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DO CHANGE OF NAME, ADDITION TO NAME, CONFIRMATION OF NAME FOR BVN, EMPLOYMENT, VISA AND OTHER PURPOSES IN THE TRUMPET

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N250 **Weekend**

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• Elder statesman and South South leader, Chief Edwin Kiagbodo Clark, praying for All Progressives Congress (APC) governorship torchbearer in Delta State, Deputy Senate President Olorogun Ovie Omo-Agege.

RELIGION AND POLITICS IN NIGERIA
Some raw data that could help in the ongoing nationwide debate on Religion & Politics in Nigeria

S/N	NORTH-WEST	GOVERNOR	DEPUTY GOVERNOR
1	Jigawa	Muslim	Muslim
2	Kaduna	Muslim	Muslim
3	Kano	Muslim	Muslim
4	Katsina	Muslim	Muslim
5	Kebbi	Muslim	Muslim
6	Sokoto	Muslim	Muslim
7	Zamfara	Muslim	Muslim
S/N	NORTH-EAST	GOVERNOR	DEPUTY GOVERNOR
8	Adamawa	Muslim	Christian
9	Bauchi	Muslim	Muslim
10	Borno	Muslim	Muslim
11	Gombe	Muslim	Christian
12	Taraba	Christian	Muslim
13	Yobe	Muslim	Muslim
S/N	NORTH-CENTRAL	GOVERNOR	DEPUTY GOVERNOR
14	Benue	Christian	Christian
15	Kogi	Muslim	Christian
16	Kwara	Muslim	Christian
17	Nassarawa	Muslim	Christian
18	Niger	Muslim	Muslim
19	Plateau	Christian	Christian
S/N	SOUTH-WEST	GOVERNOR	DEPUTY GOVERNOR
20	Ekiti	Christian	Christian
21	Lagos	Christian	Muslim
22	Ogun	Christian	Muslim
23	Ondo	Christian	Christian
24	Osun	Muslim	Christian
25	Oyo	Christian	Muslim
S/N	SOUTH-SOUTH	GOVERNOR	DEPUTY GOVERNOR
26	Akwa Ibom	CHRISTIAN	CHRISTIAN
27	Bayelsa	CHRISTIAN	CHRISTIAN
28	Cross River	CHRISTIAN	CHRISTIAN
29	Delta	CHRISTIAN	CHRISTIAN
30	Edo	CHRISTIAN	CHRISTIAN
31	Rivers	CHRISTIAN	CHRISTIAN
S/N	SOUTH-EAST	GOVERNOR	DEPUTY GOVERNOR
32	ABIA	CHRISTIAN	CHRISTIAN
33	ANAMBRA	CHRISTIAN	CHRISTIAN
34	EBONYI	CHRISTIAN	CHRISTIAN
35	ENUGU	CHRISTIAN	CHRISTIAN
36	IMO	CHRISTIAN	CHRISTIAN

Governors		Deputy Governors	
Christians	19	Christians	21
Muslims	17	Muslims	15

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Tinubu, others push back against attacks on Muslim-Muslim ticket

By **TUNDE JOSHUA**, Abuja

As the July 15 window for replacement of running mates lapsed at the weekend, the presidential candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Asiwaju Bola Tinubu stood by his choice of Kashim Shettima and said he refused to bow to any pressure to rescind his decision as a result of public outcry that greeted the choice.

The presidential candidate said he did not allow himself to be pressured or blackmailed into dropping Senator Kashim Shettima as his running mate.

Earlier, the spokesman of the Bola Tinubu Campaign Organisation, Bayo Onanuga said that the former Lagos State governor is an astute politician who takes responsibility for decisions taken.

"That is not possible. There is nothing like that going on in our camp. We have seen this move before, all these campaigns to pitch us against fellow Nigerians. It happened in 1993, and the result was clear. There was pressure from several quarters for (MKO) Abiola to drop (Babagana) Kingibe because of his Muslim background.

"I pray people will come back to their senses to discover that what they should be looking at is not religion but competence of the candidate to deliver and take the country

to a greater height" he added.

Also, the reaction that greeted the Muslim-Muslim presidential ticket of APC is yet to abate as Christian bodies in the country have been castigated for rejecting the choice of Shettima.

Segun Awosanya, the convener of the October 2020 #EndSARS nationwide protest has criticized Nigerian Christians for raising dust over APC's choice of a Muslim presidential candidate and a Muslim vice presidential candidate.

Awosanya was categorical in saying Nigerian Christians in particular and others who condemned APC's choice as being hypocritical.

Presenting the same faith ticket by APC should not be condemned "as long as they are capable of improving the security of the country, creating jobs and others.

"Our hypocrisy has reached troubling heights but that to me is not a critical discussion as much as how we are going to improve our national security, create jobs, unite our people, improve our economy, devolve more powers to the states and eradicate poverty."

Awosanya posited that Nigerians should see the religious difference of the country beyond Christianity and Islam. He said those who belong to other beliefs are not oftentimes



Tinubu

considered in national matters.

"We have had Muslim-Christian ticket forever yet our issues persist. The sensitivities of popular belief are there but do that better the conversation of equity in a country where other religious beliefs are so marginalized and deemed non-existent?"

"Sango, Osun, Ogun, Ifa, Obatala, Amadioha and other worshippers are out there within our secular state & yet we pretend our religious belief is binary? Again, in a country with women having almost an equal population, we don't see the need to push Female inclusion in Government?"

Meanwhile, following the selection of Shettima as Vice Presidential candidate, the APC has picked a former state Attorney General, Kaka Shehu Lawan as the party's candidate for the Borno Central Senatorial district.

The Former

Commissioner of Justice scored 459 votes out of 480 valid votes in the party's senatorial primaries. Declaring Lawan as the party's choice, the returning officer and former Deputy Governor of Taraba State, Alhaji Uba Magari said, "having satisfied the provisions of the electoral law, by the authority vested on me by the National Chairman of our great, I declared that Bar Kaka Shehu Lawan, former Attorney General, has been validly elected as the APC candidate for Borno Central Senatorial seat." Accepting the party's offer, Lawan appreciated the state delegates for choosing him while urging them to mobilize eligible voters for the ongoing permanent voter registration exercise. He assured of quality representation at the Senate even as he asked the people to always pray for their leaders. State Governor, Babagana Zulum also hailed Lawan's emergence adding that it was a 'divine' occurrence.



Shettima

Ghana announces 15% wages rise to cushion inflation

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH** with agency report

Public workers in Ghana have a 15 per cent raise starting from July 2022 to reflect the current economic situation in the country, especially to cushion the effect of skyrocketing inflation that has beset it in recent years, which has greatly affected the general quality of living.

Ghanaian government signed the Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) agreement with the workers, in exchange for a stable workforce in the economically-troubled country, where cost of living has become a major problem.

Ghana Minister of Information, Kojo Opong Nkrumah, said the decision was reached after consultations with the country's organised labour and other stakeholders, in a tweet on Friday, adding that the allowance took effect on July 1, the same day Ghana sought the support of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for its economic crisis.

"Government and organised Labour have concluded negotiations for Cost of Living

Allowance. A 15 percent allowance has been agreed effective July 1. Government is keen on mitigating the impact of global challenges on the people of Ghana," he said in a tweet.

Government and organised Labour have concluded negotiations for Cost of Living Allowance. A 15% allowance has been agreed effective July 1. Govt is keen on mitigating the impact of global challenges on the people of Ghana.

The government agreed that COLA would be paid at a rate of 15 percent of the base pay of public workers after negotiations between the government and organised labour concluded on Thursday 14 July.

Ghana is one of the low-income nations currently being crumpled by the effects of Covid-19 and the war between Russia and Ukraine.

Ghanaians crowded the streets of Accra last month in protest against rapid increase in energy costs and the newly imposed e-levy, which mandates them to pay a 1.5 percent tax for every electronic transaction they carry out.



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Trump's first wife Ivana dies at 73

By **BY OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH** with agency report

Former United States President Donald Trump's first wife and the mother of his three eldest children, Ivana, has died at age 73, her family and ex-husband have announced.

Ivana Trump and Donald got married in 1977 and divorced in 1992. They had three children together - Donald Jr, Ivanka and Eric.

Mr. Trump announced his former wife's demise on his social media platform Truth Social.

He wrote: "I am very saddened to inform all of those that loved her, of which there are many, that Ivana Trump has passed away at her home in New York City.

"She was a wonderful, beautiful, and amazing woman, who led a great and inspirational life. Her pride and joy were her three children, Donald Jr, Ivanka, and Eric. She was so proud of them, as we were all so proud of her. Rest in Peace, Ivana!"

The Trump family also released a separate statement, the family praised Ivana as an incredible woman, a force in business, a world-class athlete, a radiant beauty, and a caring mother and friend.

"It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of our beloved mother, Ivana Trump. Our mother was an incredible woman - a force in business, a world-class athlete, a radiant beauty, and caring mother and friend.

"Ivana Trump was a survivor. She fled from communism and embraced this country. She taught her children about grit



The Late Ivana

and toughness, compassion and determination," the family said. She will be dearly missed by her mother, her three children and ten grandchildren"

Neither the Trump family statement nor the post from the former president mentioned the cause of her death.

Ivana Trump, born Ivana

Marie Zelníčková, grew up under communist rule in the former Czechoslovakia.

She worked for years in Trump's business empire as a senior executive. She was appointed CEO of Trump's Castle, one of his hotel casinos in Atlantic City, and helped design interiors for the Grand Hyatt Hotel and Trump Tower. She also authored multiple bestselling books and created her own clothing line.

In the 1980s, the Trumps were the ultimate power couple in New York before their equally public, and messy, divorce after Donald Trump met his next wife, Marla Maples. But in recent years, Ivana Trump had been on good terms with her former husband.

Ivana Trump was married four times in her life, once before her marriage to Donald Trump and twice after.

Delta CP orders DPO to produce man who allegedly defiled infant within 24 hours

Delta State Commissioner of Police (CP), Ali Mohammed Ari, has ordered the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) in charge of Oleh Police Division in Isoko South Local Government Area, Supol Paul Oboware to produce a suspect, Mr Lawrence Emeriovo Edigheji, who allegedly defiled a six year old baby within 24 hours.

CP Ari confirmed that he has directed the DPO to transfer all those involved in the matter to the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) in charge of State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID) at the Police Headquarters, Asaba.

"I also directed him to produce the suspect within 24 hours. I will not take such cases lightly. What is bad in the sight of men is also bad in the sight of God.

How can somebody with clear conscious defile such a little girl," he lamented

The victim (name withheld), was said to have been lured into the house of Lawrence, on Tuesday, July 5th 2022.

It was gathered that the little girl was bleeding, arousing the curiosity of a grown up girl who later learnt that it was Lawrence who defiled her.

The grown up girl was said to have alerted the father of the girl when he returned from the farm.

The little girl's mother is said to have died in 2019, making Lawrence who is said to be married with three kids to take advantage of the baby's motherless condition to defile her.

There is suspicion that Lawrence might have used the blood of the baby for rituals.

Meanwhile, the Oleh DPO on getting the information, put several calls across to the community chairman, Mr Moses Oruerighe Ogbogo to brief him on the alleged defilement.

Mr Ogbogo was said to have ignored the DPO's phone calls.

It was gathered that the DPO was said to have learned that the community chairman and others were allegedly making concerted efforts to resolve the matter at community level without informing the police.

The DPO was said to have been irked by the chairman's blunt refusal to pick up his calls and sent him an invitation letter to report to his station on Wednesday, July 13, 2022, with the Vigilante members of the community and any other person involved on the issue, to defend themselves on an allegation of covering up the case.

Meanwhile, Lawrence the suspect is said to be on the run.

The vigilante members were said to have failed to show up at the police station on Wednesday.

"The DPO had to order the community chairman to bring all those involved - including the vigilante chairman, Mr Gideon Isara and his members to the station on Thursday," a reliable source at Araya disclosed.

It was further gathered that the DPO ordered detention of Isara and his men, while the community chairman was said to have escaped from the police station.

The DPO was also said to have disbanded the vigilantes of Araya with a view to inaugurating fresh members.

Tension in Bayelsa as angry youths shut down 30,000 per day Conoil crude oil production facilities

FG applauds Air Peace over direct flights to China

By **ADAKU WALTER**

The Federal Government has applauded Air Peace Airlines for the commencement of direct flights from Nigeria to China, stressing that the move is the right direction for which the time has come.

Chairman, House of Representatives Committee on Aviation, Nnolim Nnaji gave the commendation following Air Peace Airline's inaugural flight to Guangzhou, China

from the Murtala Muhammed International Airport (MMIA) New Terminal on Thursday.

It would be recalled that Air Peace officially expanded its operations into Asia with the commencement of its initial flight to Guangzhou in China on a weekly basis.

The airline stated that members of the flying public, especially those that fly the Guangzhou route, should expect best-in-class flight

experience, adding that India was next and Israel was being worked upon for the commencement of the flights, as it was announced earlier in the month of July.

It further explained that the airline also planned the Malabo, Equatorial Guinea and Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) for subsequent launch of the flight routes in its bid to cover a wider range of the African continent.

Nnaji noted that the commencement of Air Peace's direct flights to China would bring a huge relief to Nigerians and citizens of other African countries that travel regularly on business trips to China.

He stressed that Nigeria and Africa had shared robust business and cultural ties for decades, adding that the direct air link with those countries would further strengthen the relationship.

He praised Air Peace for mustering the courage to begin the long haul flight at a time the entire airlines globally were just struggling to overcome the enormous negative impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the aviation sector.

Nnaji assured that the legislature would continue to work with the executive arm of government to ensure a robust aviation industry in the country.

'Okowa owing both living and dead Delta retirees'

By **GABRIEL ELOZINO, Asaba**

Retirees from public primary schools in Delta State have accused Governor Ifeanyi Okowa of owing both the living and the dead of accrued retirement benefits.

The retirees yesterday staged a protest at the State's Government House, Asaba, demanding the payment of their gratuities. They stated that after 35 years of meritorious service to the state they were yet to be paid their gratuities seven years on the

line. Addressing the press on behalf of the retirees, their leader, Chief Mrs Ejieh C.E., said in spite of repeated promises made during meetings with a delegation of the state government, Governor Okowa bluntly refused to honour his words and have left the retirees in the cold, choosing to pursue a Vice President of Nigeria ambition.

She lamented that in the face of public outcry to the governor to demonstrate a humane sense of leadership

on the matter, nothing tangible had been done even when it was clear that the resources to reduce the burden of debt owed retirees were available to the State Government. She pleaded with the state government to declare a state of emergency in the public primary schools retiree's gratuities payment matter and also ensure that the over N5.9 billion owed by some local councils in the state are duly remitted to the Bureau of Local Government that is in charge of the payment.

The protest which lasted for hours led to gridlock of vehicular movement along Anwai Road, Asaba where the Government House is situated. The road was completely blocked by the retirees who sat on the road demanding to see the governor face to face to explain why he derelicted on his statutory obligation to pay their gratuities.

The Chief of Staff to the Governor, Mr Festus Ovie Agas, who addressed the protesters on behalf of the state governor, pleaded with

the retirees for time assuring that the payment would be made.

Security operatives including the police and a detachment of soldiers failed in attempts to disperse the protesters as the senior citizens remained adamant on the road.

After a while, the retirees decided to return home but with a message delivered to Governor Okowa that they will be back next month to ask for the money if nothing tangible was done before then.

Conoil facilities shut in Bayelsa

By **AHERHOKE OKIOMA, Yenagoa**

There is rising tension in Koluama Community in Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State following the invasion and shut down of oil facilities being operated by Conoil Producing Limited by angry youths over alleged non-implementation of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with host communities.

The Trumpet gathered that the breached oil facility known as Ango 2 Field, operated by Conoil since 2013, has a crude oil production

capacity of over 30,000 barrels per day.

It was gathered that the aggrieved indigenes, including women, youths, and elders, caught security personnel stationed on the facilities unawares and invaded with placards with inscriptions some of which read "No MoU, No crude oil exploration", "Conoil pack, and go, we are tired of suffering" and "Koluama people are suffering", demanded the shut down of operations at the facility.

The decision of the aggrieved community indigenes was also

backed by the members of the Koluama Oil and Gas Committee, insisting that the oil multinational have failed in the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) by Conoil, which spelt out social obligations of the oil firm to its host communities.

The Chairman of Koluama Clan Oil and Gas Committee, Chief Jonathan Amabebe, who spoke with The Trumpet on the breached oil facilities, said some of the community's demands include, clean-up of oil spill sites in the various communities and

carrying out medical outreach to communities affected by oil spill.

According to Amabebe, others are the issuance of employment letter to one of the community's qualified indigenes, who was successful in Conoil's last employment exercise in 2015 and the award of contracts across the five host communities, in Koluama Clan, namely, Tamazo, Koluama 1, Koluama 2, Olobia and Kalaweiyama, embedded in the MoU amongst others.

Also speaking on the development, the Technical

Assistant to Special Adviser to the Governor on Oil and Gas, Prince Tare Ekubo, said that despite several warnings from the community, intervention by government, meetings and letters sent to Conoil, to ensure that the relationship by both parties does not degenerate, the oil company has refused to implement decisions reached and as such the action from the community.

He, however, said the Bayelsa State Government will engage both parties to resolve the lingering issues once and for all.

NIMASA boost basic education in Taraba with teaching, learning equipment

By **SURU CHARLES**

Teaching and learning equipment worth millions of Naira have been doled out to pupils in basic schools spread across the nooks and crannies of Taraba state, by the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA).

Presenting the items yesterday in Jalingo, the state capital, Director General of the agency, Dr Bashir Jamoh, said that the gesture was part of the agency's efforts to support the education of children in the state.

During the distribution of the items to the students and the Clinic by both NIMASA and

SEMA officials in Jalingo, Mr Anthony Danu, Director of Relief, Taraba State Emergency Management Agency (TASEMA) noted that inadequate provision of teaching and learning material in public schools was a major challenge for basic education in the state.

He listed some of the equipment to include;

desktop computers, printers, whiteboard, markers, assorted textbooks, writing materials, exercise books, food flasks, school bags, sandals and socks, among many other items.

The Director General also said that the agency had procured medical equipment to boost primary health care services in the state.

He advised benefiting clinics to administer the equipment to enhance health care to the citizens of the state.

Presenting the learning materials to Hawaii Local Education Authority in Mile-Six, a suburb of Jalingo, Jamoh said that the gesture was part of NIMASA's Corporate Social Responsibility to the state.

"This is part of the Agency's ongoing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative across the 36 states of the Federation and the FCT.

"If we succeed in helping to ensure that some students improve

academically, we would have made a difference.

"We appeal that the materials donated today be used judiciously to give the children the best," Jamoh said.

In his remark, Mallam Sa'ad Yakubu, Head Master of the school thanked NIMASA for its support to primary education in the state.

Yakubu gave assurance that the school would judiciously utilize the items to achieve the goals it was meant for.

He also said that the items would go a long way in supporting the school in its day-to-day teaching and learning.

Gov Umahi Laments increasing rape cases, reshuffles cabinet ... Releases N900 million for empowerment

By **CHARLES ONYEKWERE**

Governor David Umahi of Ebonyi State has raised alarm over the increasing number of rape cases recorded in the State, vowing that perpetrators would not go unpunished.

This was contained in a statement made available to newsmen by the commissioner for information and state orientation, Mr Uchenna Orji, after the weekly Executive Council Meeting in Abakaliki.

According to the Orji, Umahi made a minor cabinet reshuffle while applauding the office of her Excellency and the State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development for the beautiful job they are doing in the fight against rape.

