dehumanising conditions Nigerian workers are being subjected to daily by private and public employers, does the celebration of the worker's day still have any benefits for the workforce?

By the time Nigerians celebrate the next Workers Day on May 1, 2023, will workers look back and say they have achieved the various promises the government made to them on May 1, 2022?

These questions and more become pertinent in the light of the workers' dilemma and government's insensitivity to their plight under the current reality.

The years ahead will determine if the celebration of May 1 every year still has any meaningful impact on the Nigerian workers.

ONICCIMA seeks govt partnership in Anambra market reforms

By JOHNMARK UKOKO

The Onitsha Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (ONICCIMA) has solicited partnership with the Anambra State government in its market reforms.

President of the chamber, Kelvin Obieri, said the chamber was also canvassing a single term of three years as a means of deterring greedy traders from the sit-tight syndrome, adding that the chamber was in need of the government's cooperation to make markets in the state more conducive for business.

He said the chamber was in support of the state government's plans to improve the market environment, which he admitted had been bastardised by reckless erection of illegal shops and lack of conveniences.

He stressed that the chamber was in support of the state government's determination

to rehabilitate and modernise markets in the state and ensure that dependable leadership was put in place at all times.

Obieri, who urged the government to constitute professionals and serious-minded individuals, who have stakes in the market among others for management of elections in the markets, lamented the current situation of markets across the state with lack of basic amenities like parking spaces and toilet facilities, among other things.

The ONICCIMA boss canvassed a single term of three years for leaders wishing to go into leadership positions, insisting that such would deter greedy traders from vying for leadership positions in the markets.

It would be recalled that the Anambra State government through the Commissioner for Commerce and Industry, Dr Obinna Ngonadi, sacked 30 market executives and two others last week who it believed produced

leaders through a flawed election process.

In a statement issued by the commissioner, the state government said the action was aimed at restoring sanity to markets in the state and repositioning them for greater efficiency.



Dr Obinna Ngonadi

Expert attributes NGX rally to uncertainties in fixed income market

An expert in the fixed income market and Managing Director of ARM Securities Limited, Rotimi Olubi, has attributed the sustained rally in the Nigerian economy in recent times to uncertainties expected to persist until the third quarter (Q3) when fixed-income yield will peak.

He explained that the development would encourage more inflow of funds into the stock market, stressing that the rally would persist and that the stock market was currently thriving due to liquidity flows from the fixed income space.

Olubi, who revealed that the NGX All-Share Index (ASI) recorded a growth of 5.6 per cent in April 2022, noted that the ASI, which opened for trading during the period at 46,965.48 rose by 2,673.46 points to close trading in April at 49,638.94.

On the sectors that would drive the stock market in the coming months, Olubi said consumer goods, agriculture and oil and gas sectors were likely to be the major drivers.

Speaking on the foreign exchange drivers, he said that multi-listed companies such as Airtel Africa, Seplat Energy and Exchange Traded Funds would drive the stock market rally.

"The recent uptrend in performance in the Nigerian Stock market is expected to roll into May, June and July 2022. We expect this to thrive on several factors, among which we have an uptrend in yields, encouraging earnings performance setting the tone for a nice full year for tickets in June," he stated.

He added that the uncertainties might persist till early Q3 when fixed-income yield should peak.



Rotimi Olubi

Custom seizes over 12 trucks with imported toxic rice from India

By ADAMU WALTER

The Federal Operations Unit (FOU), Zone A of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) has said over 1,000 bags of foreign parboiled rice in the seized 12 trucks imported from India contain toxic malleable metallic element, otherwise known as lead.

The Acting Comptroller, Hussein Ejibunu, who disclosed this to journalists in Ikeja, said the truckload of rice totalling about 7,259 bags were smuggled into the country through the country's western neighbour- Republic of Benin.

According to him, after the seizure, a laboratory test was conducted by the National Agency for Food, Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), which revealed that over 1,000 bags of rice branded 'SIMBA' contained lead, thereby making them poisonous to human consumption.

He said part of the negative economic impact of importing foreign

BENCCIMMA doubts Edo MSMEs' ability to pay N40,000 minimum wage

Stories by JOHNMARK UKOKO

The Benin Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (BENCCIMMA) has expressed concern and doubt over the ability of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) firms in Edo State to pay the N40,000 new minimum wage announced by Governor Godwin Obaseki.

The *Trumpet* recalled that Obaseki announced a N40,000 new minimum wage, against the Federal Government's approved N30,000 on May 1, 2022.

However, the President of BENCCIMMA, Mrs Aina Omo-Ajeonu, who spoke in Benin City, said it would be a huge burden and difficult for the private sector to pay the new minimum wage as announced by the governor.

She said that based on the current situation in the country, most members of the chamber were not in a position to pay the new wage.

We can't afford it because

the business environment is not conducive for us. We are still grappling with poor power supply, poor infrastructure and high cost of doing business. But it is good for the state government workers, as it will help increase their purchasing power," she said.

Omo-Ojeonu, however, said Obaseki's announcement would cause further inflation in the state, adding that prices of goods and services would further increase, as sellers of goods will believe that the people's purchasing power has increased.

She disclosed that the state government did not consult the chamber before the announcement was made.

It would be recalled that with Obaseki's announcement, Edo State public service workers are now the highest paid in the country, as most other states are still paying the N30,000 minimum wage President Muhammadu Buhari announced about three years ago, even as some are still struggling to pay.

It will also be noted that some



Gov Godwin Obaseki

states are still paying N18,000 old minimum wage that was approved about twenty ago by former President Olusegun Obasanjo.

Businessman laments Nigeria's harsh operating environment

Managing Director of Liberty Industries Limited, Jamal Abuh, has lamented that local manufacturers in the country have been going through harrowing experiences in the past few months.

Abuh stated this in an interview with *The Trumpet*, saying that the little growth the manufacturing firms were recording after the COVID-19 pandemic had been subdued and eroded by the impact of the Russia-Ukraine war.

He revealed that Liberty Industries which is into packaging, plastics, PVC, nylon bags and assorted items was experiencing the impact of the war, which he said was impacting negatively on the local manufacturing firms.

He also pointed out that the recent plunge in public power supply further compounded the challenges of local businesses, adding that diesel now sells beyond

the reach of the country's small businesses.

"The war in Ukraine has almost crippled our businesses. We are unable to afford the diesel which is now sold for between N700 and N900 per liter. As if that is not bad enough, the public power supply since the beginning of the year has nosedived. We used to enjoy between 12 and 16 hours of public power supply daily.

"But since February this year, we are told that the national grid has collapsed on four different occasions, which has made power supply very epileptic and unreliable. Yet, electricity bills continue to rise every month," he lamented.

He disclosed that due to the constant increase in bills, his firms have had to make do to break even, adding that the demand for his products had drastically reduced.

Abuh further lamented that most

of his colleagues have been forced to close shops due to the harsh operating environment, maintaining that he had to reduce the number of his workforce to less than 40 percent, as his firm was unable to pay for diesel to power his plant for several hours.

"I now operate my factory for between six and eight hours daily. As such, I have to ask half of my workers to proceed on compulsory leave without pay. I have to ask about 20 percent of my employees to be coming to work three days per week, while the remaining will work as long as there is public power supply. Factories are not run that way," he stressed.

He, therefore, appealed to the Ikeja Electricity Distribution Company (IEDC) to increase the number of hours it supplies electricity to the industrial areas in Lagos State.

'Federal, state governments to generate \$201b from taxes, duties in Lekki Port'

•Nigeria to regain lost maritime businesses from Togo, Ghana, others

By ADAMU WALTER

Minister of Information and Culture, Lai Mohammed, has said the Federal and state governments will generate about \$201 billion through taxes, royalties and duties from the Lekki Deep Seaport.

He said the port would have a great impact on the economy by creating about 169,972 jobs and enable Nigeria to regain the maritime business earlier lost to ports in Togo, Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana.

Mohammed stated this during inspection of the port with the team from the Ministry of Transportation, said with the port will become a trans-shipment hub, noting that the revenue the country had been losing to neighbouring countries would be regained.

He said the commencement of the port operation in the last quarter of this year, will also boost

Nigeria's economy in its quest to take advantage of the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA).

