

SDP, others meet over APC win in Ekiti, Oni rejects result

By **ADELEKE ADESERI**
(News Editor)

Social Democratic Party, SDP, and some other critical stakeholders aggrieved by the vote

■ Presidential candidate condemns vote buying
■ Buhari, Sanwo-Olu, others congratulate Oyebanji
buying and other (APC) will meet to decide their next step over the results declared by the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC.

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P A T R I O T I C V O I C E

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Gen Lucky Irabor



IGP Alkali

LIST OF SENATORS SUBMITTED BY APC TO INEC

- ABIA STATE**
Chief Hon. Emeka Atuma (Abia Central)
Senator Orji Uzor Kalu (Abia North)
Hon. Blessing Nwagba (Abia South)
- ADAMAWA STATE**
Abdulaziz Nyako (Adamawa Central)
Elisha Cliff Ishaku (Adamawa North)
Adamu Ismaila (Adamawa South)
- AKWA IBOM STATE**
Emaeyak Ukpong (Akwa Ibom North East)
Sen. Godswill Obot Akpabio (Akwa Ibom North West)
Martins Udo-Inyang (Akwa Ibom South)
- ANAMBRA STATE**
Okelekwe E. Boniface (Anambra Central)
Ify E. Anaozuonwu (Anambra North)
Hon. Chukwuma Umeoji (Anambra South)
- BAUCHI STATE**
Uba Nana Umar (Bauchi Central)
Sirajo Tanko Mohammed (Bauchi North)
- BAUCHI STATE**
Shehu Buba Umar (Bauchi South)
- BAYELSA STATE**
Timipa Orunimighe (Bayelsa Central)
Degi-Eremienyo (Bayelsa East) ***
Wilson Dauyegha (Bayelsa West)
- BENUE STATE**
Hon. Emmanuel Udende (Benue North East)
Titus Zam (Benue North West)
Daniel Onjeh (Benue South)
- BORNO STATE**
Kashim Shettima (Borno Central)
Mohammed Tahir Monguno (Borno North)
Mohammed Ali Ndume (Borno South)
- CROSS-RIVER STATE**
Hon. Eteng J. Williams (Cross-River Central)
Hon. Martin Orim (Cross-River North)
Asuquo Ekpeyong (Cross-River South)
- DELTA STATE**
Ede Dafinone (Delta Central)
Peter Nwaoboshi (Delta North)
Joel Onowakpo Thomas (Delta South)

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Worshippers slain, abducted in renewed attacks on churches

By **PAUL MICHAEL** and **OROWO VICTORIA**

Terrorists have in Kaduna State attacked two churches, killing three worshippers. Many are missing.

The gunmen invaded Saint Moses Catholic Church and Maranatha Baptist Church both in Kajuru Local Government Area.

Some worshippers were injured while several others were abducted.

Commissioner for Internal Security and Home Affairs in Kaduna, Samuel Aruwan, confirmed the attacks on the churches on Sunday.

According to the commissioner, the terrorists stormed the communities on motorcycles attacking worshippers and locals at Ungwan Fada, Ungwan Turawa, and Ungwan Makama in Rubu general area of Kajuru LGA.

Aruwan gave the identities of the worshippers killed in the attack, the victims include Peter Madaki (Ward head of Ungwan Fada), Elisha Ezekiel (Resident of Ungwan Fada), and Ali Zamani (Youth leader of Rubu).

He said two persons

were injured in the attacks while an unspecified number of locals were kidnapped.

The commissioner added that terrorists also looted shops and carted away valuables from the villages.

Deputy Governor of the State, Dr Hadiza Balarabe, condemned the attack and condoled with the families of the deceased.

Meanwhile, Anambra Police Command has confirmed a clash of two criminal gangs in Ihiala LGA of the state that led to the killing of five suspects.

A viral video on social media had shown some rifle-wielding young men in a convoy of assorted cars, carrying some dead bodies.

Reacting to the video, spokesperson to the Anambra State Police Command, DSP Toochukwu Ikenga, said the two gangs clashed at a burial ceremony, while trying to collect levy from the family of the deceased, for the burial to hold.

Ikenga said: "We have reinforced Ihiala and its environs following a trending video of SUVs and Hilux vehicles carrying young men that were



Gov El-Rufai

wielding arms to an unidentified location.

"Information from eyewitnesses show that a violent clash ensued between two criminal gangs and further details confirmed the killing of one Innocent Obieke AKA Double Lion and three others.

"Double Lion has been on police wanted list and has featured in attacks on police formations, military locations and other government infrastructure.

"Meanwhile, police patrol is ongoing in the area and the situation is being monitored."

Sources in Ihiala, however, said that the clash was between criminals known as unknown gunmen and members of the outlawed Indigenous People of Biafra

(IPOB).

One of the sources said, "It is true. The incident happened at Akwa village in Ihiala during a clash between IPOB and unknown gunmen.

"The gunmen have a camp at a place called Oseakwa from where they have been terrorizing Ihiala, Okija, Uli and other neighbouring communities.

"For some time now, the gunmen have been disrupting burials and demanding to be settled before any ceremony is organized. They are also the group that has been kidnapping people and snatching cars.

"On June 17, IPOB swooped on the gunmen in their camp and five people were killed during a shootout. IPOB operatives loaded the corpses in a Hilux van and paraded them around the villages."

SDP, others meet over APC win in Ekiti, Oni rejects result

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Among the options to be considered is whether to take the matter to the electoral petition tribunal or not.

The governorship candidate of SDP, Segun Oni has said that the outcome of Saturday's election is unacceptable.

The spokesman of the Segun Oni Campaign Organisation, Moses Jolayemi, told The Trumpet that the SDP candidate has rejected the outcome of the poll.

APC's candidate, Biodun Oyebanji, was declared the winner. He polled 187,057 to defeat former governor Oni who scored 82,211, while the candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP,

Bisi Kolawole got 67,457.

Jolayemi stated that the election was marred by vote-buying and other malpractices. He accused APC of vote-buying and using political thugs to intimidate voters and harass the opposition.

He alleged that security agencies were compromised and INEC officials were also culpable because arrangement of polling booths and ballot boxes was awkward.

He said: "The outcome is unacceptable by us as a party because it is a travesty of democracy, it is a rape on democracy and clear daylight robbery, the APC has taken advantage of the peoples' pathetic state of poverty and that is why you see that the APC

refused to campaign.

"They were not going round doing rallies; we were the ones campaigning because they knew what they wanted to do.

"Their strategy was simple: buy these peoples' votes and that is why they kept the people in perpetual poverty so that they can be of use every four years.

"They know that it is difficult for someone who is very hungry to resist cash. Some of them have children that are of voting age; some have four children plus their wife and themselves. If you multiply N5000 by six, it gives you N30,000, which is a huge amount for these people.

"To make this kind of money huge and important, that is why they (APC) have kept them in that financial bondage.

"In the United States of America, for example, it will be foolhardy for anyone to envelope \$10 or \$20 for people to vote. They will be asking you if you are okay or if you have not gone crazy because what are they going to do with it?

"The basic things of life have been taken care of by the government but here, their dignity is already taken off them with the way the APC has kept them.

"The security agencies compromised. The see

LIST OF SENATORS SUBMITTED BY APC TO INEC

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EBONYI STATE

Emeka Kenneth Eze (Ebonyi Central)
Onyeka Nwaebonyi Peter (Ebonyi North)
Dave Nweze Umahi (Ebonyi South)

EDO STATE

Monday Okpembolo (Edo Central)
Adams Oshiomhole (Edo North)
Valentine Asuen (Edo South)

EKITI STATE

Michael Opeyemi Bamidele (Ekiti Central)
Cyril Oluwole Fasuyi (Ekiti North)
Adaramodu Adeyemo (Ekiti South)

ENUGU STATE

Adaku Ogbu Aguocha (Enugu East)
Simon Ejike Eze (Enugu North)
Oby Nwofor (Enugu South)

GOMBE STATE

Mohammed Danjuma Goje (Gombe Central)
Sa'idu Ahmed Alkali (Gombe North)
Joshua M. Lidani (Gombe South)

IMO STATE

Prince Alex Mbata (Imo East)
Hon. Patrick Ndubueze (Imo North)
Sen. Osita Izunaso (Imo West)

JIGAWA STATE

Ahmed Abdulhamid (Jigawa North-East)
Babangida Hussaini (Jigawa North-West)
Tijjani Ibrahim Kiyawa (Jigawa South-West)

KADUNA STATE

Muhammad Sani Abdullahi (Kaduna Central)
Suleiman Abdu Kwari (Kaduna North)
Bulus Audu (Kaduna South)

KANO STATE

Abdulsalam Zaura (Kano Central)
Sen. Barau Jibrin (Kano North)
Sen. Kabiru Gaya (Kano South)

KATSINA STATE

AbdulAziz Musa Yar'Adua (Katsina Central)
Nasiru Sani Zangon Daura (Katsina North)
Mukhtar Muhammed Dandutse (Katsina South)

KEBBI STATE

Sen. Atiku Abubakar Bagudu (Kebbi Central)
Hussaini Sulaiman Kangiwa (Kebbi North)
Sen. Bala Ibn Na'Allah (Kebbi South)

KOGI STATE

Ohere Abubakar (Kogi Central)
Sen Isah Jibrin (Kogi East)
Karimi Sunday Steve (Kogi West)

KWARA STATE

Saliu Mustapha (Kwara Central)
Sadiq Suleiman Umar (Kwara North)
Sen. Lola Issa Ashiru (Kwara South)

LAGOS STATE

Hon. Eshilokun Wasiu Sanni (Lagos

Central)

Sen. Mukhail A. Abiru (Lagos East)
Idiat Oluranti Adebule (Lagos West)

NASARAWA STATE

Danladi Halilu ESQ (Nasarawa North)
Tanko Almakura (Nasarawa South)
Shehu Tukur (Nasarawa West)

NIGER STATE

Mohammed Sani Musa (Niger East)
Abubakar Sani Bello (Niger North)
Bima Muhammad Enagi (Niger South)

OGUN STATE

Shuaib Salisu (Ogun Central)
Olugbenga Daniel (Ogun East)
Sen. Olamilekan Adeola (Ogun West)

ONDO SOUTH

Adeniyi Adegbonire SAN (Ondo Central)
Ipinsagba Olajide (Ondo North)
Jimoh Ibrahim (Ondo South)

OSUN STATE

Ajibola Basiru (Osun Central)
Israel Famurewa (Osun East)
Amidu Tadese Raheem (Osun West)

OYO STATE

Dr. Yunus Akintunde (Oyo Central)
Sen. Fatai Buhari (Oyo North)
Sarafa Ali (Oyo South)

PLATEAU STATE

Hon. Diiket Satso Plang (Plateau Central)
Christopher Giwa (Plateau North)
Rt. Hon. Simon B. Lalong (Plateau South)

RIVERS STATE

Ndubuisi U. Nwankwo (Rivers East)
Oji N. Ngofa (Rivers South East)
Asita Honourable O. (Rivers West)

SOKOTO STATE

Ibrahim Lamido (Sokoto East)
Sen. Aliyu Magatakarda Wammako (Sokoto North)
Ibrahim Danbaba Abdullahi (Sokoto South)

TARABA STATE

Marafa Bashir Abba (Taraba Central)
Sani Danladi Abubakar (Taraba North)
Danjuma Usman Shiddi (Taraba South)

YOBE STATE

Ibrahim Gaidam (Yobe East)
Sen. Ahmad Lawan (Yobe North)
Sen. Mohammed Bomai (Yobe South)

ZAMFARA STATE

Sen. Kabiru Marafa (Zamfara Central)
Sen. Sahabi Alhaji Ya'u (Zamfara North)
AbdulAziz Yari Abubakar (Zamfara West)

FACT

Hon. Zakaria Angulu

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Akeredolu congratulates Ekiti guber poll winner Oyebanji, APC

By FRIDAY OMOSOLA,
Akure

Chairman of the South-West Governors' Forum, Arakunrin Oluwarotimi Akeredolu, has congratulated All Progressives Congress (APC) candidate, Biodun Abayomi Oyebanji (BAO), for winning the just concluded Ekiti State governorship election.

The Governor of Ondo State described Oyebanji's victory as an unequivocal testament to the acceptability of the APC and the sterling performance of the incumbent governor, Dr. John Kayode Fayemi in Ekiti. Akeredolu also saluted the people of Ekiti State over the smooth conduct of the governorship election.

In a statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Richard Olatunde, the governor said he believes that the governor-elect would consolidate on the

gains of the outgoing administration and leverage the continuity of the party in government to further deliver dividends of good governance to the people.

"No doubt, BAO's vast experience in public service was an asset that would be deployed for the

good of the people of Ekiti State. As a former Commissioner, Chief of Staff and later Secretary to the State Government, the governor-elect was well equipped to take the state to the next level.

"This was our first win since the emergence of Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu

as the Presidential candidate of our party. This election was, however, symbolic as it shows the preparedness and commitment of our people to vote en masse for the APC in next year's general elections."

He also saluted the security agencies

and the umpire, Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, for conducting credible elections. He further hailed the people of the state for voting continuity, urging them to do more for Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu in the next year's presidential election.



Oyebanji

Obaseki urges peace in Edo PDP, Igbinedion to chair committee

By ISAAC OLAMIKAN

Edo State Governor Godwin Obaseki has called on all members of the Edo State Chapter of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to unite so as to resolve all internal wranglings within the party to ensure success in the 2023 general elections.

The governor disclosed this while meeting with over 135 PDP members drawn from the National Executive Committee, State Executive Committee, and Zonal Committee of the party, at the party

Secretariat in Benin City.

Obaseki said the meeting became necessary following the defeat of the PDP in the just concluded Ekiti State Governorship election held over the weekend, in which the All Progressives Congress (APC) won the election.

He said in order not to repeat the Ekiti episode in the presidential election come 2023, the party in the state needs to be united, settle differences among members and bring everyone together to ensure PDP wins the general election.

"I am proposing this

afternoon, that we all commit ourselves to resolving all the issues in all the chapters across the State. I have consulted and for the time being decided that Chief Lucky Igbinedion, a former Governor of the State to chair the peace committee of the party in the state.

"He will select three notable leaders of the party in the three Senatorial Districts of the State to work with him in the next 30 to 60 days to try to resolve all the issues in the party."

The governor noted that the PDP is setting the pace as it has picked the Vice

Presidential running mate to Alhaji Atiku Abubakar while the ruling party finds it difficult to decide on its Vice Presidential candidate.

Obaseki said the meeting was called to make peace in the party, adding: "We have gathered here today to seek peace in the PDP as this is the only way to win the presidential election come 2023. The internal wrangling is the only thing that can stop us as it has stopped PDP in Ekiti State.

"If we sue for peace in the party, we will certainly find one. We should try to resolve the internal wrangling within the party

as no court case can bring peace unless we sit together to resolve our quarrel."

He continued: "Our aim is to be in power and to be the ruling party. Our collective interest should be our major focus, not our selfish interest which is at the root of the crisis of the party."

Obaseki urged leaders of the party to make ward meetings important and compulsory from this month. He called on the party leaders to activate the youths wing to bring youths into the party in preparation for the 2023 general election.

SDP, others meet over APC win in Ekiti, Oni rejects result

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and buy thing was going on while the security agencies looked the other way.

"INEC is also culpable because the arrangement of the polling booth and the ballot boxes was awkward. You wonder why this should be so. The election may appear free but it was not fair.

"It was not free of violence anyway because the third thing they did, was to make use of their thugs. We have videos of some of their thugs snatching ballot boxes. What did the security agents do, they looked the other way."

Jolayemi, however, said the SDP candidate will not concede victory and congratulate anyone until the party leaders meet to take the necessary steps.

He added: "The decision will be taken in the next few hours. We are going to meet but the central message here is that this election is rejected.

"Segun Oni is not accepting the results, he is not conceding and he is not congratulating anybody because this was not an election."

Meantime, Prince Adewole Adebayo, SDP's presidential candidate, has lamented the negative impact of vote-buying on the polity, especially during elections.

He made the remark yesterday in apparent reference to the Ekiti governorship election.

Adebayo added that it was a sad day for Nigeria and democracy as the voters sold their conscience for pecuniary gains.

Meanwhile, President Muhammadu Buhari has rejoiced with APC chairman, Abdulahi Adamu, and the party's National Working Committee for the victory of Oyebanji.

According to the President who spoke through his Special Adviser (Media and Publicity), Femi Adesina, the victory was the first under the tenure of the newly elected executives of the party.

"This is a good beginning for you and your team. The APC is getting stronger and more united. The victory of our party in Ekiti is an indication of the confidence of Nigerians in the ability of our great party to deliver quality governance to all,"

said the President.

He charged all APC members across and outside the country to see this as a good omen for the 2023 general elections and work assiduously to ensure the party's victory, continuing the trend with Osun State next month July.

Buhari also congratulated the governor-elect, saying the victory is well deserved considering Oyebanji's contributions to the development of the State and the party, before his nomination as the standard bearer. He urged him, however, to be magnanimous in victory in the interest of the people of the State.

He also felicitated with the people of Ekiti State for the smooth conduct of the election, affirming that they are the real victors as they have been able to freely choose their leader for the next four years.

He lauded the Independent National Electoral Commission and the law enforcement agencies for the preparations put in place, urging them to keep the momentum for upcoming elections.

Following the declaration, the agent of SDP, Owoseeni Ajayi, refused to sign the result sheet. The agent of the Action Democratic Party, ADP, described the electoral process as a vote-buying contest.

Oyebanji who served as the secretary to the government under the administration of the incumbent governor, Kayode Fayemi won 15 out of the 16 local government areas including Ado Ekiti which has a larger number of voters.

He won in Ikere, Emure, Ekiti South West, Ekiti West, Oye, Irepodun/Ifelodun, Ikole, Ido-Osi, Ado, Gbonyin, Ekiti East, Moba, Ilejemeje, Ise/Orun and IJERO LGAs.

PDP candidate Bisi Kolawole won in Efon LGA only while Oni did not win any.

Oyebanji is expected succeed Governor Kayode Fayemi in October 2022.

The Ekiti Election was according to observers characterised by voters apathy as well as vote-buying.

INEC had earlier announced that 988,923 registered voters were

expected to participate in the exercise. However, only 363,438 voters were accredited.

Several videos also surfaced online with some voters in the state displaying the cash sum they received at polling units after casting their votes indicating active vote-buying activity during the process.

Lagos State Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu has congratulated Oyebanji, describing it as a testament to the good work the APC-led government has done in Ekiti state as well as the sterling qualities of her candidates.

He also congratulated the leadership of the party at the federal and state levels on the latest feat.

Sanwo-Olu in a statement, issued on Sunday by his Chief Press Secretary, Mr. Gboyega Akosile, said he did not doubt the APC's victory because Ekiti people are progressives and would always vote for the party.

"I must note that our party, the All Progressives Congress and its government under the able leadership of Governor Kayode Fayemi has delivered beyond the

expectations of the Ekiti people. I, therefore, believe it was only natural for the citizens to reciprocate by voting for our party.

He added: "Our confidence was further buoyed by the quality of candidates presented for the governorship poll. The combination of Mr. Biodun Abayomi Oyebanji and his deputy, Mrs. Monisade Christiana Afuye is what Ekiti needs to continue with the great work started by the outgoing governor.

"I once again congratulate the winners for running a good race and emerging victorious. I also congratulate my brother-governor, Dr. Kayode Fayemi who has set a winning template for the party, with good governance over the years.

"Finally and more importantly, my hearty felicitations go to the people of Ekiti State for voting wisely for APC, the party that will continue to deliver the good for all the citizens."

Sanwo-Olu also applauded the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the security operatives for the hitch-free election.

Climate action super heroes unveiled in Lagos

By **EDU ABADE**, Business Editor

GreenHubAfrica Foundation in collaboration with Sterling One Foundation, a foundation founded and funded by Sterling Bank Plc, yesterday, unveiled climate action super heroes in a schools outreach programme in commemoration of the 2022 International Day of the African Child.

Speaking during the event, which held at the Jibowu Junior High School in Yaba, Lagos, Founder and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of GreenHubAfrica Foundation, Henry Bassey, explained that the concept of climate action super heroes emanated from a United Na-

tions (UN) comprehensive action plan developed by academics in New York, United States of America (USA) to positively engage children during the lockdown of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Symbolically, he said the climate action super heroes are Sultan from the North Central, who fights fumes, green house gas emissions and pollution; Adesuwa from the South-South, a waste collection and recycling ranger; Obi from the South East, who speaks the truth about climate change and Amina, an energy expert from the North East, who speaks to issues of energy consumption levels and how to reduce or eliminate them.