Umahi said: "EXCO reviewed the unfortunate increase in the rate of rape in Ebonyi State and commended the office of Her Excellency, the Wife of the Governor and the Ministry of

Women Affairs and Social Development for a very beautiful job they are doing in the fight against rape in the state.

"EXCO directed that there should be no sacred cow in the enforcement of the Laws on Rape. EXCO directed that there should be urgent State campaigns against rape in public institutions including churches, schools, markets and other public places.

The council lamented the increased use of hard drugs in the society and directed Mr Mark Onu to head the campaign against hard drugs and to go to all joints and marketplaces with police and Ebubeagu Security outfit to apprehend the perpetrators.

A total sum of Nine Hundred Million Naira (N900,000,000.00) was released for compensation #EndSARS victims and directed beneficiaries to go to the office of the Deputy Governor for final verification and documentation.



Gov. David Umahi

The council also directed that the list shall be forwarded to the office of the Commissioner for Information

and State Orientation for publication in at least two National Dailies ahead of the disbursement flag-off exercise.

Ondo Police begin enforcement on spy number plates ban



Oyeyemi Adesoye Oyediran

By **FRIDAY OMOSOLA**, Akure

Ondo State Commissioner of Police, CP Oyeyemi Adesoye Oyediran, has ordered the immediate enforcement of the ban and confiscation of any spy plate number in use within the state including the ones used for escort purposes.

This order was in compliance with the directives of the Inspector-General of Police, IGP Usman Alkali Baba on the total ban of the usage of spy plate numbers to curb the excesses of using the plate number to disregard and violate traffic rules and regulations and other extant laws.

In a statement by the Police Public Relations

Officer (PPRO) in the state, SP Odunlami Funmilayo, the Police and other security agencies in the Command also authorized the immediate seizure of spy plate numbers in use within the state.

The command directed vehicle owners to revert to their original registered number plates as well as cooperate with the police in the enforcement of the order. Oyediran further warned that the enforcement must be carried out with the utmost sense of diligence and professionalism.

In the same vein, policemen and personnel of other security agencies attached to VIPs are enjoined to ensure compliance to avoid being arrested for flouting the order.

Journalists admonished to use Cybernetics, Robotics for news gathering

Journalists have been admonished to inculcate the use of cybernetics, artificial intelligence, and robotics in journalism practice. The admonition was given in a one-day seminar organized by the Department of Mass Communication, Bingham University, Karu, Nasarrawa State. The seminar brought together experts in cybersecurity, media practice and academia, who deliberated on the need to leverage on technology in the effective practice of journalism in Nigeria.

Mr Azubike Ishiekwene of the Leadership Newspapers reiterated the urgent need for media practitioners to leverage cybernetics and robotics in journalistic practice. He said connecting the dots has become imperative given artificial intelligence and robots are set to take over human jobs. He tasked media practitioners to brace up to the challenge and play active roles in this era and connect the twos in the service and craft of journalism.

A keynote address given by The NUJ Chairman, Mr Chris Isiguzo, on the role of the Media in deepening democracy described the media as the oxygen of democracy; since it helps shape the mindset, perception, and opinion of the people. In addition to monitoring governance and holding governments

accountable, the media avails the masses of the information required to make appropriate and meaningful choices. He decried the absence of regulations for the provision of a conducive environment and lack of protection for journalists.

A cybersecurity expert, Mr Aviele Timothy described journalism as both an art and science and admonished all to innovate. He said "Given the forthcoming 2023 elections, a clarion call has been made to all stakeholders in the Nigerian project to connect the dots of cybernetics, robotics, and journalism in ensuring a hitch-free and credible election in Nigeria. More still is the urgent need for improved security and economic recovery for the Nigerian nation"

Dr Desmond Okocha, Head of department, Mass communication of Bingham University reiterated the need for the Nigerian state to fine-tune who a journalist should be.

Goodwill messages and felicitations were sent to the mass communication department for taking the lead in organizing departmental lecture series and seminars where national and international scholars and media gurus bare their minds on the ever-dynamic trends and innovations in the media and communication world.

Abia Police engages armed robbers in gun duel, foils Bank robbery

By ALEX OLISE

A crack team of anti-robbery police squad from the Abia State Police Command foiled an alleged attempt to rob an old-generation bank in Umuahia during the weekend.

The Police spokesperson in the state, Geoffrey Ogbonna, a Superintendent of Police (SP), confirmed the incident to *The Trumpet*.

Ogbonna said that the

command got the information that there was an attempt to rob a bank situated on Bank Road in the capital city.

He said that the command "immediately dispatched an anti-robbery squad to the scene and they succeeded in foiling the robbery attempt".

Eyewitness accounts said that the operation was carried out by a four-member gang.

It was learned that the

armed men, on sighting the policemen, began to shoot sporadically as they made an attempt to escape.

They were said to have abandoned their red-colour Corolla car, with Reg. No: LND 126 HL, and escaped in another car reportedly snatched from an unsuspecting motorist.

The incident caused a serious stampede among residents and traders in the area, including passersby, who "ran helter-skelter"

for their lives. At the end of the gun duel between the police and robbery suspects, three persons, including a policeman at the bank, sustained bullet wounds.

The victims were immediately rushed to a nearby Federal Medical Centre for medical attention.

Meanwhile, residents of the capital city, who were jolted by the incident, have appealed to the Governor of the state. Okezie Ikpeazu

and Commissioner of Police (CP), Janeth Agbede, to beef up security in the state.

They complained that violent crimes, including

armed robbery, kidnapping, and banditry, had become a daily occurrence in different parts of the state.

We don't know anything about Tinubu, Obi's placeholders – INEC

Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), is playing dumb over the issue of placeholders for which the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), has gone to court, seeking to stop it from recognising the replacement of vice presidential candidates the All Progressives Congress (APC) and that of the Labour Party (LP), from being in the ballot for next year's election.

The PDP approached the Federal High Court, Abuja, on Thursday to order INEC, to prevent Tinubu and Peter Obi, from replacing their placeholders, Kabiru Masari and Doyin Okupe, respectively as their running mates, as earlier submitted.

While the Obi has since named Datti Baba-Ahmed as Okupe's replacement, Tinubu named Kashim Shettima a move the PDP has asked the court to determine its legality, insisting that both candidates must stand disqualified unless they contest alongside the initial candidates.

In the originating summons, with suit number FHC/ABJ/CS/1016/2022, the PDP is seeking an order barring INEC from replacing the running mates of Tinubu and Obi, the party said, while listing APC, Tinubu, Masari, Labour Party, Obi and Okupe as respondents.

But reacting to the development, Festus Okoye, INEC spokesman, said on Friday that the commission was not aware that anybody submitted the name of anyone as a placeholder, and also not aware of the suit as the leadership had been quite busy with the activities of the Osun governorship election.

But he offered a general explanation to the INEC laws, about the process followed by the two parties, saying that none of them notified INEC that the candidates they submitted as VPs were placeholders.

His words: "I'm not aware that we have been served with any document on the suit with the complexion you're talking about. But let me say this. One, if a matter is in court, we're not supposed to comment on it. But secondly, I had addressed this that when political parties submitted the names of their vice presidential candidates, there was no provision for a placeholder in the forms they submitted.

"They submitted the forms for the presidential candidates and the forms for their vice presidential candidates. And that is the situation.

"If you look at section 33 of the Electoral Act, 2022, it says a political party shall not be allowed to change or substitute these candidates whose names have been submitted under section 29 of the electoral act, except in the case of death or withdrawal by the candidate. But it goes ahead to say that provided that in such a withdrawal or death of a candidate, the political party affected, shall, within 14 days of the occurrence of the event, hold a fresh primary election to produce and submit a fresh candidate to the commission for the election concerned.

"This is the particular provision we're following. In the case of senatorial candidates and the case of House of Representatives candidates and so on and so forth, it is mandatory for them to hold fresh primaries on the withdrawal of their candidates. But in the case of a presidential candidate or governorship candidates, the political party nominates a vice presidential candidate and deputy governorship candidate. Whether they're candidates or not and whether they're supposed to go in for a fresh 14-day primary, I'm not in a position to make a determination in relation to that."

Five top UK PM contenders to face off in TV Debate

By OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH

The five remaining candidates in the UK Conservative leadership race are preparing to go head-to-head in the first of three live TV debates on Friday.

It comes after Rishi Sunak cemented his lead in the second round of voting on Thursday with 101 votes ahead of Penny Mordaunt who came second with 83 votes and Liz Truss third with 64 votes.

Kemi Badenoch and Tom Tugendhat are still

in the race, but Suella Braverman was knocked out. Those remaining will face the third round of voting by Conservative members of parliament on Monday.

An initial number of 11 contenders has been whittled down following two days of votes by lawmakers from the ruling Conservative Party, but no individual has yet emerged as the obvious successor to Boris Johnson who resigned following a series of scandals.

The Leadership top five (5) contenders will face

off in a live programme on Channel 4 later today, with another taking place on Sunday 17 July on ITV.

The third debate will be on Tuesday 19 July 2022 on Sky News. More candidates will have been eliminated through further rounds of voting by this stage.

Whoever wins the contest will take on rocketing inflation and low economic growth, as well as the public's lack of confidence in politics after Johnson's scandal-ridden time in power.



Rishi Sunak

Arms proliferation's major cause of insecurity in Nigeria – NSA

• Tasks CSOs to collaborate with govt to tackle menace

By PAUL MICHAEL

The National Security Adviser (NSA), Maj-Gen Babagana Monguno (Rtd) has said the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is a major cause of the alarming upsurge in insecurity and criminal activities in the country.

The NSA stated this Thursday while presenting a keynote address at a one-day interactive session with relevant Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) at the Nigerian Army Resource Centre in Abuja.

The event with the theme 'Harnessing the Capacities of the Civil Society Towards Promoting an Illicit Arms-free Society in Nigeria', was organized by the National Centre for Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (NCCSALW) to fashion a roadmap towards the eradication of illicit firearms in the hands of unauthorized persons.

Gen Monguno, who was represented by his Special Assistant on Special Duties, Amb Ahmed Muhammed, said the event was part of many multilateral engagements that the government

intended to carry out with CSOs, NGOs, Religious Organizations, Community Leaders, and youth groups.

He said the effort is geared towards the security of the country against illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons as well as its devastating effects, which according to him, have been issues of serious concern to West African countries and the global community.

"Rather, it is the easy access to them and the simplicity of their use that make violence more lethal and conflicts more protracted.

"Therefore, SALW have become weapons of choice for criminals, terrorists and bandits in Nigeria and beyond, posing a significant challenge to the country, especially in the wake of insecurity that has recently engulfed the Sahel Region.

"Hence the need to stop the proliferation of these deadly weapons," the NSA stated.

He further stated no emphasis is required to know that the uncontrolled availability of small arms and light weapons, especially the illicit ones, have

continued to undermine global peace and significantly hinder development.

Monguno attributed the suffering in the society to the threat and the use of illicit firearms in circulation in the country. He, however, stated that it is important to emphasise that these weapons themselves do not cause conflict.

He said it was against the backdrop of the proliferation of weapons and its attendant consequences that President Muhammadu Buhari authorised the establishment of the Centre to tackle the menace following global standards.

According to him, President Muhammadu Buhari has further demonstrated Nigeria's commitment to the provisions of Article 24 of the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

"Which requires each member state to establish national institutions to promote a multilateral approach to stamping out illicit arms trade in the Sub-region.

"The effort towards eradicating illicit arms globally is one that has involved all

stakeholders including the international and regional community, nations, states and most importantly, the civil society.

"In spite of our best efforts, it has become apparent that West Africa and indeed the global community are losing the war to transnational organised criminal networks, terrorist groups, domestic criminal elements and weapons manufacturers," Monguno said.

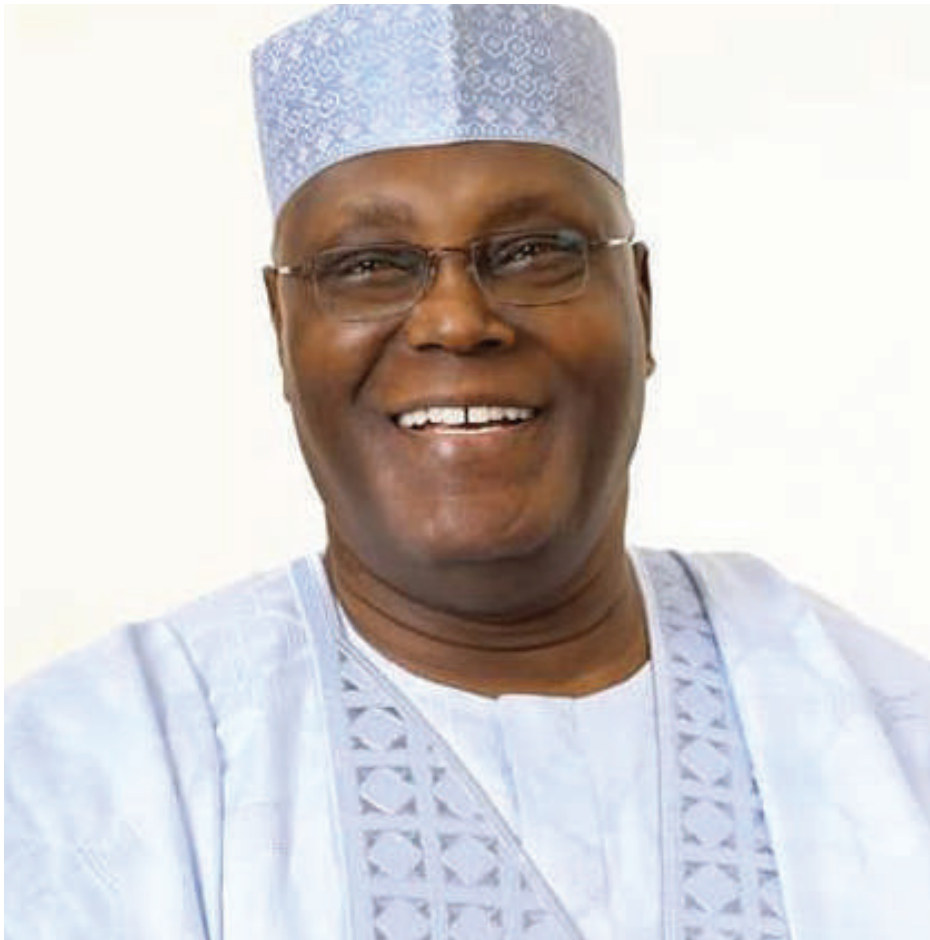
He further disclosed that numerous studies conducted by Small Arms Survey, OXFAM and SBM Intelligence suggested that Nigeria currently accounts for about 60 to 70 per cent of the 10 million illicit weapons believed to be in West Africa.

According to him, this has already manifested as evidenced in the level of armed violence witnessed across Nigeria.

Monguno, therefore, called for the support of CSOs for the government's avowed commitment to rid the society of illicit weapons.

He commended the Centre for its efforts in ridding the nation of illicit small arms and light weapons.

Wike, PDP and 2023



Atiku Abubakar



Nyesom Wike

By **CHRIS EZEONOH**, PORT HARCOURT

For former Vice President and presidential candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party, (PDP) in the 2023 general election, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, if there were to be reincarnation, he would not wish to contend with even a shadow that has a resemblance with that of Nyesom Wike, governor of Rivers State.

The former vice president and many PDP faithful obviously believed that having emerged victorious from the hotly contested presidential primaries; the only hurdle left for the party and their flag bearer is the presidential election proper.

Little did they know that the party would be thrown into a quagmire that has the potential of polarizing the opposition party and rob it of the much needed cohesion and virility to confront the ruling APC at the polls next February.

Top echelons in the PDP in their wisdom considered and nominated the Rivers governor, Wike to pair Atiku as running mate for the battle of the presidential election. But Atiku for whatever strange reasons rather saw Wike as a liability other than the asset he was meant to be for the success of the party at the polls next year.

The Turakin Adamawa (Atiku) unilaterally (even against the principles of the opposition party) snubbed Wike and went for Governor Ifeanyi Okowa of Delta State as his running mate whom he perhaps perceived would be more pliable.

Atiku must have underestimated the rising political profile and influence of Governor Wike, even when he had no reasons to do so. And since that faux pas by the former Vice president, the

umbrella of the PDP has been riddled with embarrassing holes.

Some analysts say Atiku ought to have known better than Wike is not that small fry that could be squeezed easily by the ball of the thumb taking into cognizance the governor's antecedents in the PDP and national politics.

Wike almost single handedly put together the immediate past national leadership of PDP led by Prince Uche Secondus who invariably was Wike's Man Friday then.

In 2018 when PDP was planning its national convention and sought to move the venue of the convention from Port Harcourt to Abuja, Wike had roared like a lion and threatened dire consequences against the party should the venue be moved out of Port Harcourt. The party quickly rescinded the plan and stuck to Port Harcourt venue as earlier agreed.

It is on record how Wike fought at the convention to ensure that his friend and governor of Sokoto State, Alhaji Aminu Tambuwal emerge as the flag bearer, but Atiku eventually carried the day after much dollar rain.

In this year's PDP convention held in May, Wike also caused much stir in the polity as he traversed the length and breadth of the country ahead of the convention seeking the support of delegates. But for the last minute withdrawal of Tambuwal from the race on the convention ground and the joker of asking his supporters to support Atiku, Wike would have shocked even Atiku with all the vaunted connections and influence of the former Vice president.

Is Atiku piqued by the tough challenge Wike had given him over time that he felt the governor does not deserve such

position and recognition alongside him? Some analysts say Atiku by turning down the recommendation of Wike as running mate has lost the services of a "bulldozer and swamp bogie" that would have cleared every stump and obstacle on the way to Aso Rock in 2023 for the PDP.

Interestingly, since Atiku sought to stifle the glowing light of Wike politically, the reverberations have been deafening within the polity and in PDP in particular. And as it appears, the PDP is now in a quandary on how to handle the reverberations, while Wike the supposed victim is gleefully enjoying the unfolding drama.

Today, Wike has become unarguably the most sought after politician in the country, even more attractive than the presidential candidates that emerged in the recently conducted primaries, Atiku inclusive.

Thus it is confounding according to some analysts why Atiku would not see the sterling qualities Wike possesses that other politicians are falling over themselves to court such that politicians from all walks of life in Nigeria are streaming down to Port Harcourt to consult the Rivers governor.

Wike is now being addressed in different colourful appellations - the beautiful bride, political colossus, avant-garde, political juggernaut, just name them and fuelled mainly on account of the blunder by Atiku who many before now thought is a political strategist.

Although many politicians have been visiting Rivers State since the end of the PDP primaries, mostly PDP henchmen, the frequency became intense since Atiku turned down the choice of Wike as running mate. However, what caused strong ripples was the last Friday visit of

three serving governors on the platform of the ruling All Progressive Congress, (APC), namely, Sanwo Olu of Lagos State, Kayode Fayemi of Ekiti State and Rotimi Akeredolu of Ondo State.

Even as the content of their discussion in their closed door meeting were not made public, it is obvious that the meeting was aimed at coaxing Wike to swing his support towards the APC, in particular to the Presidential project of Asiwaju Bola Tinubu in line with the demands of the Southern governors that the presidency should return to southern Nigeria in 2023.

Wike's continued silence after each meeting with different political interests is not helping matters for the PDP as it has always left the party more confused on how to approach the governor, some analysts say.

So the one million dollar question is, will Wike leave the PDP or stay and fight within? Does the governor who has professed so much love for the PDP have such tendency? Or has he been so provoked or maltreated that his anger is now tipping over such that anything is possible now?

