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## Obi's team alleges ethno- religious plot to pit SW, north against LP candidate



- Ex-governor celebrated Sallah with Islamic community, sponsored Muslim pilgrims, says aide
- Requested CPs, ADCs, Orderlies from Taraba, Kwara, Adamawa, Kano, Kebbi, Nasarawa, Kebbi, Adamawa
- Has been financially supporting schools nationwide before and since leaving office

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# Obi's team alleges ethno-religious plot to pit SW, north against LP candidate

By **TUNDE JOSHUA**,  
Politics Editor

**L**about Party's Presidential candidate Peter Obi's aides and supporters have raised the alarm over an alleged dangerous strategy by certain political detractors to whip up ethno-religious sentiments and paid orchestrated campaigns of discredit against him. They say the aim is to portray Obi as an ethno-religious bigot unfit to be Nigeria's president by painting him as an Igbo Christian candidate.

Obi's supporters want the security agencies to fish out the purveyors of the divisive explosive falsehoods against him which they say could endanger the lives of the candidate's fans.

For example, Obi's Media Adviser, Mr. Valentine

Obienyem, has reacted to an article entitled: 'No Known Ethno-Religious Bigot Should Be Elected to President Over a Diverse Country like Nigeria,' written by one AG Mahmoud.

In a statement, Obienyem said: "Our attention was brought to the above campaign of calumny lunched by some faceless groups. Is it by coincidence that it came when we were reliably informed that some political parties have charged their political office holders to hire people to relentlessly attack Obi with falsehoods on all available social media platforms?"

We shall take the falsehoods of the attack under reference, by an obviously non-existent name, AG Mahmoud, one after another.

"The false writer said that after the killing of Northerners on the 21st and 22nd of March, 2006, before Mr. Peter Obi became the Governor, that his reaction came in the form of a statement, namely: 'you people should tell your people to stop killing our people in the North.' This is complete falsehood. If Obi made that statement, it would have been lavishly published by the media. Would the author show us the link where the statement was published?"

"Though the disturbances in the State happened before Obi took over, one of his first acts was to visit the Onitsha Army Barracks, Mr Peter Obi thereafter, together with National Emergency Management Agency provided relief materials. He also took far reaching actions that fostered unity among all those living in the state to prevent such happening again. As you read, you will see some of those actions.

"The writer said Obi ejected northerners from some markets they had occupied since 1974. The writer went on to say that when the crisis was going on, that the Northerner petitioned the office of the Sultan who

sent Emirs of Suleja and Etsu of Nupe to mediate. They said the negotiations were unfruitful because Obi refused to provide an alternative.

"Upper Iweka was an eyesore. Traders from all tribes were trading on the road, such that over 50% of the road space was occupied by these traders. Obi appealed to the traders to move backwards since he also planned to expand the road to 8 lanes. Because some of them would not be accommodated if they moved to the rightful positions, Obi entered into negotiations and agreed to relocate them to various places.

"Famous transport companies like The Young Shall Grow, Mic Mirah, Chisco, Ekeson, GMO Company were all affected. Goat sellers, comprising mostly Hausa and Igbos, were relocated to Umunya, with Police Post provided for them. The Sultan came to the state at that time on the invitation of Obi. He took the opportunity of the visit to mediate on grey areas. Rather than report what happened, the false writer quoted Obi as having said: 'you people are foreigners here therefore you have no right on our land.' Could they show us the link of the saying as published then?"

"Thirdly, the false writer said that 'during the anniversary of creation of Anambra State, towards the end of Peter Obi's administration, we were invited by the organizers of the program, an Igbo lady who resides in the North, while making a point on fostering unity among Nigerians, she suggested that an exchange program should be established where young people from the state should be sent to Kano in exchange of Kano young vocational trainees, Peter Obi quickly took over the microphone and said that there was no comparison between the North and the East talk more of sharing skills and knowledge. He also added that such comparison is like asking China to come to Nigeria to learn manufacturing business. He made this assertion in public. I could remember it was the then Governor of Rivers state, Chief Rotimi Amaechi that chaired the occasion.'

"Absolute lies! This event did not even take place at all. The Internet never forgets. Could the writer show us the link where the event was published?"

"The false writer said Obi requested the DSS to remove an Hausa trader near his house. He wrote that the Hausa man was invited by an Igbo Bar man to attract more customers. The truth is that there were no bar men at all. The person that was removed by the Estate Security on their own was a woman selling articles like biscuit because she also supplied drugs to bad boys. As I write, the Suya Seller is still there.

"Lastly, the false writer said



IGP Aikali

that Mr. Peter Obi 'equally deported people of Northern extraction back to Kaduna during his tenure as governor of Anambra state.'

According to Obi's aide, this is obviously a calculated attempt to pit Mr. Peter Obi against the North.

He stressed: "what Obi did in Anambra State was to send back underaged beggars to their states, citing child abuse. When a real deportation by the then Governor of Lagos took place, Obi fought against it, saying that every adult Nigerian's right to reside wherever he desired should be respected. A single search on Google will show you the truth.

"Obi is very competent to become the President of Nigeria. Unfortunately, it is the incompetent ones that always appeal to tribalism to hide their incompetence. A sedulous enquirer would discover that as Governor, Obi celebrated Sallah with the Moslem community that visited him as a routine. He also routinely sponsored Muslim faithful on pilgrimage to Mecca.

"All the Police Commissioners that served in Anambra State when Obi was the Governor came from other parts of the State. Obi, facing security challenges was actually the one that requested them based on their competencies. They are John Haruna from Taraba State, Amusa Bello from Kwara State, Philemon Leha from Adamawa State, Muhtari Ibrahim from Kano State, Balla Nasarawa from Kebbi State, and Usman Gwary from Adamawa State. Were they the people he used to deport Northerners?"

"As the Governor of Anambra State, Obi's ADC, who is very close to him till today was Mohammed Idris from Kano State, while his Orderly was Anthony Many from Taraba State."

According to him, Obi is desirous of becoming the President and he has been going around telling people the problems of the country and how he hopes to solve them.

He said the Labour Party presidential candidate expects other contestants to do the same rather than sponsoring falsehoods to pitch him against the people.

However, During his tour of the North, Obi, for example, made it clear that expanse of land in the North for agricultural purposes is a great gift to Nigeria, which if properly managed, would be able to feed the nation and for export. Education in the north will also be accorded high priority, he added.

Obienyem stressed that Peter Obi does not have a problem with Nigerians of all classes and religions nationwide. He pointed to Obi's endorsement or positive mention nationally.

For example, in the South West, he noted that apex pan-Yoruba socio-cultural organization, Afenifere supports has not opposed Obi but is rooting for power shift southward to ensure equity. Renowned rights activists in the southwest like Dele Farotimi have also spoken positively about Obi. In the core north and Middle Belt, Obienyem pointed to the positive words, activities and mass mobilisation for Obi by people of all tribes and religions such as politicians like Professor Jerry Gana as well as rights activists, working class, students, farmers groups and the unemployed.

He said elder statesman and Former Aviation Minister, Chief Ebenezer Babatope, has declared his support for Obi who he said, is the best presidential candidate and his most preferred choice for 2023.

Babatope made the declaration during his interview with The Sun Newspapers, where he stated that the main focus in the 2023 elections is competence and capacity, not zoning.

He explained that Peter Obi has the capacity to make fundamental changes that can turn around the country for better. Babatope opined that judging from Obi's pedigree and track records of success in governance, he will do more, when given a bigger political platform.

Obienyem further reacted to more alleged plots to falsely link Obi to statements that the LP chief did not make. For example, Obienyem said "the claim that Prof. Soludo, the Sultan or Fmr Emir of Kano said this or that about Mr. Peter Obi did not come from him nor his Media Office.

However, the record of his 20 million dollars investment in SABMiller, which has been appreciating is verifiable.

He said Obi's campaign mantle is moving Nigeria from a consuming to a producing country. All his supporters are respectfully enjoined to key into the vision and desist from sharing unverified news items.

On a Hausa-Fulani WhatsApp group, a northerner reportedly said:

"I am impressed by Peter Obi's presentations so far but as a Hausa-Fulani here are my questions for Mr Peter Obi:

1. He deported my brothers who were mostly menial workers, petty traders, cobblers, manicure providers, butchers when he was Governor of Anambra State and it took the intervention of the then Governor Rabi'u Kwankwaso of Kano State to inform him that he will not guarantee the safety of Anambra indigenes in Kano State before he changed his mind, so how would I know that if I voted for him as the President, he will not victimize my people again?"

\*Response:\* There was no time Peter Obi deported Northern Beggars from Onitsha. Rather what happened was that the then Governor Babatunde Fashola of Lagos deported people he called destitute of supposedly Igbo origin from Lagos and dumped them at Onitsha. While the destitutes and beggars were there in Onitsha, an Okada ran into two of the beggars and killed them on the spot. This made the then Governor Peter Obi to seek for the profiling of the beggars and it was discovered they were from Akwa Ibom and Ebonyi State. He made arrangement for them to be relocated to their states which was Akwa Ibom and Ebonyi States. There was no single Northerner amongst the beggars relocated. It was El-rufai who lied and used that as cheap propaganda against the person of Mr Peter Obi. The internet is everyone's friend once you trust your search engine very well, you can always double check things.

2. In all of his campaigns, he kept saying he donated equipment for churches or offer grants to churches without him referring to mosque, synagogue or traditional religion shrine, so as a Non-Christian how do I know that if I vote him he is not going to bear president for only Christians?"

\*Response:\* Mr Peter Obi is a Christian who is a friend of the North. It's not in doubt that Peter Obi have donated millions to Schools in the various states of the North and trust me that's what a Nation needs to grow not churches or mosques. The earlier we begin to get our priorities right in this country the better. So will

you rather prefer he donates to churches and mosques instead of schools? Even when Father Mbaka of Adoration Ministry asked Peter Obi in the full glare of his congregation to donate to the Church he vehemently refused rather asked Father Mbaka to give him any good project belonging to the church like school project that he will sponsor but Father Mbaka refused saying that he's stingy. Peter Obi is a very disciplined and principled and no amount of harassment can make him change his beliefs.

3. While he tried in infrastructural His human development, remember many governors such as BAT, Nyesom Wike, Ahmad Adamu Muazu, Rauf Aregbesols, Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso, Dave Umahi, Danjuma Goje, Seyi Mankinde, Ibrahim Hassan Dankwanbo etc have track records to match or surpass his records in Anambra State too.

\*Response:\* But non amongst these past Governors mentioned above has his record of inheriting debt of over 32 billion Naira, worked so much and left over 75 billion Naira for their successors. During his time he was awarded as best Governor of Nigeria by not just Nigerian entities but by world class international organizations like Melinda and Bill Gates Foundation.

4. While he left his marks in terms of human development index and education other governors such as Babatunde Raji Fashola, Ibrahim Shekarau, Donad Duke, Babagana Umara Zulum, the Late Abubakar Hashidu, the Late Lam Adeshina, Kashim Shetima etc also match or surpass his records in Anambra State too.

\*Response:\* None of the Governors above during his time could match his record and that's why he lifted Anambra from No. 26 to Number 1 in WAEC and NECO. Can you beat that? Peter Obi sets the pace for others to follow and this is what he's coming to do when he becomes President of Nigeria. That's a President any country national should be proud of.

5. My pregnant sister and her four innocent children were murdered in cold-blood by blood letting hounds who happened to be his brothers in the South East and I did not hear a single condemnation from him or his campaign organization (please correct me if I am wrong), how do I trust him when he becomes president that he will not encourage or keep quiet when the criminals under his presidency enlarge their area of franchise to whole of Nigeria without him raising a finger to stop them?"

\*Response:\* Peter Obi was quick to condemn the killing of the Pregnant Fulani woman and her children so it's not true that he didn't condemn the act."



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# FG concessions Onitsha port, targets N23b revenue

By **ADAKU WALTER**

The Federal Government has approved the concession of the Onitsha River Port in Anambra State for N4 billion under a public, private partnership (PPP) arrangement. It targets to generate over N23 billion from the deal in the next 30 years.

For about five years, the government and investors had been engaged in discussions on the concession of the facility. On Thursday, a concessionaire, Universal Elysium Consortium, was

announced as the preferred bidder for the port after an open bid process.

Universal Elysium Consortium is comprised of Universal Elysium Limited as lead investor, China National Electrical Engineering Limited as EPC contractor, with the Port of ANTWERP and China Harbor Engineering Company Nigeria Limited as technical partners.

The concession process was consummated by the Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission (ICRC), as the agreement was signed at the Federal Ministry of Transportation in Abuja.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Minister of State for Transportation, Gbemisola Saraki, said concessioning the Onitsha River Port would be the catalyst for other river ports to be concessioned in the country.

She disclosed that the Baro, Lokoja and Oguta river ports were also being considered for concession.

The National Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA), the original owners of the facility, expressed satisfaction with the concession of the Onitsha River Port, as its Managing Director, George Moghalu, said several government



Saraki agencies and the World Bank were involved in the process.

On his part, Managing Director of Universal Elysium Consortium

Limited, George Nwangwu, said the company was willing to invest in the rehabilitation of the port to ensure its sustainability and profitability.

## FG, UK sign agreement to deport dangerous criminals back to Nigeria

By **OROWO VICTORIA OJIEH**

A new migration agreement which will increase the deportation of dangerous foreign criminals to Nigeria has been signed by Abuja and London.

United Kingdom's (UK's) Home Secretary, Priti Patel, who disclosed this in a social media statement said that the agreement "New Plan for Immigration," comes after the controversial deportation pact with Rwanda.

It explained that the new agreement aimed at preventing illegal migration would enable both countries to work closer together on supporting safe and legal migration and speeding up the removal of foreign criminals.

Priti Patel, described the agreement as a landmark.

The development, she stated, would increase the deportation of dangerous foreign criminals and take the fight to the criminals who smuggle migrants.

## OML 150 communities commend NDDC interim administrator on projects approval

Some communities in Warri South Local Government Area of Delta State have lauded the Interim Administrator/Managing Director (IA/MD) of the Niger Delta Development Commission, Effiong Okon Akwa, on approval of projects in their areas.

OML 150

Communities Consultative Forum said this in a statement signed by Monday Agbeyi, Executive Chairman and Oritseweyimi Aginejuoune, Secretary General. They said they represent Ifiekporo, Uwakeno, Omadino, Ewekwara, Jaluwa/Efueye, Aja-Osola, Oboro and associated communities in Warri

South Local Government Area of Delta State.

They stressed that they are the registered trustees of OML 150 Communities Consultative Forum.

The forum expressed appreciation to the interim administration for the prompt response to their community's plight in approving and including the Abicity

Water Front at Ifiekporo/Ubeji in the NDDC's budget for construction of shoreline protection and pilling.

They stated that the approval has brought hope to the indigenes and residents of the area who have been under threat due to the continual washing away of their lands and houses, which had left

some members of the affected communities homeless and in a state of despondency.

The forum appealed for speedy execution of the project in tandem with the wish of HRM Ogiame Atuwatse III, Olu of Warri Kingdom, who is very interested in the welfare of his subjects and the development of his domain.

## Ekiti Governor-elect Oyebanji visits Fayose



Oyebanji

Ekiti Governor-elect Biodun Abayomi Oyebanji has paid a courtesy visit to the Lagos residence of one of his predecessors. Mr Ayodele Fayose.

The visit was sequel to the congratulatory messages sent to Oyebanji by the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) candidate in the June 18 election, Chief Bisi Kolawole, Ekiti State chapter of PDP and Ex-Governor Fayose respectively, hailing the outcome of the election, won by the APC

candidate.

Oyebanji said the visit was to extend courtesies to Fayose as a former governor of the state, who, according to him, demonstrated statesmanship by congratulating him shortly after he was declared winner of the June 18 election.

Former Governor Fayose, while receiving the Governor-elect, urged him to be magnanimous in victory and see himself as the Governor of Ekiti State and leader of the people and not

just Governor of APC members alone.

He promised to support Oyebanji's administration in whatever area his support would be needed, adding that the development of Ekiti State is a collective effort.

It will be recalled that Oyebanji had earlier gone on a thank you visit to the Governor of the State, Dr Kayode Fayemi in Ado-Ekiti, a day after the incumbent Governor led two other APC governors to visit him at his Ikogosi Ekiti country home.

The Governor-elect has also visited the first civilian Governor of the state, currently Minister of Investments, Trade and Industry, Otunba Niyi Adebayo, at his Iyin-Ekiti country home earlier this week. He had earlier visited Chief Deji Fasuan, the nonagenarian elder statesman who chaired the committee for the creation of Ekiti State, under whom he served as Secretary (to the committee) as well as the Ewi of Ado-Ekiti, HRM, Oba Rufus Adeyemo Adejugbe.

## Firm invests N24b on integrated farm in Edo

Saro Group of Companies has invested not less than N24 billion in an integrated farm in Edo State to boost local production of raw materials for use in the manufacturing sector, especially the food and beverages sub-sector.

Chief Executive Officer of Saro Group

Companies, Rasheed Sarumi, who disclosed this during an inspection of the farm site, said the integrated agricultural project was a joint venture between SaroAfrica and Mohinani Group under the Green Hills Agric Projects.

He commended Governor Godwin

Obaseki-led government for creating a business-friendly environment, assuring that the factory would be commissioned in quarter one, 2023.

Sarumi said the project was valued at N24 billion. He said: "This is an integrated agricultural project. This factory needs 480 tons

of cassava per day and there are about 5,000 hectares of land to grow. Already, 1,500 have been grown; 350 people from neighbouring communities will work here on the feedstock alone. The 480 tons per day will be converted to waste for feedstock for the piggery."

On his part, Governor Obaseki said: "This

project is significant and important as it is a project where almost 100 per cent of raw materials needed are sourced locally and 100 per cent of the outputs will be feedstock to other companies and industries, particularly in the food and beverages sector, whether it's ethanol or carbon dioxide."

## EGSOSA Lagos branch elects new executive

The Lagos Chapter of Emede Grammar School Old Student Association last Sunday held its quarterly meeting during which it elected officials to run its affairs for the next two years.

According to a statement by the association's National Public Relations Officer, Mr Amos Iwary, the officials include: Mr Aina Abayomi, Chairman; Mr Tom Joseph Efedhoma (Vice-Chairman);

Mr Tennyson Okakoso (Secretary).

Others are Mr George Izzy (Assistant Secretary); Mr Okpeki Gabriel (Treasurer); Mr Ohis Onoriode (Financial Secretary) and Mr Anigboro Julius (Provost Marshal).

## Joel-Onowakpo Thomas hails Osanebi's choice as Omo-Agege's running mate

All Progressives Congress (APC) Senatorial Candidate for Delta South, Hon. Joel-Onowakpo Thomas, has congratulated and hailed the emergence of Rt.Hon. Friday Ossai Osanebi as the running mate to the party's governorship torchbearer in the state, Senator Ovie Omo-

Agege.

In a congratulatory message by his Personal Press Secretary, Godday Odidi, the senatorial hopeful said Osanebi's choice is a step in the right direction towards election victory of the party in Delta State.

According to Joel-Onowakpo, the joint ticket of Osanebi who is

a unique young political achiever in legislative processes and that of a highly-placed lawmaker in person of Omo-Agege who is current Deputy Senate President, will surely bring a paradigm shift in the political equation of Delta State.

"With your rich profile in the Delta House of Assembly as a former

Deputy Speaker and humanitarian expert, no doubt, the All Progressives Congress (APC) is set to come out victorious. It is a political signal to the PDP in Delta State that APC is not joking and we are ready to give Deltans Employment, Empowerment, Development, Good Governance, and Enduring Peace

and Security (EDGE) and Build A New Delta (BAND).

"You are a bridge-builder, a man of excellent character, integrity, probity, and humanitarian. Your disposition as a philanthropist which has made you a voice in the state, will be of immense service to our

party. God will continue to give you the wisdom to support the aspiration of Senator Omo-Agege to victory come 2023."

Joel-Onowakpo, therefore, called on members of the APC to remain focused in their resolve to rescue Delta State from the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) in 2023.

## Sen Nwaoboshi bags 7 years jail term for money laundering

By PAUL MICHAEL

An Appeal Court sitting in Lagos has convicted and sentenced Senator Peter Nwaoboshi, senator representing Delta North Senatorial District at the National Assembly, to seven years imprisonment for money laundering.

The court also ordered that his two companies, Golden Touch Construc-

tion Project Ltd and Suiming Electrical Ltd, be wound up in line with the provisions of Section 22 of the Money Laundering Prohibition Act 2021.

The Appellate Court's ruling followed the success of the appeal by challenging the judgment of Justice Chukwujekwu Aneke of the Federal High Court which on June 18, 2021,

discharged and acquitted the defendants of a two count charge of fraud and money laundering instituted by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

EFCC had arraigned the three defendants over the acquisition of a property named Guinea House, Marine Road, in Apapa, Lagos, for N805 million. Part of the money paid to the vendor, precisely a sum of N322 million transferred by Suiming Electrical Ltd on behalf of Nwaoboshi and Golden Touch Construction Project Ltd, was alleged to be part of the proceeds of fraud.

However, in his judgment, Justice Aneke held that the prosecution failed to call vital witnesses and tender concrete evidence to prove the elements of the offences for which it charged the defendants.

Justice Aneke said the evidence of PW2 "proved that the third defendant obtained a loan of N1.2 billion from Zenith Bank for purchase of additional equipment and as the

provision of working capital.

"It also proved that the loan of N1.2 billion together with interest of N24 million was properly granted to the third. Nothing else was proved by the complainant or prosecutor in this case."

The Judge claimed that a fatal blow was dealt in the case of the prosecution by its failure to call officials of Sterling Bank "to testify and probably tender exhibits F and F10".

Therefore, he discharged and acquitted the defendants.

But following the EFCC's appeal of the case, the Court of Appeal on Tuesday, 1st July 2022, held that the trial judge erred in dismissing the charges against the respondents. Adding that the prosecution had proved the ingredients of the offence and consequently found the defendants guilty as charged.

Consequently, the court convicted and sentenced the serving senator to seven years imprisonment.



Sen. Peter Nwaoboshi

## Kaduna ICPC charges staffers of Specialist Hospital on anti-corruption

By PAUL MICHAEL

The Kaduna State office of the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) has charged staff of Yusuf Dantsoho Specialist Hospital, Kaduna to join the fight against corruption.

Abubakar Shinkafi, an officer of the Commission, gave the charge during an awareness workshop for staff of the Specialist Hospital in Kaduna while educating them on the ills of corruption and how to eradicate it.

While delivering a paper

titled, 'Combating Corruption in Health Institution', Shinkafi, who represented the Resident Anti-Corruption Commissioner (RACC) of ICPC Kaduna office, explained that the health sector, which is the custodian of human life, is very vital to ensuring the wellbeing of citizens but have been seen to be corrupt despite government and non-governmental organisation's input in the sector.

He lamented that little or no significant results have been attained over the years as a result of corruption in the health sector.

Shinkafi, who also spoke on the various methods and tools that could be employed by staff of the hospital to enlighten the public on the effects of corruption in the health sector to help reduce the menace, added that education and enlightenment is key to reducing corruption in the society.