Spectranet wins "Best 4G LTE ISP at BolCT awards

Spectranet, a leading Internet Service provider, has once again, been adjudged the best 4G LTE Internet service provider at the recently concluded 2022 edition of the Beacon of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) awards.

Editor-in-Chief of Nigeria Communication Week, Ken Nwogbo, stated that Spectranet emerged winner in the "Best 4G LTE Internet Provider of the Year" category through the voting process that was concluded recently.

Responding to the award, Chief Executive Officer of Spectranet, Ajay Awasthi, dedicated it to the subscribers that have stayed with Spectranet over the years, saying: "Our subscribers are the reason we always strive to put our best foot forward. We appreciate every feedback about our service and we are committed to ensuring customer satisfaction always".

Speaking on Spectranet's commitment to offering high-speed, affordable and reliable Internet, Awasthi added: "In keeping with the trend to watch OTT content on smart TVs requiring high speed data with high degree of availability Spectranet has expanded its internet services to Fixed Broadband through "Home Fiber" (FTTH) and "Fiber on Air" (FOA) technologies.

He described them as high qual-

ity ultra-broadband technologies that deliver reliable, high-speed, UNLIMITED DATA with higher degree of consistency than the mobile broadband.

"We have made huge financial and technical investments in line with our business philosophy of ensuring that our customers continue to have the best internet connection in their offices, homes, and on the go."

Users of Spectranet's Home Fiber (FTTH) and Fiber on Air (WTTN) services can simultaneously stream videos, play online games, and download/upload large files at a fast speed.

Describing the Home Fiber and Fiber on Air services as being perfect for homes, Awasthi said both services are now available in over 100 estates in Lagos and Abuja.

He concluded by thanking the organisers of the BolCT Award and commended them as responsible media house, adding: "The award was organised by the Nigeria Communication's Week with the theme: "Impact of Block Chain Technology in a digitised Nigeria."

The lecture was delivered by Co-Founder/Chief Technical Officer, Digital Encode Limited, Dr. Oluseyi Akindeinde, while Managing Director of Rack Centre, Dr. Ayotunde Coker, chaired the event.



Henry Bassey

Others are, Oche from the North Central, who strives to save the planet with vegetables; Efe the water wizard from the Delta area, who likes to save waters from pollution; Abike from the South West, who is the green guide that protects the natural beautiful habitat through planting of trees and Ekanem the fashion fixer.

Also speaking, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Sterling One Foundation, Mrs. Peju Ibekwe, affirmed that Sterling Bank has prioritised issues of sustainable environment since 2008 and partnered over 26 states of

the federation in addressing environmental issues.

"The foundation is now partnering the future through school children with its HEART initiative. Our HEART initiative stands for health, education, agriculture, renewable energy and transportation through which we will continue to prioritise sustainable environment and climate action, because to us, waste is not actually waste, but a resource.

"We have, therefore, resolved to catch them young, teach and inculcate sustainable environmental issues in innovative

ways to schools in Lagos and other states of Nigeria. This, in our estimation, will enhance the children's knowledge of the environment, as they find innovative ways of nurture their surroundings and creating value in society," she said.

Officials of the Lagos State Government, who attended the event and spoke to the issues of climate change and sustainable environment are the Lagos State Commissioner for Education, who was represented by his Senior Special Assistant (SSA), Akeem Amosu; Senior Special Assistant to Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu on Education, Mrs. Adetola Salau and Principal of Jibowu Junior High School, Miss Akindele Olayinka Ann, among others.

In her address, Akindele expressed delight over the choice of her school for the programme, saying that the students and their counterparts in other schools will benefit immensely from activities of the outreach, especially as they would be educated on the difference between climate change and global warming in as much as they are used interchangeably.

She commended the organisers of the outreach, adding that the eight-week training programme being organised for the students would empower them with requisite skills to positively contribute to rectifying the issues with Sterling Bank, GreenHubAfrica, the state ministry of education and other partners.

FG warned against airports concessioning to cronies

By **ADAKU WALTER**

Civil advocacy group, Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA), has warned the Federal Government not to hand over 17 of the nation's airports to cronies under the guise of phantom concession.

HURIWA's National Coordinator, Emmanuel Onwubiko, in a statement, feared that the outgoing Minister of Aviation, Hadi Sirika, might want to give out the airports to incompetent families and friends as parting gift as his tenure as a cabinet member ends in less than 11 months.

The group warned that such approach to concession of the nation's airports won't be tolerated and therefore challenged the minister to make the process as transparent and fair so that competent concessionaires would take over the nation's airports since the regime of the President, Muhammadu Buhari has demonstrated failure in all aspect of governance including the maintenance of the nation's critical infrastructure.

The minister had during the

week said at least 17 airports under the management of the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) that are currently not up for concession are going to be given to concessionaires.

The concession process for Nigeria's four international airports in Lagos, Abuja, Port Harcourt and Kano is currently ongoing while FAAN manages 21 airports on behalf of the Federal Government.

But HURIWA warned the minister, FAAN, the Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission (ICRC) and the National Policy on Public-Private Partnership as well as all those involved in the concession process to be guided by the principles of justice and transparency.

"The move to concession the country's 17 airports yet to be concession is testament to the fact that President Muhammadu Buhari has failed in the management and maintenance of Nigeria's critical assets which he met on ground when he came into office in May 2015.

"Sadly, seven years later, the

President and his appointees including the Minister of Aviation, Hadi Sirika, have moved to hand over Nigeria's assets to private individuals.

"Whilst HURIWA reckon that the gains of concession if done rightly are undeniable, we call for the integrity of the process which is highly questionable going by the notoriety of this government's knack for massive corruption and theft of public fund with many top officials accused of fraud.

"Electricity distribution companies that were privatised were sold to cronies of government officials and today Nigeria's power supply system is the worst globally.

"HURIWA fears that these airports may be sold to cronies of this government and there is no way of knowing because there are no opportunities for credible civil society organisations to understudy those companies that may bid for concession of these national assets. The aviation industry must stop being opaque and the poor transparency records must be corrected," Onwubiko said.



Dr. Ayotunde Coker

APC candidate tackles Akwa Ibom REC over party primaries

By ISAAC JOB, Uyo

Candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC) for Eket Federal Constituency, Akwa Ibom, Hon Esemey Eyiboh, has said that the Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) for Akwa Ibom State, Mr. Mike Igini, was only on a voyage of self-destruction to have left Ekpo Obot Street, the approved venue of the party's governorship primary to Sheer Grace Arena, where a parallel exercise in the state was held by a faction.

He said for Igini not to have recognised the Stephen Ntukekpo-led executive of APC in the state which is upheld by law, meant he was only making himself a Supreme Court. He noted that it is only the Supreme Court that can overturn a judgement of a high court.

Eyiboh, a former spokesman for the House of Representatives, was reacting to the report sent by Igini to INEC headquarters, that Akwa Ibom APC does not have a governorship candidate for the 2023 general election. He stated this during a media interaction which was streamed live on Friday evening.

The report Igini sent to Abuja reads in part: "We wish to report that the APC governorship primary scheduled to hold on Thursday, May 26, 2022, at the Sheer Grace Arena, Nsirik Eduok Avenue, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, did not hold at all."

Eyiboh, however, stated that the failure of Igini to have personally observe the conduct of the governorship primaries, could

neither invalidate the process, nor discredit the emergence of Mr. Akan Udofia, the APC governorship candidate in the state.

He said, "It is not true that APC does not have a governorship and other candidates for the 2023 general elections. The Akwa Ibom chapter of the party had followed all stipulated procedures in the conducts of the various primaries. At this point in time, it is pertinent to seek answers to some specific questions.

"How could Mike Igini have gone to the Sheer Grace Arena for the governorship primaries of APC? Was that the official venue contained in the circular issued by the Stephen Ntukekpo led executive?"

He explained that no law-abiding citizen can disobey a court judgement, except those who have no regards for the rule of law. He recalled the judgement of the Abuja Federal High Court delivered by Honourable Justice Taiwo Taiwo on March 16, 2022, which declared Mr Ntukekpo as the Chairman of APC in Akwa Ibom State adding that the judgement still subsists. According to him the 42-page judgement was explicit, adding that Stephen Ntukekpo is the authentic chairman of the party in the state

"What we should be interested in is, why should Mike Igini constitute himself into a Supreme Court to overturn a judgement which appeal was further dismissed by the appeal court?"

"While it is the duty of a political party to notify INEC



Hon Esemey Eyiboh

on its political activities, it cannot drag the Commission into coming to observe them. It is the responsibility of INEC to go to the designated venues to carry out its own duty.

"In the event that Mike Igini left the approved venue of the primaries to go to Sheer Grace Arena, you can then appreciate the fact that he may have been on a voyage of self-destruct," he said.

Speaking about the emergence of Senator Godswill Akpabio as candidate of the party for Akwa Ibom Northwest District, Hon. Eyiboh stated that the National Secretary of the party, Senator Iyiola Omisore, has issued a circular indicating that the party would reconduct the primary due to security infractions in the May 27, 2022, primary. Eyiboh observed that the withdrawal of the winner of the previously conducted election, Hon. Ekperikpe Ekpo, necessitated the reconduct and that "such could not have amounted to candidate substitution as falsely peddled by Mr Igini."

Delta North monarchs defend Okowa, berate Clark, SMLBF

By GABRIEL ELOZINO, Asaba

Delta North Traditional Rulers Forum has faulted the Southern and Middle Belt Leaders' Forum, SMLBF, led by Chief E K Clark over its attack on Governor Ifeanyi Okowa for accepting to be Vice Presidential candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP.

Speaking to newsmen after an emergency meeting of the forum held at its Chairman's Palace, Obi (Prof) Chike Edozien, the Asagba of Asaba, weekend, its Vice Chairman and the Obi of Abavo, HRM Uche Irenuma, described the attack on Okowa by the SMLBF as malicious and calculated at smearing the governor's image.

He said the decision of the SMLBF to declare Okowa personal non grata was uncalled for and unacceptable to majority of the people from the region.

The monarch who was flanked by the Secretary of the forum, HRM Daniel Ogbudo, the Obi of Atuma-Igan Kingdom, said the action and outburst of SMLBF, which is supposed to protect interest of its people, "depicts personal hatred against the person of Governor Ifeanyi Okowa, who holds elders, especially Chief E K Clark in high esteem."

The monarchs accused the Forum of acting the script of a paymaster, lamenting that the aims and objectives of the Southern and Middle Belt Leader's Forum was not to cast aspersions on deserving and worthy sons and daughters of the region. They stressed

that Okowa's acceptance of the Vice Presidential slot does not amount to betrayal of his people.

Expressing confidence that Okowa would be a good ambassador of the region, they urged the Southern and Middle Belt Leader's Forum to rescind its decision and embrace the Vice Presidential slot given to the South by the PDP.

The monarchs congratulated Okowa on his nomination as the running mate to the PDP Presidential candidate, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar.

They thanked the party leadership and the presidential candidate for picking their son as the Vice Presidential candidate of the PDP, praying God to see them through the electioneering period.



Gov. Ifeanyi Okowa

Protest rocks Enugu over ban on Mbaka's Adoration Ministry

By CHARLES ONYEKWERE, South-East Correspondent

Worshippers at Adoration Ministry Enugu, have protested the Catholic authority's sanction on Fr. Ejike Mbaka following his attack on Labour Party presidential candidate Peter Obi.

On Sunday, they expressed their support for Mbaka, the Spiritual Director of the Church.

The supporters also called for the immediate removal of the Bishop of Enugu, Callistus Onaga. With leaves and placards, they chanted solidarity songs and repeatedly chorused "Onaga Must Go."

On Friday, Onaga announced a ban on activities at the Adoration Ground in Enugu. He said some of the sermons and utterances of Mbaka "are not consistent with the teachings and faith of the Catholic Church."

Mbaka drew the anger of his superiors after damning comments against the former Governor of Anambra State whom the cleric had declared cannot become the President of Nigeria because he is "stingy."

Following a national outrage, Mbaka, in a lengthy open letter, apologized to Obi and the Catholic Church for his outburst.



Fr. Ejike Mbaka

Corps member, pregnant woman, five others drown in Bayelsa boat mishap

By **AHERHOKE OKIOMA**, Yenagoa

A female corps member and a pregnant woman have been confirmed among the passengers that drowned after a boat mishap at the weekend between Otuan and Ayama communities of Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. Also among the victims are a mother with her two kids and a 70 years old Otuan Chief and father of a journalist in the State, Chief Lucky Daniels.

The boat and the bodies of the victims are still missing at the time of this report with rescue and search efforts ongoing at Ayama Community.

Available reports to *The Trumpet* in Yenagoa, revealed that the boat, with a capacity to carry 15 passengers, rammed into

a barrier while trying to berth close to Ayama Community. It was gathered that the afternoon rain storm, which made all the passengers covered themselves with tarpaulin and reduce visibility may have contributed to the disaster.

Mr. Domo Timi, a journalist, whose father was one of the victims of the accident, told *The Trumpet* on telephone that "my father was involved and rescue teams have been dispatched to check the scene for possible rescue."

He, however, expressed confidence of more survivors due to the fact that most passengers were putting on life jackets. The elected Chairman of the Maritime Union in Otuan Community, Joseph Shedrack, told our Correspondent that the

boat driver, Lucky Christopher, who survived the accident, have been detained by the Police Unit in Ayama over alleged reckless driving.

"I was chairman of the Union but some persons who claimed to know more than themselves have been taking charge of the Otuan Unit. If I had been around, I would not have allowed the loading of the boat due to poor visibility and bad weather."

He said preliminary investigations showed that the weather was bad and rain storm started but "those claiming to be acting allowed such trip. I was told a Corps member, two children and a woman died. Even the Special Adviser on Security to the Governor have called me."

The State Chairman of the Maritime Union, Ipigansi Ogoniba, however told *Trumpet* that six persons have been confirmed missing and dead.

"Six persons died. When

the boat got to Ayama, it had a mishap. One corpse was recovered and handed to the family for proper burial. While three adults and three children were still missing or probably dead."

On the identity of the Corps member involved in the boat disaster, Comrade Ogoniba said the authorities of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) has been contacted through the Community Liaison Officer (CLO), "they are still searching for her corpse and we have reached out to the NYSC for her identity."

When contacted, the State Public Relations Officer of the NYSC, Mathew Ngobua, told *The Trumpet* in a text message that he will get back to our Correspondent after discussing with his State Coordinator. But he is yet to call back with needed details as at the time of this report.

The Spokesman of the Bayelsa

State Police Command, Asinim Buatswat, also confirmed the incident but said he is yet to be properly briefed on the number of casualties and what led to the accident.

Responding, NYSC in Bayelsa said: "We got the information and the State Coordinator and other staff left the Orientation Camp and went to the place. The State Coordinator told me that the corps member's name is said to be on the passenger manifest and the said corps member is not at the lodge."

"However, we will make a detail report after the search and rescue or when the body is recovered. We are in touch with the brother of the corps member who also said she told him that she was to travel."

"The NYSC will make an official brief when the body is sighted and properly identified."

Thank you for the usual support at a time like this."

Blogger arraigned by DSS for alleged cyberstalking gets bail

By **AHERHOKE OKIOMA**, Yenagoa

Federal High Court sitting in Yenagoa at the weekend admitted to bail, a Bayelsa-based blogger, Bara Ogidi, facing trial for alleged cyberstalking for N5 million and a surety.

The Department of State Service (DSS) on Wednesday arraigned Ogidi, over an alleged false report targeted at the Executive Secretary of Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB), Mr Simbi Kesiye Wabote. Ogidi, a publisher of an online new media, Tracknews, is facing a two count charge of cyberstalking.

Ruling on the bail application filed by Ogidi's counsel, Temedie Great, trial judge, Justice Isa Dashen, said that the surety must be a responsible citizen who resides and owns landed property within the court's jurisdiction, Bayelsa. He further ruled that in the alternative, if the surety is a civil servant, the surety must not be below the rank of a Director. Also the surety must swear to an affidavit of means.

The judge adjourned the case until July 25, 2022, for continuation of trial and ruled that the defendant should remain in the custody of the Nigerian Correctional Centre at Okaka in Yenagoa.

According to the charge, Ogidi had allegedly accused Wabote of offering him the sum of N10 million to lure him to testify in Wabote's favour in a defamation suit filed by the NCDMB Executive Secretary against Mr Jackson Ude.

"Count 1 CYBERSTALKING, contrary to and punishable under Section 24(1)b of the Cybercrime (Prohibition, Prevention etc) Act, 2015"

"You OGIDI BEN BARA on 11th February, 2022, caused a false information to be dis-

seminated via various online newspaper outfits including "THE EAGLE ONLINE".

"Which you knew to be false to wit that the Executive Secretary of Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB), Engr. Simbi Kesiye Wabote, offered you the sum of ten million naira (N10,000,000) for the purpose of luring you to testify in his favour in an alleged defamation suit filed by him against one Jackson Ude.

"This publication caused annoyance, enmity, hatred and ill will towards the said Engr. Simbi Kesiye Wabote.

"COUNT 2 CYBERSTALKING, contrary to and punishable under Section 24(1)b of the Cybercrime (Prohibition, Prevention etc) Act, 2015.

"You, OGIDI BEN BARA on 6th May, 2022, via your online newspaper outfit-TRACKNEWS disseminated a false information which you knew to be false.

"To wit- that the Executive Secretary of Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB), Engr. Simbi Kesiye Wabote in connivance with Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) excluded the people of Ekeremor Local Government from contracts at the East Area oilfields."

Ejime Udueme, a member of the Delta State Council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), reminded media practitioners of the need to stick to the ethics of the profession emphasizing that whatever they did could make or mar the forthcoming general elections.

The guest speaker reminded Christians and other Nigerians of the need to arm themselves with their Permanent Voters Card (PVCs) to enable them vote for candidates of their choice in the 2023 general election.

Christians urged to actively participate in politics

By **KELVIN OHOROR**

Christians in Nigeria have been called upon to play active politics and use their numeric strength to vote for candidates of their choice in the 2023 general elections.

Senior Political Adviser to the Governor, Rt. Hon. Funkekeme Solomon, made the call while opening a training programme for directors in the Christian Political Media Forum held in Government House, Asaba.

Solomon, represented by Coordinator of the group, Evangelist Emeke Eguanimku, said the mission of the training was to expose participants to the new trend in the media world and how best to publish facts and not fiction. He said the Media and Christians are indispensable in any society and advocated the need for them to be truthful,



Rt. Hon. Funkekeme Solomon

objective and God fearing in their duties.

In a lecture on the one day seminar with the theme, "Importance of the Media and Christians

in political evolution", the Guest Speaker, Mr Ejime Udueme, a media guru, said unity was needed among Christians for them to be able to use their 80 million members in Nigeria to determine who governs them in all elective positions in the country in 2023.

Ejime Udueme, a member of the Delta State Council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), reminded media practitioners of the need to stick to the ethics of the profession emphasizing that whatever they did could make or mar the forthcoming general elections.

The guest speaker reminded Christians and other Nigerians of the need to arm themselves with their Permanent Voters Card (PVCs) to enable them vote for candidates of their choice in the 2023 general election.

Pupils sit for primary six exams in Edo

By **ISAAC OLAMIKAN**

Edo Government has said that over 90,000 pupils from private and public schools sat for the 2022 Primary Six Examination held across the state at the weekend. Commissioner for Education, Dr. Joan Osa Oviawe, spoke to journalists at Olua Primary School after monitoring the exams in five Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Edo South Senatorial District.

The Commissioner, who expressed satisfaction with the conduct of the examination, said about 445 centres were used for the exercise across the 18 local councils of Edo State.

She said, "We have monitored the various centres across Edo South Senatorial District and the exams started on time. This became necessary to ensure they finished the exercise on time to make sure that the pupils go

home on time. For this year's primary six exams, we have about 445 exam centres across the 18 local government areas of Edo State and over 90,000 pupils in public and private schools, who are writing the exams.

"I appreciate and acknowledge the efforts of the exam department in the past three weeks to ensure the success of this exam. We have gone around five local government areas of Edo State while the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Chief Inspector of Education are monitoring Edo Central and Edo North respectively, ensuring that the whole process is successful."

The Commissioner further commended the parents for obeying the examination rules by staying outside the examination centres.