"The investment is huge for \$1.53 billion on fixed assets and \$800 million on construction, but the aggregate impact has been projected at \$361 billion in 45 years, which will be over 200 times the cost of building it. The direct and induced business revenue impact is estimated at \$158 billion in addition to the impact on manufacturing, trade and the commercial services sector," he said.

Managing Director of the Lekki Deep Seaport, Du Ruogang, said the port would change the economic landscape of Nigeria and become a central hub in the West and Central African regions.

He said the second phase of the port will commence between six and seven years, adding that in the long-term, the third phase of

Telecoms firms seek 40% tariff hike over high cost of business, inflation

Telephone users in the country may have to pay more for making calls, as telecommunication operators have submitted a proposal to the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) to increase their tariffs by as much as 40 percent as the country's inflation rate surges higher.

The plan is to raise the cost of making calls by subscribers to N8.95 from N6.4, while the price cap of SMS will increase to N5.61 from N4.

In a letter to the NCC titled: *Impact of The Economic and Security Issues On the Telecommunications Sector*, the telecom firms said there has been a 40 per cent increase in the cost of doing business in the country.

In the letter written under the aegis of the Association of Licensed Telecommunication Operators of Nigeria (ALTON), they noted that the telecommunication sector has been financially impacted following the nation's economic recession in 2020 and the impact of the Russia-Ukraine crisis.

The body also cited the recent introduction of excise duty of five percent on telecommunication services had further increased the burden of multiple taxes and levies on the industry.

"In view of the foregoing, ALTON considers it expedient for the telecommunications sector to undergo periodic cost adjustment through the commission's intervention to minimise the impact of the challenging economic issues faced by our members.

"We seek an upward review of the price determination for voice, data and SMS. Given the state of the economy and the 40 per cent increase in the cost of doing business, we wish to request for interim administrative review of the mobile (voice) termination rate for voice administrative data floor price and cost of SMS as reflected in extant instruments.

"With respect to voice SMS cost, ALTON respectfully requests the commission to consider a mark-up approach to address the upward price adjustment desirable for the industry," the letter read.

the port would be developed and appealed to the Federal Government government for support in the trans-shipment policy, which he said, remains an important target for the port.

He also sought government's support in the cargo evacuation system, noting that the roads connecting the port were not satisfactory to the demands of the evacuation requirements of the port.

General Manager and Head of Government Relations and Security, Lekki Freeport Terminal, Fubara Awanta, said with the port's draft, which is the deepest in West Africa, Nigeria should not lose the huge revenue that it would generate to several bottlenecks.

He appealed to the government to ensure that the major roads connecting the port should be completed to boost cargo evacuation as short-term support, while in the medium-term, government should assist in ensuring movement of consignment through barging.



Obaseki kicks off 'Operation Plan Edo'

- NEWMAP seeks media support to curb environmental hazards
- Tasks stakeholders on handwashing

Operation Plan Edo, an exercise aimed at recertifying building plans and collecting data on socio-economic needs of communities in Benin City, the capital will be kicked off by the state government.

Commissioner for Physical Planning, Urban and Regional Development, Isoken Omo, during a press briefing, said the exercise, which will commence in the Ugbor area of Benin City, is an expansion of the 'Operation Show Your Building Plan.'

She thanked those who have complied with 'Operation Show Your Building Plan' exercise, assuring that all applications have been fast-tracked and that over 400 approvals will be granted to those who have already gone through the process.

She noted that the state government through the programme will be able to collate needs of communities which in turn will enable it to provide relevant services to Edo people.

According to her, "The programme enables the government to know what services and infrastructure the people need. The 'Operation Plan Edo' will involve various ministries, such as Education, Roads and Bridges, Health, Power, among others".

She called on citizens to cooperate with officials of the ministries and provide necessary information to help plan the city and State in line with the 30-year master plan.

Condemning attacks on its staff by residents, she warned: "Edo State Government frowns at the attack on Staff of Ministry of Planning, Urban and Regional Planning on duty. Government is concerned about the ugly incident and has vowed to bring the perpetrators to book to serve as deterrent to others."

Meanwhile, Edo State Co-ordinator of Nigeria Erosion and Watershed Management Project (NEWMAP), Dr. Tom Obaseki, has canvassed media collaboration in driving the conversation on flood control as the rains intensify.

Obaseki made the submission at a flood engagement workshop organised by the agency in Benin City, the Edo State capital.

He stressed that beyond government action and infrastructural intervention, there was need for all stakeholders, particularly the media to con-



Isoken Omo

tinue to sensitize the people so they can take ownership of flood control efforts and change their attitude towards environmental protection.

According to him, "The media has a crucial role in spreading information in bridging the knowledge gap and enhancing public awareness. The media chooses which issues to highlight to its viewers and how to frame them, influencing what people perceive to be a priority.

"When the public discussion about a particular topic is structured in such a way that it creates a sense of outrage and menace, people will put pressure on their leaders to put that issue at the top of the political agenda.

"The manner in which the media presents information shapes audience perceptions. When communicating a message, the media transmits not just the content of the message, but also their interpretation of it."

Highlighting the state government's intervention in tackling erosion in the state, Obaseki said that the state government has built a total length of over 40 kilometers of secondary drains.

"We have built a total length of over 40kms of secondary drains. This excludes over 400km constructed by other ministries and agencies; over 14kms of primary stormwater culverts, drains and over 4km of earth

storm water channels. This is more than what has been done by any other government in the history of the state.

On his part, the Resident Engineer and ZUTARI Consultant, Mr Almeroux Loubser, said global warming has contributed to the excessive rains while advocating for use of green energy solutions to reduce burning of fossils.

Also, Edo State Primary Health Care Development Agency (ESPHCDA) has urged stakeholders to collaborate with the government across all levels to sustain awareness campaigns on regular hand washing to prevent diseases.

The Executive Secretary, ESPHCDA, Dr. (Mrs.) Otanyienuwa Obarisiagbon, made the submission in commemoration of the 2022 World Hand Hygiene Day in Benin City.

She urged healthcare workers, parents and other stakeholders to adopt the culture of washing hands frequently in order to prevent diseases.

She said, "Healthcare workers are to ensure proper handwashing with soap and water before contact with patients, before a sceptic procedure, after contact with patients' body fluids, and after leaving the patients surrounding in line with the World Health Organisation's 5 moments of hand hygiene.

"This will help protect the health worker as well as oth-

ers from diarrheal diseases, Covid-19 and others. The use of liquid soap for hand washing is better than bar soap, especially in our health facilities."

Obarisiagbon noted, "When the hands are visibly dirty, washing hands with soap should be done rather than using alcohol-based hand sanitisers."

She added, "Special attention should be paid to the fingertips, the thumbs, the inter digital spaces between our fingers, the back of our hands, and our wrists when washing our hands. After hand washing, hands can be air dried or single use hand towels should be used to dry our hands. The hand towels should be washed after use and not shared with others."

"We must avoid touching the eyes, nose, and mouth

with unwashed hands to avoid infecting ourselves."

She urged, "Mothers of children less than 5 years old must remember to wash their hands after changing their diaper and before preparing food for their children.

"Let's remember to wash our hands before we eat, after using the convenience (rest room), and before and after contact with a sick person," the Executive Secretary added.

According to her, "the celebration helps to increase awareness on the importance of washing our hands regularly and ensure people of all levels work together to influence the culture of washing hands always. Washing of hands regularly is a simple and effective way to remove germs, avoid getting sick, and prevent the spread of germs to others."

AMCON property confiscation: Folawiyo seeks injunction, dissociates self from defaulting firm

Billionaire businessman, Mr Tunde Folawiyo, has filed an ex parte motion before a Federal High Court in Lagos seeking a stay of execution after a judge ordered the Nigerian Asset Management Company to seize property that belongs to him.

Mr Folawiyo, in a suit no: FHC/L/CS/799/2020, is seeking an order of stay of execution of the ex-parte orders made against him on March 24, 2022, pending the hearing and determination of his Motion on Notice seeking to set aside the ex parte orders.

Lewis Allagoa, a judge in the federal high court in Lagos, ordered on March 24 that AMCON take over some of Mr Folawiyo's assets for an alleged debt of N727.9 million.

AMCON had sought an injunction to freeze Mr Folawiyo's accounts in 18 banks and provisional confiscation of his property in Lekki Phase 1, Lagos.