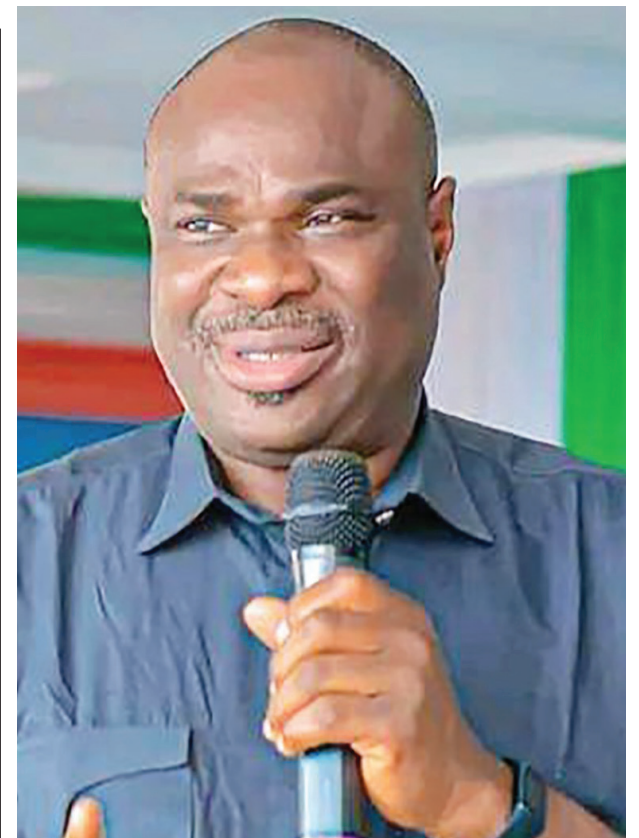
According to him, "when the people are educated and enlightened on why they should join the anti-corruption campaign, it would go a long way in helping to reduce the cankerworm as more people would be made aware of

the effects of corruption."

He further emphasised that the task of eradicating corruption is not meant for the government and anti-graft agencies alone but a duty for all Nigerians.

He, therefore, urged the participants to join the anti-corruption crusade by shunning and reporting corrupt practices.

Earlier, while declaring the workshop open, the Chief Medical Director of the hospital, Dr Ige Atawodi stated that the sensitisation workshop was the first of its kind for the staff of the hospital and commended ICPC for the initiative.



Joel-Onowakpo Thomas

## Houses burnt, villagers flee as fresh crisis rocks Enugu LGA

By CHARLES ONYEKWERE, South-East Correspondent

Several houses have reportedly been razed by angry youths in Nkpologwu Community of Uzo Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State. The killing of a 15-year-old boy by the local vigilante had sparked off violent demonstrations across the Community.

The vigilante were said to have stormed the residence of the deceased (names not confirmed) on Wednesday night for arrest. The arrest was sequel to a disagreement over a land-related issue in the market earlier in the day.

The victim allegedly resisted arrest and in the process, he was shot in the waist by one of the vigilantes. He reportedly died the next day. An eyewitness account said the news of the death of the boy angered the youths that went on rampage, burning down houses belonging to the members of the vigilante.

"We're currently living

in fear because we don't know what will happen next and we're helpless," the eyewitness, who gave his name simply as Ifeanyi, said.

"Immediately the news of the death hit the village, youths mobilized immediately and went on rampage. As I speak with you now, the house of the Chief Security Officer, CSO of our local government, Barrister Chijioko Ezugwu, has been completely burnt down.

"The house of another businessman, Anthony Ani, was torched and this arson is spreading by the day. We call on the relevant authorities to rise and save our agrarian community before the situation goes out of hand completely," he stated.

Another source said that the victim is accused of selling methamphetamine popularly known as Mkpurumiri and when the vigilante went to arrest him, he resisted and made an attempt to run away which led to the shooting.

## Okowa on a lonely road toward 2023

By **AGBEFE SEBASTINE**

There is no gain emphasizing the fact that the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) is at its lowest ebb since its formation in 1998. In fact, the party is on life support at the moment and this is not unconnected with the way and manner His Excellency, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar has managed his post-party primary election victory.

In party politics, after every contest, the burden to engineer reconciliation moves is usually on the shoulders of the winner. It is meant to massage damaged egos and calm nerves. It is the only way to get party members from their different camps back into the fold to confront their opponents from other political parties. In this regard, it appears that Atiku, the Presidential candidate of the PDP has not met the expectations of his political party bigwigs.

During the run-up to the PDP presidential primaries, we watched on national television where Governor Nyesom Wike of Rivers State, who later emerged as the first runner up in the keenly contested presidential primaries said; "I will support whoever wins this primary."

Though there were clear cases of betrayal and irregularities in the conduct of the primaries, Wike didn't change his earlier position. He kept to his words. He received Atiku who visited him after the primaries and they both smiled before the cameras after their private meeting.

Wike only had to air his reservation in Port Harcourt during his speech at a reception organized by his people, where he queried the organizers of the primaries for calling back Governor Aminu Tambuwal for a second time to man the podium, giving him an opportunity to step down for a fellow northern aspirant, Atiku Abubakar - an action that will go down the annals of history as the turning point of that primaries, leading to Atiku's victory. However, Governor Wike reaffirmed his promise to work for the party.

Prior to Governor Ifeanyi Okowa's emergence as the running mate to Atiku, we read on the pages of newspapers how Wike in one of his consultations to delegates reiterated that he was not interested in being the running mate to anybody. Especially so because he was confident and convinced that he would win the primaries. The southern governors had propelled him through actions and inactions to challenge the big masquerade, Atiku Abubakar.

He didn't know that Governor Okowa who hosted the maiden meeting for the southern Nigeria President agitation, had an ace up his sleeves. Okowa was plotting for the seat of Vice President and already had a pact with Atiku Abubakar even before hosting the meeting that is now infamously tagged "The Asaba Declaration"; A declaration that would be referred to in the future wherever regional political treachery, deceit and betrayal is discussed in Nigeria and beyond.

Not minding the political injuries incurred during the primaries, Wike's supporters continued to knock on Wike's door, and eventually got him to open up his doors for possible nomination as



Governor Ifeanyi Okowa

the presidential running mate to Atiku. His name was placed side-by-side with a few other names and after days of deliberations of motions and counter motions, the committee set up by the hierarchy of the party and Atiku Abubakar to recommend and nominate the Vice Presidential candidate, came up with Governor Nyesom Wike as the most suitable amongst the three names finally sieved.

It was later revealed that the committee had to put it to a voice vote and Wike was overwhelmingly voted for. However, in a twist of events, Atiku Abubakar and Senator Iyocha Ayu, the National Chairman of PDP, announced Governor Okowa of Delta State as his running mate instead.

They jettisoned the report of a committee set up by themselves. That action in itself was a red rag to a bull and everyone knows Governor Wike would surely react. How and when remains a mystery.

Atiku Abubakar didn't deem it fit to personally reach out to Governor Wike and those leaders whose egos may have been bruised by his decision, to at least mend fences.

However, as fate would have it, It didn't take longer than eight days for Atiku Abubakar and the National Chairman of PDP, Senator Ayu, who party leaders now adjudge as the bull in a china shop, to witness the first repercussion of their ill-treatment and disrespect on Governor Nyesom Wike and Other party leaders.

The party was ignominiously defeated like never before in the Ekiti State Governorship election. Majority of the Party leaders and serving Governors looked the other way.

For the very first time since 1999, the PDP lost an election for paucity of funds. Governor Okowa, the Vice Presidential candidate of the party could not take

charge and pull the strings like Wike did in Edo State gubernatorial election.

No doubt, Governor Wike is gifted with the power to mobilize for elections. Beyond mobilizing funds, he is a charismatic party man. He is an asset to the PDP. He is unarguably the face of opposition in this political dispensation. His absence in Ekiti exposed the weakness of Governor Okowa and the others.

The Ekiti election was no doubt, one amongst the two lifelines left for the PDP to launch itself back as a formidable party, prepared to wrestle power from the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) in the forthcoming 2023 general elections but failed to do so.

Notwithstanding, there's still one lifeline left, and that is the Osun State gubernatorial election. If the PDP puts up a good fight and come out in flying colours, it could energize them going into the 2023 elections. However, there's still a big clog in the wheel.

The recent revelation of Governor Samuel Orthom of Benue State in his interview with Arise Television shows that the party's leadership are all up in arms. And it is deeper than imagined. There's still no lesson learned from the Ekiti debacle.

The onus to call for a truce if possible lies in the hands of the National Chairman and the Presidential Candidate. They must stoop to cut the Gordian knot.

Atiku is no political novice. He has seen it all politically. In fact, had Atiku Abubakar not agreed to step down for MKO Abiola during the Social Democratic Party (SDP) presidential primaries of 1992, maybe, we would not be celebrating June 12 today, as it was very likely that Babagana Kingibe would have won if he, Atiku, had to step down for him.

He, however, stepped down for Abiola to defeat Babagana Kingibe with the belief of clinching the Vice Presidential slot as running mate to Abiola. But in the end,

Kingibe was announced as the running mate. What transpired thereof, is a story for another day.

Atiku later won the Adamawa state governorship election in 1999 but was picked as presidential running mate to Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. They won in the general election and had an uninterrupted eight years rule.

It is against this backdrop that no one can say Atiku's failure or refusal to meet with Governor Wike is an oversight. I want to believe that it is deliberate. It's either he is calling Governor Wike bluff or he wants to minimize Wike's negotiation strength. Wike on the other hand has decided to engage a very fierce and dangerous political weapon—silence. It is usually a weapon to aggressively manipulate and pressure political adversaries to come down from their high horses.

As they continue in their political moves like the knights and rooks on a chessboard, Governor Okowa and the party in Osun State suffer.

Governor Ifeanyi Okowa of Delta State, who the Southern and Middle-Belt leaders led by Pa E.K Clark, decorated with the toga of a 'betrayer', and called a wolf in sheep's clothing, It's carries the burden of the Osun election. Days ago, he was seen at the inauguration of the Osun State Campaign Committee looking pale.

Unlike the PDP, he had with him only Governor Darius Ishaku of Taraba State carrying the burden of the election. The other governors of the party boycotted the Inauguration for obvious reasons. They are not happy that having set up a committee comprising the NWC, former Governors, serving Governors and BOT, etc., their recommendation was trashed without any iota of explanation.

Arising from the disrespect for party leaders, Governor Ortom has said he is hibernating and he will pray to God to know whether or not to support Atiku Abubakar, his party presidential candidate in the 2023 general election. Ortom has gone beyond the veil.

Three southern Governors, Governor Ikpeazu Okezie, Governor Makinde and Governor Nyesom Wike are all outside the country, holidaying, with no sight of their return. They were last seen in Turkey.

Governor Udom of Akwa-Ibom has suddenly snowballed into thin air. The last time Governor Obaseki of Edo State had a microphone in his hands he focused his attention on the youth's political crusade, code-named 'Obi-dient'. He deliberately ignored his party. Atiku Abubakar has gone on vacation to Dubai.

Amidst all of this, the Osun State gubernatorial election is fifteen days away and the time is ticking fast. If PDP loses the election, then all bets are off, barring any last-minute change for their 2023 hopes.

For whatever it is, If PDP loses in Osun, it would be safe to say that Governor Okowa's inordinate quest for power is the thin end of the wedge. He has brought calamity upon his party. He has schemed his way up to grab the Vice Presidential ticket of the party against the hues and cries of majority of the leaders who favoured Nyesom Wike, and now he, Okowa, is on a lonely path toward the 2023 general election.

# Reasons to support Tinubu for President

By SHITTU OLANREWAJU

**1. Power:** Tinubu's government, in 2000, contracted AES to build an IPP that will generate 270MW of electricity to Lagos residents in order to exit the irrational power supply being provided by the FG. The 270MW is now part of our national grid. It is the first of it's Kind. Tinubu electrification project covered over 100 communities. In his first term, 53 rural communities were targeted. The projects were completed in Egan, Atewolere, Ifesowapo, Aboru, Agbado Ayetoro, Akorede, Isheri Ikosi, Orile Aguntan, Rofo, Borokini, Omologbede, Araromi, Oke Agbo, Erekusu, Logberu, Okegelu and Ebute, Lekki. Others were Origanringan, Onigbolakowe, Oke odo Elemoro, Ipaja Isale odo, Agenuba, Ajelogo, Mutaku, Egansando, Ayanfe, topo and Ikola Agbenaje.

**2. Decentralization:** In order to bring governance closer to the people of Lagos state, Asiwaju created extra 36 LCDAs which led to the disagreement between Lagos and the OBJ led FG. They are still working till date. Nigeria needs someone who believes in this! First of it's kind

**3. Economy:** With an IGR of just over 600million naira when he took over, different initiatives which included the reorganization of the LIRS led to an unprecedented IGR of over 7billion monthly after 8 years, the sustainability of which has brought same to 57bn in 2022.

**4. Health:** Decentralization of the Health Management Board led to the creation of LASAMBUS, an ambulance management scheme, Hospital Services Commission and Lagos State Health Facility Monitoring and Accreditation Agency. In addition, policies such as "Roll Back Malaria", "Jigi Bola, Free Health Policy for children below 16 year and adults above 65 years are verifiable ones that stood him out then. The First of its Kind.

**5. Infrastructure:** Roads, Railway Roadmaps, Port Roadmaps, Housing Roadmaps. Hospital Roadmaps.

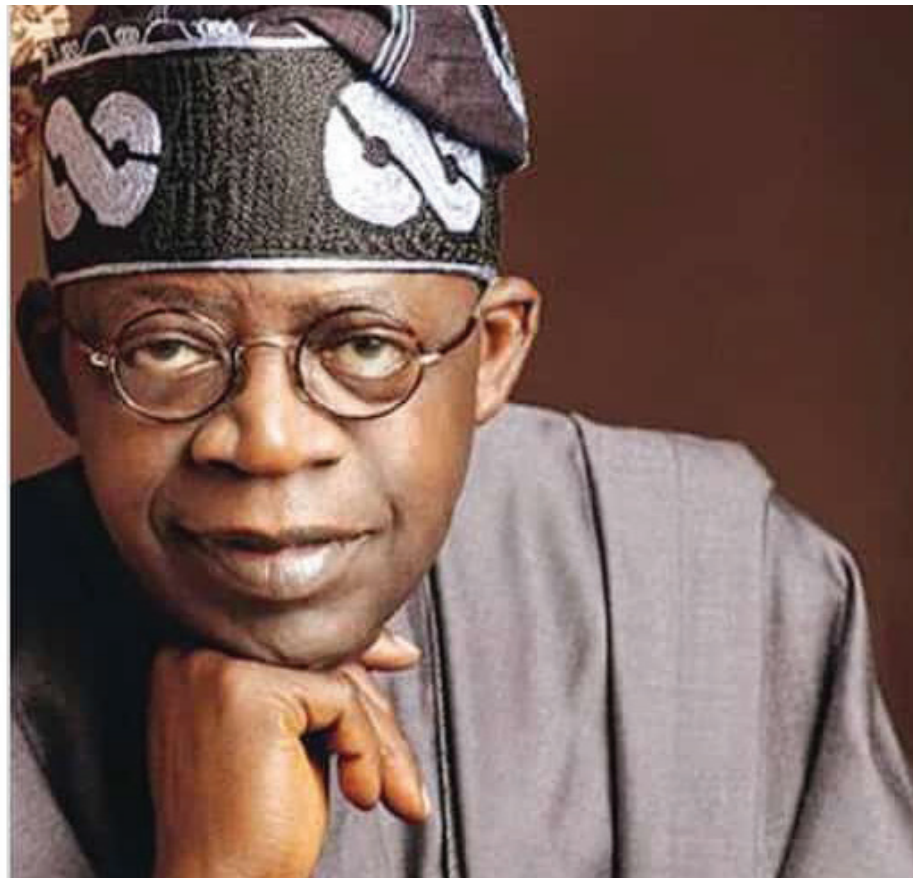
**6. Investment:** Lekki Free Trade Zone opened Lagos to investors and now several top companies/bodies have their headquarters there including the biggest consulate office of the USA. Lekki infrastructure company, Eko Atlantic.

**7. Housing:** Decentralization of the ministry of works and housing gave birth to the conversion of the housing department to a full fledged ministry which was charged with providing 500 units of houses yearly. This single move led to making the Lekki corridor the fastest growing real estate investment haven in Nigeria. Housing sector was opened to the private investors and Lagos became the highest destination for real estate investors in Nigeria.

**8. EDUCATION:** Payment of WAEC fee for students from all walks of life so far you live in Lagos. Several schools were built. The One-Day governor program started with the spelling bee competition.

First of its kind

**9. SECURITY:** The closest thing to state policing started in Nigeria under Tinubu, with RRS in 1999. The prisons reformation in order to curb activities of criminals, led to conversion of Ita Oko Prisoners Camp to a Youth Skill Acquisition Centre. Infact RRS is now the most performing police force in Nigeria. To make things work, he created the Lagos security trust fund where private sector come together to invest in Lagos security in



Bola Tinubu

conjunction with the government.

**10. ENVIRONMENT:** LAWMA, LASEPA, LWC, PUMAU, LASECA. All formulated by Tinubu to tackle the issue of environmental decay in Lagos.

**11. EMPOWERMENT SCHEMES:** The creation of several agencies led to several openings in the government which led to jobs in LASTMA, LAGBUS, LASEWA etc. First of its kind.

**12. PPP Initiatives:**  
 -Lekki Free Trade Zone PPP - Tinubu  
 -Eko Atlantic - PPP Tinubu  
 -Lagos state security trust fund - Tinubu  
 -Lekki infrastructure company - Tinubu  
 -Enron power project PPP - Tinubu  
 -LSPDC PPP - Tinubu  
 -Privatisation of Healthcare delivery ( Labs and diagnostic centers) - Tinubu  
 -Lagos BRT scheme PPP - Tinubu  
 -Lekki concession company PPP - Tinubu  
 Tinubu Received many awards: They include  
 -The 'Best Governor of for 2001 by the

Nigerian/Belgian Chamber of Commerce

-Winner of 2002 Best Practices Prize in improving the living environment (by the Federal Ministry of Works and UN habitat Group), 2000

-Best computerized Government in Nigeria (by the Computer Association of Nigeria),

-2003 Green Crystal Award for Enhancing the Value of the Environment (by Clean-Up Nigeria (CUN),

-2002 Healthcare Award as the best provider of best health services in Nigeria, Presidential Merit Award for technological Development by the Nigerian Society of Engineers,

-2001 National Literacy award for outstanding contribution to mas literacy,

-Co-winner of 2002 Outstanding Alumnus award of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC),

-2001 Distinguished Alumnus Award by Chicago State University, Distinguished Service Award for Exemplary Leadership by the Lagos State Economic Summit Group,

-Certificate of Commendation by the national Conference of Black mayors,

-Silver Jubilee Anniversary Award as Labour Friendly Governor by the National Union of Petroleum and Natural gas Workers (NUPENG),

-Award of Recognition by Nigerian Berge Limited for the initiation of the Independent Power project (IPP).

He got the history in his previous administration and he is the ONLY presidential candidate that have demonstrated the zeal for restructuring in Nigeria.

Why do we need restructuring in Nigeria? We all agree it is based on the below angle:

-State Policing: Asiwaju is the only candidate that has consistently challenged the federal government on the need for a state police. He tried during his tenure to create state police from the good faction of OPC then but obasanjo frustrated him. He then went ahead to create RRS which he improved to the best police squad in Nigeria.

-Devolution of power to the local governments: Tinubu has done with success in Lagos. He created 36 LCDAs to give power closer to the people. OBJ again tried to stop him which was why he seized lagos allocation. Yet, the LG still stand today with those LCDAs building projects and health center that other state governor cannot dare to do.

-Revenue independency: Do you know Tinubu was the first governor to challenge the FG on the need for states to hold their VAT? He took the FG to court during OBJ tenure and even proceeded to the supreme court. Many people thought Wike was the first person to do this VAT, but it was actually Tinubu that started the fight.

-Fiscal Policy: Before Tinubu, taxing in lagos used to be manual process where tax agents record taxes of business in the manual way and this allow companies to scam the government by not paying what is due. Tinubu was the first governor to fully digitize tax collection in Lagos through LIRS and expand the net such that he increased the revenue to over 700% percent in his 8 years as governor. Infact, the Federal government copied LIRS method to create their FIRS who till now are not as efficient as Lagos owned LIRS. That is intelligence, we need that in the FG.

● *Lawre Shittu is an engineer and National Admin Officer, Bola Campaign Organisation.*

## Bola Tinubu fit to be President in 2023

By ADÉMOLÁ ÒRÚNBON

Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu has been one of the prominent names since the soldiers returned to the barracks and handed over power to democratically elected leaders in 1999, he was first and foremost elected a senator to represent Lagos West in 1992 under the banner of the Social Democratic Party, SDP, was among the activists who campaigned for the return of democracy using the platform of the National Democratic Coalition Movement, NADECO.

In the first post-transition Lagos State governorship election in 1999, Tinubu as the candidate of the Alliance for Democracy defeated the Peoples Democratic Party's Dapo Sarumi and the All Peoples Party's Architect Nosirudeen Kekere-Ekun. He secured a second term in 2003 and after leaving office in 2007, Tinubu has retained his status as

one of Nigeria's most influential politicians, serving as a kingmaker in Lagos and other states, especially in the South West.

In 2013, he led the bloc of the Action Congress of Nigeria, ACN, that merged with the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), a faction of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) and the new PDP (nPDP), a fraction of the then ruling PDP- into the All Progressives Congress (APC), which ousted the PDP from power at the centre after 16 years. Thus, elevating him into the national scene as he is fondly referred to as the national leader of the APC.

His dexterity to have control over Lagos State and extend such influence not only to other states and regions in the country but also to the presidency has made him the master of the political chess game and the numero uno kingmaker.

The kingmaker never hid his intention to become the king in 2023, despite doomsday prophecies about his imminent downfall. He suffered from mudslinging, was betrayed by some prominent beneficiaries of his struggles, and was threatened among others in the build-up to the APC national convention.

His experience as a kingmaker, who has been involved in many political battles since 1992 will be helpful in the journey to Saturday, 25 February 2023, when Nigerians will elect the successor of President Buhari.

He was once forced into exile by military ruler Sani Abacha, Mr Tinubu knows the value of freedom and wears it as an insignia on his signature hat - a broken shackle that looks like a horizontal figure eight. Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, a trained accountant, it was the activities of the pro-democracy National Democratic Coalition (Nadeco) group,

## Tinubu unfit to be president in 2023

By KENNEDY EMETULU

I don't know if I'm the only one incredibly puzzled by what happened at the All Progressives Congress (APC) presidential convention that produced Bola Tinubu as the party's presidential flag-bearer in the forthcoming general election. I admit I am shocked by the outcome. And I say so as someone not very much in the business of being surprised by what passes for politics in Nigeria.

Don't get me wrong, I acknowledge Tinubu's talent as a politician. I know he is a determined man who would always go for what he wants. But, the presidency of Nigeria should not be for anyone who sees it as something that must come to them, someone who views it with a sense of entitlement – an "E gbe kiniyi wa" or "E mi lo kan" candidate. That is just plain dangerous. It is even more dangerous when we consider Tinubu's political history in Lagos and the South-West. However, most dangerous are citizens who sat through the convention to watch the aspirants live and still come up with the decision to vote for Tinubu! How? Why?