Oviawe noted, "Examination is all about improvement. We looked at the examination last

year and improved on our lapses this year. The take-away for me is that we shouldn't even be doing this examination now, because, by September, which is the beginning of the school year, we already know how many pupils we have in primary six. So, why are we waiting till the last minute?"

"We would be aiming to get this done by April and by the third term, we should be focusing on getting our pupils ready for JSS 1 and the third term will be a transition term for us."

She hinted that the Ministry plans to improve on the conduct of the examination next year, adding: "We will be introducing technology to help us know the cognitive ability of every child and help us produce a very robust analysis result to their parents. Our goal is that by August 2022, primary six certificates will be out."

Igbo have no place in APC, PDP, says APGA guber candidate, Odoh

By CHARLES ONYEKWERE,
South-East Correspondent

Governorship candidate of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) in Ebonyi State, Prof. Benard Odoh, on Sunday, lamented the failure of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) to allow the Igbo emerge as their presidential candidates.

He spoke during the Fathers' Day celebration at All Saints Anglican Cathedral, Abakaliki, the state capital.

Odoh, who bagged the Anglican outstanding leadership award, said: "We know that Igbos have no place in the two dominant parties in today's Nigeria again because we have nobody running

for President or Vice President in any of the two parties."

He stressed further that the time has come for the people of the South-East region to work hard so that Igbos can be recognized in national politics.

"So, it's time for our people to think about how to secure their various states in the South East first before we begin to gain relevance again in national politics. That's why we have to work hard to liberate ourselves and make a profound statement on our identity as a people" he stressed.

Earlier in his remarks, the Bishop of Anglican Church, Abakaliki Diocese, Rt. Rev. Nkwoagu, charged fathers to always stand as pillars of their homes.



Prof. Benard Odoh

NGO lifts indigent patients in Enugu

By CHARLES ONYEKWERE,
South-East Correspondent

Humane Succour for Friends Foundation, an NGO, has given financial assistance to 10 indigent patients at the Federal Neuropsychiatric Hospital, Enugu. The Foundation also donated a carton of noodles, beverages (milk, cocoa drink and sugar), a pack of biscuit and tissues to each of the 10 indigent patients. Donating the items on Sunday at the hospital, the Team Leader of the Foundation, Rev. Sister Frieda Okafor, noted that the foundation was out to give succour to "the forgotten, downtrodden and special indigents not reached by the society."

Okafor said that the foundation, which is a non-profit and non-governmental organization, had a directive from its US-based leader and lead-donor to provide for the neediest patients in the hospital.

"We are also here to interact with the hospital staff and management to also know areas of need that the foundation can assist the patients and the hospital better going forward. The foundation does not have all its needed resources now; but as we gather resources we will deploy them to the needed areas for effective impact especially on the patients' welfare and well-being in the hospital," she said.

Responding, Medical Director of the hospital, Prof. Monday Igwe, thanked the foundation for making the hospital its priority and breaking the jinx of people not coming around its patients as they do in visiting motherless babies' homes and inmates of prisons. Igwe noted that mental ill patients are given sound treatment in the hospital and they return to their normal lives, adding that the issue of stigma was still a big challenge to its well-treated and discharged patients.

"We appeal to wealthy individuals and groups to assist the hospital and its patients in any way they can as we have lots of indigent patients to cater for even those abandoned by their families that we cannot discharge going by medical ethics.

"Our major challenges are that of daily feeding and bill payment of our teeming indigent patients that runs into several thousands. We have water supply challenge as our over two decade-old water tanker had broken down and we are not connected to public water. So daily, we buy several tankers of water to service the hospital and ensure enough water for all.

"Our power supply bill monthly (both electricity and diesel generating sets) is about N500,000 monthly. The hospital also needed to equip and strengthen its occupation therapy department to re-tool its patients with skills to survive economically after discharge from the hospital and to contribute meaningfully to their communities and families," he added.

One of the indigent patients and beneficiary of the financial assistance, (name withheld), thanked the foundation for remembering the indigent patients at the hospital.

"We are grateful and thankful for the financial assistance and food items given to us. God Almighty will surely reward the foundation and members of the foundation as well," he said.

Vigilantes not responsible for Orlu killings, says Imo

By ATHAN AGBAKWURU, Owerri

Imo Government has distanced the state-controlled vigilance group, Ebubeagu, from the recent killing of three family members in Okporo Community of Orlu Local Government Area, saying it was the handiwork of its enemies.

Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Hon Declan Mbadiwe Emelumba, who made the assertion in a statement in Owerri, condemned the allegation making the rounds that the vigilantes carried out the dastardly killing. Emelumba described as unfortunate and provocative the haste with which enemies of the state government rush to the press to level accusations against it in order to score cheap political points.

According to him, "while it is

only the police that can make a definite pronouncement on the perpetrators of the crime at the conclusion of exhaustive investigation, the Imo Vigilante was not responsible at all."

The Commissioner explained that it was ironical that the group being accused of the killing actually took the wounded to the hospital when they were informed of the attack.

"The vigilante operates under the law, infact they work under the supervision of the police and therefore cannot engage in any extra judicial killings," he submitted.

He warned purveyors of such dangerous and fake news to desist from stoking the embers of crisis in the state.

He stated: "Some of them said it was Imo Vigilante, others said it was Fulani militia, thus creating ethnic tension.

My appeal is that they should allow the police do their job.

"Contrary to the wild allegation of the opposition, the vigilante was not set up to witch hunt anybody but to assist the security agencies to maintain law and order. They are not mad as to murder people in cold blood. For the avoidance of doubt, Imo Vigilante is not responsible for the Okporo killings. Mischief makers should stop linking them to the crime."

Three members of a family in Okporo Community in Orlu Local Government Area were last week shot dead allegedly by operatives of Ebubeagu during one of their raids in the area. The vigilantes were said to have stormed the family house in the early hours of Saturday and shot three persons while allegedly searching for youths in the family for unknown reasons.



Hon Declan Mbadiwe Emelumba

'PDP risks not having candidates in Ebonyi'

By CHARLES ONYEKWERE,
South-East Correspondent

An Abuja-based Elections Transparency Group (ETG) has raised the alarm that opposition People's Democratic Party (PDP) may not have a governorship and other candidates in the 2023 general elections in Ebonyi State.

The group said it's no longer acceptable when political parties conduct primary elections, cancel them to conduct fresh ones just to accommodate interest.

The ETG said in a release issued at the weekend by its Convener, Dr. Kazeem Adekunle, that the best option before the PDP was to have accepted result of May 29, 2022, primary election of the party in Ebonyi State that produced Dr. Ifeanyi-Chukwuma Odii as the governorship candidate.

The body said unless the PDP National Working

Committee(NWC) has a motive of making sure that the party does not participate in the 2023 general elections in Ebonyi State, there should be no reason anyone will contemplate jettisoning a primary election duly monitored by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

ETG said "with the position of INEC affirming that its report of the Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District APC primary, as submitted to INEC headquarters in Abuja, was final, it should be clear enough that no one can upturn the results of the May 29, 2022, primary election of the PDP in Ebonyi State.

"The same way APC cancelled already conducted primary in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District was the way PDP said it cancelled the primary election in Ebonyi State.

"Also, the same way INEC in its report validated the APC

primary for Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District was the same way INEC affirmed that of Ebonyi State.

"Therefore, if INEC is insisting that it will not recognize Senator Godswill Akpabio, who emerged from the APC fresh primary in Akwa Ibom, it is certain that INEC will also not recognize Senator Obinna Ogba as PDP governorship candidate as well as others who emerged from the party's rescheduled exercise of June 4 and 5, 2022, because the primaries were not monitored by INEC.

"Most importantly, Federal High Court, Abakaliki, Ebonyi State, has nullified the June 4 and 5, 2022 exercise and declared Dr. Odii as the authentic governorship candidate of the party.

"It, therefore, behoves the PDP to put its house in order and act in accordance with the Electoral Act 2022, else, the party

risks not having candidates in Ebonyi State."



Dr. Ifeanyi-Chukwuma Odii

Illicit money out of Africa more than development grants, says Owasanoye

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Chairman of the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), Prof Bolaji Owasanoye (SAN), has stated that Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs) out of Africa far outweigh grants from international development partners to the continent.

He said this during a meeting with the leadership of the Directorate of Technical Cooperation in Africa (DTCA) at the Commission's headquarters in Abuja recently.

The ICPC boss decried the challenges facing the African continent on IFFs and expressed hope that a collaboration with DTCA in terms of peer learning, sharing of information, intelligence and experiences could go a long way in addressing the menace.

He said, "ICPC is the Secretariat for the inter-agency committee on IFFs in Africa

and one of the biggest problems that Africa is facing is the issue of capital flight.

"The amount of capital that leaves Africa is far more than the development grants that it gets, and this has been a recurrent issue over the years.

"We are not averse to having a collaboration with DTCA because we have our foot on the ground. We will designate officers to look at the broad landscape and areas of collaboration."

Earlier in his address, the Director-General of DTCA, Ambassador Rabi Dagari stated that they have the capacity to integrate all Africans together on issues of corruption in the overall interest of the development of the continent.

"I want to see how we can work together. We can develop content papers and then reach out to other African countries for their participation with you to share ideas and to see the problems being encountered and

ventilate and see what really needs to be done to reduce the level of corruption in the African continent that is holding us back," Dagari stated.

He encouraged ICPC and other anti-corruption agencies to expand widespread advocacy in their fight against corruption while also appealing to the Federal Government to grant DTCA access to funds domiciled with the Nigeria's Technical Corporation Fund (NTCF), saying that would help in some of the areas of collaborations being looked at.

Also speaking at the meeting, the Provost of the Anti-Corruption Academy (ACAN), Professor Olatunde Babawale, who responded to an earlier appeal made by the DTCA delegation for capacity trainings offered by the academy, noted that the ICPC Academy had developed cost effective and hybrid programmes that DTCA can take advantage of.



Professor Bolaji Owasanoye

Pastor re-arraigned by EFCC for alleged N54.7m fraud

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

A self-acclaimed prophet, Cletus Ilongwo, has been re-arraigned by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) before Justice Sherifat Solebo of the Special Offences Court sitting in Ikeja, Lagos on an amended seven-count charge bordering on obtaining money under false pretence to the tune of N54.7 million.

The defendant was first arraigned on November 5, 2018 on an 11-count charge to which he pleaded "not guilty".

His supposed victim, one Obinna Ezenwaka, a former employee of Fidelity Bank Plc, had alleged that he was introduced to the defendant sometime in 2015 when he was seeking solution to his "spiritual problem".

However, Ilongwo allegedly lured Ezenwaka to part with N59,760,000 under the guise that he would use it to purchase a property located at Diamond Estate, Festac Town, with the assurance that they would resell it to a Chinese company at the cost of N150million.

The defendant, however, reneged on his promise prompting him to petition the EFCC.

The Court had, at the last sitting on June 8, 2022, adjourned till today, June 16, 2022, for judgement.

However, at the resumed sitting, the prosecuting counsel, Nwandu Ukoha, informed the court of an amended charge filed by the prosecution on June 14, 2022, which he said had also been served on the defence.

Ukoha, therefore, applied that the defendant be arraigned on the amended charges in

order for him to take his plea.

The defence counsel, Titilayo Akinlawon, SAN, who acknowledged service, however, informed the court that the same application was made at the last sitting on June 8, 2022, which was also withdrawn by the prosecution.

She said, "There is no way judgement can be achieved today, as the amended information filed by the prosecuting counsel is causing abuse of court proceedings.

"The amended information is going to delay judgement. I pray my lord to disallow this amended information."

Responding, Ukoha argued that the issue of the court taking the plea was fundamental and that the court was duty-bound to accept the amended charge.

"There is no principle that says a withdrawn

charge cannot be filed again and we urge the court not to see it as an abuse of court process," he said.

Thereafter, the amended charges were read to the defendant.

One of the counts reads: "Cletus Ilongwo, on or about the 29th day of January, 2016, at Lagos, within the Ikeja Judicial Division, dishonestly converted to your own use the sum of N10 million, being money received through your Zenith Bank account from Obinna Ezenwaka meant for the purchase of the property situated at No 165c, Block 12, Diamond Estate, Amuwo-Odofin, Lagos."

He again pleaded "not guilty" to the charges.

Justice Solebo, therefore, adjourned the case till September 20, 2022 for judgement.

ICPC inaugurates Students Anti-Corruption Clubs in Osun schools

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) has inaugurated 68 Students Anti-Corruption Clubs (SACs) in secondary schools in Osun State.

The inauguration took place at Atoja School of Science, Osogbo Osun state.

Chairman of the ICPC, Prof Bolaji Owasanoye SAN, represented by the Head of Osun State office of ICPC, Mr Baba Alaro Shuaib, explained further that corruption, which goes beyond financial issues, also include examination

malpractice, sex-for-marks and award of contracts without due process.

He said corruption can be tackled by schools through helps from the youths.

Owasanoye, who spoke while presenting his keynote address, stated that the formation of Students Anti-Corruption Clubs in secondary schools was an important strategy to engage the youths actively in the fight against corruption especially in their formative years.

He charged students and youths to always follow the path of integrity and report corrupt practices to the ICPC.

Owasanoye said, "The best way to kill corruption is to prevent corruption from happening. The ICPC, through its three-pronged mandate contained in the Section 6 of the Act, 2000, particularly 6 (e-f) is a manifestation, and in line with the inauguration of Students Anti-Corruption Clubs.

"It is expected that as they grow up and assume positions of responsibility, the youths would have imbibed zero tolerance for corruption and other social vices."

He concluded by appealing to all stakeholders, especially our institutions of learning and

regulatory agencies to support ICPC in the implementation of the values re-orientation projects such as the National Values Curriculum, and the National Ethics and Integrity Policy towards positive transformation of our dear nation.

Also speaking at the occasion, the Commissioner for Education in the State, Mr Folorunsho Oladoyin, commended ICPC for the inauguration which he said would further encourage positive values in the students.

The Commissioner, who was represented by his Permanent Secretary, Mr Ademola Aderinola, pledged the support of the state in building a corruption-free society, and appealed to students to join the anti-corruption clubs in order to fight corruption and ensure a positive transformation of the society.

Delivering a lecture titled "Inculcating Positive Values in the Youths Using Anti-Corruption Clubs, the ICPC Perspective", the Director of PE&E, Mr Mohammed Ashiru Baba, explained what the Anti-Corruption Clubs were all about and the roles they are expected to play as executives and members of the club.

The SACs were officially inaugurated by Mr Baba and were sworn in with the oath of membership.

The event was attended by the Director of School Services (SUBEB), Mrs Bola Adedire, the Executive Secretary, State Senior Secondary Education Board Osogbo, Dr (Mrs) T.T Adeagbo, the Senior Education Officer of Ministry of Education, Mrs V. Aishola and other dignitaries.

Mompha's absence stalls trial for alleged money laundering

● Court adjourns till June 22

BY PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Trial of one Ismaila Mustapha, popularly known as Mompha, continues on June 22, 2022 before Justice Mojisola Dada of the Special Offences Court sitting in Ikeja, Lagos.

Mompha, alongside his company, Ismalob Global Investment Limited, is being prosecuted by the Economic and Financial Crimes (EFCC) on an eight-count charge bordering on conspiracy to launder funds obtained through unlawful activity, retention of proceeds of criminal conduct, laundering of funds obtained through unlawful activity, failure to disclose assets and property, possession of documents containing false pretence and use of property derived from unlawful act.

The Instagram celebrity had pleaded "not guilty" to the charges when read to him.

At the last sitting on Friday, June 10, 2022, the prosecuting counsel, Rotimi Oyedepo, had informed the court that investigation revealed that the defendant violated his bail term, as he was in possession of another passport aside the one he deposited to the court and which he used to travel from Ghana to Dubai.

The defence counsel, Gboyega Oyewole, SAN, had pleaded with the court to give him one week to investigate the allegation, arguing that it was only the Nigerian Immigration Service that could confirm the claim of another existing passport.

When the case was called on Thursday,

the defendant was absent, prompting the defence counsel to plead with the court for a stand down.

According to the defence counseling, "My lord, we pray for a stand down of this matter because we are working on a plea bargain.

"In addition to that, I am a little bit under the weather.

"The defendant will be present in court by the time we are back my lord."

The prosecutor raised no objection for the application for a stand down.

However, after over two hours of a stand down, the defendant was still nowhere to be found.

Consequently, Justice Dada adjourned the case till June 22, 2022.

Prosecute vote-buyers or face legal action, SERAP tells INEC

Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Professor Mahmood Yakubu, has been given seven days to “gather information about reports of vote-buying, undue influence, intimidation, ballot box snatching, and other electoral offences by the three leading political parties in the just concluded Ekiti State governorship election.”

Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) which gave the warning also urged INEC to “promptly and effectively prosecute those arrested, and bring to justice anyone who sponsored, aided and abetted them.”

In the letter dated 18 June 2022 and signed by SERAP deputy director Kolawole Oluwadare, the organisation said: “Corruption of the ballot box intrudes on the freedom of Nigerian voters to make up their own minds. Vote buying and other forms of electoral corruption freeze out the less wealthy candidates and parties.

“Wealthy candidates and their sponsors ought not to be allowed to profit from their crimes. We are concerned that impunity for vote buying and electoral bribery is widely prevalent in Nigeria, as perpetrators are rarely brought to justice.

According to SERAP, “If voting is as important as INEC always claims it is, now is the time to end the buying of democracy by wealthy politicians and their sponsors.

“Vote buying encourages poor governance and weakens citizens’ capacity to hold their ‘elected officials’ accountable for their actions.

“When political candidates or their sponsors decide to buy the support of the people rather than contest fairly for their votes, there are possibilities that such candidates and sponsors will show a disregard for democratic rules and a disposition to adopt illegal means becomes inevitable.

“Vote buying is entirely an act of election malpractice connected with vested interest since an election can be said to be free and fair when it is devoid of vote buying, ballot snatching, and intimidation.

“Your commitment to these issues will demonstrate to the voters that INEC is ready, willing and able to combat vote buying and electoral bribery and reassure Nigerians that INEC will do everything within its mandates to ensure that the 2023 general elections are not tainted by corruption.

“Ending impunity for vote-buying, undue influence, ballot snatching, intimidation, and other electoral malpractices would contribute to free and fair elections and show that INEC would not tolerate these illegal practices during the 2023 general elections.

“There are reports of a brazen pattern of vote-buying and electoral bribery in several polling

units during the just concluded Ekiti governorship election. There are reports of bargaining prices for votes and payments made in uncompleted buildings and bags of foodstuff being shared after votes have been cast.

“Acting swiftly to address the brazen impunity and reports of vote-buying and electoral bribery and other electoral offences during the Ekiti state governorship election would also send a strong message to politicians that INEC under your watch would not tolerate such practices during the 2023 general elections.

“SERAP is concerned that the failure of INEC to rein in vote buying, electoral bribery and intimidation is illustrated

by the fact that the body has not seriously addressed similar incidents in previous elections.

“Vote buying and electoral bribery is a threat to fair and representative elections. Vote buying amounts to undue influence and improper electoral influence.

“By engaging in vote buying and electoral bribery in so blatant a fashion, the politicians involved and their sponsors have clearly influenced voters to vote for him, contrary to the Electoral Act, thus raising serious questions about the legitimacy and validity of the election.

“A corruption-free electoral process is essential for building public confidence in the electoral process, and the credibility and

legitimacy of the 2023 elections.

“One of the people’s most sacred rights is the right to vote. INEC has a constitutional and statutory responsibility to ensure the effective exercise of the right of all eligible voters to participate in their own government in free and fair elections.

“Preventing and combating vote buying and electoral bribery would advance the people’s right to vote and to participate in their own government, as well as bolster the ability of INEC to discharge its constitutional and statutory mandates effectively and satisfactorily.

“Many years of allegations of vote-buying, undue influence, ballot snatching, intimidation,

and other electoral malpractices, as well as entrenched impunity of perpetrators have undermined public confidence in the electoral process.

“Prosecuting allegations of vote-buying, undue influence, ballot snatching, intimidation, and other electoral malpractices during the Ekiti state governorship election would be entirely consistent with the Nigerian Constitution, the Electoral Act, and the country’s international human rights anti-corruption obligations.

“Prosecuting those that have been arrested and identifying and arresting those who sponsored, aided and abetted them and bringing them to justice would act as a deterrent against vote buying and electoral bribery and other electoral malpractices and offences in the February 2023 general elections.