What is Wike just up to that the leadership of PDP are all holed up at Wadatta Plaza headquarters of the party in Abuja looking forlorn towards Port Harcourt like a child whose mother went to the market without keeping lunch for him and the day wearing down to evening?

Is Wike really the oxygen of PDP? If the governor refuses all entreaties to be appeased, would it be nunc dimitis for Atiku and his 2023 ambition?

Political pundits are eagerly waiting to see how the PDP will handle this seeming delicate situation and come out unscathed.



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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	
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14.5 x 4	520,790.19	559,849.45	9 x 2	101,962.78	109,609.99	9 x 2	93,773.60	100,872.44	8 x 4	137,692.17	148,019.082	
7 x 5	218,243.02	234,629.74	9 x 3	152,944.01	164,414.81	9 x 3	141,108.54	151,691.68	10 x 4	172,301.37	185,224.22	
8 x 5	299,304.72	321,752.57	9 x 4	203,925.29	219,219.69	9 x 4	187,921.52	202,015.71	14.5 x 3	187,057.43	201,086.73	
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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	
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11 x 6	592,622.16	637,068.82	11 x 5	389,441.887	418,650.01	11 x 5	358,396.62	385,276.37	HP7.25 X 6	218,226.87	234,593.89	
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Provide whereabouts of Ogiamien, Oba of Benin tasked

By GABRIEL OMONHINMIN

The Ogiamien Royal Dynasty of Utantan in Benin Kingdom has once again granted a press briefing in its Palace in Benin City where they addressed three key issues raised by the Benin Traditional Council some weeks ago, especially as it concerns the whereabouts of the 23rd Ogiamien Utantan, Osarobo Okuonghae, who suddenly disappeared and has not been found till date.

The Director of Information and External Affairs for the Ogiamien Royal Dynasty, High Chief Monday Wehere, JP, pointedly asked the Oba of Benin and his Palace Chiefs to help the Nigerian Police with all the necessary information that will invariably help to find the whereabouts of Ogiamien Osarobo Okuonghae.

The statement reads in part: "Our attention has been drawn to some conflicting stories propagated in some quarters which bothered on the followings: The paternity of our revered king, His Imperial Majesty, Rich Arisco Osemwengie JP, OOS, the current 24th Ogiamien of Benin, (Utantan) Kingdom, Benin City, Edo South, Igodomigodo land of Edo State. The Whereabouts of Ogiamien Osarobo Okuonghae and The Mode of Succession of Ogiamien Royal Stool."

Wehere said the press conference was called to put the records straight; "The Great Ogiamien Royal Stool and the Great Ogiamien Royal Palace predated the colonial administration that gazetted the Great Ogiamien Royal Stool and the Great Ogiamien Royal Palace as National Monuments in 1959.

"It will interest you to know that this is the only Royal Palace gazetted by the Colonial Masters, which they handed over to the Federal Government during independence in 1960. The OGIAMIEN stool/Ogiamien Palace was also recognized by UNESCO contrary to the beliefs that the Oba of Benin Palace was also a national monument, which is not true due to the Armageddon that befalls the palace in the 1897 invasion.

"In addition, the Great Ogiamien Royal Stool is recognized in the Midwestern State of Nigeria Gazette No 59 Vol. 5 and M. S. L. N. No 37 dated 7th day of November 1968 tied to the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Constitution (Suspension and Modification) Decree, 1966 Chiefs Law (CAP 19), which is also protected by Part V Sections 38 and 39 of the Bendel State Traditional Rulers and Chief Edict of 1979. The Appeal Court judgment by Justice Jimi Olukayode Baba of Appeal Court in the Appeal Case No: CA/B/99/2016 also confirmed that the Great Ogiamien Royal stool is a



His Imperial Majesty Rich Arisco Osemwengie Ogiamien of Utantan Benin City.

recognized instrument. Hear Justice Jimi Olukayode Baba of Appeal Court sitting in Benin City, Edo State.

"It is my humble view that the Ogiamien of Benin Chieftaincy is one of the recognized instruments (M.S.L.N 37 of 1968) (See page 37 of the Judgment delivered by Jimi Olukayode Bada, JCA) dated Wednesday, 16th day of November 2016 in Benin City, Edo State.

"The issue of paternity, His Imperial Majesty, Rich Arisco Osemwengie JP, OOS, the current 24th Ogiamien of Benin (Utantan), Kingdom, Benin City, Edo South, Igodomigodo land of Edo State is a direct scion of the Great Ogiamien Royal Dynasty. His biological father, late Prince Daniel Osemwengie Orumwense, is the direct male child of late Prince Orumwense Ogienor; late Prince Orumwense Ogienor is the direct male child of Prince Ogienor Ekunwe; while late Prince Ogienor Ekunwe is the direct male child of Ogiamien Okhuanhenzuwa.

"The aspect of maternity, Ogiamien Rich Ariscos, mother late Mrs Victoria Aimwenyeye Iroegbetin Osemwengie (Nee Ediagbonya Osawe) of Ilobi Village in Uhunmwonde LGA of Edo State hails from the family of Iyase of Udo in Ovia South West LGA of Edo State.

"It is on record that the Oba of Benin known as Oba Eweka, the First and the area known as the Benin Kingdom was leased to them by Ogiso/Ogiamien Erebo via the

Memorable Ekiokpagha Treaty in 12:00AD."

On the whereabouts of Ogiamien Osarobo Okuonghae, Wehere said, when it became evident that Okuonghae was missing, we wrote to the then Commissioner of Police, Edo State to alert them of the missing Ogiamien.

"On Tuesday, 6th August 2015, the then PPRO of the Edo State Police Command, DSP Stephen Onwecheo, published a Police Press Release about the missing Ogiamien Osarobo Okuonghae.

"But in a swift reaction, the Benin Traditional Council published a rejoinder on Saturday, 8th August 2015, signed by the secretary, Mr Frank Irabor, querying the use of HRM for Ogiamien Osarobo Okuonghae instead of condoling with the bereaved families.

The Benin Traditional Council did not send a formal condolence message till this very moment, but they kept saying that Ogiamien Osarobo Okuonghae is alive even when the Police appealed to any person with useful information about his whereabouts to come forward and contact the nearest Police station or the family, then the question now is this, since the BTC know the whereabouts of Ogiamien Osarobo Okuonghae, they should please go to the police and give them the information and stop raising unnecessary dust about the whereabouts of Ogiamien Osarobo Okuonghae. After all the preliminary investigations we have done so far and based on the recent press conference

of Iyase of Benin thus indicates that they are behind the disappearance of Ogiamien Osarobo Okuonghae, all these dramas are to circumvent the Ekiokpagha Treaty to further reenact their dominance in the state."

Wehere noted that since there is no vacuum in nature, after following the traditional due process, we installed Prince Rich Arisco Osemwengie JP, OOS, as the 24th Ogiamien of Benin (Utantan) in accordance with our native laws and custom.

"On the mode of selecting a new Ogiamien whenever there is a vacuum, note, the Ogiamien Royal Stool is not only hereditary by Primogeniture but through ruling houses.

"What is today known as Ogiamien Royal Stool came into existence in the 9th Century AD. At inception, it was known as Ogiso Royal Stool. The first occupant was Pa Idu Ogiso the progenitor of Igodomigodo. He was known as Ogiso Igodo.

"From the Era of Ogiso Igodo to the present era, the Ogiso Royal Stool has passed through 4 different traditional transitions namely:

- "The Era of Primogeniture;
- The Era of Gerontocracy;
- The Era of Second Son and
- The Era of Grand Son.

"Historically speaking, the Ogiamien Royal Stool traditionally has been moving from one Ruling House to the other. The way the ancestors designed the transition, it is therefore difficult for anyone Ruling House to lay absolute claim to the Stool.

"It is therefore misleading to say that the Ogiamien Royal Stool is ONLY hereditary by primogeniture.

"For record purposes, the Ogiamien Stool can be inherited by any direct male child from any of the Ruling Houses.

"We know the Ruling Houses. At the appropriate time, we shall publish the list of the Ruling Houses indicating details of the Family Tree. The Ruling Houses are in the Family Tree. Any time there is a vacuum or vacancy, we use our internal traditional mechanism to fill the vacuum.

"Every transition is unique. The prevailing circumstances always determine who should be installed as Ogiamien hence the various modes of transition: Primogeniture, Gerontocracy, Second Son, and Grandson. But the truth however is that only direct Male Children are qualified to sit on the throne of Ogiamien of Benin (Utantan) stool.

Wehere added that, recently, the Chief and Enigies under the Benin Traditional Council requested that the OGIAMIEN should tender an apology in three national newspapers for an offence we don't know anything about. We find such requests appalling and outlandish. He concluded.

Details of my private meeting with President Buhari- Oluwo of Iwo

By **GABRIEL OMONHINMIN**

The charismatic Oluwo of Iwo Land, Oba Abdul-Rasheed Adewale Akanbi, Telu -1, is one controversial traditional ruler that means so many things to so many people in Yoruba land. He is one of the first class Traditional Rulers in the state, he is known to take on any first-class traditional ruler, who dares mess around with him.

Whatever people's opinion about him, good or bad, the Oluwo of the Iwo Kingdom is never perturbed. He believes strongly in himself and is pushed by his personal beliefs and conviction.

Trumpet Palace Watch recently encountered him, and a range of issues were discussed. It is our pleasure to lead our readers into the heart of these exclusive discussions.

Trumpet: Sometimes ago, you were accused of taking sides with the Fulanis, who most people accused of invading the bushes and forest in the South West. Why the accusation?

Oluwo: I'm not surprised that people will just sit in their comfort zones and begin to insinuate and make so many unfounded accusations. But as a first-class traditional ruler, I'm used to such accusations by now.

Anyhow, what transpired is that, at the height of the raging controversies about Fulani's invasion of our farms, and our immediate environment as a traditional ruler, I decided to carefully study the situation. From my careful study of things, I discovered, yes, some Fulani herders, who are long known for cattle trading and rearing for centuries in this part of the country, were indeed in some of our bushes. But they were just minding their businesses. In the same breath, my findings also showed that a large number of armed mercenaries from Libya, Guinea, Cameroon and Niger, were also all over our forest. These mercenaries were indeed and are still causing a lot of trouble in and around the South West Region as we speak.

I, therefore, seek a private audience with Mr President Muhammadu Buhari and brief him in detail on what I discovered and what is happening around us in the South West. I also seized the opportunity to advise the President on what I think should be done, to separate our local Fulani herders, who have lived with us for several centuries from these dangerous elements, who are trying to cause trouble in our lands and country.

From my findings, we discovered that these foreign marauders were in the habit of killing and rustling the cows of our indigenous Fulanis. Oftentimes, they use these cows they stole as a decor to commit more heinous crimes in the process.

I made no pretence in telling the President that pasturing is part of the daily life of our indigenous Fulanis. And for them to embrace modern ranching techniques, they need to be trained and taught what to do with regard to modern ranching. And as such, special national economic provisions should be made to accommodate the kind of training that will benefit them. As this is the only way, our indigenous Fulanis who are used to pasturing can gradually transit from the present crude methods of rearing cows to embrace modern day ranching.

I, therefore, suggested that some

of them should be taken outside the country to places like South Africa and the Netherlands for training on ranching.

Trumpet: Kabiyesi, traditional rulers are supposed to be apolitical. What informed your open endorsement of Governor Adegboyega Oyetola for a second term as the Governor of Osun State?

Oluwo: Endorsing Governor Oyetola for a second term as the Governor of our State Osun, doesn't make me partisan in any way. I'm a traditional ruler, who must at all times look out for the interest of my people.

Moreover, it is not just and proper, to just wake up one day, and change a man who has been performing and doing an excellent job as a governor, just because some people want him out of office. Why most people are after Governor Oyetola's chair, is because unlike other governors in other states of the federation, he is not a noisemaker. He does his things quietly without making noise about them and moves on to other projects. For example, Governor Oyetola had done several roads quietly without any fanfare, as some State Governors are known for. The Iwo-Oshogbo Road, Alliece Osun - Oyo Road and within the four years of his first tenure constructed one of the fly-over bridges in Oshogbo, all these projects he initiated and completed without making a noise.

For example, Osun state is largely a civil servant state, since he assumed office, he has consistently made sure that all the civil servants in the state are paid their salaries as at when due. Pensioners also are not own a dime within this period in question.

Moreover, I am looking out for the Osun West Senatorial zone interest as it concerns our present and future interest. This I make no pretence about and also have no apology about. If you



HRM Oba Abdul-Rasheed Adewale Akanbi Telu-1, Oluwo of Iwo Kingdom

must know, Senator Adeleke, the P.D.P candidate in the July 16th Governorship election is from Ede. He is also from this Senatorial zone just like Iwo, my domain. If he wins the Osun State Governorship election, that means my desire for an Iwo indigene to emerge as the next Governor of Osun State, will evaporate into the thin air. As expected from a traditional ruler, who loves his people and wants the very best for his people, I am expected to go where my

heart is. If people like it, let them call it selfishness. I don't see what is wrong with what I am doing.

Trumpet: What could be the possible reason(s) for the sharp disagreement between the immediate past Governor Rauf Aregbeshola, who is now the Minister of Interior and Governor Oyetola?

Oluwo: I don't know what caused their disagreement. You know politicians, they can never be predicted they always go where their bread is buttered.

Deji of Akure celebrates 7th coronation anniversary •Declares August 16th as annual prayer day

By **FRIDAY OMOSOLA**, Akure

The Deji of Akure Kingdom, Oba (Dr.) Aladetoyinbo Ogunlade Aladelusi, Odundun II, has declared 16th of August every year as prayer day in his kingdom, and amongst Akure indigenes globally.



Deji of Akure Kingdom, Oba (Dr.) Aladetoyinbo Ogunlade Aladelusi, Odundun II

In a statement signed by his Chief Press Secretary, Mr Adeyeye Michael, the Monarch made the declaration at a morning thanksgiving prayer service organized to commemorate his 7th coronation anniversary in Akure, the Ondo State capital.

While addressing the early morning worshippers at his palace, the monarch appreciated God for His mercies and goodness throughout his seven years on the throne in the ancient city of Akure.

He said, "There is nothing I could have achieved if not for God, who had been on my side. I decided to mark this year's thanksgiving service, because of the enormity of what God has done for me and all my accomplishments within these seven years that I have been on the throne.

"We know that as a people, the incident of 1983 was indeed a trying period, which we prayed never to witness again. However, we must go back to basics and commit our ways of life to God. We will therefore use this date, August 16th of every year,

as a day set aside to commit ourselves and Akure Land to God. We will pray for the good of the land, Ondo State and the Country in general. We will surely overcome the amalgams of challenges occasioned by that incident under reference."

Oba Aladetoyinbo, who recalled the ugly incident of August 16, 1983 and described it as a major setback for the Kingdom, urged the people to continue to pray for the city.

According to him, he is aware of the pockets of challenges that are threatening the unity in the Kingdom, and expressed optimism that the unity of the Kingdom will be achieved under his watch as there is no sacrifice too much to achieve unity.

He thanked God that Akure had witnessed a great turnaround during his reign and prayed that God will continue to guide him in making rightful decisions and leading the people in his Kingdom right with the fear of God.

Oba Aladetoyinbo became the 47th Deji of Akure Kingdom on the 8th of July, 2015.

FG moves to mop up small arms, light weapons, engages CSOs

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

The Federal Government through the National Centre for Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (NCCSALW) has vowed to mop up illicit weapons in the hands of unauthorised persons across the country as part of its efforts to address growing insecurity.

National Coordinator of NCCSALW, Maj-Gen AM Dikko (Rtd), stated this in a one-day interactive session with the theme 'Harnessing the Capacities of the Civil Society Towards Promoting an Illicit Arms-free Society in Nigeria', which was held at the Nigerian Army Resource Centre in Abuja on Thursday.

Gen Dikko, while welcoming Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), which were carefully drawn from the six geo-political zones of the country said, the government is determined to partner with critical stakeholders to mop up and destroy all illicit small arms and light weapons currently in circulation as well as stop the proliferation and local manufacturing of such weapons.

He further stated that the proliferation of small and illicit firearms has negatively

impacted the peace, security, and economic development of Nigeria while noting that the Centre has established Zonal Offices in each region in a bid to decentralize its operations by directly engaging stakeholders at the grassroots.

"The NCCSALW was established in May 2021 as part of a wider national response to the escalating menace of illicit arms and light weapons in the country and the sub-region. There is no gainsaying the fact that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons has negatively impacted the peace, security, and socio-economic well-being of our dear nation.

"In the last two decades, it has remained a key driver for terrorism, ethno-religious crisis, violence, and sundry organized criminal activities within and across our borders," he said.

According to him, Nigeria has borne the brunt of insecurity in the Sahel Region as a result of arms trafficking and proliferation. He, however, added that the government is tackling the challenges.

"Consequently, Nigeria has closed ranks with our neighbours, the ECOWAS, and other International Stakeholders over the years to eradicate illicit small arms and light weapons in the hands of unauthorized



Participants of the interactive session in a group photograph

persons.

"Even though the progress made in this area has been the subject of debate, Nigeria has continued to tackle the challenge head-on.

"I am delighted to say that since its establishment, the Centre has made giant strides within the short time frame to achieve full operationalization. Of note is the establishment of regional offices in the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria.

"The operationalization of the Centre has focused on discharging its core functions of providing a strategic platform for arms control in Nigeria through close partnership with stakeholders, especially Civil Society both local and internationally.

"The mopping up of these weapons will remain a continuous exercise until our security space is free of

the menace of illicit small arms and light weapons," he added.

The CSOs, which were grouped into six focused groups in accordance with the region of operations, interfaced with the Zonal Coordinators and proffered actionable solutions to arms proliferation based on the peculiarities in each of the zones.

Insecurity has in the last two decades constituted a major challenge to the advancement of the country with far-reaching implications on the safety of lives and properties, socio-economic wellbeing of citizens, development, and growth as well as peaceful coexistence among various interest groups.

While Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) terrorize the Northeast, banditry,

and kidnapping for ransom dominate the Northwest. In North Central, religious extremism and herders/farmers clashes have been the order of the day.

Meanwhile, the rise of separatist groups, ritual killings, herders/farmers clashes, and kidnapping among others unsettle the Southeast and Southwest while militancy, kidnapping, cultism, armed robbery as well as crude oil theft reign over the South-South region.

These security challenges and more are fuelled and sustained by the small arms and light weapons in the hands of outlawed groups, disgruntled elements, organised criminals, political thugs, and other unauthorised persons. Hence, the urgent need for mopping up small arms and light weapons to restore peace to the country.

Six terrorist leaders, 3,858 terrorists, families surrender to troops

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

The Defence Headquarters has stated that six top terrorist commanders have surrendered to the troops of Hadin Kai operating in the Northeast.

This was disclosed by the Director of Defence Media Operations, Maj-Gen Benard Onyeuko, on Thursday in a press briefing held at the Defence Headquarters, Abuja.

According to Gen Onyeuko, the terrorists surrendered on Wednesday at Gwoza. He gave their names as Mallam Mala Hassan (WALL), Ali Madagali (MUNZUR), Musa Bashir (CHIEF ANUR), Buba Dahiru (MUNZUR), Jafar Hamma (KAID) and Abbali NAKIB Polisawa while noting that this was the first time that such high calibre of Commanders were surrendering.

He further stated that about 3,858 Boko Haram terrorists and their families also surrendered to troops between 1 - 14 July 2022.