How can 1,271 Nigerians who know what our nation has suffered as a result of voting in persons who have serious health issues as President still sit down and vote for Tinubu who EVIDENTLY is suffering from Parkinson's disease? In addressing them, Tinubu was shaking like a leaf in the wind, spending more than 12 seconds to open another page in his laboured speech, yet they voted for him!

We recall how Umaru Yar'Adua was evacuated to Germany during the 2007 presidential campaign and all the lies and denials that followed until the poor guy gave up the ghost on the 5th of May, 2010. That triggered a constitutional crisis that saw Nigerians rise in defence of constitutionality to see the then Vice President Goodluck Jonathan take over, despite the best efforts of 'the cabal' to thwart him.

Arguably, Nigeria suffered worse under President Muhammadu Buhari because of his poor health and his incessant hopping on the plane to London for very long periods to go take care of his health. That Buhari is still alive today is a miracle for which we all thank God. But, again, like Umaru Yar'Adua, the lies about his state of health by his handlers could not hide the fact that Nigeria has suffered greatly from the consequences of his ill-health.

Now, let me make something clear. It is not a comfortable thing to talk about the ill-health of another mortal because we are all brittle beings at the mercy of the Almighty. Any of us can fall ill at any time and it's not a crime. It's true that as private citizens, whatever happens to our health is our business and the business of our family, friends and close associates and loved ones generally. It is not the business of the nation how you go about looking after yourself or how your handlers go about looking after you.

But, when you are occupying a public office as high as that of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria or when you aspire to it, then your health becomes a public issue because the Constitution frowns upon a severely ill person occupying the position of the President. This is why it is scary that some people sat somewhere in Abuja in the name of a party convention and chose a man suffering from a degenerative disease without cure as the presidential



Bola Tinubu

flag-bearer of their party in the forthcoming general election. It is scary because this is the ruling party with the capacity to put this man in Aso Rock as successor to President Muhammadu Buhari!

To properly contextualize this problem, we need to understand that the fact that someone suffers from Parkinson's should ordinarily not be the end of their working life. In Europe or America, for instance, what usually happens, in order to avoid discrimination against such a person, is that they are given fewer tasking jobs that they can do in their condition until it is practically impossible for them to continue with the job because of the progressively degenerative nature of the disease. Parkinson's impedes

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where he was a member, that brought him into Abacha's crosshairs.

The opposition of groups like Nadeco and Abacha's death in 1998 ushered in Nigeria's democracy in 1999 and in many ways, Mr Tinubu, a former Mobil oil executive, feels entitled to Nigeria's presidency. He will surely be banking on his experience in politics and huge influence across the country to win the general election, where he will face stiff competition from former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar, who is standing for the main opposition People's Democratic Party (PDP), and a burgeoning campaign by the Labour Party's Peter Obi, who is hugely popular with urban voters.

If Mr Tinubu, known as "Jagaban" by supporters, gets the top job, he would be looking to unify a country divided across regional lines, tackle widespread insecurity, create jobs and bring down rising inflation. Mind you, it is not a job that fazes him. He has pointed to his time as Lagos state governor between 1999 and 2007 to sell his candidacy to party delegates and will be hoping to do the same with Nigerians.

Under his tenure, Lagos massively grew its income through huge foreign investment, while a public transport scheme that saw new lanes created for rapid buses eased the notorious traffic jams faced daily by commuters. Indeed, his immense political influence led to the merger of opposition parties in 2013 and eventually wrestled power

your ability to walk, your ability to carry or move things, your ability to read and write, your ability to concentrate and learn and your ability to use the phone or have a conversation and so on. How then can we as people who are compos mentis decide that the office of the President of our nation is the place we must install a person suffering Parkinson's, even if we say this fellow is the brightest amongst us? How can we look ourselves in the eye and declare ourselves true patriots if we have no scruples rooting for a Tinubu in his condition in the Nigeria of 2022 with all the problems our nation is facing?

Honestly, there is a sense in thinking that these people supporting Tinubu and Tinubu himself are taking advantage of what is supposedly a lacuna in our laws. Under the eligibility provisions of the Constitution as it concerns the health of anyone seeking to be President, section 137(1)(c) says a person shall not be qualified for election to the office of the President if under the law of any part of Nigeria, he is adjudged to be a lunatic or otherwise declared to be of unsound mind. This is all it says with regard to health as qualification for election to the office of the President. So, it only talks the mental health of the person seeking the office and not their physical health.

But, we can get an idea of what the objective of the Constitution is with regard to the health status of any person seeking to occupy that office by looking at what the law says with regard to someone already occupying the office. Indeed, we will look at the law in the context of our history of attempts by two different presidents and groups to game the system, so as to avoid what is constitutionally and indeed morally necessary.

The Constitution addresses two situations that require the President to hand over power temporarily or resign permanently where he suffers from ill-health. Here are the sections dealing with these:

### Section 145:

Whenever the President transmits to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives a written declaration that he is proceeding on vacation or that he is otherwise unable to discharge the functions of his office, until he transmits to them a written declaration to the contrary such functions shall be discharged by the Vice-President as Acting President.

### Section 144:

(1) The President or Vice-President shall cease to hold office, if -

(a) by a resolution passed by two-thirds majority of all the members of the executive council of the Federation it is declared that the President or Vice-President is incapable of discharging the functions of his office; and

(b) the declaration is verified, after such medical examination as may be necessary, by a medical panel established under subsection (4) of this section in its report to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

(2) Where the medical panel certifies in the report that in its opinion the President or Vice-President is suffering from such infirmity of body or mind as renders him permanently incapable of discharging the functions of his office, a notice thereof signed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall be published in the Official Gazette of the Government of the Federation.

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## Bola Tinubu fit to be President in 2023

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Under his tenure, Lagos massively grew its income through huge foreign investment, while a public transport scheme that saw new lanes created for rapid buses eased the notorious traffic jams faced daily by commuters. Indeed, his immense political influence led to the merger of opposition parties in 2013 and eventually wrestled power

from the then-ruling PDP in 2015 - a rarity in Nigeria where incumbents are not often defeated.

In fact, with Bola Ahmed Tinubu's presidency, the nation's educational and Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) sectors are poised to experience audacious capital outlay with the aim of making them compete on the same pedestal with the best across the globe. He is not a man who pays lip service to education, economy and computer development. I see uncommon excitement and development in the nation's political sphere with Asiwaju Bola Tinubu's presidency.

The sacrifice bore fruits for Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the political genius, at the APC's special convention for the 2023 race, as some of the beneficiaries of his long-suffering and self-denial cleared the path for his emergence, despite uninformed rumours of a rift. Some unscrupulous elements had earlier murmured that some of the aspirants contesting with him were not in good ranpor and most of them were his sworn enemy.

It is time to give to those who sheathed their sword to pave way for Bola Tinubu's presidency, those dogged contenders, such as Governor Kayode Fayemi of Ekiti State, Governor Badaru Abubakar of Jigawa State, former Governor Ibikunle Amosun of Ogun State, former Governor Godswill Akpabio of Akwa Ibom State, Senator Ajayi Boroffice and former Speaker Dimeji Bankole, all shelved their ambitions and stepped down as spirants of APC to back, support and endorse Bola Tinubu.

Indeed, Fayemi, Amosun and Akpabio deserve commendation for their doggedness, sensible pragmatism and good-natured decision, which is very hard to take, having recognized the need for southerners to unite around the most likely aspirants to go the long haul and secure the victory of the APC at the event.

Your emergence as the standard-bearer of the APC is a national call to duty, to serve humanity, bring prosperity to the country and replicate what you have done in the city of Lagos on a national scale when you look at your scores in the convention, BAT scored 1,271, and when you at it critically, you will observe it in Psalm 127 vs 1, which says; unless the Lord builds the house, its builder's labour in vain, may Allāh (SWT) give you the strength and power to steer the boat of the party till the general elections in February, next year.

Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu polled 127-1 votes at the APC Presidential primaries. Please, check out Psalm 127 verse 1 in the Holy Bible. "Except the LORD build a house, they labour in vain that build it; except the LORD keep the City, the Watchman waketh but in vain".

This is a house built by the LORD, and the LORD is watching over the house. What a symbolic number to poll!

• *Orunbon, an opinion writer, poet, journalist and public affairs analyst, writes from Federal Housing Estate, Olomore, Abeokuta, Ogun State and can be reached via [orunbonibrahimademola@gmail.com](mailto:orunbonibrahimademola@gmail.com) or 08034493944, 08029301122.*



## Edo govt's Nolle Prosequi fails to end Oba of Benin, Ogiamien feud

By GABRIEL OMONHINMIN

On April 29, 2022, Edo State Government through Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Mr Oluwole Iyamu (SAN) filed a 'nolle prosequi' indicating inability to proceed with criminal charges it initially instituted against His Imperial Majesty, Rich Arisco Osemwingie and one other member of the Ogiamien Royal Dynasty of Utantan, Benin City.

The criminal charges were initially filed against the head of the Royal Dynasty for allegedly violating the Edo State Traditional Rulers and Chiefs Law when he was proclaimed the Ogiamien of Utantan Kingdom in the ancient city without recourse or approval of the Oba of Benin.

Ordinarily, with the dropping of the charges, Palace Watchers would have thought, this matter has been put to rest finally. Sadly, that is not the case, the unfolding drama has indicated that the least is yet to be heard, as both parties in this drama are still warming up for more contestation.

On Thursday, June 23, 2022, 14 Benin High-ranking Chiefs and Enogies (Dukes) in a statement read by the Traditional Prime Minister of Benin Kingdom, Chief Sam Igbe, said, "The Oba of Benin, Oba Ewuare II, said that Mr Rich Arisco Osemwingie, has committed a sacrilegious offence against the Benin customs and traditions for unlawfully crowning himself as Ogiamien of Benin Kingdom, a Chieftaincy title in the Benin royal stool and he is thus adjudged an enemy of the Benin palace and the Binis in general."

Other Benin Chiefs present at the press conference were Chief D.U. Edebiri, who is the Esogban of Benin, Chief M.N.O. Ozigbo-Esere, Osuma of Benin and eleven other Chiefs of the Benin palace.

The statement reads: "This conference is called by the Chiefs and Enigies in Benin Kingdom of the seven Local Government Areas of Edo State namely Oredo, Ikpoba-Okha, Egor, Ovia North East, Ovia South West, Orhionmwon and Ununwode.

Mr Rich Arisco Osemwingie's criminal charges are as follows:

"The recent publications from the Office of the Edo State Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice with regard to the Edo State withdrawal of the criminal case against one, Mr Rich Arisco Osemwingie and one other necessitated this Press Conference. We would have responded long before now, but restrained for reason of contempt of court. Now that the case has been withdrawn, we decided to address the public via this press conference.

"The Binis, both at home and in Diaspora have been very angry over the withdrawal of the criminal case against the said, Rich Arisco Osemwingie and one other.

"We want to state categorically, that the said Mr Rich Arisco Osemwingie is not Ogiamien. He has no locus standi to claim or be addressed as Ogiamien neither has he any right to the title of Ogiamien of Benin Kingdom. We are told that his relationship with the Ogiamien family is maternal and not paternal; hence he has no right to, or say, is holding the Ogiamien Chieftaincy title.

"We the Benin Chiefs and Enigies are



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

very much aware of Chief Osarobo Ogiamen, the Ogiamien of Benin Kingdom, who is a member of the Uzama N'ibie at the Oba of Benin Palace. Chief Osarobo Ogiamen is the existing Ogiamen of Benin Kingdom because the family of Ogiamen has not informed the Palace of his demise.

"However, the Press Statement by the Office of the Edo State Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, which was published on Tuesday, 21st June 2022 in connection with the withdrawal of the criminal case against Mr Rich Arisco Osemwingie and one other has empowered us to speak on the issue since there is no longer a case in court.

"The Benin Chiefs and Enigies noted that there was no proper consultation with the Oba of Benin Palace before the withdrawal of the criminal case."

The Ogiamen in a statement dated 24th June 2022, signed by High Chief Monday Wehere JP, the Director of Publication and External Affairs dismissed the press conference and statement by the Benin Chiefs and Enigies, as mere ranting, saying they are minors in matters like this, and as such have no locus standi to talk about our revered King, His Imperial Majesty, Rich Arisco Osemwingie JP, OOS, the current 24th Ogiamen of Benin (Utantan). High Chief Wehere said joining issues with the Benin Chiefs in this matter will make them look relevant, as the Ogiamen Royal Stool has similar categories of Chiefs and Enigies in the Utantan Traditional Council.

"The Great Ogiamen Royal Dynasty has given the Chiefs and Enigies 24 hours to withdraw the apology they requested Ogiamen Rich Arisco Osemwingie to tender, failing which we will invoke our ancestors on the Chiefs and Enigies from the Oba of Benin Palace. Saying

traditional tenants like the Chiefs in question, have no right to challenge their landlord, thus reminding them of the renowned historian, Professor P.A. Igbafe comments in his book, Benin Under Colonial Administration, which stated that "The belief that land belongs to the Oba is a mistaken conception of the theory of Benin land tenure system. In reality, it is difficult to see how they could make such claims vis-à-vis the customary presents which each Oba sent to the Ogiamen on occasion in acknowledgement of the permission granted to the founder of the present dynasty to settle on a foreign soil."

On Tuesday, June 21, 2022, in a published statement entitled; Statement by the Office of the Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Edo State, Regarding the Ogiamen Chieftaincy and Matters Related Thereto" which was published by the Edo State Government.

The state government said, "It has been brought to the notice of this office that a controversy appears to have arisen (or being manufactured) arising from the recent exercise of the powers of my office in exercising nolle prosequi (or withdrawal of a criminal charge) in Charge No. MOR/148C/2015.

"In order to set the records straight and prevent people with a political agenda from misrepresenting the facts as they relate to this matter, it is necessary to recount the sequence of events that led to the current situation.

"Sometime in 2015, during a period of traditional transition in the Benin Kingdom, a certain Rich Arisco Osemwingie made claims in various newspapers and other electronic media to be an alternate Traditional Ruler within the Benin Kingdom and described himself as 'Emperor of Utantan Kingdom of Benin.'

"The same claimant followed up this act by instituting an action at the High Court against (amongst others) the Benin Traditional Council, the Edo State Government and other traditional authorities in the Benin Kingdom, with a view to securing a court order to restrain the coronation of His Majesty, Oba Ewuare II as the Oba of Benin.

"It was my duty, honour and privilege as the Solicitor-General of Edo State and a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN) to work alongside other Senior Counsel of Edo extraction, who successfully combated and ultimately defeated this claim right up to the Supreme Court of Nigeria. The cost of the litigation was borne by the Edo State Government.

"As a corollary to the then ongoing civil claim in 2015, the Ministry of Justice through the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions filed charge No. MOR/148C/2015 against the said Rich Arisco Osemwingie for the misdemeanour offence (as provided in the Traditional Rulers and Chiefs Law) of claiming or allowing himself to be referred to as a Traditional Ruler not having received the sanction of the law or recognition of the authorities to that effect.

"The purpose of the said criminal charge filed in 2015 was to bring maximum pressure to bear on the said Rich Arisco Osemwingie regarding the escapade he had embarked upon which we deemed at that time to be a clear and present danger to the peace and tranquillity of Benin and the entire state.

"With the eventual dismissal of Rich Arisco Osemwingie's claim by the Supreme Court, there no longer existed any legitimacy whatsoever for the claim of being a traditional ruler which had previously been sued by the said Rich Arisco allegedly on behalf of the Ogiamen Chieftaincy Family of Benin.

"Furthermore, by a letter dated 4th of April, 2022 (seven years after the institution of the charge), the said Rich Arisco Osemwingie wrote to my office formally and without reservations, renounced all claims of co-sovereignty with His Majesty, the Oba of Benin and vowed to "maintain cordial relationship for the peaceful development of Benin Kingdom and put an end to the legal tussles in various Courts."

"In response to the said renunciation letter, I came to the considered view that the prosecution in Suit No. MOR/148C/2015 served no further public policy purpose and therefore exercised my powers under the Constitution to put an end to the same.

"It must be noted that a withdrawal of a charge by the Attorney-General on grounds of public policy does not amount to an acquittal in respect of the charge in question and cannot be a bar to future prosecution if the subject either fails in his undertaking or continues in the commission of the offence.

"For the education of those who might not be aware, the PARMOUNT TRADITIONAL RULER in the seven Local Government Areas which make up Edo South Senatorial District is our revered monarch, His Majesty, Omo N'Oba N'Edo Uku Akpolokpolo, Oba Ewuare II, the Oba of Benin.

"It is not and has not hitherto been the duty or responsibility of the Government

Continued on page 10

## Edo govt's Nolle Prosequi fails to end Oba of Benin, Ogiamien feud

Continued from page 9

to appoint or recognize Chiefs within the Benin Kingdom outside the prescribed authority of the Royal Palace of Benin."

The statement concluded, "The Edo State Government, therefore, has no recognized role in the appointment and activities of anyone claiming to be a Chief.

"At the risk of repulsion, that is entirely a traditional and cultural matter within the domestic authority of the Royal Palace of the Benin Kingdom.

"This office will therefore appeal to all persons seeking to project an impression of conflict between the Government and the Palace on this issue and or any other issue for that matter to find other avenues to exercise their energy and imagination, as this office has absolutely no intention, desire or even legal responsibility in that regard."

The press statement was signed Oluwale Osamudiamé Iyamu, SAN. Honourable Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Edo State.

The Ogiamien Royal Dynasty of Benin in a rebuttal entitled "Re: Statement by the Office of the Honourable Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Edo State, regarding the Ogiamien Chieftaincy and matters related thereto" signed by High Chief Monday Wehere JP, dated 23rd June 2022, the Ogiamiens took their time to respond to all the issues raised in the Benin Chiefs press statement.

"Our attention has been drawn to the publication dated Tuesday, June 22, 2022, where the office of the Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Edo State, regarding the Ogiamien Chieftaincy and matters related thereto and wish to react as follows:

Ordinarily, we would have ignored the publication under reference for two reasons,

1-Since the Edo State Government had already entered Nolle Prosequi on our behalf (or withdrawal of a criminal charge in Charge No. MOR/148C/2015;

2-For the fact that in your capacity as the Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, you spoke not on behalf of the Edo State Government, which already granted us the waiver but seeing the many lies, falsehoods and deliberate distortions of facts as displayed in the publication under reference whilst recounting the sequence of events that led to the current situation, we have decided to react to keep the records straight.

"There was never a time our King, Ogiamien Rich Arisco Osemwengie JP, made claims in various newspapers and other electronic media to be an alternate Traditional Ruler within the Benin Kingdom and described himself as Emperor of Utantan Kingdom of Benin, rather we installed him as Ogiamien of Utatan, which is in line with the provision of 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 now applicable in Edo State.

"In addition, prior to these Legal Instruments, the Great Ogiamien Title/Ogiamien Royal Palace had been gazetted as a national monument by the Colonial Masters in 1959 and handed over to the

Federal Government of Nigeria during the Independence in 1960.

"The Ogiamien title, therefore, is not only statutory but a legal instrument exclusively preserved and is the prerogative of the Great Ogiamien Royal Dynasty. All the 24th Ogiamiens we have installed from inception to date, we have never taken permission from any person be it the state government or any traditional ruler.

"In January 2010, in his response to our letter dated 15th March 2010, through the Oba of Benin Palace Secretary, Mr Frank Irabor, Benin Traditional Council, Oba Erediauwa admitted and wrote, "To the best of our knowledge, the title (Ogiamien) has not been taken from your family." In the same letter under reference, he addressed Pa. Edwin Ogbomo Ogiamien as Ezomo of Utantan. The same letter was rooted in the Ogiamien Palace, Ogiamien Quarters in Benin City. With this, Oba Erediauwa thus confirmed the existence of Utantan, Ogiamien Stool and Ogiamien quarters located inside Utantan quarters in Benin City.

"All the above are the creation of the Ekiokpaga Treaty, which the Ogiamien and the Oba of Benin signed centuries ago. This particular letter in reference, therefore speaks volumes and exposes your weakness in this matter; your poor knowledge of the true history and position of the Great Ogiamien Royal Dynasty in Benin. So we would like to counsel you to tread with caution, thus your allegation that our king claimed to be an alternate Traditional Ruler within the Benin Kingdom and that he described himself as Emperor of Utantan Kingdom of Benin, therefore, is false and unsubstantiated. To us, this is a deliberate attempt to distort facts and history to continue to deceive the public."

Contained in the petition the present Oba of Benin, Oba Ewuare II, did then to the Edo State Commissioner of Police, he wrote "That we have no right anymore to install our King and that the title of Ogiamien has been taken by the Benin Palace without our knowledge and that as such we have committed a criminal offence, and therefore sent our King and his brother to Oko prison in Benin for an offence they did not commit.

"During this period, they made it very difficult for the Ogiamien family to secure the bail of their king and his Traditional Prime Minister. We had to go to a High Court to secure their release from prison. While this particular drama was ongoing, the process, the coronation plans of Oba Ewuare II was in progress and the Oba was quoted as saying that he will circumvent the Ekiokpaga Treaty which has been an age-long practise by previous Obas of Benin. This we objected to then and now. In the process, we secured a court order to restrain the coronation and the Appeal Court granted us the relief asking us to, however, maintain the status quo, which we did. But sadly, the former Governor, Adams Oshiomole's administration in spite of this court order, still went ahead in defiance of the court order and installed Oba Ewuare II as Oba of Benin."

Having disobeyed the court order, which had earlier stipulated, that the 'Status quo ante' be maintained in this matter, the Edo State Government then, still went ahead to install Oba Ewuare II, as the Oba of Benin, and as such, the



His Majesty Oba Ewuare II of Benin

matter did not go beyond this stage then.

In accordance with the 1959 Colonial Master Edict handed over to the Federal Government of Nigeria in the year 1960, when the country gained independence, and subsequently to the then Midwestern State of Nigeria in Gazette No. 59 Vol.5 and M.S.L.N. No. 37 dated 7th day of November 1968 tied to the 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, Ogiamien Title/Ogiamien Royal Palace were already statutory and legal instruments, then under which law the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, filed Charge NO. MOR/148C/2015 against the said, Rich Arisco Osemwengie for the alleged misdemeanour or offence.

We would want it to be on record that we did not install our King as the Oba of Benin, rather Ogiamien of Utantan was installed in accordance with the Ekiokpaga treaty and in line with the 1959 Federal Government Gazette and the 1968 Midwestern State Edict. If one may ask, how did this present danger to the peace and tranquillity of Benin and the entire Edo State, using the Honourable Edo State A.G.'s words?

There was never a time the Supreme Court dismissed our claims rather when we filed a motion for additional information, there was a typographical error of Appeal Court, our attention was drawn to it, and we withdrew our motion to enable us re-file the motion and the Supreme Court as it is the practice in law, struck out the application for the additional motion to be filed appropriately. We have since last year re-filed the additional motion and have been given dates for the hearing before the Edo State Government came into the matter.

We would want it to be on records, that the letter dated 4th April 2022, earlier on referred to by the Edo State

A.G. is hereby reproduced below for all to see, there was nowhere in that particular undertaken, our King admitted that Ogiamien was a Chief under the Oba of Benin. We would want to ask the Edo State Attorney-General why did he accept this undertaking before filling the nolle prosequi?