“Agents of the three dominant political parties in the state, namely All Progressives Congress (APC), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and Social Democratic Party (SDP), were reportedly involved in buying votes across the state. According to reports, agents of the three parties in Ward 007, PU 001, Ado LGA offered voters as high as N10,000 in exchange for their votes.

“There are also several reports of ballot box snatching including in polling units with codes 13/05/06/005 and 007 in Ilawe Ward IV, near St. Patrick’s School. In several voting units, party agents for the APC, PDP and SDP reportedly clustered around the voting cubicle and saw how voters marked their ballot papers.

“Vote buying and electoral bribery, intimidation of voters, ballot snatching and other electoral malpractices and offences undermine the ability of INEC to discharge its responsibilities under Section 153 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) and paragraph 15(a) of the third schedule of the Constitution, and the Electoral Act 2022.

“The Nigerian Constitution provides in Section 14(1)(c) that, ‘the participation by the people in their government shall be ensured in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution.’

“Section 145(2) of the Electoral Act provides that, ‘a prosecution under this Act shall be undertaken by legal officers of the Commission or any legal practitioner appointed by it.’ Under section 2(b), the commission ‘shall have power to promote knowledge of sound democratic election processes.’

“We would be grateful if the recommended measures are taken within 7 days of the receipt and/or publication of this letter. If we have not heard from you by then, SERAP shall consider appropriate legal actions to compel INEC to comply with our request in the public interest.”



R-L: Ekiti State Governor-Elect, Mr. Biodun Abayomi Oyebojani; his wife, Dr. Olayemi; Deputy Governor-Elect, Chief (Mrs) Monisade Afuye; Ekiti State First Lady, Erelu Bisi Fayemi, and others during the celebration of victory round Ado-Ekiti... on Sunday.

HURIWA urges INEC to nullify Ekiti governorship poll for alleged bribery

Pro-democracy and civil society organisation, Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA), has urged the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to annul the Ekiti State governorship poll held at the weekend because of overwhelming evidence of financial inducements, corruption of the electoral process and absolute compromise of the ingredients of a free, fair and transparent election.

HURIWA condemned the major contenders for their alleged involvement in the compromises and criminalization of the electoral process in the state which the group maintained has vitiated the constitutional principle of respecting the will of the electorate. This, the group said, can no longer be attained going by the widespread reports of brazen and open trading, buying and selling of the votes of the electorate even as law enforcement agencies were

allegedly also bought over.

HURIWA is miffed that even a governorship candidate (name withheld) was captured by an eagle-eyed media practitioner allegedly giving money to a voter at his polling unit alongside his wife.

The group asked the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to arrest the candidate and for INEC to “cancel the poll because whatever results from a process that is muddled by corruption and bribery can’t be said to be credible, free and fair nor can it be classified as transparent. HURIWA carpeted the EFCC for lacking good enough intelligence to stop this distortion of the electoral process in Ekiti State.”

HURIWA disclosed that its members that voted reported widespread buying and selling of votes by the major contenders such as the APC, SDP and PDP. It alleged that evidences abound in the media and from

credible sources of how agents of mostly a major party went about negotiating, buying and paying openly for votes. Some voters were seen arguing about the fact that some polling agents of the political grouping failed to pay them the agreed sum after they cast their votes for their candidate as negotiated, HURIWA affirmed.

HURIWA in a media statement by its National Coordinator, Comrade Emmanuel Onwubiko, said “the only credible line of action by INEC to take immediately is to annul the election and reschedule another fresh poll” during which time proper vetting of the security apparatuses and persons to monitor the electoral process and ensure zero tolerance to bribery and mortgaging of the electorate.

HURIWA added: “If INEC doesn’t cancel this immoral and open buying and selling of ballots, then INEC itself is compromised heavily.”

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The significance of June 12

June 12, formally known as Democracy Day is now a public holiday to commemorate the restoration of democracy in Nigeria. The date poignantly iconises the martyrdom of Chief MKO Abiola, the man whose blood could be said to have watered the tree of democracy in Nigeria after decades of military rule. June 12 as Democracy Day is President Muhammadu Buhari's replacement of the May 27 date which had been instituted by then President Olusegun Obasanjo. However, in the light of infractions, refusal to follow due process, official corruption in high places, and some brutal actions of administrations since 1999, the question arises whether there is cause for any celebration.

Have democratic cultures and practices been established? Why have the actors in the macabre drama of governance been more interested in compromising institutions and persons? Are the State Governors truly committed to democracy if they seem to have wrapped the legislatures in the different States around their fingers? What about voting persons into office? Has the system been above board as a true reflection of the spirit of free choice?

One school of thought argues that we ought to celebrate governance and not democracy. They contend that it is not right to celebrate democracy day when we are not practicing democracy. Their view is that there is nothing worth celebrating in a democracy that is monetized against the people. In their view, democracy that is not government of the people, by the people and for the people is not democracy. The other school of thought says that we are right as a country to celebrate Democracy Day because June 12 is a celebration of political values that have many things to do with some principles that June 12 represents. Failure to mark June 12 will be tantamount to going back to anti-democratic inclinations.

June 12 is a date that is significant or iconic for mixed reasons. It is part of our national and institutional memory. The date in 1993 saw the annulment of the most objective, transparent, and credible elections in the annals of Nigerian history. June 12 is an injustice of a vocal minority against the collective desires of majority of the people. June 12 indeed is a day to remember. The wound of June 12 may heal but Nigeria, as a nation must live with the scar for a long time to come. Antagonists thought June 12 was dead; but it has refused to die!

The significance of June 12 is diverse and stares us in the face. The significance includes the fact that it remains a barometer for measuring government sincerity in electioneering. It is a yardstick for evaluating

the independence of the election umpire of Nigeria. It is a test case of how over 350 nationalities could speak with one voice; it reflects how a few enemies of progress, and their minions sabotaged the collective will of the people. June 12 provides the foundation on centripetal and centrifugal forces that have made our moving forward as a nation, continuously impossible!

All these notwithstanding, we have many reasons for celebrating June 12. We have the challenge of military practitioners, now turned politicians that believe in command and obey or obey before complaining militaristic or gunboat-democracy principles that foist exclusive governance on hapless Nigerians. Our celebration of June 12 provides us the opportunity to smoothen the rough edges of our now compromised democracy and good governance. It is not a day of the parade of ill-trained politicised military personnel that will faint and collapse during parade. It should be a day for cerebral seminars, workshops and retreats on democracy and good governance in Nigeria to reset Nigeria.

We in The Trumpet believe in the ideals of the protagonist of June 12 to restructure Nigeria in a new fiscal federalism that is rooted in equity, justice, and fair play where no man is a second-class citizen in his own country. We believe that delegates should represent the opinion of their people. We believe also that political representatives must represent their people well, respect the values of democracy which includes the rule of law, separation of powers, inclusion, free and fair election, democracy and good governance, protection of lives and security that democracy provides.

We believe also that the worst democratic government is better than the best military regime. When all the ingredients and values of democracy are in place, the significance of June 12 will be better understood and appreciated by all.



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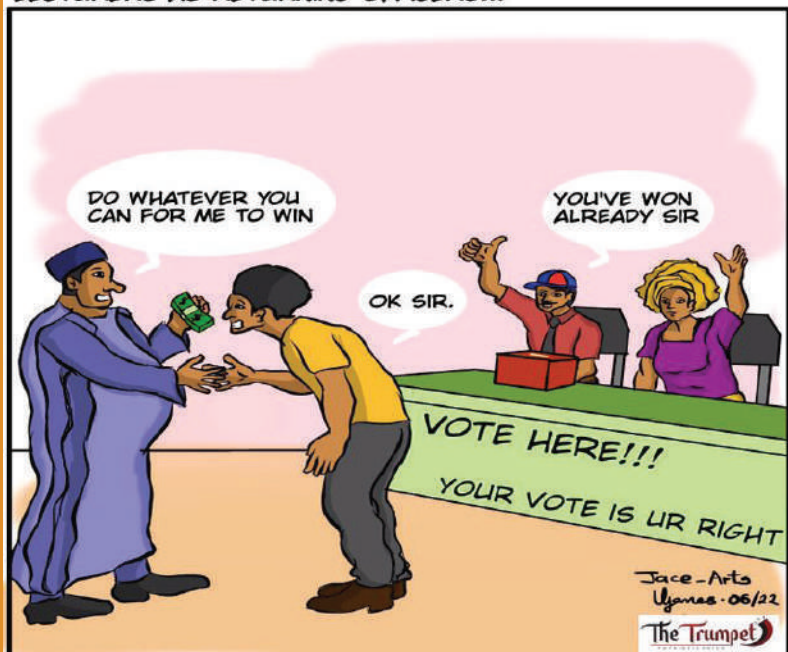
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LECTURERS AS RETURNING OFFICERS...



LECTURERS AFTER THE ELECTIONS...



Democracy and Money Politics

The initiators of democracy in 5th Greece never envisaged a situation in which only the wealthy or super-rich would become representatives of the people, whether in the legislative or executive arm of government. Its original meaning – rule of the people – is quite instructive in this regard. For, it is in the sense that aristocrats would no longer rule over the people that democracy was born. To be sure, aristocrats were the money and propertied people, who dominated the economic and political lives of society, virtually dictating the private and public lives of citizens. After Nigeria's ugly romance with military dictatorship, we have come full circle to adopt civil rule in the name of democracy. Ironically, two strong-willed characters who have 'ruled' Nigeria in the guise of democracy were retired Army Generals, still imbued with the spirit and temper of military dicta! What can we say about the Odi massacre and the savage response of government to the #ENDS SARS protests if not a clear demonstration of the vestiges of military impatience with the nuances of democratic culture?

It is true that with the passage of time, the nuances and practice of democracy have been redefined and adapted to prevailing circumstances. Society is not stagnant. Human beings create new things sometimes just for the sake of it. Or in real time reaction to unfolding culture. And so, we have such spurious, fanciful terms and notions as 'autocratic democracy', 'liberal democracy', 'consensus democracy', 'minority democracy', and 'supermajority'. 'Minority Democracy! Some have used this concept to describe the

seizure of power by the Fulani elite while majority ethnicities looked on in stupor!

The last special conventions orchestrated by All Peoples' Congress (APC) and Peoples' Democratic Party, (PDP) in Abuja brought to the fore the power of money at the heart of politics and politicking in Nigeria. There was a time in our history when the political rulers in Nigeria managed to pretend about public morality, pretending to respect the naira, pretending about fighting corruption, pretended about setting the right standards, pretended about inclusive politics, and pretended about their image in the eyes of the people. But that era has gone with the wind of time. In Abuja during the conventions, although the event was beamed for the whole world to see, it was mainly to entertain the people and give the illusion of transparency. Everyone knew that the dirty things had taken place off camera.

In a most blatant and imprudent manner, the future rulers of the country brazenly passed a vote of no confidence on sociopolitical ethics and the value of the naira in relation to the American dollar. Apart from the scandalously high price tag on the Nomination or Expression of Interest Forms, there was a battle by aspirants to pay the highest bribes to the delegates who are charged with producing the flagbearers of the Parties. In this regard, the future 'rulers' showed disdain for public opinion and image of brigands which the conventions flashed or etched in the minds of the hapless citizenry. As usual there is acquiescence on the part of the people who will vote for or against the envisaged

representatives in 2023.

Man's ingenuity in crafting new political frameworks has been his life and of course his death. Speaking broadly, we could speak of 'parliamentary democracy' and 'presidential democracy'. Ingeniously, man learnt how to elect five or ten persons into a cult-like group who in turn dished out instructions to the common people as a form of democracy. Society also created 'god fathers' who pulled the strings behind the scenes and dictated the persons who were qualified to be in parliament or occupy the executive seat of government.

There is a fundamental contradiction between democracy as a form of government and the power of money in the emergence of persons as representatives. Men and women with deep pockets but with little popularity among citizens or a questionable source of wealth have become the major nominees. This goes beyond bellyaching. There is the pervasive narrative that these men will bully their way through the power of money. What is your price tag, the flagbearers seem to ask the country? What can we do, the people seem to say? As for the Peter Obi Movement which is Even in advanced democracies, a poor man cannot really represent the people. Expressed differently, a poor man can only represent the people if he is able to raise funds to finance electioneering. In some jurisdictions, there are legal prescriptions on how to raise such funds.

If democracy as currently practiced was very successful, the notion of people power would not have developed. People Power! This is a 'political term denoting the populist driving force of any social move-

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ment which invokes the authority of grassroots opinion and willpower, usually in opposition to that of conventionally organized corporate or political forces. In principle and in practice, democracy ought to be about the power of the people to elect their representatives. But it came to be that certain subterranean forces grabbed power and dictated willy-nilly the nature and practice of politics, as we saw in the Arab world which led to the historical Arab Spring in 2010; that led to the END SARS uprising in Nigeria in 2017. People power takes over when the people are frustrated with the type of democracy and the personalities/actors who pull the strings of politics in a country. Nigeria has reached that point. What seems to have withheld those forces from taking over is the façade of ethnic and religious diversity in the two big regions that form Nigeria. For those who really know, it is a veneer. The fate of the oppressed, suffering man in the south is the same with that of the ordinary man in the north. The difference is in how they react to state-oppression and exploitation in the short run. Ultimately, suffering will unite the northern and the southern youths

to take back their country. It is only a question of time.

As the nation prepares for the 2023 general elections, angered by money politics and the politics of official exclusion, the youths have started a movement around Peter Obi. How successful this will be we are no prophets to know. There is anger in the land. Northern youths are angry. Southern youths are angry. Some people in the south believe that the Presidency of the incumbent President has favoured the North more in terms of access to the good life. Nothing can be further from the truth. Things are generally bad in the country. The odious display of money politics in Abuja during the Conventions is a breaking point for us all. Sadly, it happened under the watch of the unsmiling General who campaigned on an anti-corruption mantra. This signals the end of hope that mainstream politics can resolve the deep contradictions of the Nigerian state. So, the big question arises: NIGERIA, WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SAVE US FROM MONEY POLITICS?

• Professor Eghagha is a member of The Trumpet's Editorial Board

Postscript on permanent voter's card 'revolution'

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The term 'revolution' is one of the most misused and misunderstood in our political discourse in Nigeria. Recently, some sections of the Church, Christian faith, have added their voice in a most dramatic way to the 'enforcement' of Permanent Voter's Card's (PVC) registration and acquisition by their members. Some pastors have gone to the extreme of even denying their members sacerdotal duties if they cannot show evidence that they are registered voters. The reason why the Church has been called into the foray of PVC ownership is not far-fetched. Unfortunately, it does not seem to be borne out of some sudden sense of patriotism. It is not due to a desire by the Church's leadership to make any change on the damaged economy, corruption and inept leadership. The Church is rising to protect its members and itself. The first reason is the perceived threat against its leadership, and members by Islamist fundamentalism. Second, and related to the first, is the Church's perception that the Federal Govern-

ment - by body language - does not seriously desire to provide the much needed security by engaging the fundamentalists – most of whom are foreign Fulani infiltrators – with all the forces and might of government.

Invariable, the Church is uniting itself to effect a political change through the ballot in the next elections. This new feeling is exacerbated by the murder and burning of Sarah Yakubu by some of her fellow students at the Shehu Shagari College of Education, Sokoto. This incidence has been quickly followed by the kidnap of the Methodist Prelate, an Anglican Bishop and currently another senior Anglican Clergyman. None of the foregoing is as serious and dastardly as the massacre that was witnessed at Owo in a Catholic Church during Mass. The general thinking of most Church leaders is that the criminals who carried out these evils will all go the 'normal' way. None will be apprehended. None will be brought to justice. The perpetrators of these evils are generally perceived to be persons above the law by circumstances of

their birth and their faith and their ethnic nationality.

It is not as if the divide in Nigeria has been sealed over the years of our chequered history. The National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) scheme was established after the Civil War to solve the problem of ethnic divide in Nigeria. Today, it has failed in this specific primary assignment. Not many youth of Southern Nigeria extraction would go to some Northern States. Ethnic hate and fear of being killed without State protection are the reasons.

The ethnic divide in Nigeria can only be glossed over by government at the peril of the state and her citizens. The new Christian visible religious incursion into Nigerian polity is caused by government that today seems to be paradoxically applauding an impending danger. No nation that is divided along religious lines survives. PVC is the plank upon which the Church has actively entered Nigerian politics. I doubt if it is not just a first step. Even Frederick Lugard, in his 1914 Amalgamation speech saw this divide in Nigeria when he said, "The Legislative Council of Nigeria, if it is to represent the public opinion of Nigeria, must draw its Unofficial Members alike from Calabar and Lagos in the South, and from the Minefields and Kano in the North. To no place, however central, could the busy merchants and others find time to come in order to attend the Council's Meetings. It would be manifestly unjust to place the Mohammedan Emirates of the North and the Mining interest in the Bauchi plateau under a Council sitting on the Coast, in which they have no representation..."

Let us also recall King George's words in "The Nigeria Gazette –

Extraordinary" of Thursday, January 1, 1914, Lagos thus: "On the occasion of the formal Amalgamation of the two Nigerians, I wish you [Lugard] to convey to the Emirs, Chiefs and inhabitants of the New Protectorate and the Colony my best wishes for their future. Pray assure them of the great interest I take in their welfare and express my earnest hope that great prosperity may be in store for them."

Many years later the "two Nigerians" have increased. In Southern Nigerian alone we have Biafra, Oduduwa, and the Niger-Delta groups. The Middle Belt bloc is also visible. The "Two Nigerians" citizens' future that 1914 spoke about is now today. But it is one lacking 'welfare' and 'prosperity'. We live in danger and fear of eminent attacks by bandits, unknown gunmen, kidnapers, terrorists, and thieving civil servants and politicians who are careless whether we have functional education, health and economy. Lugard may have spoken about the Mohammedan North; today a Christian South seems to be emerging. Why is our government blind to this? Why are we calling it a PVC revolution?

Every revolution is against an existing body or system or status quo. Revolutions are meant to effect socio-political change. Scientific revolutions are harsher. In science a revolution is said to occur when new scientific laws emerge to replace old existing laws, thereby making the old laws obsolete and consequently abandoned by the scientific community. In the socio-political sphere a few characters of the ancient regime may remain as vestiges of the old in the new. Nevertheless, the old is often kicked out by a new class who were not part of the status quo. The Revd Martin

Luther-King did not use PVC to enforce his Black Rights' revolution; Herbert Macaulay, Jeremiah Awolowo, Benjamin Azikwe, Anthony Enahoro; NADECO and other Pro Democracy groups in Nigeria, etc carried out great socio-political change without the use of PVC. PVCs are only essential if the existing structure and players are accepted as genuine constitutional provisions and statesmen.

Ballot boxes can only bring about limited political change. I say limited because today, given our political reality in Nigeria, the PVC we hold can only give us Atiku or Obi or Tinubu. Our voting for these politicians is a function of the delegate system that has foisted them on us. They can only rule within the structure given to them by the Nigerian Constitution that they will ultimately swear to uphold on oath. Here are the limitations of those currently building castles of hope on a PVC Revolution. Many citizens are currently acquiring PVCs because they think that their preferred candidates will gain power and effect some radical political change. They may sooner or later begin to rally around the Church for new forms of agitations; borne out of the failure of government to guarantee life and property; and now painfully, the right of citizens to unimpeded freedom of the religion of their choice in ANY part of Nigeria at any time. Let us collectively, with a sense of justice, truth, equity and fairness, stop this tide towards a two Nigerians before it gathers full momentum.

• Dr Karo Ogbinaka lectures at the Department of Philosophy, University of Lagos. He is member of the Editorial Board of The Trumpet.

Names of Lawan, Akpabio on APC senatorial candidates list spark row

● *Four serving, three ex-governors jostle for seat in Red Chamber*

By **TUNDE JOSHUA**, POLITICS EDITOR

During the weekend, names of 109 senatorial candidates of the All Progressives Congress (APC) believed to have been forwarded to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) surfaced online and flooded the social media.

But two of the names attracted comments from Nigerians as APC members and non-members alike expressed surprise about the inclusion of Ahmad Lawan, current President of the Senate as candidate for Yobe North and former Minister for Niger Delta Affairs, Chief Godswill Akpabio for Akwa Ibom North West.

It was a known fact that Lawan bought a N100 million nomination and expression of interest forms to contest the APC presidential primary which he lost. There was no evidence that he obtained senatorial form, neither did he participated in the party's senatorial primary election.