Folawiyo was allegedly instrumental in a N522.4 million loan from Spring Bank by Compagnie Generale de Logistique, where he is reportedly a director.

A 2017 lawsuit between AMCON and Compagnie Generale De Logistique & Others led the judge to grant an ex parte order in favour of the former.

The interest payable on the N522.4 million amounts to the loan at N727.9 million.

Folawiyo argued that he was not a party to the 2017 lawsuit and was not served with the judgment.

He argued that he was not a director of Compagnie Generale de logistique at the time of the lawsuit and was not involved in the loan transaction with spring bank.

Folawiyo said that, as a result, he is not a "debtor" within the meaning of section 61 of the AMCON act in terms of ensuring the provisional confiscation

of his assets and the freezing of his bank accounts because of the ruling of 2017.

He argued that a combined reading of sections 49(2), 50(2) and 61 of the Amcon act would show that only current directors of a company fall within the definition of "debtor" as to justify the freezing of their assets and accounts.

The businessman accused AMCON of not disclosing his status in Compagnie Generale De Logistique, the main debtor of the judgment in the lawsuit.

He also said that the ex parte order obtained by AMCON is an abuse of the judicial process, adding that the origin summons he filed is incompetent as it had expired at the time the order was granted.

He complained about the impact the order would have on his employees and the reputation of the three-generation family business that he has worked hard to maintain and grow over the years.



Mr Tunde Folawiyo

Lagos residents write Sanwo-Olu, over proposed demolition of houses

By **BEN OKOLOR**, Lagos

Residents and landlords of houses situated along some parts of Isheriosun/Bucknor/Jakande Oke-Afa extension areas in Ejigbo Local Council Development Area have appealed to the Lagos State Government to intervene in the proposed demolition of houses in the area.

The concerned property owners, in a joint statement, accused some officials of the Lagos State Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources of inconsistently marking their buildings in a bid to create a drainage route.

The statement read partly, "The area in question (Isheri, Jakande and Bucknor) is a valley plain which was clearly laid out in plots by the owners. We never experienced flooding until some individuals colluded with some members of the family to buy portions of it, thereby infringing on its right of way. Due to the blockade, flash flooding became the new order from 2012. This led to a diversion of the stream upwards. As work on the drain progressed, we suddenly noticed a second marking of the buildings on January 19 and as if that was not enough, a third marking was made on February 22, all pointing upwards on the plane.

"The questions now are: does water flow upwards if not powered by a force? Would it not end up as a wastage that failed to achieve its purpose? We call on Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu and good-spirited members of the public to come to our aid in whatever capacity and put a stop to the impending and unjustified calamity that is progressively reeling its ugly head."

Some of the residents were quoted as; "The officials have not been fair in the marking of houses for demolition; they marked 40 houses including mine which was not sited close to the natural way whereas only seven houses should have been affected. They refused to mark a particular house blocking the way but marked ours. Why? They served us notice on April 1 and the date on it indicates March 28. This is unfair. We are appealing to the government to please intervene."

In his response, The Director of Drainage Enforcement and Compliance, Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources, Mr Mahmood Adegbite, explained to our correspondent that the demolitions were inevitable because the houses were built along a water course.

Adegbite said, "The ministry got to know about this in 2014 and there was a consensus that a particular route should be formed to curb flooding. From the map, it is clear that houses have been built over the natural stream and we have started constructing ridges of 30 metres but we had to reduce the required setback to give them some leeway.

"Our aim is not just to go there and destroy anything but to make sure that we have a water course and this demolition will give them a respite, so it needs to be done for a greater good. We will try to reduce the number of houses that will be affected, but the demolition is inevitable.

"We have given them notice late last year and early this year; they have six months' notice. So we request that if they have any form of approval to submit, because the government will only deal with those with approval, but none of them have come up with any approval" Mr Adegbite noted.



Edwin Devakumar

Why cement prices are higher in Lagos, Kano

By **GENESIS ERIRIOMA**

Recently, the price of Cement in two of Nigeria's biggest industrial and real estate hubs has been on the rise occasioned by price hikes by manufacturers despite the closeness of these cities to manufacturing plants.

While the consumers, builders and prospective homeowners berate the manufacturers for the hike in price and complain bitterly of not enjoying the benefit of being close to the manufacturing hub, the latter blames the increase on the cost of spare parts and logistics, dollar to naira exchange rate etc.

The biggest cement manufacturing plants are owned by Dangote, BUA and Lafarge. While Dangote's factory is located at Ibeshe, the Lafarge factory is located in Sagamu

In Lagos, a 50-kilogramme (kg) bag of Dangote Cement, BUA and Lafarge is sold between N4, 300 and N4, 600 in Lekki and other areas where property development is high. In Kano, Dangote cement is about N4, 500, while BUA N4, 700 and Lafarge cost N4, 450 for a 50kg bag.

The Trumpet gathered that other areas of the country are experiencing growth in the real estate sector apart from Kano and Lagos. This has increased the demand for cement and raised the cost of building materials, coupled with unfavourable government policies and debt burdens.

Speaking on the development, Group Executive Director, Strategy, Portfolio Development and Capital Projects, Dangote Industries Limited, Edwin Devakumar, said, "We are expanding capacity from about 50,000 tons a day at the beginning of the year to 70,000 tons a day at the end of the year. All other producers in the market can sell at their own price." He however added that price-fixing does not exist in the present Nigerian market noting further that prices have scaled up as a result of higher demand, increased cost of diesel and unstable supply of gas required for powering manufacturing plants across the country.

Speaking further he said: "Transport fares for moving cement have jumped up, due to congestion at the ports that have resulted in longer turnaround time for trucks."

According to some experts, Lagos is the fastest growing city in Sub-Saharan Africa, and this puts pressure on building materials. The development of Lagos is unprecedented and cement is in very high demand because of an increase in construction activities.

One expert said: "In a situation where demand overshoots supply, you are bound to have such a price surge."

He blamed the increase on middle players that want to earn higher profits.

Mr. Debo Adejana, Vice President, Real Estate Developers

Association of Nigeria (REDAN), Southwest zone when asked said that transportation should not be a factor when it concerns bringing cement to Lagos noting that the price should not be so high, as their returns are being reflected already on the profit declared by the manufacturers. Speaking further he said, "except big developers that could buy in bulk, small private developers, who contribute largely to the increase in the housing stock, find it difficult to do as it reflects on the home prices. Private developers are desirous of engaging manufacturers on how to make cement affordable to their members, adding that they will not relent until it is done".

Mr Kunle Awobodu the immediate past president of the Nigerian Institute of Building, corroborated the fact that Lagos and Kano have higher demand than in any other city in Nigeria, anticipating cheaper cement prices stating however that the expectations that Lagos should benefit from the closeness of cement factories in Ibeshe, Ewekoro and Sagamu are being affected by the state of roads in some of the locations noting that most of the roads are in a very bad state.

It is expected that before the end of 2022 the cement production capacity of Nigeria should be around 60 million tonnes per annum (mtpa) with Dangote cement controlling about 60.6 percent of the market share,

Lafarge Africa Plc 21.8 per cent and BUA Group 17.6 per cent share.

Specifically, Dangote Cement is Africa's leading cement producer with operations in 10 African countries, revenues over \$2.5 billion as well as a production capacity of up to 48.6 million tonnes per annum (Mta) across Africa as of 2020.

Dangote Cement plant in Obajana, Kogi, is the largest in sub-Saharan Africa with 10.25 million tonnes per year capacity across three lines and a further three million tonnes per year capacity currently being built.

In 2012, the firm opened a \$1 billion cement plant in Ibeshe, Ogun. The facility is capable of producing six million metric tonnes of cement per year, raising the company's total production by 40 per cent at the time.

The company's plant in Gboko, Benue has three million tonnes per year capacity with an upgrade to four million tonnes per year.

Dangote Cement controls 61 per cent of the market share, Lafarge Africa 22 per cent and BUA Cement the rest.

With BUA Cement planning three new cement plants each having a capacity of 3 million tonnes yearly in Edo, Sokoto and Adamawa states, with the expected completion date put at the end of 2022, It is expected that the total output capacity of 20million metric tonnes will help in reducing the price of Cement in the local market.