Furthermore, in the Edo State A.G. acceptance letter dated 13th April 2022, on page 2, (items A) he ordered our King to revert to his official statutory position as the Ogiamien of Benin, which is in line with the 1968 Edict and the provision of his renunciation letter.

"MEMORANDUM OF UNDERTAKEN OF THE OFFICE OF THE OGIAMIEN OF UTANTAN KINGDOM VIS-À-VIS THE PALACE OF THE OBA OF BENIN. IN CHARGE NO MOR/148C/2015, COMMISSIONER OF POLICE VS. RICH ARISCO OSEMWENGIE AND PATRICK OSABUOHIEN.

1-Hon. Rich Arisco Osemwengie JP, the Ogiamien of Utantan Kingdom hereby states clearly that I am the Ogiamien of Utantan Kingdom hereby stated clearly that I am the Ogiamien of Utantan Kingdom of Edo State and not the Oba of Benin.

The title of Oba of Benin belongs to the Oba of Benin Royal Family while the Ogiamien of Utantan Kingdom belongs to the Great Ogiamien Royal Family.

As the Ogiamien of Utantan Kingdom, I am not in competition with the Oba of Benin. The Oba of Benin and the Ogiamien of Utantan have lived peacefully for centuries without any rancour and I pledge to maintain that cordial relationship for the peaceful development of the Benin Kingdom to put to an end all the legal tussles in various courts. I have decided to write this letter to you as the Chief Law Officer of the state so that the issues in the above-mentioned case can be resolved.

Thanks, Hon. Rich Arisco Osemwengie (JP), the Ogiamien of Utantan.

## NDLEA establishes call centre to aid recovery of addicts

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

■ Says no drug user has an excuse not to get treatment anymore

National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has established a Call Centre with a toll-free helpline in a bid to provide free access and treatment for drug users and addicts, who hitherto complained of lack of funds and inadequate medical help to aid recovery.

Commissioning the 24/7 Call Centre in Abuja, the Chairman/Chief Executive of the Agency, Brig-Gen Mohamed Buba Marwa (rt) said that the Centre shall be manned by professionals such as licensed and credible clinical psychologists, counsellors, support workers and mental health professionals.

Marwa added that the Centre shall provide the needed support in aiding recovery, managing social and emotional problems, improving quality of life and enhancing the performance and productivity of drug users and addicts. According to him, the call line, 080010203040, is language sensitive and users can choose to speak in English, Pidgin, Hausa, Yoruba or Igbo.

He further added that going forward no drug user and addict has any excuse not to

get treatment to recover from the grips of drugs and illicit substances abuse as well as the troubling effects associated with it.

The NDLEA boss noted that though the country has treatment Centres with NDLEA's 26 treatment facilities across its commands, however, there is gross inadequate of such facilities in the face of statistics of drug users and those suffering from drug use disorder.

"NDLEA recognised the importance of providing a safety bubble for users who ordinarily cannot access the conventional treatment services at established rehabilitation Centres due to poverty, social stigma and the resultant discrimination attached to being an identified drug user in society, among other factors. Therefore, the inevitability and the utility of a toll-free helpline that guarantees anonymity, confidentiality and safety, as a motivation for those in need of health help to freely seek such.

"The NDLEA Call Centre is manned by a team of licensed and credible clinical psychologists, counsellors, support workers and mental health professionals who would provide the needed support

in aiding recovery, managing social and emotional problems, improving quality of life and enhancing performance and productivity of the users of the service. With its state-of-the-art equipment and its team of highly trained professionals in substance abuse disorder, this Centre offers a teletherapy service according to global best practices.

"The benefit of the Call Centre is manifold. Aside from helping us in providing telephone-based psychosocial support and addiction services in the War Against Drug Abuse (WADA), it will at the same time provide us with information that will deepen our understanding of the country's dynamics of drug use and potentially put us ahead of the game.

"To those in need of help, we open a new chapter today, whereby help is just a phone call away. We have simplified the helpline service by making it language-sensitive whereby callers have the choice of language including English, Pidgin, Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo. And very importantly, the helpline is open 24/7. A call to the helpline, 0800 1020 3040, elicits a prompt response from professionals, regardless of the



**Marwa**

time or geographic location," Marwa stated.

According to him, calls to the Centre open the door to engagements with counsellors, followed by service orientation that leads to case management, at which point the engagement moves from telephone assessment to follow-up therapy sessions and referral.

"This seamless process ends in Resolution and Aftercare Follow-Up. Given the simplicity of the process, there is no valid excuse for not accessing treatment by drug users and their concerned families. We expect those concerned to take advantage of this opportunity," he said.

Meanwhile, in their remarks at the event, Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami SAN represented by the Director of Public Prosecution of the federation, Muhammed Abubakar, the UNODC country representative, Oliver Stolpe and European Union delegation representative, Eleni Zerzerlidou commended the NDLEA for the initiative and called for its expansion and sustenance.

Dr Vincent Udenze, Chief Executive of Primly Services Ltd, the company managing the centre, commended Marwa for providing the leadership that made the initiative a reality.

## Terrorists kill many soldiers in Niger, suffer heavy casualties in Zamfara

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

Several soldiers have been killed following an ambush by terrorists, the Nigerian Army has confirmed.

Director of Army Public Relations, Brig-Gen Onyema Nwachukwu, in a statement on Thursday, lamented the deaths of the soldiers while advising the public against sharing gory videos and photos of such attacks on social media, noting that the families of the victims who paid the supreme price would be traumatized by such conduct.

Nwachukwu also debunked a rumour that the terrorists attacked some national infrastructure while adding that the location has been reinforced and overtaken by the army as troops are on the trail of the terrorists.

He said, "On Wednesday 29 June 2022, troops of the Nigerian Army (NA) deployed in Shiroro general area responded to a distress call of bandits attack on people operating a mining site. En route to the location, the troops ran into an ambush staged by the criminal elements. Sadly, a number of personnel paid the supreme price in the fierce firefight that ensued.

"Subsequently, the location has been reinforced and troops are on the trail of the criminals with some already neutralized. The GOC 1 Division has moved to the location to take charge of the follow on operations.

"The NA notes that some clips of the incident have surfaced online and wish to encourage well-meaning Nigerians to exercise some restraint in posting images of such occurrence, mindful that our brothers and sisters who may have lost their breadwinners deserve to be properly notified and not to get such information via the media. We mention this, mindful of the inalienable rights of citizens to use social media which is respected.

"It is also necessary to clarify that activities of the criminals were not on any critical national asset or infrastructure."

The Army, therefore, called on all Nigerians to continue to support the efforts of the military personnel and other security agents, who continue to confront the enemies of the nation in a bid to provide adequate security for citizens.

Also, troops of the Air Component of Operation Hadarin Daji have reportedly bombarded a terrorist camp in Kofar Danya Village in Bukkuyum Local Government Area of Zamfara State resulting in the casualty and injury of no fewer than 82 terrorists.

The terrorists that numbered about 150 were said to converge under a thick vegetation with a plan to attack Kofar Danya Village before the troops came to the rescue.

According to Major General Benard Onyeuko, Director of Defence Information, in a press briefing held at the Defence Headquarters, Abuja, on Thursday, Forward Operation Base Bakura troops of Hadarin Daji also engaged in a fierce gun battle with terrorists, thereby neutralizing two bandits and rescued six kidnapped victims.

"On 21 June 2022 troops of Forward Operation Base Bakura Operation HADARIN DAJI responded to distress call of terrorist activities at Rafin Dankura in Bakura Local Government Area of Zamfara State. Troops engaged the terrorists in a shoot-out who were trying to abduct innocent civilians. After the encounter troops were able to rescue the six (6) kidnapped civilians and neutralised 2 bandits in the process.

## IGP task force impounds oil-laden barge, arrests four in Port Harcourt

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

As the fight against economic sabotage continues to gather momentum, the Inspector-General of Police Special Task Force on Petroleum and Illegal Bunkering (IGP-STFPIB) in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, has arrested four persons for alleged involvement in illegal bunkering and illegal refining of oil products.

The suspects were arrested following the interception of a seagoing 12-compartments barge known as "Rainbow-I" laden with about 350 litres of Automotive Gas Oil (AGO) suspected to be illegally refined on 10th June 2021, at Slaughter Area of Trans Amadi, Port Harcourt.

According to a statement by the Force Public Relations Officer, CSP Olumuyiwa Adejobi, on Thursday, preliminary investigations and analysis by the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority on the samples, confirmed that the product is adulterated and unfit for usage.

Adejobi also added that while commending the IGP-STFPIB for the interception, IGP Usman Alkali Baba, warned criminal elements that are sabotaging the economy of the country of dire consequences if they failed to

turn a new leaf.

"The Inspector-General of Police, IGP Usman Alkali Baba, psc(+), NPM, fdc, has warned that there would be severe sanctions for criminal elements who engage in activities such as illegal bunkering and illegal refining of oil products, which is capable of sabotaging the economy of the country. The IGP equally charged members of special teams set up to monitor, investigate, apprehend, and prosecute purveyors of these crimes to renew their offensive against crimes and criminality, and professionally shun all manner of corruption so that offenders would be made to face the full wrath of the law.

"The IGP stated this while commending the IGP Task Force on the interception of a seagoing 12-compartments barge known as 'Rainbow-I' with Registration No. 8765432 laden with about three hundred and fifty thousand litres of Automotive Gas Oil (AGO) reasonably suspected to be illegally refined, and the arrest of four suspects, by the Inspector-General of Police Special Task Force on Petroleum and Illegal Bunkering (IGP-STFPIB) on 10th June 2021 at Slaughter Area of Trans Amadi, Port Harcourt.

"Preliminary investigations as well as analysis carried out on the samples by the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority

based in Port Harcourt, confirm that the product is adulterated, and therefore unfit for sale to the public.

"The Inspector-General of Police, therefore, warns

all economic saboteurs to cease forthwith their criminal activities else the long arm of the law will catch up with them. The IGP equally tasked personnel of the IGP-STFPIB to

be steadfast in discharging their responsibilities," Adejobi stated.

He added that all the arrested suspects will be charged to court upon the conclusion of investigation

## How Ayanwola's body was thrown out of moving BRT bus in Lagos

By **ALEX OLISE**

A police witness in the trial of Andrew Ominnikoron, a Lagos BRT driver, testified that the body of Bamise Ayanwola was thrown from the moving BRT bus.

The suspect is accused of rape and murder of Ms Ayanwola, a 22-year-old fashion designer, in February inside a BRT bus.

Following the incident, another victim also appeared in court to accuse him of rape.

At the resumed hearing at a Lagos High Court sitting in Tafawa Balewa Square (TBS), Isibor Amos, a police officer, said he was alerted on February 26, about a corpse along with the Ogogoro village, leading to Oyingbo on Carter bridge.

"I was alerted on 26th of February, 2022 that people were gathered on the Express with someone lying down there. On getting there, I saw a female lifeless

body," he told the court.

"I gathered that a moving vehicle had thrown something down, and when the observers came close, they saw that it was a lifeless body. They tried to revive her with sachet water but she did not survive," he added.

Earlier, in the proceeding, the defence lawyer, P.O Idogwu, who stood in for the lead lawyer, Ayobami Omotubora, mentioned that he was new to the case and pleaded that the court adjourns to a new date.

The judge, Sherifat Sonaiké, however, overruled the application stating that the case will not be further delayed by the lawyer.

Mr Omotubora's absence has caused the judge to adjourn the matter twice.

Meanwhile, another witness, Segun Agbe, a social worker with the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency Response Team (DSVRT)

mentioned that he was assigned to the case on March 12, 2022.

Mr Agbe narrated how he visited one of the victims, Maryjane Odezulu, in her house, where she told him of how she was sexually abused by the defendant before visiting the Ajah police station to report the matter.

"I was assigned on this case on the 12th of March, 2022. I went to Miss Mary Jane, to talk to her about the incident and she narrated to us how everything happened on the bus and how the bus driver sexually abused and tore her clothes.

"Thereafter, we visited the Ajah Police Station to investigate the matter. CSP Oseni and two other officers came to meet us.

"When we arrived at Ajah Police Station, Maryjane made (gave) her statement," Agbe said.

The judge adjourned till July 7, for the continuation of the trial.

# The five months shutdown of universities

**C**risis in the nation's educational sector was aggravated on the 14th of February 2022 when the Academic Staff Union of Nigerian Universities (ASUU) commenced yet another industrial action over the refusal of the federal government to implement the agreements and memoranda signed with the Union. It started as a warning, but soon transformed into a full-blown strike when the union sensed insincerity on the part of the government. Other unions in the university system soon joined by commencing their own strikes over the same scenario of the Federal Governments disrespect for agreements and memoranda. This is the fifth month of complete breakdown of teaching, research, and other activities in governments' owned universities across the nation.

The impact of this sectoral crisis is unimaginably dangerous and devastating to the existence of our nation. WAEC and NECO continue to conduct the Senior School Certificate Examinations for secondary school leavers. But the school leavers are stuck in the strike space. The flow in the entire educational system is broken. Inside the universities research, teaching, learning and even community services are disrupted. Active youngsters that form 50 percent of Nigeria's population are kept idle. More and more of them are taking to drug and fraud. Many others are being recruited as political thugs for the 2023 general elections. Students whose parents can afford overseas education are forced to leave en masse, and to face many new environments where they are vulnerable. Anxiety over the future grip both students and parents.

The striking university workers are being denied their salaries. Their families are starving. Many of them can no longer pay rents nor purchase drugs to manage their health conditions. Brain drain is once again renewed and aggravated as many lecturers

now escape to get jobs in other countries. Aside the universities' students and workers, other families that operate businesses on the universities' campuses are equally in agony because of the crisis. Once again, they are returned to the streets to join the army of unemployed Nigerians.

Although the federal government claims it has been negotiating with the striking university unions, there are no concrete results yet. Amidst all these, sadly, Nigerians read daily the disturbing news of how individual government officials continue to steal humongous sums, the latest of which is that of the Accountant General of the Federation. The quantum of money that exchanged hands amongst politicians during the primary elections makes everyone

wonder why the university sector has for long been abandoned. It is depressing that none of the leading presidential aspirants in the political parties is making the crisis an issue in their campaigns.

Indeed, a period of five months shutdown of universities is a national emergency. In managing emergencies, nations must go to the extent of collapsing structures and taking painful policy options to address the emergency and forestall the disasters it may bring. It is on this note that we call on the federal government to treat the current strike in the universities as a national emergency. All steps should be taken to end it. Whatever it takes: budget, policy redress and even radical political reversal must be brought to the table at this time to ensure the immediate end of the five months strike.

As part of their agenda setting roles, civil society organizations should mobilise the entire Nigerian society into making education a front burner issue during political campaigns. Parents association, students, religious leaders, and traditional rulers who have joined in pressurizing the federal government should not relent. This is the time all sectors in the Nigerian State should mount pressure on the government to act timeously to save the nation.

We are aware that the Professor Briggs led Committee currently negotiating with ASUU is making some progress. The Committee needs to make the difference this time by using the press, civil society, and other social structures across the country to ensure that its final decisions with the unions are implemented. This is how the Committee will not end like others before it whose reports were either discarded or disregarded.

Finally, all hands must be on deck to end the lingering crisis in the public universities. We call on Mr. President to personally intervene and end the crisis before the universities lose a full academic session.



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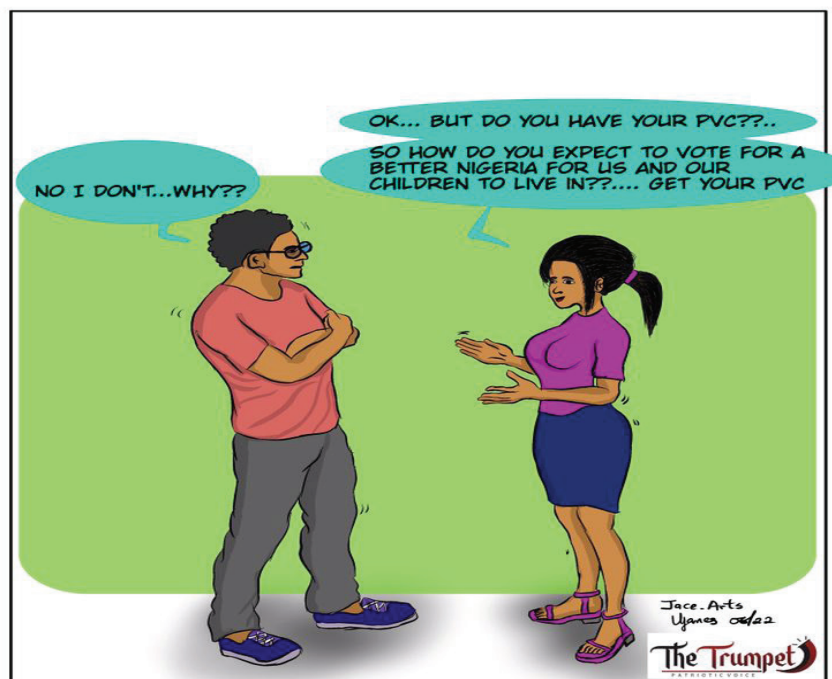
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## 2023 elections: Is Nigeria for sale?

By PROMISE ADIELE

There are ominous indications in Nigeria's current political atmosphere that the country may be sold to the highest bidder in the 2023 general elections. If reports from the venue of the just concluded primary elections of the twin behemoth political parties, APC and PDP are anything to consider, the leadership of the country may be traded in a grave rehash of feudal mercantile tyranny. At the forefront of these dissimulations are power desperados searching for fame and prominence through disreputable practices to the detriment of core governance. Nigerians must vehemently resist the impending gloom that, like overcast weather, has the potential to submerge our democracy. Following the conclusion of the primaries by the two major parties, reports emerged that they gave US Dollars to the Delegates to influence their votes. Nigerians gleefully watched the video of one Delegate on social media with millions of naira, which he shared in his constituency after the primaries. Towards the 2023 elections, while the PDP may be financially handicapped to participate fully in the electoral bazaar, the APC will be invigorated by the massive financial outlay from State coffers. Some people argue that the APC rigging schedule is already being implemented in instalments across the country. Hmmm!!!

Something is beguiling about the hypnotic conviction which pushes some people to spew the mantra that politics requires money. That mantra, in all its monotonous possibilities to benumb the mind, seeks to validate the 'the end justifies the means' analogy. Those who peddle that trite mantra unconsciously negotiate their sentiments by remotely excusing such degraded practices as inducement of the electorate. In developed countries of the world, politics requires money to take care of protocols, logistics, and different contingencies. But in Nigeria, when some people, in their feeble attempt to promote a shamefaced idealism, advance the 'politics requires money' narrative, they confer relevance to politicians with deep pockets - those richer than some states with an underbelly that oozes of heist and corrupt enrichments. In Nigeria, 'politics requires money' is simply for vote-buying and compromising the electoral process. Nigeria's two major political parties are champions in vote-buying.

The historical inconsistencies that trail some of our presidential aspirants are disconcerting. If their educational background does not quirk with contradictions, their place of origin is in doubt or their ages are a matter of infinite conjecture. Because we are in



Tinubu

Nigeria, these things can be defended and covered up. But to shamefully earmark millions of dollars to buy Delegates and voters during elections is at the height of innate, moral decay. Some Nigerian politicians are masters of the dark art - they can never operate in a free and fair environment. In a chaotic ordering, they thrive and shine like the Shakespearean Northern Star. For them, ascension to Aso Rock is some kind of primordial appetite to be nourished by the fantasy of political power. When these politicians move around the country, they derive joy from the ecstasy fawned by ignorant citizens lacking an understanding of the prevailing economic matrix that defines their meagre existence. The citizens bellow "Long Live the King, Long Live the King" without realizing that the life of the king is sustained by their blood and those of their children. Na Naija levels be that.

If we introspectively ponder the issues in Nigeria in the last twenty-three years or so without bias, then we will be faced with one truth - the strenuous conflict of Nigeria finds resolution by implicating the two major political parties as responsible for plunging the country into the abyss of hopelessness. While one party destroyed Nigeria for sixteen years, another party has perfected that destruction for seven years. Every politician under the two parties shares blames for the present shell-shocked conditions pervading the country. They supplant what they should supplement. Yet, these same politicians are posturing for another opportunity to finally liquidate the Central Bank of Nigeria. Anybody arguing otherwise is deviously



Atiku

upholding the present cataclysmic conditions in the country. Currently, the APC government under Buhari has incurred a total debt of 41 trillion naira. Between January and March 2022 alone, the government incurred a debt of 2 trillion naira. IMF has raised the alarm that Nigeria may spend 10.74 trillion naira on debt servicing in 2022 alone. Ask yourself, what is Nigeria's annual revenue? Yet, some people want APC to remain in power. *Wahala dey o!*

Nigeria is burning and unfortunately many people do not know it. The economic and financial figures are scary. They present an apocalyptic future of the country. The two major political parties are directly responsible for the tragic conditions in Nigeria. There is no other way to say it. Recently, the accountant general of the federation admitted that the country borrows money to pay salaries. That is at once disturbing and at large infuriating. Yet, some people decide to look away from these realities but commit to enthroning the same people responsible for creating them. These victims of monomania are with us, they are everywhere, in our offices, social media, estates, clubs, and other social circles. But we must endeavour to accommodate them because we believe that exorcism is achievable. If Titubi, in Osofisan's *Morountodun*, could transform from an old consciousness to a new one, there is hope that our brothers and sisters baying for blood to have APC and PDP return to power will be transformed before 2023.

2023 holds a special space in Nigeria's democratic maturation. It is either the country hits the depths

of pandemonium and finally becomes another Zimbabwe or it will mark the beginning of a redemptive transformation for a country heavily populated by political parasites. From the body language of both political parties, it appears that there are plans to rig the election, buy votes, threaten the youths, stop them from voting, and use every known and unknown underhand means to win the elections. Millions of youths in Nigeria, especially the educated ones are aware of the conditions in the country and are poised for a change. But some are irredeemably lost to ignorance and sophistry which betrays the inherent infirmities in their cognitive process. It truly defies reason that APC and PDP are applying to occupy Aso Rock in 2023. How can Nigerians desire to outsource their future and that of their children by entrusting power to megalomaniacs that have serially pillaged our land? If we consider what APC and PDP have done with power in Nigeria in the last twenty-three years, do they deserve to hold power at any level in this country? Nigerians must wake up and refuse a prolongation of the misery in the land.

In 2023, billion vans will convey millions of dollars across the country for vote-buying. The strategy of the party in power is to utilize the weapons of poverty and capitalise on the collective deprivation in the land to induce voters with money. They caused the poverty, now they want to reap the fruits of that poverty. Going by what happened during the Ekiti elections where people openly received money to vote, next year's election will be determined by the same old corrupt practices. It is commendable that the youths are all united to enthrone a new Nigeria. But will it be possible to resist money when these desperados offer them to hungry people? Will our country be bought over by the party with the deepest pocket in 2023? Are we in for a final journey to Golgotha, the iconic place of crucifixion? Can anything be done to rescue this country from the grip of vicious wicked men committed to promoting the immediate resolve of Satan? Can those that failed the country for twenty-three years redeem the same country? Every concerned Nigerian (not all Nigerians are concerned) towards the healing and revival of the country, whether at home or abroad should commit to propagating the gospel of a new dispensation for the benefit of our future and those of our children. We have suffered enough under APC and PDP. It is time for a new beginning. Get your PVC.