Rather, Bashir Machina won the primary contest and was declared elected as APC senatorial candidate in Yobe North.

There has been insinuation of attempts to pacify Machina to drop the senatorial ticket for Lawan to continue the parliamentary career which he started in 1999. Attempts were allegedly made by party leaders in Yobe State and at the national level but Machina held to his gun that he will not surrender his mandate to anybody.

So, it came as a surprise to see that the name of Bashir Machina was replaced with that of the Senate President, Ahmad Lawan.

Other names on the list for Yobe State are that of the state governor, Alhaji Ibrahim Gaidam for Yobe East and Senator Mohammed Bomai for Yobe South.

Repeatedly vowing to resist attempt to make him swallow the hard pill of withdrawing for Lawan, Machina was said to have decided to take legal steps to reclaim his mandate.

On the other hand, on the Akwa Ibom list was the name of Senator Godswill Akpabio whose election as a candidate was nullified on the ground that INEC did not reckon with the process through which he emerged.

Recalled that INEC rejected the primaries which produced Godswill Akpabio as APC candidate in Akwa Ibom Northwest senatorial district

Akwa Ibom State APC Chairman, Mr. Stephen Ntukekpo, had said he was directed by the party at the national level to carry out a re-run over alleged infractions.

According to the result of the rerun senatorial primary election, Akpabio emerged the winner with 478 votes, while DIG Ekpo Udom (rtd), who won the first primary, secured just three votes.

But the Resident Electoral Commissioner, Akwa Ibom State, Mr. Mike Igini, said the commission would only recognize the winner of the primaries monitored by INEC.

He denied the claim that the commission monitored the re-run APC senatorial primaries, where Akpabio emerged the winner.

"The primaries were concluded on the 27th of last month, so I don't know what you are talking about. The one that was conducted was monitored by INEC and the report has been submitted to Abuja.

"INEC is not aware of any senatorial primaries conducted on Thursday (June 9) that was monitored by INEC, none," he stated.

The REC also affirmed that the APC has no governorship candidate in the state, saying the governorship primary where Mr.



Lawan

Akanimo Udofia emerged the winner was not monitored by INEC.

In a counter-allegation, Akpabio's camp said Igini, as the INEC resident electoral commissioner in Akwa Ibom State is encouraging illegality.

He was alleged to have pitched his tent with a state party executive that is not recognised by law.

"The duly recognised exco of the party in the state is led by Stephen Ntukekpo and not by Austin Ekanem that had been sacked by the Appeal Court. Igini claimed to have observed the primaries conducted by the sacked exco and vow not to recognise the one legally known. Igini is not INEC," said on the loyalist of Akpabio.

While the response and clarification of INEC is being awaited on the two candidates, questions are being asked as to why the ruling party should allow such row which no doubt, rub on its integrity.

However, four serving governors of the party have secured APC senatorial tickets of the district to contest the 2023 polls.

Ebonyi State governor, David Nweze Umahi secured the Ebonyi South ticket, Kebbi State governor, Atiku Abubakar Bagudu secured the Kebbi Central ticket, Niger State governor, Abubakar Sani Bello secured the Niger North ticket while Yobe State governor, Ibrahim Gaidam secured Yobe East ticket.

Three former governors also are in the race for seats in the Red Chamber come next year. They are, former Ogun State governor, Otunba Gbenga Daniel who is APC candidate for Ogun East senatorial district.

The rest are former governor of Borno State, Kashim Shettima who won the Borno Central ticket and former governor of Zamfara State, Abdul Aziz Yari who picked the Zamfara West ticket.

APC list of senatorial candidates

ABIA STATE

Chief Hon. Emeka Atuma (Abia Central), Senator Orji Uzor Kalu (Abia North) and Hon. Blessing Nwagba (Abia South)

ADAMAWA STATE

Abdulaziz Nyako (Adamawa Central) Elisha Cliff Ishaku (Adamawa North) Adamu Ismaila (Adamawa South)

AKWA IBOM STATE

Emaeayak Ukpong (Akwa Ibom North East) Sen. Godswill Obot Akpabio (Akwa Ibom North West)

Martins Udo-Inyang (Akwa Ibom South)



Akpabio

ANAMBRA STATE

Okeleke E. Boniface (Anambra Central) Ify E. Anaozuonwu (Anambra North) Hon. Chukwuma Umeoji (Anambra South)

BAUCHI STATE

Uba Nana Umar (Bauchi Central) Sirajo Tanko Mohammed (Bauchi North) Shehu Buba Umar (Bauchi South)

BAYELSA STATE

Timipa Orunimighe (Bayelsa Central) Degi-Eremienyo (Bayelsa East) ***** Wilson Dauyegha (Bayelsa West)

BENUE STATE

Hon. Emmanuel Udende (Benue North East) Titus Zam (Benue North West) Daniel Onjeh (Benue South)

BORNO STATE

Kashim Shettima (Borno Central) Mohammed Tahir Monguno (Borno North) Mohammed Ali Ndume (Borno South)

CROSS-RIVER STATE

Hon. Eteng J. Williams (Cross-River Central) Hon. Martin Orim (Cross-River North) Asuquo Ekpeyong (Cross-River South)

DELTA STATE

Ede Dafinone (Delta Central) Peter Nwaoboshi (Delta North) Joel-Onowakpo Thomas (Delta South)

EBONYI STATE

Emeka Kenneth Eze (Ebonyi Central) Onyeka Nwaebonyi Peter (Ebonyi North) Dave Nweze Umahi (Ebonyi South)

EDO STATE

Monday Okpebholo (Edo Central) Adams Oshiomhole (Edo North) Valentine Asuen (Edo South)

EKITI STATE

Michael Opeyemi Bamidele (Ekiti Central) Cyril Oluwole Fasuyi (Ekiti North) Adaramodu Adeyemo (Ekiti South)

ENUGU STATE

Adaku Ogbu Aguocha (Enugu East) Simon Ejike Eze (Enugu North) Oby Nwofor (Enugu South)

GOMBE STATE

Mohammed Danjuma Goje (Gombe Central) Sa'idu Ahmed Alkali (Gombe North) Joshua M. Lidani (Gombe South)

IMO STATE

Prince Alex Mbata (Imo East) Hon. Patrick Ndubueze (Imo North) Sen. Osita Izunaso (Imo West)

JIGAWA STATE

Ahmed Abdulhamid (Jigawa North-East) Babangida Hussaini (Jigawa North-West) Tijjani Ibrahim Kiyawa (Jigawa South-West)

KADUNA STATE

Muhammad Sani Abdullahi (Kaduna Central) Suleiman Abdu Kwari (Kaduna North) Bulus Audu (Kaduna South)

KANO STATE

Abdulsalam Zaura (Kano Central) Sen. Barau Jibrin (Kano North) Sen. Kabiru Gaya (Kano South)

KATSINA STATE

AbdulAziz Musa Yar'Adua (Katsina Central) Nasiru Sani Zangon Daura (Katsina North) Mukhtar Muhammed Dandutse (Katsina South)

KEBBI STATE

Sen. Atiku Abubakar Bagudu (Kebbi Central) Hussaini Sulaiman Kangiwa (Kebbi North) Sen. Bala Ibn Na'Allah (Kebbi South)

KOGI STATE

Ohere Abubakar (Kogi Central) Sen Isah Jibrin (Kogi East) Karimi Sunday Steve (Kogi West)

KWARA STATE

Saliu Mustapha (Kwara Central) Sadiq Suleiman Umar (Kwara North) Sen. Lola Issa Ashiru (Kwara South)

LAGOS STATE

Hon. Eshilokun Wasiu Sanni (Lagos Central) Sen. Mukhail A. Abiru (Lagos East) Idiat Oluranti Adebule (Lagos West)

NASARAWA STATE

Danladi Halilu ESQ (Nasarawa North) Tanko Almakura (Nasarawa South) Shehu Tukur (Nasarawa West)

NIGER STATE

Mohammed Sani Musa (Niger East) Abubakar Sani Bello (Niger North) Bima Muhammad Enagi (Niger South)

OGUN STATE

Shuaib Salisu (Ogun Central) Olugbenga Daniel (Ogun East) Sen. Olamilekan Adeola (Ogun West)

ONDO SOUTH

Adeniyi Adegbonire SAN (Ondo Central) Ipinsagba Olajide (Ondo North) Jimoh Ibrahim (Ondo South)

OSUN STATE

Ajibola Basiru (Osun Central) Israel Famurewa (Osun East) Amidu Tadese Raheem (Osun West)

OYO STATE

Dr. Yunus Akintunde (Oyo Central) Sen. Fatai Buhari (Oyo North) Sarafa Ali (Oyo South)

PLATEAU STATE

Hon. Diiket Satso Plang (Plateau Central) Christopher Giwa (Plateau North) Rt. Hon. Simon B. Lalong (Plateau South)

RIVERS STATE

Ndubuisi U. Nwankwo (Rivers East) Oji N. Ngofa (Rivers South East) Asita Honourable O. (Rivers West)

SOKOTO STATE

Ibrahim Lamido (Sokoto East) Sen. Aliyu Magatakarda Wammako (Sokoto North) Ibrahim Danbaba Abdullahi (Sokoto South)

TARABA STATE

Marafa Bashir Abba (Taraba Central) Sani Danladi Abubakar (Taraba North) Danjuma Usman Shiddi (Taraba South)

YOBE STATE

Ibrahim Gaidam (Yobe East) Sen. Ahmad Lawan (Yobe North) Sen. Mohammed Bomai (Yobe South)

ZAMFARA STATE

Sen. Kabiru Marafa (Zamfara Central) Sen. Sahabi Alhaji Ya'u (Zamfara North) AbdulAziz Yari Abubakar (Zamfara West)

FCT

Hon. Zakaria Angulu.

Ekiti guber election outcome, others as litmus tests for Tinubu, APC in S'West



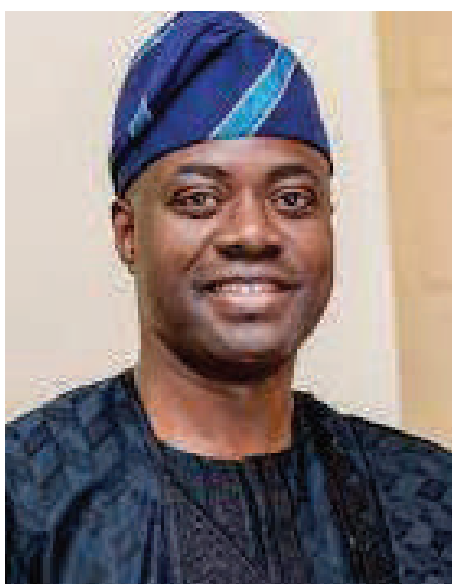
Bola Tinubu



Kayode Fayemi



Rotimi Akeredolu



Seyi Makinde



Gboyega Oyetola



Babajide Sanwo-Olu



Abayomi Oyebanji

By **TUNDE JOSHUA**, POLITICS EDITOR

Returning Officer for the Ekiti 2022 Governorship Election, Professor Kayode Adebowale, Vice-Chancellor, University of Ibadan, early hours of Sunday declared the candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Biodun Abayomi Oyebanji (BAO), as the winner and returned him Governor - Elect.

Oyebanji polled 187,057 votes to defeat his closest rival, Engr. Segun Oni of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), who got 82,211 and Peoples Democratic Party's (PDP's) Chief Bisi Kolawole, 67,457.

The Ekiti governorship election and next month's gubernatorial poll in Osun State are no doubt litmus tests of acceptability of Tinubu in his South West base ahead of 2023.

Though the APC won in Ekiti, the result has great implication for the party and the prospect of its presidential candidate, Asiwaju Bola Tunubu not only in the state but South West and nationwide in 2023.

Oyebanji though led his closest rival with a margin of over 100,000 votes, the victory could not be described as landslide considering the fact that the PDP could have scored about 150,000 votes if Oni had not defected to the SDP after losing out at the primary election of the opposition party.

This result showed that the APC has not convincingly express its dominance and it not yet time for Tinubu and the party to start rejoicing or roll out the drums.

Should there be a repeat of this result in the general polls in 2023, then Tinubu would not be said to have swept Ekiti State.

It is obvious that the APC candidate still has a lot of horse trading to do in Yorubaland. With his dexterity in political bargaining, it is possible for him to react out to Segun Oni to

trade off SDP vote during presidential election.

Asiwaju and his foot soldiers across the West still has a lot to do if he must win convincingly in the zone. The reason is that the Ekiti result clearly showed that the South West is not totally under the control of APC as some political novice would think.

In Lagos State which is Tinubu's base, he will need extra efforts to win 60 percent of Lagos votes. This is because of the soaring influence of Jide Adediran (Jandor), the governorship candidate of the PDP who has in his control a sizeable chunk of former APC members that moved enmass with him to PDP.

Also of note is the impressive number of South Easterners residing in Lagos who are sympathetic to the Igbo presidency course as symbolised by Peter Obi of the Labour Party.

In Oyo State, a sitting PDP governor, Seyi Makinde who is seeking a second term will not make the state an easy ride for Tinubu and APC. So, there is no way Tinubu can make 60 percent votes in Oyo.

His chances in Osun depends largely in the outcome of the July 16 governorship poll. He may leverage on the re-election of his blood relative, Gboyega Oyetola of the APC to poll considerable large votes. But, if the result turn out otherwise, the he will still have the opposition PDP to grapple with.

The APC candidate may not have much problem in Ogun State because of its proximity to Lagos. The spill effect of a Tinubu presidency may pull some votes for him than any other party. While in Ondo State, he may also have an upper hand.

Going by the above projection, Tinubu could only be said to expect a little above average performance in the South West which is his stronghold in the entire southern Nigeria.

Results of last general election and off season

elections have shown that the APC is still struggling for acceptance in both the South East and South South. Both current APC governors in the South East, Dave Umahi of Ebonyi and Hope Uxodoinma of Imo cannot pull any surprise for APC in their states. They are both only APC in Abuja and PDP at home.

In the South South, the APC has lost the control of Edo, the only state it governed before to the PDP. Therefore, there is no magic for Tinubu to pull a meaningful electoral surprise.

Going by the above, however, the former Lagos governor is left with little choice than to look across the political divide to the North where he think he has allies.

Political conventional arrangement has even made it expedient for him to pick his running mate from the north.

Though he had submitted the name of Ibrahim Masari in holding as his running mate, he still battle with the choice of acceptable vice presidential candidate.

Tinubu, is in a dilemma of dancing to the tune of a Muslim dictate because of his need of votes of the northern Muslim populace.

Knowing fully he has totally less than average assurance of votes from the entire south, his electoral survival is in the north, hence, he is handicapped but to submit his ego about the choice of running mate to factors beyond Hus control as the search continues.

Quick take home from the Saturday polls showed not impressive turn out if voters despite claims by stakeholders that there was large turn out.

Statistics from INEC had it that as huge as 988,924 Permanent Voters Cards (PVCs) were collected across the 2445 polling units in 177 wards across the 16 local government areas of Ekiti State but it disheartening to

note that just 360,753 votes were cast in the election, out of which a total of 351,865 were said to be valid.

Another thing to note was cases of vote buying and arrest of a few culprits by security agents assigned to election duty. This was confirmed by report of the Nigerian Civil Society Situation Room.

"Situation Room received reports of widespread vote buying by political party agents across the 16 Local Government Areas of the State. In many instances, voters were induced with money ranging from N4,500 to N10,000 by asking them to flag completed ballot papers as proof of voting in the specified manner in what they term "See and Buy". Situation Room strongly condemns this blatant violation of the electoral law," read the report.

There was a general perception that the Bi-Modal Verification Accreditation System (BVAS) widely functional in at least 76% of the voting locations. Though there were reports of delays and malfunctioning BVAS machines in some voting units especially those with many registered voters.

Examples of the locations where the machines malfunctioned include; PU 002 Igbaletere by Mechanic Workshop, Ward 6 Ado Okeyinmi, Ado-Ekiti LGA where the Machine was going on and off intermittently, PU 007 LA Primary School Oke Afin, Otun Ward III and PU018 Igogo Ward II both in Moba LGA where the BVAS failed, and PU 014, Ward I Okemesi, Ekiti West LGA, amongst others. Furthermore, INEC's distribution of the BVAS devices was not proportionate to the population of registered voters by polling unit.

The election was generally peaceful save pockets of disruption by political thugs in a very few polling units.

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Who is who in Isoko project 3rd decade (2011 – 2021) book presentation, public lecture and dinner gala awards nite key note address by Justice V. I. Ofesi (Rtd)

Let me first of all express my sincere thanks to the organizers of this event especially Jerry Odugala the author of this book for finding me worthy to deliver this key note address and also to the rest of us present. All the awardees and the other personalities I wish to further commend the author of the book whose effort and industry has brought us here today.

My job here today is simple, since key note address have no form nor are they subjected to any restrictions or limitations legally, politically or style. Just like judgment of the courts which has no style yet there are methods. There is the general method, the chronicle, the narrative and staccato, any of these methods is better than no method at all. I shall therefore deal with this address by adopting the chronicle method. Each time, I had the opportunity to address any gathering of Isoko elites; I hammer on the unity of Isoko Nation. My experience when for the first time I was invited to the end of year Isoko Development Union Conference by the current President General, Professor Akpotu in 2021, it was very discouraging as the attendance was a far cry from what I was expecting. To me, it was a clear indication of lack of commitment on the part of our people.

I want to urge that we be more committed to our common course as a people. Before the year 1999 and shortly after, Isoko Nation was strong, united and well organized, politically, socially and economically. No group or party undermines us. But today with passage of time, same cannot be said of Isoko. We are in a sorry state. We have become so self-centered so lazy and so greedy. May be it is the general trend in the country that has robbed off on us. In Nigeria today, the latest way to corruption is power. Our leaders are now looters. Looters who are waiting to take over in 2023 are more than those who are already looting. Nobody is safe either in your own house, road, air, train or the Highways. Our health facilities are dead, our speed limit on our highways is determined by the member of pot holes. Companies work with generators just to pay electricity bills. The press destroy information. Money rituals are now the last hope of the common man. The common man can no longer afford common things. We are in a cross road approaching the dead end; yet we appear not bothered. Nigerians need to rise to the occasion irrespective of tribe, religion, political and ideological differences. Power unchallenged is negative. Bad men are in control because good men do not won't to get involved.

Power is taken not given. The worst of us now rule the best of us. The worst of use are celebrated as the epitome and representation of the best of us because the best of us are too scared to make that move. As the general elections approaches, some or most of our politicians can take any call, eat corn with the common man, sir even in the dirtiest classroom with students even when they have abandoned same eight years ago. Any of us who is 60 years and above is already on top of the graph. If so, what are we bequeathing to our children? Politics is as old as the creation of man. Hence we are told and God said, let's



Justice V. I. Ofesi

make man in our own image and after our likeness and give him dominion to govern lesser animals that are not human beings. And I make bold to think that, in the mindset of God, man was to perform his good duties here on earth through the instrumentality of a delegated legislature. I am sure, it was never in the image or attributes of God to have anyone (man) treated lesser than a human being. Of course, man inhumanity to fellow man, selfishness and greed in men has ridiculed the original purpose and plan of God for man. Any wonder, one wonders, what society becomes each passing day as we see on the TV screen and read on print media. Indeed, all men, just like all fingers are not equal but are very important to man and in the sight of God. So also men are expected to see and treat fellow humans.

Unfortunately, a lot of evil tendencies took over man of which God himself had said "The heart of man is desperately wicked and deceitful, who can know it? Very unfortunate to the extent that he God would not hide his dismay or disappointment when he also said "I regretted that I made man. You can see that man has turned the world upside down because his thoughts and doings continually are evil. Men have put themselves in the devil's palace and are dealing with fellow humans as external enemies whether politically, economically, socially, emotionally, even spiritually and otherwise. This is because we love what is good for ourselves and family members but hate it for other people. For instance, a state or society has been structured or patterned to accomplish certain goals or purposes. And this includes social – political – Economic perceptions or differences in all diversities, especially in secularism. And to this end, institutions are put in place for men to see the need of appreciating it uniformitarianism, equilibriums, egalitarianism, peaceful co-existentialism, purposeful progress and Development, justice and fair play. But the activities of most average men today have negated the real purposes and plan of God for most states and country, to the extent that, bequeathing a stronger and better state particularly in our states and country at large, has become a very great illusion to be pursued without any hope of attainment. We have deliberately killed our institutions with corruption, tribalism, estheticism, despotism, regionalism/political unpredictable systemise, wishful hatred and greed. So we now celebrate powerful men in society who mortgaged our differ-

ences, short changed our institutions and development for their own selfishness, greed and corrupt pockets which was never the original purpose and plan for man by God. Therefore we must change the narratives, for the better, our ways, mindsets and perceptions or perspectives of dealing with fellow Isoko people whether as leaders at any level of our society. Now the only thing that makes democracy better than all other form of Government/System is its emphasis on collectivity; two good heads are better than one.