"Also, about 3,858 Boko Haram Terrorists and their families surrendered between 1 - 14 July 2022, comprising 505 males, 1,042 Females and 2,311 children.

"Furthermore, in the theatre, troops neutralized several Boko Haram/Islamic State of West African Province terrorists within the period under review at different encounters at Gamage village in Dikwa Local Government Area, Dikwa - Gambora Ngala road, Pulka - Gwale road in Borno State among others.

"Several terrorists logistics suppliers/collaborators were arrested with various items at various logistics towns within the theatre. Among them were two women namely; Hauwa Gambo and Khadija Dirsu," the General said.

Also, the Air Component of Operation Hadin Kai was said to have conducted air interdiction operations at Tumbum Jaki and Tumbum Murhu near Lake Chad in Borno State on the receipt of intelligence report on the activities of the insurgents in the general area.

Onyeuko said the operation led to the death of about 21 terrorists.

Meanwhile, troops of Hadarin Daji neutralized two terrorists and recovered weapons at Sambo village in Dandume Local Government Area Katsina State. More so, one Mallam Sani Umar Wara, who was serving at Zuru Correctional Centre but was kidnapped at Kofar Gabas town in Shinkafi LGA on 2 July 2022 was rescued by troops at Maberiyia Village in Shinkafi LGA of Zamfara State.

In the South-South region, troops discovered and destroyed 109 illegal refining sites, 34 wooden boats, 150 storage tanks, 119 overns, and 104 dugout pits.

"Cumulatively, within the period under review troops recovered 27 pumping machines, 1 weapon, 1-speed boat, 13 vehicles, 7 outboard engines, Four Million Three Hundred Thirty-Nine Thousand (4,339,000) litres of crude oil, Two Million Fifty-One Thousand (2,051,000) litres of AGO and Thirty Thousand (30,000) litres of DPK," Onyeuko said.

He added that 24 economic saboteurs were also arrested by the troops within the same period.

Gunmen attack INEC officials, 2 hospitalised in Enugu

By **CHARLES ONYEKWERE**, Enugu

Unknown gunmen have attacked officials of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Igboeze North Local Government Area of Enugu State.

During the unfortunate incident, two voter registration machines were damaged leading to the injury of two

INEC staff said to have been hospitalised in an undisclosed hospital in the State.

INEC Chairman, Information and Voter Education Committee, Festus Okoye, confirmed the attack via a statement issued on Thursday.

He said electoral officials were involved in the Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercise before gunmen stormed the Community

Primary School Umuopu in Umuozzi Ward 19 in the South-Eastern state.

It was gathered that after the Administrative Secretary in Enugu State, Mr Jude Okwuonu reported the incident to INEC Headquarters, the Commission decided to suspend the Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercise in the affected area.

"The gunmen fired

sporadically into the air to disperse registrants and registration officials. In the ensuing stampede, one of our staff sustained injuries and is receiving treatment in a hospital," the statement read.

"Two voter registration machines and personal items of the staff such as mobile phones were lost. Consequently, Ward level registration of voters in Igboeze North is hereby suspended," it added.

According to Okoye, the Commission has reported the incident to the police authorities in Enugu State to commence an investigation.

Attacks on INEC facilities have been frequent in the South-East as the nation prepares for the general elections in seven months.

On July 3, arsonists attacked the INEC office in Igboeze North Local Government Area and burnt down the facility.

Osun Election: NSCDC deploys 11,226 personnel to enhance security

By **PAUL MICHAEL**

The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) has deployed no fewer than 11,226 personnel to provide security during the conduct of the Osun State gubernatorial elections scheduled to hold on Saturday.

Commandant General of the Corps, Dr Ahmed Audi, while approving the deployment of the officers said they shall man the 3,763 polling units in the state, collation centres, flashpoints and critical infrastructures in all 31 Local Government Area.

NSCDC's Director of Public Relations, DCC Olusola Odumosu, disclosed this in a

statement on Monday while noting that the officers were drawn from the National Headquarters and nine State Commands of Osun, Ondo, Ekiti, Oyo, Ogun, Lagos, Kwara, Kogi and Edo.

Odumosu further disclosed that the operatives have been exposed to the Rules of Engagement as provided for in the Electoral Act.

According to him, Deputy Commandant General (DCG) in charge of Operations, Dauda Mungadi is to oversee the election exercise while Assistant Commandant General (ACG) Operations, Philip Ayuba, Zonal Commander (Zone J), Fasiu Adeyinka and Commandant

Special Duties, Oliver Ugwuja are deployed as field Commanders monitoring each senatorial district of the state.

He said, "The CG stated that the objectives of the Corps in the forthcoming election is to create a secured environment for its successful conduct and enhance the general security in the State before, during and after the election.

"He explained that personnel had attended various workshops on best practices during elections.

"They have also been acquainted with the provisions of the Electoral Act as regards Rules of Engagement, hence, must comply with the Corps' Operational Code, Standard

Operating Procedure and above all, display of professionalism and high sense of discipline throughout the election.

"This robust operational order has been activated to ensure a hitch-free exercise and guide against molestation and intimidation of the electorates by hoodlums or party thugs.

"Dr Audi hinted that in readiness for the election, the Corps' undercover personnel from the National Headquarters have joined their counterparts in Osun State for covert operations to nip any security compromise in the bud."

He stressed that the Ant-vandalism Squad, Critical

National Asset protection unit and other special forces were specifically deployed to all key points in the State to protect critical assets of government against the activities of vandals and other criminal elements before, during and after the election.

More so, a pool of officers drawn from Special Forces, such as the Arms Squad Unit, Counter Terrorism Unit (CTU), Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear and Explosives Unit (CBRNE), the Special Female Squad, Rapid Response Squad, K9 and SWAT Unit, which are different from the regular conventional personnel, were part of those deployed.

Decay in federal government teaching hospitals

The decay in federal government Teaching Hospitals has reached an embarrassing crescendo, yet government officials are more concerned with lining their pockets with stolen funds and politicking against 2023. Recently at the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital, 42 babies died because of lack of incubators at the medical facility. This is tragic, criminal, actionable, and unacceptable.

Across the world, responsible governments take their healthcare sector seriously because it safeguards people's lives against unforeseen, inevitable health challenges. No country in the world can do without a functional healthcare system. Some countries like India, Switzerland, and UK, depend on their sophisticated healthcare system to attract foreign exchange and boost their economy. Obviously, it is not the case in Nigeria given that over the years, the Nigerian healthcare system has gradually decayed and continues to slide into an empty shell of what it used to be. It is either because successive governments in Nigeria are not interested in developing the health sector or there is an inherent negative mechanism that does not allow the health sector to develop.

In Nigeria, federal government teaching hospitals share structural and administrative proximity with federal government owned universities' Colleges of Medicine. In such an arrangement, medical lecturers function as consultants to the teaching hospitals. Given the foregoing scenario, one would expect that the teaching hospitals will be the best in the country in terms of manpower, professionalism, availability of modern medical equipment, research, and output. Unfortunately, the opposite has been the case. Our teaching hospitals, like most infrastructure in the country, are in complete disrepair. They are an eyesore; not fit to be called a clinic by any standard. It is inconceivable that a university teaching hospital in the 21st century will lack basic equipment like incubators.

There are many reasons for the decay in the teaching hospitals. One is their obvious neglect by government officials because they all travel abroad for Medicare with their families. In the early seventies in Nigeria, the University College Hospital (UCH) Ibadan was adjudged the best in the whole Commonwealth region. Also, it is on record that former military Head of State General Yakubu Gowon used to visit Lagos University Teaching Hospital for treatment with members of his family. His wife had her first child at LUTH. But today, due to the decay in the teaching hospitals, government officials do not visit them, preferring to visit medical facilities abroad. Thomas Hospital is a public hospital in London where the Nigerian ruling

class and politicians troop to for health issues. Last year, the hospital spent about \$2.4bn on patient care, an amount more than twice the federal government's budget for healthcare.

Incessant strikes by doctors in the country to protest poor working conditions and low salaries is part of the decay in federal government teaching hospitals. Doctors and other health workers should be handsomely remunerated to give their best and remain in the country. It is no longer news that many Nigerian doctors migrate to different parts of the world where they excel. In New York alone, it is reported that there are over 4,000 Nigerian medical doctors. Ironically, when the ruling class travels abroad for Medicare, they are treated by their fellow citizens who left the country due to poor conditions of service and remuneration.

Also, the federal government should as a matter of urgency commit more funds to all the teaching hospitals to upgrade facilities, provide electricity and other necessary materials needed for effective delivery of medical services. A situation where patients in a teaching hospital are required to pay 1,000 naira every day as reported at UCH for the provision of diesel to power generating sets for electricity is condemnable.

Henceforth, public servants should not be allowed to travel abroad for Medicare. If such a law is put in place, perhaps, the federal government will be forced to fund and upgrade existing teaching hospitals. Perhaps this is the solution that can reverse the decay in the health sector. If the president, senate president, senators, members of the House of Representatives, governors, senior civil servants and many other public officials are forced to patronize our teaching hospitals, it will force the government to upgrade the institutions to acceptable, international levels. A country with a sick healthcare system is a sick country. Nigeria cannot continue to be sick on all fronts.



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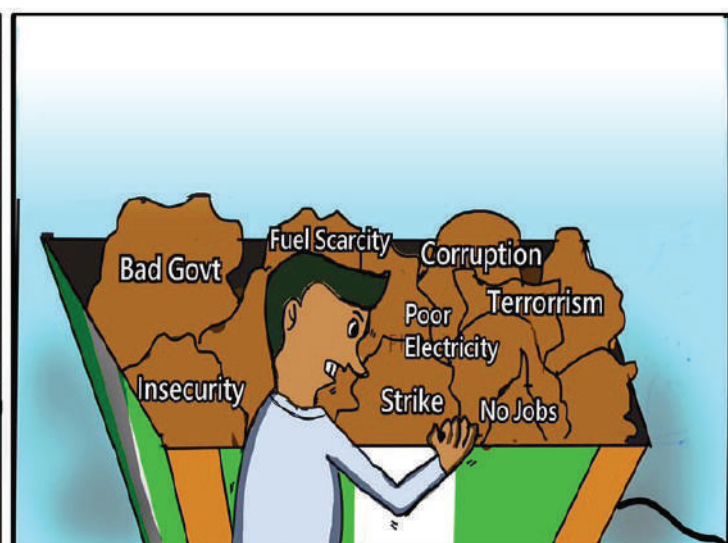
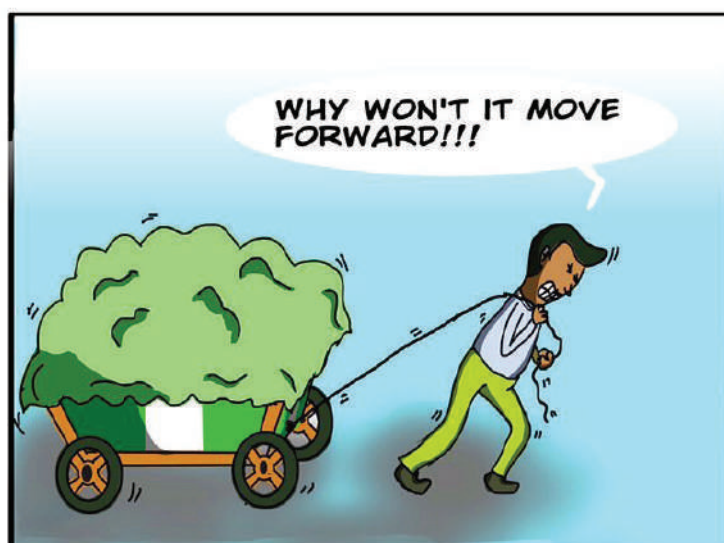
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Restful Prosperity in God's Promised Location

One of the assurances and promises of God to his chosen is prosperity, but one that is accompanied with rest. There are many wealthy people who do not have rest, rightly called 'peace of mind,' in our common parlance. Their wealth is accompanied with battles, anxiety and fears. They battle with their neighbour and community, with their health and immediate families. They cannot live without human security around them. They feel hate all around their environment. And so they find it difficult to truly appraise themselves as wealthy and happy. God desires rest for us both here and in eternity. This is explicit in both the OT and the NT.

In Genesis 49:15, Jacob spoke, "Issachar is a strong donkey, lying down between two burdens; he saw that rest was good, and that the land was pleasant, he bowed his shoulder to bear a burden and became a band of slave." For whatever it was worth, a good rest and land made Issachar to commit his life to slavery. Sadly, many are in this situation. Sabbath Day is not only a day of worship, it is also a day God separated for rest (Exodus 34:21). It is in fact called 'solemn rest' (Leviticus 23:3). Rest is a promise given by God as part of His covenant obligation to His people. "My presence will go with you and I will give you rest" (Exodus 33:14).

Rest signifies the presence of God. Wherever He allows His altar to be built enjoys divine rest. In Numbers 10:33-36, the account of the departure of the Israelites from Sinai was given, and it reads: "So they set out from the mount of the Lord

three days' journey. And the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them three days journey to seek out a resting place for them. And the cloud of the Lord was over them by day, whenever they set out from the camp." Many are so quick to run to locations where they can find prosperity without bothering about their 'solemn rest.' God desires a promised land of rest as well as a land of milk and honey for His people. The case of Isaac is instructive.

It is only in the location God has assigned that anyone can be very restfully prosperous. His promise is always supported by His rest. God's rest is also His peace which passes all understanding. "And He said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Therefore most gladly, I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecution, in distress, for Christ sake. For when I am weak I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:9-10). The concluding part of the foregoing verses is to assert that our rest and peace in this world lie in God through Christ once we are where He has assigned us to be.

It is only unbelievers that do not enjoy the rest of God (Psalm 95:11; Heb 3:11). And in Hebrew 4:1-3ff, 9, "Therefore since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not



Dr. Karo Ogbinaka

being mixed with faith in those who heard it. For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said, 'so I swore in My wrath they shall not enter My rest.'

The true prosperity of Isaac was found in God's place of rest. In all the other locations where Isaac dug wells, he did not see the face or presence of God. But God appeared to Isaac in Beersheba! "And the Lord appeared to him the same night and said, 'I am the God of your father Abraham; do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your descendants for My servant Abraham's sake.'" The Bible goes on to list four things Isaac did immediately. They are: "So (i) he built an altar there and (ii) call the name of the Lord, and (iii) he pitched his tent there, and (iv) there Isaac's servants dug a well" (Genesis 26:23-25).

The four things Isaac did at Beersheba

signified that he had found rest both with himself and his God. He did not go down to Egypt, he was no longer living with the Philistines, and he was no longer at Gerar. He had established a relationship with God; and only at a location approved by God Himself. Our prayer, as you read this is that you will not be short of God's promised rest. "Weaknesses, infirmities, reproaches, may come our way, but we pray that we shall be overcomers because of the assurances God has given us in Christ Jesus;" wherein our rest lie. Like Isaac, we all shall erect altars of appreciation of the goodness of God upon us. We shall be where our calling God's name will be answered. Let us therefore pitch out tents in the right and divine locations.

Isaac was not only blessed; he had an appreciative communion with God. So, those envious of you, contending with you; your haters and troublemakers, shall seek your peace and covenant as Abimelech did with Isaac (Genesis 26: 26-28). Let us make peace and live right. "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting your care upon Him, for He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:6-7). And as Apostle desired, "From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus" (Galatians 6:17).

Shalom and be blessed.

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

What is God's position on tithes?

The recent uproars about tithing from both within and outside the Church on the statement credited to Pastor Ceffro Dollar where he regretted his teachings on tithing show that many are gradually departing from the faith that Jesus Christ brought to humanity. What is ten percent of our income that we are struggling with?

Some nations are putting down billions of dollars, individuals are donating their entire wealth and riches to spread their religious ideology and we Christians are struggling with whether to pay ten percent of our income for the spread of the gospel or not.

Let us now look at what God said directly on the issue of tithing. God Almighty said in Malachi 3:8-12 thus: "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts."

Therefore, Tithes and offerings are part of the structures that God laid down so that the Kingdom of God on earth from the time of Abraham as documented in the Bible till the time of Moses and even



Dr. Agbodo

in the era of Jesus Christ is run effectively.

Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour never condemned the giving of tithes but only stressed that as people give tithes they should also get involved in other weightier matters. Jesus said in Matthew 23:23 thus "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

Associations on earth fix dues to be paid by members to sustain the financial inflow of the association. Committed members of such associations also go out of their way to donate generously to the financial growth of the association when the need arises.

Yes, proceeds from tithes and offerings may have been wrongly used in some

quarters, but that does not take paying tithes away from the expectations of God for our lives.

On whether there is any form of gain in tithing, it should be known that any obedience to the Word of God has gains. God said if we tithe our harvest/income, the windows of Heaven will be opened to us and devourers will be chased away. That is the Word of God and as long as God did not change His Word or gave new laws to replace the old, His laws stand.

In the beginning, Adam and Eve were not permitted to eat meat but God only approved fruits and vegetables for them as food. So, those who have resolved to follow the original food for man, are still giving great testimonies of improvement in their health.

Please, note that every Word of God is powerful once God utters it as a commandment, the gains if we obey and the punishments if we disobey, are established forever. Every word of God is backed by the power of God to fulfil it. So, whatever God promised in His Word will surely come to pass, hence if you pay your tithes, the blessings of God will surely follow, so don't allow anybody to discourage you from paying your tithe.

Paying tithes and offerings is entering into partnership with God on earth to prosper His Kingdom, and God rewards such partnership.

Our Lord Jesus Christ stated clearly in Matthew 5:17 that He did not come to destroy the laws of the old testament completely, but He came to fulfil them and anyone that will not obey the laws of the old testament and teaches men to also disobey them will be called least in the Kingdom of God while those who obey the laws and teach men to

obey them will be called great in the Kingdom of God.

God said that we should love Him with all our hearts and all our souls and might. That means God expects us to show the love we have for Him by respecting His laws and abiding by them in all circumstances. Hence, if you decide not to obey God's laws, especially in tithing and in giving offerings because we know that as long as we are on earth, every organization needs money to carry out its activities, then we have become an enemy to the spread of the Kingdom of God.

I feel something has gone wrong with many of us as Christians and the love of God in us is not as deep as it should be. Meshach, Shadrach and Abednego were ready to die to show their love and commitment to the Word of God and ordinary tithes from the money God blessed us with is now a problem and some people are jubilating with what Ceffro Dollar said about tithing.

Dollar is not God or Jesus, we should always be wise to guide ourselves with the Word of God and not the words of men. Even a Pastor can make a mistake and that is the reason every Christian should always search the scriptures. The devil and his agents have mapped out plans to disorganise the Church of God financially and we must guild against it.

Never stop paying your tithes because the benefits are still potent and will remain potent till the end of this Adamic world. God bless us in Jesus Name.

•Pastor ESANEROVO TRINITY AG-BODO is a Contributing Editor with *The Trumpet Newspaper* and can be reached on eagbodo@gmail.com or 08075504012(WhatsApp)

Religion uproar over Muslim-Muslim ticket

Stories By **GABRIEL OMONHINMIN**,
Culture and Religion Editor

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society. The two major religions in the country are Islam and Christianity. Adherents of these two major religions take divergent positions on the questions of the secularity of the country.

The constitution protects religious freedom, "The government shall not adopt any religion as State Religion."

As enshrined in the country's constitution. Secularism means separation of religion from political, economic, social and cultural aspects of life, as religion is to be treated as a purely personal matter. It emphasized dissociation of the state from religion and full freedom to all religions and tolerance of all religions.