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# Eliezer's stewardship model

Last week we mentioned the name Eliezer, Abram's steward. By the principle of the first appearance in biblical studies, it is important we analyse the stewardship model of Eliezer. It is clear from Abram's own statement that if he were to pass on without having a biological child of his own, then Eliezer would be the automatic heir to his heritage and inherit all that belonged to him. Even before the birth of Ismael (Genesis 16:5), Isaac (Genesis 25:1-6), and his other sons that Abraham had through Keturah (Genesis 25:1-6), Eliezer was already in his house. "... The Lord God, what will thou give me, seeing I go to childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, 'Behold, to me thou hast given no seed, and lo, one born in my house is mine heir.'" Therefore, the circumstances of being born in Abram's house and being a steward of Abram, being Abraham's heir was thrust upon Eliezer.

The test of Eliezer as a servant came when he was commissioned by Abraham to go to his relations to secure a wife for his son, Isaac. Genesis chapter 24 gives a detailed narrative of the stewardship of Eliezer. Eliezer was given the important assignment at a time Abraham was not capable of monitoring him closely due to his old age. "Now Abraham was old, well advanced in age; and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things" (read Genesis 12:1-3). Yet, it was under Eliezer, the "eldest servant of his house" that Abraham put "all things that he had" (Genesis 24:35). Again, Eliezer was aware of the Jewish practice that but for Isaac's birth, he would be Abraham's heir! This knowledge did make him plot against his master and Isaac the heir to Abraham's wealth. He was not unduly ambitious. He did not wish Isaac any ill. He never saw Isaac as one who had come to turn his fortunes for 'bad.' Many would

see Isaac as a 'spoiler' or 'destiny destroyer.'

Genesis chapter 24 reveals a 10-fold stewardship worthy traits of Eliezer thus: He was (i) faithful to the trust reposed upon him by his master, verse 2; (ii) intelligent and obedient, vv. 2-11; (iii) he had good acquaintance with God, v. 12-14; he was a (iv) prayerful man, vv. 15-16; (v) wise and courteous, vv. 17-25; (vi) thankful for answered prayers, v. 27; (vii) patient and believing, vv. 28-30; (viii) not selfish, but diligent in business, vv. 31-49; (ix) impressive, with the spirit of a winner, vv. 50-58; and (x) successful and truthful person, vv. 59-67.

Eliezer did not hastily go into an oath with Abraham. He was not a sycophant or a "YES SIR" man, but a highly thoughtful person. Many today who say "yes" when indeed they have NO deeply entrenched in them. Eliezer asked questions before undertaking the task (Genesis 24:5, 8-9). A good steward always has the will of his master at heart. This was demonstrated by Eliezer by the well. "O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day and show kindness unto my master Abraham." Do we make intercession on behalf of our masters when they give us assignments? Do we pray to God to show kindness unto our earthly masters, for our Bishops and other Church leaders? Eliezer was on a mission to fulfil his master's desire, not to earn a promotion or to be acclaimed to be a "goal-getter." He desired success for his master over praise and promotion for himself.

Eliezer showed his devotion and diligence to his master's assignment when he immediately, as a priority, demanded from Rebekah – the damsel – a drink of water; knowing full well that the answer to this request is an indicator of the object of his master's desire. Eliezer had earlier prayed that "And let it come to pass that the damsel to whom I shall say, 'Let down



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thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camel drink also; let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast showed kindness unto my master" (Genesis 24:14).

Eliezer's uncommon diligence and commitment to his master's assignment are worthy of emulation. Even if we are given business and administrative duties by our superiors we should work for their success. He avoided distractions and was not ready to make a major out of a minor. "Food was set before him to eat, but he said, 'I will not eat until I have told you about my errand'" (v. 33). "And he and the men who were with him ate and drank and stayed all night. Then they arose in the morning, and he said, 'Send me away to my master'" (v. 54); "And he said to them, 'do not hinder me, since the Lord has prospered my way; send me away so that I may go to my master'" (v. 56). What a focused person Eliezer was?

A good steward will not allow personal interest and opportunities to sway them from those of their masters. Today, some so-called Christians hijack their master's assignments and goals, visions, and missions of their master when sent out. Eliezer knew his success was from God (vv. 26-27), to whom he gave the glory. The marriage he secured for Isaac was due to the way he comported himself with humility before both Rebekah and Bethuel, Isaac's father-in-law. The journey to Beer-Sheba was about 450 miles. It traversed a dangerous and arduous route. Eliezer obeyed to do this for his master's sake. Eliezer worked for Isaac even when he was by age older than him. He called Isaac "master" before Rebekah (vv.65-66). This is humility!

Eliezer's stewardship is worthy of emulation. He had integrity. He did not misrepresent his master. He never held back anything he had as he threw all his wherewithal in the service of his master. With passion, he desired to achieve results for his master. He did not behave like the greedy Gehazi (2 King 5:20-27). He believed in and trusted God to whom he prayed for success for his master. As we go into the week let us think over this as put before us the poser put by Jesus Christ in Matthew 21:28-31, "But what do you think? A man had two sons and he went to the first and said, 'Son go and work in the vineyard today.' And he answered, 'I will not, but afterward he repented and went. And he went to the second and said the same; and he answered, 'I go, sir,' but did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father? They said, 'The first.'"

Shalom and be blessed.

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## Is God's righteousness a burden?

Many people have complained that it is not easy to serve God because of His commandments. They argue that it is difficult to live a holy and righteous life. My response has always been that if you think God's ways are difficult, go and examine the ways of satan and see if they are easier.

As far as I am concerned, the ways of God are so easy if we appreciate the principles behind God's laws. God's commandments are there to ensure that all of us are useful to ourselves and our environments, hence God does not want us to be a nuisance to ourselves and society.

God commanded that "Thou Shall Not Steal". If everyone adheres to this commandment, everyone will have rest of mind irrespective of where their properties are domiciled, and this will take unwanted worries from us and make us live long and happily on earth.

How do you feel anytime you lose your property to a thief? Do you feel good? The answer is no. So, if you will feel bad if your property is stolen, why would you want to steal another man's property? God's commandments are there to make us live comfortably on earth and they are not burdensome.

Secondly, let's examine the commandment of God that says we should love our neighbours the way we love ourselves. Yes, every one of us loves ourselves and our families and that is



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why even murderers in our society have been found to take all forms of caution to protect themselves and members of their families at all cost. Even those in criminal organizations like the Mafias try as much to keep their families safe even though they kill others at the slightest provocation. So, everyone wants the best for themselves.

God commanded us to love our neighbours the way we love ourselves (Matthew 22:29) so that we can live in peace. For instance, when you are in a government office managing the resources on behalf of other citizens and decide to embezzle money and leave those who you

are supposed to take care of stranded, those people may resort to other harmful practices like indulging in crime and other vices, and even you that stole their resources will not be comfortable eating what you stole because criminals will saturate the whole environment and you will be living in fear every time. Even though the initial plan of the government officials was to embezzle the resources and make themselves comfortable, the comfort they envisaged will become elusive because fear will creep in and even the mansion they may have built to enjoy life will now be like a prison because of the fear of criminals that have increased due to his action.

On the other hand, if the government official decides to use the resources to the benefit of everyone, everybody will enjoy and there will be little room for criminal activities and there will be relative peace in the environment because everyone will be happy. Even science has proven that negative emotions that emanate from fear and insecurity reduce the life span of individuals because diseases like hypertension and other heart-related diseases can kill the person prematurely.

Therefore, the righteousness of the law of God is promoting goodness for all and to adhere to His laws is in our interest. We should love the righteousness of God and never see it as a burden.

Another common sin that many people

are involved in these days is sexual immorality. God said in His Word that we should commit sexual immorality.

Sexual can man defiles a soul, for instance, the man has joined himself to another spiritual home without the permission of God and this singular act can destroy the whole of the family of the woman because the soul of the intruder will begin to fight with the soul of the legal husband and this can affect the love the man has for the wife negatively and may eventually lead to divorce.

Sexual immorality can also lead to unwanted pregnancy and death through abortion. You can now see that one singular act of disobeying God led to disgrace and embarrassment, thereby complicating the future of our destiny.

God's righteousness for man is for our own good. Keeping God's commandments will give us peace and rest of mind. Therefore, it is ignorance that has made many of us feel or say that the commandments of God are difficult because all the commandments are in the best interest of the human race.

Love God and appreciate Him with all your heart for giving us His commandments and love the righteousness of His commandments and never see them as a burden. God bless us in Jesus Name.

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# Pain, agony as bandits Kill 2 Catholic Priests

Stories By GABRIEL OMONHINMIN, Culture and Religion Editor

The lamentation of Catholic Bishop of Sokoto Diocese, Most Reverend Mathew Hassan Kukah, sums up the agony and apprehension in the land over the activities of bandits, which seem to have continued unchallenged.

At the flag-off of the 70th Anniversary Lecture of the Order of the Knight of Saint Mulumba, at the St. Leo's Catholic Church, Ikeja, Lagos, a downcast Bishop Kukah, made public, that the kidnapers, who abducted two Priests from his Diocese in Sokoto, are currently demanding N200 million as ransom.

"As I speak, for the past three weeks, my Priest, a young man and a sister are still in captivity even though the Nigerian state wishes to pretend that we are not negotiating with the kidnapers.

"We are negotiating with the kidnapers as I'm talking because I don't know how else to get back my Priest.

"It is a very painful experience. My blood relations have been kidnapped. I have lost a seminarian to kidnapers and somehow we like to pretend we have a government.

"Of course, we have the apparatus of government, we have the scaffolding, but this scaffolding is important because people can see access to and appropriate resources of the state.

"As to what the state needs to do, they are still far away from reality. It is a very painful and sad reality that as at the last conversation with the kidnapers, we have negotiated up to N20 million, which I do not have."

While the above drama is not yet concluded, Rev. Fr. Vitus Borogo, who was abducted last week Saturday at his Prison Farm, Kujama, along Kaduna-Kachia Road, after a raid on the farm, was killed by the kidnapers exactly a week after his adoption.

The 50-years old Priest was the Chaplain of the Catholic Community of the Kaduna State Polytechnic. He was also the Chairman of the Nigerian Catholic Diocesan Priests Association (NCDPA), Kaduna Chapter.

Similarly, over 50 Parishioners were killed during worship at the St. Francis Catholic Church in Owo, some weeks ago.

The rampaging bandits, on Sunday, 26th June 2022, again attacked St. Michael's Catholic Church, in the rustic village of Ikabigbo, Uzairue in Estako West Local Government Area of Edo State. In this incident, Rev. Fr. Christopher Odia, was abducted from his residence at the Ikabigbo Catholic Church Parish at about 6:30 am.

The Catholic Church confirmed the death of Odia, 24 hours after he was adopted;

"With heavy hearts but with total submission to the will of God, we announce the death of our Priest, Rev. Father Christopher Odia, who was killed by his abductors after being kidnapped on the morning of June 26, 2022, in his rectory while coming out to go for Sunday Mass at St. Michael Catholic Church, Ikabigbo, Uzairue, Edo State.

"Rev. Father Odia before he was kidnapped, was the Administrator of St. Michael's Catholic Church, Ikabigbo and also the Principal of St. Philip's Catholic Secondary School, Jattu. He was 41 years old."

As tension continues to mount over the activities of bandits, some States and individuals have begun to map out ways and means to secure their lives and properties.

It was therefore not surprising, when the government of Zamfara State, in a special state government announcement, directed citizens to secure a gun license to defend their lives and properties.

The Zamfara State Government said this extreme measure is necessitated, "because of the increase in the activities of bandits in various parts of the state and



Rev. Fr. V. Borogo -Kaduna Diocese

the government commitment to ensure adequate security and protection of lives and property of the citizens in the state, particularly during this rainy season, the government has resolved to take further measures to deal with the recent escalating attacks, kidnapping and the



Rev. Fr. Christopher Odia Catholic Church -Ikabigbo Uzairue Edo State

criminal levies being enforced on our innocent communities.

"This act of terrorism has been a source of worry and concern to the people and government of the state. Therefore, in order to deal decisively with the situation in our respective communities, govern-

ment has no option than to take the following measures: Government has henceforth, directed individuals to prepare and obtain guns to defend themselves against the bandits, as the government has directed the state commissioner of police to issue licenses to all those who qualify and are wishing to obtain such guns to defend themselves. Government is ready to facilitate people, especially our farmers, to secure basic weapons for defending themselves. Government has already concluded an arrangement to distribute 500 forms to each of the 19 Emirates in the state for those willing to obtain guns to defend themselves."

Amidst this worsening insecurity in the country, the Archbishop of Enugu Ecclesiastical Province and Bishop of Enugu Diocese, Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion, His Grace Most Rev. Emmanuel Chukwuma, has warned that a revolution is coming to chase away those holding Nigeria down.

Bishop Chukwuma asked President Muhammadu Buhari-led Federal Government to resign if it can no longer find solutions to the security problems facing the country.

## Supreme Court Hijab verdict upturns apple cart

•Muslims happy, other religious adherents, school owners kick

Nigeria is a multi-religious and multi-cultural society, which is evolving continuously with citizens becoming more aware of their rights and the avenues through which to enforce them.

This is possibly why Miss Asiyat Abdul-Kareem, Miss Maryam Oyeniyi and the Registered Trustees of Muslim Students Society of Nigeria (MSSN) decided to drag Lagos State Government, Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice as well as the Commissioner for Home Affairs, to court in an effort to enforce their fundamental rights.

On Friday, 17th June 2022, six years after the Court of Appeal in Lagos overturned an earlier judgment by a lower court on the 17th October 2014, seven Justices of the Supreme Court, made up of Olukayode Ariwoola, Kudirat Motonmori, Olatokunbo Kekere-Ekun, John Inyang Okoro, Uwani Musa Abba-Aji, Mohammed Lawal Garba, Tijani Abubakar and Emmanuel Akomaye Agim delivered earth-shaking judgment on the use of Hijab in Lagos public schools.

In the lead judgment delivered by Kudirat Motonmori Olatokunbo Kekere-Ekun, JSC, in suit No. SC.910/2016, the Supreme Court upheld the fundamental human rights of Muslim students in Lagos public schools to wear Hijab.

This particular judgment since then has sent jitters down the spines of Public/private and Christian school owners nationwide about the implications of the Supreme Court ruling. A major issue about this judgment, which presently bothers school owners and some state governments, is whether the ruling is applicable nationwide. A cross section of lawyers in a reaction told *The Trumpet* Religious Desk, "Since the judgment is the apex court ruling on this matter, it will be applied nationwide."

We thereafter sought the reactions of the National Parent Teacher Association of Nigeria (NAPTAN), Association for Formidable Education Development (AFED), National Association of Proprietors of Private Schools (NAPPS) alongside other senior lawyers and other stakeholders on the Supreme Court Hijab judgment.

What however became clear from all these enquiries, is that, if care is not taken and this issue is not properly managed, this singular judgment might lead to confusion and result in serious problems in some of our schools across the length and breadth of Nigeria.

People are asking if Christians and Traditional Worshippers can also wear their gowns and other traditional attires to schools if they chose to, especially now that Muslim Students in our Schools have been permitted to wear Hijabs? And if this now becomes the practice, where lies the uniformity expected of standard schools

in a modern-day country like Nigeria?

A school proprietor Mrs Moyo Ogunrinade in Yewande, Ogun State, said, "I am afraid that what happened in Osun State during the regime of Ogbeni Rauf Aregbesola, where Christian students and Traditional worshippers went to their various schools in the state, in different church gowns, ropes and traditional attires, might begin to happen in various schools across the country. And not only this, the confusion will also permeate our various offices and workplaces in Nigeria."

She asked, "Any surprise at the drama that recently took place in the Supreme Court, when a Human Rights Lawyer dressed in a traditional religious attire, went to the Supreme Court to protest this inhuman judgment?"

Speaking in the same vein, Engineer Taiwo Oyedele, the proprietor of the New Promised Land group of schools in Lagos and Ogun States, expressed disgust at the apex court decision. Saying Yes! "It's nice to uphold Human Rights. But before a far reaching decision with severe implications on other people's lives such as students and school owners is reached, the possible consequences or ripple effects should have been weighed thoroughly by these Justices of the Supreme Court."

He stressed that "This is sad, as this is not the Supreme Court where we once had eminent jurists such as Justices as the late Chukwudifu Oputa, Kayode Esoh, Alexander, Fatai Williams, Adetokunbo Ademola and Uwaifo just to mention a few. These high calibre men once held sway at the Supreme Court. It is sad that the decadence that has affected the general fabric of the society in general, has sadly caught up with the Supreme Court too," he concluded.

Superior Evangelist Kayode Ajala who is the spokesman of CCC Worldwide while reacting to the Supreme Court judgement said "The which allows Muslim students to wear hijab in public schools should not be looked at in isolation. What the Supreme Court has inadvertently done is to have simply recognised the rights of all religions to wear their religious garments in public places."

An Islamic Cleric, Abu Jabir Abdullah Penabdul in his submission, expressed satisfaction with the judgment of the Justices of the Supreme Court on the Hijab issue. He said, "This particular judgment has brought all the controversies surrounding this issue over the years to an end.

He said, "The Qur'an instructs Muslim women and men on how to dress modestly. And for some, the Hijab is worn by Muslim girls and women to maintain modesty and privacy from unrelated males. He continued, "Wearing of Hijab is an injunction for Muslim women from Allah. It is therefore a way of demonstrating their submission to Allah. The men are also instructed by Allah in the Qur'an to wear beards.

Ustzah Abu Jabir Abdullah Penabdul not only argued in favour of the judgment, but he also went ahead to cite various sections of the Qur'an to support this line of argument. He began with Suratu, 'An-Noor' Qur'an Chapter 24 verse 31 which says, "Tell the believing women to lower their eyes, guard their private parts, and not display their charms except what is apparent outwardly, and cover their bosoms with their veils and not to show their finery except to their husbands or their fathers or father-in-law; their sons or step-sons, brothers, or their brothers and sisters sons, or their women attendants or captives, or male attendants, who do not have any need (for women), or boys not yet aware of sex. They should not walk stamping their feet lest they make known what they hide of their Ornaments. O believers, turn to God, every one of you, so that you may be successful."

He added that "the only exception given in this matter of Hijab, is expressly stated in verse 60 of Chapter 24 of the Holy Qur'an and it reads, "As for your women past the age of bearing children, who have no hope of marriage, there is no harm if they take off their outer garments, but in such a way that they do not display their charms; yet if they avoid this, it would be better for them. God is all-hearing and all-knowing."

He stressed it is in this particular case, that Allah gave his injunctions and also gave reasons for the injunction. In Suratu Al-Ahzaab, Qur'an Chapter 33 verse 59 reads, "O Prophet, tell your wives and daughters, and the women of the faithful, to draw their wraps a little over them. They will thus be recognized and no harm will come to them. God is forgiving and kind."

He continued, "You see the high incidences of rape in our societies today, is often times, as a result of the indecent manner our ladies dress. He explained in verse 53 of this same Chapter 33, specific injunction was given as follows; "O you who believe, do not enter the houses of the Prophet for a meal without waiting for the proper time, unless asked, and enter when you are invited, and depart when you have eaten, and do not stay on talking. This puts the Prophet at inconvenience, and he feels embarrassed before you, but God is not embarrassed in (Saying) the truth. And when you ask his wife for something of utility, ask for it from behind the screen. This is for the purity of your hearts and theirs. It does not behoove you to annoy the prophet of God or to ever marry his wives after him. This would indeed be serious in the sight of God."

He emphasised that the SCREEN mentioned above is like the Hijab case. It limits you to where you can access the human anatomy of a Muslim female that is not your wife and relatives. The argument that wearing Hijab will make other people easy targets for bandits in schools, is neither here nor there. As we speak today, more Muslims have been killed by bandits than Christians across Nigeria.



# IPMAN warns of impending long fuel queues at filling stations

•May begin indefinite strike next week

By **EDU ABADE**, Business Editor

Petroleum marketers have warned that the country will continue to witness massive queues at fuel stations across the country from next week if the Federal Government fails to pay the 12 months bridging claims being owed operators in the downstream sector.

The Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria (IPMAN), which controls about 70 per cent of filling stations across the country, also denied being paid N74 billion by the Federal Government as bridging claims for the transportation of fuel.

This followed the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority

(NMDPRA) claims on Wednesday that it had paid N74 billion to oil marketers as bridging claims in the past seven months.

It made this known in a statement issued by the General Manager, Corporate Communications of NMDPRA, Kimchi Apollo in Abuja, saying: "So far, the authority paid N71.2 billion bridging claims and another N2.7 billion on freight differentials to oil marketers as of June 6, 2022."

He said the authority's attention was drawn to allegations of the Suleja Chapter of IPMAN on scarcity of products due to non-payment of bridging claims, adding that the Major Oil Marketers Association of Nigeria (MOMAN) received N9.96 billion, while IPMAN got N42.30 billion.

## Respite for manufacturers agents over clearing of cargoes

By **JOHNMARK UKOKO**

Local manufacturers and clearing agents now have a reason to smile, as the International Trade Advisory Services Limited (ITAS), an indigenous brand company, has begun operations in the country.

The firm offers services bordering on safe clearance of goods for importers, exporters, manufacturers, freight forwarders and multinational companies, among others.

Speaking at the maiden media briefing and unveiling of the company in Lagos, the Principal Consultant and Chief Executive Officer of ITAS, Okey Ibeke, lamented that currently, the compliance level at the Nigerian ports was very low, noting that this was why most importers and clearing agents have been suffering in the hands of Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) through regulatory classification of cargoes.

He pointed out that there are lots of conflicts that result from non-compliance with regulations and laws for importers and exporters in the Nigerian import and export business.

He explained that according to the corporate profile of ITAS, some of its services include classification of cargoes, harmonised tariff; valuation determination; post-clearance and its assistance, as well as determination of export assistance jurisdiction.

"Others are voluntary disclosures and appeals, compliance assessment, training and support duty recovery and duty drawback, rules of origin and free trade agreement programme compliance reviews. Some importers willfully refuse to comply with the laid down rules and regulations, but the majority of them do it out of ignorance.

"So, basically, what we have done is to advise multinationals and corporate entities on customer's processes, procedures and how to classify the goods they are importing so that when their goods arrive, they will not have problems with customer service and clearance will be seamless," he stated.

Ibeke further explained that although the company was established two years ago, it has

been operating silently, but has now reached a level where it wants to publicly tell Nigerians that if they do things properly, they would not have problems with regulatory agencies at the ports.

On the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) and others, he said: "These are complicated matters for which we guide manufacturers on how to exploit opportunities that abound in the continental and regional trade agreements.

"We also advise our clients on valuation matters that if they declare their goods properly, they wouldn't have problems, though it increases the duty, but when they start giving bribes to officials, it all amounts to the same thing. Their cargoes will be delayed at the ports and the demurrage keeps increasing."

He noted that there was a corruption chain at the ports, because once the Customs officers find out that importers have undervalued goods by bribing an officer, the police, National Drugs Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON) and other regulatory agencies would also collect their own.