The greatest undoing of man is the possibility of an imagination of invincibility. When they get to a level, they start promulgating some spurious ideologies of the non-existence of God. They do it to prepare the foundation of being worshipped as god. This is rampant with autocrats and dictators. It started in the olden days when they were addressed principally as Kings. Nebuchadnezzar was so highly elevated that he ordered his people to make his image and compelled men to worship him as God. Whoever disobeyed his injunctions was either thrown into fire or the lion's den. Remember Shedrach, Meshach and Abednigo who were thrown into fire because they refused to worship Nebuchadnezzar as god.

The cheapest way Satan lures men is by swelling their heads that they are not ordinary. The fall of man came when he ate from the forbidden fruit that Satan convinced him will make him to be like God. He eventually lost his glory and ended up in dust. Nebuchadnezzar was made a human monkey and wandered in the bush for seven years cohabitating with other animals during that period. He came back from that experience to with a declaration that there is God who rules over the affairs of men. He was so lucky to be alive to tell the story. Some of his likes were slain on their throne. The other example was Jezebel who exhibited so much wickedness, but from the end of her reign till date her name is synonymous with wickedness. From these examples, I will advise that we learn from them and others experiences. Some of us just refused to learn even though we are good students of history.

There should be a change of attitude to avoid the faith of Nebuchadnezzar and Jezebel befalling on us. A man's success or rather our happiness, and life fulfillment does not in real sense depend on the amount of our possessions. In otherwise, happiness and life fulfillment is not guaranteed by the number of cars, houses and large bank account. We must strive as leaders to recreate and prepare a generation of Isoko men and women in every area of life that can hold out and competently represent Isoko Nation in this country. When our time is over our legacies will not just be the number of our private jets, the amount of public funds stashed away in foreign banks but that which our children will feel and see; that which will last forever. Today in Isoko land, there is no single Federal presence. The State Government activities are negligible. This is in spite of the fact that Isoko is one of the major oil bearing and producing communities in the country.

Those of us in the oil business can bear me out. It is sad, very sad that our brothers

far away in the North owns several oil wells behind our houses. While the oil is our own (all Nigerians) the devastation and economic degradation is for only the Niger Deltans. While all senior staff positions/managerial positions in the oil sector are occupied by people from a section of the country, Emede and Igbide are fighting and killing themselves over a piece of land without any economic or commercial value. What a faith that has befallen on our land. Since my retirement, I have closely and keenly watched and monitored the political actions and activities in Isoko and one particular issue that struck my mind is the struggle for the local political leadership. This has seriously polarized and divided the political class.

Our undoing as a people is disunity and confidence crisis; poverty and evil envy. I want to see this gathering today as an opportunity for us to reflect on our history/past. The gathering of the cream of our Isoko elites like we have today is rare, now that the Almighty has brought us together in this arena, let's ask ourselves one simple question, and that is how did we get to where we are today. I don't know what will be your answer but for me, it is simple. "It is lack of unity. There is no unity no trust; I pray these mitigating factors do not push us into oblivion. We need each other to succeed. Let's speak with one voice, loud and clear; the solution to our problems is in ourselves. The whole of Isoko land do not worth the life of one Isoko man. Let us put our differences behind and look ahead in one accord for the interest of our land. Isoko as an ethnic group, chart a new course to move Isoko forward. Enough of unnecessary killings and wanton destruction of properties. Unlike some of our brothers in the riverine communities, the average Isoko man does not have access to the oil behind his house. In all we should be wise in choosing our political representatives come 2023, profile all the contestants any disrespectful, ill cultured, ill nurtured and ill mannered candidate must not be allowed into any elective office. We must not be fooled again or traded by a few for a "Food of Goose".

The system should not be crippled because of the damaging interests of a destructive few. We must come out from the envelopes of all political antelopes and begin to develop our minds, grow our brains, educate our thoughts and elevate our narrow mindedness.

Free up the political space for political freshness/fresh air. Isoko is so backward today because of the mindsets of those who position people without conscience and good disposition. I know Isoko people are wiser now. From what I have seen, we have quite a number of well educated, well cultured men and women with excellent conduct vying for various positions. The choice is yours. Lastly, let me once again congratulate all the awardees, it is a great honour to be selected and considered for recognition by your own people. I rejoice with all of you. It is hoped that this award will spur you to do more for Isoko in particular and the country Nigeria in general. It is my fervent prayers that the Almighty will continue to protect, guide and lead you now and forever. Thanks for your attention.



Anxiety as Nigeria's foreign debts surpass \$100 billion

Since the mid-1980s, Nigeria has been borrowing regularly for one purpose or the other. For instance, the country was highly indebted to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, Paris Club of Nations and other multilateral financial institutions. During his administration, former President Olusegun Obasanjo negotiated with the Paris Club of nations to repay part of its loans to liberate the country from its huge debt burden. However, since the inception of President Muhammadu Buhari's administration, Nigeria has, again, accumulated huge debts, which the Debt Management Office (DMO) said has surpassed the \$100 billion mark, a situation capable of jeopardising the nation's economy and worsening the living conditions of Nigerians, **JOHNMARK UKOKO** writes.

Shortly before former President Olusegun Obasanjo left office in 2007, Nigeria was almost free from its foreign debts due to his administration's efforts to repay substantial amounts the country owed the Paris Club of Nations and debts cancellation it secured from the group.

Nigeria's former Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, was widely believed to have facilitated the engagements that led to the repayment of about \$12 billion at the time.

However, when President Goodluck Jonathan administration came on board, the country started borrowing afresh from global financial institutions and other countries to the extent that before he left office, Nigeria's foreign debts had risen to levels at which most economic analysts and financial experts expressed deep concern.

Obasanjo had expressed concern that less than a decade after almost getting the country out of its debts challenges, his successors, the late Umaru Musa Yar'Adua and Jonathan returned the country to a highly indebted nation.

At the inception of President Buhari's government on May 29, 2015, Nigerians were hopeful that his administration would clear the country of its debts or at best reduce the nation's high indebtedness.

But such optimism was dashed as the crash in the price of crude oil in the international market to an all time low of about \$20 per barrel, which slightly rose to \$30 per barrel and other factors, plunged the country into two recessions.

To get the country out of the recession, the Buhari administration borrowed from China, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, European Bank, the Africa Development Bank (AfDB) and other multilateral financial institutions.

For instance, the government obtained a loan from the Islamic Bank, just as it tied most of other loans such as the Sukuk loan, a non-interest for road infrastructure to capital projects across the country.

Also, the government explained that the facilities obtained from China banks were being used to finance the rail system, power projects and remodeling runways of international airports in the country.

Some of the major road projects that have gulped huge amounts are the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, the Second Niger Bridge, Abuja-Lokoja Highway, Kano-Kaduna Expressway and several other road projects across the country.

Besides, the Buhari administration told Nigerians that it was using the loans to upgrade the rail projects started by Jonathan's administration, which it said, accounted for the huge foreign

debts.

By and large, China had funded the Lagos-Ibadan, Abuja-Kaduna and the Port Harcourt-Maidugiri rail projects, among others, in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Transportation headed by former Governor of Rivers State, Rotimi Chinuike Amaechi

The Buhari government also borrowed huge amounts to revive the country's comatose power sector even as electricity generation and supply continue to depreciate beyond normal levels.

Investigations revealed that in spite of the huge financial investment on the power sector power generation still stands between 3000 and 6000 megawatts, while the national grid had collapsed seven times from around April and June this year.

Curiously, despite protestations by economists, as well as informed and uninformed Nigerians that the level of borrowings by the Buhari government signaled serious danger to the country, the Federal Government and its officials had consistently ignored such concerns.

Government officials had constantly told Nigerians that the loans were being deployed to capital projects and that the projects have the potential of repaying the loans.

The government consistently argued that unlike what obtained during the Jonathan administration when loans were taken to pay salaries and run the government, the current administration was borrowing to fund capital projects.

But the Debt Management Office (DMO), which recently raised the alarm about the country's rising debt profile, disclosed that Nigeria's total indebtedness as of the first quarter (Q1) of 2022 has reached N41.60 trillion, which is over \$100 billion.

"The new debt figures, compared to the N39.56 trillion and \$95.78 billion recorded in December 2021 represented the domestic and external debt stock of the Federal Government, the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja.

"The total public debt stock includes Federal Government's fresh domestic borrowing to partly finance deficits in the 2022 Appropriation Act, the \$1.2 billion Eurobond issued in March 2022 and disbursements by multilateral and bilateral lenders. There were also increases in the debt stock of state governments and the FCT," a statement issued by the DMO reads.

The statement added that while the total public debt to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at 23.27 per cent was below Nigeria's self-imposed limit of 40 per cent, momentum by the government to grow and diversify revenues remains a priority to ensure that the country sustained its public debt.

"But the truth is that debt becomes a problem, if the revenue



President Muhammadu Buhari

base is not strong enough to service the debt sustainably, it invariably becomes a debt problem and possibly a debt crisis," the statement added.

Management of the DMO expressed deep concern that the country's debt profile has become a big challenge to those charged with the responsibility of managing the country's debts.

However, Chief Executive Officer of Centre for the Promotion of Private Enterprise (CPPE), Dr. Muda Yusuf, disagreed with that position, saying government's rising debt profile raised serious concerns about sustainability.

"When we take account of borrowings from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and the stock of the Assets Management Corporation of Nigeria's (AMCON) indebtedness, the debt profile would be in excess of N50 trillion.

"Although the Federal Government tends to argue that the condition is not a debt problem, but a revenue challenge, the truth is that debt becomes a problem if the revenue base is not strong enough to service the debt sustainably," he stressed.

Yusuf, an economist and immediate past Director-General of the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), said the country was in a serious debt crisis, adding that further borrowing would only further deepen the country's economic woes.

Lamenting that the country has to now borrow for recurrent purposes, he said: "Government's actual revenue can now hardly cover the country's recurrent budget, which implies that the entire capital budget and part of the recurrent expenditure are being funded from borrowing.

"This is surely not sustainable. As of November 2021, debt service to revenue ratio was 76 per cent. The situation had evidently worsened. What is needed is the political will to cut expenditure and undertake reforms that could reduce the size of government, cost of governance and ease the fiscal burden on the government," he said.

Yusuf restated that it was important to ensure that the loans were been used strictly to fund capital projects, especially infrastructure projects that would strengthen the productive capacity of the economy, adding: "That is the position of the Fiscal

Responsibility Act.

Also responding to the development, another economist, Stanley Orosanye, who pointed out that borrowing was not bad in itself, but such loans should be deployed for productive or capital projects, lamented that this was not the case with Nigeria.

"Borrowing is not bad, but what matters most is the reason for the borrowing. Our problem is that we are borrowing to pay salaries and finance wastages. A country that spends nearly one quarter of its budget to subsidise importation of petroleum products is not a serious country.

Another respondent, an editor of a national daily, Kingsley Igho, who spoke to The Trumpet in an interview, said the challenges facing Nigeria today remain its debt service to revenue ratio.

"Nigeria has a revenue challenge, but has continued to borrow not for productive endeavors that will create more jobs and reduce poverty, but to subsidise consumption, corruption and bloated lifestyles of government officials and public servants.

"We have modular refineries that are not being fed with crude oil to end fuel importation which is why we spend all our dollar earnings on payments for fuel imports and subsidy," he lamented.

Most informed Nigerians, therefore, urge President Buhari to stop further borrowing, especially during the last 11 months of his administration.

It is left to be seen if the Federal Government will look inwards and curb the massive corruption that had been responsible for the borrowings, just as Nigerians expressed the view that a large chunk of the loans end up being diverted into private pockets.

Court restrains FG from concessioning \$3.2b e-Customs project to Chinese firm

By **ADAKU WALTER**

Following conflicts among concessionaires in the \$3.2 billion Customs modernisation project, a Federal High Court in Abuja has restrained the Federal Government from enforcing or giving effect to an agreement on the e-Customs project signed on May 30, 2022.

The *Trumpet* recalled that the lead concessionaire, Bionica Technologies Limited hinted at a litigation to stop the project, following the impasse with other concessionaires and the Federal Government on the contract.

They alleged that the Nigeria Custom Service (NCS), Trade Modernisation Project Limited, Huawei Technologies Company Nigeria Limited and the African Finance Corporation (AFC), executed the disputed concession agreement.

The court had on Friday, also issued an order of interim injunction against the Federal Government or its agents acting through the Federal Executive Council (FEC) from retrospectively ratifying the

decision to concession the Customs Modernisation Project also known as e-Customs project to Trade Modernisation Project Limited, Huawei Technologies Company Limited and the AFC.

The restraining order issued by Justice Inyang Ekwo of the Abuja Division of the court shall last till the hearing and determination of a suit brought against the Federal Government and other parties by the two aggrieved companies.

The two firms, E-Customs HC Project Limited and Bionica Technologies (West Africa) Limited had challenged the alleged unlawful concession of the E-Customs project to the defendants.

Counsel to the aggrieved companies, Anone Usman, who had argued an ex parte application, prayed the Court for interim orders against the defendants to protect his clients' interests.

Ruling on the application, Justice Ekwo granted the prayers of the plaintiff having placed sufficient evidence of interest in the project and also granted permission to the companies to serve a writ of summons

and other filed processes on the AFC at its head office, in Ikoyi, Lagos through DHL courier services.

Defendants in the suit are the Federal Government of Nigeria; Attorney-General of the Federation; Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning; Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission (ICRC); NCS; Trade Modernisation Project Limited; Huawei Technologies Limited; AFC and Bergman Security Consultants and Supply Limited being first to ninth defendants in the case.

Justice Ekwo subsequently fixed June 28, 2022 for hearing in the matter, just as the plaintiffs in their statements of claim narrated how they proposed to actualise the project through several government officials for the overall benefit of the NCS.

They claimed that after series of meetings and negotiations with some of the defendants, President Muhammadu Buhari granted anticipated approval for the e-Customs Project, insisting that on September 2, 2020, the Minister of Finance presented a memorandum marked: EC2020/153 to the FEC and secured approval for the plaintiffs for the concession.

At Oriental News summit, stakeholders canvass financial inclusion, literacy

Stories by **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

The Federal Government's and Central Bank of Nigeria's (CBN's) initiatives to rescue adults towards achieving financial inclusion and financial literacy received a boost during STANMEG Communications conference at the weekend in Lagos,

Speaking at the conference with the theme: *Engaging Critical Grassroots Groups To Develop Effective Financial Inclusion Initiative*, in Lagos at the weekend, Editor of Oriental News Online, Mrs. Yemisi Izuora, said the conference was initiated about two years ago after a painstaking study on the progress and prospects of the initiative.

She said the journey began in 2020 and the feedbacks generated, especially from grassroots segments of the society prompted publishers of Oriental News online

"to organise what we are about to share today from state actors and non-state actors alike.

"The conference is organised

given that over the past couple of years, the Federal Government and stakeholders in the financial sector have had to deal with expanding financial services to large communities of underserved populations and the need to deal with resilience challenges due to confluence of events that have taken place," she said.

In his presentation, Chairman of the occasion and President of the Bank Customers Association of Nigeria (BCAN), Dr. Uju Ogubunka, disclosed that the concept of financial inclusion was mooted in 2012 when CBN lunched the initiative as a result that majority of the country's adults do not have bank accounts.

He explained that at that time there were no insurance policies or capital market involvements, adding that the CBN and other financial regulators have done a lot to promote the initiative.

Ogubunka commended the publishers of Oriental News online for the initiative and urged all Nigerians to support the policy, because the more Nigerian adults that are financially included, the better



Dr. Uju Ogubunka

will the country's economy.

He also appealed to Nigerian adults to open accounts in banks, buy insurance policies, actively participate in the capital market activities and subscribe to pension services to improve their financial status.

He lamented that a research carried out by the CBN showed that about 54 per cent of women were not financially inclusive as against 39.2 per cent of male adults, adding that despite Federal Government and CBN's efforts to motivate more Nigeria adults into financial inclusion, more work still needed to be done by Nigerians to ensure that the policy succeeds.

"In 2012 when the policy was launched, the CBN targeted that by the year 2020, most Nigerian adults would have been financially included. 2020 has come and gone, I am not sure we have achieved the target," he said.

In his presentation, Managing Director of APT Securities and Funds Limited, and Guest Speaker at the event, Garba Kurfi, charged Nigerian adults to embrace financial services and stop keeping their money under their pillows.

Kurfi, who was represented

by Rotimi Olubi, said if all the money outside the banks and all the transactions in the Macro and Small Scale Enterprises (MSMEs) and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) being done outside the formal sector are formalised, the better the Nigerian economy would become.

He said: "A business may have great potential, but if the business owner is not financially inclusive, such business can't grow. Our economy will grow faster if more Nigerian adults are financially included. All of us must join in propagating the gospel.

"The more financially literate one becomes the better his financial status. One may be highly educated without being financial literate. While some people not much educated, some few financially literate ones will do r better than the educated ones, who lack financial literacy," he stressed.

Equity market capitalisation falls below N28tr, naira depreciates to N421.3 per dollar

Nigerian equity market sustained its downward trend on Friday, June 17, 2022, as profit takings dominated transactions in the bourse and capitalisation of listed stocks falling below N28 trillion.

The market's All Share Index (ASI) declined by 1.21 per cent to close at 51,778.08 points, below the 52,411.09 points it closed with the previous day, just as the market capitalisation of equities listed on the Nigeria Stock Exchange (NGX) fell to N27.914 trillion from N28.255 trillion as against the previous day.

The total volume traded closed with an exchange of 241.191 million units valued at 3.67 billion traded in 5,043 deals as the market breadth closed on the negative note with 10

gainers as against 24 losers.

The NGX index declined by 1.76 per cent to close at 1,880.41 points, as against 1,914.13 points the previous day, while market turnover closed with traded volume of 1.48.47 million units.

Fidelity Bank and Unilever Plc were the only gainers, while International Breweries and Eco Bank Nigeria Limited were the key losers, as International Breweries Stock fell by 9.42 per cent, Eco Bank dropped by 8.6 per cent and MTN Nigeria share dipped by 5.04 per cent.

First Bank of Nigeria (FBN) Holden fell by 5.37 per cent, Access Bank shares declined by 2.62 per cent, but Fidelity Bank's shares gained 3.4 per cent, while BUA Food increased by 2.3 per cent.

On the money market, the interbank lending rate declined as overnight (O/N) rate decreased by 3.08 per cent to close at 10.92 and 14.00 per cent.

Also, the Open Repo (OPR) declined by 3.08 per cent to close at 10.92 per cent compared with the 14.00 per cent it closed with previously, just as the OPR decreased by 3.50 per cent to close at 10.33 per cent as against the 13.83 per cent it closed with the previous day.

At the Import, Export (I&E) and Foreign Exchange window, the naira depreciated by 0.20 per cent, as the dollar was quoted at N421.33 against N420.50 at the last trading, while traders said most participants maintained bids between N413.00 and N444.00 to the dollar.

Illegal roadblocks: Transporters commend ANLCA's escort committee at Seme border

Association of the Nigerian Licensed Customs Agents (ANLCA) has been commended for creating an escort committee for loaded incoming trucks or those exiting the Seme-Kraka borders to prevent extortions from unscrupulous security agencies.

The Trumpet learnt that at the last check, there are more than 50 checkpoints between Agbara and Seme border.

Speaking with newsmen recently in Lagos, Coordinator of the West African Road Transport Union (WARTU), Comrade Peter Umukoro, commended the Chairman of ANLCA, Seme Border chapter, Chief Onyekachi Ojinma, for creating the escort committee.

While lamenting the activities of illegal checkpoints along the Seme corridor, Umukoro said the Federal Government agencies inflict cuts and injuries on transporters, who fail to bride them.

"The security agencies don't invite us to their meetings again,

because we constantly opposed the multiple checkpoints where our drivers sustain severe injuries, while some of them lose their eyes or sustain deep cuts due to the menace of multiple checkpoints.