ICPC chair says corruption a huge obstacle to development, ethical values

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Chairman of the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), Prof Bolaji Owasanoye, SAN, has said that corruption remains a huge obstacle to the development and ethical values in Nigeria.

Prof Owasanoye disclosed this while speaking during the Annual Making a Difference Leadership Seminar of the Harvest Fields International held



Prof Owasanoye

at the Events Centre, Agidingbi Road, Lagos.

In his presentation titled "Corruption and Integrity: Making the Difference Leadership Series", the ICPC Chairman, who was the guest speaker, stated that corruption undermines infrastructure development due to skewed procurement processes.

"Corruption is the greatest obstacle to development and an existential threat to unity. It affects everyone and everything negatively and gravely.

"In the minimum, corruption destroys ethical and moral values; compromises security, justice and rule of law; deprives citizens of economic, social and constitutional rights; breeds distrust, mistrust, unemployment, violence; breeds poverty as it diverts resources from poverty reduction projects; hinders effective resource allocation and deployment, and fuels ethnic distrust and conflicts due to unjust resource allocation," he said.

The ICPC boss, however, listed some corruption and integrity red flags for leaders in the public service to be wary of or to avoid slipping into them.

According to him, the red flag includes public procurement, contract splitting, fiscal management skill, abuse of office or power,

and disconnect from reality.

He identified the recovery of assets from corrupt persons as a key measure in the fight against corruption.

"Asset recovery from corrupt persons has become necessary to deny them the use of whatever they had stolen from the public coffers. Our efforts are geared towards recovery of identified stolen assets and resources that will be used for the development of the country.

"Millions of Nigerians suffering denial of basic social services and lack of infrastructures such as hospitals, schools, water and employment will receive succour when stolen assets are recovered from looters," he added.

The ICPC Chairman cited some scriptural passages in his recommendations to the seminar participants on how to make a difference in leadership while avoiding corrupt tendencies.

The recommendations include: reducing expectations of reward or gratitude (Luke 17:10); having options and reminding oneself that he or she is not the only person who can do it (1 Kings 19:10); focusing on basic needs not the vanities of life (1 Tim 6:8) and ignoring praise singers who exaggerate someone's importance to the system (John 6: 25-26).

Others are forgoing a privilege or entitlement

when in doubt about it (1 Cor. 6:12), conceding benefits to others and focusing on the welfare concerns of subordinates (Matt. 5:40), shouldn't be ambiguous about integrity issues (Proverbs 11:3), and be ready to speak truth to power and to walk the talk.

Earlier in his welcome remarks, the host and Senior Pastor of City Harvest Church, Rev Abraham Akinola, said the 2022 Leadership Seminar is aimed at creating a better society and providing redemption for the country.

He said, "It has been a long journey. This is the 16th Edition and is creating a better society. We shouldn't be overwhelmed by our numerous challenges; we have Nigerians who have faced the challenges of our society and our guest speaker is one of them.

"We need to exert the influence of Christ more in our life and attitude to enable us to preserve our nation. We, particularly, need the character of Christ in our life, choice of words, dress code and attitude in order to influence a change in our society."

Other speakers at the Leadership Seminar were former President of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Prof Assisi Asobie and Lead Researcher, TVC News, Mr Babajide Otitoju.

Ex-Perm Sec bags 12 years' jail term for non-declaration of assets

● *Forfeits N97.3m, \$139,575.50, £10,121.52 to FG*

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

A former Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Labour and Productivity, Clement Illoh, has been convicted to 12 years imprisonment by Justice Babs Kuewumi of the Federal High Court sitting in Ikoyi, Lagos.

The Trumpet gathered that the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) secured the conviction on Thursday, May 5, 2022.

Iloh was prosecuted by the EFCC on a three-count charge bordering on non-declaration of assets to the tune of N97.3m.

One of the counts reads: "That you, Dr Illoh Onubuogo Clement, on the 19th day of April 2016 in Lagos, within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court, failed to make full disclosure of your assets to wit: the sum

of N97, 300, 613. 44 (Ninety-Seven Million, Three Hundred Thousand, Six Hundred and Thirteen Naira, Forty Four Kobo), which sum you warehoused in Account No 3033750243 domiciled with First Bank of Nigeria Ltd in your name and you, therefore, committed an offence contrary to and punishable under section 27(3) (C) of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (Establishment) Act 2004."

At the proceedings, the prosecution counsel, during cross-examination of the defendant, revealed that Illoh received funds to the tune of N65million from SURE-P project contractors, which was domiciled in his personal First Bank account with no:3033750243.

In the course of proceedings, the defence counsel, T.S. Awana, sought the court's permission to confer with his client.

Thereafter, the defendant, through his counsel, applied to change his "not guilty"

plea.

Justice Kuewumi granted the application and Illoh "pleaded guilty".

While delivering his judgment, Justice Kuewumi held that "I have given due attention to the allocates of the defendant.

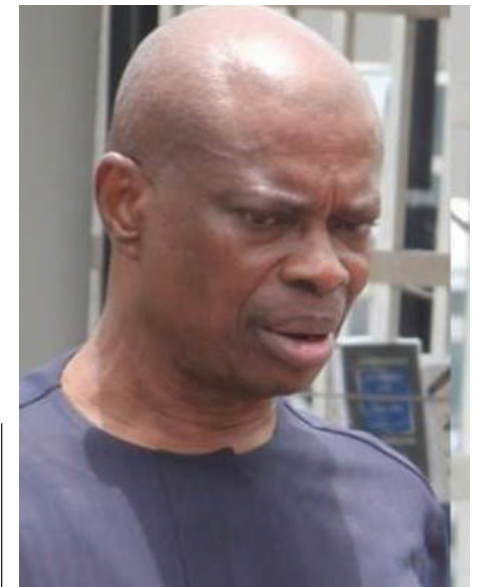
"However, the court will not fail to perform its duty in accordance with the provisions of the law.

"Consequently, the defendant is hereby sentenced to four years in each of the counts and the same shall run concurrently from the 10th of October 2019."

The Judge also ordered the forfeiture of the sum of N97, 300,613.44, \$139,575.50 and £10,121.52 respectively to the Federal Government of Nigeria, being proceeds of unlawful activities.

According to a statement by its spokesperson, Wilson Uwujaren, "The EFCC had, on

October 3, 2019, secured the conviction and sentencing of Illoh to five years imprisonment over a N14.1m fraud before Justice Oluwatoyin Taiwo of the Ikeja Special Offences Court sitting in Ikeja, Lagos."



Dr Clement

Court closes serving senator's defence on alleged N204m fraud

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Justice Agatha Okeke of the Federal High Court sitting in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State has ordered the defence team of Senator Albert Bassey, standing trial on a six-count charge bordering on money laundering, to close its defence and prepare its final address.

The judge gave the order on Thursday,

May 5, 2022, following the failure of the lead defence counsel, Kanu Agabi, SAN, to continue the trial of the serving Senator representing Akwa Ibom North-East district, in alleged N204million fraud.

When the matter came up for continuation of trial on Thursday, a member of the defence team, Mike Ozekhome, SAN, prayed the court for an adjournment on the ground that the lead counsel, Agabi who is in possession of the case file, is currently receiving medical treatment abroad.

He said, "With due respect my Lord, we shall be asking for an adjournment. We have filed a letter to that effect before this Honourable Court. The lead counsel, Chief Kanu Agabi, SAN is abroad for medical treatment and he has the file of this case.

"He called me to passionately plead for just one more adjournment. If I had the case file, I would have proceeded with this case."

Responding to the application, the counsel of the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), Ekele Iheanacho, expressed displeasure with the numerous pleas from the defence and the several adjournments granted in the course of the trial at the instance of the defence.

He said, "My Lord, we just got the letter of adjournment from the Chambers of the learned silk, Kanu Agabi. On our part, we will say that this is very worrisome and we urge the court to refuse the application."

Ruling on the defence's prayers, Justice Okeke upheld the argument of the prosecution and turned down Ozekhome's request for an adjournment. The court consequently ordered him to continue his defence.

However, Ozekhome, while addressing the court after the ruling, insisted that the defence could not continue as the case file was with the lead defence counsel.

"My lord, we don't have the case file," he said.

The prosecution thereafter applied that the case of the defence be close. The application was granted and the court-ordered parties to file their final addresses.