"Before you know it, you would have spent more than you are supposed to pay to the government. So, we advise our clients on the proper things to do to clear their cargoes without hiccups. We also offer defence for our clients whenever they are being cheated by the customers. We do training for clients and their shipping department on Customs processes," he added.

Speaking on the low level of compliance at the ports, he said the level of compliance at the Nigerian ports was poor and that this was not peculiar to import businesses, but cuts across other sectors.

He alleged that only few of the freight forwarders in Nigeria can classify goods properly, using the right code, but 99 per cent of freight forwarders were ignorant of their jobs, adding: "Most clearing agents are our clients when they have a job they find it difficult to execute, we advise them on what to do."

•Refutes NNPC's alleged payment of N74b to marketers on subsidy

Apollo further stated that NNPC Retailers received N6.66 billion, while DAPPMAN members were paid N12.30 billion, which translated to N73.97 billion and that the Chief Executive of NMDPRA, Farouk Ahmed, discussed bridging payment extensively with IPMAN at a meeting on May 17, 2022.

He also affirmed that the processes were explained and agreed upon by IPMAN, maintaining that Ahmed assured IPMAN of NMDPRA's willingness to continue the payment of outstanding claims to ensure seamless operations.

He maintained that before the meeting, NMDPRA made an additional payment of N10 billion in June and sought an upward review of the freight rate, which was approved by President Muhammadu Buhari and was currently being implemented.

"It is disheartening that despite the payments and increase of N10 bridging cost, which was approved by President Buhari, IPMAN could turn around to accuse the NMDPRA of insensitivity. The authority wishes to reiterate that bridging payment is an ongoing process which is carried out after due verification by the authority and marketers," he said.

He expressed NMDPRA's commitment to ensuring safe, efficient and effective conduct of midstream and downstream petroleum operations.

But in a swift reaction, Secre-

tary-General of the Abuja-Suleja IPMAN, Mohammed Shuaibu, whose unit covers Abuja, Kogi, Niger and parts of Nasarawa and Kaduna states, countered the position of the NMDPRA on the payment of bridging claims.

He said the NMDPRA alleged payment of N74 billion to the marketers was wrong, adding: "We have accused NMDPRA of sabotaging our efforts by not paying the bridging claims and that is the fact.

"Since Ahmed claimed to have paid, we are not arguing but we challenge him to name the marketers he paid. He should explain and provide the documents with which he paid the money. If he says he has paid our members N74 billion and we say we've not been paid, he should explain to the public.

"Anyway, by the time we embark on a full strike in the next one week, he will explain to members of the public and the presidency how the situation got to that level because this industrial action will lead to the mother of all queues."

Continuing, Shuaibu said: If, for example, you owe a marketer N30 million or N20 million but you paid him only N150,000 or N200,000 and announce that you have paid the marketer, is there any justification to that effect?

He said the indebtedness to marketers was over N50 billion, adding that IPMAN had been

raising the alarm because most of its members were shutting down operations due to the inability to continue in business.

Also speaking, National President, Natural Oil and Gas Suppliers Association, Bennett Korie, lamented that the cost of diesel had made it very difficult for filling stations to operate optimally.

This was confirmed in Abuja at the weekend, as most filling stations were shut down due to lack of products, while the few ones that dispensed fuel had long queues.

Retail outlets such as Gegu Oil, Eterna and Oando at the Dutse end of the Kubwa-Zuba Road and many others in Abuja and its environs were closed as of Thursday, June 30, 2022.

Korie explained that marketers were paid bridging claims because of the long distances to which their trucks transport products, but noted that the current high cost of diesel had made things very tough.

"Not just that, the roads are bad and the maintenance of trucks is becoming too high for marketers. If you go round, you will see that 75 per cent of filling stations in the country have gone out of business. There is no diesel to take fuel to their stations. All of them are going down. And it is not that the fuel is not available, but the cost of conveying the product to the stations is too high," he stressed.

## Nigeria, Japan exchange notes on \$2.8m high-speed boat for Deep Blue Project

By **EDU ABADE**, Business Editor

The Federal Government has signed an Exchange of Note (E/N) with the Japanese Government for an Economic and Social Development Programme involving the acquisition of high-speed boat to reinforce coastal security in Nigeria, to be implemented by the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA).

Minister of State for Budget and National Planning, Clement Agba, signed on behalf of Nigeria, while the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Nigeria, Kazuyoshi Matsunaga, signed on behalf of the Japanese Government, with the Director General of NIMASA, Dr Bashir Jamoh in attendance.

Agba, who noted that the procurement of the High Speed Boat worth \$2.78 million, will greatly enhance the operations of the Deep Blue project, commended the Japanese government for their interest and interventions in Nigeria for Economic development.

"This project to strengthen the operations of NIMASA will definitely strengthen the partnership between the Government of Japan and the Federal Republic of Nigeria."

"Nigeria also appreciates the recent exchange of notes we signed for Emergency Improvement of Electricity Supply Facilities in Abuja, and the role Japan played in the development of the National



Clement Agba

Power Development Master-plan designed to guide the Government on the optimal energy mix and efficiency for Nigeria," Agba said.

Responding, Jamoh assured the Japanese Government of the agency's readiness to work with relevant stakeholders in ensuring sustainability of the recent success in the war against piracy in Nigerian waters and the Gulf of Guinea.

His words: "The High-Speed Boat is a welcome addition in our growing arsenal of platforms and assets to reinforce service for coastal security, not only in

Nigeria but also in the Gulf of Guinea, as over 60 per cent of shipping activities in the region pass through Nigerian waters.

"The vessel will be incorporated into the Deep Blue project which already has 2 special Mission Vessels; 2 Special Mission Aircrafts; 3 Special Mission Helicopters; 10 Unmanned Air Systems and vehicles; 17 fast moving interceptor boats; 16 armoured vehicles and the C4i centre."

Kazuyoshi noted the project is to support the measures adopted by the Nigerian Government to deal with the threat of the blue economy, to prevent and suppress piracy, armed robbery, and any other unlawful act against ships in Nigerian waters.

He said: "In the Gulf of Guinea, piracy is hindering the economic development of the coastal areas. A slowdown in economic development impoverishes the coastal population, forcing some of them into piracy for their livelihood and we need to break the vicious cycle."

"Socio-economic development is one of the guiding principles of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD). The people and government of Japan hope that this project will enable NIMASA to reinforce their operations and services for coastal security in Nigeria, strengthen Nigeria's counter piracy efforts and prove useful for the security of the Gulf of Guinea."



## CBN gives banks ultimatum for cyber security framework compliance

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has given all banks in the country a December 1, 2023 deadline to fully comply with its cyber security framework, insisting that the directive became mandatory for institutions to strengthen their cyber defence to enable them to remain safe and sound.

It gave the directive in a circular dated June 29, 2022, signed by the CBN Director, Other Financial Institutions (OFIs) Department, Nkiru Asiegbu and addressed to all other financial institutions under the banking sector regulator.

The apex bank, which stressed that the need for full compliance with the framework was necessitated by the recent increase in the number and sophisticated nature of cyber security threats against financial institutions, maintained that the objective of the framework was to create a safer and more secure cyber environment that supports information systems security and promote stability of the OFIs.

It also seeks to promote and maintain public trust and confidence in the sub-sector, as well as contribute to the prevention and combating of cybercrime in the OFIs sub-sector.

Also, the framework provides a risk-based approach to managing cyber security risk and consists of six parts including cyber security governance and oversight, cyber security risk management system, cyber resilience assessment, cyber security operational resilience, as

well as cyber-threat intelligence metrics, monitoring and reporting.

Adding that the guidelines represented the minimum requirements to be put in place by all OFIs, the CBN stated that the safety and soundness of OFIs required that they operate in a safe and secure environment, hence the platform on which information is processed and transmitted should be managed in a way that ensures confidentiality, integrity and availability of information, as well as the avoidance of financial losses and reputation risks, among others.

It noted that considering the reliance of financial institutions on information and communications technology (ICT) to operate their business and the rising incidences of cyber threats and attacks targeted at financial institutions, it became necessary to implement cyber security measures to mitigate against those risks.

Specifically, it noted that threats including ransomware targeted phishing attacks and Advanced Persistent Threats (APT) had become prevalent and demanded that financial institutions boost cyber resilience, as well as take proactive steps to secure their critical information assets to ensure their safety and soundness.

The document further spelt out the roles of the board of directors in relation to cyber security, appointments and responsibilities of the Chief Information Security Officers (CISOs), among others.



Godwin Emezie

## Dana Air introduces additional flights on Lagos, Abuja routes

By **ADAKU WALTER**

Dana Air has announced the introduction of additional flights on its Lagos and Abuja route network to provide a seamless travel experience for its customers.

Communications Manager of Dana Air, Kingsley Ezenwa, made this known in a statement made available to journalists in Lagos, saying the introduction of additional flights was strictly based on popular demand, the desire to meet the growing demand, and the need to follow through with its strategic route expansion.

"The additional Abuja to Lagos flights will operate at 12:40 p.m., 7:00 p.m. and 8.10 p.m., while the Lagos to Abuja will be at 2.30 p.m., 5:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. and with these

additional flights, our customers can rest assured that we will always have convenient, optional flight times on the Lagos and Abuja routes.

"We are consolidating our network, providing competitive fares, seamless travel experience, and reliable schedule for our guests and this expansion will be across the network, as we take delivery of more of our B737 aircraft very soon.

"We want to be available to our guests at suitable times across the network and our growth has been consistent, meticulous and commendable and we want to keep it that way for our loyal customers who have kept us going," the statement reads.

Dana Air operates daily flights from Lagos to Abuja, Port Harcourt, Enugu and Owerri with its varied fleet of nine aircraft.

## Agriculture remains highest employer of labour in Africa, says Elumelu

Chairman of Heirs Holdings, Tony Elumelu, has said at the World Economic Forum (WEF) that agriculture remains the highest employer of labour in Africa, especially with the continent's abundant arable land and resources.

He stated this at the PepsiCO's Global Leaders Roundtable on Mobilising Climate Finance for Regenerative Agriculture, saying: "In the wake of the food security crisis caused by the Russia and Ukraine war, I championed Africa's capacity to feed the world.

"There is an abundance of

arable land and agricultural resources on the continent. We need to fix commodity exchanges, we need to deal with issues of produce processing, transportation, storage and access to electricity.

"But most of all, we need to incentivise African farmers for us to see progress in the sector and create an export and tariff regime that works."

Elumelu stressed that there was a great and urgent need to mechanise and leverage technology to harness the full potential that agriculture offers on the African continent for the benefit of humanity.



Tony Elumelu

## FG partners stakeholders, unveils 10-year plan for catfish farming

To boost sustainable catfish production in the country, the Federal Government has unveiled a 10-year strategic plan and committed to driving it to deliver greater results.

Director of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD), Ime Umoh, said at a two-day workshop in Lagos that Nigeria remains the largest producer of catfish in Africa.

Umoh, who was represented by the Deputy Director of Planning at the ministry, Ibrahim Abubakar, explained that Nigeria's huge catfish sector could improve the economy and offer job opportunities without additional burden on the environment.

He said: "Nigeria is the world's largest producer of African catfish, on which millions of people depend. Our goal is to improve domestic catfish production, not only in quantity but also in quality, while providing better jobs for our people and

ensuring that no harm is done to the environment.

"By 2023, we plan to foresee a 20 per cent increase of catfish production that would lead to 30 per cent more benefit, particularly for small-scale aquaculture producers. At the same time, there would be 10 per cent growth in employment and the health of workers that will reduce air pollution, halt deforestation, as well as protect our waters and wildlife."

Also speaking, the International Partnership Officer of the European Union (EU) Delegation in Nigeria, Mrs Urszula Solkiewicz, stated that Europe was in full support of the plan for a more sustainable catfish sector in Nigeria.

She said: "This is an ambitious plan that will boost the prosperity of small-scale producers and better jobs for fish workers. FISH4ACP is a flag bearer of EU's development support for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture. It will make a difference

in Nigeria's catfish sector.

"Nigeria is one of the 12 countries where FISH4ACP, an initiative of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) and implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations (UN).

Responding, FAO representative in Nigeria and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Dr Fred Kafeero, said experts, stakeholders and participants would discuss strategies to enhance the catfish sector, adding that the workshop would set the agenda for FISH4ACP in the years ahead.

"FAO is happy to support Nigeria's ambition to increase and improve its domestic catfish production. FISH4ACP's innovative value chain approach is a good example of how FAO core objectives of better production, better nutrition, better environment and better life can become a reality in Nigeria," he stated.

## Lagos raises BRT fares to sustain operations

By **ADAKU WALTER**

To sustain operations of regulated bus services in Lagos State, Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu has approved a N100 increase in bus fares for all Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and standard routes around the Lagos metropolis.

The state government explained that the increase, which will come into effect on Wednesday, July 13, 2022, is aimed at ensuring sustainability of the BRT and standard routes scheme.

With the increase, a bus ride from Ikorodu to Tafawa Balewa Square (TBS) will cost N600 instead of N500, while Berger to Ajah will cost N700, up from N600. Oshodi to Abule Egba will cost N450 as against N350 and Abule-Egba-CMS-Obalende will attract a fare of N600.

A statement issued by the Assistant Director, Corporate Communications, Lagos Metropolitan Area Transport Authority (LAMATA), Kolawole Ojelabi, disclosed that the operations of the transport

scheme had been hampered lately due to the rising cost of inputs required for sustainable service and the high number of buses that have been grounded due to lack of spare parts.

He explained that for instance, the increase in the price of diesel from N187 to N830 per litre between August 2020 and June 2022, greatly affected the performance of the bus operating companies, which led to the withdrawal of some buses from operation and longer waiting time at bus terminals.

Ojelabi noted that in agreeing to the increase in fare, the governor also approved a proposal for a bailout fund for the bus operating companies to cushion the effect of the harsh operating environment, safeguard private partnership investment and forestall the demise of bus operations in the state.

He said in view of the economic situation, the state government is also supporting the Bus Operating Companies (BOCs) due to the continuous increase in fuel price,

which is to ensure that the increase in the passenger's fare is kept to a minimum.

"The fare increase notwithstanding, the government noted that whatever support this will give the operators, will still not cover the cost of fuelling and as such was likely to jeopardise the continued survival of the bus operations.

"The governor also approved LAMATA's request for the conversion of the diesel buses in operation to the use of compressed natural gas (CNG), as well as a shift to different economically viable, environmentally friendly and cost-effective mobility energy solutions.

"This will maximise operations cost such as electric vehicles, hydrogen buses and the development of hybrid energy sources as alternative fuel for the Bus Reform Initiative (BRI) buses. According to the request, these measures are indispensable in the current global economic and environmental reality to ensure sustainability of the BRI operations," the statement reads.



# Osinbajo urges architects to participate in govt programmes

By **BLESSING OZIWO**

Vice President Yemi Osinbajo has urged professional bodies to play more active roles in the implementation of government plans and policies. Osinbajo stated this when he received members of the Nigerian Institute of Architects, (NIA), led by its President, Enyi Ben-Eboh.

The Vice President, who made specific reference to the social housing scheme of the Federal Government, said the programme would significantly impact more Nigerians if professional bodies such as the NIA, played an active role.

He said: "When we developed the Economic Sustainability Plan (ESP), it was part of our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We were very concerned about social housing, not just as a way of providing cheap housing for the poorest among us, but also

as a way of providing jobs and job opportunities. But I am not so sure we got much response from NIA.

"One of the advantages of professional bodies like yours is to make it possible for a vast majority of our people to get decent housing, for instance, finding the cheapest ways of building 300,000 affordable houses."

Osinbajo noted: "For the vast majority of Nigerians, the relevance of our professional institutions, especially when it comes to the design and building, must be felt when it comes to the basics. I certainly would like to see what sorts of contributions the NIA will make in developing policies around social housing."

He commended the institute for coming up with the Integrated Infrastructure Research for Development Conference as its contribution to the country's

National Development Plan, noting that situating architecture in the creative industry is apt.

Osinbajo emphasised the need for the building sector to drive the industry and its operations as much as possible, noting that "it is very important that the sector itself drives reforms, regulation and policy."

Mr Ben-Eboh praised the Federal Government for its contribution to the growth of professionals by signing Executive Order 02 in 2017.

He said: "Without doubt, Executive Order 2 laid the foundation for the gradual take-off of our nation's envisioned industrial diversification and self-sustaining economy with 100 per cent in-country capacity utilisation and development."

The NIA officials made a presentation on the implementation guide of the institute's Integrated Infrastructure Research for Development Conference.



Vice President Yemi Osinbajo

## Before you rent or buy a storey building

By **GENESIS ERIRIOMA**

It is important to properly investigate the health and state of a building to avoid tragedies arising from collapse.

There are quite a number of reasons why a building falls. It can be because of an act of terrorism, a structural failure or herbal screw-ups like an earthquake, hurricane, flooding, landslide, twister or mudslide.

Nigeria has suffered its percentage of collapsed buildings, with numerous instances of homes collapsing and killing lots of people.

One notorious incident that happened on December 10, 2016, in Nigeria was a church collapse in Uyo, the capital of Akwa Ibom State; killing over 2 hundred people. The Akwa Ibom State Governor, Udom Emmanuel, was one of the fortunate survivors of this tragic incident while the church building collapsed in the middle of a Saturday service.

On September 22, 2015, a building under construction collapsed in the Lekki axis of Lagos State. In May 2016, a four-storey building collapsed in Ogun State, which left many dead. In October 2015, a 3-storey building collapsed in Lagos.

About 46 persons were reported dead when a 21 storey building collapsed in the Ikoyi axis of Lagos in November 2021. Ten persons were reported dead when a one-storey building said to belong to Salvation Ministries collapsed at Okpanam in Oshimili North Local Government Area of Delta State in January 2022.

Sadly, in the last 10 years, there has been a rise in the cases of collapsed buildings in Nigeria. In a report by the Lagos State Building Control Agency, in 2016, a total of about 1,104 homes were sealed between June and October 2016 throughout Lagos State because of faulty or unlawful construction.

The truth remains that buildings do not just simply fall apart. There are always warning signs. In many cases, the building control agencies of several states in Nigeria carry out a non-destructive integrity test.

This test according to real estate professionals is to ascertain the structural stability of the building. This helps the state know if such buildings can be renovated or re-engineered.

In scenarios where buildings are detected to have a fault, building owners are asked to take the test before further actions are taken by the state.

As part of our commitment to ensuring the safety of homeowners as well as those who live or work in properties in Nigeria, here is a list of key warning signs that should not be taken for granted.

The moment you notice any of the warning signs we will discuss in this article, immediately evacuate the building and make it a point of duty to notify your nearest Local Council Development Area (LCDA).

Major wall cracks: Thermal movement remains one of the most potent causes of cracks to appear in the walls of buildings. If overlooked, this could eventually lead to the collapse of the building.

A crack in the wall of a building is a natural sign that the structure is unable to accommodate the movement or load to which it is subjected. When cracks appear in the walls of a building, it is either a structural crack or a non-structural crack.

While structural cracks appear as a result of incorrect design, faulty construction or overloading, non-structural cracks appear due to internally induced stress on the materials used in constructing a building.

Floors gaps: When there are gaps between the walls and floors of a building, you must understand that this is a structural defect that could end very badly.

In 1995, a building with gaps between the floors and its walls eventually collapsed and killed three people.

Uneven spaces and sloping floors are not to be taken lightly. For instance, take a look at the house from the street. Is the front entrance straight? For contemporary homes, sloping floors are a really bad sign.

## LAWMA boss tasks Lagos residents to bag waste

By **BLESSING OZIWO**

Lagos Waste Management Authority (LAWMA) has reassured residents of a clean environment despite the challenge of diesel scarcity. It also urged them to always bag their waste.

The Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Lagos Waste Management Authority (LAWMA), Mr Ibrahim Odumboni, has stressed the need for waste sorting for residents, hinting that come April, residents who comply would get reduction in waste bills and increase for those who don't.

Odumboni, stated this at the weekend while monitoring the environment. He added that efforts were being intensified to clear the backlog of refuse and to stop acts of indiscriminate waste disposal around the city.

He said: "We have redoubled our efforts, working round the clock to ensure that we evacuate all waste anywhere around the city. Although the scarcity and high cost of diesel have been a major challenge, as service providers' trucks run on diesel, nonetheless, we are doing the needful and leaving no stone unturned, to maintain a clean environment and prevent health hazards to the people.

"Over preceding months, we have rolled out advocacy and media sensitisation campaigns, to inform and educate residents on the importance of environmental cleanliness, particularly the act of waste containerisation. We have also supported efforts of PSP operators, by providing backup services in areas that experienced service gaps, with the overall aim of eradicating black spots across the metropolis."

He urged residents to bag and containerise their waste to allow for more storage period and prevent littering.

"The resurgence of waste observed in some areas of the metropolis is borne out of the unforeseen diesel challenges the service providers are experiencing, and since tenements cannot keep waste in their houses, have resorted to bringing it to the highways, which isn't proper.

"While we strongly reiterate the importance of waste containers at home, we passionately appeal and canvass for public cooperation, to combat a resurgence of waste on road medians, canals and other illegal spots.

"We are assuring Lagosians of our total commitment to rid the environment of dirt. As we work day and night to make this happen, we urge you to support our efforts because the cleanliness of the state is a collective responsibility," he said.

Odumboni noted that despite the serious logistics challenges faced by PSP operators, as a result of the increase in the price of diesel, they had continued to provide services to tenements. He added that the authority, to ensure effective turnaround time of waste collection trucks, had ensured that landfills are in proper shape.

"Before now, we had carried out massive rehabilitation work across our various landfills, to improve the turnaround time of PSP trucks servicing tenements and commercial facilities in the state. This has improved the condition of the sites, paving way for seamless waste collection activities," he stated.



Ibrahim Odumboni

## Fraudster bags 235 years jail term for N525m fraud

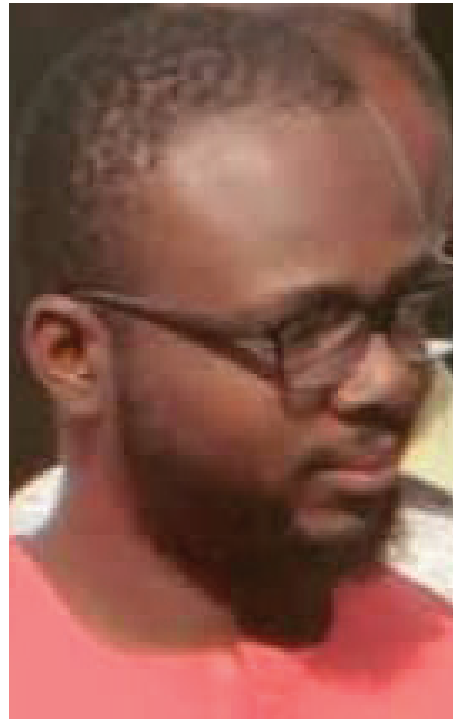
By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

Justice Agatha Okeke of the Federal High Court, Uyo has convicted and sentenced a notorious international fraudster, Scales Olatunji, to 235 years imprisonment for N525 million internet fraud and money laundering.

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) arraigned Olatunji on July 2, 2019, on 45-count charges bordering on identity theft, money laundering, and conspiracy.