Section 38 sub-section 1 of the 1999 constitution states, "Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and freedom to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance." Non-Muslims have, however, argued that the imposition of Shari'a in some states in the country violates these rights. Despite this open opposition in the past, nothing was done about the imposition of Sharia in some states of the Federation.

A secular state does not have any official religion. It neither encourages nor discourages the practice of any religion. All citizens are free to propagate, profess or practice their own religion. No discrimination is made among citizens based on religion.

The three main objectives of a secular State are; Religious community does not dominate another. Some members do not dominate other members of the same religious community and The State does not enforce any particular religion nor does it take away the religious freedom of individuals.

With all these provisions in the country's constitution, most religious watchers were surprised at the uproar that greeted the All Progressive Congress, APC, Presidential Flag bearer, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, a Yoruba Muslim, unveiling another Northern Muslim, Alhaji Kashim Shettima, as his running mate in the forthcoming Presidential election in Nigeria, come next year, 2023.

Trumpet Religion Desk, after a study of the situation in the country, decided to carefully examine all the views expressed so far across board, to find out whether or not, there is justification for the fear over the Muslim-Muslim ticket of the APC.

Human Rights Lawyers, Ebun-Olu Adegboruwa, SAN, in a statement dated, Tuesday, July 12, 2022, described as dangerous, APC Muslim-Muslim ticket and asked Nigerians to vote the party out of office.

Adegboruwa outlined in a statement, ten grave implications of APC Muslim-Muslim ticket;

1 - Others don't matter, saying it shows absence of consideration for the unity and plurality of the country.

2 - Desperation and over-ambition on the part of the APC ticket holder and the party, whose attitude to the game was, "We just want power at all cost and we don't care what others think or do."

3 - "We can win the election without you, especially by other means other than by open ballot."

4 - "It is a cruel affirmation of the supposed superiority complex. That only one region determines electoral victory. That



Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu

the presidential candidate of the APC is not acceptable to northern Muslims."

5 - "It is an indication of a hidden agenda. The spirit of Hope 93 died with MKO Abiola and those who betrayed him and his mandate. May Boko Haram, terrorists and insurgents, their sponsors and sympathizers not win the 2023 general election"

6 - "That Nigeria is not a secular state but rather being ruled to satisfy certain religious tendencies."

7 - "That the APC has absolute control of the electoral system and thus electoral victory may not be determined through free, fair and credible elections."

8 - "That certain political tendencies and interests do not trust others to accommodate them if they are entrusted with power whereas they have been in power and accommodated by others."

9 - "That the APC Presidential candidate has no mind of his own and he will be unable to defend the unity of Nigeria in crucial moments of decision making."

10 - "That the APC is incompetent to manage a complex nation like Nigeria with diverse interests, different tongues and tribes and consisting of different faiths."

The Catholic Bishop of Sokoto Diocese, Most Reverend Mathew Hassan Kukah, was one of the very first prominent Christians in Nigeria, to react to the Muslim-Muslim APC Presidential Ticket in a press statement in this manner, "Tinubu is free to pick whoever he wanted just as a coach is free to select the players on his team.

"It is up to Nigerians to decide if they want a Muslim-Muslim President and Vice-President or not. This is what we call team selection and everybody will choose depending on what they think will give them a fair chance. So people will take responsibility for the choices they have made. For me, it is not something to lose sleep over."

The Bishop stressed, "If people feel unhappy with the kind of choices that have been made that is why we are democrats, you can't force it. We outsiders cannot force a choice on any candidate. It is now left for you to look at the choices that have been made. And there is no guarantee that all Christians will

vote for Christians and all Muslims will vote for Muslim."

Speaking in the same vein, the Catholic Archbishop of Abuja Diocese, Most Rev. Ignatius Kaigama, in a press statement entitled "Catholic Bishops Condemn APC, Tinubu's Choice of 'Muslim-Muslim' Ticket: Nigeria Not Ripe to Have President, VP Of the Same Faith, he described the choice of APC Muslim-Muslim ticket as unfortunate.

Archbishop Kaigama maintained that Nigeria as a country was not ripe for a same faith Presidential ticket. He stressed, "When you decide that only one religion will produce the major actors, excluding others, who will become like strangers, it would not be fair and just. For the sake of religious sensitivity in a place like Nigeria, it is good that we have a balance so that we become like one big family."

The Muslim Rights Concern (MURIC) led by Professor Ishaq Akintola in its reaction said the group has satirical facts to support its claims that there has been an imbalance against Muslims in Nigeria, in the country's political system. Saying that the APC Muslim-Muslim ticket amounts to nothing anyone should bother about.

The Islamic Human Rights advocacy group said it is unfortunate that the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) has decided to heat up the polity with its comment on Tinubu's choice of a running mate. Thus asking CAN to address the APC presidential candidates not their creeds.

"The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) has come again. As usual, Muslim candidates for the 2023 presidential election are targets. This time around, it is Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu and his running mate. Tinubu is under CAN's hammer for picking a Muslim, Senator Kashim Shettima, as his vice presidential candidate and Rev. John Hayabl of Kaduna State Chapter of the organization is the axe man for CAN.

"We are not surprised by CAN's verbal halitosis over Tinubu's choice. The Christian umbrella body is just staying in character. It is always out to oppose any Muslim in power or any Muslim seeking office. That is because CAN will never be satisfied with a Muslim

as President of Nigeria. It will not suit its agenda of Nigeria for Christ.

"CAN is simply hungry for power. We know CAN. The group has been canvassing for a Christian running mate not for the benefit of Nigerians but for parochial ends. The idea is to milk the Christian vice presidential candidate if his party wins in the end by claiming that the Christian umbrella body fought for him. It is for political influence, for contracts and for power. We advise CAN to form its own political party.

"Democracy is a game of numbers and every candidate should be allowed to make a free choice. It is not written in the constitution that a candidate must not pick a running mate from his own religious group. Every candidate's choice is at his own peril. So what's the big deal? What is CAN afraid of? Its own shadow, of course.

"Nigerians should not allow themselves to be deceived by CAN's spiritual banditry. We should be looking at a candidate's pedigree, his integrity and competence. By the same token, a presidential candidate should look for a running mate, who has electoral value as well as relevant experience. CAN's insistence on Muslim-Christian ticket is motivated by articulated religiosity and tramadolised spirituality. Candidates should not be assessed by their religion.

"CAN talks about fairness and balancing at the national level but ignores the gross lopsidedness in the Christian-Christian regimes of the whole South. Is CAN unaware that all but one of the 17 states in Southern Nigeria have Christian governors? That is 94 per cent for Christians and just 6 per cent for Muslims.

"There are only three Muslim deputy governors in the whole Southern Nigeria (Lagos, Ogun and Oyo) as against fourteen Christian Deputy governors. That is 82 per cent for Christians and 18 percent for Muslims. Ekiti and Ondo states with substantive Muslim populations have Christian governors and Christian deputies. This is give and take. The world goes round by giving and sharing. But why does CAN want to share by force when it is not prepared to give?"

"Nigeria has 36 states. Of these, Christian Governors are 20 while Muslim governors are just 16. That is 56 per cent for Christians and a paltry 44 per cent for Muslims. Yet, CAN is not satisfied and the organization will always cry marginalization when in actual fact, it is taking all the milk and honey in the land. We are waiting for CAN to deny this 20 to 16 computation. But CAN cannot. It dares not because the facts are there, and facts are sacred. Are the United States' Senators listening? Is Kukah still there?"

"There are 22 Christian Deputy Governors in Nigeria as against 14 Muslim Deputy Governors. Mathematicians should put that together and work out the percentage. This is 61 per cent for Christians and just 39 per cent for Muslims. So what is CAN talking about?"

"Can charity not begin at home. That is why it is making so much noise about Muslim-Muslim ticket at the centre? CAN is not ready to share in the States but it wants to force sharing down our throats at the centre. Is that not a double standard? Must CAN take everything?"

"CAN is simply hungry for power and it is always seeking ways to railroad everyone to have its own way. Bulldozing, blackmailing, harassment and intimidation are CAN's stock in trade. But the same intimidating CAN is now the one accusing Tinubu of intimidating the Christian group and threatening to escalate the situation."



Nigeria businesses embrace solar energy as price of diesel soars

By **EDU ABADE**, Business Editor

Companies investing in and promoting solar energy products in the country are witnessing a surge in demand for mini-grids and equipment, as businesses in the country grapple with the high cost of diesel and erratic public power supply.

As Africa's largest economy and major crude oil producer, Nigeria's inability to refine its petroleum products, even with the country's four refineries, had led businesses to seek alternative power sources following soaring cost of diesel globally due to rising global oil prices.

Solar supply constraints could, however, hamper their ability to capitalise on the trend with some sources saying they have begun

to turn away customers because they have largely been unable to meet rising huge demands.

Nigeria, with a population of over 200 million people, reportedly have installed electricity capacity of 12,500 megawatts, but the national grid only provides 4,000 megawatts or even lower at its peak, leaving businesses and citizens to heavily rely on diesel, which has not been subsidised like petrol.

Findings in Lagos and other parts of the country showed that diesel is currently sold at between N800 and N900 per litre, as investigation showed that most of the increase resulted due to the Russia- Ukraine war.

Chief Commercial Officer of Daystar Power Limited, Victor Ezenwoko, told The Trumpet there has been increasing demand



Victor Ezenwoko

for solar energy products and inverters, saying: "I think it is really driven by the constant hike in the price of diesel this year."

Also speaking on the development, Onareme Geoffrey, who supplies solar energy products and inverters in Warri, Asaba in Delta State, Benin City, Edo

State and Port Harcourt in Rivers State, as well as their environs, confirmed the surge in solar energy products, adding that the situation could only be so, considering the epileptic power supply and diesel crisis in the country.

Besides, the Energy Commission of Nigeria (ECN) affirmed that businesses and individuals spend \$22 billion yearly to fuel generators in the country, as solar power adoption has been estimated at below two per cent, while some businesses perceive it as unsuitable for large-scale use.

A study conducted earlier this year by Boston Consulting Group and All-On firm also revealed that Nigeria's installed photovoltaic solar panel per capital amounted to one megawatt compared to an average of eight megawatts in other emerging markets like South Africa.

Managing Director of Resource Energy, Prince Ojeabulu, lamented that the situation was getting worse in the country, as energy costs eat deep into

companies' margins, forcing most businesses to actively consider solar as a cleaner and cheaper source of energy.

"In 2021, Resource installed under one megawatt of solar panels, but it is now constructing six-megawatt plants. By the end of the year, going by the trend so far, we should have 12 megawatts of solar installations operational across the country or even more," he said.

An official of the Ministry of Power said there was an increase this year of approved solar mini-grids serving industrial users, but declined to give details.

But global supply chain disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in China this year and the Russia-Ukraine war were altering and frustrating the hope for growth.

Ezewonko and co-founder of Daystar, Jasper Graf von Hardenberg, said: "We could install 60 megawatts this year if we had the equipment. We have started turning down customers, we have become choosier with who we work with."

Beer sector group of MAN unveils plans to check underage drinking

By **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

The Beer Sector Group (BSG) of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) has said it is collaborating with the Federal Ministry of Education to check drinking among the underage population.

It also said the BSG had inaugurated the fourth edition of its SMASHED project in Abuja for the purpose of maintaining

the SMASHED project was aimed at breaking the culture of underage drinking and reducing alcohol-related cases among school children.

Managing Director of Guinness Nigeria Plc and Chairman of the group, Baker Magunda, who stated this at a media briefing in Abuja recently, said the BSG comprised leading beer manufacturers in Nigeria, including the Nigeria Breweries Plc, Guinness Nigeria Plc and International Breweries Plc, among others.

He said the project had been launched in 25 countries and the initiative was focused on helping teenagers to build confidence in the face of peer pressure of taking alcoholic beverages, adding: "SMASHED global project started in 2005 and the idea behind it is to use drama and theatre to help adolescents to understand the dangers of alcohol consumption to their health.

"The outcome of the project is intended to empower young people to make the right choices and not be put under pressure to drink alcohol before they are adults. We have, therefore, reached over one million adolescents globally and the project has been launched in 25 countries across the world."



Baker Magunda

Banks move to enforce N1.4tr debt on loan defaulters

By **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

Deposit Money Banks (DMBs) have started monitoring accounts of loan defaulters with a view to enforcing a debt of N1.4 trillion on borrowers that signed the Global Standing Instructions (GSIs) clause.

The Trumpet learnt that the GSIs policy authorised banks to debit accounts of chronic loan defaulters in any bank in Nigeria to recover debts or settle defaults, just as the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) data showed that 5.31 per cent of the N26.1 trillion credit to the economy representing N1.4 trillion are Non-Performing Loans (NPLs) being monitored for the GSI sanctions.

A top banker, who is a Regional Director in a mid-level bank told The Trumpet that the country's banks are reviewing credits in their balance sheets to ascertain delinquent loan defaulters with a view to enforce the GSIs Policy on defaulting accounts.

"The banks are already preparing lists of short and long terms loans which expired in June 2022 ending. The debit on the defaulting accounts that signed the GSIs clause will start by next week in many of the banks," he said. According to him, the GSIs

implementation gained momentum among banks after the CBN follow-up circular in January 2022, which stipulated that the frequency of recovery attempts via the platform will be continuous and unrestricted.

He said the GSI automated loan recovery feature applicable to all loans in the industry is now perpetually in place throughout the tenor of the loan or until the loan is fully repaid.

Speaking on this issue recently, CBN Deputy Governor of CBN, Kingsley Obiora, said total flow of credit to the economy increased to N26.10 trillion in April 2022 from N21.45 trillion in April 2021, representing an increase of 21.66 per cent.

Obiora explained that some sectors with increased credits include, manufacturing, consumer credit and general consumer, Information and Communications Technology (ICT), agriculture and others.

He added that the Non-Performing Loans (NPLs) ratio stood at 5.31 per cent at the end of April 2022, slightly above the prudential threshold of 5.00 per cent.

"It was however an improvement from 5.89 per cent at the end of April 2021, reflecting recoveries,

restructuring of facilities and sound management practices by Other Depository Organisations (ODOs), he said recently in his notes to members of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).

Governor of CBN, Godwin Emefiele, who backed the GSIs policy, said debtors must repay their loans, stressed that the CBN would not allow people to borrow money and refuse to pay, adding: "That era has gone. If you borrow money and refuse to pay, we will take your money wherever you keep it."

He added that the initiative was conceived to address the recurring instances of wilful loan defaults in the banking industry to identify and watch-list recalcitrant loan defaulters, enhance recovery from eligible and funded accounts in the industry and improve credit repayment culture.

"The GSIs mandate authorises recovery of amounts specified by the bank from accounts maintained by the borrower in all financial institutions. It also empowers banks and other financial institutions to debit accounts of chronic loan defaulters in any bank within the country to ease the growth of NPLs in the country," he said.

Abbey Mortgage Bank holds 30th AGM on Tuesday

By **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

The 30th Annual General Meeting of Abbey Mortgage Bank is scheduled to hold on Tuesday, July 19, 2022 at its corporate head office in Lagos at 11:00a.m.

As one of the seven national Primary Mortgage Banks (PMBs) licensed by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and the Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria (FMBN), Abbey

Mortgage Bank continues to lead the industry as an innovator in the Nigerian mortgage sector, not only offering mortgage services, but also retail and investment banking solutions and positioning itself as a one-stop-shop for domestic banking needs.

Managing Director of the bank, Mobolaji Adewumi, said: "2021 was a pivotal and redefining year for Abbey, as we worked strategically to return

the institution back to the path of sustainable profitability.

"We believe this is only the tip of the iceberg, as our forecasts, transformation, technology and innovation strategies for the short to mid-term, is expected to boost earnings and returns for our shareholders. This will form the basis of the discussions at this year's AGM."

Other items on the agenda include the Board of Director's

report on the company's activities during the past financial year, adoption of the audited 2021 Annual Report, proposed distribution of profit as recorded in the adopted Annual Report, the proposed dividend to be distributed and proposal to cover any losses and other proposal by shareholders and board of directors.

The AGM will be streamed live on social media platforms, Abbey Mortgage Bank Plc on

YouTube, Facebook, Teams, Zoom and Instagram, which stakeholders, guest and other interested participants can join.

This year marks Abbey's 30th year of exceptional service in simplifying mortgage, housing, finance and investments to Nigerians. With our strategic partnership with the VFD Group and a rebranded image, we are poised for improved business growth and productivity in this evolving digital world.

ECOWAS trains farmers on livestock value chain in Gombe

The Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) has embarked on livestock value chain training for 35 farmers in Gombe State.

It is organised by the ECOWAS Support Programme for Livestock Marketing. The capacity building workshop is funded by the Swiss Development Cooperation through ECOWAS and the Gombe State government.

Speaking at the programme tagged: ECOWAS PACBAO 11, team lead of the programme, Dr Adetunji Jolaosho, said the project was initiated to propagate modern ways of livestock business from

production to marketing.

Jolaosho also said the objective was to build the farmers' capacity to fully harness the livestock value chain, provide jobs for women and youths, as well as improve their incomes and livelihoods.

This, he said, would be done by educating the beneficiaries on how to upgrade their feedlots, crossbreeding and meat value chains, adding: "It is to upgrade the way livestock industry is operated to minimise losses for farmers. The programme's estimated meat supply to the market is between 200kg and 250kg," he said.

AfDB ranks first on global aid transparency index

The global campaign for aid and development transparency has named the African Development Bank (AfDB) as the most transparent development financial institution in the world.

Publish What You Fund 2022 Aid Transparency Index findings released on Thursday, scored the bank 98.5 per cent, just as its sovereign portfolio now ranks first among 50 global development institutions.

Responding to the development, Group President of AfDB, Dr. Akinwunmi Adesina, said: "I am elated to learn about this outstanding recognition from Publish What You Fund. It is a testament to the relentless efforts of the over 2,000 personnel across our organisation, who work to accelerate Africa's progress maintaining razor-sharp focus, they consistently deliver top quality under the highest scrutiny.

"I am incredibly proud of Publish What You Fund for its important mission, combining robust research and technical expertise with targeted advocacy and engagement to make aid and development efforts more transparent and effective."

On his part, Senior Vice President of the bank, Swazi Tshabalala said: "I am absolutely delighted with this score, as it helps promote openness and greater transparency.

"The bank has worked hard over the years to improve the disclosure of its aid flows by providing consistent high quality



Akinwunmi Adesina

easy accessible data. Our top ranking has significant human and financial resource implications as this is the only way to conduct our development businesses."

The AfDB achieved the highest score in the Aid Transparency Index's ten-year history and evolved into the top sport from its fourth place ranking in 2020. The index is the only independent measure of aid transparency among the world's major development agencies.

It has remained consistently in the good category. Since 2014, it has consistently demonstrated commitment to increased transparency and its extraordinary progress in past over 10 years in providing high-quality information and becoming more transparent.

Its non-sovereign portfolio was assessed for the first time and separately in the 2022 index and is the second most transparent development finance institution in handling non-sovereign operations.

The bank's non-sovereign portfolio is ranked 12th among the 50 global development institutions under comparison.

Also responding, Chief Executive of Publish What You Fund, Garry Foster said: "We congratulate the AfDB Sovereign Portfolio for achieving first place in 2022 Aid Transparency Index. For several years now, the AfDB has engaged to understand the demand of the index, re-engineered its approach to disclosure accordingly and publishing more comprehensive, higher quality data.

"This has been made possible because the efforts of their technical staff are matched by commitment to aid transparency from the highest levels of the organizations and for the AfDB, transparency is more than a watchword, it contributes to relevant bank information.