Justice Okeke adjourned the matter till June 22, 2022, for adoption of final addresses.

Bassey is being prosecuted by the EFCC for alleged money laundering and being in possession of six vehicles worth N204 million, at the instance of one Olajide Omokore, whose companies allegedly executed contracts for the Akwa Ibom State government.



Senator Bassey

Company's employee arraigned for fraud

The Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) has arraigned one Musa Mohammed before Justice Darius Khobo of the Kaduna State High Court on a three count charge bordering on criminal breach of trust.

Mohammed, an employee of a company, Halims & Co. Nigeria Limited, allegedly diverted to personal use, over N32million meant to finance a contract awarded to the company.

He, however, pleaded not guilty to the charges.

Consequently, the prosecuting counsel, P.C Onyeneho urged the court to fix a date for commencement of trial.

The case was adjourned till July 5, 2022, for trial.



I try my best to stay out of trouble-Actress, Ireti Osayemi

Ireti Osayemi is one of the most versatile Nollywood actresses whose acting delivery is top-notch as she can switch from role interpretation in Yoruba, English, Igbo and Liberian English; not relenting any time soon, the proud mother of two is full of hope for the future. In this interview, she bares it all.

What is the secret to your beauty?

I have no secret, this is just me, and it's the grace of God

For some reason, you have been able to keep your size intact, what has been your daily routine?

I have been trying to work on my weight seriously, this is showbiz, you can't be just a particular size, you have to look different at a particular time, there are different stages in your career and you have to go with the trend and you need to look different.

How has it been being an actress?

It's been wonderful, this is the only profession you get to practice every other profession in, being an actress has been wonderful.

You are one of the few Yoruba actresses that have been able to stay off scandal throughout your acting career, what is the secret behind it?

I try my best to stay out of trouble, I think there are some certain things that you will do and you know within yourself you are not doing the right thing, you might think you are doing the right thing and the society, the viewers see it the other way and it becomes a scandal, sometimes those things don't really happen then people blow it out of proportion, it is not as if I have any trick, I have just been living my life.

You don't say so much on social media, why?

I have got my hands full in my house and my kids, so there is no time to go on social media, I love to go online and read and then follow the trend but there is no time.

Most celebrities of your status are known to flaunt their kids on social media, why is yours different?

I try my best to keep my kids out of the roller balloon of the industry, my son doesn't like it, and my daughter does not mind. Once they get old enough they can choose what they want.

You are a beautiful woman, how do you handle your admirers?

I can't dispute the fact that I do have admirers, it is normal for a woman to have admirers, I try my best to let my admirers know that I am booked and should try someone else.

How have you been able to manage acting, motherhood and the admiration you get from men?

It is normal, some men will tell you that I am a married man as well so what is the big deal, you know what you want for yourself and you go for what you want.

Now that you are a versatile actress, how many languages can you speak?

I speak Yoruba fluently, I speak English fluently and I speak a bit of Igbo, I speak Liberian English fluently and am hoping to learn more languages.

How many roles have you rejected and what kind of roles do you reject?

I have rejected a lot of roles, I have to balance the home and work so when it is crashing I have to reject them, I try my best not to turn down scripts, if the script is not what I want I try to talk to the producer to balance it. You don't totally say this is a bad job, I don't believe that there is a bad script, all you need is to put in some things, take some things out and make it perfect.

With a million dollar will you act nude?

No! I won't, I am an African woman.





AMVCA 8: Bonang Matheba Joins IK Osakioduwa as Co-Host

Africa Magic in association with MultiChoice has announced the hosts for the eighth edition of the Africa Magic Viewers' Choice Awards, set to hold on May 14, 2022, in Lagos.

The multi-talented Nigerian media personality, IK Osakioduwa, will return to host the award show with South Africa's media darling, Bonang Matheba, who will be making her hosting debut at the AMVCAs.

Bonang Matheba is a multi-award-winning radio host, TV presenter and style icon renowned for her flamboyant presentation skills and her signature voice on South African radio and television.

She has hosted several award shows and prominent events, including the 2016 MTV Africa Music Awards, the pre-shows for the 2014 MTV Europe Music Awards and 2016 BET Awards, and Miss South Africa 2019.

Announcing the awards' hosts, Executive Head of Content and West Africa Channels, MultiChoice Nigeria, Dr Busola Tejumola said: "We are excited to have Bonang join IK as co-host for the eighth

edition of the AMVCAs. They are both extremely talented and have attained continental acclaim having both hosted some of Africa's biggest shows. Together they will keep the crowd entertained on the biggest night to celebrate African film and TV stars".

Speaking on her AMVCA debut, Bonang expressed her excitement saying, "it's been a long time coming". On what viewers should expect to see, Queen B revealed that she will be bringing world-class, quality television hosting to the show.

"It's always such an honour to host live productions and I think after COVID, we haven't had the opportunity to be outside to have these big, big productions with live studio audiences. So, it's lovely to have all of that back. It's also an honour. Any single stage I get to step on is an honour. I've always wanted to work with IK. I am a huge fan of his. So, I'm looking forward to that too", she said.

Making his return to the glamorous AMVCA stage, IK said: "I feel really honoured to be hosting the AMVCAs again. I'm also really excited about the decision to honour the social media content creators with a category of their own. Trust me when I say, without a doubt this year is going to be another amazing outing for the African film industry".

Nack and Naija Ninja launch design contest for fashion collection

Activities to mark the first anniversary of the death of beloved music icon, Olanrewaju Fasasi, aka Sound Sultan have kicked off in full gear.

In addition to the highly anticipated release of his first posthumous studio release, "Reality Chq", set to drop in July, Now Muzik, managers of the Sound Sultan estate, have announced the collaboration between Naija Ninja and foremost home-grown fashion brand, NACK Apparel, towards the launch of the late icon's merch line, SOUND SULTAN ETERNAL.

In line with the late Sultan's vision of nurturing and empowering young talents, organizers are kicking it off with a fashion graphic design competition, tagged NACK x NAIJA NINJA for SOUND SULTAN DESIGN COMPETITION.

The competition, inviting entries from all over Nigeria & beyond, is an online contest for the Sound Sultan Eternal (SSE) line of apparel and accessories, and offers fair and equal opportunity to young, upcoming fashion graphic designers. Entries are expected to close come May 12, 2022, with the grand finale holding on May 19, 2022.

Organizers have equally announced Toke Makinwa, Basket Mouth, Baba Dee and Nack Apparel CEO, Tolulope Akin as judges for the online competition as winners are expected to go home with cash prizes worth a million naira and an opportunity to design bespoke SSE merch.



Nigerian Idol Contenders Wowed Judges with Musical Prowess

As Anxiety on Winner Mounts

As the contest on Nigerian Idol heats up, the top four contestants on the Bigi sponsored Nigerian Idol had stunning performances with a display of exceptional talents to the admiration of the judges, with each trying to outwit the other in Sunday's show that saw two contenders evicted due to lower votes.

The contestants who performed exhilaratingly also got the audience excited, as they were thrilled to make it to the next show, on the music talent discovery platform, which will culminate on May 22nd. It will also see the winner smiling home with N100, 000, 000 worth of prizes, including a recording deal from a label, a brand-new Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV), cash prizes, and other exciting gifts.

The show, with over twenty-four million votes in the last episode, kept music lovers surprised with the improved performances of the top four contenders: Zadok, Jordan, Progress, and Banty. It also saw the eviction of Itohan and Faith.

Also, there was the appearance of a guest judge, top Nollywood actress, Omawunmi Megbele, known by her stage name, Omawunmi, together with Obi Asika, Dapo Oyebanjo, popularly known by his stage name D'Banj, Simisola Bolatito Kosoko popularly known as Simi, to comment on the gig, and IK Osakioduwa, the host.

Progress sang Johnny Drille's "Wait for Me," and it made Asika, who was so delighted with his stage control, affirm that the rendition was splendid, while Simi said, "It was very good." D'Banj stated "keep progressing as you have proven your worth as a singer," while Omawunmi enthused, "I was following your song and it was quite interesting."

Jordan did "Aeroplane mode" by Fireboy: with praises from Simi, saying "your voice is really fine", D'Banj "you sang from your heart, it is a classic performance," while Omawunmi stated, "your voice is so melodious." Not left out was Asika, who avowed, "You did well."