"If you give a driver an empty trucks going out of the country to load consignment, you start paying these illegal checkpoint, if you don't have money to give them, they would give your driver an injury, we have complained severally but there is nothing we can do about it.

"The leadership of ANLCA has come up with a means of escorting our loaded and the empty trucks and with the move multiple checkpoints are now being frustrating. When they are coming with our goods, they don't give a dime to anybody and it was an escort committee that was created and is really working, even though it is not totally free for now," he said.

Umukoro noted that the con-

tainerisation of cargoes through the Seme border had caused most West African Transporters to lose their jobs, because cargoes coming to Benin Republic no longer come by road, but by sea.

According to him, if the cargo is imported by road from Cote d' Voire or Ghana, the transporters would benefit, but now, the containerisation of the process has ran the transporters out of business.

"Our trucks go to these West Africa countries to load cargoes, but presently, the goods are only coming through the seaports and as it is now, only transporters and clearing agents in Nigeria are working like elephants and eating like ants.

"We pay duties at Republic of Benin and still pay in Nigeria and with this, importers don't come to Seme border again, because they prefer going to Apapa Port where the job would only delay and they would pay only one duty.

WTO ministers reach agreement on fisheries, food, COVID-19, others

After an all-night talks, members of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) early Friday reached a string of deals and commitments aimed to limit over fishing, broaden production of COVID-19 vaccines in the developing countries, improve food security and reforming a 27 years-old trade body that has been back on its heels in recent years.

Director-General of the WTO, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, after some negotiations concluded the WTO's first ministerial conference in four and half years by canvassing a new sense of cooperation at a time when the world faces crisis like the Russia and Ukraine war and the COVID-19 pandemic that has claimed millions of lives.

"The package agreements will make a difference to the lives of people around the world," Okonjo-Iweala said.

She commended what she described as "an unprecedented package of deliverables after 15 months on the job," adding: "The outcomes demonstrate that the WTO, is in fact, capable of responding to the emergencies of the times.

"The agreement could breathe new life into the trade body that faced repeated criticism during the administration of immediate past President of the United States of America (USA), Donald Trump, which accused the WTO of lack of fairness to the United States in rising economic and political rivalry between the United States and China.

"In recent years, Washington has incapacitated the WTO's version of an appeal court that rules on international trade disputes.

"The WTO operates through consensus, meaning that all its 164 members must agree on its deals or at least not get in the way. The talks at times took place in backrooms or side chats because some delegates didn't

want to be in the same space as their counterparts from Russia, as a way to protest President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine, which has had fallout far beyond the battlefield, such as on food and fuel prices," she said.

She revealed that among the main achievements of the meeting was an accord, which fell short of early ambitions to prohibit support for illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and fishing in overtaxed stocks in oceans globally.

"This marked the WTO's first significant deals since the one of 2013 that cut red tape on treatment of goods crossing borders and arguably one of its most impactful. Members of WTO have for the first time concluded agreement with environmental sustainability as major priority.

"This is also about the livelihood of the 260 million people who depend directly or indirectly on marine fisheries. This deal takes a step to curb government subsidies and overcapacity in the fishing industry," Okonjo-Iweala stated.



Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala

NDLEA arrests wanted alleged notorious Adamawa drug dealer

● *Seizes illicit substances in other states*

By PAUL MICHAEL, DEFENCE EDITOR, ABUJA

Operatives of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) have arrested a suspected notorious drug dealer, Abdullahi Musa, a.k.a Yerima Uding, who has been on a wanted list.

The agency's Director of Media and Advocacy, Femi Babafemi, stated this on Sunday in a statement obtained by The Trumpet. According to him, the suspect was caught with 57 blocks of compressed cannabis sativa, concealed in the boot of his ash coloured Toyota Corolla car.

Babafemi said, "A notorious drug dealer, Abdullahi Musa, a.k.a Yerima Uding wanted for some past attacks on officers and men of the agency was in the early hours of Thursday 16th June arrested in Hong town, Adamawa state.

"The 53-year-old suspect was caught with 57 blocks of compressed cannabis sativa, concealed in the boot of his ash coloured Toyota Corolla car with reg. no. GMB 185 MF.

"He has been fingered as the mastermind of the mob attack in Hong on 6th October, 2020 that led

to the death of an NDLEA operative and another officer now bedridden due to permanent incapacitation."

According to Babafemi, the drug cartels also suffered losses in other operations across Borno, Kogi, Ogun, Zamfara and Taraba state.

"In Borno State, another drug dealer Umar Musa was arrested in Tashan Kano, Gwoza LGA on Thursday 17th June with 8,000 capsules and tablets of Tramadol weighing 4.550kgs, while 32.182kgs cannabis were seized by NDLEA operatives along Okene/Abuja highway, Kogi state from a commercial bus travelling from Lagos to Abuja.

"Following credible intelligence, operatives also arrested one Nwanbunike Chibuike, 22, with 19,576 tablets of Exol-5, Diazepam, Tramadol and Rohypnol as well as 7.9 litres of Codeine at Ogere, Ikenne LGA, Ogun state on Wednesday 15th June.

"In Zamfara, a consignment of 11,660 tablets of Hyponox and 6,000 ampoules of pentazocine injection was recovered from a drug dealer, Success Amaefuna at Tsafe area of the state on his way to Sokoto state,

● *Intercepts Meth consignments in Lagos, courier firm*

while 5,000 tablets of Tramadol were seized from Darius John F. Mbugun, 33, who ordered the consignment from Onitsha, Anambra state. The drug exhibit was concealed in a bag of gari for distribution in Gembu, Sardauna LGA, Taraba state."

Meanwhile, attempts by drug traffickers to export parcels of Methamphetamine locally called 'Mkpuru Mmiri' concealed in cornflakes packs and body cream containers to Malaysia and Australia have been foiled by operatives of the NDLEA at Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Ikeja, and a courier company in Lagos.

According to Babafemi, two freight agents, Nneji Anoma and Etoh Barnabas "involved in the bid to export nine parcels of Methamphetamine weighing 1.45kg hidden in packs of cornflakes to Malaysia through the NAHCO export shed of the MMIA on Wednesday 15th June 2022 have been arrested", as a result.

He added, "Another consignment of 10 cartons of Tramadol 225mg packaged as Tramaking containing 500,000 tablets with a total weight



Buba Marwa

of 407kg and an estimated street value of Two Hundred Million Naira (N200, 000, 000) have been seized during a joint examination with the Customs at the NCS warehouse. The consignment, which had arrived SAHCO import shed since 6th June from India via Ethiopian Airline was eventually transferred to the NDLEA by Customs on Wednesday 15th June.

"The previous day, Tuesday 14th

June, a similar joint examination with Customs at the Customs enforcement terminal, Tincan seaport, Lagos led to the seizure of 33 parcels of cannabis indica (Colorado) weighing 16.5kgs. The drug exhibit was recovered from a 40-foot container, TRHU 7874497 containing four vehicles. The cannabis coming from Montreal, Canada was discovered in three out of the four vehicles in the container.

"In the same vein, operatives of the Directorate of Operations and General Investigation, DOGI at the Agency attached to a courier company have intercepted a kilogram of Methamphetamine concealed in body cream containers heading to Australia."

Chairman/Chief Executive of NDLEA, Brig-Gen Mohamed Buba Marwa (rtd) commended the officers and men of the Agency for the seizures and arrests of the past week.

"He encouraged them and their compatriots across other formations to remain vigilant and intensify their offensive action against the drug cartels in all parts of the country," Babafemi added.

Police nab three alleged fraudsters

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Operatives of the Lagos State Command of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) have arrested three suspects for fraudulent activities.

Police Public Relations Officer of the Command, SP Benjamin Hundeyin, who disclosed this in a press statement, said the suspects usually disguise as driver and passengers to defraud unsuspecting members of the public.

Hundeyin said the suspects, Dele Olawale, Remi Ogunleye, and Kole Akintunjoye often carry out their illicit activities around Lagos Island, Lekki and Ikoyi.

He said, "Officers of the Rapid Response Squad (RRS) of the Lagos State Police Command have arrested three suspects for defrauding unsuspecting members of the public while disguising as driver and passengers.

"The trio were intercepted by operatives of the Lagos State Neighbourhood Safety Corp (LNSC), in Opebi, Ikeja following a tip off and handed over to the RRS.

"Preliminary investigations reveal that the suspects: Dele Olawale 'm' aged 52, Remi Ogunleye 'm' aged 45 and Kole Akintunjoye 'm' aged 40 reside in Ogun State but resume in Lagos daily to prey on unsuspecting passengers.

"The gang, operating in a Volkswagen Golf, with registration number KRD 998 DE act like total strangers to one another to disarm their victim.

"They carry out their nefarious activities mostly in Lagos Island, Lekki and Ikoyi."

According to Hundeyin, the Commander RRS, CSP Olayinka Egbeyemi, has transferred the case to the State Headquarters for further investigations.

Police debunk kidnapping of 17 in Abuja, find alarmist

By PAUL MICHAEL

Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Police Command of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) has debunked a claim by one Amira Safiyanu that 17 persons including herself, three pregnant women and two little kids were abducted by gunmen in police uniform on Tuesday 14th June 2022 in Abuja.

Safiyanu had raised the alarm which went viral on her Twitter handle, Ameerah Sufyan, saying her mobile phone was not seen by the kidnappers. She also alleged that they were taken to Lagos in a green Nissan vehicle.

Safiyanu, therefore, alerted all family members and friends with her WhatsApp contact to check their phones for a broadcast message of their location.

A statement by the FCT Command Deputy Police Public Relations Officer, ASP Oduniyi

Omotayo, said the alarmist, Safiyanu has been found by the Police and currently receiving medical attention at the hospital.

It added that the alleged kidnapped of the 17 people is false and called for the continuous partnership of members of the public with the police to arrest cases of insecurity.

The statement reads, "The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Police Command wishes to categorically debunk the viral news of the alleged kidnapping of one Safiyanu Amira and seventeen (17) others who were reportedly abducted at gunpoint by Armed men in Police uniform on Tuesday 14th June 2022 at about 1:00 pm and to state that Safiyanu Amira is currently safe in Police custody.

"While she is currently in the hospital receiving medical attention as demanded by global

best practices, the investigation continues and findings will be communicated subsequently.

"The Commissioner of Police FCT Command CP Babaji Sunday psc while commending the gallantry of the Tactical and Investigative apparatus detailed on the case, appreciated the members of the public for their calm maintained and the various degrees of useful information given to the Police.

"He enjoined the good people of the FCT not to relent in partnering with the police, especially towards the rendition of information, to remain vigilant, and report any suspicious or abnormal occurrence to the Police through the following emergency lines: 08032003913, 08061581938, 07057337653, and 08028940883, While the Public Complaint Bureau (PCB) desk, could be reached on: 0902 222 2352."

Customs hands over N3.7b Tramadol to NDLEA

● *Impounds another 20ft container of drug*

By PAUL MICHAEL

Apapa Command of the Nigeria Customs Service led by Comptroller Malanta Yusuf has handed over 150 cartons of Tramadol tablets (120mg) to the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in Lagos.

Handing over the 150 cartons which amounted to about 4,500,000 capsules of Tramadol, Yusuf reiterated the resolve of the Command in fighting illicit trade.

He warned that the Apapa Port will always be an abominable place for smuggling of hard drugs and other illicit activities that are forbidden by Law.

He said, "The Port is sealed for illegal trade, not only for hard drugs. The Eagle Eye of the Nigeria Customs Service and other Government Agencies in the Port are well at alert.

"It's a complete synergy, intelligence gathering and collaboration to make sure that the right thing is done by protecting the lives of the Citizens. If this type of menace is allowed to get into the society the havoc it will cause cannot be estimated."

Ame Inalegwu, Narcotic Commander, Apapa Port, who received the capsules on behalf NDLEA, thanked the NCS and expressed commendation on behalf of the

NDLEA Boss, Brig-Gen Buba Marwa (rtd) for the continuous synergy the Agency has enjoyed with the Service.

Inalegwu also beacons on the society to join hands with the government and make the country safe for all.

"It's a whole society approach, because we are all involved and vulnerable. If your house is on fire, you do not wait for Fire Brigade, you first try to quench it. Let us be seen doing our part," he said.

According to him, the street value of the illicit drugs used to be N8 million per carton but has increased due to the sustained fight against it, bringing the present value to N12

million. He put the street value of the 150 cartons of the hard drugs at N3.7 billion.

The Agency received the hard drugs at the ESS Libra Terminal, Ikorodu and Jaelith Bonded Terminal, Festac Lagos.

Inalegwu recommended rehabilitation, and reintegration for any repentant drug dealer while adding that a drug dealer is a sick person that should seek treatment.

In another development, the Apapa Area Command of the NCS intercepted another 1x20ft Container with no PCIU 0183241 laden with Tramadol tablets, which was declared falsely as Static Converter and

Switches.

Giving more details, Yusuf disclosed that the Port of Origin of the Tramadol is Singapore but the Importers tried covering up their tracks by moving the Cargo to other Countries before arriving in Nigeria.

He noted that the Contents are 150 Cartons of 250mg Tramadol and were all laden inside the Container with each containing 72 rolls and each roll, 10 packets with 10 satchels each.

"For the recalcitrant importers who do not want to obey the laws, I will always emphasize that the Service is at alert at all times, if you do not want to repent, test our will," Yusuf warned.



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1 x 1	6,135.10	6,595.23	1 x 1	5,664.59	6,089.43	1 x 1	4,587.47	4,931.53	1 x 1	3,786.98	4,071.00	
1 x 2	12,448.80	13,382.46	1 x 2	11,294.45	12,141.54	1 x 2	9,174.94	9,863.07	1 x 2	7,573.97	8,142.02	
2 x 2	24,941.96	26,812.61	2 x 2	22,588.91	24,283.09	2 x 2	18,349.89	19,716.64	2 x 2	15,147.94	16,284.03	
3 x 2	37,413.09	40,219.07	3 x 2	33,987.48	36,622.04	3 x 2	27,524.84	29,589.20	3 x 2	22,721.91	24,426.05	
4 x 2	49,884.02	53,625.42	4 x 2	45,177.83	48,566.17	4 x 2	36,700.09	39,452.60	4 x 2	30,295.53	32,657.70	
5 x 2	62,355.15	67,031.71	5 x 2	56,472.29	60,707.71	5 x 2	45,866.19	49,315.34	5 x 2	37,863.00	40,710.09	
6 x 2	76,142.50	81,853.18	6 x 2	67,975.12	73,073.25	6 x 2	55,049.68	59,178.41	6 x 2	45,443.82	48,852.10	
7 x 2	87,297.21	93,844.50	6 x 3	101,962.78	109,609.99	6 x 3	54,074.55	61,200.90	7 x 2	53,017.79	56,993.61	
7 x 3	166,172.00	179,229.37	6.5 x 3	110,459.64	118,744.11	6.5 x 3	89,455.78	96,164.94	8 x 2	60,591.76	65,136.14	
7 x 4	197,125.00	211,909.37	7 x 2	79,304.29	85,252.11	7 x 2	64,224.63	69,041.48	9 x 2	80,454.83	86,488.95	
8 x 2	99,768.24	107,250.85	7 x 3	128,456.43	138,090.67	7 x 3	96,336.94	103,562.21	10 x 2	86,147.92	92,609.02	
9 x 2	112,183.69	120,597.47	7 x 4	158,608.73	170,504.38	7 x 4	145,965.10	156,912.48	14.5 x 2	124,915.92	134,284.61	
9 x 3	168,358.90	180,985.39	7 x 5	198,260.25	213,129.77	7 x 5	182,500.19	196,187.71	5 x 3	56,804.77	61,065.13	
10 x 3	187,065.45	201,095.35	8 x 2	90,633.42	97,430.92	8 x 2	73,399.58	78,904.54	6 x 3	68,170.86	73,283.67	
14.5 x 2	260,395.00	279,924.62	8 x 3	135,950.22	146,146.48	8 x 3	125,871.78	134,674.05	7 x 3	79,526.68	85,491.18	
8 x 4	199,536.48	214,501.71	8 x 4	181,266.93	194,841.95	8 x 4	167,043.40	179,022.80	8 x 3	103,375.58	111,130.80	
9 x 4	224,478.54	241,314.43	8 x 5	226,238.74	254,477.52	8 x 5	208,805.79	224,469.23	6 x 4	100,634.10	110,944.41	
10 x 4	299,302.72	321,752.57	8 x 6	271,900.48	292,008.02	8 x 6	250,284.32	269,911.09	7 x 4	120,404.56	129,434.90	
14.5 x 4	520,790.19	559,849.45	9 x 2	101,962.78	109,609.99	9 x 2	93,773.60	100,872.44	8 x 4	137,692.17	148,019.082	
7 x 5	218,243.02	234,629.74	9 x 3	152,944.01	164,414.81	9 x 3	141,108.54	151,691.68	10 x 4	172,301.37	185,224.22	
8 x 5	299,304.72	321,752.57	9 x 4	203,925.29	219,219.69	9 x 4	187,921.52	202,015.71	14.5 x 3	187,057.43	201,086.73	
8 x 6	359,165.65	386,103.08	9 x 5	305,373.04	328,276.02	9 x 5	281,288.07	303,022.10	14.5 x 4	249,838.03	268,575.88	
9 x 5	404,061.37	434,365.97	9 x 6	367,065.92	394,595.86	9 x 6	337,805.68	363,141.11	7 x 5	141,001.98	161,793.93	
10 x 5	448,957.08	482,628.86	10 x 3	169,651.36	182,375.21	10 x 3	156,602.81	168,348.02	8 x 5	172,116.65	185,025.40	
11 x 5	493,852.78	530,891.74	10 x 4	226,258.00	243,176.28	10 x 4	208,808.58	224,469.23	9 x 6	278,649.91	299,548.66	
9 x 6	484,873.39	521,239.16	10 x 5	354,037.54	380,590.16	10 x 5	325,815.11	349,966.25	11 x 5	295,636.20	317,808.91	
10 x 6	538,748.49	579,154.53	10 x 6	424,845.04	456,708.42	10 x 6	390,978.13	420,320.48	11 x 6	340,573.10	340,466.08	
11 x 6	592,622.16	637,068.82	11 x 5	389,441.887	418,650.01	11 x 5	358,396.62	385,276.37	HP7.25 X 6	218,226.87	234,593.89	
HP 7.25 x 6	317,178.40	340,337.5	11 x 6	447,303.49	480,851.24	11 x 6	412,916.45	443,885.19	FP14.5 X 6	379,943.00	408,438.72	
FP 14.5 x 6	560,500.00	602,537.50	14.5 X 2	197,128.09	211,912.70	14.5 x 2	151,178.45	162,516.84				
			14.5 X 4	394,256.19	423,825.40	14.5 x 4	362,827.71	390,039.79				
			14.5 X 5	472,286.06	507,707.52	HP7.25 X 6	246,131.63	264,591.50				
			HP7.25 X 6	269,191.05	289,380.38	14.5 X 5	431,525.39	463,889.79				
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World Cup qualification is my goal, Oshoala vows

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

Four-time African Women Footballer of the Year winner, Asisat Oshoala said her main goal in the Women's African Cup of Nations (WAFCON) in Morocco is to qualify for the 2023 Women's World Cup to be co-hosted by Australia and New Zealand.

Oshoala said winning the WAFCON for a record of ten times for Nigeria is a secondary priority as the primary is focused on getting the ticket to the global arena next year.

The Barcelona Femini star, who became the first African female footballer to win the Pichichi award last season and the second African after Cameroonian Samuel Eto, brushed off any impending threat from the South African team adding that when the Super Falcons get to that phase, they will cross it.

Bayana Bayana of South Africa, rivals to the Super Falcons, were defeated by the latter in the final of the 2018 edition of WAFCON and are upbeat to end the dominance of Nigeria in the tourney.

Oshoala thinks the tourney is not all about South Africa



that are in the same group C with Nigeria, Botswana and Burundi because there are other stronger sides like Cameroon and Morocco in the tourney.

"I don't think the opening game is a decider of the tournament, and by the way, it's not only South Africa we will be facing. It's a whole tournament," Oshoala told CAF.

"We are not going to be seated talking tough about just one team [South Africa]. Obviously, they are a very strong team, a very competitive one as well. Maybe the mindset of our team and theirs may not be the same, but we have the

likes of Cameroon, Morocco, and other great teams in Africa to face.

"We are just basically focused on working on ourselves and we are not so bothered about playing South Africa. When we get to the phase of playing them, we will cross it," She stated.