"Stakeholders can find out how the bank is helping Africa to meet its energy and infrastructure needs through the institution's Map Africa platform in addition, the AfDB has designed a projects portal to present easily accessible data."

MAN laments continued increase in price of diesel, FX scarcity, others

By JOHNMARK UKOKO

The Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) has decried the constant increase in the price of Automated Gas Oil (AGO), popularly known as diesel.

It stated this in a statement issued by the Director-General of MAN, Segun Ajayi-Kadir and made available to *The Trumpet* in Lagos, maintaining that the Russia-Ukraine crisis had impacted negatively on the country's real sector.

He stressed that if not curtailed, the current price of the product and constant hike could collapse the country's business sector due to the lack of stable power supply.

"Global events have shown that the world is like a village. The emergence of challenges in one country can become a major constraint with spiral effects for the world. Oftentimes when disruptions occur in any part of the global economy, only countries with functional institutions and strong internal economic mechanisms will be able to respond appropriately to such external shocks.

"The current increase in prices of crude oil and other refined petroleum products such as diesel is one of such disruptions occasion by external shocks that confirm the interconnectedness of global economies. No doubt,

the recent short supply and over 200 per cent increase in the price of diesel are part of the backlash of Russia's invasion of Ukraine," the statement reads.

It said MAN was greatly concerned about the implications of the over 200 per cent increase in the price of diesel on the Nigerian economy and especially the manufacturing sector, adding that more worrisome was the deafening silence from the public sector regarding the plight of manufacturers.

"Should manufacturing companies that are already battered by multiple taxations, poor access to foreign exchange and over 200 per cent increase in the price of diesel be advised to shut down operations? It asked.



Segun Ajayi-Kadir

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"Should manufacturing companies that are already battered by multiple taxations, poor access to foreign exchange and over 200 per cent increase in the price of diesel be advised to shut down operations? It asked.

In the short-term, the disruptions occasioned by Russia's invasion of Ukraine would continue to impact the global energy space and upset the supply of petroleum products, thereby causing persistent increases in the price of refined petroleum products including AGO.

The MAN lamented that in the long run, the development would further result in enormous increase in the prices of other manufacturing inputs like wheat, maize, fertiliser and other raw materials.

It maintained that the implementation of the sharp increase in the price of diesel on the manufacturing sector include exertion of untold hardship on the manufacturing sector leading to the closure of several business outfits and reduction in capacity utilisation, further decline in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), unemployment in the 76 sub-sectors of the association and increasing crime rate.

"There will be further decrease in foreign exchange from the manufacturing sector, as high cost of production impact export commodity prices. It will also lead to a sharp reduction in government tax revenues occasioned by the drop in sales, lower profitability, as lesser quantum of disposable income will be available to purchase manufactured goods," the statement added.

NIMASA deploys special mission aircraft to fight oil theft in Nigeria

By EDU ABADE, Business Editor

The Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) has assured that two special mission aircraft in the agency's deep blue project fleet will be deployed to fight oil theft and protect the country's economy.

Director-General of NIMASA, Dr. Bashir Jamoh, who spoke at the 16th edition of the Maritime Seminar for Judges organised by the Nigerian Shippers Council (NSC), described oil theft, pipeline vandalism and illegal refining, as unlawful activities capable of threatening the country's economic and environmental safety.

He said the aircraft from the mobile assets of the deep blue project would support existing platforms being deployed by other security agencies with which NIMASA has subsisting Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs).

Jamoh explained that the aircraft would assist in patrolling oil facilities, installations and other assets to effectively monitor suspicious human and vessel movements in and around

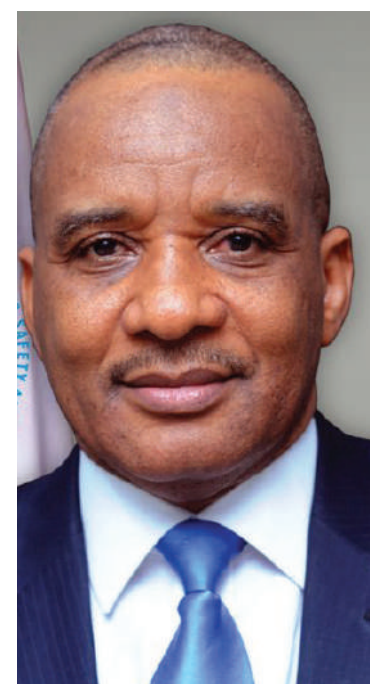
the facilities.

While restating the agency's commitment to a crime-free and secure maritime domain, he reminded participants at the seminar of President Muhammadu Buhari's interest in rebuilding stakeholders and investors' confidence in the country's maritime sector.

He said the President's approval for procurement of the assets, their commissioning in Lagos and their deployment for security duties, have contributed immensely to the fight against maritime crimes.

He said: "We shall be deploying our two special mission aircraft for aerial surveillance to prevent and fight oil theft in the country. With this, we aim at using the aircraft to patrol sensitive areas, record suspicious human and vessel movements to process intelligence for timely action by our security agencies.

"The oil industry is critical to our national economy and no space of the sector should be left for criminals to occupy or operate. We have recorded gains in our maritime security efforts and more needs to be done to sustain and consolidate



Bashir Jamoh

on these gains.

"Among other reasons, our collaborations with security agencies with which we have MoUs are to ensure effective partnership and work ahead of criminal elements and I am happy to state that our synergies have been beneficial to the country in several ways."



Bloom Tower: a bold statement worth over N20bn – Blessing Obomovo

Standout Property Limited has entrenched itself deeply into the Nigerian Real Estate market. With the launch of its 21-floor Bloom Towers in Victoria Inland, they are making a deeper reach in the industry. In an interview with our Weekend Editor, OBAH SYLVA, the CEO/MD, Blessing Obomovo, gave insights on the journey, successes and challenges of the emerging giant – Standout Property.

Who is Blessing Obomovo and what are some of the factors that shaped you to become the man that you are today?

Blessing Obomovo is a very quiet and humane personality. I am from Otor-Owhe paternally and Ozoro maternally, both from Isoko North Local Government Area of Delta State. I live in Lagos, studied Building Technology, and proceeded for my Master's in Housing Development and Management at the University of Ibadan. I am married and blessed with kids. The truth is that we didn't get here by accident, we got here through hard work, perseverance, and complete faith in God because we believe that God can do all things. I am a construction expert and we share a vision and have worked hard to achieve it. But we still believe that we are at the genesis compared to the vision that we have.

A few days ago, you launched the Bloom Towers in Victoria Island, Lagos. Can you give us the details of the project?

Bloom Tower is one very audacious project that we are embarking on. It is audacious because of the size and because of the cost value of the area. Housing a twin tower of 19 and 21 floors is not a joke; you know what that means. It is a project that is worth over 20 Billion Naria. It is a huge one and it is a bold statement that we want to make. We do not want to limit ourselves, that is why when we started MIJL Residence and Villa it was as if it is not possible, but today you can see MIJL is here, we are wired to do things unusually and we are putting everything in place to achieve our plans. In Bloom Towers, we have offices and luxury shops, we also have residential apartments.

We have the basement for parking, the ground and first

floor for both luxury offices and shops, while on the second floor we have Apartments for flats and Maisonette. Because of the nature of our luxury shops, we are not selling less than 20 square meters and a square meter is going for N2 million for the office spaces. For the apartment, we have the one-bedroom flat for N80 million and the one-bedroom Maisonette for N90 million. The two-bedroom flat is N120 million while the two-bedroom Maisonette is N130 million. The three-bedroom apartment is N150 million and the Maisonette with BQ is N180 million and a unit of three-bedroom penthouse for N205 million

Apart from the office and shops, in all the residential apartments, you pay a minimum of 30 percent deposit and spread your payment up to 30 months. For the luxury shops and office space, you pay a minimum of 50 percent and spread the balance within 30 months. Bloom Towers is providing high-grade finishing and top-notch kind of development with a gym, lounge, and laundry in the heart of the city of Lagos.

Standout Property has been around for some time now. Can you tell us about when it was birthed and the journey so far?

Standout Property was registered in 2010, our mind was built on our goals obviously, and we started like every other small building contractor, like I said I am a Builder. Far back in 2009, we said enough of the small contracts, then we were actually working with developers. That was how we got into our own development and that was how MIJL came to be. MIJL is a 155 units housing estate, people are already staying in MIJL. We will be done with MIJL in the next two months. From MIJL to Bloom Haven. Bloom Haven is almost 40% now, so much



Blessing Obomovo

work is currently going on there, it's a two years project. Then the Warri project, a lot of materials are already coming in, we currently have one block of three bedrooms ready, then 2 units of two-bedroom have already taken off; we are done with the foundation. We also have the stand-alone 4-bedroom duplex and we are already at the woodwork for the slab. In fact, so much is happening here. We also have the Cynergy Gardens in Lagos which was launched sometime in February, in a month or two we will start construction work there too. Then the big one, Bloom Towers. We are on the verge of concluding with the contractor we want to use. Hopefully in

the next few weeks, we will be done and by August we will commence construction. It is a 4 years project but we want to be done before 4 years.

We noticed that most of your projects and investment are concentrated in Lagos, do you have any plan of expanding to other regions of the country?

Obviously Abuja and Port Harcourt are in the pipeline. Some investors are also talking to us in yenagoa. We have the intention of expanding. Standout Property is a growing company and whatever success we have achieved so far is just the starting point. We want to concentrate and consolidate on them. We want to be the leading company when it comes to housing

What are some of your biggest challenges so far running Standout Property and how have you managed them?

Well for anybody who is in an industry like this, funding will always be one major issue, but like I said God has been faithful. MIJL is over N4 billion currently and we didn't borrow one kobo from the bank, we were able to sort for funding through the market, and because we actually do off-plan investment and that is why we do installment payment, which has worked for us so far. But funding is a major challenge, in fact, it's a Nigerian thing. We hope to do bigger projects than MIJL and we know that as we go on investors will come. We have a bit of investors already but we know that as we continue to push ourselves in the market more

investors will come in. However, I must admit that funding is an issue, just imagine taking a loan that you pay 20 to 30% interest. Then you should ask yourself how much am I making? At the end of the day, if you factor in all these costs you won't be selling at the prices we give our offers.

This is one reason why our prices are lower when you compare with the prevailing market, not because we lower our quality but because we have decided to provide better services and products by using these processes.

So far what will you consider to be your greatest achievement?

Delivering MIJL is our biggest one. When we went into that project, there were doubting Thomases everywhere. We used to hear things like it is not possible, you can't deliver that project and all of that, but as of today, the present cost of that project is over N4 billion, and not 1 kobo was borrowed from the bank. This is our greatest achievement and that is why we can boldly talk about Standout Property because we were able to deliver MIJL.

What is your vision for Standout Property in the next 10 years?

MIJL is 155 housing units. Bloom Haven is 63unit housing, Warri is about 210 though we are still expanding, Cynergy is 190, and Bloom Towers is about 243 units. So, in a few years, if you add all of these with more that are still coming, we will be well above one thousand. So in the next 10 years, we must have done over 10 estates in Lagos, we must have finished Warri and we must have done something in Asaba and Ughelli and a minimum of five estates in Delta.

Also, we must have established ourselves in the Abuja and Port Harcourt Markets and in a majority of our state capitals. For us, it's about providing affordable luxury. So, in the worst-case scenario, we must have established ourselves in a minimum of 50% of our State capitals in the next 10 years.

As an expert in the real estate business in Nigeria, what is the future of the industry in the country?

We have not scratched the surface. If we are talking about having over 70 million housing deficit with an expanding population and you know we cannot do more than 3 or 4 million per year, so there is still a huge gap. We have not started, most of our people are still living in the slum and in shantytowns. The real estate business is a goldmine for this country as far as job creation is concerned.



Bloom Towers

Courageous petrol tanker driver saves lives

By EDAFENA OWEH

Comrade Ejiro Otarigho, who averted a monumental tragedy that would have caused many their lives and properties in Agbarho, Ughelli North Local Government Area of Delta state, granted an interview to the Trumpet newspaper, where he recounted how he successfully drove a petroleum tanker that had caught fire from a residential area to a safe space to avoid the destruction of lives and properties.

Comrade Otarigho who has undoubtedly become a hero in his community and the country at large told The Trumpet how the incident occurred in the evening of June 10, 2022, and all of the appreciation and applause that he has received because of his courageous action:

What exactly can you say caused the fire outburst?

Honestly speaking, up till now, I still do not know what exactly triggered the fire. I still haven't figured it out. It was my boy who works with me that alerted me that fire was coming from the tanker. Immediately I saw the fire, I told my boy to jump down to safety, while I tried to drive the furiously burning tanker as far away from people as possible.

In what part of Agbarho did the fire start?

Anyone that is familiar with Agbarho would know the water board junction. It was around that area we noticed the fire on the tanker.

How long did it take you to drive the tanker to a safe space?

It took about 15 to 20 minutes at most to have successfully driven the tanker to where there were no people. When we noticed the fire at the water board junction, I had to drive through a place called Five Junction, from there down to Okpokpo and from there to the express road that leads to the Agbarho River where I considered safe. That was how long I drove, through the fairly heavy evening traffic. The more I drove the more the fire raged more dangerously. But I was resolute.

What prompted such swift and heroic decisions as most people in that situation may be paralyzed by fear?

Well, I had to put away



Ejiro Otarigho

every atom of fear as that would have made me lose my concentration. Then again, I am from Agbarho and quite popular in the community even before this incident. I didn't want to be the one responsible for the death of anybody in my own home town. How would I walk the streets? What would people say about me? That I had caused the death of many? The thought of these alone prompted me to swing into that action, to avoid all of those blames and name callings. With God helping me, I succeeded without any injury. If I hadn't succeeded, my boy who I told to jump down earlier when we noticed the fire, would have told the story of how it all happened, but God was faithful.

What was the reaction of your family, particularly your wife when she heard about the situation?

Honestly, my wife is a very calm person by nature. The only thing she told me was that I took a deadly risk endangering my life, leaving them out of my thoughts or didn't I think about them? I subsequently told her that I had to take the risk, to save the lives and properties of many people and also protect her from the stigma of: "the wife of the tanker driver that killed people". I didn't want that for her or my family either. If that had happened, I am sure on hearing about the situation she would have become destabilized. Although, I did apologize to her because, in all honesty, the action I took was really a risky and scary one. It didn't

cause any quarrel at home, rather she hailed me by the nick name she usually calls me.

What is your reaction to the outpouring of applause from the general public, especially the people of Abgarho?

Well, after the incident, I have received numerous songs of praise from various people from across the country, particularly in Agbarho, my community, including the king and all the chiefs of his cabinet, even down to the ordinary man in the street. I was also recognized by the Agbarho Urhobo Improvement Union (AUIU) which gave me a heroic award for my bravery. Honestly, I have been treated with so much love and respect, I mean if the people controlling the affairs of Agbarho can appreciate and honour me, that speaks volumes. It means that I have a place in their hearts and in the community. I am

extremely grateful for the love that has been showered on me in this period. It means a lot to me.

It is no news that you were invited over to the Senate, what can you say about this?

Yes, I was invited to the senate, where our Distinguished Senator, Chief Ovie Omo Agege, the deputy senate president moved a motion for the President to give me a national award for my heroic act. The motion was overwhelmingly approved, for onward transition to the presidency. You know that the process may take a little while, but I am sure that before the year ends, something will be done about it. I also met with the Senate President, Ahmed Lawan who congratulated and appreciated me, for the lives and properties that were saved, because of my courageous action.

Has the tanker that burnt to ashes been replaced?

No, there hasn't been any replacement for the tanker just yet, but I believe in a short while, it will be replaced. However, I am overwhelmed by the appreciation of well-meaning Nigerians who have reached out to me and rewarded me both in cash and in kind. I am grateful to them.

How long have you been into petrol tanker driving, and has this ever happened before?

I have been driving fuel tankers since 2010 and I have gained a lot of experience. This kind of incident has never happened before. This was just an unfortunate situation, but I am grateful to have been saved by God.

What are some of the challenges you face as a tanker driver?

Well, in this profession, there are a lot of challenges just like every other job. For instance, scarcity of petrol which leads to low earning, and bad roads that damage our vehicles. One would have to repair the vehicles to keep them in good shape at all times. As you know that is very expensive and it affects our daily bread.

What are some of your hopes for a better Nigeria?

For me, I would say if you are in a position to do that which is good, you ought to do it, for the overall interest of the country, whether you are being paid for it or not. If you are in such a position, your responsibility is to add value to the lives of the people you are governing, for them to live a better life. What I did, I didn't do it for any rewards. I did it because I was placed in the position to do so because I know saving lives is a priority. If I hadn't taken the risk of saving those lives, I wouldn't be a free and happy man today. I would have probably moved quickly to another state with my family to save us from shame and ignominy. So if you are in any position to help the country, you should put in your best for the greater good of our nation.

Comrade Ejiro Otarigho who is now popularly called the 'superhero' in his community, said that he is entirely grateful to God who gave him the courage to take the risk that averted a situation that would have left many dead, and properties destroyed.



Fuel Tanker

Professionals' lack of integrity fuels corruption, Owasanoye says

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Chairman of the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), Professor Bolaji Owasanoye (SAN) has stated that lack of integrity by professional bodies was responsible for the spate of corruption in Nigeria.

Prof Owasanoye stated this at the 11th Summit of Professionals, which was organised by the Association of Professional Bodies of Nigeria (APBN) in Abuja on Wednesday.

The ICPC boss, who was the Special Guest of Honour at the event, noted that the country's ailing economy was currently suffering from maladies bordering on a lack of integrity and good ethical conduct.

According to him, "If we must achieve our dream of sustainable economic growth as a nation, integrity should be the cornerstone of every professional practice, and professional bodies must be seen to enforce their code of ethics to the letter."

He noted that financial fraud cannot be committed without the complicity of a 'professional', hence, the decision of ICPC to introduce a Forum of Professional Bodies and Business Management Associations, which brings professionals together to brainstorm on how to reduce corruption to the barest minimum and to conduct their businesses with uttermost integrity and strict adherence to code of professional ethics.

"The overall objective of the Forum is to sensitize professionals on the content of anti-corruption laws, especially the Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act, 2000, and discuss the possibility of infusing relevant aspects of the law into the professional



Professor Bolaji Owasanoye

code of ethics of various professions so that violating the codes of ethics would invariably amount to violating ICPC Act and therefore punishable

"The motivation to do wrong is very high because professional codes of ethics are not implemented by those saddled with the responsibility whether they be the officers of the professional body or regulators partly because the rules allow for discretion or because they are implicated. The result is that erring professionals easily rationalise their actions.

"Experience however shows that a person, professional, or business that chooses the path of integrity will always appear short-changed but only in the short term. Such is vindicated in the long term if they stay the course," He added.

The ICPC Chairman added that the Commission has made further efforts to help reduce corruption in the country by liaising with various professional bodies through the forum.

"Between 2013 when the Forum was introduced and 2018, ICPC had conducted five sessions whereby it sensitized and interacted with 627 professionals from 28 professional bodies. ICPC had signed a Memorandum of Understanding with some professional bodies such as the Council for the Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria (COREN) with the view of ridding the engineering profession of unwholesome behaviours such as quackery," he said.

While urging APBN to team up with ICPC in the implementation of anti-corruption policy, he said the private sector, consisting largely of professionals, was important to the implementation of the National Ethics and Integrity Policy (NEIP).

Earlier in his remark, the President of APBN, Surveyor Akinloye Olufemi, noted that the Association, being the umbrella body for all professions in the country, has the undisputable responsibility to continue to intensify its effort on advocacy against corruption.