The convict, however, pleaded “not guilty” to the charges when read to him, thus setting the stage for his trial.

One of the counts reads, “That you, Scales Olatunji Ishola ‘M’, Meraiyebu Charles ‘M’ (at large), Gabriel Adeyemi Olugbenga ‘M’ (at large), Ojomo Oluwatobi Ayodele ‘M’ (at large) and Adekola Oluwatoyin ‘M’ (at large), between January 2017 to October 2018, in Nigeria, within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court conspired amongst yourselves to convert the total sum of N525,172,580.00 (Five Hundred and Twenty Five Million, One Hundred and Seventy-two Thousand, Five Hundred and Eighty Naira) only, which sum you reasonably ought to have known forms part of proceeds of unlawful activities to wit: fraud (Business E-mail Compromise and Identity Theft), and thereby committed an offence contrary to Section 18 (a) of the



Scales Olatunji

Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act 2011 (as amended) and punishable under Section 15 (3) of the same Act”

Another count reads, “That you, Scales Olatunji Ishola ‘M’ on or about the 15th day of May 2018, in Nigeria, within the

jurisdiction of this Honourable Court with intent to defraud did send electronic messages (email) using emailoffice01@aol.com to one Monica Goulmoen of the Charity Association for providing girls and boys in Kobane with a football pitch, while impersonating a certain Per Ravn Omdal, a former Norwegian Football Association President, demanding the sum of €64,000.00 (Sixty-Four Thousand Euros) to be transferred to you via IBAN GB74HBUK40062132722119 which was paid and you thereby committed an offence contrary to Section 22 (3)(b) of the Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, etc) Act 2015 and punishable under Section 22 (4) of the same Act.”

EFCC’s counsel, Nwandu Ukoha opened the case on November 7, 2019, and subsequently tendered thirty-five (35) exhibits through four prosecution witnesses, which were all admitted in evidence against the defendant. He closed the case on January 29, 2021, for the defence to open its defence.

Both the prosecution and defence counsel adopted their written addresses in October 2021, before the court adjourned for judgment.

Delivering judgment on Monday, June 27, 2022, Justice Okeke convicted Olatunji on all the 45- counts preferred against him by the EFCC.

Justice Okeke said that “the evidence of the prosecution witnesses are consistent and the prosecution established the guilt of the defendant in the case of money laundering as

it relates to count one to five of the charges. The prosecution also established the guilt of the defendant in the offence of cybercrime as it relates to count six to forty-five of the charges. The prosecution, on the totality of the evidence before this court, proved the charges against the defendant.”

The judge sentenced Olatunji to seven (7) years imprisonment on counts one to five, and five (5) years imprisonment on counts six to forty-five. The sentence, shall, however, run concurrently with effect from the date of arrest.

The court also ordered that the money in the convict’s account be forfeited to Norwegian citizens through the EFCC. Also, his properties: House No. 6, located on Road 2 West-end Estate, Ikota, Lekki, Lagos State, and House No. 10, Donatus Odum Street, Ikate, Lagos State are to be sold by the EFCC, and the proceeds restituted to the Norwegian victims.

The convict’s journey to the Correctional Centre started when operatives of the EFCC arrested him on March 20, 2019, at his Ikota, Lekki’s residence based on a petition from the Oslo Police District in Norway, requesting the assistance of the EFCC is investigating a network of Nigerians that had defrauded Norwegian citizens for years.

Investigations revealed that the convict belonged to a syndicate of internet fraudsters who specialized in Business Email Compromise (BEC).

## NSCDC Deputy Commandant arraigned in court over N26.7m property fraud

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) has docked a Deputy Commandant of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC), Mr Edike Mboutidem Akpan, for allegedly defrauding prospective homeowners of N26,655,000.

A statement by the Commission on Friday said Akpan was charged before Justice V. S. Gaba of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) High Court, sitting in Kwali, Abuja on a 17-count charge, that includes using a private real estate company, Danemy Nig Ltd, to defraud land subscribers.

According to the statement, “the deputy

commandant convinced many subscribers with the claim of being in partnership with NSCDC, to pay various sums of money for plots of land both in Karshi, Nasarawa State and Sabon Lugbe Extension, Airport Road, Abuja, which were never allocated to them.”

ICPC told the court that the offence, which was committed between 2010 and 2015, violated Sections 19 and 26 (1)(c) of the Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act, 2000 and was punishable under Section 19 of the same Act.

In one of the charges, Akpan was alleged to have conferred an undue advantage on himself when he allegedly received N13,350,000 in 2011 from a subscriber,

Mr Igwe Onus Nwankwo, through his company Danemy Nig Ltd, as payments for 10 plots of land at Airport Road.

He was at various times alleged to have received N1,305,000 each from Doctors Robert Okoro and Akuneme Marcel Ikwuoma for the allocation of plots of land at the Defenders Family Estate Homes Scheme, Airport Road.

The NSCDC officer was also accused of receiving N2,610,000 from Mrs Chidinma Obasi for two plots of land and N1,205,000 from Mr Etuechere Martins, for a plot.

However, the accused pleaded “not guilty” when the charge was read to him as his counsel prayed the court to grant him bail on liberal terms.

Counsel to ICPC, John-Paul Okwor, who did not oppose the bail application, however, prayed the court to admit the accused to bail on reasonable terms that would ensure his attendance in court for trial.

Justice Gaba thereafter admitted him to bail in the sum of N5 million with two sureties in like sum. One of the sureties must show proof of residing in his or her personal house.

The defendant was also ordered by the court to deposit his international passport with the court’s Registrar with a caveat to be released to him upon application for the purpose of medical treatments.

The case was subsequently adjourned to 7th November for commencement of trial.

## EFCC says declining number of whistleblowers worrisome

By PAUL MICHAEL, ABUJA

The Economic Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) has decried the decline in the number of whistleblowers across the country in spite of rewards offered to informants by the government.

The Chairman of the Commission, Abdulrasheed Bawa, expressed his dissatisfaction on Thursday in Awka, Anambra State at a meeting on strengthening the capacity of stakeholders on whistleblowing policy, organised by the African Centre for Media and Information Literacy (AFRICMIL).

The programme with the theme “Role of Community-Based Organisations in Entrenching Whistleblowing Policy at the Grassroots” was supported by the MacArthur Foundation in collaboration with Anambra Civil Society Network (ACSONET).

Bawa, who was represented by Enugu

Zonal Commander of EFCC, Oshodi Johnson, said the whistleblowing policy had helped the agency to recover huge stolen public funds across the country.

He, however, lamented that some challenges were undermining the policy’s effectiveness in the country.

He further stated that ignorance of the legal and administrative frameworks of the policy as well as difficulties and bureaucratic processes for claiming the advertised incentives are some of the challenges.

Bawa said, “It is also not impossible that the few false informants or whistleblowers who were prosecuted for wanting to turn a serious programme to memes unnerved some other would-be informants.

“Whatever the challenges are, it is imperative that there is fresh awakening to sustain the flow of critical intelligence to Nigerian law enforcement agencies.”

The EFCC boss further stated that the

Commission was committed to the success of the whistleblowing policy, saying it was a critical peg of the Federal Government’s anti-corruption framework.

He promised to partner with AFRICMIL and other community-based groups in strengthening their capacities to identify and quickly report suspected cases of corruption in their communities.

Also speaking, Kennedy Ebotemen, Resident Anti-Corruption Commissioner at the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission, ICPC, Enugu, said that corruption thrived in secrecy.

He urged the public to speak out by reporting any act of corruption or unethical practices to anti-graft agencies.

Chairman of ACSONET, Chris Azor, in his remarks, urged EFCC and ICPC to establish their offices in Anambra State to aid easy access to Whistle-blowers.

Meanwhile, Dr Chido Onumah,

Coordinator, AFRICMIL, earlier in his speech said that whistleblowing policy had proved to be the most direct method of exposing corrupt practices.

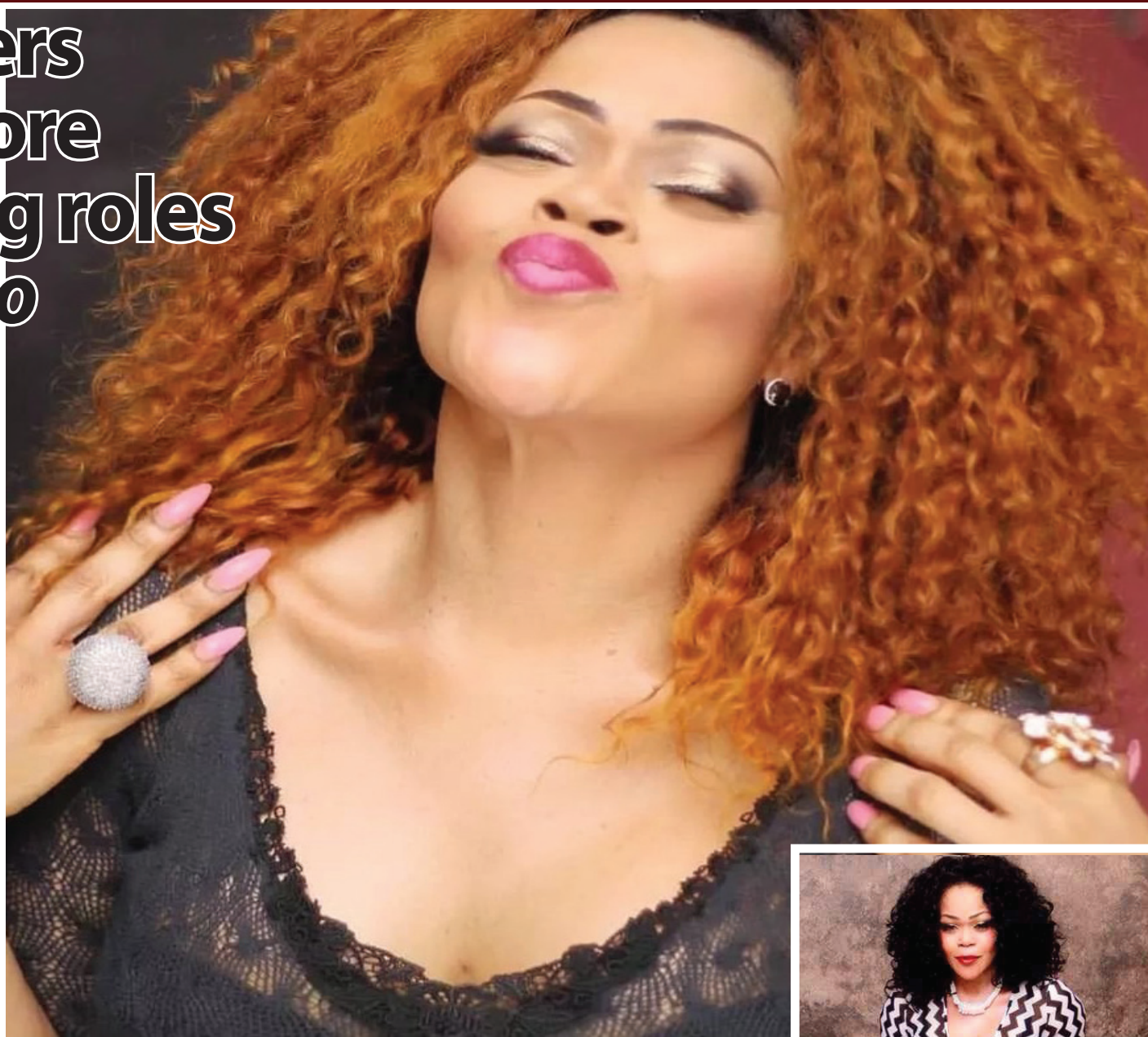
Onumah, who was represented by Kolawole Ogunbiyi, Programmes Manager, identified early detection and exposure of mismanagement of public funds, bribery, fraud, theft of public funds, and other illicit acts as an effective strategy in the fight against corruption.

According to him, “We all are aware that corruption thrives in multiple forms in our communities, but most visibly in the misappropriation of funds and abandonment of projects that could bring development and meaningfully turn around the lives of the people.

“We are both morally and legally bound as citizens not to keep silent about any act of corruption or wrongdoing whenever we see one.”

# I dare writers to write more challenging roles - Shaffy Bello

*Her voice reminds us of her role in the melodious track, Love Me Jeje, Love Me Tender. Light skin actress, Shaffy Bello Akinrimisi is fully back in Nigeria and has featured in quite a number of movies one of which was her role as Adesua in the unique Telenovelas series 'Taste of Love'. Shaffy is equally a wife and mother of two teenagers) who are based in the USA; despite being over 40, the classic lady of the screen still waxes stronger each day. In this chat with OMONIYI ALLI she spoke about her transition from being a musician to an actor amongst other sundry issues.*



**Q:** You have explored music and movie; is there any other talent of yours that is yet to be seen?

**A:** Keep watching!! One of the things in a human's life is growth and also I think for everyone we must learn that even when I tell you I am not doing music anymore; in a year I might decide that I want to do it. For now, I am trying to be a better person in this chosen field (Acting), studying to be a director, producer and doing bigger things in Nollywood. However, when I feel like I want to take a break from all that and go back to music, I will do that.

**Q:** In 1997 a lot of people fell in love with your personality when you featured in the song 'Love me Jeje', how much of this moment is available to be shared?

**A:** Well I still have lots of love to give out; but the fact remains that I am still who I am, I have grown personally, professionally as an actor, as a singer and I only wish that as I grow older; I am still very much wiser. 1997 still date, a different person might have evolved but the thorough idea of the kind of person I am has not still changed.

**Q:** Are there still plans for you to go back into music?

**A:** Music is still very much part of me because it will never depart from me; it's now a matter of finding the right time now. I still get a nudge in the heart to do something cosy like an MTV unplugged kind of thing

**Q:** If you have the opportunity to meet

*your younger self, what advice would you give?*

**A:** I will tell her not to be so hard on herself; there is so much more, make those mistakes. I have a 22 years old daughter; sometimes when I look at her, she has lots of ideas and she is like, Mum I feel I should have grown past this stage doing better things and I will go back to tell myself just like I am telling her now. It's ok to make mistakes now, calm down!! It's coming and it will happen.

**Q:** If your autobiography is to be commissioned today, what will the title be and why?

**A:** The title will definitely be 'The woman who lives by grace and grace did not leave'

**Q:** Despite your busy schedules, how do you maintain the home front?

**A:** It's not been easy but what works for me is the fact that I set my priorities and one of them is that I want to be there for my children and they equally respect me for what I do but the beautiful thing is that I have grown up children; you can't compare me with actors with little children. I am at the stage where in a month we might not see each other but we communicate via telephone call because technology has made it easier. After all, my children are not here.

**Q:** You are well over 40 and still look ravishing, what is the secret to your youthful look?

**A:** The secret is just taking care of yourself, I tell a lot of people that when you take care of yourself; your body will thank you. I think the biggest thing also is to feel good, forget

the outer layer, the inner layer is the most important. I must because when a woman is truly happy and she feels she is driven by her purpose, people will see that and that is the beauty. There is no reason every woman out there should not look good, Ankara fabric out there is as cheap as a thousand naira, give it to a tailor, pack your hair and look good. Always make a good first impression, not necessarily expensive.

**Q:** How do you un-wind?

**A:** I listen to music, I read a lot and I love to travel.

**Q:** If we were to search your library, what kind of books are stockpiling there?

**A:** Seriously!! A range of suspense, drama, and romance; and also the most important books to me are books that change your life thinking, books that challenge you to think differently. I am an opera fan.

**Q:** Knowing that you acted in countless movies; which role did you find more challenging for you as a person?

**A:** I think Ovi's voice was one challenge for me, it was fun because I loved playing the character; the most challenge for me was then I had to play a 60/70 year grandmother and they made me up but the challenging aspect of it was the fact that I needed to sound older but I dare to challenge our writers to write more challenging roles for us; don't stigmatize actors because a character usually plays the role of mother in a movie does not mean she can't do well in other characters. We are really not challenging our industry yet.

**Q:** One significant thing life has taught

*you about being an actor?*

**A:** Life has taught me that fame does not bring happiness; unfortunately on social media you put the good day for the best day, one of the things I would love to do is to approach younger girls and let them know your self-confidence matters a lot. We all have good days and bad days; don't ever feel that the pictures you see are who you are. Being an actor has made me realize that people want to place me on a pedestal and they want to see you as a hero but meanwhile, we are not heroes but actors. The heroes out there are the mothers, teachers teaching in public school, single fathers and mothers; those are the heroes.

**Q:** What is your advice to celebrities who bring up their personal issues on social media?

**A:** For me as a person, I have chosen to keep my private life private but my work life is what my social media account is all about which you will always see but whatever happens in my home is my private life. My candid advice is to take your family issues off social media and put out more of your work for the world to see.

## Africans to get up to \$2000 through The Tony Elumelu storytellers fund

Africa No Filter, a donor collaborative working to transform stereotypical narratives of Africa, has launched the Tony Elumelu Storytellers Fund. Named after African business leader and philanthropist Tony O. Elumelu, the Fund will award grants to emerging artists and storytellers, whose work shines a light on entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship in Africa.

The \$30,000 fund is sponsored by Heirs Insurance and Heirs Life Assurance, the insurance subsidiaries of the pan-African investment group, Heirs Holdings.

Tony Elumelu, Chairman of Heirs Holdings and Founder of the Tony Elumelu Foundation, has led the championing of entrepreneurship in Africa and has empowered over 15,000 young African entrepreneurs across the continent through a \$100 million commitment made by his Foundation.

The Tony Elumelu Storytellers Fund is

a standalone initiative and an extension of his commitment to catalysing a redefined African success story, powered by Africa's youth and their creative ideas. The Fund calls on journalists, filmmakers, content producers, and visual and performing artists to submit multimedia creative ideas that tell the stories of inspiring entrepreneurs and showcase the true and positive spirit of entrepreneurship in Africa. Applicants must be aged between 18 and 35 years, living on the continent or in the Diaspora. They must have a platform or portfolio of work that shines the light on entrepreneurship in Africa.

Speaking on the Fund, Tony Elumelu said: "I have always believed in the potential of young African entrepreneurs to transform Africa. This initiative aligns with our beliefs and extends the work that we do at the Tony Elumelu Foundation. Empowering

young creative entrepreneurs and the creative sector provides a channel for us to project Africa's positives globally. We need their voices to tell our often less-told stories of triumph, resilience, hard work and innovation."

Moky Makura, Executive Director at Africa No Filter, said: "Our partnership is significant because this is the first African funding we have received towards the fight for narrative change. We are also excited to be partnering with one of Africa's leading entrepreneurs to celebrate entrepreneurship on the continent through storytelling. We need more success stories, more awareness and more celebrations around entrepreneurial ideas and the dynamic young people driving change here."

The Fund is open for applications on the Africa No Filter website with a closing date of 29 July 2022.

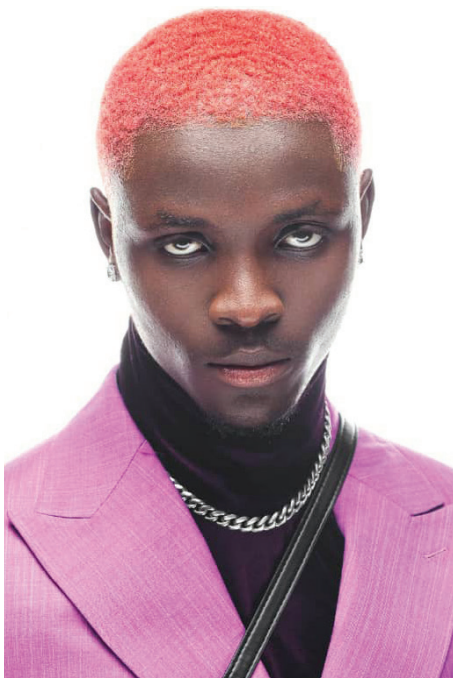


### Shon Joel Nerat set to blow minds with "RunAway" off "The Fantasizer EP"

The name Shon the Fantasizer is gradually picking up the wave right now, for the unacquainted, he's about to surf your minds and your playlists with heart-throbbing grooves that will whet your appetite and leave you screaming for an encore, this is no doubt an introduction.

Shon the Fantasizer who is subtly taking the Nigerian music industry by storm is an incredibly talented 19-year-old singer, songwriter, trapper, and rapper; as versatile as they come, he is originally from Jos Plateau state, born in Kano state Nigeria.

He sets the premise for his music career under the canopy of Positive World Entertainment with his lead single "Runaway" off his much-anticipated project tagged "The Fantasizer EP". According to him, "Runaway" was inspired by a friend's relationship experience. The melodious song laced with rhythmic and thumping instrumentals is a sonorous ballad which showcases Shon's versatility as an artist. The song was produced by the ever-impressive Ozedikus and is scheduled to drop on the 1st of July, 2022. So get ready to update your Playlist.



### AFRIMA 2022: Entry submission portal closes on August 5

Organisers of the All African Music Awards (AFRIMA) have revealed that eligible submission of music materials for this year's edition of the award closes Friday, August 5, 2022.

According to the AFRIMA Juror, representing Diaspora Northern America, Hadja Kobele Keita, speaking from Washington DC, United States of America, the award platform would not extend the submission date beyond the stipulated time.

"It is important that all relevant parties submit their entries on time this year. We are a very thorough and transparent organization, and we have a clear process for the award ceremony every year. Once the submission of entries ends, we spend time judging the materials, before we can derive our final nominations list. We also have a specific time allotted to voting. The entire process is also audited by a firm of international repute, Pricewaterhousecoopers. We do not just wake up and nominate people. AFRIMA 2022 will be held from November 3 - 6 this year. To achieve this, we cannot extend deadlines at this point."

According to AFRIMA, all prospective entries must have been created between August 20, 2021, and August 5, 2022, being the year in review for all submissions. Artistes, artiste managers, music producers, recording companies/

labels, video directors, disc jockeys and other relevant stakeholders can submit their work or submit on behalf of their clients via the official AFRIMA website at [www.afrima.org](http://www.afrima.org). All submissions must be done in consonance with AFRIMA guidelines, terms and conditions, which

are also available on the website.

This year's edition retains its existing categories, all of which are carefully curated to celebrate the best of talents within the African music scene as well as communicate the strengths of Africa for global competitiveness.



### 2022 Naija Corn Festival to take place on July 9

#### ● lots of prizes to be won

With the resounding success that accompanied the 2021 edition of the Naija Corn Festival, HLTT Consult, a Lagos-based tourism development company, also known as Travel Begins at Home (TBAH), has unveiled programmes and plans for the 2022 edition of the Naija Corn Festival. The event is scheduled to take place at The BoardWalk Event Centre, Victoria Island, Lagos on July 9, 2022.

The Naija Corn Festival is an opportunity to showcase our indigenous food, a staple in most African homes. We will put a spotlight on the Tourism industry and grow the Agro sector by identifying a value chain for our dear Corn, also

learning about business and investment opportunities around Corn. Farmers, travel consultants, travel enthusiasts, artists, and food vendors are all welcome to be a part of the event.

In a media statement by the Founder and Chief Host, Olubunmi Akinyemi said, "We aim to promote Agritourism as a new form of Tourism which is grossly underdeveloped in this region. Also, we want younger people to be involved in Agriculture, and support the SDG goals of eradicating poverty and food security."