Tunde Kelani's 'Ayinla' set for Netflix debut

Global streaming platform, Netflix has licensed Tunde Kelani's 2021 film 'Ayinla'; the film based on iconic Apala singer Ayinla Omowura is set to debut to African subscribers on May 20.

Set in 1980, the same year the Ayinla music star died, the Jade Osiberu produced film follows the events leading to his death.



Omowura was played by Lateef Adedimeji with Debo 'Mr. Macaroni' Adebayo, Bimbo Manuel, Ade Laoye, Bimbo Ademoye, Omowunmi Dada and Kunle Afolayan (who doubles as executive producer) in supporting roles.

'Ayinla' recorded an impressive theatrical release, grossing over N70 million in box office despite launching in 33 cinema locations.

The Kelani directed film's success at the box office was followed by award nominations and an AMAA win for its Achievement in Cinematography category.

'Ayinla' joins Netflix's growing library of Nigerian titles and is reportedly the first licensed title from the streamer this year.

Netflix kicked off the year with original titles including the Bolanle Austen-Peters directed 'The Man of God' and the soon-to-debut Ebonylife studio's 'Blood Sisters'.



Rangers' fans laud 'classy' Carvin Bassey

By OVIRI KELVIN, Sports Editor, Abuja

Rangers fans have continued to praise Super Eagles Calvin Bassey over his outstanding performance in defence that saw the Scottish club overturn a one-goal deficit to win RB Leipzig 2-1.

In a tense atmosphere at Ibrox Stadium, Rangers dealt a shocking blow to the German side with two first-half goals from defender James Tavernier and midfielder Glen Kamara to hand Giovanni van Bronckhorst's side an advantageous 2-1 lead on aggregate until 45 minutes.

While the Gers were busy constituting various degrees of problems to Leipzig defenders, Calvin Bassey ensured the Rangers' defence was rocky and impenetrable.

The 19 years old Super Eagle who featured in Qatar 2022 world cup qualifiers for Nigeria while earning two



caps, dedicated the victory to Rangers kit man Jimmy Bell who recently passed away at 69 after spending over 3 decades at Ibrox.

Emotionally drained Bassey, in his tweet, said, "For Jimmy, we love you, Jimmy," touching the black armband to his chest.

Sequel to his tweet, Rangers fans have responded accordingly using the opportunity to dignify the defender for a job well done.

Andrew Bluebells said, "This boy, Calvin Bassey is a credit to the club and his family, a real classy young man.

"He's been outstanding and will get better, he's a man-mountain, just hope we can hold onto him next season," he added.

Matty Van Hagi, "Honestly Bassey is one of the best signings our club has made defensively."

Billy Adams said, "The bursts from the back are unbelievably important.

And his positioning defensively has improved so much. What a player."

Rangers face another German side Eintracht Frankfurt which won West Ham 3-1 on aggregate for the Europa League finals at the Ramon Sanchez-Pizjuan Stadium in Sevilla, Spain on May 18.

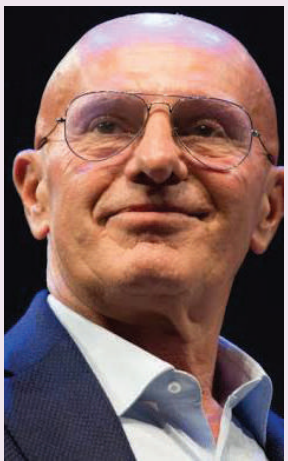
'Italian teams must learn from Madrid's Champions League victory if...'

Ex-Italy and Milan coach Arrigo Sacchi said there are a lot Italian football teams need to learn from the 3-1 victory of Real Madrid over Manchester City in Wednesday's Champions League match at the Santiago Bernabeu.

Sacchi, who spoke to La Gazzetta dello Sport in an exclusive interview, praised the relentless spirit of Madrid players who never gave up but continued to fight for a win and eventually got it.

He acknowledged Carlos Ancelotti for being a genius by taking out experienced Casimero, Luka Modric, and Toni Kroos for the young, promising players who have the zeal to excel.

Thanks to Ancelotti's changes that paid off with inspirational Rodrygo lighting up the atmosphere at the



Bernebeu with a brace.

Sacchi said, "Ancelotti won against City as he had done against PSG and Chelsea, with a comeback inspired by substitutions.

"He replaced some champions with youths that

make enthusiasm their most important quality. He subbed off all the midfielders in the second half: Casimiro, Luka Modric, and Toni Kroos. Even Karim Benzema in extra time.

"He gambled on the freshness of Rodrygo, Marco Asensio, and Eduardo Camavinga. He turned the game around thanks to Rodrygo, who scored a decisive brace when Manchester City seemed to have secured a place in the Final.

"Every goal came from pressing, possible thanks to the energy of young players and quick counter-attacks.

Sacchi opined that Italian teams must change their defensive mentality for an attacking type as Real Madrid did over Manchester City if they are to succeed in Europe.

"That's what our teams must

do to pursue success in Europe. Pressing gives courage and scares the opponents, forcing them to do something they can't do well: defend.

"Foreign clubs are much better attacking rather than defending. Manchester City proved it over the two legs. Therefore, we must press them to win. Unfortunately, every Italian club uses one or even two extra men at the back, often to man-mark just one opposing striker. Like this, they lose a man in midfield and miss the chance to dominate games," the ex-Italian boss added.

The win against Manchester City makes it the fifth final Carlo Ancelotti has reached and could become the manager with the greatest number of Champions League titles if he triumphs over Liverpool to lift his fourth.

Mike Arteta extends Arsenal's contract until 2025

Arsenal head coach, Mikel Arteta has extended his contract with the Gunners until 2025 saying he is happy his ideology fits into what the Arsenal board wants for the club.

The 40 years old manager who has taken Arsenal to fourth on the Premier League table, a position which had been out of sight since 2017, hopes to build the North London club to compete fiercely with European greats.

The Spaniard signed for Arsenal in 2019 and won his first silverware in 2020 when Arsenal defeated Chelsea in the FA Cup final to lift the trophy.

Following the success over

the Blues at Wembley, Arsenal sustained the winning relics over Jurgen Klopp as they dismantled Liverpool in the Community Shield clash to lift the trophy.

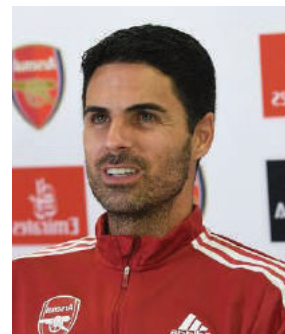
Though Arsenal had a poor run of form midway in the 2021/2022 season, Arteta has been able to find the best rhythm to stabilize the team which has propelled them to occupy the Champions League spot.

"I'm excited, grateful and happy today. When I spoke to Josh [Kroenke] he could see the club at the same point and he wanted to take the club the way I wanted to do it. So everything that he's

said, and that Stan has said when I've been together with both of them, they've always delivered," Arteta said after signing a new deal with Arsenal.

"We want to take the club to the next level and to compete really with the top teams. To do that, we have to be playing in the Champions League.

"We have to be able to evolve the team, improve our players, improve all departments, generate even more connections with our fans, improve the atmosphere at the Emirates, be able to recruit top, top talent and the best people for this club to drive this project to that level," he added.



Arsenal despite occupying the fourth place in the Premier League table, have four matches left to run including the crucial match against fellow top-four contender and fierce rival Tottenham and relegation-struggling side Everton.

Tunisian Ons Jabeur, first African to reach WTA 1000 event finals

World number 10 Ons Jabeur becomes the first African ever to reach the WTA 1000 event final at Madrid Open after seeing off Ekaterina Alexandrova in two straight sets in the semifinals.

The 27 years old, who has a record of 6-1 defeats against the Russian Alexandrova that featured in the tourney as an independent athlete, asserted that she took it as a challenge to put up shocking revenge.

Alexandrova was featured in the WTA 1000 event in Madrid Open as an independent athlete due to the ban on Russian and Belarusian athletes from several supporting activities with Wimbledon and LTA following suit.