The Barcelona Femini striker, who will feature for the fifth time in WAFCON, stressed that she will replicate the same form that pipped her ahead of other contenders for the Pichichi award in the continental tournament which she is desirous of getting a Women's World Cup qualifying ticket.

She continued: "First of all,

I think we need to understand football, talking about shifting focus and replicating the same performances, I am always ready to give 100 per cent whenever I am given the opportunity to play. I am in a positive mood going into the tournament.

"For me personally, the main goal is to qualify for the 2023 Women's World Cup, because, at the end of the day, that is all that matters and every other thing coming after or with it is just secondary. The primary aim is to qualify, of course, we want to win [WAFCON] but the main goal is to qualify for the World Cup," Oshoala reiterated.

Amusan sets African 100m record

Nigerian sensational sprinting hurdler, Tobi Amusan, at the weekend set a new African record in 100 metres hurdles of 12.41' to climax in the thirteenth season of the 2022 Diamond League meeting in Paris, France.

The 2018 gold medalist in the Commonwealth Games has been a beam in the spotlight in athletics with consecutive victories at the recently concluded African Athletics Championship and Continental Gold Tour in Finland.

Amusan relatively sprinting at the speed of light, ward off her challengers, with Devynne Charlton from Bahamas who came close with 12.63', Cindy Sember from Britain with 12.73', and French Cyréna Samba-Mayela's 12.76' at the Charléty Stadium.

Other challengers include fifth-placed Australian Liz Clay with 12.89', sixth-placed Swiss Ditaji Kambundji's 12.90' and French Laeticia Bapté, who finished seventh with 13.05'.

The Nigerian, 25 years of age, won two gold medals in the African Athletics

Championship held in Mauritius and maintained the traits to impress the nation by setting up a new standard in Paris making her the fastest woman hurdler in Africa.

Accordingly, the sprint hurdler ran a previous best of 12.57' this season at the Continental Tour Gold meeting in Finland to displace Jamaica's Britany Anderson on 12.59' and Nadine Visser of the Netherlands placed third with 12.72'.

With overwhelming successes, Amusan who is reportedly expected to grace the Athletic Federation of Nigeria (AFN) national trials between June 21 and 23 in Benin, Edo state is enthusiastic to set a new standard at the World Athletics Championship in Oregon, United States, and the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, England, both in July next month.

The Trumpets reports that with the 12.41' ran by Amusan, she becomes the third-fastest 100 metres hurdler in the world, edging Jamaican Demisha Roswell and her compatriot Ackera Nugent in fourth and fifth on the world athletics chart.



Chelsea's searchlight on Raheem Sterling

Chelsea are considering a move to snap the pacy winger from Manchester City this summer to sharpen the cutting edge of Thomas Tuchel's side attacks.

The Blues struggled last season to convert several opportunities in front of goal with Romelu Lukaku's rustiness compounding their woes.

The 2021 UEFA Champions League winners at the early start of last season led the log and maintained it to a circa midway but a drop in goal conversion coefficients saw

them struggle to qualify for a Champions League spot on the Premier League table.

However, club manager Thomas Tuchel pose to bring in some new additions to the team and has pencilled Raheem Sterling as a prime target for the Blues.

According to transfer expert Fabrizio Romano, Tuchel is a big fan of the Manchester City striker, who scored 17 goals with 9 assists last season, and itches towards bringing him to Stamford Bridge.

"Raheem Sterling, for sure one of the names on Chelsea

list with Thomas Tuchel big fan of the English winger. Chelsea have explored conditions of the deal," Romano said.

"No direct talks between Man City and Chelsea or bid yet. Depends on other deals like Lukaku, Ousmane and more," he added.

Meanwhile, Romelu Lukaku is close to returning to Italy with Inter Milan already in talks to bring the Belgian striker to San Siro on a season-long loan.

Chelsea are reported to value the striker at €15m but Nerazzurri are unwilling to



pay above €10m to bring in Lukaku, who is extremely willing to leave Stamford Bridge to rediscover his goalscoring prowess under Simone Inzaghi.

Maikaba laments over Enugu Rangers draw



Abdul Maikaba has praised Enugu Rangers over their performance against Nigeria Professional Football (NPFL) League leaders Rivers United but felt unhappy with the goalless outcome at Nnamdi Azikiwe Stadium, Awka.

Maikaba, who is the head coach of Enugu Rangers that presently contend with Enyimba of Aba and Remo Stars for the third place with 1-2 points discrepancies, lamented that the result did not reflect his team's performance on the pitch.

He conceded that despite the result being unappealing to him, the Flying Antelope will continue to work hard to fight for a continental spot on the NPFL table.

"It was a very good display by my players but we did not get the result we actually worked for," Maikaba said post-match.

"I am a bit disappointed not in my players but with the result we could not get.

"We will keep fighting until the very last match of the season

to ensure that we achieve our target," he assured.

Meanwhile, Rivers United have been pleased with the outcome which edges them closer to the NPFL season triumph than envisaged.

The Pride of Rivers top the log with 11 points ahead of close contender Plateau United in second place but with two more wins by coach Stanley Eguma in the remaining four games, the rivalry for the NPFL 2021-22 trophy would have been allayed.

CAF got it right on Gusau's appointment, says FCAAN

Football Coaches Association of African Nations (FCAAN) at the weekend congratulated the Member of NFF Executive Committee and Chairman of Chairmen of Nigeria Football, Alhaji Ibrahim Gusau, on his recent appointment as Member of Confederation of African Football (CAF) Organizing Committee for Youth Competitions.

President of FCAAN, Dr Terry Babatunde Eguaoje, stated that the appointment was in recognition of Gusau's utmost dedication, palpable passion and hard work in the African football terrain, which has been rewarded by the leadership of CAF.

"The appointment is well-deserved, given Alhaji Gusau's energy and total commitment to the cause of Nigeria, nay African football development. We also appreciate the CAF hierarchy, led by Dr Patrice Motsepe, for this due recognition of the attributes of Alhaji Gusau, and we are confident they will not be disappointed for the confidence reposed in this committed Nigerian

administrator," stated Dr Eguaoje.

Gusau, who is also Chairman of the Zamfara State Football Association, previously served as a Member of CAF's Organizing Committee for the African Nations Championship and is a CAF Security Officer.

Eguaoje, who is NFF's Consultant on Coaching and Development, also commended NFF under the watch of Mr Amaju Melvin Pinnick for giving Nigeria football a facelift, especially in the areas of youth development and human capacity building.

"Our U20 Boys recently won the WAFU B Championship to qualify for the U20 AFCON, and the U17 Boys are also doing well in the WAFU B tournament in Ghana. These are results of long-term planning, vision and doggedness," he recounted.

"The Super Eagles set a new win record at international level only a few days ago. We are on to a good thing and the sky will be the beginning with the full support and encouragement of Nigerians," the NFF's consultant added.

Osaka withdraws from Wimbledon

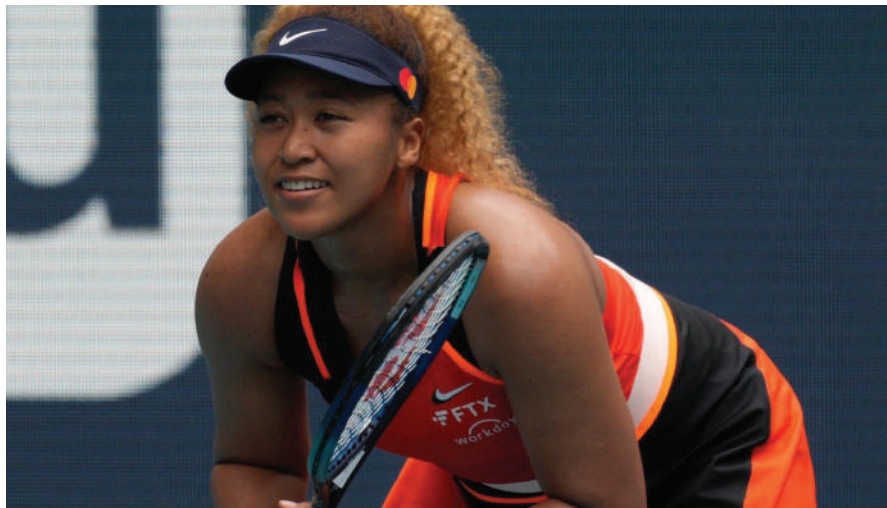
By **OVIRI KELVIN**, Sports Editor, Abuja

Former world number 1, Naomi Osaka, has withdrawn from this year's Wimbledon due to an Achilles injury sustained in the 2022 Madrid Open where she lost 3-6 1-6 to Spanish Sara Sorribes Tormo in round of 32 at Manolo Santana.

Osaka, who has earlier doubted her possibility of featuring in the event scheduled from June 27 to July 10 due to the removal of ranking from Wimbledon, finally opted out to properly treat the injury.

The Japanese player last featured in Wimbledon three years ago having missed 2020's following the coronavirus pandemic and the 2021 edition on mental health grounds.

Since the 24-year-old lost 7-5 6-4 in the first round of the 2022 French Open to United States Amanda Anisimova at Court Suzanne Lenglen, she has been out of action



undergoing a rehab to fix herself up.

Though Osaka is yet to best her 3rd round exits from Wimbledon, the four Grand Slam winner had evaluated the event as merely an exhibition since ATP and WTA stripped it of rankings.

The WTA and ATP decision is a reaction to the sanction meted by All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club on Russian and Belarusian athletes from participating in the grass-court event following

the military invasion of Ukraine by Russia.

To confirm her withdrawal from Wimbledon, Naomi on Saturday said, "After the storm comes the calm. This is a saying that I'm actively trying to master.

"I feel like life keeps dealing cards and you're never gonna be used to them but it's how you adapt to uncomfortable situations that really say stuff about your character. I've been repeating mantras in my head a lot recently.

"I don't know if it's to subconsciously help myself through stressful times or to ease my mind into realising that everything will work out fine as long as I put the work in.

"Cause what more can you do?" she asked.

The Trumpets reports that Osaka, who was ranked world number 1 on January 28, 2019, with Grand Slam double in US Open and Australian Open respectively, has fallen forty-three steps downward in the WTA latest ranking.

It's €8m loan deal for Lukaku or forget it, Inter tells Chelsea

Inter Milan have reportedly told Chelsea they will not exceed the €8m offer to bring Romelu Lukaku for a season-long loan to San Siro.

Milan whose earlier offer of €5m for the Belgium international was outrightly rejected by the West London club, had to increase the offer to €8m.

Although emerging reports from Italy disclosed that Chelsea valued the deal at circa €15m but Nerazzurri are not ready to meet the Blues' price tag.

According to Calcimento.com, Inter Milan are opposed to paying above their value for a player they sold for €115 last season to Chelsea, adding that they have lesser use for Lukaku.

It is believed that Lukaku is unhappy at Chelsea having fallen short of expectations despite the huge amount used to sign him from Italy.

The player struggled for form and performed poorly to record 8 goals in 26 appearances, underwhelming Chelsea's Premier League campaign last season.

Inter Milan insist they are not constrained to sign the player, adding that their attack comprising Lautaro Martinez, Edin Dzeko, Alexis Sanchez and Joaquin

Correa is one of the best in the Italian league.

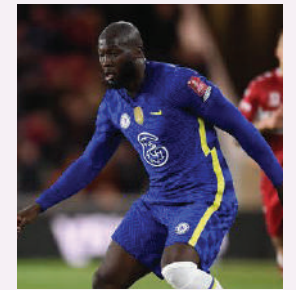
However, the player is pushing to leave Stamford Bridge to rediscover his goal-poaching prowess in Italy where he was classical in Inter Milan's attack.

Following the disparity between both clubs, Italian Journalist Fabrizio Romano said Chelsea and Inter will return to table to continue the discussion over Lukaku's proposed loan move to San Siro.

"Inter and Chelsea have scheduled a new direct contact in the coming hours for Romelu Lukaku. Inter are feeling confident, now waiting for Chelsea's final price tag," he said.

"Todd Boehly is open to discuss with Inter on a potential loan deal for Lukaku," Romano added.

Chelsea manager Thomas Tuchel supports the move and has advised Todd Boehly to allow Lukaku leave Stamford Bridge for a season loan deal at San Siro.



CAF picks Abuja, Uyo stadia for CHAN23 qualifiers

■ Bars 15 countries from home venues

Confederations of African Football (CAF) has selected Moshood Abiola National Stadium, Abuja and Godswill Akpabio International Stadium, Uyo to host qualifiers of the 2023 African Nations Championship (CHAN). The Trumpet has reliably gathered.

In the list released by the continental football governing body to announce the venues for the qualifiers, both Nigerian stadia which have hosted continental tourneys were expected to be among the lots.

Recently, precisely on May 20, 2022, Godswill Akpabio International

Stadium hosted the final of the CAF Confederation Cup between South African top-flight club, Orlando Pirates, and Moroccan club, RS Berkane, where the latter won 5-4 on penalties after playing 1-1 full-time draw.

Like a recurring decimal, the Moshood Abiola National Stadium is the venue of most CAF and FIFA tournaments where all Nigeria's national football teams process their home matches against other countries' national teams.

Meanwhile, while Nigeria will play their qualifying home matches in either Abuja or Uyo, fifteen African nations whose

stadia do not meet CAF standards, will play theirs away from their native countries.

According to a report by ATP, South African countries top the list of countries whose stadia did not meet the CAF specifications with 6 while East African countries trailed with 4 in the 15 countries released.

The list of countries includes Lesotho, Liberia, Kenya, Libya, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Rwanda, Sao Tome, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Eswatini and Zimbabwe.

"Lesotho, Mozambique,

Eswatini, Lesotho and Namibia have been hosting matches in neighbouring South Africa and they look certain to continue on that path," ATP reported.

"On the other hand, countries such as Malawi have received temporary relief as their venue can, for now, host matches subject to fulfilment of some pre conditions," ATP stated.

However, the qualifiers billed to kick off next month, July 22, for the first leg, will hold the second leg within August circa 26 where Salisu Yusuf, head coach of the Nigeria CHAN team, is expected to lead the country to victory.

Azpilicueta may hand Chelsea transfer request

Chelsea captain, Cesar Azpilicueta, is pondering on handing a transfer request to Chelsea to see him fulfil a move back to Spain, with Barcelona arms-wide to receive him for reinforcement of their defence.

Azpilicueta has one year left on his contract after spending about a decade with the club he shared in a couple of successes, including winning a Champions League double.

The captain of Thomas Tuchel's side is guaranteed a starting lineup by Xavi Hernandez and this is confirmed by the Catalans'

unwillingness to renew Dani Alves's contract at Camp Nou.

According to The Sun, the 32-year-old, who can play in the right-wing back and centre-defensive position, would add value to Barcelona.

"Azpilicueta could request the 'transfer request' at the request of Barça to be able to change Stamford Bridge for the Camp Nou," The Sun said.

However, the Blues captain has served in the highest capacity in Chelsea's squad honouring the jersey and would love to leave on

a remarkable note without straining the relationship with the club or Thomas Tuchel.

Although Tuchel and Azpilicueta are due to hold talks to decide on the latter's future, Barcelona are growing frustrated over the delay because they need the Spaniard to join the team in their pre-season preparations.

Azpilicueta became a Chelsea player in 2012 when he made a circa £7m switch from French side Marseille. He has scored ten goals and parades 324 appearances stat for the club.



'CFN to host befitting Africa Cycling Championship'

President, Cycling Federation of Nigeria (CFN), Giandomenico Masari, has said it is prepared to host the 2022 Africa Cup Track Cycling Championship scheduled from July 14 - July 17, 2022, at MKO Abiola National Stadium, Abuja.

Masari said 20 African countries are expected to compete in the cycling championship.

The CFN President assured that the event would meet the desired expectation adding that the federation is making all necessary efforts to ensure the event is devoid of rancour.

"We are ready and set to provide a befitting environment to compete for all participants," Masari told NAN.

"The Federation has made all the necessary preparations and plans to organise a hitch-free championship," he added.

According to Masari, the maiden edition of the Africa Cycling Championship held in Abuja, July 2019, saw Nigeria scooping the highest number of gold ahead of eight other African countries.

He stressed that this edition will host a higher number of countries than the previous with the likes of Egypt, South Africa, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and

Cameroon expected to fully participate.

Sequel to the above, the Republic of Benin, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Italy, Burundi and Burkina Faso, and other African countries have also indicated interest to take part in the event.

Masari stated that CFN will organise training for prospective commissaries.

Explicitly, the CFN President said in the 2019 edition, the Nigerian contingent comprising 21 cyclists amassed 51 medals consisting of 21 gold, 18 silver, and 12 bronze to win the championship.

They were followed by Egypt who came second after winning a total of 22 medals made up of eight gold, seven silver and seven bronze medals.

Another North African side, Morocco, came third with seven medals made up of four gold and three silver medals.

The Nigeria Cycling Federation mandated all participating countries to wear their registered national kits which conform with the UCI's apparels regulations.

The Trumpet reports that host country Nigeria competes in the junior and elite levels in both male and female categories, comprising eleven events per category.



Tinubu's convoy attacked in Lagos

Hoodlums at the weekend attacked the presidential candidate of the ruling All Progressives Congress, APC, Bola Tinubu, in Lagos where he is a former governor of the state in South-West Nigeria. The incident occurred at Adeniji end of Isale Eko after the ruling party's standard-bearer visited the Oba of Lagos on his return to his home state after emerging as a

presidential candidate in the 2023 general elections. Tinubu was heading to his Bourdilon Ikoyi residence from the palace. The hoodlums threw stones and other dangerous weapons at the convoy as it drove from the palace. Some of them were wielding swords and cutlasses smashing side glasses and front windshields of vehicles that were attached. Though Tinubu was not affected by the attack, the bus conveying journalists and the backup

security car on the convoy were the most affected. While the ait.live reporter and cameraman were unhurt, two other journalists sustained injuries and are receiving medical attention. The former Lagos State Governor arrived in Lagos on Sunday after the Ekiti State governorship election and was received at the Presidential Wing of Murtala Mohammed International Airport in Ikeja before proceeding to the palace of the Oba of Lagos.



The damaged vehicle

Irish PM urges Britain to resume talks with EU

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH** with agency report

A new British law to change part of a Brexit deal to try to ease trade with Northern Ireland is "unilateralism of the worst kind" according to Irish Prime Minister Micheal Martin who on Sunday urged the government to resume talks. The European Commission launched

two new legal proceedings against Britain this month after London published plans to override some post-Brexit rules in the Northern Ireland protocol which governs trade with the British province. London has proposed scrapping some checks on goods from the rest of the United Kingdom arriving in Northern Ireland and challenged the role of the European Court of Justice to decide on parts of the

post-Brexit deal agreed by the EU and Britain. The new legislation has yet to be passed by parliament, a process which could take some time. "It's not acceptable, it represents unilateralism of the worst kind," Martin said.

"We accept fully there are legitimate issues around the operation of the protocol and we believe with serious sustained negotiations between the European Union and United Kingdom government, those issues could be resolved."

He said the legislation, which London says is needed to restore a power-sharing administration in Northern Ireland, would damage the province's economy by introducing a dual regulatory regime that could increase costs to

business. "If this bill is enacted, I think we're in a very serious situation," he said. "What now needs to happen is really substantive negotiations between the British government and the European Union."



Martin

Obaseki lauds contribution of fathers to social cohesion, societal advancement

By **ISAAC OLAMIKAN**

Edo State Governor Godwin Obaseki has hailed fathers for their delicate role in holding the family unit together and bearing enormous responsibilities that have contributed to societal cohesion and advancement. The governor, who made the submission in commemoration of Father's Day, said their contribution to

propagating the ethos of sacrifice, hard work, discipline, and love remain indelible in the sands of time. According to him, "I celebrate fathers on this auspicious day set aside to acknowledge their gallantry, sacrifices, love and care in holding the family unit together. "Tasked with an enormous responsibility of providing direction and instilling morals

to the family and other relatives, fathers toil daily to make ends meet and juggle different roles such as mentor, leader, protector, provider and breadwinner."So much is expected from fathers and their efforts at ensuring stability, harmony and order are taken for granted. This is why it is refreshing that such a day is set out to pat them on the back as a way of acknowledging their

efforts. "The governor said the state government will continue to provide opportunities for decent work for fathers to meet up with their responsibilities in homes in the state. He added that the civil service reforms and increase in minimum wage are geared towards ensuring that fathers continue to play their role in homes across the state with dignity.