"We have a dream to create new tourism attractions for Nigeria and Africa as a whole. Thus the introduction of our flagship event named "Naija Corn

Festival" which we intend to develop and deliver at a global standard to attract visitors from all over the world. It will be an exciting time for families and friends to unwind and relax while a series of events are taking place," she added.

To enrich the one-day festival, the organizers have put together a series of activities such as a film show; panel discussion; Conversation, and loads of corn meals to relish. Others Free Eating Competition, Free Cooking Competition and a dancing competition with loads of freebies to be won. There would also be different kinds of games and board games sections.

Registration for the Naija Corn Festival 2022 is free, and open online.



## Heavyweight bout: Anthony Joshua on a revenge mission

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

- I will do my job - Usyk
- Joshua to come with different strategies - Garcia

Former heavyweight champion Anthony Joshua is on a revenge mission against Ukrainian Oleksandr Usyk if both meet in the rematch slated for August 20.

Joshua lost his IBF, WBA and WBO heavyweight title belts to Usyk in a unanimous decision after a 12-round bout at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium last year to become the new heavyweight champion.

With both fighters set to take on each other in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, next month, they met in London on Wednesday to grant a press conference where Joshua underlined his determination to reclaim the belts.

While the heavyweight champion Usyk insisted that he does not fight for fame or money but does it as his job, Joshua said he is desperate to reclaim his title when he gets into the ring.

"I'm definitely hungry, I'm definitely desperate. But at the end of the day how I perform will speak volumes to the masses," Joshua said.

"I'm definitely desperate to get my hands on [the titles].



Just let me get in there and do my job," the former champion reiterated.

Usyk in his statement said, "I'm not fighting for money or recognition. Many people want recognition, many people want others to remember them. But I don't need this.

"I don't want to become 'the great'. I'm just doing my job now and I will continue doing it while my heart is beating," he added.

Joshua has changed his trainer and Usyk believes the player will adopt a different approach in the rematch.

"I do understand that he's going to be different. So will I," Usyk stated.

Meanwhile, Robert Garcia, Joshua's new trainer stressed that Joshua has advantages over Usyk considering certain physical factors.

Garcia said, "Usyk is a very talented fighter. He's got different ways to fight.

Seeing the size difference, the height, the reach, the weight, everything's in Anthony's advantage. We've got to take advantage of that.

"We have to do whatever it takes. We have to come out with different strategies in case one of them does work," he stressed.

Nonetheless, Joshua conceded that Usyk is not a pushover but possesses left-handed southpaw punches that could be detrimental.

## Sevilla, Villareal, others court Umar Sadiq

Spanish club Sevilla have entered into the race to sign Almeria star Umar Sadiq reportedly being courted by several top European clubs.

The Nigerian international last season, was a key figure that helped the Spanish second-tier division club to gain promotion to La Liga, netting 18 goals in 36 games during the process.

Reports from Spain by Marca reveal that the prolific striker has been on the radar of Sevilla though the asking price of about £22m by Almeria is considered too high to attempt the deal.

Other clubs that have also signified interest in the 25-year-old player are Dutch champions Ajax, Benfica, Villareal and Valencia.

Marca noted that the former Rangers forward has a good relationship with the influential Sevilla's sporting director, Monchi, during their time together in Roma.

Meanwhile, a report revealed that the player, whose time at Ibrox was lacklustre, has become a prized asset for top European clubs with Villareal seeking

to bring him to Estadio de la Cerámica.

Villarreal's winger Arnaut Danjuma has been linked with a move to England with West Ham United officially making contact with the Yellow Submarines who desire to bring in Sadiq as his replacement.

This resolve Villarreal would make them enter into a bidding war with Sevilla that desire the player, who is capped seven times for the Super Eagles, to boost their attacking line in the season's campaign.



## Nottingham Forest need Aina in City Ground

Premier League newcomer Nottingham Forest have turned their searchlight towards Torino's right-back, Ola Aina to salvage their defensive loopholes.

Forest last season depended on Djed Spence, who was on loan from Middlesbrough to allay problems created in this area of their defence.

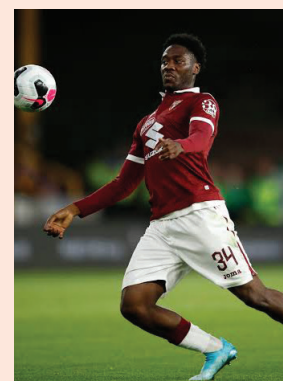
With the player reported to have returned to his parent club Middlesbrough

and likely to switch to Tottenham, Forest have pencilled Super Eagles Aina as a potential replacement for Spence.

Aside from Steve Cooper, who longs for the 25-year-old Nigerian international to come to Premier League, Leeds also exploited the option of bringing the defender to Elland Road until they signed Rasmus Kristensen from RB Salzburg.

A report has it that Forest had earlier signified interest in Liverpool's Neco Williams which ended unfruitfully as the Merseyside club bluntly turned down their offer.

The player, who made 23 appearances last season for Torino in all competitions and also featured in the African Cup of Nations for the Super Eagles in January, could be on his way back to England after a loan spell at Fulham last two seasons ago.



## Kyrgios fined £8211 for spitting at fans



World-ranked number 45, Nick Kyrgios, has been fined by Wimbledon for spitting at fans after the match against British Paul Judd on Tuesday in round 128.

Before the match, the Aussie has pondered on the contest against Judd which he conceded would be tough due to the support from the home fans for the Briton.

Kyrgios reportedly had enjoyed similar support from fans during the Australian Open and would have been aware of what

lies ahead with Judd.

Resultantly, Kyrgios won the five-set contest 6-3 1-6 5-7 7-6 (7-3) 5-7 to send Judd, who crashed out of the qualifiers of the Eastbourne International championship to United States Steve Johnson last month.

Consequent to recording a victory, Kyrgios spat to express his dismay at a section of the fans which attracted the attention of Wimbledon to investigate his activities.

According to the Aussie who admitted doing it, he said that his actions were

preempted by the disrespect shown to him during the contest.

"Of one of the people disrespecting me, yes," Kyrgios admitted.

"I would not be doing that to someone who was supporting me," he added.

The Aussie happens to receive the highest fine from All England Club followed by Alexander Ritschard that was fined £4,105. He will face world-ranked No.6 Stefano Tsitsipas in round of 32 after he brushed off Serbian Filip Krajinovic 6-2 6-3 6-1 in the round of 64.

## United, Arsenal battle for Ajax Lisandro Martinez

Manchester United have turned their attention towards Ajax defender Lisandro Martinez to fix their defensive problems after making headway on Barcelona midfielder Frenkie De Jong.

United boss Erik ten Hag signed the Argentine international in 2019 at Ajax and is looking to reunite with him at Old Trafford to bolster the club's defensive lineup ahead of the new season.

According to reports, Manchester United will have to battle Arsenal which have already had several of its offers rejected for the 24-year-old Martinez.

Lately, Arsenal have tendered a bid of €40m plus add-ons but the Dutch champions will only consider doing business when their value for the defender, which is reportedly around €50m, is reached.

The Gunners are ahead of Manchester United in the pursuit of Martinez having officially tendered a bid for the player against the latter who have only made their intentions known.

Also, Manchester United have reached out to Brentford Christian Eriksen in a bid to bring the Danish player to Old Trafford. Although the player's contract has expired, he still has the option to renew it with the West London club.

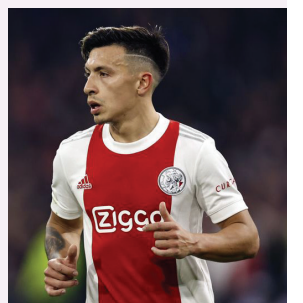
While United fans are wary

about where Martinez will fit into a club that has defensive options in its lineup, Ten Hag last year's statement reveals why he considers the versatile player as a prime target.

"He is an example of what my statement about more than eleven basic players is based on. Only its competition is enormous. He can play as a left-back, left central defender and left controlling midfielder," Ten Hag told Voetbal International last year.

"He has good technique, overview on the ball, duelling power, but he has less walking ability, for example. Our midfield has been given a different interpretation, which means that Martínez mainly has to compete with [Daley] Blind and [Nicolo] Tagliacico," he commended the Ajax defender.

United have targeted three players in Ajax, Jurrien Timber, Antony and Martinez, who worked with Ten Hag last season to emerge champions of the Dutch top division.



# CAF Awards: Moses Simon, Amoo make list without Osimhen

Confederation of African Football (CAF) have released a list comprising 90 nominees that include players, coaches and clubs in this year's edition of CAF awards in men's category.

With the event slated to take place next month on July 21 in Morocco, Nigeria got only two nominees in the categories of 'CAF Player of the Year' and CAF Young Player of the Year with Moses Simon and Akinkunmi Amoo featuring respectively.

Surprisingly, the name of Nigeria and Napoli striker, Victor Osimhen was visibly absent from a list which paraded the names of Bayern Munich and Senegalese forward Sadio Mané, Liverpool's and Egyptian

Mohamed Salah, Manchester City and Algerian Ryad Mahrez and others.

In a statement by CAF on Thursday, the nominees in various categories were selected by experts, legends and journalists taking into cognizance their performances from September 2021 to June 2022.

"A stakeholder panel made up of Technical Experts, CAF Legends and Journalists decided on the list for the various categories taking into consideration the performance of the nominee from September 2021 till June 2022 at all levels," CAF claimed.

"The winners of each category will be decided by a voting panel made up of CAF Technical Committee, media professionals, Head Coaches & Captains of Member



Associations and clubs involved at the group stage of the Interclub competitions," stated the continental football governing body.

The exclusion of Victor Osimhen from CAF list, a player who scored 14 Italian Serie A goals in 27 appearances last season coupled with 5

assists is worrisome.

CAF added that the event will take place two days before the June 23rd final of the women's African Cup of Nations in Morocco, and this coincides with the two years anniversary of the launch of the CAF Women's Football Strategy.

## El Classico: Madrid host Barca in October

Following the release of the Spanish top-tier fixtures for 2022-2023 season by the Spanish Football Federation, after the draws were held yesterday, Real Madrid will host Barcelona in Santiago Bernabeu for El Classico.

According to the fixtures, Carlo Ancelotti's side on October 16 will welcome Xavi Hernandez's club to the Bernabeu in their Matchday 9 fixture, the first El Classico for the season.

Recall that last season, Barcelona plummeted Madrid at the Bernabeu to record a resounding 4-0 victory against Los Blancos having held them to a draw at Camp Nou.

However, Madrid would long to take their pound of flesh when both teams clash this season in Spanish La Liga which occurs eight-games

after their season's opener with newcomers Almeria on August 4 at Estadio Mediterraneo.

In the same vein, Barcelona welcome Rayo Vallecano to Camp Nou in their first La Liga match of 2022-23 season and would ensure they secure maximum points to avoid a repeat of last season's 1-0 painful loss to the visitors.

Aside from El Classico clashes in the La Liga season, Atletico Madrid will travel to Coliseum Alfonso Pérez to take on Getafe and will hope to sustain last season's feat against Azulones.

Last season, Atletico boss Diego Simeone recorded a 2-1 win at Coliseum Alfonso Pérez against Getafe who had one of the players, Carles Aleña, sent off in the second half.

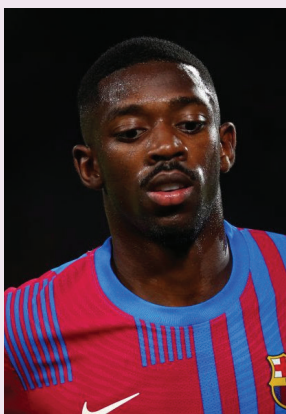
## Barcelona's Dembele becomes a free agent

Ousmane Dembele's era in Barcelona has finally come to an end yesterday after spending five years in Camp Nou from Borussia Dortmund.

The player, who signed for Barcelona on August 8, 2017, in a deal worth €105m and €40m on variables, has become a free agent for the likes of Chelsea and Paris Saint-Germain to pounce on.

However, no one knows the next move of the French winger, who is reported to be on the negotiation table with Barcelona.

According to reports in Spain, the player's agent, Moussa Sissoko met with Barcelona representatives, Mateu Alemany and Jordi Cruyff on Monday at Ciutat



Esportiva to discuss a proposal for the forward.

Reportedly, Catalans had earlier presented a proposal to the 25-year-old which he rejected and expect a better offer from the club he has poached 32 goals

and provided 34 assists from 149 appearances in all competitions.

According to his inner circle, should Barcelona refuse to improve on the proposal being offered to the former Rennes forward, he will have no option but to look for another club.

However, Dembele has not lost hope in Barcelona who he believes will come with a better offer to make him remain in Catalonia.

Although Barcelona are yet to make a move to oblige the player's request according to MundoDeportivo, Dembele's contract talks have not ended.

Meanwhile, a report by a Spanish news outlet yesterday, reveals that Barcelona are not willing to improve on

the terms being offered to Ousmane Dembele following the financial crises ravaging the club.

Diario Sport reported that Barcelona have pegged all wages within the range of €9m for all its players which means for the Frenchman to remain in Camp Nou, he will have to take a pay cut.

Presently, Barcelona are trying to sell some of their assets and TV rights to meet up with the deadline to renew the contracts of their players which finally elapsed yesterday, Ousmane Dembele inclusive.

Consequent to the expiration of Ousmane Dembele's contract, Barcelona if still interested in the Frenchman will have to sign him as a fresh player.



## Andy Murray records earliest Wimbledon exit

Two-time British champion Andy Murray has been sent out of Wimbledon in a four-set thriller by world-ranked 20, John Isner to record his earliest exit from the grass-court event.

Murray, a former world-topmost ranked tennis player in 2016, fell to a 6-4 7-6 (7-4) 6-7 (3-7) 6-4 loss to the 'big-serve' American, who defeated French Enzo Coucaud 7-6 (8-6) 6-7 (3-7) 6-4 3-6 5-7 in the first round.

Isner, while in the contest against Murray, winner of the event in 2013 and 2016 editions, dominated the first and second sets before the British gained ground to win the third set.

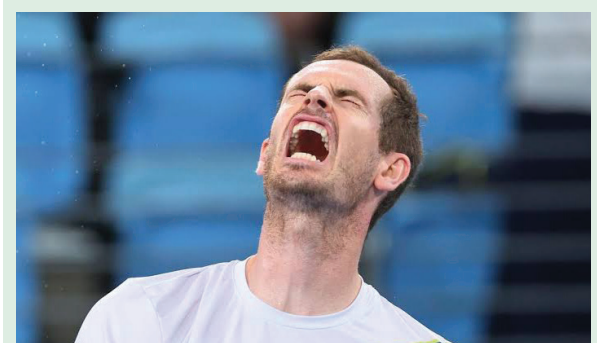
However, Murray with the support of the home fans could not sustain the tempo of the third set as the Isner, who in the French open lost in the third round to Spain's Bernabe Zapata Miralles,

regained his ground to send him packing.

The 35-year-old British is yet to win a tennis event this season and has suffered several defeats in various contests. Among the several defeats, Murray's first for 2022 was at Melbourne, Australia where he fell 6-3 5-7 6-3 in the round of 32 to Argentine Facundo Bagnis.

Murray came close to winning his first trophy for the season in the Sydney International tournament but lost to Aslan Karatsev 6-3 6-3 in the final at Ken Rosewall Arena.

Presently ranked 52 in the world, Murray who retired from Queen's Club Championships round of 32 against Italian Lorenzo Sonego on June 14, lost in the same court where British Emma Raducanu was defeated 6-3 6-3 by Caroline Garcia in the second round.



## Moses Simon ready for Nantes showdown

### Leeds join Nice in chase

Super Eagles forward, Moses Simon, will be ready to tackle FC Nantes over their refusal to accept OGC Nice's €10m offer, The Trumpet gathered.

Simon according to reports from France, has already agreed verbally to a contract with Les Aiglons where he was provided with an option for a better salary at Allianz Riviera.

The 27-year-old is not happy over the news and would not want the opportunity to slip away from his fingers; this may instigate him to confront the management of Canaries.

Although Moses signed

a four-year deal with the French Ligue 1 club after his loan move from Spanish Levante that included a buyout option expired in 2019, he has submitted an exit form to the club despite having two years left at Stade de la Beaujoire according to Nantes President, Waldemar Kita in a press conference recently.

The Aiglons are preparing a second bid for the Super Eagle who netted 6 times in 30 appearances while recording 8 assists for Nantes in Ligue 1 last season.

With the development set to take place, an insider

in the deal, Emmanuel Merceron said that Moses will enter a showdown with Nantes should they reject the second offer from OGC Nice whom he already has a contractual agreement.

"If FC Nantes refuse the 2nd offer to come from the OGC Nice, Moses Simon would be ready to go to the showdown. The player agrees contractually with Nice," Merceron said.

Meanwhile, Leeds United are set to battle OGC Nice for the Nigerian forward according to a recent report from Foot Mercato.

Leeds United in negotiation with various clubs for highly sought Brazilian forward

Raphinha has turned towards Simon as a possible replacement.

The Premier League club do not want to take last season's route and are prepared to build their squad to avoid hovering around the drop zone of the 2022-23 season.

More so, Raphinha and Calvin Phillips are reportedly headed towards Chelsea and Manchester City respectively, with the latter already bound to Etihad Stadium.

With this impending departure of the duo, Leeds' head coach, Jesse Marsch, will try to convince Moses, who would prefer to remain in France, with a mouthwatering offer to lure him to England.



# FK Sarajevo captures Nigerian defender on free transfer

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

Bosnia's club FK Sarajevo have signed Nigerian defender Mohammed Musa on a free transfer from HNK Gorica in the Turkish topflight league.

Musa, who moved to Europe to sign a €300Th with Istanbul Basaksehir in Turkish Super Liga, made a series of loan moves where he featured for Zeljeznica in Bosnia's topflight league before making a move to Bulgarian Parva Liga to join Lokomotiv Plovdiv.

The 25-year-old versatile defender can play in both

defensive wings and has featured for HNK Gorica in either of the positions in the Croatian topflight league, Supersport HNL.

Playing in one of his roles, Musa scored the second goal against Hrv Dragovoljac last season in a 4-0 victory after his fellow compatriot and Nigeria forward Iyayi Atiemwen opened the scoresheet from the penalty spot at SRC Velika Gorica Stadium.

According to 2022-23 fixtures of Bosnian Premijer Liga, FK Sarajevo which finished a step below the qualifying spot for next season's UEFA tournament on last season's table, may feature Musa against Tuzla City in their first match on 16



July, 2022.

Musa made his debut for the Super Eagles in 2016 Summer Olympics and

earned 3 caps, having earlier played for Nigeria U17 and U20 where he scored 3 and 4 goals respectively.

## AFN trials: Athletes, residents hail Obaseki for investment in sports

By **ISAAC OLAMIKAN**

Sportsmen and women, who participated in the just-concluded Commonwealth Games and the World Athletics Championships Trials, hosted by Edo State, have applauded the Governor Godwin Obaseki-led administration for its investment in sporting infrastructure in the state.

The Trumpet gathered that the competition is part of activities lined up by the Athletic Federation of Nigeria (AFN) in preparation for Nigerian athletes for the World Championship in Oregon, USA as well as the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, United Kingdom.

The trials held between 23rd and 25th June, 2022, with the state showcasing its world-class facilities at the Samuel Ogbemudia Stadium to the over 1000 top athletes, from the country and beyond, who clinched tickets for the global tournaments.

The state government undertook a massive reconstruction of the Samuel Ogbemudia Stadium in furtherance of the government's unprecedented investment in sports.

The stadium hosts a main bowl, an ultra-modern Olympic-sized swimming pool, indoor sports hall, a new four-in-one tennis court and spectators' stands, a two-storey secretariat building, a squash court, weightlifting and Para-powerlifting halls, which is attached to the main bowl, and a suspended gymnasium hall for weightlifting, kickboxing and boxing, among other facilities.

The state has since then become a sporting hub and home of global competitions, playing host to various national and international tournaments including the 20th edition of the National Sports Festival; Olympics Trials; Nigeria's Women Football League, the Super Six Tournament; the Aiteo Cup for male and female categories and the Group L 2021 AFCON Qualifier between Nigeria and Sierra Leone, among others.

# Moldovan Sheriff Tiraspol sign Nigerian forwards

Sheriff Tiraspol have signed Nigerian forward Iyayi Atimven from Croatian club Dynamo Zagreb after his fellow compatriot Rashid Akanbi was signed and unveiled on the club website in June 27.

According to the Moldovan club, the Nigerian forward signed an agreement after he passed his medical to become part and parcel of the club plans.

In the club statement, the 26-year-old who started his European football career in Cyprus for Dogan TBSK after

he moved from Nigeria, joined different clubs in Croatia like Gorica, Lokomotiv, and Dynamo Zagreb.

Iyayi during his footballing campaign in Croatia, performed superbly to be adored a champion after winning the Croatian top-tier league with Dynamo Zagreb.

Also last season, the former Bendel Insurance striker played 4 matches in the qualification of the Europa League and 6 matches in the group stage of the League of Conferences for the Cypriot Omonia.

Earlier in the week, the Moldovan club captured Nigerian Centre-forward, Rashid Akandi, who is glad to make the move from Turkey's second-tier club, Kocaelispor to Sheriff Tiraspol.

The player, who featured 29 times, scoring 7 goals last season coupled with 2 assists in Turkey Lig 1, revealed that he never gave much consideration to the club's offer before accepting it.

"Sheriff has a good and well-known reputation," Akanbi said on the club website.

"Yes, it means a lot to me, the

Tiraspol club has a good and well-known reputation. A lot of people want to be in this club.

"This is a major step forward in my career. The opportunity presented itself to develop and at the same time raise the club to a higher level, thanks to my individual contribution," the Nigerian forward stated.

Sheriff Tiraspol won the Moldovan Cup last season after they defeated Sfantul Gheor 1-0 in the final to gain automatic qualification to next season's Champions League.

# IFK Göteborg sign Suleiman Abdullahi on 3-year deal

IFK Göteborg have signed Union Berlin's Suleiman Abdullahi on a free transfer to the Swedish topflight The Trumpet reliably gathered.

Abdullahi, who joined Union Berlin three seasons ago from Eintracht Braunschweig after completing a season-long loan move in 2019 with Die Eisernen, scored the opener in the 2-2 first-leg playoff against VfB Stuttgart where the club finally secured promotion to the Bundesliga.

The striker's last season's performance was threatened by

injury in Eintracht Braunschweig where he had returned for a season-long loan move to the Bundesliga second-tier to manage 2 goals from six appearances.

Despite the shortfall in performance last season, the former Viking FK versatile striker, who can play as a centre-forward and also from the attacking right and left wings, attracted interest from Mikael Stahre's side to sign him to Allsvenskan.

In a statement by the IFK Göteborg to announce the signing of Abdullahi, they disclosed that

the 25-year-old Nigerian striker signed a three-year deal.

"We have completed a new acquisition that spearheads the squad. The 25-year-old Nigerian striker Suleiman Abdullahi is on a free transfer from the Bundesliga club Union Berlin," IFK Göteborg confirmed.

Abdullahi, who will officially join his new club on July 1, will be expected to kickstart a new campaign in Sweden's Allsvenskan on July 4th when IFK Göteborg take on Degerfors in the 2022-23 fixtures.