Sequel to the above, the eight-seeded Jabeur having won the quarterfinal 6-3 6-2 against Romanian Simona Halep, a former French Open and Wimbledon champion, took revenge on Alexandrova in a 6-2, 6-3 win. This win brings the head-to-head stats between the Tunisian and Russian to 6-2.

"I felt like I was sick of losing against her all the time, so I came here to take my revenge," Jabeur told BBC Sport.

"I feel like this tournament is a revenge tournament, every match. I'm very glad about my performance. I

know she plays well, so I tried to impose my rhythm."

"I'm very happy with the level I played," she added.

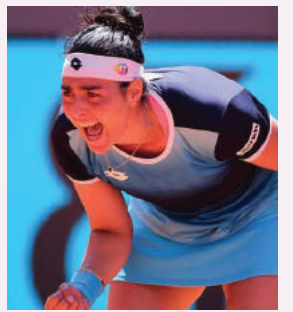
Jabeur plays 12th-seeded American Jessica Pegula, the winner against Switzerland's Jil Teichmann, in Saturday's final in what could be her greatest career win.

According to the Tunisian, her opponent should appear exhausted when they meet.

She continued: "I really hope they play for five hours and they become tired.

"I'm just going to focus on myself, it's been tough losing a few finals lately. I'm going to do my best and then give it all for this one," Jabeur said.

Following last month's defeat in Charleston to Belinda Bencic, Jabeur, currently the number one African player and the highest-ranked Arab tennis player in ATP or WTA rankings' history, looks to win her second trophy after her first from WTA 250 event at Birmingham in 2021.



LMC sanctions MFM, Kwara United for misconduct

The League Management Company, (LMC) have sanctioned the MFM football club over several unprofessional conducts and breach of game rules in their matchday 26 fixture against Rangers of Enugu.

MFM supporters had during the match, encroached into the field of play to attack the center referee.

Allegedly, that not being enough, the MFM team manager, Geoffrey Aghogi, visited the match officials in the hotel where they lodged to constitute a nuisance, reports say.

According to LMC, MFM failed to provide and ensure effective security during the game which resulted in the breakdown of law and order at the match venue.

LMC stressed that MFM conduct contravenes the rules as their supporters, players and officials behaved in a way capable of bringing the league to disrepute.

The administrators of NPFL added that MFM failed to control their players and officials in ensuring they displayed proper conduct in the course of their match against Rangers.

Furthermore, LMC said that MFM team manager Geoffrey Aghogi breached the Fair Play rules by going to the hotel of the match officials to harass, threaten and intimidate them.

Following the series of infringements, MFM has been fined N1 million for failure to provide general security and also fined another N1 million for

encroaching into the field of play.

A fine of N1 million has also been imposed on MFM for the unsporting behaviour of their players, officials, and fans.

Accordingly, MFM players, Jerry Isaac and Christian Molokwu have been handed a 12-match suspension for their involvement in the infraction in the first instance.

MFM team manager Geoffrey Aghogi was banned indefinitely from all NPFL-organised activities including matches.

The NPFL administrators ordered MFM to identify the persons involved in the assault of match officials and further show evidence of an arrest by the police and prosecution/arrestment in a competent court of jurisdiction.

LMC revealed that the assaulted center referee will get a compensation of N250,000 and any other additional verifiable medical costs.

Sequel to the above, the LMC stated that MFM will play their next three home matches at the Dina Dipo Stadium in Ijebu-Ode and will only return to their home ground after LMC must have received a satisfactory police report on the prosecution of the persons involved in the alleged assault.

A suspended two-point deduction has been imposed on MFM which will be for a probationary period for the remainder of the season.

LMC reiterated that MFM has 7 working days to pay all fines and also has 48 hours from the date of the notice to appeal the sanctions.

Nigeria to play France, Canada and Korea Republic in U20 W' Cup

Following the U20 World Cup draw that was held at Teatro Nacional in San José, the capital of Central American nation, Nigeria, France, Canada, and Korea have fallen into Group D.

Defending champions Spain will slug it out in Group A with host nation Costa Rica, Australia, and Samba girls Brazil, while fellow African compatriot Ghana battle with the Netherlands, Japan, and three times champion United States in Group D.

More so, the German machines who have an equal record with the United States of winning the diadem three times, two of which were against Nigeria in the finals, 2010 & 2014, fall into Group B with Columbia, New Zealand, and Mexico.

According to FIFA, all group phases and quarter-final matches will be played at the Alejandro Morera Soto, comprising a hybrid of natural and



synthetic grass, called stitched grass.

The semi-final, final and third-place matches will take place at the Estadio Nacional during the 19 days competition scheduled from August 10-28.

The draw ceremony at the Teatro Nacional in San José was witnessed by the Head Coach of Nigeria's U20 girls, Christopher

Danjuma, and the Team Secretary, Patricia Osuji, the NFF media report.

Nigeria's opening group match will be against the 2018 host nation France. A francophone colonist that finished third place in 2014 where Nigeria emerged as runners-up.

Barely eight years ago, Nigeria dislodged the Korea Republic 2-1 in the group stage at the 2014

championship in Canada to lead the group.

GROUP A: Costa Rica, Australia, Spain, Brazil

GROUP B: Germany, Colombia, New Zealand, Mexico

GROUP C: France, Nigeria, Canada, Korea Republic

GROUP D: Japan, The Netherlands, Ghana, USA

'AFCON 2023: Delay in Eguavoen's successor not good for Super Eagles'

Following the constraint on time to get the Super Eagles prepared for the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) qualifiers, Nigerians have grimaced at the delay by the Nation's football governing body (NFF) in announcing Augustine Eguavoen's successor.

Nigeria have been scheduled to play Sierra Leone at the MKO Abiola national stadium after approval to that effect was granted by the continental football governing body (CAF) in a letter conveyed to the NFF on Sunday, May 1, 2022.

But like a sheep without a Shepard, the Super Eagles are yet to know who steps in the stead o steer the team to success which is a question every concerned sports lover is begging to get answers from the NFF.

One could recall that the NFF after its technical and development committee submitted its report, swung into action to name new technical crews, which were all indigenous coaches, for the nation's football teams.

On the aspect of the Super Eagles, the NFF opted to secure the services of a foreign coach, an option which did not augur well with the Ministry of Youth and Sports Development which preferred an indigenous gaffer with the 1994 nation cup winner, Sunday Olise, in its scope.

Adamantly, NFF made a list of foreign coaches vying for the Super Eagles' job with Portuguese Jose Poseiro, former PSG manager, Laurent Blanc, Ernesto Valverde, and Phillip Cocu all in the frame.

However, from a source, NFF forwarded Jose Poseiro as the successful candidate to succeed Eguavoen, a choice opposed by the sports ministry who faulted the NFF's selections over an improperly conducted screening.

The sports ministry reminded the NFF that they are much concerned about who takes charge of the Nigeria senior men's team because they will be responsible to foot the bills of the head coach.

With this internal imbroglio, Nigerians have lamented that the impasse is harming the Super Eagles' preparation for the 2023 AFCON qualifiers.

A former Nigeria goalkeeper, Andrew Aikhomogbe, bemoaned that Nigeria was supposed to have announced Augustine Eguavoen's successor by now.

He warned that a further delay in announcing the foreign coach would not tell well of a nation preparing for an imminent 2023 AFCON qualifiers.

"I expected that by now the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) would have named a substantive coach for the Super Eagles so that the new coach can quickly get used to the system in Nigeria," Aikhomogbe told Complete Sports from Cairo, Egypt.

"Delaying the announcement of a new foreign coach may not be too good for Nigeria, because the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations qualifiers will commence soon.

"NFF must get this right before it is too late," he added.

Former Lobi Stars coach petitions club to FIFA

Lobi Stars football club have been dragged before the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) over a breach of contract involving ex-Nigeria international and professional football manager, Eddy Dombrye.

Dombrye through his agent, Alicia Nikolis, forwarded a petition before the highest football governing organ over the inability of the Makurdi-based club to compensate him after being relieved of his job.

The football gaffer's two years contract signed in September 2021, was

terminated by Lobi Stars in March 2022 after a poor run of results that saw the Ortom Boys struggling to beat the drop zone of the Nigeria Professionals Football League (NPFL) table to evade relegation.