"It is common knowledge that the world is going through trying times. Just as the slow Socio-economic recovery after the Covid-19 pandemic was gathering momentum came the Russian invasion of Ukraine which has preoccupied the developed countries. As lives are being lost daily, the attention of the

developed countries has been shifted to trying to contain the invasion and its far-reaching implications.

"It is as if our nation's share of this was not enough, we have a high level of inflation and insecurity to contend with on a daily basis.

"APBN as the umbrella Association for all professions in the country has the undisputable responsibility to continue to intensify its effort on advocacy and enlightenment. This is borne from the conviction that it is the professionals of any country that would develop it," Olufemi said.

The ceremony was attended by key stakeholders from thirty (30) different professional bodies that make up the APBN.

Court to rule on Jonah Jang's N6.3bn fraud case

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Justice C.L Dabup of the Plateau State High Court sitting in Jos is set to rule on the ongoing N6.3 billion fraud trial of former Governor of Plateau State, Senator Jonah David Jang, and a former cashier in the Office of the Secretary to the State Government (OSSG), Yusuf Pam in a date that would be announced.

Justice Dabup on Thursday, July 14, 2022, adjourned the case for judgment after the adoption of final written addresses by both the prosecution and defence counsels.

Jang and Pam are facing trial for alleged criminal breach of trust and misappropriation of Plateau State funds to the tune of N6.3 billion.

At the resumed hearing of the case on Thursday, counsel to the first defendant (Jonah Jang), Mike Ozekhome SAN adopted his final written address and urged the court to discharge and acquit his client.

Ozekhome, who also informed the court that the first defendant pleaded not guilty to the charges preferred against him, said the case lacked merit and that the prosecution did not prove its case beyond a reasonable doubt.

Speaking in the same vein, counsel to the second defendant (Yusuf Pam), S.G. Odey, while adopting his final written address, urged the court to discharge and acquit his client on all charges levelled against him.

However, prosecution counsel, Rotimi Jacobs SAN, urged the court to consider the evidence of all fourteen (14) witnesses before it, especially the evidence of Prosecution Witness 5, PW5, which supported the confessional statement of the second defendant.

Jacobs submitted that the required proof is not "proof beyond all shadow of doubt".

He informed the court of two pending motions seeking leave to appeal the two rulings on trial within the trial and urged the court to allow the adoption of the two pending motions.

Ozekhome did not object to the two applications but Odey indicated his intention to oppose the applications. The court thereafter directed that the final addresses be adopted.

The prosecution adopted the written address and urged the court to convict the first and second defendants. Ozekhome adopted his written address and prayed the court to discharge and acquit his client while Odey also adopted his written address and urged the court to discharge and acquit Pam.

Whistleblowing policy used for vendetta, not working – AGF

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

The Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF) and Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami (SAN), has said that the much-celebrated anti-corruption whistleblowing policy is not working because it is being abused by some to settle personal scores.

The AGF stated this in Abuja at the formal launch of the Corruption Anonymous (CORA) whistleblowing platform organised by the African Centre for Media and Information Literacy (AFRICMIL) and other partners on Thursday.

Malami, who was represented by the Special Assistant to the President on financial crimes, Abiodun Aikomo, commended AFRICMIL for the initiative to support the government's anti-corruption fight while noting that the process for having

robust legislation for the protection of whistleblowers is ongoing and that the government was not relenting in its fight against corruption.

"Governments cannot do it alone. So, we need everybody, I want you to know that the government is committed to bringing everybody on board," he said.

Earlier in his address, the Coordinator, AFRICMIL, Dr Chido Onumah, said that the CORA whistleblowing platform was organised to increase citizens' participation in the anti-corruption fight in Nigeria.

Dr Onumah recalled that the federal government on December 22, 2016, introduced the whistleblowing policy that offered, among other things, financial incentives for citizens who blow the whistle that leads to the recovery of looted public funds.

He said that AFRICMIL launched CORA

in its quest to help the government get the desired impact of the policy.

Meanwhile, the Chairman of the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), Prof Bolaji Owasanoye SAN, who was represented by a board member of the commission, Mrs Anne Odey, commended AFRICMIL and the Yar' Adua Foundation for their initiatives.

On his part, Director General, National Orientation Agency (NOA), Dr Garba Abari, represented by the Director of Press, Mr Paul Odenyi, urged AFRICMIL, MacArthur Foundation, Yar' Adua Foundation, and other partners to extend the whistleblowing platform to elections in the country.

According to him, vote buying and selling in the electoral process was becoming worrisome, hence the need to nip it in the bud.

ICPC to probe MDAs on abuse of COVID-19 intervention funds

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) has vowed to investigate Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) for infractions on COVID-19 intervention funds and other procurement abuses.

Chairman of ICPC, Prof Bolaji Owasanoye (SAN) said this while speaking at the 2022 African Union Anti-Corruption Day, saying that the commission had observed discrepancies and infractions in the procurement and payments made by some Ministries and Agencies after the disbursement of

the COVID-19 fund.

"The Commission had observed discrepancies and infractions in the procurement and payments made by some Ministries and Agencies after the released and appropriate disbursement of COVID-19 funds.

"The Commission observed that in some instances, the distribution of relief materials or palliatives was chaotic, disorderly, and uncoordinated.

"Some implicated MDAs denied the monitoring team access to their records thereby impeding the successful inquiry into their activities. These MDAs are flagged and will be investigated for breaches and

infractions of the law and COVID-19 intervention funds guidelines and other procurement abuses.

"Hoarding and diversion of materials were also common warranting the raids by people in some situations, facilities or locations warehousing palliatives. Some of such also created widespread violence," the ICPC boss said.

While citing media reports, Owasanoye lamented selective distribution, favouritism, nepotism, and other biases in the allocation and distribution of palliatives as well as the 'high-jacking' of palliatives by political actors, their proxies, cronies, and affiliates.

Not even marriage can stop me from acting -Actress, Omowunmi Dada

Nollywood actress, Omowunmi Dada is one of the very few actresses on the cause of changing the perspective people have towards filmmakers. Having featured in countless movies, soaps and stage plays; the theatre thespian isn't stopping at giving her best at any given shot. In this chat with OMONIYI ALLI, she spoke about her, career, challenges, why even marriage can't stop her from acting amongst others

Q: I have watched you in movies and you are intentional about how you take up your role, how were you able to develop this passion?

A: I have always been passionate about art. I have always said that it's not just about talent for me, it's a ministry. I'm very intentional about the kind of scripts that I take on, the kind of stories that I'm part of. I turn down a lot of scripts but the truth is when you don't know where you are going to, everywhere will look like the way but when you know where you are going to, from the beginning of your career, you channel your path and you are very intentional about it. Sometimes it looks like, 'what are you doing?', but if you have a bigger picture in mind, you will definitely get there. Nothing good comes easy.

Q: So talking about script, what factor would make you reject a script?

A: If I don't believe in the story, if I don't like the script itself and don't believe in what it is preaching, I will turn it down. This is not a shade to any producer or director but I know that day by day we are getting better and telling better stories.

Q: What of financial wise?

A: It's talent, career, passion but it's also a profession. You also have to make money out of it. If the money is not good but I believe in the story, I will take it because sometimes money is not everything. Leaving your name in the good sands of time is more important.

Q: As a leading brand, what do you stand for in the industry?

A: I stand strongly for professionalism, quality, discipline, integrity and consistency because at every particular time; keep working



as nobody wants to work with a lazy actor

Q: Do you think it's hard work that paved the way for you this far?

A: I always say that whatever you do, always give it your best because sometimes, it only takes one scene for someone to notice your good job for referral in projects you can never imagine in your life. Your success is in the hand of God and you.

Q: Which movie will you say shot you to limelight?

A: Well for me, the first time I was on TV was as a presenter in a Nigeria reality show for kids in 2008 but my first movie was an epic movie titled 'Oya'. I have featured in countless movies and soaps but the truth is so many people are yet to know me, and that is the truth that's why I need to constantly give my best to all I do should in case anyone stumbles on me and be like awwww who is this person but sincerely I can't pick on one exactly. But for every job I have done, I feel so honoured to do them all.

Q: Which are you more comfortable doing, TV presenting or acting?

A: For me, I am an all-round act; I can do any of the two perfectly.

Q: Don't you think marriage can stop you from acting?

A: Hell No!!! Not even marriage can stop me from acting because I want to be old with all my grey hairs acting because this is what I am born to do. It gives 100% fulfilment.

Q: As an actor, which will you consider the most challenging role you have ever played?

A: I will say when I acted in the movie titled 'Moremi' where I played the role of a boxer. For me to be able to deliver on the role; I had to train as a boxer for two months. I equally just rounded up on a project with Ebonylife; there also I had to go all the way out to do research on the role and when we had the private screening some time ago and I saw a lot of people crying and I was so happy about what I did for myself with the role I played. For me as a brand, I don't

run away from challenges and hard work

Q: In the process of building your acting brand; what are some of the challenges you encountered?

A: The first challenge that I had as an actor was my stature. When I attended auditions back then, people usually told me, "Oh you are very good and quite talented but unfortunately, you are small in stature." I used to be very skinny and I am still not big now so, my small stature posed a challenge. Even the colour of my skin was another major challenge. Sometimes, people would tell me that I am dark-skinned and they want a light-skinned person for a particular role but I am very happy that right now, filmmakers now look past the complexion of actors and the focus is now on talents and what you can bring to the table. It's now about what you've got inside of you, your level of discipline and your craft. Those were some of the things I had to deal with and I surmounted them. Of course, I love challenges and I love playing characters that enable me to be able to task myself. I don't like to feature in movies with drab characters. The farther I am from a character, the more excited I am to conquer challenges.

Q: What dream role do you look forward to acting?

A: There are lots of dream roles but the most important for me at the moment is getting an action role call in a Hollywood movie.

Q: How will you define your style?

A: I would say comfortable, classy, and edgy.

Q: What are your hobbies?

A: I like to listen to music and sleep



AMAA 2022: Keith Shiri emerges Jury President

By **OMONIYI ALLI**

The Africa Film Academy, the organizers of the Africa Movie Academy Awards – also known as AMAA, AMA Awards or the AMAAs- the premier and the most prestigious film award in Africa is excited to announce the appointment of Keith Shiri as the president of the AMAA 2022 Jury. Keith Shiri, an international film curator and program advisor to several international film festivals will now lead other respected curators and renowned filmmakers that make up the AMAA Jury.

“We are excited to welcome Keith Shiri, a founding juror at the AMAA and a promoter of African art and film as the president of the AMAA 2022 Jury,” said Peace Anyiam-Osigwe, Founder of the Africa Film Academy. “Keith’s experience and vast knowledge of African Films which

has spanned over 2 decades coupled with his expertise which has seen him serve in different international organizations made him a great fit for this position. We look forward to continuing our strong ties with the board of jurors at the academy under his leadership.”

Keith will preside over the jury after Steve Ayorinde, a renowned film and art critic served as the President of the AMAA 2021 Jury. Keith is presently curating the Icons of the Africa Centre Series for the legendary London-based cultural institution.

He is also a consultant on film business development for the International Trade Centre (ITC), an agency of the United Nations that is currently implementing an initiative to promote film exports from the Caribbean to the UK and European markets.

He was a member of the Berlinale World Cinema Fund from 2004-2007 and a trainer for Esodoc/EU (European Social Documentary),

a programme for documentary filmmakers. He has served as an expert advisor for the EU-ACP programme for the ACP cinema and on the advisory board of New York’s Focus Features Africa First Programme, which supported young African filmmakers through its mentorship programme.

Since its establishment in 2005, the AMAAs have been consistent for 17 years. Every year, the Africa Film Academy (AFA) team works all year round to create a thriving and promising environment for creatives and filmmakers across Africa by recognizing filmmakers’ excellent works and nurturing many movie makers across the continent.

The purpose of the Africa Movie Academic Awards (AMAA) is to support and celebrate the brilliance of African filmmakers both at home and in the diaspora; recognize the excellence among professionals and non-professionals who have contributed to the African film industry.



Felabration 2022: Organisers announce N500,000 as cash prizes

The organisers of Felabration have announced a total prize-winning of N500,000 for winners at the sixth edition of the artwork competition.

This is coming after a call for entries to artists ahead of the commencement of the 2022 edition of Felabration.

With the theme, ‘Fear not 4 man,’ three winners are expected to emerge in the art competition. The second runner-up will go home with N100,000, the first runner-up will win N150,000 and the winner will be presented with a cash prize of N250,000.

The submission portal for the artwork competition opened on June 15, 2022, and is scheduled to close on July 31, 2022. The competition is open to contestants and participants worldwide.

Over the years, Felabration has provided a platform for stardom for young creatives. The competition has continued to be a fantastic opportunity for global recognition in the world of arts.

The exhibition of the artwork and selection of the winners of the Felabration Artwork Competition as it is known will be held at the New Afrika Shrine.

Returning judges include Prince Yemisi Shyllon, Otunba Mufu Onifade, and Sarah Boulos, highly regarded personalities and experts in the art world. The judges will decide the winners after which they will be announced at a ceremony in the months of Felabration.

Other events lined up for Felabration 2022 include the Felabration AfroBics dance competition, the 10th edition of the Secondary Schools Debate, The Symposium also known as the FELA DEBATES, A Fela themed Fashion show, The Dress Like Fela Day, seven days of Music Concerts featuring Nigerian and International artistes and The Felabration Ladies Webinar.

D’banj makes acting debut in ‘Symphony’

● *As movie set for premiere in September*

Nigerian singer cum producer, Dapo Oyebanjo, also known as D’banj has joined the league of musicians pitching tent in the movie industry as he makes his debut acting in soon to be released movie ‘Symphony’.

Produced by Helen Ayagere and directed by Oraka Nvy Nnanyelu, Symphony movie reflects the travails of a typical talented African youth struggling to overcome all odds in order to breakthrough.

With a stellar cast that includes D’banj, Ghanaian actress, Jackie Appiah, Kenyan superstar, Tanasha Donna, Lanre Hassan (Iya Awero), Kalu Ikeagwu, Efa Iwara, Mr Latin, Scarlet Gomez amongst others; the new movie is expected for nationwide cinema release come September 9, 2022.

According to the executive producer, Helen Ayagere; Symphony is a youth and music basic movie captured as its central theme as the premiere will equally witness the release of a music album comprising original soundtrack and performances from the project, written, recorded and performed by top stars, some of who featured in the movie.

For Oraka Nvy Nnanyelu, the director of the movie, Symphony is a beautifully crafted, priceless work of art that mirrors the everyday life of the African youth’s journey to relevance”



Showmax takes BBNaija S7 and Buzz to Africa and the United Kingdom

For the second year in a row, African streaming service Showmax brings BBNaija fans exciting and exclusive content from the biggest reality show on the continent. As Big Brother Naija returns for its seventh season, fans across sub-Saharan Africa and the United Kingdom will enjoy front-row, live-streamed access to all the activities in the Big Brother house on Showmax.

In addition, the highly entertaining BBNaija S7: The Buzz makes a comeback for a second season, bringing all the scoops, gist and armchair analysis from the host and guests, without any holdbacks.

Speaking at the BBNaija press conference in Lagos, Adeola Oluwatobi, brand marketing and partnerships manager at Showmax, said,

“For the past two years, Showmax has been bringing BBNaija exclusives to viewers and fans. Last year we launched BBNaija S6: The Buzz, which became the go-to gist and opinion box for the reality series and we’re



thrilled that it’s back for another season.”

The return of BB Naija S7: The Buzz highlights Showmax’s commitment to investing in Nigerian Original content such as I Am LAYCON, a reality series that followed the journey of Big Brother Naija Season 5’s winner Olamilekan ‘Laycon’ Agbeleshe, and Ghana Jollof, which was produced by and starred comedian Basketmouth. The Real Housewives of Lagos, a Showmax Original reality series that premiered in April, broke streaming records on Showmax for the highest first-day views in Nigeria. This was followed by Journey of the Beats, a 10-part music documentary that traces the story of Afrobeats from its roots to its modern-day adoration across the globe.



Nigeria to host 2022 Girls' U19 African Nations Volleyball Championship

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

■ NVBF target 2024 Paris Olympics- Nimrod

Nigeria have been selected by the Confederations of African Volleyball (CAVB) to host the 2022 Girls' U19 African Nations Volleyball Championship scheduled to hold from August 30 to September, 2022.

In a statement released on Thursday by the Nigeria Volleyball Federation (NVBF) to announce the welcome development, it noted that the event on the above date will take place in Abuja.

While the West African country is slated to host the Girls' U19 African Nations Volleyball Championship, the North African country Morocco will host the Boys' U19 edition in Casablanca from September 1 - 12, 2022.

Meanwhile, the President of Nigeria Volleyball Federation and Chairman of Nigeria Beach Volleyball Commission, Engineer Musa Nimrod, last week Saturday, said that the federation is working round the clock in ensuring Nigeria does not miss Paris 2024 Olympics.

Nimrod stated this at the end of the National Beach Volleyball Tour (Round 1) in Yola, Adamawa State.

According to NVBF President, the beach volleyball



tour will ensure Nigeria players are fit before major African Championships and International outings.

Nimrod said, "the Nigeria Beach Volleyball Commission decided to commence the National Beach Volleyball Tour this year because the aim is for Nigeria to qualify for the Paris 2024 Olympics.

"Nigeria narrowly missed participating in the Olympics twice; Rio 2016 and Tokyo 2020. Nigeria placed second in 2016 behind Egypt and second in 2020 behind Kenya.

"The federation is trying to allow new players to make the country proud and coming to

Yola for the Round 1 of the National Beach Volleyball Tour is not a mistake, it is by divine intervention," he claimed.

The NVBF President told Nigerians to expect more explosive performances in the second and third rounds later this year.

He continued: "I am assuring Nigerians that the second and third rounds of the beach volleyball tour will be more exciting and rougher. The second round will be in the South-South while the third round will come up in the South West.

"The tour has allowed

young players to showcase their talents and that is the pride of Nigeria Volleyball Federation.

"I am assured that with what I am seeing on the beach volleyball tour, we are going back to our rightful position in Africa. Our current rankings might not be encouraging but I believe that we will return to the summit, particularly our male teams.

"Nigeria will be attending the African Senior Beach Nations Cup in Morocco by the end of this month and I am assuring you that the boys will give their best," Nimrod reiterated.

Como beat Las Palmas in race for Cesc Fabregas

Former Chelsea playmaker, Cesc Fabregas is closed to joining Italian side Como on a two-year deal The Trumpet understands.

Fabregas, who signed for Monaco in France three years ago having left Stamford Bridge, is presently a free agent with a report linking him with a move to join a Serie B team.

According to reports from Spain, UD Las Palmas are also interested in the midfield maestro who can play in either the attacking or defensive positions but a higher bid from Como has frustrated the effort of the club's President Miguel Ángel Ramirez.

Ramirez, in his lamentations over his club's inability to compete with Lariani financially for the 35-year-old Spanish midfielder, allayed the tension with the imminent signing of Atletico Madrid winger, Victor Machin Perez popularly known as Vitolo.

Corroborating the above report, Sky Sports Italia noted that the former Arsenal and Barcelona player is an inch away from a switch to Stadio Giuseppe Sinigaglia until June 2024.

Reportedly, Cesc is one step away from Como 1907, a Serie B team. He would arrive not only for this season but

signing a contract until June 2024.

Explicitly, Como are desperate to come to the Italian top-tier as soon as possible and believe Fabregas can give them the needed flair in the team to fulfil their season's campaign.