FIFA, which oversees and upholds the dignity of football globally while it disciplines anybody/institution whose actions and inactions are meant to bring the game to disrepute, is presently reviewing the petition brought before it by Dombrye's agent, according to Mmenyeneabasi Akpan's report.



However, this is not the first petition that has been lodged before the FIFA Disciplinary and Ethics

Committee against an NPFL club as Heartland of Owerri have tasted from the vine of FIFA's unbiased sanctions as well.

Heartland of Owerri were petitioned to FIFA in May 2020 after they unlawfully terminated the contract of Brazilian Santos Da Costa Ivo Jorge.

Though the Samba boy was not the only player to have been dropped by the Owerri-based club, he sought to exploit the option of letting the world football governing body decide his fate despite having a year left to run in his 2 years contract.

'NTF to scout emerging talents in 2022 tennis championship'



Dayo Akindoju, President of Nigeria Tennis Federation (NTF), has commended the sponsors of the 2022 Davnotch National Open Championship for creating the avenue where emerging talents will be harvested and nurtured into future stars.

Akindoju, in a statement, disclosed that the tennis tournament which is not discriminatory on gender equality will be held at Package B of the MKO Abiola National Stadium, Abuja.

NTF president, who

spoke ahead of the tournament scheduled from Thursday, May 5 to May 14, 2022, assured that the NTF will ensure that tournament is organised to meet international standards.

Akindoju stressed that all the requirements needed to ensure that the tournament achieves a successful outing have been put in place.

"I can assure you that this year's edition will witness the best of technical and tactical exhibitions, thereby showcasing the

improving standard of tennis in Nigeria," he told News Agency of Nigeria.

"We have put in place all necessary arrangements to ensure the players, officials, and even spectators have a great competition," the Tennis boss added.

Nevertheless, Akindoju after applauding the gesture of the sponsors of the championship with an underlining fact to aid grassroots development called on more sponsors to contribute to the advancement of tennis sport.





FIFA sanction former Gabonese U17 coach, others over sexual abuse of minors

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

The independent Ethics Committee of the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) has sanctioned former Gabonese U17 coach Patrick Assoumou Eyi, President of La Ligue de Football de l'Estuaire, Serge Ahmed Mombo, and two Gabonese coaches Triphel Mabicka and Orphée Mickala over sexual assault on minors.

The incident happened in December last year when local media alleged that U17 Gabonese coach was sexually assaulting minors and young footballers which spurred the Ethics Committee to swing into action by launching a preliminary investigation.

According to The Guardian, several of Eyi's victims reported being abused by the former Gabonese U17 coach who later became the technical director for La Ligue de l'Estuaire, the country's highest league, necessitated the International players union

(Fifpro) to register a complaint to FIFA.

"Our preliminary inquiries yielded consistent evidence from credible witnesses who all tell of an ongoing and long-embedded practice of forcing young players into sexual relationships as a pre-condition for footballing opportunities," Fifpro said.

"If these allegations are indeed true, it is yet further evidence that football is being consistently exploited, across leagues and continents, as a forum for abusers to access, groom, extort and assault players. More must be done to prevent this horrific abuse and we call on football's governing bodies to act as a matter of urgency," the players union added.

After a review of the degree of allegations, the chairman of the Disciplinary and Ethics Committee directed that the scope of the investigation be broadened which saw Serge Ahmed Mombo, Triphel Mabicka and Orphée Mickala indicted.



Patrick Assoumou Eyi Patrick Assoumou Eyi

Following the investigation by the disciplinary organ of the world football governing body, Mambo, Mabicka, and Mickala have been suspended from partaking in all

football-related activities for 90 days while Eyi who was suspended on December 17, 2022, by the Gabonese FA has his sanction exacerbated to have a global effect.

2023 AFCON: Nigeria host Sierra Leone in MKO National stadium

Confederation of African Football (CAF) has approved the Moshood Abiola National Stadium, Abuja as the venue for Nigeria's 2023 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) qualifying matches.

CAF in a letter to Nigeria's football governing body (NFF) on Sunday, May 1, 2022, approved the nation to use the aforementioned venue

for the qualifier between the Super Eagles of Nigeria and Leone Stars of Sierra Leone.

Going by this development, all suppositions that the stadium would be banned from hosting competitive tournaments due to the incident that happened when Nigeria failed to qualify for the Qatar 2022 FIFA World Cup, have

been thwarted.

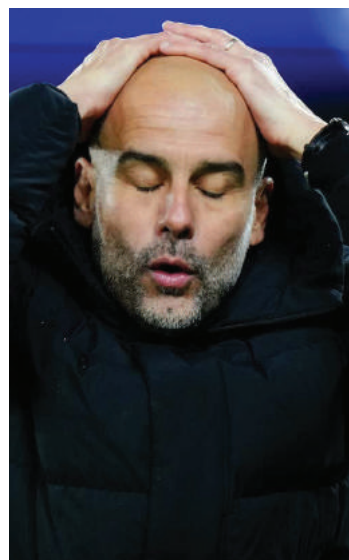
Meanwhile, the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) recently, sanctioned Nigeria and other countries after it concluded preliminary investigations on varying degrees of incidents that happened during the FIFA World Cup qualifiers around the globe.

Nigeria, after the investigation,

was fined CHF150,000 which is equivalent to N63,685,371.31, and was subjected to play one match in closed doors without spectators to cheer them up to victory.

Consequent to the second resolve by FIFA, the Super Eagles will have to play the Leone Stars in the MKO Abiola national stadium without the support of Nigeria fans.

'We were close to Champions League final'



Manchester City head coach Pep Guardiola has lamented the devastating outcome of the Wednesday Champions League semi-final clash against Real Madrid at the Santiago Bernabeu.

The City gaffer, whose team at 89minutes still had a 2 goals lead over Madrid, having secured a 3-2 win at the Etihad in the first leg, never thought the home team could put up a shocking fightback.

Guardiola, signed by Khaldoon Al Mubarak in 2016 from Bayern Munich to help the Blues of Manchester secure their first-ever Champions League trophy, fell to his sixth elimination in the semi-finals like Jose Mourinho, the most for any manager in history.

The City boss in a post-match

interview undeniably agreed that the game was tough despite getting close to the finals.

He, however, accepted that the defeat resulted from the inability of the Sky Blues to perform in top form.

More so, Guardiola conceded that Madrid exploited the option of packing the 18 yard-box with attacking-minded players while crossing the ball simultaneously to pressurize the Manchester City defence.

"It is tough for us, I cannot deny," Guardiola to BT Sport after the loss on Wednesday.

"We were so close to the Champions League final.

"Now we need to process that and come back, with our people at home and in the last four games we have."

"They put a lot of players in the box, with Eder Militao, Rodrygo, Vinicius Junior, Karim Benzema and they put in crosses and scored two goals.

"We didn't play our best, but it is normal, a semi-final, the players feel the pressure and want to do it. Football is unpredictable, it is a game like this. We have to accept it," he added.

Manchester City return to England to concentrate on the Premier League title hunt with four games remaining to end the season.

Meanwhile, Jurgen Klopp is on the trail to leapfrog Pep Guardiola on the top spot before the season's end, which depicts Liverpool's focus on finishing the season with a quadruple.

'Virgil Van Dijk excels in the absence of Drogba, others'

Former Chelsea midfielder Michael Ballack has ridiculed Liverpool's defender and captain, Virgil Van Dijk, for feeling too confident as a defensive block-wall.

Ballack, according to Football Tweet, opines that the Liverpool man got the opportunity because the league does not parade strikers in the same clime as former Premier League greats.

The German, who thinks the Dutch Defender is overrated, mentioned a class of Premier League strikers that would make a mess of the latter.

He said, "Virgil van Dijk is very lucky to play in an era where there is no Drogba, Lampard, Alan Shearer, Henry, Rooney, Van Persie, Tevez, Adebayor, and Diego Costa in the Premier League.

"No wonder they think he is the best defender in the League, "Ballack added.

Virgil van Dijk has been inspirational to Liverpool's success and quadruple campaign this season.

The 30 years old, who joined Liverpool through 2018's winter transfer window at a record fee of £75m, hopes to lift the second Champions League trophy of his career in Paris after he captained his team to a legendary win against Villarreal.

Dijk, this season, has featured 47 times for Liverpool in all competitions, scoring three Premier League goals and providing an assist in the process.