Aside from Fabregas, the Serie B team have also engaged Dennis Wise, a former Chelsea midfielder in a coaching role.

It is noteworthy to say that Cesc Fabregas during his spell at Chelsea provided 57 assists and netted 23 times in 198 appearances.

Should he complete the move to become the second Spaniard to join Como, Fabregas will reunite with Alex Blanco who joined the club last season from Valencia. Sky Sport Italia added that both players trained together at Barca intermittently.



After Budapest 2023, Tokyo host 2025 World Athletics Championships



Tokyo, Japan has been selected by the World Athletics Council to host the next edition of the World Athletics Championships in 2025 after 2023's in Budapest, Hungary, The Trumpet gathered.

In its 228th council meeting in Oregon, USA, the world's athletics governing body added that the 2024 World Athletics Cross Country Championships will be held in Medulin and Pula in Croatia and the 2026 World Athletics Cross Country Championships will be held in Tallahassee, Florida.

According to them, the 2025 Tokyo event will be a duelling place for top athletes, who will converge in Tokyo's Olympic Stadium, the venue for last year's Olympic Games.

One thing that is significant

about the year 2025 World Athletics Championships as it tallies with the hundredth anniversary of the Japanese Association of Athletics Federations (JAAF).

However, Tokyo's emergence as the successful bidder to host the 2025 edition was not a one-horse race as other contenders like Nairobi, Silesia and Singapore also signified interest but the former polled a larger number of votes.

The council noted that Tokyo seems to have edged other bidders in the 'potential for a powerful narrative; revenue-generating opportunities for World Athletics; a destination that will enhance the international profile of the sport; and appropriate climate'.

It also added that the Tokyo stadium is one of the biggest in the world with top-class facilities which provided an avenue for athletes' success in 2025.

In a statement by Sebastian Coe, President of the World Athletics Council, appreciating all the parties that took the time in preparing a bid for the 2025 event, he stated that their attitude proves their commitment to the growth of Athletics.

World Athletics President Sebastian Coe thanked all the cities that took the time and effort to prepare bids, showing their commitment to athletics. He reinforced the Council's wish that all of them continue to discuss future opportunities to host World Athletics events.

Coe said, "Within an extremely strong field of candidates to host the World Athletics Championships 2025, Tokyo offered a compelling bid.

"I hope this will be a shining light for Japan as they celebrate 100 years of the Japanese Association of Athletics Federations (JAAF) in 2025, by bringing world-class athletics

back to the people in Tokyo," he underlined.

In a response, Mitsugi Ogata, President of JAAF, said, "We are immensely proud that World Athletics has demonstrated its confidence and trust in Japan to host the 2025 World Athletics Championships.

"Together with World Athletics as one team, we will capitalise on this opportunity to showcase the best possible global event for growing our sport to a higher level.

"History has shown that we have the ability and energy to host the world's top athletes and to inspire international audiences.

"We promise that the Olympic Stadium in Tokyo will be full of fans to become an unforgettable experience for the athletes and everyone involved," he assured.

World Athletics Council point out that one of the most populated cities in the world with 43.8 million people in Tokyo which have an advanced market for athletics and associated growth opportunities.

Sevilla, Villarreal court €30m Sadiq Umar

Sevilla and Villarreal are not backing out of a move to sign Almeria and Super Eagles striker, Umar Sadiq, who was instrumental to the Andalusian club to return to the Spanish top-tier.

Sadiq has been on the radar of Sevilla and Villarreal also in the loop but the asking price of Almeria for the 25-year-old forward, who netted 18 times in 36 appearances in the Spanish Segunda division, has posed a hitch.

Reportedly, Almeria need nothing below €30m to allow the striker that moved in on October 5, 2020, to Estadio de los Juegos Mediterráneos for €9m from FK Partizan Belgrade.

A forthright ago, Football Espana reported

that due to the amount Almeria need for the Nigerian forward, Sevilla would only be able to acquire him should they sell 25-year-old Moroccan forward Youssef En-Nyessri.

Sadiq according to the above report, is interested in the move that would see him reunite with Ramón Rodríguez Verdejo, commonly known as Monchi and currently the director of football of Sevilla FC, who both were together in Roma.

The Nigerian international with seven caps joined Almeria in 2020 and was key to their promotion from Segunda to Primera in 2021/22 with stats that have made him the exact kind of hidden gem Sevilla pride themselves on finding.



How Super Falcons qualified for 2023 FIFA World Cup

■ Book semi-final clash against host Morocco ■ Pinnick praises 'resilient' Falcons
■ Nigeria, 15th team to qualify for 2023 FIFA WC

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

Nigeria qualified for the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup finals after a lone goal by Rasheedat Ajibade steered the Super Falcons to the semi-finals of the ongoing Women Africa Cup of Nations in Morocco at the expense of Cameroon's Indomitable Lionesses.

Ngozi Okobi-Okeoghene made a bold run at the Cameroonian defence supported by twists and turns and the ball somehow landed at the feet of gangling Ifeoma Onumonu, who heaved the ball into the box for Ajibade to nod past Ange Bawu for the only goal of the match in the 57th minute.

The nine-time champions dominated a physical game right from the onset and could have led by at least two goals in the first period only to be undone by near misses.

In the 7th minute, Onumonu, who scored the first goal in the 2-0 defeat of Botswana in Group C that rejuvenated Nigeria's campaign following the opening game defeat by South Africa, headed Okobi-Okeoghene's well-weighted

free-kick over the sticks. In the 24th minute, Onumonu and Ucheibe were involved as a melee ensued in the Lionesses' vital area, but Bawu was up to the task.

The two teams abbreviated each other's opportunities with very close marking in a turgid second half. However, after Nigeria scored, Gabrielle Onguene lashed at the Nigeria goal but it went far away.

Ajibade's headed goal, her third of the tournament, took Nigeria to eight goals in the championship with only two conceded – both against South Africa – and their reward is a potentially-explosive semi-final duel against the slick host nation, Morocco.

Meanwhile, President of the Nigeria Football Federation and FIFA Council Member, Mr Amaju Melvin Pinnick has showered praises on the Super Falcons, saying their resilience against the fit-fighting Indomitable Lions reflected the fabled Nigerian spirit.

He said, "I congratulate the girls for a strong performance against another strong team. They showed that truly, Nigeria is the powerhouse of African women's football. They held firm to victory even in the face of pressure towards the end.



"Their strength and perseverance were highly commendable. They have done very well to qualify for the FIFA World Cup. Now, we can aim for retention of the trophy," he added.

The Super Falcons have set up a mouth-watering semi-final duel against host nation Morocco, with vintage football expected from both teams who have already qualified for the FIFA Women's World Cup.

Nigeria's Super Falcons on Thursday night became the 15th team to qualify for the 9th FIFA Women's World Cup finals, to be staged in Australia and New Zealand from 20th July – 20th August next year.

Hosts Australia (with five venues) and New Zealand (four venues), as well as China,

Korea Republic, Philippines, Vietnam, Japan, France, Spain, Sweden, Denmark, United States of America, Morocco and Zambia are the other teams.

The 5th and 6th –placed teams at the ongoing tournament in Morocco will have another shot at qualifying for the World Cup, as they join eight other teams for a Playoff Tournament early next year.

Nigeria is one of only six teams, among them the USA, Germany, Brazil and Japan, to have played in every edition of the FIFA Women's World Cup finals since the championship was launched in China in 1991.

The Atletico Madrid of Spain forward, Ajibade was named the Woman of the Match.

WAFU B change draw date, venue for WCL

The West Africa Football Union B (WAFU B) have shifted the date previously slated to hold on Tuesday 12 to Wednesday 20 July for the draw of the zonal qualifiers of the Confederations of Africa (CAF) Women's Champions League.

WAFU B had earlier slated the draw for the zonal qualifiers of the CAF Women's Champions League at Ivotel Plateau in Abidjan but rescheduled it to take place in Morocco.

According to the information by the zonal football governing body, a notification will be communicated in due course to keep football associations in the zone

abreast with further development.

WAFU's statement read: "We hereby bring to your attention that the draw for the WCL 2022 initially scheduled for July 12th, 2022 in Abidjan, is postponed to July 20th, 2022 in Morocco. The re-transmission links will be communicated in due course."

Bayelsa Queens are Nigeria's contingents qualified to represent the country in the CAF Women's Champions League after they emerged the champions of Nigeria Women's Football League (NWFL), edging out Rivers Angels to the diadem in the 2021-22 season.



How Zambia secured first FIFA Women's World Cup ticket

■ Reach first WAFCON semi-finals

Zambia women's national team secured the FIFA Women's World Cup ticket to Australia and New Zealand after they edged out West African side Senegal in the quarter-final through penalty shootouts at the Complexe Sportif Mohamed V in Casablanca.

The Copper Queens also from the 4-2 penalty victory against Senegal after both teams played a one-all stalemate at extra time, booked their first WAFCON semi-final place in history.

Senegal opened the scoresheet through Nguenar Ndiaye after both teams played a goalless first-half draw but the South African side responded 20 minutes to the ninety through Avell Chitundu's close-range strike to level the scoreline.

However, the inability of both sides to find the back of the net in the course of processing the extra time, forced the game into a first WAFCON quarter-

final penalty shootouts where Teranga Lionesses lost 4-2 to book a ticket back to Dakar.

"Zambia demonstrated their desire to win the match as coach Bruce Mwape made no changes to the impressive starting team that beat Togo in the last group game four days ago," CAF reported in a statement.

"Senegal gaffer Mame Moussa Cissé made a couple of changes to the team that lost narrowly to host country Morocco in their last group game.

"Mareme Babou, Anta Dembele, Ndeye Awa Diakhate and Nguenar Ndiaye were brought into the starting list for the Teranga Lionesses," CAF statement noted.

Consequent to the shootout, Siomala Mapepa, Misozi Zulu, Ireen Lungu and goalkeeper Hazel Natasha Nali scored for Zambia while Teranga Lionesses' Mama Diop, Haby Baldé were the only players that scored for Senegal.



Barcelona, De Jong dilly-dallying over United move

Barcelona have accepted Manchester United's offer for Dutch midfielder Frenkie de Jong and expect the player to honour the move to Old Trafford likewise The Trumpet gathered.

Reportedly, the 25-year-old prime target for Red Devils' coach, Erik ten Hag in the summer, who once was under the tutelage of the Dutch gaffer in Ajax, is adamantly against the move to the English Premier League.

According to several reports from Europe, Manchester United have promised to build the team around De Jong in a way

to convince him of the club's plans for him.

While United think big for the player, he does not fashion a move to a club he would be denied the Champions League football in the new season; a related incident Cristiano Ronaldo is presently engulfed with.

However, Catalans were initially against the move with President Joan Laporta, during the tribute to club legend Johan Cruyff, reiterating that De Jong is not for sale at any price.

Every decision has a price and Barcelona which are highly engrossed in financial difficulties in a dramatic turn,

have accepted the United's offer reportedly about €70m with add-ons that would see it rise to circa €80m.

With this agreement reached between both clubs, the final decision lies on the Dutch who still has a contract at the Camp Nou to heed the Blaugrana's wish of honouring the move to Manchester United.

Reportedly, Barcelona need the money from De Jong's deal to assuage other players' agreements, those whose contracts have expired and to wrap up some new deals.

Head coach of Barcelona, Xavi Hernandez is not happy over the move as reported by

Mundo Deportivo because he needs the player in his squad for the new season's campaign but with the financial mess bedevilling the club, he has no option but to allow De Jong leave.

Despite the rigmarole, Blaugrana will have to look for a capable replacement for the Dutch midfielder of lesser monetary value with Manchester City Bernardo Silva already on the Catalans' glimpses.

Mundo Deportivo added that De Jong's 'departure would also help players like the recently signed Kessie, Gavi and Nico González gain prominence'.

Ajax eye Calvin Bassey as Martinez's replacement

Rangers and Super Eagles versatile defender, Calvin Bassey, has emerged as a target for Ajax who are eager to replace Manchester United-bound Lisandro Martinez.

Bassey has been on the radar of European clubs with Aston Villa's Steven Gerrard reported being in need of the 22-year-old that broke into the spotlight in the second half of the season for the Gers.

The Nigerian defender, who grew from the ranks of Leicester City youth team and is valued at €25m by the Gers, has two years left to run on his

contract at Ibrox.

According to Daily Mail, 'Ajax have identified the Nigerian international as a replacement for Manchester United-bound Lisandro Martinez. The Dutch champions are set to rake in a £46m windfall for the defender and it's said Bassey is on their wishlist'.

Bassey's impressive development as one of the promising world-studded defenders, started when he was snubbed by Nigeria's senior men's national team for the TotalEnergies Africa

Nations Cup (AFCON) in Cameroon.

The Super Eagles defender is versatile and can play in the left-back and centre-defensive positions making him a suitable replacement for Martinez who played both positions for Godenzonen.



Why Bassey will be interested to embrace a new challenge in Eredivisie, Gers manager Giovanni Bronckhorst would be opposed to the deal in a bid to keep the player by an extra season at Ibrox for Champions League group stages' qualification.

Rangers recently sold Calvin's fellow compatriot and Super Eagles midfielder, Joe Aribito to Southampton but are reportedly 'sweating over the futures of Ryan Kent and Alfredo Morelos as the duo enter the final 12 months of their contracts.



Friendlies: Super Falcons, USA clash in September

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

Nine-time African champions Nigeria will fly to the United States of America for a two-match tour against the United States Women's National Team (USWNT) in September.

Both teams, presently competing in their respective continental tournaments, will clash at the Children's Mercy Park in Kansas City, Kansas on 3rd September and then have a go at each other's jugular once more at the Audi Field in Washington, D. C. on 6th September.

The USWNT is the most successful team in the FIFA Women's World Cup, having won half (4) of all eight championships competed for so far. The Stars & Stripes were champions of the very first edition in China in 1991 and then won on home soil in 1999, in Canada in 2015 and France three years ago. The team has also won four Olympic women's football gold medals and eight CONCACAF titles.

The Super Falcons billed to

face Cameroon in the quarter-finals of the ongoing Women's Africa Cup of Nations on Thursday evening, have won the African championship nine times, played in every edition of the FIFA Women's World Cup and also played in 2000, 2004 and 2008 Olympic women's football tournament. They remain the most successful women's team on the African continent.

The Children's Mercy Park is home to Kansas City in the US National Women's Soccer League and Sporting Kansas City in the Major League Soccer, while Audi Field is utilized by National Women's Soccer League side Washington Spirit and Major League Soccer team, D. C. United.

The match in Kansas City will see Vlatko Andonovski, appointed Coach of USWNT at the end of 2019, return to his home area for the second time. It is the sixth time that the USWNT will be playing at the Children's Mercy Park but it is their first time at the Audi Field, though they have played 10 times previously in Washington – all at the RFK Stadium.



Andonovski says he's excited to send out his girls against the Super Falcons: "First, I'm just excited to play two matches against Nigeria. They have some very talented players who will present a lot of different problems for us to solve on both sides of the ball."

"Secondly, of course, we're looking forward to bringing the team back to one of the best soccer stadiums in the United States in Kansas City, as well as getting to play our first game at Audi Field, which I've visited several times for NWSL games and is

also a fantastic venue for our team to play in front of our home fans," USWNT coach added.

The USWNT has already qualified for the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup, becoming the 12th team to reach the finals and the first team from the CONCACAF region.

Nigeria's Falcons are also coached by an American, long-time college coach Randy Waldrum – who is aiming for a FIFA Women's World Cup ticket and first African title with Nigeria in Morocco.

Maduka Okoye relishing his time with Watford

Super Eagles goalkeeper, Maduka Okoye is having a good time in his club and English Championship side, Watford, in their pre-season tour as they work to kickstart a return to the England top-tier division in August.

Okoye signed for Watford from Sparta Rotterdam during last season's winter transfer window but returned on loan to Het Kasteel to complete the remaining part of the 2021-2022 season in Eredivisie, the Dutch topflight league.

The 22-year-old goalie, who was handed his first international cap by the former Super Eagles' German gaffer, Gernot Rohr on October 9, 2019, in a friendly match against Ukraine that ended 2-2, has earned a total of 16 caps for the national side.

In an interview with Watford TV during a training session, Okoye said the game was tough in the first half but noted that the Hornets found a way out in the second half.

"I think it was quite difficult in the beginning and is understandable because we just came together and that's a new thing for us. But yeah, I think we will find our way and you could see in the second half we did way better and that is progress," Okoye told Watford TV.

The Super Eagle added that he is relishing his time with the Hornets, stressing that his teammates are fantastic.

He said, "Yeah, fantastic. Having a great time with my already funny guys, funny teammates, good vibe in here. And I think that's important. Feeling connected to the players and the staff."

"I had a good time there [Austria]. We worked very hard. But we had fun with a smile on our faces and I think we made good steps in the right direction in Austria. And now we're just out here continuing the with the work," Okoye added.

The Hornets open their 2022-23 English Championship campaign with Sheffield United on August 1 at Vicarage Road with coach Roy Hodgson eyeing a quick return to the English top-tier division.



AFN, ministry's negligence affected my participation in Oregon, Birmingham Games, laments Ezinne

United States-based Nigerian Athlete, Ezinne Abba has lambasted the Ministry of Youth and Sports Development and Athletics Federation of Nigeria (AFN) for negligence that has resulted in her ineligibility to compete in the 2022 World Athletics Championship in Oregon and the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

Ezinne recently switch her allegiance from the USA to fulfil her dreams of competing for Nigeria on the world stage but met a shocker in her life when a week for Nigeria contingents to journey to the USA for the World Athletics event, she was told her name was not on the list.

According to 100 & 200m sprinter who came second in 100m race at Pac-12 Track and Field Championship, Hayward Field, Eugene, Oregon, on May 15, 2022, she has prepared

herself mentally and physically for the contest after her first hamstring injury.

"It has always been my dream to compete for Nigeria on the world stage. But, despite

reaching the world standard, flying to Nigeria alone, s withing my allegiance from the US, and mentally/physically preparing myself after my first-ever hamstring strain, the athletics federation of Nigeria has failed me," Ezinne lamented.

"The negligence and egocentric actions of the Minister and other [administrators] have once again overcome the federation which negatively affects the athletes," the Nigerian athlete complained.

Ezinne three months ago, ran her personal best in the 100m sprint of 11.12s at Mt. SAC Relays, Hilmer

Lodge Stadium, Walnut, California.

The disheartened 21-year-old claimed that she was informed about 40 minutes before her flight to Oregon adding that the federation are being coarse by irrational fear.

She added that of the three required drug tests for competing athletes, she has successfully completed two (2/3) while being denied the third for fear of failure on the part of the federation.

Ezinne continued: "Why am I being told 40 minutes before my flight to Oregon, the week of competition, that I'm no longer competing because of their wrongdoings and irrational fear? I have already passed 2/3 drug tests, but for some reason, I am not allowed to do my third test because of fear of failure."

She opined that despite the changes the federation is undergoing by hiring new staff to rejig the system, the

national athletics governing body is still submerged in corrupt practices.

"They speak repeatedly about trying to fix the broken system that is Nigerian athletics by firing and hiring all new staff but the corruption still lives. I, unfortunately, will not be competing at worlds or the commonwealth games," Ezinne said.

Recall that in Tokyo Olympics 2020, Nigeria selected 23 athletes of which 10 were denied to compete including Annette Echikunwoleke who switched allegiance for not having an Out of Competition Test (OCT).

Preceding Blessing Okagbare's doping case, Nigeria have been kept under strict surveillance by the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) in charge of doping issues since reportedly, the country has not been testing their athletes as it ought to be on doping.